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## COMMENTARIES

# EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

## NUMBERS

*by John Gill*

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth*  
— Psalm 60:4

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## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS

This book has its name from the account it gives of the “numbers” of the children of Israel, twice taken particularly; which name it has with this Greeks and Latins, and so with the Syriac and Arabic versions; but with the Jews it is called sometimes “Vajedabber”, from the first word of it, “and the Lord spake”; and sometimes “Bemidbar”, from the fifth word of the first verse, “in the wilderness”, and sometimes “Sepher Pikkudim”; or, as with Origen<sup>f1</sup>, “Ammesph,kodim”, the book of musters or surveys. That it was written by Moses is not to be doubted; and is indeed suggested by our Lord himself, (~~<B66>~~John 5:46) compared with (~~<0E14>~~Numbers 3:14), and the references to it, in the New Testament, fully ascertain to us Christians the authenticity of it, as that of our Lord hinted at, and those of the apostle in (~~<100>~~1 Corinthians 10:4 ~~<8013>~~Hebrews 9:13,14). It contains an history of the affairs of the Israelites, and of their travel in the wilderness for the space of thirty eight years; though the principal facts it relates were done in the second year of their coming out of Egypt, and in the last of their being in the wilderness; and it is not merely historical, but gives a particular account of several laws, ceremonial and judicial, to be observed by the people of Israel, as well as has many things in it very instructive, both of a moral and evangelical nature.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 1

In this chapter orders are given to Moses to take the number of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upwards, (~~BOOK~~ Numbers 1:1-3); and the men that were to assist in this work, one of each tribe are mentioned by name, (~~BOOK~~ Numbers 1:4-16); all which was accordingly done, (~~BOOK~~ Numbers 1:17-19); and the particular numbers of each tribe are recorded, as they were taken, (~~BOOK~~ Numbers 1:20-44); and the sum total is given, (~~BOOK~~ Numbers 1:45,46); the Levites being excepted, who were employed about the tabernacle, and so not to be employed in military service, (~~BOOK~~ Numbers 1:47-51); they encamped about that, while the Israelites pitched their tents every man by his own camp and standard, (~~BOOK~~ Numbers 1:52-54).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai*, etc.] Which is different from the wilderness of Sin, (~~BOOK~~ Exodus 16:1); and had its name from the mountain so called, on which God gave the law of the decalogue, and where the Israelites had been encamped eleven months, (~~BOOK~~ Exodus 19:1,2);

*in the tabernacle of the congregation*; which had now been set up a whole month, and out of which the Lord had delivered to Moses the several laws recorded in the preceding book in that space of time, (~~BOOK~~ Exodus 40:17 ~~BOOK~~ Leviticus 1:1);

*on the first [day] of the second month*; the month Ijar, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our April, and part of May, and was the second month of the ecclesiastical year, which began with Abib or Nisan:

*in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt*; that is, the children of Israel, who had now been a year and half a month out of it:

*saying*, as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel*, etc.] Excepting the Levites; nor were any account taken of the mixed

multitude that came out of Egypt with the children of Israel, only of them; and this account was taken, partly to observe the fulfilment of the divine promise to Abraham concerning the multiplication of his seed, and partly that it might be observed, that at the end of thirty eight years from hence, when they were numbered again, there were but three left of this large number, their carcasses falling in the wilderness because of their sins; and chiefly, as Aben Ezra observes, this sum was now taken to fix their standards, and for their better and more orderly journeying and encampment; for on the twentieth of this month they set forward on their journey from hence, (<sup><Q1011></sup>Numbers 10:11,12); the word for the order is in the plural number, take ye, being given both to Moses and Aaron, who were to take the number, and did, (<sup><Q1013></sup>Numbers 1:3);

*after their families*; into which their tribes were divided:

*by the house of their fathers*; for if the mother was of one tribe, and the father of another, the family was according to the tribe of the father, as Jarchi notes, a mother's family being never called a family, as Aben Ezra observes:

*with the number of [their] names*; of every particular person, whose name was inserted in a list or register:

*every male by their poll*; or head <sup>f2</sup>; for none but males were numbered: the Lord's spiritual Israel are a numbered people, written in the book of life, placed into the hand of Christ, and exactly known by him, even by name; yea, all that belong to him are numbered, and the very hairs of their heads,

**Ver. 3.** *From twenty years old and upwards*, etc.] All that had entered into their twentieth year, or, as it should rather seem, who were full twenty years of age, and all that were above it without any limitation; though some limit it to fifty, and others to sixty years, when men may be reasonably excused going to war; for to know who were fit for it seems to be a principal design of this order, as follows:

*all that are able to go forth to war in Israel*; who being about to journey, might expect to meet with enemies, with whom they would be obliged to engage in battle; and therefore it was proper to know their strength, and whom to call out upon occasion: Aben Ezra observes, that the phrase "in Israel" excepts the mixed multitude; those were not of Israel, and so not numbered, and perhaps not to be trusted or depended upon in war; nor were they mustered and marshalled by the standards of the several tribes; in

a mystical sense, those numbered may signify the valiant of Israel, the same as the young men in (<sup><014></sup>1 John 2:14); (see <sup><210></sup>Song of Solomon 3:7,8);

*thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies*; each tribe making a considerable army, (see Gill on “<sup><010></sup>Exodus 7:4”); these people were now typical of the church of God in its militant state in the wilderness, for which they are provided, and prepared, and accoutred.

**Ver. 4.** *And with you there shall be a man of every tribe*, etc.] Excepting Levi, of which Moses and Aaron were, to assist in taking the account, and to see that it was an exact and perfect one:

*everyone head of the house of his fathers*; and prince of the tribe he belonged to, as appears from (<sup><016></sup>Numbers 1:16) and (<sup><012></sup>Numbers 7:2), where an account is given of the same persons as princes of the tribes that offered at the dedication of the altar, who here assisted in the taking this account; the Targum of Jonathan calls them each a prince, as Prince Elizur, etc.

**Ver. 5.** *And these [are] the names of the men that shall stand with you*, etc.] Be present with Moses and Aaron when numbering the people; not merely as spectators of the affair, and inspectors of the accounts, but as assistants in the work; each man in his tribe, being best acquainted with the families and houses in it; and these men were not pitched upon by Moses and Aaron, nor chosen by their respective tribes, but were appointed and named by the Lord himself, which was doing them great honour:

*of [the tribe] of Reuben*: or “for Reuben”<sup>f3</sup>, for the taking the number of men in this tribe; and so of all the rest, (see <sup><014></sup>Numbers 1:44);

*Elizur the son of Shedeur*; from (<sup><015></sup>Numbers 1:5-15) the names of those several men are given, which were very proper for Moses and Aaron to know, though of little importance to us; nor the signification of their several names, given by Ainsworth and others; only, as Bishop Patrick observes, most of them show how much God was in the thoughts of those who, imposed these names on their children, several of them having in them “El” or “Eli”, “God” or “my God”, and “Shaddai”, “Almighty” or “all-sufficient”: to which may be added, that in some of them they seem to respect the Messiah, as Elizur, signifying “my God the rock”; and Shelumiel may be rendered, “God my peace”; and Zurishaddai, “my rock the Almighty”, or “all-sufficient”; and Pedazhur, “the rock redeemeth”: nor is there anything of any moment to be remarked, unless the order in which

the several tribes are placed; and first the children of Leah, beginning with Reuben, the firstborn; and the rest, Simeon and Judah, are ranked according to their birth; Levi being omitted, because that tribe was not now numbered, and besides, Moses and Aaron were of it; and then Issachar and Zebulun; after those the children of Rachel, because of her honour and glory above the handmaids, as Aben Ezra remarks; who further observes, that it begins with Ephraim, following Jacob our father, that is, because of the blessing of Jacob, who preferred Ephraim the younger to Manasseh the elder; and here Ephraim and Manasseh are set before Benjamin, because they were in the place of Joseph; and after that the account goes on with Dan, because, he was the firstborn of the handmaids; and after him Asher, though the second son of Zilpah, is placed before Gad, the first son, because, says the same Aben Ezra, the Lord knew that he would be the head of those that encamped by the standard of Dan, and so is placed next to him; and after him Gad, who was the firstborn of Leah's handmaid; and Naphtali last of all, the second son of Bilhah: this order seems to be designed to suit with their encampments, and the form of them.

**Ver. 6.** *Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 7.** *Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 8.** *Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 9.** *Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 10.** *Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 11.** *Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 12.** *Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 13.** *Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran.* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 14.** *Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel.* (See Gill on “<sup>(-0005)</sup>Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 15.** *Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan.* (See Gill on “<sup>(-0005)</sup>Numbers 1:5”).

**Ver. 16.** *These [were] the renowned of the congregation,* etc.] The most famous and eminent among the people, for their birth and pedigree, or for their excellent qualities of wisdom, courage, and the like; or “the called of the congregation”<sup>f4</sup>, whom God had called by name and selected from the rest of the congregation to the above service, whereby great honour was done them: Aben Ezra says, the sense is, that the congregation did nothing until they had called them; with which agrees the note of Jarchi,

“who were called to every business of importance in the congregation:”

*princes of the tribes of their fathers;* as Elizur was prince of the children of Reuben, (<sup>(-0023)</sup>Numbers 7:30); the same is there said of the rest in their respective tribes:

*heads of thousands in Israel;* the congregation of Israel being divided into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, by the advice of Jethro, (<sup>(-0282)</sup>Exodus 18:21); each of these divisions had a ruler over them, and thousands being the highest number, these princes were chiliarchs, rulers or heads of thousands.

**Ver. 17.** *And Moses and Aaron took these men,* etc.] They doubtless sent for them, and acquainted them with the nomination of them, by the Lord himself, for such a service; and they took them with them to the place where the number of the people was to be taken:

*which are expressed by [their] names:* in (<sup>(-0016)</sup>Numbers 1:16), and that as declared by the mouth of God himself.

**Ver. 18.** *And they assembled all the congregation together on the first [day] of the second month,* etc.] The month Ijar, as the Targum of Jonathan, answering to part of April and May: this was done on the selfsame day the Lord spake unto Moses about this affair, (<sup>(-0001)</sup>Numbers 1:1); so expeditious were he and Aaron in doing the will of God:

*and they declared their pedigrees;* either Moses and Aaron, according to Aben Ezra, who inquired when they were born, because of the

computation of twenty years; and then their birth was wrote down, as he says; or rather the people declared their pedigrees, of what tribe, family, and house they were, who their parents, when born, and so, of course, how old they were; Jarchi interprets it, they brought the books of their genealogies, and witnesses to confirm the birth of everyone of them, to show their genealogy according to their tribe; nor is it at all unlikely that every family and house, or master thereof, kept a register of those born to him in it, whereby their age could be ascertained as well as pedigree:

*after their famines, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names, from twenty years old and upwards, by their poll:* that is, every tribe gave an account of the families in it, every family what houses were in it, and every house what number of males were in it, and of what age; and such were numbered who were twenty years old and upward.

**Ver. 19.** *As the Lord commanded Moses,* etc.] In this Moses and David differed in numbering the people of Israel; the one did it by an express command from God, and in obedience to it; the other without one, and against his will, (<sup><13217></sup>1 Chronicles 21:17);

*so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai;* where they now were when this order was given, (<sup><0400></sup>Numbers 1:1); and from whence they removed the twentieth day of this month, (<sup><0400></sup>Numbers 10:11,12); so that in less than three weeks time, perhaps much sooner, this affair was finished; and it may be, that the place of numbering them at this time is expressly observed, to distinguish it from another numbering of them, recorded in this book, which was done in the plains of Moab, (<sup><0402></sup>Numbers 26:2,3).

**Ver. 20.** *And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son,* etc.] Were numbered first, and next to them those of Simeon and Gad, for they were numbered according to the order in which they were to be encamped; for under Reuben's standard were Simeon and Gad, and under Judah's Issachar and Zebulun, and under Ephraim's Manasseh and Benjamin, and under Dan's Asher and Naphtali; and according to their order were the tribes numbered:

*by their generations:* or "their generations", the birth, descent, and pedigree of them:

*after their families, by the house of their fathers:* according to the families and houses to which they belonged;



*according to the number of the names by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward*; their names were taken down, the number of them counted by their heads, even all the males that were above twenty years of age:

*all that were able to go forth to war*; which phrase, as it suggests that before this age they were not reckoned able bodied men for war, in common, though some might; so it seems to except all infirm persons, by reason of age and otherwise: now in all the other account of the numbering of the rest of the tribes, the same forms of expression are used as here, only the tribe of Simeon, which is the next, these words are left out, “by their polls, every male”, which being twice observed, need not be repeated, since by these instances it might be sufficiently known that the number was taken by a poll, and only of males; so that in (<sup><0023></sup>Numbers 1:23-43), there is nothing material to observe, or anything different from what is in this verse, but the particular sums of each tribe numbered, which stand thus: of the tribe of Reuben 46,500; of the tribe of Simeon, 59,300; of the tribe of Gad, 45,650; of the tribe of Judah, 74,600; of the tribe of Issachar, 54,400; of the tribe of Zebulun, 57,400; of the tribe of Ephraim, 40,500; of the tribe of Manasseh, 32,200; of the tribe of Benjamin 35,400; of the tribe of Dan, 62,700; of the tribe of Asher 41,500; of the tribe of Naphtali, 53,400; in which may be observed the various increase of the tribes, agreeably to divine predictions, and according to the sovereign will and infinite wisdom of God: Reuben, the firstborn, did not excel in number, six of the tribes having more in number than he: Judah had by far the greatest increase of them all, from whom the chief ruler was to come, and even the King Messiah; and in process of time was to become a kingdom of itself; Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph, was much more fruitful than Manasseh, his elder, more than eight thousand being numbered of the former than of the latter, all which agree with Jacob’s prophecies, (<sup><0004></sup>Genesis 49:4,8-10,22 48:19,20); nor had they always the greatest number who had the most sons at their going down into Egypt; for though Simeon, who had then more sons than Reuben, had at this time a larger posterity; yet Gad, who had more than Simeon, had now fewer descendants; and Dan, who had but one son at that time, had now almost double the number of Benjamin, who then had ten sons: and it may be observed of other tribes, that their increase was not in proportion to the number of the sons of the patriarchs then; (see <sup><0408></sup>Genesis 46:8,24).

**Ver. 21.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Reuben, [were] forty and six thousand and five hundred.* 46,500 men. (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 22.** *Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 23.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Simeon, [were] fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.* 59,300 men. (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 24.** *Of the children of Gad, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 25.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Gad, [were] forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.* 45,650 men. (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 26.** *Of the children of Judah, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 27.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Judah, [were] threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.* 74,600 men. (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 28.** *Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 29.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Issachar, [were] fifty and four thousand and four hundred.* 54,400 men. (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 30.** *Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 31.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Zebulun, [were] fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.* 57,400 men. (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

**Ver. 32.** *Of the children of Joseph, [namely], of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “Numbers 1:20”).

- Ver. 33.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Ephraim, [were] forty thousand and five hundred.* 40,500 men. (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 34.** *Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 35.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Manasseh, [were] thirty and two thousand and two hundred.* 32,200 men. (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 36.** *Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 37.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Benjamin, [were] thirty and five thousand and four hundred.* 35,400 men. (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 38.** *Of the children of Dan, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 39.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Dan, [were] threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.* 62,700 men. (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 40.** *Of the children of Asher, by their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 41.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Asher, [were] forty and one thousand and five hundred.* 41,500 men. (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 42.** *Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 43.** *Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Naphtali, [were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred.* 53,400 men. (See Gill on “<sup>Q012</sup>Numbers 1:20”).
- Ver. 44.** *These [are] those that were numbered, etc.]* Or, as the Targum of Jonathan, these are the sums of the numbers; namely, those before given of the several respective tribes:

*which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, [being] twelve men*; for though the tribe of Levi was not numbered, yet Joseph having a double portion, his two sons are reckoned as distinct tribes; so that one out of each tribe made up the number twelve:

*each one for the house of his fathers*; for the tribe he belonged to, with which it might reasonably be supposed he was best acquainted, and could more readily take the number of them.

**Ver. 45.** *So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel,* etc.] Of all the tribes, excepting Levi, that is, all the sums of the number of the children of Israel; all put together made the sum total given in the next verse:

*by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel*; all in every tribe, family, and house, that were above twenty years of age, healthful and strong, and fit for war.

**Ver. 46.** *Even all they that were numbered,* etc.] Of whom an account was taken, and their names set down in a book or register: were 603,550; which was exactly the number of them, when taken about seven months before this, when they were assessed for defraying the expenses of the tabernacle, (<sup><B335></sup>Exodus 38:26); so that it should seem not one person had died during that time; for though there were three that died a violent death in that compass of time, yet two of them were of the tribe of Levi, not now numbered; and the other was not an Israelite by the father's side; (see <sup><B101></sup>Leviticus 10:1,2 24:11,23); but it is not very probable, among such a vast number of people, that not one above twenty years of age should die in that time: some therefore are of opinion, that the tribe of Levi was numbered before, though not now; and that there was such an increase in that time among the other tribes as to equal the number of males of twenty years and upwards, in that tribe taken into the service of God, by which they were no losers.

**Ver. 47.** *But the Levites,* etc.] The tribe of Levi were excepted from this muster, they being employed in a kind of warfare, and therefore not to be engaged in another:

*after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbered among them*: the rest of the tribes; the reason follows.

**Ver. 48.** *For the Lord had spoken unto Moses,* etc.] Not to number the Levites, when he gave him the orders to number the rest of the tribes: this is observed, lest it should be thought that this was what Moses did of himself, out of affection to the tribe he was of, and to spare it, that it might not be obliged to go forth to war when others did; not that they were forbid to engage in war, or that it was unlawful for them so to do, for when necessity required, and they were of themselves willing to engage in it, they might, as appears in the case of the Maccabees, but they might not be forced into it; they were, as Josephus<sup>f5</sup> says, exempted from it; and so all concerned in religious service, both among Heathens and Christians, have always been excused bearing arms:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 49.** *Only thou shall not number the tribe of Levi,* etc.] That is, along with the other tribes, for it might be numbered by itself, as it afterwards was, (<sup>00BB</sup>Numbers 3:43);

*neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel*; which confirms what is before observed: now this being the declared will of God clears Moses from all partiality to his own tribe, he doing nothing but what he had a command of God for it.

**Ver. 50.** *But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony,* etc.] So called from the ark in it, in which was the law of God, which was a testimony of the will of God to his people:

*and over all the vessels thereof*; the candlestick, table: and altars, as Aben Ezra notes:

*and over all things that [belong] to it*; the vessels of vessels, as the same writer calls them; for the candlestick, shewbread table, and the two altars of incense and burnt offering had vessels appertaining to them:

*they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof*; carry them from place to place when needful:

*and they shall minister unto it*; by taking care of the instruments of it and the vessels in it, but not by doing any part of the priestly office in it, as offering sacrifice, burning incense, and the like:

*and shall encamp round about the tabernacle*; they were a sort of camp or army of themselves, and their station was around the tabernacle, which was

a kind of royal palace to God the King of kings; so that as they were the king's legion, and to be numbered alone, as Jarchi observes, in (<sup>1049</sup>Numbers 1:49), so they were a guard about his palace, and were placed between that and the camp of Israel.

**Ver. 51.** *And when the tabernacle setteth forward*, etc.] Or was about to set forward; that is, the congregation were about to journey, and take the tabernacle with them, as they always did, when and wherever they journeyed:

*the Levites shall take it down*; unpin it, take the boards and pillars out of their sockets, and the bars out of their places, and the whole into pieces, in order to be put into wagons prepared to carry them, of which mention is made in a following chapter;

*and when the tabernacle is pitched, the Levites shall set it up*; at whatsoever place the congregation encamped and took up their abode for any time: the tabernacle was pitched in the manner as tents are, when the Levites put the several parts together, laid the sockets, put in the boards and the bars, and also the pillars of the court and elsewhere, and hung the hangings upon them; and set the candlestick, tables, altars, ark, and all the vessels of the sanctuary in their proper places:

*and the stranger that cometh nigh*; to meddle with or touch the above things, to assist in taking down or setting up the tabernacle, or bearing any of the vessels of it: by a stranger is meant, not one of another nation, nor a proselyte, whether of the gate or of righteousness; but, as Aben Ezra interprets it, one that is a stranger from the sons of Levi, who is not of that tribe, even though an Israelite:

*shall be put to death*; either the sanhedrim or court of judicature shall condemn and put him to death, as the same writer observes; or he shall die by the hand of heaven, as Jarchi; that is, by the immediate hand of God, or with flaming fire from before the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan; as Uzzah was smote, and died by the ark of God for touching it, (<sup>106</sup>2 Samuel 5:6,7).

**Ver. 52.** *And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp*, etc.] There were four, unless every tribe was a camp, and so then there were twelve camps, besides the camp of the Levites: the Targum of Jonathan is,

“by the house of his troop,”

the regiment to which he belonged, every tribe or camp having various troops or regiments in it:

*and every man by his own standard throughout their hosts*; there were four standards, and three tribes to each standard, which were placed east, west, north, and south of the tabernacle, as is at large described in the following chapter.

**Ver. 53.** *But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony*, etc.] Between the tabernacle and the camps of Israel, to guard the tabernacle and preserve the things in it, and to keep persons from going into it that should not, to pollute or plunder it: these were placed in like manner as the four living creatures round the throne, (<sup>4045</sup>Revelation 4:6); where the allusion seems to be to this situation of the Levites:

*that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel*; that is, from the Lord, should any of them approach too near, or meddle with and touch what they had nothing to do with, or go where they should not; such wrath as came upon Uzzah for his error and transgression before observed:

*and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony*; the several things in it committed to their charge; (see <sup>4048</sup>Numbers 3:8).

**Ver. 54.** *And the children of Israel did according to all the Lord commanded Moses*, etc.] Pitched their tents by their own camps and standards; did not come near the tabernacle but kept at a proper distance from it, and did not meddle with things they had no concern, with, and which were peculiar to the Levites:

*so they did*; which is repeated to show how readily, punctually, and perfectly they observed the command of God with respect to this affair.

# CHAPTER 2

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 2

This chapter contains the order of the encampment and march of the tribes of Israel in their proper places about the tabernacle; the general direction for the same is in (<sup>-0400E</sup>Numbers 1:1,2); the particulars follow; on the east of the tabernacle the camp of Judah was to pitch, and under his standard the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun, (<sup>-0400B</sup>Numbers 1:3-9); on the south side of it the camp of Reuben, and under his standard the tribes of Simeon and Gad, (<sup>-0400D</sup>Numbers 1:10-16); then the tabernacle, with the camp of the Levites round it, were next, to stand or set forward, (<sup>-04017</sup>Numbers 1:17); and on the west side the camp of Ephraim, and under his standard the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, (<sup>-04018</sup>Numbers 1:18-24); and on the north side the camp of Dan, and under his standard the tribes of Asher and Naphtali, (<sup>-04025</sup>Numbers 1:25-31); the sum total of the numbers of which camps are given, exclusive of the camp of Levi, (<sup>-04032</sup>Numbers 1:32,33); and the chapter is concluded with observing, that all was done according to the commandment of God, (<sup>-04034</sup>Numbers 1:34).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,* etc.] Very probably after the number of the children of Israel was taken, of which in the preceding chapter, and when the congregation of Israel with the tabernacle were about to set forward on their journey; and therefore directions are here given for their orderly and regular proceeding in it, in what form and manner they should both encamp and march;

*saying:* as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard,* etc.] Or banner, of which there were four, as appears from the following account, under each of which were placed three tribes; and so every man of each tribe was to pitch his tent in the tribe he belonged to, and by the standard under which his tribe was marshalled, and in the rank that he was placed:

*with the ensigns of their father's house;* which were either lesser standards or banners, somewhat different from the great standard or banner, which



belonged to the camp consisting of three tribes, and which were peculiar to their several families and houses, and distinguished one from another, like flags in different regiments; or these were signs<sup>f6</sup>, as the word may be rendered, or marks in the standards or banners, which, distinguished one from another; so the Targum of Jonathan, the signs which were marked in their standards: but what they were is not easy to say; Aben Ezra observes, and Abendana from him, that their ancients were used to say, that there was in the standard of Reuben the form of a man, on account of the mandrakes, (~~0304~~Genesis 30:14); and in the standard of Judah the form of a lion, because Jacob compared him to one, (~~0409~~Genesis 49:9); and in the standard of Ephraim the form of an ox, from the sense of those words, the firstling of his bullock, (~~0307~~Deuteronomy 33:17); and in the standard of Dan the form of an eagle, so that they might be like the cherubim the prophet Ezekiel saw, (~~0110~~Ezekiel 1:10), which is not very likely, such images and representations not being very agreeable, yea, even detestable to the people of the Jews in later times, and can hardly be thought to be in use with their early ancestors: others, as Jarchi, fancy that those standards were distinguished by their colours, as our flags or ensigns are; which, if they stopped here, would not be much amiss, but they go on and say, that each was according to the colour of his stone fixed in the breastplate, so that there were three colours in every flag or standard; thus, for instance, in the standard of Judah, which is the first, were the colours of the three precious stones, on which were the names of Judah, Issachar, and Reuben, namely, the emerald, sapphire, and diamond; and so in the rest of the standards; but others say, the letters of the names of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, differently disposed of, were on those standards; but rather, one would think, the names of the three tribes under every standard were embroidered on them, which would sufficiently distinguish one from another, and direct where tribe was to pitch; but of those things there is no certainty:

*far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch:* a mile from it, according to Jarchi, or two thousand cubits, which is supposed to be a sabbath day's journey, (~~0112~~Acts 1:12); and this distance is gathered from (~~0100~~Joshua 3:4), and is not improbable.

**Ver. 3.** *And on the east side, towards the rising of the sun,* etc.] Which rises in the east; or of all; for, as Jarchi observes, that which is “before” is called “Kedem”, the east, as the west is called “behind”:

*shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch, throughout their armies*; the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, formed one camp, which had its name from the principal tribe Judah; and this was divided into various regiments and companies, called armies, who severally pitched under one and the same standard. It is said <sup>17</sup> Judah's stone was the "nophech" (which we render an emerald), and his flag was coloured in the likeness of the colour of the heavens, and there was formed upon it a lion. Issachar's was the sapphire, and his flag was coloured black, like to black lead, and there were framed upon it the sun and moon, on account of what is said, (<sup>1322</sup>1 Chronicles 12:32). Zebulun's was a diamond, and his flag was coloured white, and there was formed upon it a ship, because of what is said, (<sup>0413</sup>Genesis 49:13);

*and Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, [shall be] captain of the children of Judah*; who had been assisting in numbering the people, and who afterwards offered to the dedication of the altar, (<sup>0402</sup>Numbers 1:2 7:2).

**Ver. 4.** *And his host, and those that were numbered of them*, etc.] As they had been before; and, supposing these words to be the words of God, there is no necessity of rendering them in the future, as some have observed; though they seem rather to be the words of Moses, who under every tribe repeats the number, which is exactly the same as when taken; and though it was not till twenty days after that they set forward according to their order of encampment, not one of them died, which Aben Ezra observes as a very wonderful thing;

*[were] threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred*; the number of the tribe of Judah were 74,600; (see <sup>0402</sup>Numbers 1:27).

**Ver. 5.** *And those that do pitch next unto him [shall be] the tribe of Issachar*, etc.] Who with Zebulun, after mentioned, as placed with him under the same standard, were the brethren of Judah, by the same mother Leah, and so fitly put together, as most likely to continue in harmony and love; and being the youngest sons of Leah, and brethren of Judah, would, without any reluctance or murmuring, pitch under their elder brother's standard:

*and Nethaneel, the son of Zuar, [shall be] captain of the children of Issachar*; (see <sup>0408</sup>Numbers 1:8 7:18).

**Ver. 6.** *And his host*, etc.] The host of Issachar;

*and those that were numbered thereof, [were] fifty and four thousand and four hundred.*] 54,400 men. Which had been numbered, for it does not appear that there was a fresh account taken; (see <sup><0012></sup>Numbers 1:29).

**Ver. 7.** [*Then the tribe of Zebulun*, etc.] He pitched next; though the order of their encampment was not, as it may seem, first Judah, after him Issachar, and below him Zebulun; for Judah lay between these two, the one before him, and the other behind him; and it was Issachar that was behind, and Zebulun before, as Aben Ezra observes; they were pitched on each side of the standard of Judah, one on one side, and the other on the other side:

*and Eliab, the son of Helon, [shall be], captain of the children of Zebulun;* (see <sup><0013></sup>Numbers 1:9 7:24); each tribe had its own captain; nor does it appear that there was a general over those captains, that had the command of the camp, consisting of three tribes, but Moses was the generalissimo of all the camps.

**Ver. 8.** *And his host*, etc.] That is, the host of Zebulun;

*and those that were numbered thereof, [were] fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.* 57,400 men; (see <sup><0014></sup>Numbers 1:31).

**Ver. 9.** *All that were numbered in the camp of Judah [were] an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies*, etc.] 186,400 men. The sum total of the three tribes, which formed that camp: this was the largest camp of them all, being near 30,000 more than Dan's, (<sup><0015></sup>Numbers 2:31), which was the next in number unto it, and therefore placed foremost, and as the vanguard to the tabernacle:

*these shall first set forth*; in a march, when about to journey; when they saw the cloud remove, the priests blew with the trumpets, and then the camp of Judah moved first, as Jarchi observes, and when they went out to fight, Judah went up first, (<sup><0016></sup>Judges 1:1,2).

**Ver. 10.** *On the south side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies*, etc.] This camp consisted of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, which was divided into lesser bodies, regiments, or companies, called armies; and this was placed to the south of the tabernacle, or to the right hand, as Aben Ezra interprets it; this was the right wing of the whole army. Reuben's stone, according to the Jewish writers <sup>f8</sup>, was the "sardius", and his flag was coloured red, and there were

figured upon it mandrakes. Simeon's stone was the topaz, and his flag was coloured green, and on it was figured "shechem". Gad's stone was the agate, and his flag was coloured neither black nor white, but mixed, and there was figured upon it a camp or host, on account of what is said, (<sup><0499></sup>Genesis 49:19);

*and the captain of the children of Reuben [shall be] Elizur the son of Shedeur;* (see <sup><0406></sup>Numbers 1:5 7:30).

**Ver. 11.** *And his host,* etc.] That is, the host of Reuben, as distinct from his camp, of which it was only a part, and of which Elizur was captain;

*and those that were numbered thereof, [were] forty and six thousand and five hundred.*] 46,500 men; (see <sup><0402></sup>Numbers 1:21).

**Ver. 12.** *And those which pitch by him [shall be] the tribe of Simeon,* etc.] Under his standard, and on one side of it; Reuben and Simeon being brothers by the mother as well as the father's side, might well be thought to agree together; and Reuben being the eldest brother, and the eldest of all Jacob's sons, Simeon would not grudge to pitch under him:

*and the captain of the children of Simeon [shall be] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai;* of whom (see <sup><0406></sup>Numbers 1:6 7:36).

**Ver. 13.** *And his host,* etc.] That is, the host of Simeon:

*and those that were numbered of them, [were] fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.* 59,300 men; the same as in (<sup><0403></sup>Numbers 1:23).

**Ver. 14.** *Then the tribe of Gad,* etc.] Who was placed on the other side of Reuben's standard, and according to the former direction he must be before, and Simeon behind; and Gad being the eldest son of Leah's handmaid Zilpah, is fitly placed under Leah's firstborn, and being the son of an handmaid, could not object to his situation:

*and the captain of the sons of Gad [shall be] Eliasaph the son of Reuel:* who is called Deuel, (<sup><0414></sup>Numbers 1:14 7:42). The letters **r**, "resh", and **d**, "daleth", being similar, are sometimes put one for the other, of which there are other instances, as in (<sup><0103></sup>Genesis 10:3,4), compared with (<sup><1006></sup>1 Chronicles 1:6,7).

**Ver. 15.** *And his host,* etc.] That is, the host of Gad, as distinct from those of Reuben and Simeon, which together formed the camp;

*and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty.]* 45,650 men; (see <sup><40125></sup>Numbers 1:25).

**Ver. 16.** *And all that were numbered in the camp of Reuben [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies, etc.]* 151,450 men. Putting Reuben's host, and the hosts of Simeon and Gad together, (<sup><40123></sup>Numbers 2:13,15), which was much lesser than the preceding camp, being 34,500 fewer in number:

*and they shall set forth in the second rank:* they in journeying moving next to the camp of Judah, and before the tabernacle; for though, while encamped, the camp of Reuben lay on the south, or right side of it, yet, when marching, went before it.

**Ver. 17.** *Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites, etc.]* Which reached four miles, according to the Targum of Jonathan, as did Judah's. Levi's stone, as the Jews say <sup>f9</sup>, was the carbuncle, and his flag was coloured, a third part white, and a third part black, and a third part red, and on it were formed Urim and Thummim:

*in the midst of the camp;* or "camps" <sup>f10</sup>; between the camps of Judah and Reuben, before mentioned, and those of Ephraim and Dan, which are after spoken of: the order in which they moved was this, as Aben Ezra observes; the Gershonites and Merarites marched between the standard of Judah and the standard of Reuben; and the Kohathites marched, and with them Aaron and his sons, between the standard of Reuben and the standard of Ephraim:

*as they encamp, so shall they set forward;* this is to be understood, according to Aben Ezra, not of the camp of Levi, since the standard of Judah was to the east, and the Gershonites, which were to the west of the sanctuary, and the Merarites in the north, set forward together; but of the camps of Israel, which set forward, not as they were encamped about the tabernacle, for those that were encamped on the side of it, in marching went before and behind, but as they were encamped with respect to themselves; first marched the standard of Judah, then that of Reuben, which went before, and then those of Ephraim and Dan, which followed; and besides, as each camp was pitched, so it moved; as the camp of Judah, his host marched between those of Issachar and Zebulun, and the same order the rest observed:

*every man in his place by their standards,* as every individual person in the several tribes were ranked under their respective banners, so they marched.

**Ver. 18.** *On the west side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Ephraim, according to their armies,* etc.] It was in the rear or behind, consisting of his tribe, and of the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, divided into several companies, and extended four miles, as the above Targum. The Jewish writers say<sup>f11</sup>, that Joseph's stone is the onyx or sardonyx, and his flag was coloured very black, and on it were figured for the two princes, Ephraim and Manasseh, Egypt, because they were born in Egypt; and upon the flag of Ephraim was figured an ox, because of what is said in (<sup><06317></sup>Deuteronomy 33:17); and on the flag of the tribe of Manasseh was figured an unicorn, because of what is said in the same place. Benjamin's stone was the jasper, and his flag was coloured like to twelve colours, and on it was figured a wolf, because of what is said (<sup><04427></sup>Genesis 49:27);

*and the captain of the sons of Ephraim [shall be] Elishama the son of Ammihud;* of whom (see <sup><00110></sup>Numbers 1:10 7:48).

**Ver. 19.** *And his host,* etc.] That is, the host of Ephraim;

*and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty thousand and five hundred.* 40,500 men. Not his camp, but his host, or the army, which consisted only of his own tribe (see <sup><00133></sup>Numbers 1:33).

**Ver. 20.** *And by him [shall be] the tribe of Manasseh,* etc.] Who though the elder brother to Ephraim, yet Ephraim was preferred to him, and had a standard given him, and his elder brother was directed to pitch by it; and this being agreeably to the prophecy of Jacob, could not well be objected to; and Benjamin, the younger brother of Joseph, being placed under the standard of a son of his, that stood in his father's room, could not be offended; and these all being the descendants of Rachel, might well be thought to agree together, and be very well pleased with their situation:

*and the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur;* the same as in (<sup><00110></sup>Numbers 1:10 7:54).

**Ver. 21.** *And his host,* etc.] That is, the host of Manasseh;

*and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and two thousand and two hundred.* 32,200 men; (see <sup><00135></sup>Numbers 1:35).

**Ver. 22.** *Then the tribe of Benjamin,* etc.] He was to pitch under the same standard of Ephraim, and the other side of it from that of Manasseh; the

one being before, and the other behind, and the standard in the middle; (see Gill on “<sup>(0417)</sup>Numbers 2:7”);

*and the captains of the sons of Benjamin [shall be] Abidan the son of Gideoni*; of whom (see <sup>(0411)</sup>Numbers 1:11 7:60).

**Ver. 23.** *And his host*, etc. That is, the host of Benjamin;

*and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and five thousand and four hundred.* 35,400 men. The least number of all the tribes, excepting the tribe of Manasseh, (<sup>(0421)</sup>Numbers 2:21); (see <sup>(0415)</sup>Numbers 1:37).

**Ver. 24.** *All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim [were] an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies*, etc.] 108,100 men. Which was the smallest of all the camps, and near eighty thousand fewer than the camp of Judah, (<sup>(0419)</sup>Numbers 2:9):

*and they shall go forward in the third rank*; and which was the first following the tabernacle.

**Ver. 25.** *The standard of the camp of Dan [shall be] on the north side by their armies*, etc.] To the left of the tabernacle as encamped, and so was the left wing of the grand army; it consisted of the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, in which were several divisions and companies, whose camp also the Targum of Jonathan says reached four miles. According to the Jewish writers <sup>f12</sup>, Dan’s stone was the “ligure”, and his flag was coloured like to a sapphire, and there was figured upon it a serpent, on account of what is said (<sup>(0417)</sup>Genesis 49:17); Asher’s stone was the “tarshish” or beryl, and his flag was coloured like to a precious stone, with which women adorn themselves, and on it was figured an olive tree, on account of what is said (<sup>(0419)</sup>Genesis 49:20). Naphtali’s stone was the amethyst, and his flag was coloured like to clear wine, whose redness is not strong, and on it was figured an hind, on account of what is said of him (<sup>(0421)</sup>Genesis 49:21):

*and the captain of the children of Dan [shall be] Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai*; who made mention of in (<sup>(0410)</sup>Numbers 1:10 7:66).

**Ver. 26.** *And his host*, etc.] That is, the host of Dan;

*and those that were numbered of them, [were] threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.* 62,700 men, which agrees with the account of this tribe in (<sup>(0413)</sup>Numbers 1:39).



**Ver. 27.** *And those that encamp by him [shall be] the tribe of Asher,* etc.] Dan had a standard given him, though the son of an handmaid, being the firstborn of the sons of the handmaids, and his tribe being a warlike tribe, and very numerous; and Asher and Naphtali are placed by him, being the sons of handmaids also, and could not but contentedly pitch by him, who was the eldest of the sons of the handmaids Naphtali being his younger brother by mother's as well as father's side, and Asher the second son of Zilpah, Leah's maid:

*and the captain of the children of Asher [shall be] Pagiel the son of Ocran;* the same as in (<sup>4013</sup>Numbers 1:13 7:72).

**Ver. 28.** *And his host,* etc.] That is, the host of Asher;

*and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and one thousand and five hundred.* 41,500 men; as they were numbered (<sup>4044</sup>Numbers 1:41).

**Ver. 29.** *Then the tribe of Naphtali,* etc.] That was to pitch by the same standard of Dan, on the other side of it:

*and the captain of the children of Naphtali [shall be] Ahira the son of Enan;* who is mentioned (<sup>4015</sup>Numbers 1:15 7:78).

**Ver. 30.** *And his host,* etc.] That is, the host of Naphtali;

*and those that were numbered of them;* not that some part of the tribe of Naphtali was numbered, which made up the host Ahira was captain of, but the whole of it, who were all numbered that were of twenty years of age and upwards; and the same is to be observed in all the above places, where this phrase is used;

*[were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred.* 53,400 men; (see <sup>4043</sup>Numbers 1:43).

**Ver. 31.** *All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred,* etc.] 157,600 men. Consisting of his own tribe, and those of Asher and Naphtali, which make the largest camp next to Judah:

*they shall go hindmost with their standards;* for though, while encamped, they lay to the north, or the left side of the tabernacle, yet, when marching, they brought up the rear, and were the rear guard to the tabernacle; so that it had in its van and rear the two largest camps, which were wisely ordered



for its safety: “standards” is put for “standard”, the plural for the singular; for there was but one standard to a camp, unless this takes in their ensigns, of which they had many.

**Ver. 32.** *These [are] those that were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers,* etc.] As the number was taken by Moses and Aaron, assisted by twelve princes of the tribe, who were now constituted captains over them, as so many hosts or armies:

*all those that were numbered of the camp throughout their hosts:* of the four camps, of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan, throughout the respective tribes or hosts that belonged to each of them,

*[were] six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty;* 603,550 men, which is exactly the sum total of them, as taken (<sup>4046</sup>Numbers 1:46). It is a large number, considering in how short a time, and that great part of it a state of bondage, from seventy persons, they rose unto it; but the spiritual Israel of God, consisting of his people of all nations, is a number which no man can number, (<sup>6009</sup>Revelation 7:9); besides, the number of the sealed ones, of every tribe, (<sup>0046</sup>Numbers 2:4-8); Now this encampment of the people of Israel was an emblem of the form and order of the spiritual Israel or church of God, under the Gospel dispensation. Christ in human nature is the tabernacle, who is in the midst of his people by his gracious presence; as the heart and life of the congregation of his saints, in whom they all centre and terminate, and where he sits enthroned as King of saints; and as the Levites encamped in four squadrons next unto the tabernacle, all around it, to these answer the living creatures in (<sup>2005</sup>Ezekiel 1:5 <sup>6006</sup>Revelation 4:6); which design the ministers of the word, who are in the highest place in the church, between Christ and the congregation, and are near to him, to be supplied by him; then encamped the whole body of the people of Israel by their standards, with their ensigns, to whom answer the wheels in (<sup>2015</sup>Ezekiel 1:15 10:9); and the twenty four elders in (<sup>6004</sup>Revelation 4:4); all which show the church to be militant, and that there is an order in Gospel churches, which makes them both comely and terrible, (<sup>2064</sup>Song of Solomon 6:4 <sup>5005</sup>Colossians 1:5); and may teach every member to abide by his standard, and follow his ensign and ensign bearer, (<sup>2010</sup>Isaiah 11:10 <sup>6040</sup>Revelation 14:4 <sup>6101</sup>1 Corinthians 11:1).

**Ver. 33.** *But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel,* etc.] At this time, not among the Israelites, but by themselves, they being a camp of themselves:

*as the Lord commanded Moses;* (<sup>-0018</sup>Numbers 1:48,49).

**Ver. 34.** *And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses,* etc.] Formed themselves into camps, so many tribes to a camp, and over each tribe or host appointed a captain, and erected a standard to each camp, by which they pitched as directed, which is next particularly observed:

*so they pitched by their standards;* every tribe, and every person in the tribe, as they were ranked, pitched by the standard to which they belonged:

*and so they set forward, after their families according to the house of their fathers;* the camps, and the tribes in them the families in those tribes, and the houses or lesser families under them, when they marched, proceeded in this regular order, as they did on the twentieth of this month; (see <sup>-0001</sup>Numbers 10:11,12).

# CHAPTER 3

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 3

In this chapter an account is given of the genealogy of the priests and Levites, and of the gift of the Levites to the priests, of the numbering of them, and the service they were to perform; and first of the priests, the sons of Aaron, (<sup><04B1></sup>Numbers 3:1-4); and then of the Levites, as given unto them, to wait upon them, and assist them, (<sup><04B5></sup>Numbers 3:5-10); and these were taken instead of the firstborn, (<sup><04B1></sup>Numbers 3:11-13); and ordered to be numbered, which was done accordingly by their families, (<sup><04B4></sup>Numbers 3:14-20); and the sum of each is given, and the particular work assigned to them; of the Gershonites, (<sup><04B2></sup>Numbers 3:21-26); of the Kohathites, (<sup><04B7></sup>Numbers 3:27-32); of the Merarites, (<sup><04B3></sup>Numbers 3:33-38); the sum total of them is given, (<sup><04B9></sup>Numbers 3:39); then the firstborn of the children of Israel, from a month old are ordered to be numbered, and were, (<sup><04B0></sup>Numbers 3:40-43); and these appearing to be more in number than the Levites, by two hundred seventy three a direction is given that the two hundred seventy three should be redeemed at the rate of five, shekels apiece, and the money paid to Aaron and his sons, (<sup><04B4></sup>Numbers 3:44-48); which was accordingly done, (<sup><04B9></sup>Numbers 3:49-51).

**Ver. 1.** *These also [are] the generations of Aaron and Moses,* etc.] The descendants of them, those of the former, who is named first, because the eldest, were priests, and those of the latter Levites, and who are not very plainly pointed at, but are included among the Amramites, (<sup><04B7></sup>Numbers 3:27); the posterity of Moses being very obscure, only Levites, and these not particularly named but swallowed up among the Kohathites: find the following account was as it stood,

*in the day [that] the Lord spoke with Moses in mount Sinai;* and not, altogether as it then, was when he spoke to him in the wilderness, of Sinai, for then Aaron had four sons, but now two of them were dead as is after observed; and it seems to be for the sake of this circumstance chiefly that this clause is so put.

**Ver. 2.** *And these [are] the names of the sons of Aaron*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan adds, disciples of Moses, the master of the Israelites; none of the posterity of Moses being expressly, named; Jarchi observes, that the sons of Aaron are called the generations of Moses, because he taught them the law; for whoever, he says, teaches his neighbour's son, the law, the Scripture accounts of him as if he begat him, (see <sup><4045></sup>1 Corinthians 4:15);

*Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar*; as in (<sup><4023></sup>Exodus 6:23).

**Ver. 3.** *These [are] the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests that were anointed*, etc.] With the holy, anointing oil, with which they were anointed when, Aaron was and they only, (see <sup><4230></sup>Exodus 30:30);

*whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office*; that is, whom Moses consecrated, by anointing them, putting the priest's garments on them, offering sacrifice for them, and filling their hands with sacrifices which is the phrase here used for consecration: (see <sup><4295></sup>Exodus 29:15-24).

**Ver. 4.** *And Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord*, etc.], By flaming fire, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, (see <sup><6102></sup>Leviticus 10:2); and so were not alive at this time when the account of the priests and Levites was taken:

*when they offered strange fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai*; after the tabernacle was set up, and the service of it begun, and quickly after their unction and consecration: of this strange fire, (see Gill on <sup><4002></sup>Numbers 10:1");

*and they had no children*; which is observed, partly to show the punishment of them, and the reproach upon their names, that they died childless, and had none to succeed them in the priesthood; for as the Jewish writers <sup>f13</sup> observe if they had left any behind them, those would have come into the office before Eleazar and Ithamar; and partly to show that all the priests in succeeding ages sprung from those next mentioned:

*and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office, in the sight of Aaron their father*; in his presence, under his inspection, and by his direction, he seeing and observing that they did everything according to the laws delivered by Moses, relating to, the office of the priesthood; or while he was yet alive, as Aben Ezra, they were concerned with him, and acted under him in the priestly office; and so the Septuagint version renders it, "with Aaron their father" <sup>f14</sup>; but a Jewish writer <sup>f15</sup> interprets it in a

different manner, “in the room of Aaron their father”; as if it respected not any conjunction with him in the then present exercise of their office in his lifetime, but their succession in it after his death; but the former seems most correct.

**Ver. 5.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] After he had given him the order for the numbering the children of Israel, and for the manner of their encampment and journeying:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 6.** *Bring the tribe of Levi near*, etc.] Separate them from the rest, set them apart for special service about, the sanctuary, let them have a place nearer to it than the other tribes, or offer them, that is, to the Lord, as in (<sup>ORIG</sup>Numbers 8:11); as well as bring them near to Aaron; so it follows:

*and present them before Aaron the priest*; that he may receive them as a gift unto him, as servants to wait upon him; and! that he may appoint and declare unto them their work, and set them about it:

*that they may minister unto him*; in guarding the tabernacle taking care of the vessels of it, taking it down, carrying it, from place to place, and setting it up as there was occasion for it.

**Ver. 7.** *And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation*, etc.] The charge of Aaron and of all the people of Israel, which was to secure the sanctuary from being polluted or plundered: this the Levites were to be employed about, and thereby ease the high priest and the other priests, and the people, of what otherwise would have been incumbent on them:

*before the tabernacle of the congregation*; not within it, neither in the holy place, nor in the most holy place, where they might not enter, to do any service peculiar thereunto, but at the door of the tabernacle, and in the court of it, and in the rooms and chambers in it: and do the service of the tabernacle; not to offer sacrifices on the altar of the burnt offering, which stood in the court, and much less to burn incense on the altar of incense, and to him the lamps, and set on the shewbread in the holy place; and still less to enter into the most holy place, and do there what was to be done on the day of atonement; but to do all that is before observed, and to bring the people’s offerings to the priest, and to assist in slaying them; and to keep all profane and polluted persons out of it, the tabernacle, as we find in later

times; they were porters at it, and some of them were singers in it, and had the care of various things belonging to it: (see <sup><1394></sup>1 Chronicles 9:14,26-29 23:3-5,28-30).

**Ver. 8.** *And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] Take care of them that none be lost or come to any damage, especially while it was moving, and carried from place to place; then the several parts of it, as well as the vessels in it, were committed to their care and charge, the particulars of which see in (<sup><0485></sup>Numbers 3:25,26,31,36,37);

*and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle;* (see Gill on "<sup><0485></sup>Numbers 3:7").

**Ver. 9.** *And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons,* etc.] To be their ministers and servants:

*they [are] wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel:* even all of them entirely, none excepted; the whole tribe which were not in the priestly office; those were separated from the rest of the tribes of Israel, and appointed for the service of the priests: or they were "given, given"<sup>f16</sup>; which is repeated not only to show that they were wholly given, as we render it, but to denote the certainty of it, that they were really given; and especially to declare the freeness of the gift; the priests had them as free gifts, nor did they pay them any thing for, their service; they were maintained another way, namely, by the tithes of the people; and indeed the priests received a tithe out of the tithe of the Levites; so far were they from contributing any thing to their support, or in consideration of the service they did them.

**Ver. 10.** *And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons,* etc.] To the priestly office; this was done before, but is renewed for the confirmation of it, and repeated to put them in mind of it, that they be careful to execute it, as follows:

*and they shall wait on their priest's office,* to do what was peculiar to it, both in the holy and in the most holy place, at the altar, and within, the veil, where the Levites had nothing to do; and this is observed that the priests might take notice, that by the gift of the Levites to them, they were not excused from doing any part of service which was proper to them as priests; for they were given them that they might more readily attend their office, and be wholly employed in it; just as, under the Gospel dispensation,

deacons were appointed to take care of the secular affairs of the church, that the apostles might give up themselves to the word of God and prayer, (~~4th~~ Acts 6:2-4);

*and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death*; that comes nigh to perform any part of the priest's office peculiar to him as to offer sacrifice, burn incense, etc. whether he be a common Israelite, or even a Levite, as Korah was; any that was not a priest was reckoned a stranger, and so to be put to death for intruding into the office, as the above mentioned person was: so Aben Ezra interprets it of anyone that came nigh to a priest, to be with him or join with him in the execution of his office, whether an Israelite or a Levite, he shall die: the Targum of Jonathan adds, by flaming fire before the Lord.

**Ver. 11.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Continued to speak unto him, and give him the reason of his appointing the Levites to minister to the priests and serve the tabernacle:

*saying*: as follows.

**Ver. 12.** *And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel*, etc.] Separated them from others, and set them apart for the service of the sanctuary; this was his own act and deed, and which he did of his own will and pleasure, who is a sovereign Being, and might and would do whatsoever he pleased, nor should any object unto him, or contradict him: and this he did,

*instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel*; he made an exchange of those for the Levites; upon the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, and saving the firstborn of Israel, he claimed the latter as his own in a special sense, and now he gave up his right to them, and instead thereof took the Levites; nor could the people of Israel reasonably object to this, nor be uneasy at it, but rather be pleased with it; since hereby they were not only freed from the charge of redeeming their firstborn, but since they were the Lord's, he might have appointed them to be servants to the priests; and every Israelite would choose rather, no doubt, to part with a tribe for this service than to have their firstborn sons employed in it; and there were none so fit as the tribe of Levi, not only because it was a small tribe, but because the priests were of this tribe, to whom they were to minister; and therefore as there was a connection between them, the Levites would readily serve them: it is a notion that has

obtained both among Jews and Christians, that the firstborn before this time were priests in the family, but now the Levites were taken in their room; and Jarchi particularly observes, that when the firstborn sinned in the business of the calf, they were rejected, and the Levites, who did not commit idolatry, were chosen in their room; but it does not appear, before the fixing the priesthood in Aaron's family, that the firstborn in a family were priests, and officiated as such, but rather the father and head of the family for the whole, or everyone for himself, as in Adam's family, he and his two sons; and moreover, it was a recent thing, and only among the Hebrews, that the firstborn were in a peculiar manner the Lord's, not as priests, only to be redeemed, and now the Levites were redeemed in their room; it was not to be priests, but the servants of the priests<sup>f17</sup>:

*therefore the Levites shall be mine*; whom he gave to the priests to assist them in their work, which was for him and his glory.

**Ver. 13.** *Because all the firstborn [are] mine*, etc.] Not merely in a general way, as all creatures are his, but in a special manner as his own, and that for the following reason:

*[for] on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast*; that is, sanctified or set them apart as his own special property, or ordered the people of Israel so to do, (<sup><DPT></sup>Exodus 13:2); for as when he destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians, he saved the firstborn of Israel, he had a special claim upon them as his; and though it was in the night when he destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, yet it was the night which preceded that day, and was a part of that day, even the fifteenth of Nisan, when the instructions were given to sanctify all the firstborn; though, as Aben Ezra observes, "day" signifies "time", so that it was at or about the same time that the one and the other were done:

*mine they shall be*; this was declared when they were ordered to be sanctified to him, but now they were to be exchanged for the Levites:

*I [am] the Lord*; who have sovereign power to do as he would in claiming the firstborn, and then in exchanging them for the Levites, and appointing the Levites to minister to the priests, and serve in the tabernacle.

**Ver. 14.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai*, etc.] At the same time he gave the order, and made the declaration before



mentioned, and in the place where now the children of Israel were, and from whence they shortly removed:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 15.** *Number the children of Levi*, etc.] Who were left out of the general muster of the children of Israel, but now were to be numbered alone, and in a different manner, and for, a different purpose, the Lord having a special regard unto, them, and special service for them:

*after the house of their fathers, by their families*; into which the tribe was divided; house seems to be put for “houses”, which were principal ones; and these were divided into families, which branched from them, and according to these, denominated from their fathers, and not their, mothers, were they to be numbered; for as the Jewish writers often say, a mother’s family is no family; wherefore, if a Levite woman married into any other tribe, as she might, her, descendants were not taken into this accounts only such whose fathers were Levites, (see <sup><04002></sup>Numbers 1:2);

*every male from a month old and upwards shalt thou number them*; the reason of this was, because the firstborn, for whom they were to be exchanged, were at a month old claimed by the Lord as his, and to be redeemed; and as this numbering was on, another account than, that of the children of Israel, who were numbered from twenty years of age and upwards, that they might on occasion be called out to war, from which the Levites were exempted, and the numbering of them was for the service of the sanctuary; so from their youth they were to be brought up and trained for this, that they might be fit for it, and enter upon it at a proper age.

**Ver. 16.** *And Moses numbered them according to the word of the Lord*, etc.] Took the account of all of a month old in the several houses and families of the tribe of Levi; though Moses is only here mentioned, yet it seems from (<sup><04039></sup>Numbers 3:39); that Aaron was concerned with him in it; yea, in an after numbering of the Levites who were fit for business from thirty to fifty years of age, the chief of the children of Israel were assisting to him and Aaron, (<sup><04046></sup>Numbers 4:46);

*as he commanded*; he was obedient to the divine will in all things, and so in this, though it was his own tribe and his own posterity, which in all successive ages were to be no other than ministering servants to the priests, and to have no inheritance in the land of Israel.

**Ver. 17.** *And these were the sons of Levi, by their names,* etc.] The immediate offspring and descendants of that patriarch:

*Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari;* these went down with him into Egypt, (<sup><0461></sup>Genesis 46:11).

**Ver. 18.** *And these [are] the names of the sons of Gershon, by their families,* etc.] Or to Gershon belonged two families, called after the names of his sons, who were now numbered, namely,

*Libni and Shimei;* and who are elsewhere mentioned as his sons, (<sup><0167></sup>Exodus 6:17); and from hence were the families of the Libnites and Shimites, as in (<sup><0421></sup>Numbers 3:21).

**Ver. 19.** *And the sons of Kohath, by their families,* etc.] Who was the second son of Levi:

*Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel;* so in (<sup><0168></sup>Exodus 6:18); and from whom were named the family of the Amramites, to which Moses and Aaron belonged; and the families of the Izeharites, Hebronites, and Uzzielites, as they are called, (<sup><0427></sup>Numbers 3:27).

**Ver. 20.** *And the sons, of Merari, by their families,* etc.] The third son of Levi;

*Mahli and Mushi;* the same as in (<sup><0169></sup>Exodus 6:19); from whom were denominated the families of the Mahlites and Mushites, who, as the preceding families, were numbered at this time: these

*[are] the families of the Levites, according to the house of their fathers;* in all eight families.

**Ver. 21.** *Of Gershon [was] the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites,* etc.] The first son of Levi:

*these [are] the family of the Gershonites;* that were now, numbered.

**Ver. 22.** *Those that were numbered of them,* etc.] Of the two families that sprung from Gershon:

*according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upwards:* in the said families;

*[even] those that were numbered of them, [were] seven thousand and five hundred; 7,500 men, which was neither the least nor the largest number of the sons of Levi.*

**Ver. 23.** *The families of the Gershonites*, etc.] The two before mentioned, the Libnites and Shimites:

*shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward*; this was their situation when encamped; they were placed in the rear of the camp of the Levites, between the tabernacle and the camp of Ephraim, which was westward also, (<sup><0018></sup>Numbers 1:18).

**Ver. 24.** *And the chief of the house of the fathers of the Gershonites*, etc.] Who had the chief authority over them, and the chief direction of them in what they were to do:

*[shall be] Eliasaph the son of Lael*; but who he was, or of which family of the Gershonites, whether of the Libnites or Shimites, is not said here or elsewhere; nor do the Jewish writers, who affect to know every thing, pretend to tell us.

**Ver. 25.** *And the charge of the sons of Gershom*, etc.] The Libnites and Shimites:

*in the tabernacle of the congregation*; or with respect to the things of it, when it was taken down and committed to them; for otherwise they had no place in it, nor might they enter into it, or do any service therein:

*[shall be] the tabernacle and the tent*; the former intends not the boards of it, which were the charge of the Merarites, (<sup><0135></sup>Numbers 3:36); but the curtains, as Aben Ezra, or the under curtains, as Jarchi calls them, which were made of fine twined linen, (<sup><0201></sup>Exodus 26:1); and the latter is to be understood of the eleven curtains, as Aben Ezra, the curtains of goats hair, which were made for the roof of the tabernacle, as Jarchi observes, (see <sup><0207></sup>Exodus 26:7);

*the covering thereof*: made of rams' skins, and badgers' skins, which were thrown over the tent, (<sup><0214></sup>Exodus 26:14);

*and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; the vail, as Jarchi calls it; not what divided the holy and most holy places, for that fell to the charge of the Kohathites, (<sup><0131></sup>Numbers 3:31); but the vail or

hanging which was at the door of the tent, or which led into the holy place, (<sup><0236></sup>Exodus 26:36).

**Ver. 26.** *And the hangings of the court*, etc.] Which formed the great open court that encompassed the tabernacle, and was an hundred cubits long and fifty broad; (<sup><0270></sup>Exodus 27:9-13);

*and the curtain for the door of the court*: which was an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, (<sup><0276></sup>Exodus 27:16);

*which [is] by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about*: this refers to the court, the hangings, and curtains of the door of it, which are spoken of; and this court surrounded the tabernacle, and the altar which was without the tabernacle, as Aben Ezra observes, and which was the altar of burnt offering that stood within this court; for the particle **l** [ sometimes signifies “about”<sup>f18</sup>, and the word **bybs**, “around”, being joined with it, requires this sense:

*and the cords of it*; which seem to be the cords of the court, which fastened the hangings and curtains to brass pins, or stakes fixed in the ground to keep them tight, that the wind might not move them to and fro; but Jarchi says, these were the cords of the tabernacle and tent, and not of the court; and indeed the tabernacle had its cords as well as the court, (<sup><0388></sup>Exodus 38:18); the cords of the court were in the charge of the Merarites, (<sup><0437></sup>Numbers 3:37);

*for all the service thereof*: for that part of the tabernacle and court which the Gershonites had in their care and custody.

**Ver. 27.** *And of Kohath [was] the family of the Amramites*, etc.] So called from Amram, the first son of Kohath, and father of Aaron and Moses; so that Moses and Aaron, and their children, are included in this family:

*and the family of Izeharites*; of which family was Korah, (<sup><0461></sup>Numbers 16:1);

*and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites*; which four families had their names from Kohath’s four sons, (<sup><0469></sup>Numbers 3:19);

*these are the families of the Kohathites*; which were as many as both the other sons of Levi.

**Ver. 28.** *In the number of all the males, from a month old and upwards, [were] eight thousand and six hundred, etc.]* 8,600 men, which was the largest number of any of the houses of the Levites; but considering it had double the number of families in it, the increase was not so large in proportion, at least to Gershon, whose two families wanted but 1,100 of these four:

*keeping the charge of the sanctuary;* of the holy and most holy places, and the vessels and instruments belonging thereunto; not that the males of a month old were keeping them, but when they were grown up and were capable of it, they had the charge thereof, in which they were instructed and trained up from their youth.

**Ver. 29.** *The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward.]* Or to the right, which was the more honourable place, excepting the east or front, which was reserved for Moses and Aaron, and his sons, and who were one of these families; and is the reason why this honour was conferred upon them, as well as they had the more honourable charge, having the holy places and holy things committed to their care; and one from among them was appointed over all the Levites, and the chief of them, as they had also, when they came into the land of Canaan, almost as many cities of refuge as both their other brethren had: their situation about the tabernacle was between that and the camp of Reuben, and this accounts for it, how Korah who was of one of the families of the Kohathites, became so intimately acquainted with, and joined in a conspiracy with Dathan and Abiram, who were of the tribe of Reuben, (<sup><BIBL></sup>Numbers 16:1).

**Ver. 30.** *And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites [shall be] Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.]* The same man, who, with his brother Mishael, carried Nadab and Abihu out of the camp, and buried them, (<sup><BIBL></sup>Leviticus 10:4,5); he descended from the last and youngest of the families of the Kohathites; and some think this was one reason at least of Korah's dissatisfaction, and of his entering into a conspiracy against Moses and Aaron, because one of a younger family of his house was preferred to this dignity before him.

**Ver. 31.** *And their charge [shall be] the ark, etc.]* That is, when the tabernacle was taken down, and carried from place to place, this, and the following things, were committed to their care and custody, the ark with

the mercy seat, and all appertaining thereunto, which were in the holy of holies:

*and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars*; the table of shewbread, and the candlestick of pure gold, with its lamps, and the altar of incense, all which stood in the holy place, and the altar of burnt offering, which was in the court, for both altars were their charge:

*and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister*; all the vessels which belonged to the above things; for the table, candlestick, and altars, all had vessels appertaining to them:

*and the hanging*; that is, the vail, as Jarchi interprets it, which divided between the, holy and the most holy place; all the other hangings for the court, and the door of it, and for the door of the tabernacle, were the charge of the Gershonites, (<sup><0425></sup>Numbers 3:25,26):

*and all the service thereof*; what belonged to the things in this part of the tabernacle.

**Ver. 32.** *And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest*, etc.] Who was of the first of these families, the Amramites:

*[shall be] chief over the chief of the Levites*; over the three chiefs of the three houses of the Levites, who were Eliasaph the son of Lael, the chief of the Gershonites; and Elizaphan the son of Uzziel, the chief of the Kohathites; and Zuriel the son of Abihail, the chief of the Merarites:

*[and have] the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary*; the Kohathites, who had the care of the things belonging to the holy and most holy places; and these were particularly under the inspection of Eleazar, because they were things the priests had a, special concern in; (see <sup><0432></sup>Numbers 4:32).

**Ver. 33.** *Of Merari [were] the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites*, etc.] So called from his two sons Mahli and Mushi, (<sup><0420></sup>Numbers 3:20);

*these [are] the families of Merari*; the youngest son of Levi, (<sup><0417></sup>Numbers 3:17).

**Ver. 34.** *And those that were numbered of them*, etc.] Of the above two families:

*according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, [were] six thousand and two hundred; 6,200 men; the least number of them all.*

**Ver. 35.** *And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari,* etc.] I think it should rather be rendered, “and the chief of the house”, that is, of the Merarites, “the father to the families of Merari”; the common father to them all, having the chief authority and power over them, and so in (<sup><0193></sup>Numbers 3:24,30);

*[shall be] Zuriel the son of Abihail;* of whom we read nowhere else, nor is it certain of which family he was, whether of the Mahlites or Mushites:

*[these] shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northward;* to the left of it, between that and the camp of Dan.

**Ver. 36.** *And [under] the custody and charge of the sons of Merari [shall be] the boards of the tabernacle,* etc.] Both of the holy and the most holy place, which were the walls of the tabernacle, and which were covered with curtains; these when taken down for journeying were committed to the care of the Merarites; and because these, with what, follow, were a heavy carriage, they were allowed wagons to carry them; and who on this account had more wagons given them than to the Gershonites, for the Kohathites had none, (<sup><0106></sup>Numbers 7:6-9);

*and the bars thereof;* which kept the boards tight and close, (see <sup><0236></sup>Exodus 26:26);

*and the pillars thereof;* the pillars on which the vail was hung, that divided between the holy and most holy place, and, on which the hanging was put for the door of the vail, (<sup><0262></sup>Exodus 26:32,37);

*and the sockets thereof;* in which both the boards and pillars were put, (<sup><0269></sup>Exodus 26:19,32,37).

**Ver. 37.** *And the pillars of the court round about,* etc.] Of the great court which went round the tabernacle, on which pillars the hangings were hung:

*and their sockets;* into which the, pillars were put; of both which (see <sup><0279></sup>Exodus 27:9-17);

*and their pins, and their cords*, the pins were fixed in the ground, and the cords fastened the hangings of the court to them, whereby they were kept tight and unmoved by the winds; (see <sup>(127)</sup>Exodus 27:19).

**Ver. 38.** *And those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east,* etc.] At which was the entrance into the tabernacle:

*[even] before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward;* that is, before the court of the tabernacle, where the people assembled together:

*[shall be] Moses, Aaron, and his sons;* Moses the chief ruler, and Aaron the high priest, and his sons priests under him; these had the most honourable place of all, beings at the front of the tabernacle, between that and the camp of Judah. There is an extraordinary prick on the word Aaron, to show, as Jarchi says, that he was not in the number of Levites, though of the tribe of Levi, being high priest:

*keeping the charge of the sanctuary, for the charge of the children of Israel;* either in their room and stead, which otherwise they must have kept; or rather for their safety and security, keeping out all persons from entering into the sanctuary, who had no business there, that they died not, as it follows:

*and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death;* that is, whoever came nigh to enter into the holy place, and did, who was no priest, though an Israelite, and even a Levite, or into the most holy place, excepting the high priest, it was death unto him, either by the civil magistrate, or by the hand of heaven; so the Targum of Jonathan.

**Ver. 39.** *All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron, numbered at the commandment of the Lord, throughout their families,* etc.] Whence it appears, that Moses was not alone, but Aaron with him, in numbering the Levites, and that by the appointment of the Lord. The word "Aaron", in the Hebrew text, has a dot on every letter, for what reason it is not certain; the word itself is left out in the Samaritan and Syriac versions:

*all the males, from a month old and upward, [were] twenty and two thousand;* 22,000 men; but by putting the sums together they amount to three hundred more; for of the Gershonites there were 7,500, and of the Kohathites 8,600, and of the Merarites 6,200, in all 22,300; which difficulty some endeavour to remove by saying, as Aben Ezra observes, that the Scripture takes a short way, mentioning the thousands, and leaving



out the hundreds but this, he says, is not right, nor is it the way of the Scripture in this chapter: and in an after account of the firstborn of the Israelites, not only the hundreds are mentioned, but the broken number of seventy three. Others think there is a corruption crept into the text somewhere in the particular numbers, through the inadvertency of some copyist; and suppose it to be in the number of the Kohathites, where they fancy  $\zeta\zeta$ , six, is put instead of  $\zeta\lrcorner\zeta$ , three: but there is no occasion to suppose either of these, for which there is no foundation, since the reason why three hundred are left out in the sum total may be, because there were so many firstborn among the Levites, and these could not be exchanged for the firstborn of the other tribes; they, as such, being the Lord's, and one firstborn could not redeem another; and so it is said in the Talmud<sup>f19</sup>, these three hundred were firstborn, and there is no firstborn redeems a firstborn, or frees from the redemption price of five shekels.

**Ver. 40.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] After he had taken the number of the Levites:

*number all the firstborn of the children of Israel, from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names*; that they might be compared with the number of the Levites, and the difference between them observed.

**Ver. 41.** *And thou shall take the Levites for me*, etc.] For his service, to minister to his priests, and serve in his tabernacle:

*I [am] the Lord*; who has a right to all, and can claim who he pleases for himself in a special manner, and therefore could and did take the Levites to himself:

*instead of the firstborn among the children of Israel*; these he had taken to him before, and ordered to be sanctified unto him, and for whom a redemption price was paid to his priests for the support of them, and the tabernacle service, and now it was his will to make an exchange of these for the Levites:

*and the cattle of the Levites, instead of all the firstling among the cattle of the children of Israel*: every firstling of clean cattle was the Lord's, and given to his priests, and the firstlings of unclean cattle were redeemed with a lamb, and which were given to the same; and now instead of these he requires the cattle of the Levites; not that they should be deprived of their use of them, or that they should be taken and sacrificed, but that they

should be with them devoted to him, and they should possess them in his right.

**Ver. 42.** *And Moses numbered, as the Lord commanded him,* etc.] No doubt assisted by others, though not mentioned:

*all the firstborn among the children of Israel;* which some think were only those that were born since they came out of Egypt, as Bonfrerius, Bishop Patrick, and others.

**Ver. 43.** *And all the firstborn males,* etc.] For such only were ordered to be numbered, and not firstborn females:

*by the number of names;* which were particularly taken:

*from a month old and upward;* for before that time they were not sanctified to the Lord, nor subject to the redemption price:

*of those that were numbered of them [were] twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen;* 22,273 men; so that there were two hundred seventy three more than the Levites, (<sup>OR</sup>Numbers 3:39).

**Ver. 44.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] After the number was taken, and gave him directions what to do upon it:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 45.** *Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel,* etc.] The Lord had declared before that he had taken them, and now he bids Moses take them, who had numbered them, and give them to Aaron, instead of the firstborn, whose numbers were also taken for this purpose:

*and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle;* but not to be given to Aaron and his sons, or to the priests for their use, but to remain with the Levites for their use, who were now separated from the other tribes, and taken into the service of God; and as they were dedicated to God, so their cattle likewise for their support as his ministers:

*and the Levites shall be mine;* in a special manner his, being devoted to his service:

*I [am] the Lord;* who had a right to do this, and expected to be obeyed in it.

**Ver. 46.** *And for those that are to be redeemed*, etc. With money, there being not Levites enough to answer to them, and exchange for them:

*of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites*; for the sum total of the Levites, as given, was but 22,000, (<sup><0183></sup>Numbers 3:39), whereas the sum total of the firstborn of Israel were 22,273, (<sup><0183></sup>Numbers 3:43), so that there were, two hundred seventy three more of the latter than of the former; and what was to be done with these next follows.

**Ver. 47.** *Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece the poll*, etc.] Or head; every firstborn, or his parent for him, was bound to pay five shekels, which were about eleven or twelve shillings of our money, and which was afterwards settled as the price of such a redemption, (<sup><0186></sup>Numbers 18:16);

*after the shekel of the sanctuary shall thou take [them]*; being full weight according to the standard there kept:

*the shekel [is] twenty gerahs*; (see Gill on "<sup><0175></sup>Leviticus 27:25").

**Ver. 48.** *And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed*, etc.] Or the superfluous number, the number of them that exceeded the Levites, namely, two hundred seventy three; the price of their redemption is ordered to be given

*unto Aaron, and to his sons*; since the Levites were taken in lieu of the firstborn, whose redemption money belonged to the priests; and seeing the Levites were given to Aaron and his sons on that consideration, and there being a deficiency of them to answer to the firstborn, it was but right and just that the redemption price of the superfluous number should be paid to them.

**Ver. 49.** *And Moses took the redemption money*, etc.] Of five shekels per head:

*of them that were over and above redeemed by the Levites*; or were more than those redeemed by them. A Levite redeemed a firstborn, or freed him from the redemption price, being taken in lieu of him: 22,000 Levites were answerable to 22,000 firstborn of Israel; but as there were no more Levites than the above number, there remained two hundred seventy three firstborn to be redeemed by money, and it was the redemption money of these Moses took.

**Ver. 50.** *Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money,* etc.] Or “for the firstborn”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, and so the Hebrew particle **tam** is sometimes used <sup>f20</sup>; for children of a month old or little more could not pay the money, but their parents for them, which was paid by them, and Moses received it for the superfluous number of two hundred seventy three; but it is a matter of doubt of whom this was exacted, and by whom paid, and who could be reckoned as this superfluous number, unless they were the last two hundred seventy three that were numbered: some have thought this was paid out of the public stock, which was a ready way of doing it, but whether reasonable is not so manifest, since these firstborn were the properties of particular persons; the more commonly received method of doing it with the Jewish writers was, according to Jarchi and Abarbinel, and so in the Talmud <sup>f21</sup> by lot; the former of which describes the manner of doing it thus, 22,000 pieces (of paper or parchment) were brought, and on them written, “a son of Levi”, or “a Levite”, and two hundred seventy three other pieces, and on them were written, “five shekels”; these were mixed together and put into an urn or box, and then they were bid to come and take out the pieces, and according as the lot was, they were allowed as redeemed by the Levites, or paid the redemption money: and as this was a method much in use with the Hebrews, it is not improbable:

*a thousand three hundred and threescore and five [shekels], after the shekel of the sanctuary;* 1,365 shekels, which is exactly the number of shekels that two hundred seventy three should pay, reckoning five shekels per head; which Jarchi counts thus, for two hundred firstborn, a thousand shekels; for seventy firstborn, three hundred fifty; and for three firstborn fifteen, shekels, which in all amounted to about an hundred seventy pounds of our money.

**Ver. 51.** *And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed,* etc.]

That were redeemed this way, and not by Levites, as in (<sup>-01BB</sup>Numbers 3:49), but by money, paying five shekels a head:

*unto Aaron and his sons;* to whom the Levites were given; and this money, as a recompence for the deficiency of the number of them, to answer to the firstborn exchanged for them:

*according to the word of the Lord;* (<sup>-01BB</sup>Numbers 3:48);

*as the Lord commanded Moses*; so did he, being a faithful servant in all things in the house of God; he did not convert it to his own use, or to any other use than to what God had appointed it.

# CHAPTER 4

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 4

This chapter relates an order to number the Levites fit for business, and gives an account of the time and age when they should enter into service, and how long they should continue therein, (<sup><0001></sup>Numbers 4:1-3); what their particular service should be; and first of the Kohathites, (<sup><0001></sup>Numbers 4:4-20); next of the Gershonites, (<sup><0002></sup>Numbers 4:21-28); and then of the Merarites, (<sup><0003></sup>Numbers 4:29-33); after which Moses and Aaron, with the chief of the congregation, numbered each of them, even as many as were at the age fit for service, as the Kohathites, (<sup><0003></sup>Numbers 4:34-37); the Gershonites, (<sup><0003></sup>Numbers 4:38-41); the Merarites, (<sup><0004></sup>Numbers 4:42-45); the sum total of which is given, (<sup><0005></sup>Numbers 4:46-49).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron*, etc.] After they had taken the number of the Levites, and made an exchange of the firstborn of Israel for them; and now they are ordered to number them a second time, and take out from them such as were fit for service:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi*, etc.] They were to begin with them first, and number them:

*after their families, by the house of their fathers*; as many as were of the age after mentioned; and the reason why they began with Kohath, and not Gershon, the eldest son, as in the former numbering, was; not as Aben Ezra suggests, because of Moses and Aaron, who sprung from him, for that, if it had any strength in it, would have held good before; but rather, as Chaskuni and others, because the Kohathites carried the ark and other holy things; though the true reason seems to be, because of the order observed in taking down the tabernacle, and removing the parts of it, and the things in it; and it was most proper and reasonable, when they were about to take it down, first to take out the ark, table, etc. which was the business of the Kohathites to carry; next to take down the curtains, coverings, and hangings for the tabernacle and court, and the doors thereof, which were

the charge of the Merarites; wherefore, in this order the sum out of each of them fit for business were ordered to be numbered.

**Ver. 3.** *From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old*, etc.]

This is the full time of the Levites service, and the prime season of man's life for business; at thirty years of age he is at his full strength, and when fifty it begins to decline: it is said in the Misnah <sup>f22</sup>,

“a son of thirty years for strength,”

upon which one of the commentators <sup>f23</sup> makes this remark, that the Levites set up the tabernacle and took it down, and loaded the wagons, and carried on their shoulders from thirty years and upwards: thus both John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ himself, entered into their ministry at this age:

*all that enter into the host*; army or warfare; for though the Levites were exempted from going forth to war, yet their service was a sort of warfare; they were a camp of themselves about the tabernacle, and part of their work was to watch and guard it, that it was neither defiled nor robbed; in allusion to this, the ministry of the word is called a warfare, and ministers of the Gospel good soldiers of Christ, and their doctrines weapons of warfare, (<sup><5018></sup>1 Timothy 1:18 <sup><5108></sup>2 Timothy 2:3 <sup><4708></sup>2 Corinthians 10:3,4); some interpret this of the troop, company, or congregation of the Levites, which a man of thirty years of age was admitted into for business:

*to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation*; not in the sanctuary, either in the holy place or in the most holy place, where they were never allowed to enter, or do any business in, such as sacrificing, burning incense, etc. but in that part of it which was called “the tabernacle of the congregation”, or where the people assembled on occasion, and that was the court, which was so called, as Jarchi observes on (<sup><0232></sup>Exodus 29:32).

**Ver. 4.** *This [shall be] the service of the sons of Kohath, in the tabernacle of the congregation*, etc.] What follows, (<sup><0004></sup>Numbers 4:4-15);

*[about] the most holy things*; which Aben Ezra interprets only of the ark, which was indeed a most holy thing, and stood in the most holy place; but there were other holy things, in the care of which the service of the Kohathites lay; as the shewbread table, the candlestick, and the altars of incense and burnt offering, and the vail, and the ministering: vessels, which Jarchi reckons with it, as more holy than all other things.

**Ver. 5.** *And when the camp setteth forward*, etc.] Upon the cloud's removing and the trumpets blowing:

*Aaron shall come, and his sons*; into the holy place:

*and they shall take down the covering vail*: the vail that divided between the holy and the most holy place, which covered all in the holy of holies out of sight:

*and cover the ark of testimony with it*; together with the mercy seat and cherubim on it, that they might not be seen nor touched by the Levites when they carried them. Now though the high priest himself might not go into the most holy place but once a year, on the day of atonement, yet on this occasion, when the tabernacle was to be taken down, and the things in it to be removed, both he and his sons might enter without danger; since, as Bishop Patrick observes, the divine Majesty was gone from thence in the cloud which gave the signal for the motion of the camp, and the taking down of the tabernacle.

**Ver. 6.** *And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins*, etc.] Not that which covered the tabernacle, for that was committed to the Gershonites, (<sup><04025></sup>Numbers 4:25); but a covering made of these on purpose for the present use, to preserve the ark from rain and dust; and this covering was put not immediately upon the ark, but upon the other coverings that were over the ark, and so preserved the vail as well as the ark:

*and shall spread over [it] a cloth wholly of blue*; it is a matter of question, whether this was over the covering of badgers' skins also; if over the latter, as one would think it should be, by the order of the text, how could that be a shelter from the rain and dust, which seems to be the use of it, and therefore should be the outermost, as one of the same kind was the outermost covering of the tabernacle? Aben Ezra observes, there were some that say it was over the covering of badger's skin, but it is right in mine eyes, says he, that it was spread over the covering vail; if indeed it was for the sake of honour and dignity, the first is right, but the badger's skin was on account of rain and dust:

*and shall put in the staves thereof*: having been removed while the ark was covering, as Aben Ezra observes, or otherwise they always remained in their rings, and were never taken out, (<sup><02514></sup>Exodus 25:14,15); but on this occasion they might, and then be put in again for the carrying of the ark,



which was the use of them; though he also remarks, that there are some that say the sense is, they put the staves on the shoulders of them that carried it, which is not a despicable sense; unless rather it is to be understood of putting the staves through holes made in the coverings of the ark, and disposing and fitting them in them, for the better carriage of it.

**Ver. 7.** *And upon the table of shewbread they shall spread a cloth of blue,* etc.] That that also might not be seen nor touched by the Levites:

*and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and the covers to cover withal:* all which belonged to the shewbread table; the use of which, (see Gill on “<sup><0259></sup>Exodus 25:29”); these seem to be put not immediately upon the table, but upon the blue cloth spread over the table:

*and the continual bread shall be thereon:* the shewbread is called “continual”, because it was always on the table; for while the one was removing by a set of priests, which had stood a week, new loaves were placed by another set of priests: this bread seems at this time to be placed also upon the table, spread with the blue cloth; and from hence it appears, that the Israelites had the shewbread in the wilderness; for the making of which they might be supplied with corn from the neighbouring countries, though they themselves needed not any, being daily fed with manna.

**Ver. 8.** *And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet,* etc.] Upon the dishes and other vessels belonging to the shewbread table, and on the shewbread itself:

*and cover the same with a covering of badgers’ skins;* this was clearly the outward covering, and seems to confirm the observation made in (<sup><0046></sup>Numbers 4:6); that the same sort of covering was the outermost covering of the ark:

*and shall put in the staves thereof;* which belonged to the table, and were made to carry it with on occasion, from place to place; (see <sup><0257></sup>Exodus 25:27,28); and the same phrase being used as here of the staves of the ark in (<sup><0046></sup>Numbers 4:6); seems to confirm the sense of them there, that they were taken out and put in upon this occasion, though otherwise fixed.

**Ver. 9.** *And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps,* etc.] Which had lamps in it, and were continually lighted, and gave light in the holy place:

*and his tongs, and his snuff dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it; by supplying the lamps with oil, and snuffing and trimming them.*

**Ver. 10.** *And they shall put it, and all the vessels thereof, within a covering of badgers' skins,* etc.] Which here also was the outermost covering; the ark and the shewbread table had three coverings, but the candlestick only two, they being more sacred than that, especially the ark:

*and shall put [it] upon a bar;* the word “mot” perhaps signifies a kind of mat or mattress, on which the candlestick and its vessels, bundled together in the covering of the badgers' skins, were laid and carried between men on staves; and so the Septuagint render the word “staves”; as does the Targum of Onkelos.

**Ver. 11.** *And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue,* etc.] The altar of incense, which was overlaid with gold, and therefore called a golden one, to which the allusion is in (~~Exo~~ Revelation 8:3);

*and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins;* after the cloth of blue was spread upon it:

*and shall put to the staves thereof;* into the rings, both made to bear and carry it, upon occasion, from place to place.

**Ver. 12.** *And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary,* etc.] The garments in which the priests, ministered in the sanctuary, which were laid up in proper places, and which they only wore when in service:

*and put [them] in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins;* all wrapped up in one bundle:

*and shall put [them] on a bar;* the same sort of carriage on which the candlestick and its vessels were borne, (see Gill on ~~Exo~~ Numbers 4:10”).

**Ver. 13.** *And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon.*] Having cleared the holy of holies, and the holy place, they were to come forth from thence into the court of the tabernacle, where stood the altar of burnt offering, which is here meant, and on which sacrifices being daily burnt, there were always ashes to be removed; and which at this time was highly necessary to be done, when the tabernacle was taken down, and all belonging to it to be carried away; and though no

mention is made of the fire, which was always burning on it, it was doubtless preserved, and care was taken for the carrying it along with the altar, or in a separate vessel from it. Bishop Patrick supposes it might be carried upon the grate.

**Ver. 14.** *And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof*, etc.] Upon the altar covered with a blue cloth; on that were to be put everything belonging to the altar:

*wherewith they minister about it*; the priests, when they offered sacrifice on it:

*[even] the censers, the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar*; of which (see <sup><27:3></sup>Exodus 27:3);

*and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins*: to prevent the rains falling upon them, which being all of brass, would be apt to tarnish:

*and put to the staves of it*; which were made to bear and carry it on such an occasion as this, (<sup><27:6,7></sup>Exodus 27:6,7). No mention is made of the laver, though there is both in the Septuagint and Samaritan versions, which add,

“and they shall take a purple cloth and cover the laver, and its base, and shall put it into a covering of skin of a blue colour, and put it upon bearers:”

but perhaps the reason why this is not mentioned is, because it was carried uncovered; the mystery of which, Ainsworth conjectures, was this, that it might be a lively representation of the grace of God in Christ, continuing and opened as an ever springing fountain, where always God's elect, having faith in him, may wash and purge themselves in the blood of Christ unto forgiveness of sin sanctification of the Spirit, and salvation; (see <sup><13:1></sup>Zechariah 13:1).

**Ver. 15.** *And when Aaron and his sons had made an end of covering the sanctuary*, etc.] Not the holy place, nor the most holy place, for these were not covered by them; but “the holy things” in them, as the Septuagint version, the ark, shewbread table, etc. and all “the vessels of the sanctuary”; all appertaining to those holy things, which are before mentioned. Jarchi interprets the “sanctuary”, or the “holiness”, of the ark and altar,

*and all the vessels of the sanctuary*; of the candlestick and the instruments of ministry:

*as the camp is to set forward*; which made the covering of them necessary, in order to their being carried as that moved:

*after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear [it]*; or rather them, all the holy things, and their vessels, and that upon their shoulders:

*but they shall not touch [any] holy thing*; even in bearing them, neither the ark nor any other, only the staves and bar, on which they were carried: lest they die; by the immediate hand of God:

*these [things are] the burden of the sons of Kohath, in the tabernacle of the congregation*; the above things, the ark, etc. which they were to bear on their shoulders, and not make use of wagons to carry them.

**Ver. 16.** *And to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, [pertaineth] the oil for the light*, etc.] The following things, to bear them, according to some Jewish writers; but rather it was to give the oil for the light, that is, the vessels, and so the vessels of the oil to the sons of the Kohathites; agreeably to which are the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, who paraphrase the words,

“and that which was delivered to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, the oil for the light, etc.”

And indeed the words, as they are in the Hebrew text, may be rendered,

“and the oversight of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, shall be, or “let it be”, the oil for the light, etc. <sup>f24</sup>,”

the same word being so rendered in a latter clause of this same text: he had the inspection of these, and on him lay to see to it, that these were carried by the Kohathites, the oil for the light of the lamps in the candlestick; of which (see <sup>(1271)</sup>Exodus 27:20);

*and the sweet incense*: to burn on the altar of incense, (<sup>(1338)</sup>Exodus 30:34-38);

*and the daily meat offering*; offered with the lambs morning and evening, (<sup>(1294)</sup>Exodus 29:40,44);

*and the anointing oil*; with which Aaron and his sons were anointed, the tabernacle and all its vessels, (<sup><HRD></sup>Exodus 30:23-33);

[*and*] *the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof*: the former, the oil for the light, etc. were his immediate oversight and care; but the oversight of these by his brother Ithamar, according to the Jewish writers.

**Ver. 17.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron*, etc.] And gave them a very solemn and awful charge about this affair of the Kohathites, it being a very hazardous one they were employed in:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 18.** *Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites.*] Or give no occasion, as the Targum of Jonathan; or be not the cause of their cutting off, as Jarchi, through negligence or inadvertency of theirs, in packing up the above things, and delivering them to them.

**Ver. 19.** *But thus do unto them*, etc.] As after directed:

*that they may live and not die*; live long, and not die a sudden and violent death:

*when they approach unto the most holy things*; the ark, the shewbread table, etc. to take them up and carry them:

*Aaron and his sons shall go in*; into the holy and most holy places:

*and appoint them in everyone to his service, and to his burden*; what everyone shall do, and how they shall take them up, and bear them.

**Ver. 20.** *But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered*, etc.] They were not to be present while they were packing up, lest they should see any of them with their eyes; they were not to go in until they were quite covered out of sight; which may signify the hiding of the mysteries of grace in those things under the former dispensation, when even the Levites themselves were not admitted to a sight of them; (see <sup><HRD></sup>Ephesians 3:4,5);

*lest they die*; by the immediate hand of God.

**Ver. 21.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Though Aaron is not mentioned here, he was concerned in taking the sum of the Gershonites, as well as of the Kohathites, as appears from (<sup><0044></sup>Numbers 4:41);

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 22.** *Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon*, etc.] As well as of the sons of Kohath; for though Gershon was Levi's eldest son, yet his posterity were not excused from the service of the tabernacle, and bearing things of it in journeying:

*throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families*; all in their several houses, and in the several families in those houses, that were of the age next mentioned, were to be numbered.

**Ver. 23.** *From thirty years old and upward, until fifty years old, shalt thou number them*, etc.] Take an account how many there are of that age, and so fit for service <sup>f25</sup>; (see Gill on "<sup><0048></sup>Numbers 4:3");

*to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation*; as the rest of the Levites; (see <sup><0048></sup>Numbers 4:3);

**Ver. 24.** *This [is] the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens.*] The former of these phrases Aben Ezra interprets of setting up the tabernacle, making the bread (the shewbread), slaying (the sacrifices), and keeping, that is, watching and guarding, the tabernacle; and the latter of what they did when journeying, bearing and carrying the things assigned to them, afterwards mentioned.

**Ver. 25.** *And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle*, etc.] The ten curtains of fine linen, (<sup><0241></sup>Exodus 26:1);

*and the tabernacle of the congregation*; the curtains of goats' hair made for a tent over it, as Jarchi, (see <sup><0247></sup>Exodus 26:7);

*his covering the covering of rams skins dyed red*, (<sup><0244></sup>Exodus 26:14);

*and the covering of the badgers' skins that [is] above upon it*; over all the rest:

*and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; the eastern vail, as Jarchi calls it, which was for the door of the tent that led into the tabernacle, the holy place, (<sup><0236></sup>Exodus 26:36).

**Ver. 26.** *And the hangings of the court*, etc.] Which made the great court that surrounded the tabernacle, (<sup>4270</sup>Exodus 27:9);

*and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court*; the eastern gate that led into the court, an hanging of twenty cubits, (<sup>4276</sup>Exodus 27:16);

*which [is] by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about*; that is, which hangings that formed the court, and were round about the tabernacle, and the altar of burnt offering; (see Gill on "<sup>4236</sup>Exodus 26:36");

*and their cords*; which fastened the hangings to pins or stakes fixed in the ground to keep them tight, that they might not be moved to and fro with the wind:

*and all the instruments of their service*; in the court, as the tables on which the sacrifices were laid, and the hooks, and cords, and pins, on which they were hung and fastened, as Aben Ezra; (see <sup>3419</sup>Ezekiel 40:39-43);

*and all that is made for them*; for the vessels of service, or for the tabernacle, or the altar, as the same writer intimates:

*so shall they serve*; by bearing them and carrying them.

**Ver. 27.** *At the appointment of Aaron and his sons*, etc.] As they shall order and direct:

*shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites*; everyone of them was to take their share, as Aaron and his sons should appoint them:

*in all their burdens, and in all their service*; what each of them should carry, and in what they should perform duty:

*and ye shall appoint to them in charge all their burdens*; charge them carefully to keep all that were committed to them to bear, that none be lost, not a pin nor a cord.

**Ver. 28.** *This [is] the service of the families of the sons of Gershon*, etc.] Which they should execute when the camp and tabernacle were in motion:

*in the tabernacle of the congregation in the court*; where they should take up their burdens, or which lie in things respecting the tabernacle; this was the part they were to be employed in, namely, in taking care of the hangings of the tabernacle, etc.

*and their charge [shall be] under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest;* the things committed to their care were delivered by him to them, and they were under his inspection and direction.

**Ver. 29.** *As for the sons of Merari,* etc.] The third and youngest son of Levi:

*thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers;* which is the form of expression used of them all; (see Gill on “<sup><001B></sup>Numbers 4:2”).

**Ver. 30.** *From thirty years old and upward,* etc.] The Septuagint version here, and in (<sup><001B></sup>Numbers 4:3,23), renders it, from twenty five years old and upward, agreeable to (<sup><0034></sup>Numbers 8:24), at the which age the Levites went into the tabernacle, to wait and to learn their business, but they did not enter upon it till thirty;

*even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them;* at which age they were discharged from business:

*everyone that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation;* (see Gill on “<sup><001B></sup>Numbers 4:3”).

**Ver. 31.** *And this [is] the charge of their burden,* etc.] What should be committed to their care and charge, and they should bear and carry:

*according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation;* which was assigned to them as their part, and which was very heavy and cumbersome, and therefore they had wagons allowed them, (<sup><001B></sup>Numbers 7:8);

*the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof;* all these belonged to the holy and to the most holy place; (see <sup><0265></sup>Exodus 26:15-37).

**Ver. 32.** *And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords,* etc.] These belonged to the court of the tabernacle; the pillars were what the hangings were hung upon, and the sockets, into which the pillars were set, and the and cords, with which the hangings were fastened; (see <sup><0270></sup>Exodus 27:9-19);

*with all their instruments, and with all their service;* whatever else were used in, and served for the support of this part of the tabernacle:



*and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden;* everything, even the least that were committed to their charge, and they were to bear and carry, either they themselves, or in wagons, were to be mentioned by name; and (not only every board, pillar, and socket, were to be told out to them, and particularly named, how many they were, to what they belonged, from whence they were taken, and where to be replaced; but every pin, and cord, and the use of them, that so when they came to set up the tabernacle again, there might be nothing wanting in its place to secure it, and make it as firm as at first: such particular notice and care does God take of all his people, and Christ of all committed to him, and so should ministers of the word of all that are their charge, who must one day give an account to God, (<sup><S1317></sup>Hebrews 13:17).

**Ver. 33.** *This [is] the service of the families of the sons of Merari,* etc.] The Mahlites and Mushites, namely, the service before observed, the particulars of which are given:

*according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation;* agreeably to what was allotted to them in that part of the tabernacle they were concerned in:

*under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest;* who had the oversight of these as well as of the Gershonites, as Eleazar had of the Kohathites; though as Eleazar was the chief of the tribe of Levi, it is thought that Ithamar acted under him, (<sup><O432></sup>Numbers 3:32).

**Ver. 34.** *And Moses and Aaron, and the chief of the congregation, numbered the sons of the Kohathites,* etc.] Perhaps these chiefs were the same with those who were concerned with Moses and Aaron in numbering all the tribes whose names were given, (<sup><O435></sup>Numbers 1:5-16); the Kohathites are begun with, according to the divine direction, and then the Gershonites and Merarites in their order; and in (<sup><O436></sup>Numbers 4:34-48) is only an account of the numbering of each of them, as ordered by the Lord, and this account is expressed in the same terms in them all; there remains nothing to be observed but the particular sums of each of them, the number of the Kohathites from thirty years old even to fifty, men able and fit for business, were 2750, (<sup><O436></sup>Numbers 4:36); whereas their number from a month old were 8600, (<sup><O438></sup>Numbers 3:28); so that not a third part of them were at an age for service: the number of the Gershonites were 2630, (<sup><O440></sup>Numbers 4:40); whose number of males in all were 7500, (<sup><O432></sup>Numbers 3:22); so that they were rather more than a third part who were able-

bodied then and fit for business; and the number of the Merarites were 3200, (<sup>-0044</sup>Numbers 4:44); and as the number of males of a month old and upwards were 6200, (<sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 3:34); there were more than half of them able and fit men for service; in which, as Ainsworth observes, may be seen the wisdom of divine Providence, that whereas the service of the Kohathites and Gershonites were the lightest, and what was committed to them the easiest of carriage, they had the fewer hands of able men to be employed, though their numbers of individuals were the greatest; and the Merarites, who had the smallest number of males, yet having the heaviest work to do in carrying burdens, loading and unloading wagons, were superior to the rest in their number of able bodied men; and thus God makes good his promise, that as the day of his people is, their strength shall be; whatever work and service God calls men to, he will fit them for it: the sum total of the Levites, in the several divisions of them, who were between: thirty and fifty years of age, in which they performed their office, was 8580, (<sup>-0048</sup>Numbers 4:48); a small number, as the above writer observes, of such as warred the spiritual warfare in the sanctuary of God, when the tribe of Judah afforded 74,600 for the outward warfare.

*after their families, and after the house of their fathers;* (see Gill on <sup>-0002</sup>Numbers 4:2”).

**Ver. 35.** *From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old,* etc.] (See Gill on <sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 36.** *And those that were numbered of them by their families,* etc.] (See Gill on <sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 37.** *These [were] they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites,* etc.] (See Gill on <sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 38.** *And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon,* etc.] (See Gill on <sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 39.** *From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old,* etc.] (See Gill on <sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 40.** *Even those that were numbered of them,* etc.] (see Gill on <sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 4:34”);

**Ver. 41.** *These [are] they that were numbered of the families,* etc.] (See Gill on <sup>-0034</sup>Numbers 4:34”);

**Ver. 42.** *And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0064</sup>Numbers 4:34”);

**Ver. 43.** *From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0064</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 44.** *Even those that were numbered of them after their families, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0064</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 45.** *These [be] those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, etc.]* (see Gill on “<sup>-0064</sup>Numbers 4:34”);

**Ver. 46.** *All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0064</sup>Numbers 3:34”).

**Ver. 47.** *From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0064</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 48.** *Even those that were numbered of them, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0064</sup>Numbers 4:34”).

**Ver. 49.** *According to the commandment of the Lord, they were numbered by the hand of Moses, etc.]* Aaron and the chief of the congregation of Israel assisting it:

*everyone according to his service*; called in (<sup>-0047</sup>Numbers 4:47) “the service of the ministry”, or “service of service”, which Jarchi interprets of that part of the service of the Levites, which lay in singing the song with cymbals and harps; which, he says, was a service to another service; though it seems to be better explained, by Chaskuni, of their taking down and setting up of the tabernacle, which was a service incumbent on all the Levites:

*and according to his burden*: called “the service of the burden”, (<sup>-0047</sup>Numbers 4:47); which the last mentioned writer restrains to the ark, table, candlestick, and altars, which the Kohathites carried on their shoulders; but may be extended to what each of them bore and carried when journeying:

*thus were they numbered of him, as the Lord commanded Moses*; from thirty years old to fifty, as Jarchi observes; for that was the order given to

Moses by the Lord, which he punctually attended to, as a faithful servant in the house of God.

# CHAPTER 5

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 5

This chapter contains a repetition of some former laws, concerning putting unclean persons out of the camp, (<sup><OF1></sup>Numbers 5:1-4); making restitution in case of trespass against another, (<sup><OF5></sup>Numbers 5:5-8); and of giving the offering of all holy things and all hallowed things to the priests, (<sup><OF9></sup>Numbers 5:9,10); and a new law concerning jealousy, in a man, of his wife, (<sup><OF11></sup>Numbers 5:11-14); when she was to be brought to the priest, and various rites and ceremonies to be used, (<sup><OF15></sup>Numbers 5:15-23); who was to give her bitter water as a trial of her chastity, which, if guilty, would have a strange effect upon her, and make her accursed, but if not, would not affect her, and she would be free and happy, (<sup><OF24></sup>Numbers 5:24-31).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Jarchi says, what follows was said on the day the tabernacle was erected, but it seems rather to have been delivered after the several camps were formed, and the people numbered, when those that were unclean were ordered to be cast out of them:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Command the children of Israel*, etc.] Not as from himself, but from the Lord; deliver out the following as a command of his, to which obedience was required of all the children of Israel:

*that they put out of the camp every leper*; there were three camps, Jarchi says, in the time of their encampment; between the curtains was the camp of the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty; the encampment of the Levites round about; and from thence to the end was the camp of the standards, to the four winds, which was the camp of Israel; and the leper was to be put out of them all; so Ben Gersom; (see <sup><OF34></sup>Leviticus 13:46);

*and everyone that hath an issue*; a gonorrhoea, man or woman, (see <sup><OF15></sup>Leviticus 15:2,19); according Jarchi, such an one might be in the camp of Israel, but was to be put out of the other two camps:

*and whosoever is defiled by the dead*; by attending the funerals of the dead, or touching them, (see <sup><R20></sup>Leviticus 21:1 22:4); such an one might go into the camp of the Levites, according to Jarchi and Ben Gersom; and was to be put of none but the camp of the Shechinah, or the tabernacle; but the camp of Israel seems to be meant of them all, out of which they were to be put, as an emblem of the rejection of all impure persons out of the church of God.

**Ver. 3.** *Both male and female shall ye put out*, etc.] Whether leprous, or profluvius, or defiled by touching a dead carcass: by this law, Miriam, when leprous, was put out of the camp, (<sup><H214></sup>Numbers 12:14,15);

*without the camp shall ye put them*; which is repeated that it might be taken notice of, and punctually observed:

*that they defile not their camps*; of which there were four, the camps of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan:

*in the midst whereof I dwell*; for the tabernacle, which was the dwelling place of the Lord, was in the midst of the camps of Israel; they were pitched on the four quarters of it; and this is a reason why impure persons were not suffered to be in the camp of Israel, because of the presence of God in the tabernacle so near them, to whom all, impurity is loathsome, and not to be permitted in his sight; and though this was ceremonial, it was typical of the uncleanness of sin, which is abominable to him, and renders persons unfit for communion with him, and with his people.

**Ver. 4.** *And the children of Israel did so, and put them without the camp*, etc.] Aben Ezra observes, that this was done immediately before they journeyed, and that those that were defiled journeyed between the standard of Ephraim and the standard of Dan; but this, he says, was by way of conjecture, since it is not expressed:

*as the Lord spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel*; they were obedient in this particular.

**Ver. 5.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Or continued to speak to him at the same time:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 6.** *Speak unto the children of Israel*, etc.] Put them in mind of the following law, that they observe it; and which is here repeated, because of

two new things in it, as Jarchi observes, the one relates to confession, teaching that there is no fifth part nor trespass offering by witnesses, till a man confesses the thing; and the other is, concerning taking anything away by violence from a proselyte, which is to be given to the priests; see the original law in (<sup><RB></sup>Leviticus 6:1-7);

*when a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit*; or, “any of the sins of men” <sup>f26</sup>, which are commonly done by men, and men are subject to through the infirmity of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan; or “any sin against man” <sup>f27</sup>, so some, as this referred to is expressly said to be, (<sup><RB></sup>Numbers 5:7);

*to do a trespass against the Lord*; for every sin against man is also against the Lord, being a breach of his command; as David’s sin against Uriah was a sin against the Lord, (<sup><RB></sup>Psalm 51:4); though the Jews understand it particularly of lying and swearing falsely, appealing to God, and calling him to be a witness to a falsehood; and so the Targum of Onkelos seems to interpret it:

*and the person be guilty*; and knows he is so, and even knew it when he took an oath to the contrary; (see <sup><RB></sup>Leviticus 6:3,4).

**Ver. 7.** *Then they shall confess their sin which they have done*, etc.] The form of which confession, according to Fagius, was, O Lord, I am guilty of death, I have deserved to be stoned for this sin, or to be strangled for this trespass, or to be burnt for this crime, etc.

*and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth [part] thereof*; paying the whole of whatsoever he had in any manner defrauded his neighbour of, to which he was to add a fifth part of that; that is, as Aben Ezra interprets it, it he confesses of himself, but if there are witnesses of it he must add two fifths, and some say a fifth of a fifth:

*and give [it] unto [him] against whom he hath trespassed*; as a satisfaction for the injury done him.

**Ver. 8.** *But if a man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass to*, etc.] This supposes that if a man should die, against whom the trespass is, before the restitution is made, then it shall be made to his heirs; and if he has none, then it was to be given to the priest, as after directed: the Jews <sup>f28</sup> generally understand this of a proselyte, that has no heirs, for they say, there is no

Israelite but has kinsmen, a brother or a son, or some one or other near of kin to him, of his father's family, even up to Jacob:

*let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, [even] to the priest;* that is, let the principal, with the fifth part, which is the recompence for the trespass committed, be given to the priest of the Lord, which is the same as if it was given to him, he being his minister:

*beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him;* which, in this case, was ordered to be offered for the expiation, of the trespass, (see <sup><RB6></sup>Leviticus 6:6,7); the Jewish canon is,

“he that takes away anything by force from a proselyte, and swears to him, and he (the proselyte) dies, lo, he shall pay the principal and the fifth to the priests, and the trespass offering to the altar, as it is said, “if a man has no kinsman”, etc. when he brings the money and the trespass offering, and he is dead, the money shall be given to his sons, but the trespass offering (the ram) shall feed until it contracts some blemish, and then it shall be sold, and the price of it shall fall to the freewill offerings <sup>f29</sup>.”

**Ver. 9.** *And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel,* etc.] Of the holy sacrifices brought by them to be offered up; that part of them which is elevated, heaved, or waved, as the heave shoulder and wave breast:

*which they bring unto the priest, shall be his;* what they bring to him to offer for them shall be his who performs the service, even that part of them which is his due.

**Ver. 10.** *And every man's hallowed things shall be his,* etc.] Which he, by a vow or freewill offering, separates to holy uses; these are at his own dispose, to give to what priest he will, or they are the priest's; for what a man devotes to the Lord is to be given to them, or such things as God has hallowed, sanctified, and set apart for sacred uses, as the firstfruits and tithes, they were the priests'; the Jewish writers <sup>f30</sup> restrain it to tithes:

*whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his;* his personally, who officiates, or to whom the gift is given, and is not to be divided among the other priests in the course.



**Ver. 11.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] At the same time, and delivered to him a new law:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 12.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,* etc.] It being an affair which concerned them:

*if any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him;* the sin of adultery, which is a going aside out of the way of virtue and chastity, and a trespass against an husband, a breach of the marriage covenant with him, a defiling his bed, doing an injury and dishonour to him, bringing confusion into his family, and a spurious offspring to possess his substance: though this is to be understood, not of certain adultery, of which there is plain and full proof, for then there would be no occasion of such a trial, as is afterwards directed to; besides, her husband, in such a case, might put her away, and even, according to the law, she was to be put to death, (~~REMO~~ Leviticus 20:10); but of her having committed it in the opinion of her husband, he having some ground of suspicion, though he could not be certain of it; and therefore, by this law, was allowed to make trial, that he might find it out, it at present only a suspected case, and a doubtful one; and the Jews<sup>f31</sup> say,

“they never gave the waters drink but in a doubtful case:”

and so this may interpreted of her declining and departing from her husband's house, not keeping at home to mind the affairs of her family, but gadding abroad, and keeping company with another man, or other men; and that after she had been warned and charged by her husband to the contrary, and so had disobeyed him, and acted contrary to his will; and in that sense had committed a trespass, and so had given him suspicion of her unchastity, for which he might have some reason; if, as it is said in the Misnah<sup>f32</sup>, he gave her an admonition before two witnesses, saying, have no talk with such a man, and yet she talks with him; or, as the commentators add<sup>f33</sup>, be not secretly or in private with such an one, and yet goes into a private place with him, and stays so long with him that she may be defiled; this with them rendered her suspected.

**Ver. 13.** *And a man lie with her carnally,* etc.] That is, is suspected that he has so done, not that it is a clear case, for it follows;

*and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close*; so that it is not known by her husband, nor by any other; “she hath hid herself”, so Ainsworth, being in a private place with another man, though warned to the contrary by her husband:

*and she be defiled, and [there be] no witness against her*; of her being defiled, though there may be of her being in private with such a man:

*neither she be taken [with the manner]*; or in the act of uncleanness.

**Ver. 14.** *And the spirit of jealousy come upon him*, etc.] A thought rises up in his mind, a strong suspicion works in him, which he cannot resist and throw off, but it remains with him, and makes him very uneasy, that his wife has defiled his bed, as it follows:

*and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled*; that his wife is defiled by a man; and which is the real case, as it afterwards appears, though at present he is not certain, only has a suspicion of it:

*or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled*; it is mere jealousy and suspicion, without any foundation for it; and his wife proved a chaste and virtuous woman; yet be it which it would, he being jealous, the following law was to take place, and the following rules to be observed.

**Ver. 15.** *Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest*, etc.] Not to the high priest but to a common priest, anyone then officiating in his course; for there was a jealousy offering to be offered up before the Lord upon the altar, which none but a priest might do; and besides, the whole process in this affair was to be carried, on by him: according to the Misnah<sup>f34</sup>, the man brought his wife first to the sanhedrim, or court of judicature in the place where he lived; before whom, as Maimonides<sup>f35</sup> says, he proved by witnesses that he had warned his wife of being in private with such a man, and yet she had done it again; and whereas she insisted on her chastity, he desired that the bitter waters might be given her, that the truth might appear; and then they sent him with two disciples of the wise men, to the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem, where the trial was made; who, in order to bring her too confession, endeavoured to terrify her, as they do persons in capital cases, and finding this wilt not do, then they used smooth words, saying, my daughter, perhaps much wine was the occasion of it, or much laughter, etc.

*and he shall bring her offering for her*: not the priest, but her husband, and that whether he is willing or not, as Aben Ezra; who also observes, that it may be interpreted, with her, or for her sake, not to make any expiation for any fault of his, that when he first observed her immodesty, did not reprove her; for the offering, though brought by him, was not his, but his wife's, and not to expiate her sin, but to bring it to remembrance, as is after expressed:

*the tenth [part] of an ephah of barley meal*; which was an omer, (<sup><Q166></sup>Exodus 16:36), the quantity of manna for one man every day, (<sup><Q166></sup>Exodus 16:16), and the quantity of flour in the daily meat offering, (<sup><Q240></sup>Exodus 29:40); only that was of fine wheaten flour; this of barley, the food of beasts, as the Targum of Jonathan remarks; and R. Gamaliel in the Misnah <sup>f36</sup> says, that as her deed was the deed of a beast, so her offering was the food of a beast; and this is observed by Jarchi and Aben Ezra on the text, as the reason of barley being used in this offering: some say it was a symbol of her impudence, others of her being little at home, as the barley is not long under ground <sup>f37</sup>; the true reason, it may be, was for her humiliation, being vile, and mean, hence it follows:

*he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon*; as used to be oft meat offerings, denoting their acceptableness to God, (<sup><R11></sup>Leviticus 2:1); the reason seems to be, because these were tokens of joy and gladness, whereas this was a mournful affair to the husband, that he should have any cause of suspicion and jealousy, to the wife that she should be suspected, and to the whole family on that account:

*for it [is] an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance*; if guilty of it, and therefore oil and frankincense were forbidden in this kind of offering as in a sin offering, (<sup><R51></sup>Leviticus 5:11).

**Ver. 16.** *And the priest shall bring her near*, etc.] Or “offer it”, as the Vulgate Latin version, that is, the offering of jealousy:

*and set her before the Lord*; or “it”, the offering; for which the Tigurine version is more express,

“let the priest offer that sacrifice, and set that before the Lord,”

for the setting of the woman before the Lord is spoken of in (<sup><Q518></sup>Numbers 5:18).

**Ver. 17.** *And the priest shall take holy water*, etc.] Out of the laver, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra:

*in an earthen vessel*; which held half a log, and that was but a quarter of a pint, or three egg shells; for no more was assigned, to a suspected woman, according to the Misnah<sup>f38</sup>. Some say only a fourth part: an earthen vessel was made use of, as everything vile and mean was in this affair:

*and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put [it] into the water*; first the water was put in, and then the dust, as Ben Gersom observes: there was a place a cubit square, where was a marble table, and a ring fixed in it, and when he lifted it up he took dust from under it, and put it so as it might be upon the top of the water<sup>f39</sup>; which was used, either, as the Targum of Jonathan suggests, because the end of all flesh is to come to dust, and so to put her in mind of her original and her end; and in like manner the earthen vessel might signify, that she would be broke to pieces as that vessel; as also it might direct her thoughts to the tempter, by the influence of whose temptation she had been drawn into this sin, dust being the serpent's food; and this being taken off the floor of the tabernacle, might add to the veneration of it, and make it more solemn and awful to drink of it.

**Ver. 18.** *And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord*, etc.] In the east of the tabernacle, with her face to the west, where was the holy of holies, so Ben Gersom; but not immediately for they had her from place to place, as Jarchi says, till she was weary, and her mind disturbed, that she might confess; and if she said, I am defiled, she rent the writing of her dowry, and went out; but if she said, I am pure, they brought her to the eastern gate, the gate of Nicanor, for there they made women suspected of adultery to drink the waters<sup>f40</sup>:

*and uncover the woman's head*; as a token of her immodesty and non-subjection to her husband, and that she might be seen by all, to cause shame in her: according to the Misnah<sup>f41</sup>, the priest took off her clothes, and loosed her hair--if she was clothed with white garments, he clothed her with black; if she had on her ornaments of gold, chains, earrings, or rings, he took them away from her, that she might be unseemly, and whoever would might come and look at her:

*and put the offering of memorial into her hands, which [is] the jealousy offering*; to weary her, as Jarchi says, that if perhaps her mind was

disturbed she would confess; and so in the Misnah<sup>f42</sup> it is said, that her husband put this offering into her hands to weary her; but the true reason here seems to be, that it might appear to be her own offering:

*and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse*; not that the water was bitter of itself, for it was the water out of the laver, and had nothing in it but the dust of the floor of the tabernacle; though some think some bitter thing was put into it, so Ben Gersom, as wormwood; but it is so called from the effects of it on those that were guilty; it produced sad effects in them, bitter and distressing, and made them appear to be accursed ones, for it was not bitter till it entered, (~~OR~~ Numbers 5:24); whereas it was not so to the innocent, nor attended with any such consequence to them; so that there was nothing in the water itself, but its efficacy was divine and supernatural.

**Ver. 19.** *And the priest shall charge her by an oath*, etc.] Or give her her oath:

*and say unto the woman, if no man hath lain with thee*: besides her husband:

*and thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness [with another] instead of thy husband*; which is but another phrase expressive of the same thing, the sin of adultery:

*be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse*; if this is the case, it shall produce no bitter effects, or bring any curse upon thee.

**Ver. 20.** *But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband*, etc.] Gone aside from the paths of modesty and chastity, and betook herself to another man's bed instead of her husband's:

*and if thou be defiled*, by committing adultery:

*and some man hath lain with thee beside thy husband*; these phrases are all synonymous, and a heap of words are made use of to express the sin, and that there might be no evasion of it, and that it might be clear what was intended, this being said on oath.

**Ver. 21.** *Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing*, etc.] An oath which has a curse annexed to it, if taken falsely, which was to be pronounced upon the woman if guilty:

*and the priest shall say unto the woman*; pronouncing the imprecation or curse upon her, she having taken the oath, should she be guilty of the crime suspected of, and she had sworn concerning:

*the Lord make thee a curse, and an oath among the people*; accursed according to the oath taken; or let this be the form of an oath and imprecation used by the people, saying, if I have done so and so, let me be accursed as such a woman, or let not that happen to me, as did to such a woman, so Jarchi:

*when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell*; upon drinking the bitter waters; but though these things followed upon that, yet not as the natural cause of them, for they are ascribed to the Lord, and to a supernatural and miraculous power of his, which went along with the drinking of them.

**Ver. 22.** *And this water that causeth the curse*, etc.] Upon the drinking of which the curse follows, if guilty:

*shall go into thy bowels*; and there operate and produce the above effects, which are repeated again to inject terror:

*to make [thy] belly to swell, and [thy] thigh to rot*; here ends the form of the oath, which begins (<sup>(4159)</sup>Numbers 5:19);

*and the woman shall say, amen, amen*; so be it; let it be as pronounced, if I am guilty; which, as Aben Ezra observes, is repeated for the sake of confirmation; though the Jewish writers commonly understand it as respecting various things, the oath and the curse, the thing charged with, and the persons suspected of <sup>f43</sup>.

**Ver. 23.** *And the priest shall write these curses in a book*, etc.] The above curses imprecated on herself by an oath; the words and the letters of them were written at length, in a scroll of parchment; and, as some say also, her name, but not her double amen to them <sup>f44</sup>:

*and he shall blot [them] out with the bitter water*: wash them out with it, and into it, or scrape them off of the parchment into it.

**Ver. 24.** *And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse*, etc.]. Having the curse imprecated upon herself, if guilty, scraped into it; and this she was obliged to drink, whether she would or not; so it is said, if the roll is blotted out, and she says I am

defiled, the water is poured out, and her offering is scattered in the place of ashes; if the roll is blotted out, and she says I will not drink, then force her, and make her drink whether she will or no <sup>f45</sup>:

*and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, [and become] bitter*; produce the sad and bitter effects mentioned.

**Ver. 25.** *Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand*, etc.] Which she was obliged to hold in her hand while the above rites and ceremonies were performed; which was very heavy, being an omer of barley flour, a measure about three quarts, which was put into an Egyptian basket made of small palm tree twigs: and this was put into her hands to weary her, as before observed, that, having her mind distressed, she might the sooner confess her crime:

*and shall wave the offering before the Lord*: backwards and forwards, upwards and downwards, as Jarchi; who also observes, that the woman waved with him, for her hand was above the hand of the priest so the tradition is,

“he (her husband) took her offering out of the Egyptian basket, and put it into a ministering vessel, and gave it into her hand, and the priest put his hand under hers, and waved it <sup>f46</sup>.”

*and offer it upon the altar*: this was the bringing of it to the southwest corner of the altar, as Jarchi says, before he took a handful out of it, as in other meat offerings.

**Ver. 26.** *And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, [even] the memorial thereof*, etc.] For good or evil, according as her works were, as Aben Ezra observes; a memorial for good, if innocent, and a memorial for evil, if guilty:

*and burn [it] upon the altar*; as the handful of other meat offerings used to be, (~~CRUDE~~ Leviticus 1:2);

*and afterwards shall cause the woman to drink the water*; oblige her to it; having proceeded thus far, and no confession made, namely, an oath taken, the curses of it written in a scroll and scraped into the waters, and the jealousy offering waved and offered.

**Ver. 27.** *And when he hath made her to drink the water*, etc.] For, as before observed, and here by Jarchi again, if she says I will not drink it,

after the roll is blotted out, they oblige her, and make her drink it whether she will or not, unless she says I am defiled:

*then it shall come to pass, [that] if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband;* or has committed adultery:

*that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, [and become] bitter;* the water drank by her, and having the curses scraped into it, shall enter into her, and operate and produce bitter and dreadful effects:

*and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot;* not through any natural virtue in the water, or what is put into it, either the dust of the floor of the tabernacle, or the scrapings of the parchment roll, these could have no physical influence to produce such effects; but they must be ascribed to a supernatural cause, the power and curse of God attending this draught. A certain Jewish writer<sup>f47</sup> says, though very falsely, that the priest put poison into the water, which produced such effects; but then, how could an innocent woman escape the effects of it? that must be allowed to be miraculous and supernatural, was it so; but there is no manner of reason to believe that anything of this kind was put into it, The Jews say<sup>f48</sup>, as soon, or before she had made an end of drinking: the water, the effects appeared; her face turned pale immediately, her eyes bolted out, and she was filled with veins, her body swelled, and they called out, Cast her out, cast her out, that she may not defile the court. And the text seems to intimate, as if the operation was immediate; yea, moreover, they say<sup>f49</sup>, that as the waters searched her, so they searched him (the adulterer), because it is said twice, “shall enter, shall enter”; and that the same effects appeared in him as in her, but in neither, unless the husband was innocent; for if he was not pure from the same sin himself, the waters would not search his wife<sup>f50</sup> hence they say<sup>f51</sup>, when adulterers increased (under the second temple) the bitter waters ceased, according to (~~3044~~Hosea 4:14); (see ~~4029~~Matthew 12:39). This practice has been imitated by the Heathens; the river Rhine, according to Julian the emperor<sup>f52</sup>, tried the legitimacy of children; and so lakes have been used for the trial of perjury and unchastity, as the Stygian lake for perjury, and another of the same name near Ephesus for unchastity; into which, if persons suspected of adultery descended, having the form of an oath hanging about their necks, if they were pure, the waters stood unmoved, but if corrupt, they swelled up to their necks, and covered the tablet on which the oath was written<sup>f53</sup>. The priestesses of a certain deity being obliged to live a single life, were tried by drinking bullocks’ blood,



upon which, if false to their oath and corrupt, they immediately died, as Pausanias<sup>f54</sup> relates; and Macrobius<sup>f55</sup> speaks of some lakes in Sicily, the inhabitants called the Cups, to which recourse was had when persons were suspected of any ill, and where an oath was taken of them; if the person swore truly, he departed unhurt, but if falsely, he immediately lost his life in the lake. Philostratus<sup>f56</sup> relates of a water near Tyana, a city in Cappadocia, sacred to Jupiter, which the inhabitants call Asbamaea, which to those that kept their oaths was placid and sweet, but to perjured persons the reverse; it affected their eyes, hands, and feet, and seized them with dropsies and consumptions; nor could they depart from the water, but remained by it, mourning their sad case, and confessing their perjury: but what comes nearest to this usage of the Jews is a custom at marriages among the savages at Cape Breton<sup>f57</sup>: at a marriage feast, two dishes of meat are brought to the bridegroom and bride in two “ouragans” (basins made of the bark of a tree), and the president of the feast addresses himself to the bride thus,

“and thou that art upon the point of entering into a respectable state, know, that the nourishment thou art going to take forebodes the greatest calamities to thee, if thy heart is capable of harbouring any ill design against thy husband, or against thy nation: shouldst thou ever be led astray by the caresses of a stranger; or shouldst thou betray thy husband, and thy country, the victuals contained in this “ouragan” will have the effects of a slow poison, with which thou wilt be tainted from this very instant; but if, on the other hand, thou remainest faithful to thy husband, and to thy country, if thou wilt never insult the one for his defect, nor give a description of the other to the enemy, thou wilt find this nourishment both agreeable and wholesome.”

Now if these relations can be credited, then much more this of the bitter waters, for though there was something wonderful and supernatural in them, yet nothing incredible:

*and the woman shall be a curse among her people*: the time she lives; but then all this while she was looked upon as an accursed person, and despised and shunned by all.

**Ver. 28.** *And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean*, etc.] If she is not guilty of adultery, but pure from that sin:

*then she shall be free*; from the effects of the bitter water; they shall have no such influence upon her, but she shall be as soured and healthful as ever; nay, the Jewish writers say more so, that if she had any sickness or disease upon her she would now be freed from it <sup>f58</sup>; the Targum of Jonathan has it, her splendour shall shine, the brightness and beauty of her countenance:

*and shall conceive seed*; a man child, as the same Targum; and the Jewish writers say, if she was barren before, now she would be fruitful; but no more is meant by it than that her husband should receive her gladly, and she should live comfortably with him hereafter, and the blessing of God would be upon her, which would still be a confirmation of her chastity.

**Ver. 29.** *This [is] the law of jealousies*, etc.] Which was appointed by God to deter wives from adultery, and preserve the people of Israel, the worshippers of him, from having a spurious brood among them; and to keep husbands from being cruel to their wives they might be jealous of, and to protect virtue and innocence, and to detect lewdness committed in the most secret manner; whereby God gave proof of his omniscience, that he had knowledge of the most private acts of uncleanness, and was the avenger of all such. The reasons why such a law was not made equally in favour of women, as of men, are supposed to be these: because of the greater authority of the man over the woman, which would seem to be lessened, if such a power was granted her; because marriage was not so much hurt, or so much damage came to families by the adultery of men, as of women; because women are more apt to be suspicious than men, and in those times more prone to adultery, through their eager desire of children, that they might not lie under reproach <sup>f59</sup>:

*when a wife goeth aside [to another] instead of her husband, and is defiled*; is suspected of going aside to another man, and is supposed to be defiled by him.

**Ver. 30.** *Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife*, etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>40154</sup>Numbers 5:14”);

*and shall set the woman before the Lord*; has carried the matter so far as to bring his wife to the priest or civil magistrate, and declare his suspicion, and the ground of it:

*and the priest shall execute upon her all this law*; he shall proceed according to the law, and perform every rite and ceremony required; nor could any stop be put to it, unless the woman owned she was defiled.

**Ver. 31.** *Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity*, etc.] Which otherwise he would not, by conniving at her loose way of living, and not reproving her for it, and bringing her either to repentance or punishment; and retaining and encouraging jealousy in his mind, without declaring it, and his reasons for it: the sense of the passage seems to be, that when a man had any ground for his suspicion and jealousy, and he proceeded according as this law directs, whether his wife was guilty or not guilty, no sin was chargeable on him, or blame to be laid to him, or punishment inflicted on him:

*and the woman shall bear her iniquity*; the punishment of it, through the effects of the bitter waters upon her, if guilty; nor was her husband chargeable with her death, she justly brought it on herself: or if not guilty, yet as she had by some unbecoming behaviour raised such a suspicion in him, nor would she be reclaimed, though warned to the contrary, she for it justly bore the infamy of such a process; which was such, as Maimonides says<sup>f60</sup>, that innocent women would give all that they had to escape it, and reckoned death itself more agreeable than that, as to be served as such a woman was; (see Gill on “~~4158~~Numbers 5:18”).

# CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 6

In this chapter is given the law concerning Nazarites, (<sup><0401></sup>Numbers 6:1,2); which directs what they were to abstain from, from drinking wine, or any strong liquors, from shaving their heads, and defiling themselves with the dead, (<sup><0402></sup>Numbers 6:3-8); and in case of a defilement, directions are given what offerings a Nazarite should bring to be offered for him, (<sup><0403></sup>Numbers 6:9-12); and when the time of his Nazariteship was up, an account is given of what rites and ceremonies should then be performed, (<sup><0404></sup>Numbers 6:13-21); and the chapter is concluded with the form of blessing the children of Israel, to be used by Aaron and his sons, (<sup><0405></sup>Numbers 6:22-27).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] At the same time, or immediately after the law concerning the woman suspected of adultery was given; with which the following law concerning Nazarites may be thought to have a close connection, as some Jewish writers observe, women being concerned in it as well as men; and as wine leads to adultery, as Jarchi observes, abstinence from it, which the Nazarite's vow obliged to, and forbearance of trimming and dressing the hair, and a being more strictly and closely devoted to the service of God, were very likely means of preserving from unchastity, and any suspicion of it:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] Whom the following law only concerned, and not Gentiles; so runs the Jewish canon,

“the Gentiles have no Nazariteship, though they may bring their vows and freewill offerings as an Israelite, yet if they vow the vow of a Nazarite, the law of the Nazarite is not obliging on them, or they bound by it; but it is free for them to drink wine, and defile themselves for the dead; for it is written, “speak unto the children of Israel”<sup>f61</sup>.”

*when either man or woman shall separate [themselves] to vow a vow of a Nazarite*; or “do a wonderful thing”<sup>f62</sup>; something unusual and uncommon, and what is out of the way of the men of the world, who give themselves up to pleasure, and have little regard to the worship and service of God; wherefore for a person, a man or woman, to vow abstinence from wine and dress, and from the company of others, and to oblige themselves to strict and close devotion to God, was something singular and surprising. This is to be understood of such persons who were at their own disposal; for such that were in their minority, and under the power of parents, or were married women, if they vowed, their vows did not stand, and their parents or husbands could disannul them, unless they had consented to them by their silence, when they heard them made, (<sup><001B></sup>Numbers 30:3-14). There were various sorts of Nazarites; some were appointed by God, as Samson; some were devoted by their parents, as Samuel; and some by themselves, concerning whom is this law more especially; some were perpetual Nazarites, a Nazarite for life, as the two persons just mentioned; though the Jews distinguish between a Samsonian Nazarite, and a perpetual one<sup>f63</sup>; and some were only for a certain time, according as they vowed:

*to separate [themselves] unto the Lord*; the Targum of Jonathan is, “to the name of the Lord”; to the honour of his name. Such persons devoted themselves, and set apart their time to serve the Lord in a stricter and purer manner than others, and therefore were had in great account, (<sup><001B></sup>Lamentations 4:7 <sup><001B></sup>Amos 2:11); they were types of Christ, who, though he was not strictly a Nazarite, but a Nazarene, yet answered to the Nazarites in his being set apart in divine predestination by his Father to the office of Mediator; in the sanctification of himself, and devoting himself, his time and service, to his Father’s glory; and in his being holy and harmless in his life and conversation, and separate from sinners: and they were also emblems of the special people of God, who are a separate people in election, redemption, and calling, and in the intercession of Christ; and as they will be at the last judgment, and to all eternity, and should be now separate from others in their lives and conversations.

**Ver. 3.** *He shall separate [himself] from wine*, etc.] Old or new, as Ben Gersom; from drinking it, any of it: not only from an immoderate and excessive drinking of it, which every man should abstain from, but from drinking of it at all, that he might be more free and fit for the service of God; for prayer, meditation, reading the Scriptures, and attendance on the worship of God in all its branches, and be less liable to temptations to sin;

for, as Aben Ezra observes, many transgressions are occasioned by wine, which, if drunk immoderately, intoxicates the mind, and unfits for religious duties, excites lust, and leads on to many vices:

*and strong drink*; any other intoxicating and inebriating liquor besides wine, or any other sort of wines besides such that is made of the fruit of the vine, as wines of pomegranates, dates, etc. or such as are made of barley, as our ale, or of apples and pears, called cider and perry, respectively:

*and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink*; all the three Targums paraphrase it, vinegar of new wine, and vinegar of old wine, these operating in like manner as wine and strong drink themselves:

*neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes*; any liquor in which grapes are macerated, as the Targum of Jonathan; or water into which they are squeezed, or which is made of the lees of wine, or is a second sort of wine made of the grapes after they have been pressed, which we call "tiff":

*nor eat moist grapes or dried*; which have somewhat of the nature and taste of wine, and produce some of the like effects, and may lead to a desire after drinking it; wherefore this, as other things mentioned, are, as Aben Ezra says, a kind of an hedge, to keep at a distance from drinking wine.

**Ver. 4.** *All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree*, etc.] Of its leaves, branches, and fruit, especially the latter, put into any sort of food, or infused into any liquor, or mixed with any sauce for food: the days or time of separation were according as the vow was made, for a shorter or longer time; though the Jews <sup>f64</sup> say, where the vow is, absolutely expressed, it is always to be understood of thirty days, during which time the Nazarite was not to eat or drink of any composition that had anything the vine in it:

*from the kernels even to the husk*; the Jews <sup>f65</sup> are divided about the two words here used, which of them signifies the outermost part of the grape, and which the innermost; Ben Gersom agrees with us, but it matters not much who are in the right, since both are forbidden: by this part of the law, the people of God, who are spiritual Nazarites, are taught to live temperately and soberly, and to abstain from all appearance of sin: it is pretty remarkable what the Jews <sup>f66</sup> say, that when the son of David comes, it will be free for a Nazarite to drink wine on sabbath days and festivals,

though not on week days; from whence it appears, they seem to be conscious of a change of the ceremonial law in his days.

**Ver. 5.** *All the days of the vow of his separation*, etc.] Be the time he has vowed to be a Nazarite a week, a month, or more, even a thousand days, but not less than thirty, as Ben Gersom observes:

*there shall no razor come upon his head*; he might not shave his beard, nor cut off his locks, and shave his head, nor cut short his locks with a pair of scissors, nor any with anything by which the hair may be removed, as Ben Gersom; nor pluck off his hair with his hands, as Maimonides says<sup>f67</sup>; but let it grow as long as it would during the time of his separation, which is expressed in the latter part of the verse:

*until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth [himself] unto the Lord*; to his service, to which he wholly addicted himself as long as his vow continued:

*he shall be holy*; separate from other men, and their practices and customs, and spend his time in holy exercises, in a religious way, and abstain from what might be a temptation to sin, or in the least hinder him in his acts of devotion:

*[and] shall let the locks of his hair grow*; two reasons Fagius gives of this part of the law, the one is, because of the mystery of it; letting the hair grow signified an increase of virtue or grace, as Samson's strength was increased and became very great while his hair was not cut; and so spiritual Nazarites, while they are in the way of their duty, grow in grace, and in knowledge of God and Christ, and all divine things, and grow stronger and stronger in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and Ainsworth hints at the same thing, and also supposes it might be an emblem of the subjection of the saints to Christ, as the letting the hair grow was a sign of the woman's subjection to man: the other is, that it was appointed to take the Israelites off of the errors and superstitious they had imbibed in Egypt, by ordering them to perform those rites and ceremonies to the honour of the true God, which they had used in the service of demons; and for this he cites a passage out of Cyrill; but it does not appear, by any good authority, that such a custom obtained among the Egyptians, or any other Gentiles so early; and what were used among them in later times took their rise from hence, and were imitations of this law; though there seems to be no great likeness between this law of Nazariteship and the customs of the Heathens,

who used to consecrate their hair to their deities, Apollo, Hercules, Bacchus, Minerva, and Diana: what seems best to agree is what Lucian says<sup>f68</sup>, who observes, that young men consecrate their beards, and let their hair grow, consecrated from their birth, which they afterwards cut and lay up in vessels in the temple, some of gold, others of silver.

**Ver. 6.** *All the days that he separateth [himself] unto the Lord*, etc.] This phrase is repeated at every new article and branch of the law of the Nazarites, of which what follows is the third; showing that each part of it, during that time, was strictly to be observed:

*he shall come at no dead body*: not near to any, not even to be in the same place where a dead body lay, nor to touch one, nor to attend the funeral of any, nor be concerned at all about burying the dead; now, as such so defiled were unclean seven days, and during that time might not go into the tabernacle, the Nazarites were strictly cautioned against such pollution, that they might not be detained from the service of God they had devoted themselves unto; (see <sup><0911></sup>Numbers 19:11,14,16).

**Ver. 7.** *He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die*, etc.] Aben Ezra adds also, for his wife, and for his daughter, and for others; what even the priests of the Lord, the common priests might do, a Nazarite might not, not come near any of his relations when dead, as to touch them, to close their eyes, or wash their bodies, and provide for their funeral, and attend that, or to be where they were; in this respect they were upon a level with the high priest, who was forbid the same, which shows how sacred these persons were; (see <sup><0201></sup>Leviticus 21:1-3,11); this may instruct spiritual Nazarites to abstain from the company and conversation of sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, and from all dead works and sinful actions, which, as they are deserving of death, are defiling:

*because the consecration of his God [is] upon his head*; or that which shows him to be consecrated to God, and separated to his service, is upon his head, namely, his long hair: the Targum of Jonathan renders it, “the crown of his God”; so Aben Ezra observes, that some say that the word “Nazarite” is derived from “Nezer”, a crown, in proof of which this passage is produced; and in this respect the Nazarites were not only types of Christ our King and high priest, who is a priest on his throne, and has on his head many crowns, but of the saints who are freed from the power and dominion of sin, and are made kings and priests unto God.



**Ver. 8.** *All the days of his separation he [is] holy unto the Lord.*] Set apart for his service, separate from all others, especially the dead, and under obligation to abstain from the above things; from drinking wine, from shaving his hair, and from defiling himself for the dead, and to be employed in holy and religious exercises during the time his vow is upon him.

**Ver. 9.** *And if any man die very suddenly by him,* etc.] In the place where he is, whether house or field, a public or private place, in the tent where he is, as Jarchi; there are two words we render, “very suddenly”, which many take to be synonymous; and that being of the same signification, two being used increase the sense, but others think they have a different meaning: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render them,

“suddenly through ignorance,”

understanding it of a chance matter, as when one man is killed by another, not wilfully and through malice, but without intention and design: Jarchi interprets the first of them by violence, and the latter through error or mistake, and so may include both cases; as when a man dies at once, through the force of a disease seizing him, or he is killed by the violent hands of a man, who stabs him in the presence of a Nazarite; or else when this is done ignorantly and through mistake; be it which way it will, if a Nazarite was present:

*and he both defiled the head of his consecration:* or the consecration of his head, his Nazariteship, that is, his hair, he being polluted by the dead, through being where it was:

*then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing;* which was the seventh day from his defilement, as follows:

*on the seventh day he shall shave it;* for so many days was a person unclean that had touched a body, or had been where one was, and on the seventh day he was to be cleansed, (<sup>(-0891)</sup> Numbers 19:11,12); and this was one way of cleansing the Nazarite, cutting off his locks of hair, which were to grow long, and made him to be a Nazarite; and shave his head for his pollution by the dead, put an end to his Nazariteship; and he was obliged to begin again, and his hair being polluted, must be shaved, and new hair grow to make him a Nazarite again: thus by one single breach of the law of God a man becomes guilty of all, and liable to its curse, and his legal righteousness becomes insufficient to justify him before God, and therefore his own righteousness must be renounced by him in the business of

justification; and which, Ainsworth suggests, is the mystery of the Nazarite's head being shaved when polluted.

**Ver. 10.** *And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons to the priest,* etc.] Not a turtledove and a young pigeon, as Ben Gersom observes, but two of one of the sorts, which was the offering of the poorer sort of childbearing women at their purification, and of profluous persons, men or women, (<sup><BR128></sup>Leviticus 12:8 15:14,29); and this case of the Nazarite's being an uncleanness, could not be purged away but by sacrifice; which was typical of the sacrifice of Christ, by which that unclean thing sin is put away for ever; even the sins of holy things can be moved in no other way; these were to be brought to the priest to be offered by him:

*to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;* for being defiled, the Nazarite might not go into the tabernacle, and therefore was to bring his offering to the door of it, where the priest received it of him.

**Ver. 11.** *And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering,* etc.] That is, one of the turtles or young pigeons for the one kind of sacrifice, and one for the other sort; both being necessary; the one to expiate sin, and the other as a gift to God by way of thankfulness for acceptance of the former:

*and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead;* by being where the dead body was, which, though not sinful, in a moral sense, was, in a ceremonial one, and therefore required a sacrifice to atone for it; and which atonement was made by the sin offering typical of Christ, who was made an offering for sin:

*and shall hallow his head the same day;* consecrate himself to God afresh, particularly the hair of his head, let that grow again and begin his Nazariteship anew; so Jarchi interprets it, to return and begin the account of his Nazariteship.

**Ver. 12.** *And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation,* etc.] He was to begin his account again, from the time of his shaving his head, and devote as many days to the service of the Lord as what he had vowed before:

*and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering;* we see how much trouble and expense were brought by a single act of pollution, and

that involuntary too; how much more need is there of an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, even for all of them, and for which only the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient?

*but the days that were before shall be lost*; which were before the pollution, how near soever the time of Nazariteship being at an end was, whether his vow was for thirty days, or a hundred, or a whole year; be it what it will, and the pollution happened on the last of those days, all were lost; he was obliged to begin again, and go through the whole time he at first vowed; and this was the case if he drank the least quantity of wine, or shaved ever so little of the hair of his head, or was any ways polluted by the dead; and this severity, as it may seem, was used to make him cautious that he broke not his vow by any means:

*because his separation was defiled*; in the case instanced in, by the dead, but it was the same if he broke the law of Nazariteship in any of the other articles of it.

**Ver. 13.** *And this [is] the law of the Nazarite*, etc.] This has respect either to what goes before; those are the things he is obliged to that vows the vow of a Nazarite; what he is to abstain from during the time of his vow, and what he is to do in case of any defilement; or to what follows after, what is binding upon him, what offerings he is to bring, and what rites and ceremonies are to be observed by him when he has finished his vow:

*when the days of his separation*, or Nazariteship,

*are fulfilled*; whether more or fewer; when the time is quite up, and he has gone through his vow without any breach of it:

*he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; it is not said by whom he should be brought, whether by himself or by the priest; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“he shall bring himself;”

that is, present himself; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; which latter adds, or the priest shall bring him by command, whether he will or not, to offer his offering.

**Ver. 14.** *And he shall offer his offering unto the Lord*, etc.] The Nazarite was to present his offering at the door of the tabernacle, to the priest, in order to be offered for him to the Lord:

*one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering*; according to the law, manner, and custom of a burnt offering, as Aben Ezra observes, which, whether of the herd or of the flock, was to be a male and unblemished, and not more than a year old, (<sup><R00B></sup>Leviticus 1:3-10);

*and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering*; as was the manner and custom of a sin offering, to be a female, as is remarked by the same writer, (see <sup><R00B></sup>Leviticus 4:32);

*and one ram without blemish for peace offerings*; all sorts of offerings were offered on this occasion; a “sin offering”, though the vow was performed, and not any mistake made, or anything omitted that was known; yet, lest there should be any secret and unknown breach of the law of Nazariteship committed, a sin offering was required: this teaches us that there may be secret and unknown sins committed by the best of men, in their most sacred and solemn services; and that there is no justification before God by the best works of men, find that the purest and most perfect stand in need of the atoning sacrifice of Christ: a “burnt offering” was to be offered, which usually followed the sin offering, as it did here, though mentioned first, (see <sup><R056></sup>Numbers 6:16); and which was done by way of thanksgiving to God for his acceptance of the sin offering: and “peace offerings” were, as Aben Ezra observes, for joy that he had performed his vow: the burnt offering was wholly the Lord’s, the sin offering the priest had his part of, and the peace offerings the Nazarite and his friends ate of, and so everyone had their share in these oblations.

**Ver. 15.** *And a basket of unleavened bread*, etc.] As at the consecration of Aaron and his sons, (<sup><R230></sup>Exodus 29:2); though for peace offerings for thanksgiving leavened bread was offered, (<sup><R073></sup>Leviticus 7:13);

*cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil*; ten of each sort, as Jarchi says, ten cakes and ten wafers, (see <sup><R230></sup>Exodus 29:9 <sup><R072></sup>Leviticus 7:12);

*and their meat offering and their drink offering*; which always used to attend every sacrifice.

**Ver. 16.** *And the priest shall bring [them] before the Lord*, etc.] All the above offerings to the altar of burnt offering, and there present them to the Lord in the name of the Nazarite:

*and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering:* here they stand in the proper order in which they were offered.

**Ver. 17.** *And he shall offer the ram [for] a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord,* etc.] After he had offered the other two:

*with the basket of unleavened bread;* which went along with that:

*the priest shall also offer his meat offering, and his drink offering:* of which he had his part, and were the usual appendages of other sacrifices; (see <sup>4081E</sup>Numbers 28:1-29:40).

**Ver. 18.** *And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation, [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] The Targum of Jonathan is,

“and the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation without,”

without the tabernacle, the door of it, where the people assembled together; so that this was to be done publicly, that it might be known of all, and no offence taken at the Nazarite’s drinking wine, and concerning himself for the dead, and attending funerals, for by this action it was known that his Nazariteship was at an end; and whereas the hair of the Nazarite was consecrated to the Lord by his vow, and this vow being punctually fulfilled, it was sacred, and to be presented to the Lord, and to be of no use and service to himself or others, and therefore to be all clean shaven off; for, as Maimonides <sup>f69</sup> says, if two hairs only were left, nothing was done, and the command of shaving not kept:

*and shall take the hair of the head of his separation;* being cut off and shaved;

*and put [it] in the fire which [is] under the sacrifice of the peace offerings;* under the pot or cauldron, as the Targum of Jonathan, in which the ram for the peace offerings was boiled: this was done in the court of the women in later times, at the southeast of which was a chamber called the chamber of the Nazarites, where they bailed their peace offerings, and shaved their hair and cast it under the pot <sup>f70</sup>; and this might not be put, as before observed, to any other use; if any of it was made use of in a sack that was made of hair cloth, we are told <sup>f71</sup> that sack was to be burnt.

**Ver. 19.** *And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram,* etc.] The left shoulder, for the right shoulder, which is the heave shoulder of

every peace offering, belonged to the priest by another law; and by this law of the Nazarite, he had also the other shoulder, and so had both, which was peculiar to this case; the vow of the Nazarite being a very sacred thing and he being enabled to perform it, a greater expression of gratitude for it was expected and required of him: this shoulder was taken out of the pot in which it was boiled:

*and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer*; one of the ten cakes, and one of the ten wafers, both are mentioned; and which appear by this to be together in the basket of unleavened bread, from whence they were now to be taken, the rest having been offered with the other sacrifices:

*and shall put [them] upon the hands of the Nazarite*; the boiled shoulder, and the cake and wafer upon it:

*after [the hair of] his separation is shaven*; and cast into the fire; for the waving of these seems to be the last and finishing part of this whole affair.

**Ver. 20.** *And the priest shall wave them [for] a wave offering before the Lord*, etc.] Putting his hands under the Nazarite's, as in other cases where this ceremony was used; and so moving them to and fro, backwards and forwards, upwards and downwards, testifying hereby the goodness of God unto him, his sovereign dominion over him, that all he had depended on him, and was received from him; and that all he did, particularly in keeping his vow of Nazariteship, was through his assistance, and for which he made this grateful acknowledgment by delivering the above, together with what follows, to his priest:

*this [is] holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder*; besides these which were given him by another law, the wave shoulder of the Nazarite's ram was given him to eat; it was holy, and set apart for his use, and his only, and it belonged not in common to the course of the priests then on duty, but to him only that officiated in this peculiar service; and so it is observed by the Jewish writers<sup>f72</sup>, that the Nazarite's ram and some other things were not given to every priest, but to him that offered the sacrifice, as it is said, "he shall wave this is holy to the priest"; upon which it is observed, that it follows from hence, that the priest that waves is he that eats the sacrifice:

*and after that the Nazarite may drink wine*; and cut his hair, and shave his head, and be defiled for the dead as other persons, the vow of his Nazariteship being fulfilled.

**Ver. 21.** *This [is] the law of the Nazarite, who hath vowed*, etc.] The vow of a Nazarite; what he is obliged to do when his Nazariteship is up:

*[and of] his offering unto the Lord for his separation*; of the several offerings required of him, to offer to the Lord, for and upon his going through his Nazariteship, his burnt offering, sin offering, sacrifice of peace offerings, his meat offering and drink offering; together with the basket of unleavened bread, cakes and wafers:

*besides [that] that his hands shall get*; the above offerings were what he was obliged unto by the law of God, even though a poor man; but, besides these, it was expected of a man of substance, that he would voluntarily of himself offer more, according to his ability and the length of the time of his Nazariteship:

*according to the vow which he hath vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation*; there were some things he was obliged to do by his vow, and as he had vowed, there was a necessity upon him to fulfil it; as to abstain from the things he vowed so to do, and that as long a time as he fixed by his vow, and when finished to offer the sacrifices required of him.

**Ver. 22.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] At the same time perhaps that the above law was given concerning the Nazarites; though why this should follow upon that, and what connection there is between the one and the other, it is not easy to say; the Nazarites were holy persons, and so were the priests; and therefore, according to Aben Ezra and others, the law of the one is joined to the law of the other:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 23.** *Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons*, etc.] Aaron and his sons that succeeded him in all after generations, being the persons that were in a public manner to bless the people of Israel, they are particularly addressed, (see <sup><1808></sup>Deuteronomy 10:8 21:5 <sup><1332></sup>1 Chronicles 23:12);

*saying, on this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel*; in such manner and with such words as after expressed; standing upon an eminence, lifting up their hands on high, spreading out their fingers, and raising their voices,

and pronouncing the blessing in the Hebrew language, in the name of Jehovah, with their face towards the people; all which, according to the Jewish writers <sup>f73</sup>, were to be strictly observed;

*saying unto them*; as follows.

**Ver. 24.** *The Lord bless thee*, etc.] Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; the word “Jehovah” being three times used, and a different accent put to each word, denoting three distinct persons and one Jehovah, according to (~~(Rom)~~ Deuteronomy 6:4); who are each of them concerned in the blessing of the Lord’s people, the spiritual Israel of God; Jehovah the Father blesses with all spiritual blessings, with electing, adopting, justifying, and pardoning grace, with regenerating and calling, and persevering grace, and with eternal life: Jehovah the Son blesses particularly with redeeming grace, and has a concern in all the other blessings; the saints are blessed with them in him, they are all in his hands, they are procured by him, come through him, and are the gifts of his grace: and Jehovah the Spirit blesses as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as the spirit of faith, as a comforter, as the spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and sealer of the saints unto the day of redemption:

*and keep thee*; from, the evil of the world, from the evil one Satan, from the evil of sin, and the power, prevalence, and dominion of it, and from falling totally and finally by it, and keep in a state of grace unto everlasting salvation.

**Ver. 25.** *The Lord make his face to shine upon thee*, etc.] Cause himself, the sun of righteousness, to arise and shine upon them, and give both spiritual light and heat unto them; grant his gracious presence, the manifestations of himself, communion with him, clearer discoveries of his love, of interest in him, and an increase of spiritual light and knowledge of his Gospel, and the truths of it, and of his mind and will:

*and be gracious unto thee*; by granting larger measures of grace out of his fulness, by leading more abundantly into it, and making fresh and frequent applications of it; grace is often wished for from Christ as well as from the Father.

**Ver. 26.** *And the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee*, etc.] Show his face and favour, look cheerfully on his people, declare himself well pleased with them in Christ, and appear as smiling upon them through him, indulging them with visits of love, restoring to them the joys of his



salvation, and upholding them with his free Spirit; and so causing them to walk pleasantly and comfortably in the ways of God, expecting eternal life and happiness, as God's free gift through Christ:

*and give thee peace*; all outward needful prosperity, internal peace of mind, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, the peacemaker, and peace giver, and eternal peace in the world to come.

**Ver. 27.** *And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel*, etc.] Call them by his name, the people of the Lord; call upon the name of the Lord to bless them, and pronounce the blessing on them in the name of the Lord, in or by the name Jehovah, as Jarchi, three times used in this form of blessing:

*and I will bless them*; really and truly bless them with blessings indeed; with all sorts of blessings temporal and spiritual; with solid and substantial ones; and such are blessed, and will remain so, their blessings are irrevocable and irreversible; and unless the Lord blesses, in vain do the priests bless, or any of his ministers pronounce a blessing; theirs lies in words and wishes, his in real facts; they can only pray and wish for the blessing, it is he only that can give it, and can ratify and confirm what they declare and pronounce, according to his revealed word. Some refer the relative "them" to the priests, as if the sense was, I will bless the priests that bless Israel, for God will bless them that bless his people; but Aben Ezra thinks it belongs both to Israel, and to the priests, that God would confirm and establish the blessing of the priests pronounced on Israel, and bless the priests also, who needed the divine blessing as well as the people, and being found in the way of their duty, might expect it: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"I will bless them in my Word;"

his essential Word, Christ, in whom his chosen ones are blessed with all spiritual blessings, and who is the promised seed, in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed.

# CHAPTER 7

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 7

This chapter gives an account of the presents brought, by the princes of the twelve tribes at the setting up of the tabernacle, for the use of it, (<sup><0470></sup>Numbers 7:1-9); and at the dedication of the altar, and the service of that, (<sup><0470></sup>Numbers 7:10,11); first of the prince of the tribe of Judah, (<sup><0472></sup>Numbers 7:12-17); then of the prince of Issachar, (<sup><0478></sup>Numbers 7:18-23); of the prince of Zebulun, (<sup><0474></sup>Numbers 7:24-29); of the prince of Reuben, (<sup><0470></sup>Numbers 7:30-35); of the prince of Simeon, (<sup><0476></sup>Numbers 7:36-41); of the prince of Gad, (<sup><0474></sup>Numbers 7:42-47); of the prince of Ephraim, (<sup><0478></sup>Numbers 7:48-53); of the prince of Manasseh, (<sup><0474></sup>Numbers 7:54-59); of the prince of Benjamin, (<sup><0470></sup>Numbers 7:60-65); of the prince of Dan, (<sup><0476></sup>Numbers 7:66-71); of the prince of Asher, (<sup><0472></sup>Numbers 7:72-77); of the prince of Naphtali, (<sup><0478></sup>Numbers 7:78-83); the sum of all which follows, (<sup><0478></sup>Numbers 7:84-88); and the chapter is concluded with a token of God's approbation and acceptance of the whole, (<sup><0478></sup>Numbers 7:89).

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle*, etc.] Not on the very exact day on which it was first reared up, for that was on the first day of the first month of the second year from the coming up of Israel out of Egypt, (<sup><0407></sup>Exodus 40:17); whereas the following offerings of the princes were not offered, and many other things previous to them, recorded in the preceding chapters, were not done, until after the first day of the second month of that year, (<sup><0400></sup>Numbers 1:1); though the Jews say <sup>f74</sup> the first of Nisan, or of the first month, was the first for various things, and the first on which the princes offered; but no one particular day can be intended, because the princes were twelve days successively offering their offerings; wherefore "the day" here only denotes the time about which it was when this service was performed; when the tabernacle was not only set up, but "fully" set up, when everything relating to it was in its proper place and order; when not only it was put together, and all the vessels and instruments of it in their due place, but also when the people of Israel, for whose sake it was erected, that the Lord God might dwell among them, were numbered, and their camps formed and

pitched around the tabernacle; and the Levites were taken and numbered also, who were to serve at it, and their place and service were appointed unto them about it; for then, and not till then, was the service of it completed, and its proper place and situation fixed and settled:

*and had anointed it*; with the holy oil Moses was directed to make and anoint it with, (<sup><123></sup>Exodus 30:23-28 <sup><880></sup>Leviticus 8:10);

*and sanctified it*: set it apart for holy use and service, to be an habitation for God, and the place of his worship:

*and all the instruments thereof*; the ark, table, candlestick, etc.

*both the altars, and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them*; the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering, and all appertaining: thereunto; according to Ben Gersom, this finishing of the whole was at the end of the seven days of consecration of Aaron and his sons, (<sup><123></sup>Exodus 29:35).

**Ver. 2.** *That the princes of Israel*, etc.] The princes of the twelve tribes of Israel:

*heads of the house of their fathers*; of the each of the houses and families the tribes were divided into, and took their name from each of their ancestors, as is next explained:

*who were princes of the tribes*; the twelve tribes, as before observed, (<sup><1004></sup>Numbers 1:4-16);

*and were over them that were numbered*; over the children of Israel that were numbered, (<sup><1019></sup>Numbers 1:19-46); by which it that these princes are the very same persons that are mentioned by name there, as they are here afterwards; and were with Moses and Aaron, and assisting to them when they took the number of them; but according to the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, these were appointed over them in Egypt; but the former is right: these now

*offered* not sacrifices but gifts; they brought their presents to the Lord for the service of his sanctuary, and set them before him, as follows.

**Ver. 3.** *And they brought their offering before the Lord*, etc.] Before the tabernacle, as it is afterwards explained, where he had now taken up his habitation:

*six covered wagons, and twelve oxen*; according to the number of the twelve tribes, of which they were princes, two oxen for each wagon, which were to carry the tabernacle, and its vessels, from place to place; and which wagons were covered, not only to hide the things to be put into them from the sight of the people, being sacred, but to preserve them from the rain and dust, and the like; and no doubt, but as they were made of the best materials, So they were covered with rich coverings for the honour of the vessels put into them, being the presents of princes, and in which they joined, and could not be ordinary carriages. The word is rendered “litters” in (<sup>271d</sup> Isaiah 66:20); and by some, “coaches”; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“six wagons yoked,”

or drawn with a yoke of oxen; and Aben Ezra says, it signifies a kind of oxen which drew wagons; but the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Ben Gersom interpret it “covered”, as we do:

*a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox*; two princes joined in the present of one wagon, which shows it could not be a common wagon, but rich carriage, and ornamented, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; and each prince presented an ox, so that there was a yoke of them for each wagon:

*and they brought them before the tabernacle*; the Targum of Jonathan says, Moses would not receive them, and therefore they brought them before the tabernacle; and so, says Jarchi, Moses received them not at their hands, until it was declared to him by the mouth of the Lord what he should do, as follows.

**Ver. 4.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Out of the tabernacle, before which the wagons and oxen were brought:

*saying*: as follows.

**Ver. 5.** *Take [it] of them*, etc.] The present of the wagons and oxen, by which it appears that this freewill offering of the princes was according to his mind and will, and what they were influenced and guided to by his Spirit, and was well pleasing in his sight, and acceptable to him:

*that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation*; be made use of, and employed in carrying the tabernacle, and the things of it, from place to place, when the Israelites journeyed:

*and thou shalt give them to the Levites*; to ease them, whose business it was to bear and carry the several parts of the tabernacle, and the vessels of it:

*to every man according to his service*; whether lighter or heavier, for such difference there was in the three divisions of the Levites; and according as their work was, they had more or fewer wagons and oxen given them, as it follows, (<sup>4007</sup>Numbers 7:7,8).

**Ver. 6.** *And Moses took the wagons and the oxen*, etc.] Of the princes, as he was directed:

*and gave them unto the Levites*; the Gershonites and Merarites; for, as for the Kohathites, they had no part of them, for a reason after given, (<sup>4009</sup>Numbers 7:9).

**Ver. 7.** *Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon*, etc.] The eldest son of Levi:

*according to their service*; which was to bear and take care of the curtains, coverings, hangings and rails of the tabernacle; and which, when carrying from place to place, it was proper they should be covered from being exposed to rain and dust; and being so many as they were, must be heavy, burdensome, and cumbersome, and therefore two wagons, with two yoke of oxen, were given them, to ease them.

**Ver. 8.** *And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari*, etc.] All the remaining wagons and oxen, which were double the number given to the Gershonites:

*according unto their service*; being much heavier than theirs, having all the boards, pillars, sockets, pins; cords, etc. to bear and carry: thus Moses was directed of God wisely to dispose of those carriages, in proportion to the services each was employed in; and in a spiritual way, as the day, duty, and service of the people of God be, he proportions grace and strength to them to answer thereunto:

*under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest*; under whose care, inspection, and direction, were both the Gershonites and Merarites, (<sup>4023</sup>Numbers 4:28,33); and by whom were delivered, according to the instruction of Moses, the several wagons and oxen, to them.

**Ver. 9.** *But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none*, etc.] Being all disposed of to the sons of Gershon and Merari: the reason of which follows,

*because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them [was that] they should bear upon their shoulders*; as the ark with the mercy seat, and cherubim, the shewbread table, the candlestick, and the two altars; though in later times we find the ark was sometimes not only carried by the priests, but upon a cart, (<sup><4087></sup>Joshua 3:17 4:10 <sup><4088></sup>2 Samuel 6:3).

**Ver. 10.** *And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar*, etc.] For setting it apart to sacred use and service, even the altar of burnt offering; or rather after it had been sanctified and set apart, when it began to be made use of for sacrifice:

*in the day that it was anointed*; with the anointing oil, whereby it was devoted to sacred service;

*even the princes offered their offering before the altar*; the altar of burnt offering; they brought their vessels for the service of it, and the creatures for sacrifice, and set them before it; signifying what they meant, thereby, that the silver and golden vessels were for the use of it, and the beasts for sacrifice to be offered up on it: and here Jarchi also observes, that Moses would not receive their offering until he knew the mind of God about it, and it was declared to him from himself.

**Ver. 11.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] For before this was said to him, even what follows, Moses knew not, as the same writer observes, how they should offer, in what order, whether according to their birth, or whether according to the journeying of their camps, or whether they should offer together, or one after another, one day after another <sup>f75</sup>; this affair is set in a clear light:

*they shall offer their offering each prince on his day*; one on one day, and the other on the next, and so on successively for twelve days running; and this was ordered for the greater solemnity of the service, and that it might be taken notice of, and each have the honour and credit of it; and this was done, not according to the order of their birth, but as their standards were fixed, first Judah, and those under him, and so the rest in course:

*for the dedicating of the altar*; (see <sup><4070></sup>Numbers 7:10).

**Ver. 12.** *And he that offered his offering on the first day,* etc.] Was he whose standard was pitched first, at the east, to the rising sun: and this

*was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah;* who was the prince and captain of that tribe, though the title is not here given him, as to the rest of the princes, this being left to be concluded from his offering first; for if they that offered after him were princes, he must needs be one; or it may be this title is omitted, because the chief prince, of the prince of the tribe of Judah, most peculiarly belongs to a greater Personage, even the Messiah, who was to spring, and did spring from that tribe, (~~1~~1 Chronicles 5:2); and, as Baal Hatturim says, from Nahshon; and who also observes, that Ben Nahshon is the Messiah.

**Ver. 13.** *And his offering [was] one silver charger,* etc.] Or dish, like one of those used in the shewbread table to hold the bread in, only they were of gold, this of silver, and belonged to the altar of burnt offering; the use of which might be to hold the meat offering in, as it may seem from the latter part of the verse, or the wave breast or heave shoulder, which belonged to the priest:

*the weight thereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels];* which were sixty one ounces, four drachms, one scruple, and seventeen grains<sup>176</sup>, worth about sixteen pounds and five shillings of our money;

*one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary;* the standard that was kept in the sanctuary; this was a lesser vessel, and was either for holding the drink offering, or receiving the blood of the sacrifices; its weight was thirty three ounces, five drachms, and three grains, and was worth about eight pounds and fifteen shillings of our money:

*both of them [were] full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering;* which always attended other sacrifices after mentioned, part of which was burnt on the altar of burnt offering, and the rest were the perquisites of the priests.

**Ver. 14.** *One spoon of ten [shekels] of gold, etc.]* Its weight was according to the shekels, its matter of gold; it weighed four ounces, one drachm, and nine grains, and was worth about seven pounds and ten shillings of our money:

*full of incense*; this looks as if this spoon was designed for the golden altar of incense, which might be at this time also dedicated; but Jarchi understands it as for the altar of burnt offering, and observes, we never find incense belonging to a private person, nor to the outward altar (the altar of burnt offering), but this only, and which was temporary.

**Ver. 15.** *One young bullock*, etc.] Of three years old, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

*one ram*; of two years old, as the same Targums:

*one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering*; of which (see <sup><CROCS></sup>Leviticus 1:3,10).

**Ver. 16.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.*] Though these offerings of the princes were by way of thanksgiving, and to express their joy and gladness at the erection of the tabernacle, its altars, and the service thereof; yet as this might not be without sin, which attends the best and purest performances of men, a sin offering was required, teaching us to look to Christ, who was made an offering for sin, for the taking away the sins of our holy things.

**Ver. 17.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings*, etc.] So that here were all sorts of offerings on this occasion, meat and drink offerings, burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings: and for the latter were brought

*two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year*; the reason why so many were brought and used for this sort of sacrifice was, because with these a feast was made, of which not only the priests partook, but the princes, and as many of their friends and acquaintance as they thought fit to invite:

*this [was] the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab*: which he offered out of his own substance, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it; though some have thought, that the presents and offerings were so large, and the princes not so very rich, or so much above the common people, as may be thought, that therefore they were assisted by the several tribes they were princes of: and as was this prince's offering, so were all the rest that follow in the order, according to their encampment under the several standards where they were fixed; and which were offered successively every day, the sabbath day or days not excepted, these being religious services, until the whole twelve were finished; and their presents



and their offerings were exactly the same, and the account of them is given in the same words; they either agreeing together to make the same presents and offerings, or else they were directed to do so by the Spirit of God; whereby might be signified the common and equal right that they, and the tribes they represented, had in the altars, and the benefits arising from thence; as those that believe in Christ have an altar which is himself, they have a joint right to partake of, and have an equal share in the benefits of righteousness, peace, pardon, and atonement by him; (see <sup><0130></sup>Hebrews 13:10); wherefore there is nothing more particularly to be observed in (<sup><0177></sup>Numbers 7:17-83); only that in the several accounts of the presents and offerings of each prince, the vowel points in the Hebrew text are omitted, excepting in the names of persons that offer; which does not at all militate against the antiquity of the points, or their being coeval with the consonants, since, both in manuscripts and printed copies, these may be left out for brevity's sake, and quicker dispatch, and without any detriment, since they may be easily supplied from the first instance given; and they may be omitted on purpose, that these accounts might be the more taken notice of as a very wonderful thing, that their presents and offerings should be exactly alike; since the vowels being wanting, the naked letters may the more strike the eye, and lead the mind to notice them; and whereas the accents are all along continued, the reason of which may be, because the vowels once put, and read, might be more easily known, especially by one skilful in the Hebrew language, than the stops, distinctions, and divisions of the text, as a learned man has observed <sup>f77</sup>.

**Ver. 18.** *On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer.*] (see <sup><0108></sup>Numbers 1:8 2:5).

**Ver. 19.** *He offered [for] his offering one silver charger, etc.*] (See Gill on <sup><0173></sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 20.** *One spoon of gold of ten [shekels], full of incense.*] (See Gill on <sup><0174></sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 21.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.*] (See Gill on <sup><0175></sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 22.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.*] (See Gill on <sup><0176></sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 23.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0477></sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Nethaneel the son of Zuar;* (see <sup><0408></sup>Numbers 1:8 2:5).

**Ver. 24.** *On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, [did offer].]* (see <sup><0409></sup>Numbers 1:9 2:7).

**Ver. 25.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0473></sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 26.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0474></sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 27.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0475></sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 28.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0476></sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 29.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0477></sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Eliab the son of Helon;* (see <sup><0409></sup>Numbers 1:9 2:7).

**Ver. 30.** *On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, [did offer].]* (see <sup><0405></sup>Numbers 1:5 2:10).

**Ver. 31.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0473></sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 32.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0474></sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 33.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0475></sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 34.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0476></sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 35.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup><0477></sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Elizur the son of Shedeur;* (see <sup><0405></sup>Numbers 1:5 2:10).

**Ver. 36.** *On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, [did offer].* (see <sup><0006></sup>Numbers 1:6 2:12).

**Ver. 37.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.* (See Gill on <sup><0073></sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 38.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.* (See Gill on <sup><0074></sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 39.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.* (See Gill on <sup><0075></sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 40.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.* (See Gill on <sup><0076></sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 41.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.* (See Gill on <sup><0077></sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai;* (see <sup><0006></sup>Numbers 1:6 2:12).

**Ver. 42.** *On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, [offered].* (see <sup><0014></sup>Numbers 1:14 2:18).

**Ver. 43.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.* (See Gill on <sup><0073></sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 44.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.* (See Gill on <sup><0074></sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 45.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.* (See Gill on <sup><0075></sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 46.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.* (See Gill on <sup><0076></sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 47.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.* (See Gill on <sup><0077></sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Eliasaph the son of Deuel;* (see <sup><0014></sup>Numbers 1:14 2:18).

**Ver. 48.** *On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, [offered].* (see <sup><0010></sup>Numbers 1:10 2:18).

**Ver. 49.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.* (See Gill on <sup><0073></sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 50.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0074</sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 51.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0075</sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 52.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0076</sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 53.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0077</sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Elishama the son of Ammihud;* (see <sup>-0010</sup>Numbers 1:10 2:18).

**Ver. 54.** *On the eighth day [offered] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh.]* (see <sup>-0010</sup>Numbers 1:10 2:20).

**Ver. 55.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0073</sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 56.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0074</sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 57.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0075</sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 58.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0076</sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 59.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0077</sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur;* (see <sup>-0010</sup>Numbers 1:10 2:20).

**Ver. 60.** *On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, [offered].]* (see <sup>-0011</sup>Numbers 1:11 2:22).

**Ver. 61.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0073</sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 62.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0074</sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 63.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.]* (See Gill on “<sup>-0075</sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 64.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.*] (See Gill on “<sup>-0476</sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 65.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>-0477</sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Abidan the son of Gideoni;* (see <sup>-0411</sup>Numbers 1:11 2:22).

**Ver. 66.** *On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, [offered].*] (see <sup>-0412</sup>Numbers 1:12 2:25).

**Ver. 67.** *His offering [was] one silver charger,* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>-0473</sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 68.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.*] (See Gill on “<sup>-0474</sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 69.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.*] (See Gill on “<sup>-0475</sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 70.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.*] (See Gill on “<sup>-0476</sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 71.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>-0477</sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai;* (see <sup>-0412</sup>Numbers 1:12 2:25).

**Ver. 72.** *On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, [offered].*] (see <sup>-0413</sup>Numbers 1:13 2:27).

**Ver. 73.** *His offering [was] one silver charger,* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>-0473</sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 74.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.*] (See Gill on “<sup>-0474</sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 75.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.*] (See Gill on “<sup>-0475</sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 76.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.*] (See Gill on “<sup>-0476</sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 77.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>-0477</sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Pagiel the son of Ocran*; (see <sup>-0013</sup>Numbers 1:13 2:27).

**Ver. 78.** *On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, [offered].*] (see <sup>-0015</sup>Numbers 1:15 2:29).

**Ver. 79.** *His offering [was] one silver charger, etc.*] (See Gill on <sup>-0073</sup>Numbers 7:13”).

**Ver. 80.** *One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.*] (See Gill on <sup>-0074</sup>Numbers 7:14”).

**Ver. 81.** *One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering.*] (See Gill on <sup>-0075</sup>Numbers 7:15”).

**Ver. 82.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering.*] (See Gill on <sup>-0076</sup>Numbers 7:16”).

**Ver. 83.** *And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, etc.*] (See Gill on <sup>-0077</sup>Numbers 7:17”).

*Ahira the son of Enan*; (see <sup>-0015</sup>Numbers 1:15 2:29).

**Ver. 84.** *This [was] the dedication of the altar by the princes, etc.*] These the presents they made, and the offerings they offered when the altar first began to be made use of, after it had been anointed and sanctified for sacred service:

*in the day when it was anointed*: this shows that it was not the precise and exact day of the setting up of the tabernacle, and the anointing of the altar, that the above presents and offerings were brought, since they were twelve successive days in bringing; but that the sense is, that about that time, or quickly after it was anointed, the princes dedicated it in the manner before described:

*twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold*; according to the number of the princes, and the tribes they were princes of; a noble instance both of devotion and piety, and of liberality and generosity; and is a standing example on record to all princes and great personages in all successive ages, to promote religion and godliness, by their own personal conduct and behaviour, and to encourage and support it by their generous benefactions and donations: the sum total of what they contributed is in this and the following verses given.

**Ver. 85.** *Each charger of silver [weighing] an hundred and thirty [shekels], each bowl seventy, etc.]* (See Gill on “<sup>4073</sup>Numbers 7:13”);

*all the silver vessels [weighed] two thousand and four hundred [shekels], after the shekel of the sanctuary;* which amounted to 1,139 ounces and four drachms <sup>f78</sup>, which were worth about three hundred pounds of our money.

**Ver. 86.** *The golden spoons [were] twelve, full of incense, etc.]* Which points at the use those spoons or cups were of, namely, to carry incense in them, such as were used on the day of atonement <sup>f79</sup>:

*[weighing] ten [shekels] apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary;* (see Gill on “<sup>4074</sup>Numbers 7:14”);

*all the gold of the spoons [was] twenty [shekels];* which amounted to forty nine ounces, five drachms, scruples, and eight gains, worth about seventy five pounds of our money.

**Ver. 87.** *All the oxen for the burnt offering [were] twelve bullocks, etc.]* According to the number of the princes and their tribes, and so,

*the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve;* which were also for the burnt offering:

*with their meat offering;* which always went along with the burnt offering:

*and the kids of the goats, for a sin offering, twelve;* thus the twelve princes, and by them the twelve tribes, expressed their faith in Christ, the antitype of those sacrifices, and their hope of his coming into the world to be a sacrifice for sin, and of their atonement, reconciliation, peace, pardon, and salvation by him; (see <sup>4076</sup>Acts 26:6,7).

**Ver. 88.** *And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings [were] twenty and four bullocks, etc.]* Each prince bringing two:

*the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty;* five of each being brought by every prince; so that the whole number of beasts for peace offerings only, which were to feast with, were two hundred four;

*this [was] the dedication of the altar after that it was anointed;* this clearly shows, that it was not the precise day the altar was anointed the dedication was made, but some little time after; even that the first prince brought his presents and offerings for the dedication of it.

**Ver. 89.** *And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with him,* etc.] With God, to consult him on some affair or another, or to learn whether he had anything else to communicate to him, to be delivered to the children of Israel; or whether he had any directions and instructions to give him about the presents and gifts of the princes, since this seems to be immediately after their offerings:

*then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him;* the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, the voice of the Spirit; but rather the voice of the Shechinah, or Word of God, the eternal “Logos”, is what was heard; who in the fulness of time was to be made flesh, and dwell among men, and be heard, and seen, and handled by them; for as for the voice of the Father, the was not heard at any time, (~~REV~~ John 5:37);

*from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim;* upon the ark in which the law was, called the testimony, was the mercy seat; over that were placed two cherubim shadowing it, and between these was the seat of the divine Majesty, which he had now taken, and from hence the voice of him speaking, was heard; which, as it follows upon the presents and offerings of the princes, may be interpreted, of the divine approbation and acceptance of them, since it was promised by the Lord to Moses, that upon their building a tabernacle for him he would dwell in it; and upon the making a mercy seat with the cherubim over the ark, he would there meet with Moses, and commune with him; all which being done to his mind he fulfils his promise: though it seems that at this time Moses did not go into the most holy place, only into the tabernacle of the congregation, the outward sanctuary, the court of the tabernacle; and there he heard the voice, as Jarchi observes, coming out of the most holy place, and from the mercy seat there, which was so loud, clear, and distinct, as to be well heard and understood by him; he supposes the voice went out from heaven to between the two cherubim, and from thence to the tabernacle of the congregation: and he spake unto him; what he spoke is not said, unless it is what follows in the next chapter.



# CHAPTER 8

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 8

In this chapter orders are given for the lighting the seven lamps of the candlestick, (<sup>(0481)</sup>Numbers 8:1-4); and for the consecration of the Levites to their office, by a purification of them, (<sup>(0485)</sup>Numbers 8:5-8); by a separation of them from the children of Israel, and the imposition of their hands on them, and of the hands of the Levites on the offerings offered for them, (<sup>(0489)</sup>Numbers 8:9-15); and being thus given to the Lord, and claimed as his, instead of the firstborn of Israel, they are given to Aaron and his sons to do service in the tabernacle, (<sup>(0486)</sup>Numbers 8:16-22); and their age at which they were to enter into service and cease from it is fixed, (<sup>(0483)</sup>Numbers 8:23-26).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Whether immediately after the offerings of the princes, or at another time, is not certain; Aben Ezra thinks it was in the night God spake unto him, because then the lamps were lighted and burning:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him*, etc.] It being his work to light the lamps, though, as Ben Gersom observes, it was not incumbent on an high priest alone to do this, for it also belonged to the sons of Aaron, who were common priests, (<sup>(0272)</sup>Exodus 27:21); though it is probable that as this was the first time of lighting them, it might be done by Aaron himself, his sons attending and assisting him; in which he was an eminent type of Christ, the great High Priest, who lights the lamps in all his golden candlesticks, the churches, (<sup>(6611)</sup>Revelation 1:20), and from whom they have all their light and all the supplies of it:

*when thou lightest the lamps*; which was done at evening, (<sup>(0208)</sup>Exodus 30:8); pointing at the great light set up by Christ, the light of the world, in the evening of it, in the last days:

*the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick*; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“at the same time of thy lighting the lamps over against the candlestick, there shall be seven lamps giving light: three on the west side and three on the east side, and the seventh in the middle:”

and in the like order Jarchi places them, who observes, that the three eastward looked over against the middlemost, the wicks that were in them; and so the three westward, the tops of the wicks were over against the middlemost: and he also observes, that the middlemost lamp was no other than the body of the candlestick, and so all the rest of the lamps were over against and looked to that; and this is the sense of Maimonides <sup>f80</sup>, and other Jewish writers; but the truer meaning of the phrase is, that the seven lamps gave light, as they were to do, to that part of the holy place that was opposite to the candlestick, the north part of it, where stood the shewbread table, the candlestick being in the south, (<sup><0102></sup>Exodus 40:22,24); that the table of the Lord might have light, as it was proper it should; and the priests might see to set on and take off the bread, which otherwise they could not, there being no window in the place; (see Gill on “<sup><0253></sup>Exodus 25:37”).

**Ver. 3.** *And Aaron did so, he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick*, etc.] As God had taken up his residence in the most holy place, as appears by the voice speaking from off the mercy seat, (<sup><0189></sup>Numbers 7:89); and sacrifices were begun to be offered in the outward court on the altar of burnt offering, it was proper that the service of God in the holy place should also be set on foot; as placing of the shewbread on the shewbread table, and burning incense on the golden altar of incense; which could not well be done until the lamps were lighted, and therefore orders were given for the lighting them, which was accordingly done by Aaron:

*as the Lord commanded Moses*; (<sup><0257></sup>Exodus 25:37).

**Ver. 4.** *And this work of the candlestick [was] of beaten gold*, etc.] As it is also said to be; (see Gill on “<sup><0251></sup>Exodus 25:31”); and (see Gill on “<sup><0256></sup>Exodus 25:36”):

*unto the shalt thereof, unto the flowers thereof, [was] beaten work*; of which, (see <sup><0251></sup>Exodus 25:31);

*according unto the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses*; when on Mount Sinai with him:

*so he made the candlestick*; that is, ordered it to be made, and took care that it was made exactly to the pattern he had of it; otherwise Bezaleel was the artificer; and so the Targum of Jonathan here expresses him by name.

**Ver. 5.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] the same time the order about lighting the lamps was given; and this section is joined to the former, Aben Ezra thinks, to show that Aaron employed himself in lighting the lamps, but in the rest of the services the Levites helped him, and stood before him to do what he commanded them: they were ordered to be taken and given to Aaron before; and they were numbered, and their services appointed to each division of them; and now they are ordered to be ordained and consecrated to their office:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 6.** *Take the Levites from among the children of Israel*, etc.] Among whom they were mixed, as were all the tribes mixed together as Aben Ezra says, before they took their journey from Mount Sinai; however, from hence forward, they were distinguished from Israelites, as they are both in Scripture and in Jewish writings; (see <sup><B30D></sup>1 Chronicles 9:2); though this seems to design no other but their appointment and separation to their work and service, as ministers to the priests of the Lord; and so as Aaron did not assume the honour of priesthood to himself but was called of God, the Levites did not take the honour of their office to themselves but had it by the appointment and call of God:

*and cleanse them*; with water, by sprinkling the water of purification on them, and by washing their bodies and clothes with water; which outward washing was a sign of moral purity, which was necessary to their employment in the service of the sanctuary; for though there was no particular uncleanness on them, either ceremonial or moral, but what was common to men; yet it was proper, by such outward rites, to put them and others in mind, that they which are employed about holy things should be eminently pure and holy; and as their business was to carry holy things, to bear the sacred vessels of the sanctuary from place to place when needful, they ought of all men to be clean, (<sup><2521B></sup>Isaiah 52:11): and in this they were emblems of the ministers of the word, who ought to be pure, as in heart, so in life and conversation, and be examples of purity to others, (<sup><406B></sup>2 Corinthians 6:6 <sup><544D></sup>1 Timothy 4:12).

**Ver. 7.** *And thus shall thou do unto them, to cleanse them,* etc.] Or order Aaron to do unto them; the cleansing of the Levites was the work of Aaron, either by himself or by his order; in which he was a type of Christ, who is the refiner and purifier of the sons of Levi, (~~308B~~ Malachi 3:3);

*sprinkle water of purifying upon them;* or “water of sin”<sup>f81</sup>; water which purifies from sin, in a ceremonial sense; and this was water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer, which was the purification of persons defiled by the dead, as Jarchi observes; and though the law concerning the red heifer, and of making the water of purification, is not made mention of till afterwards, (~~409B~~ Numbers 19:1-22): yet it was very probably given before; and the Jews say<sup>f82</sup>, it was on the second of Nisan, or the first month, which was the day after the tabernacle was erected, that Eleazar the priest burnt the red heifer and sprinkled all Israel; this only “sanctified to the purifying of the flesh”, (~~509B~~ Hebrews 9:13), in a ceremonial sense, but was typical of the blood of Christ, which “purges the conscience from dead works”; that so men may be fitted and qualified, as the Levites were, “to serve the living God”, (~~509B~~ Hebrews 9:14);

*and let them shave all their flesh;* the hair of their bodies, in all parts thereof; even the beard, as Aben Ezra notes, some say; yet not the corners of it; but the whole hair of the body, everywhere, was to be shaved off; to denote the most perfect purity, and a removal of all superfluity of haughtiness and excrescences of the flesh from them: so the Egyptian priests used to shave their whole body every third day, lest there should be anything filthy in those that served the gods<sup>f83</sup>: this cleansing of the Levites was after the same manner as lepers were cleansed: and Jarchi observes, from one of their writers, that because the Levites gave an atonement for the firstborn, who committed idolatry, which is called the sacrifices of the dead, and the leper is called a dead man, they were obliged to shaving as the lepers; but Ben Gersom gives a better reason for the shaving of them; that it was to put them in mind that they should forsake material (or corporeal) things, and employ themselves in the service of God; (see ~~409B~~ Acts 6:2,4) (~~509B~~ 2 Timothy 2:4);

*and let them wash their clothes;* and much more their bodies, as Chaskuni, after the manner of those who were polluted by touching a dead body; typical of the saints having their bodies washed with pure water, and their garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, (~~580B~~ Hebrews 10:22 ~~607A~~ Revelation 7:14);

*and [so] make themselves clean*; the Targum of Jonathan adds, in forty seahs of water; and according to the sense of that paraphrase, both the bodies and clothes of the Levites were dipped in water.

**Ver. 8.** *Then let them take a young bullock*, etc.] Of two years old, as the Jewish writers gather from the other in the next clause, being called the second; though the wise men say one of three years old is fit for such a sacrifice; nay, others say, if four or five years old; but the decision is according to the wise men <sup>f84</sup>

*with his meat offering, [even] fine flour mingled with oil*: which always went along with a burnt offering, and consisted of three tenth deals of line flour, and half an hin of oil, (<sup>Q82</sup>Numbers 28:12,14);

*and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering*; which was the offering for the sin of the whole congregation of Israel, through ignorance; and this being for all the Levites, and they being instead of the firstborn of Israel, such an offering was required; and though there was no particular sin charged upon them, but it became necessary for their perfect cleansing and expiation.

**Ver. 9.** *And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation*, etc.] Not without it, but within it, in the court of the tabernacle, at least at the door of it, where stood the altar of burnt offering, on which sacrifices for them were now to be offered:

*and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together*; the heads of the tribes, and elders of the people, as Aben Ezra interprets this phrase in (<sup>Q83</sup>Leviticus 8:3); where the whole congregation is said to be assembled at the consecration of the priests, as here at the consecration of the Levites, having a concern therein, as well as to be spectators and witnesses of this solemn affair; and no doubt as many of them as could conveniently assemble at the door of the tabernacle did, though every individual of that large body of people could not possibly do it.

**Ver. 10.** *And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord*, etc.] From the door of the tabernacle, to the altar of burnt offering, where the Lord was in some sense present to accept the sacrifices offered to him:

*and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites*; as were used to be put upon sacrifices, for the Levites were themselves offered for

an offering of the children of Israel, as is expressed in (<sup>4081</sup>Numbers 8:11); by which rite they signified that they voluntarily parted with them, and gave them up to the Lord, and transferred their service to them, in which they were to serve in their room and stead; these, according to some Jewish writers, were the firstborn of Israel that laid their hands on the Levites, a type of the general assembly and church of the firstborn; or rather the princes and heads of the tribes, who represented the whole body. Some think by this rite is signified the consent of the people in the designation and appointment of the ministers of the word to their work and office; but what in the New Testament seems to answer to this is, the laying of the hands of the presbytery on ministers of the word, (~~5044~~<sup>1</sup> Timothy 4:14).

**Ver. 11.** *And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord*, etc.] Or “wave”<sup>f85</sup> them, as a wave offering, which was moved to and fro, backwards and forwards; not that they were actually so waved and moved to and fro by Aaron, which could not be done by him; though it is possible he might make such a motion himself, and they might do the like after him, thereby signifying that they belonged unto the Lord of the whole earth; and some think this testified their readiness to serve the Lord; to which may be added their constant employment in his service, being always in motion, doing one piece of service or another continually; as the people of God, and especially the ministers of the word, should be always abounding: in the work of the Lord. Ainsworth supposes that the troubles and afflictions of the ministers of God are figured hereby:

*[for] an offering of the children of Israel*; to the Lord, hereby devoting them to his service:

*that they may execute the service of the Lord*; for them, in their room and stead, do what otherwise they must have done; (see <sup>4082</sup>Numbers 3:7,8); with this compare (<sup>2860</sup>Isaiah 66:20,21).

**Ver. 12.** *And the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bullocks*, etc.] Or “on the head”<sup>f86</sup>; on the head of everyone of them, as Aben Ezra, thereby, as it were, transferring their sins to them, for these were to make atonement for them, as the latter part of the verse shows; and this was a figure of the imputation of sin to Christ, and taught that doctrine, and led the faith of the offerers to the sin bearing and sin atoning Saviour:

*and thou shalt offer the one [for] a sin offering, and the other [for] a burnt offering, unto the Lord;* that is, shall order to be offered; for not Moses, but Aaron, offered these offerings, as Aben Ezra observes, of which this is a proof, that Aaron is said to make the atonement for them, (<sup>(-HRE)</sup>Numbers 8:21), for which purpose these sacrifices were offered, particularly the first; and the latter by way of thanksgiving for atonement made by the former: so it follows,

*to make an atonement for the Levites;* who could not be admitted to service until their sins were expiated; as no man is worthy to be employed in the work of God, but such for whom reconciliation for their sins is made by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which they are purged from dead works to serve the living God.

**Ver. 13.** *And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons,* etc.] After atonement was made for them, as Aben Ezra observes; then they were presented to Aaron and his sons, to whom they were given to be their ministers, and assistants to them:

*and offer them [for] an offering unto the Lord:* or, and “waved them”, etc. as before, that is, order them to be waved; for not Moses, but Aaron, did this, and indeed was done already; and therefore should rather be rendered, as by Bishop Patrick, after thou hast offered, or waved them.

**Ver. 14.** *Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel,* etc.] By sprinkling the water of purification upon them; by offering sacrifices for them; by presenting them before the Lord, with the hands of the people of Israel put upon them; by offering and waving them before the Lord, and by setting them before Aaron and his sons, as their ministers:

*and the Levites shall be mine:* in a special and peculiar manner devoted to his service, and by him given to his priests for that purpose; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

“and the Levites shall minister before me.”

**Ver. 15.** *And after that shall the Levites go in,* etc.] Not into the sanctuary, where only the priests entered, much less into the most holy place, where only the high priest went, and that but once a year, in neither of which places the Levites had anything to do, but into the court of the tabernacle:

*to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:* to watch there, and to assist the priests at the altar of burnt offering, to take down the tabernacle and bear the vessels of it, and set it up, as occasion required:

*and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them [for] an offering;* cleanse them by sprinkling the water of purifying on them, and offer them by waving them as before; and indeed this is no new thing which is here observed, but what was already done, and therefore should be rendered, “when thou shalt have cleansed them”, or “after thou hast cleansed them”, etc. and so the particle “vau” is sometimes used <sup>f87</sup>.

**Ver. 16.** *For they [are] wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel,* etc.] All of them, entirely, and most certainly; or, “given, given” <sup>f88</sup>, which is repeated for the confirmation of it; or because of their being twice given, first to the Lord by the children of Israel, and then by the Lord to Aaron and his sons, as Chaskuni; though Jarchi interprets it of the different parts of their service they were devoted to, given for bearing and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary, and given for the song, or to be singers in the temple:

*instead of such as open, every womb, [even instead of] the firstborn of all the children of Israel have I taken them unto me;* (see Gill on “<sup><04B12></sup>Numbers 3:12-13”)

**Ver. 17.** *For all the firstborn of the children of Israel [are] mine, [both] men and beasts,* etc.] Not only in common with other of his creatures, but in a special respect on account of his signal deliverance of them; they were his, as Jarchi expresses it, by the line of judgment, or rule of justice and equity, because he protected them among the firstborn of the Egyptians, saved them when he slew theirs, as follows:

*in the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt;* both of men and beasts:

*I sanctified them for myself;* claimed them as his own, and set them apart for his own use, or ordered them to be set apart: (see <sup><04B12></sup>Exodus 13:2).

**Ver. 18.** *And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.*] Gave up his right in the firstborn, and instead of them took the Levites for his use and service: (see <sup><04B12></sup>Numbers 3:12).



**Ver. 19.** *And I have given the Levites [as] a gift to Aaron and his sons, from among the children of Israel,* etc.] Or I have given the Levites that were given; that is, the Lord gave to Aaron and his sons the Levites, that were first given to him; as they were, when brought before him, and the children of Israel laid hands on them, and they were offered before the Lord, (<sup>(04810)</sup>Numbers 8:10,11);

*to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation;* to do what otherwise they must have done, watch and guard the tabernacle, carry the sacrifices to the priests, assist them at the altar, take down and set up the tabernacle, and carry it, and the vessels of it, from place to place:

*and to make an atonement for the children of Israel;* not by offering sacrifices for them, which was the work of the priests, but by being now offered themselves, (<sup>(04810)</sup>Numbers 8:10,11,13); that they themselves might be the atonement of their souls as Aben Ezra expresses it, as well as they were by their service hereafter a means of preserving the Israelites from death; which may be interpreted of making an atonement, which Phinehas is said to do by his deed, though no sacrifice was offered, (<sup>(04810)</sup>Numbers 25:7,8,13); which sense seems to be confirmed by what follows:

*that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh to the sanctuary;* by approaching nearer than they should, touching what they ought not, intruding themselves into service they were not called to, or doing it amiss, not being instructed in it, or inured to it as the Levites were. The phrase, “the children of Israel”, is five times used in this verse, to denote the love of God to them, as Jarchi observes.

**Ver. 20.** *And Moses and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel,* etc.] The several parties concerned in the consecration of the Levites: these

*did to the Levites according unto all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel unto them:* which, as Jarchi notes, is said to the praise of them that did it, and of what was done by them; everything was done that was ordered, and in the manner in which it was prescribed; Moses sprinkled, or ordered to be sprinkled, the water of purification on them, and set them before the tabernacle, and before the Lord; the children of Israel laid their hands on them, and Aaron waved them, offered the sacrifices for them.

**Ver. 21.** *And the Levites were purified*, etc.] From sin, by the sprinkling of the sin water, or water of purification on them, (<sup><048D></sup>Numbers 8:7);

*and they washed their clothes*; that they might have no defilement about them, neither in their bodies, nor in their garments:

*and Aaron offered them [as] an offering before the Lord*; a wave offering, as in (<sup><048E></sup>Numbers 8:11);

*and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them*; by offering the sacrifices for them, (<sup><048F></sup>Numbers 8:12).

**Ver. 22.** *And after that went the Levites in*, etc.] Into the court of the tabernacle, being at the door of it when the above rites and ceremonies of their consecration were performed:

*to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, before Aaron and his sons*; in their presence, and by their order, as they should direct them:

*as the Lord had commanded Moses, so did they unto them*; Aaron and his sons did to the then present Levites according to the command of God by Moses; they exactly observed every punctilio of it, and complied with it; and this the sons of Aaron did continually to the sons of the Levites, as Aben Ezra remarks, in all succeeding ages; when the Levites were consecrated to their service, the same things were done unto them that are here ordered.

**Ver. 23.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] At the same time he gave the instructions about the consecration of the Levites, the time of their entrance on their service, and of leaving it, was fixed:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 24.** *This [is it] that [belongeth] unto the Levites*, etc.] The fixed and settled time for their service, as is after related:

*from twenty and five years old and upward, they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation*; in (<sup><049A></sup>Numbers 4:3); the time for the Levites entering on the work of the tabernacle is fixed to thirty years and upward, which Jarchi reconciles thus; at twenty five years old the Levite goes in to learn the rites of service, and he learns five years, and when thirty years of age he services; the same is observed by others<sup>f89</sup>; but

what Aben Ezra proposes seems much better; at thirty years of age a Levite entered into the service of bearing and carrying burdens; and at twenty five years of age he entered into the service of the tent or tabernacle, where he was employed in lighter service, such as opening and shutting the doors of the sanctuary, keeping out strangers and unclean persons, and singing the songs of the sanctuary; but was not concerned till thirty years of age in carrying the vessels of the sanctuary on the shoulders, as the Kohathites; or in taking down and setting up the tabernacle, loading and unloading the wagons, as the Gershonites and Merarites; which is the business assigned unto them, and spoken of in (<sup>0402</sup>Numbers 4:22-35), where the age of thirty years, and upward, is mentioned, as the time of their entrance on it, (<sup>0403</sup>Numbers 4:23,30).

**Ver. 25.** *And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service [thereof],* etc.] The heavy service of it:

*and shall serve no more;* by bearing and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary upon their shoulders, as Jarchi interprets it; this, according to the Jewish writers, was only in force while the tabernacle was in the wilderness, and was moved from place to place: but when it had a fixed habitation, and that laborious service of bearing and carrying the vessels of it ceased, years made no difference in the Levites, or disqualified them for service; for it is said <sup>f90</sup>, that the Levites were not bound by this law, but in the time of the tabernacle; but when it was at Shiloh, and at Jerusalem, where there was no bearing and carrying upon the shoulder, the Levites were not rejected on account of years, only for their voice, when they had lost that, and could not sing.

**Ver. 26.** *But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] By giving advice, instructing younger Levites, and doing lighter service. Jarchi says, they shall return to shutting of doors, singing and loading wagons; but the last especially seems too burdensome: the ministry of such is explained by the next clause,

*to keep the charge;* of the tabernacle, to watch and observe that no stranger or unclean person enter into it; and this they were capable of when at the age of fifty, and upwards:

*and shall do no service;* heavy and laborious:

*thus thou shall do unto the Levites touching their charge;* dismiss them from service when at such an age, or however make their service easier; for

this respects ancient men, as Aben Ezra notes; though it may include both their entrance on their work, and their cessation from it.

# CHAPTER 9

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 9

In this chapter the command for keeping the passover is repeated, and it was accordingly kept, (<sup>000E</sup>Numbers 9:1-5); but some persons being defiled and disqualified for observing it, Moses inquires of the Lord, on their solicitation, what should be done in such a case, (<sup>000E</sup>Numbers 9:6-8); when it was ordered to be kept by such, and those on journeys, on the fourteenth day of the second month, but not by others, who were to observe it according to its first appointment, (<sup>000E</sup>Numbers 9:9-14); and an account is given of the appearance of the cloud by day, and fire by night, upon the tabernacle, which directed the children of Israel when to journey, and when to pitch their tents, (<sup>000E</sup>Numbers 9:15-23).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai,* etc.] While the people of Israel were encamped there, before they took their journey from thence:

*in the first month of the second year, after they were come out of the land of Egypt:* the following order was given some time in the first month of the second year of Israel's departure out of Egypt; the precise day is not mentioned, it must be in the beginning of the month before the fourteenth day of it, in which the passover is ordered to be kept, according to the first institution of it; very probably immediately after the setting up of the tabernacle, and the consecration of Aaron and his sons; and it must be before the numbering of the people the fixing of their standards, the appointment of the Levites, and the dedication of them; since the order for the numbering of the people was on the first day of the second month, (<sup>000E</sup>Numbers 1:1), but the account of them was postponed to this time, in order to give a relation of an affair which was not finished until the second month, and therefore the whole is laid together here:

*saying,* as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Let the children of Israel also keep the passover,* etc.] Though this ordinance was enjoined the people of Israel, and observed by them at the time of their coming out of Egypt, and had been since repeated,

(<sup>(12315)</sup>Leviticus 23:5); yet without a fresh precept, or an explanation of the former, they seemed not to be obliged, or might not be sensible that they were obliged to keep it, until they came into the land of Canaan, (<sup>(12325)</sup>Exodus 12:25); and therefore a new order is given them to observe it:

*at his appointed season*; and what that season is is next declared.

**Ver. 3.** *In the fourteenth day of this month*, etc.] The first month, the month Nisan or Abib, answering to part of our March:

*at even ye shall keep it, in his appointed season*: between the two evenings, (<sup>(12316)</sup>Exodus 12:6); and even if it fall on the sabbath day, as Jarchi; and this was a sabbath day, according to the Jewish writers <sup>f91</sup>:

*according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof shall ye keep it*; the former of these, according to Jarchi, respects the lamb, and the requisites of it, that it should be without blemish, a male, and of the first year; and the latter, according to him and others, the removal of the leaven, and the seven days of unleavened bread, and the eating of the lamb with bitter herbs: they take in no doubt all that were prescribed by the original law, except the sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts, and also eating the passover in haste, with their loins girt, and shoes on their feet, and staves in their hands; though some think these latter might be observed at this time, when they were unsettled.

**Ver. 4.** *And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover.*] The time now drawing nigh for the observation of it, it being now almost a year since their coming out of Egypt.

**Ver. 5.** *And they kept the passover on the fourteenth, day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai*, etc.] No mention is made of keeping the feast of unleavened bread seven days, only of the passover, which indeed was only enjoined at this time, though the feast of unleavened bread used to follow it, and did in later times; but perhaps it would not have been an easy matter to have got the flour to make it of, sufficient for so large a body of people, for seven days together in the wilderness; though they might be able to furnish themselves with what was enough for one meal from the neighbouring countries, and especially from Midian, where Jethro, Moses's father, lived, and which was not very far from Sinai, where the Israelites now were:

*according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel*; which is observed to their honour; though Jarchi gives this as a reason why this book does not begin with this account, as the order of things seems to require, because it was to the reproach of the Israelites, that all the forty years they were in the wilderness they kept but this passover only; the reason of which was, because of the omission of circumcision during that time, through the inconveniences of travelling, and the danger of circumcision in it, without which their children could not eat of the passover, (<sup><0128></sup>Exodus 12:48).

**Ver. 6.** *And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan adds,

“who died by them suddenly,”

whereby pollution was contracted, (see <sup><0419></sup>Numbers 6:9); though perhaps this was a whole house or family, one of which was dead, and so all were defiled, being in the place where the dead body was, or had touched it, or been concerned however in the burying of it, and on account of which were unclean seven days, and so might not eat of any holy things, as the passover; and though at the first institution there was no such law, yet since that time there was, which obliged them, (see <sup><0472></sup>Leviticus 7:20,21); and it is said <sup>f92</sup>, that the section concerning the red heifer, and so of defilement by a dead body, was delivered on the day the tabernacle was erected, even on the first day of the first month; and though recorded in (<sup><0491></sup>Numbers 19:1-22); yet was given out before this; and indeed otherwise it is not easy to conceive how these men should know that the dead body of a man was defiling:

*that they could not keep the passover on that day*; as others did, the fourteenth of Nisan, it being, according to the Targum of Jonathan, the seventh day of their defilement:

*and they came before Moses, and before Aaron, on that day*; on the selfsame day the passover was kept, and they were sensible of their pollution, which disqualified for it; and therefore it should rather seem to be the first day of their pollution than their last; since otherwise they would doubtless have inquired about this matter before the passover came; unless the time of their pollution was so near out, that they thought they might eat it safely, on which they desired advice.

**Ver. 7.** *And those men said unto him,* etc.] To Moses, who was the chief magistrate, though Aaron was the high priest. Jarchi says, they were both sitting together when the men came, and put the question to them, but it was not proper to speak to one after another; for if Moses knew not, how should Aaron know? says he; the more difficult matters were brought to Moses, and he gave answers to them:

*we [are] defiled by the dead body of a man;* they had touched it, or had been where it was, or at the funeral of it, and so were defiled: this they knew was their case by a law before mentioned, and which they speak of, not as a sin purposely committed by them, but as what had unhappily befallen them, and they could not avoid; and express their concern, that upon this account they should be deprived of the ordinance of the passover and as this confession shows an ingenuous disposition, so what follows, a pious, religious, and devotional frame of mind:

*wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel?* they speak very honourably of the ordinance of the passover, they call it “an offering of the Lord”, the passover lamb being a slain sacrifice; and this offered to the Lord, by way of thanksgiving, for, and in commemoration of, their wonderful deliverance out of Egypt, and done in faith of Christ the passover, to be sacrificed for them; and it gave them much uneasiness that they were debarred by this occasional and unavoidable uncleanness, that was upon them, from keeping it; and what added to it was, that they could not observe it on the day which the Lord had appointed, and when the whole body of the children of Israel were employed in it; for it is no small pleasure to a good man to observe every ordinance of God in the manner and at the time he directs to, and his people in general are attending to the same; and the rather they were urgent in their expostulations, because it is said<sup>193</sup>, this was the seventh and last day of their pollution, when they should be clean at evening, and the passover was not to be eaten until the evening, and therefore so earnestly expostulate why they should be kept back from it.

**Ver. 8.** *And Moses said unto them, stand still,* etc.] Where they were; Aben Ezra says, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

*and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you;* as it was a singular case, of which there had been no instance before, Moses would not determine anything about it himself, but would inquire of the Lord his



mind and will concerning it; and for that purpose, very probably, went into the most holy place, where the Lord had promised to meet him and commune with him, from off the mercy seat, about any matter of difficulty he should inquire about, (<sup>1752</sup>Exodus 25:22).

**Ver. 9.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] From between the cherubim, after he had laid the case before him, and he gave him an answer:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 10.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, saying*, etc.] Not to the men only that came to Moses for advice, but to the body of the people; for the answer of the Lord concerned them all, and carried in it a rule to be observed in the like case, and others mentioned, in all succeeding ages, as long as the passover was an ordinance of God:

*if any man of you*; or “a man, a man”, or any private man; for, according to the Jewish writers, this law only respects private persons, as those were who were the occasion of its being made:

*or of your posterity*; or “in your generations”<sup>f94</sup>, or “ages”; which shows that this law respected future times, and not the present case only:

*shall be unclean by reason of a dead body*; (see <sup>1006</sup>Numbers 9:6); Maimonides<sup>f95</sup> says, this only respects uncleanness by a dead body, and not uncleanness by any creeping thing; for such as were unclean by them might sacrifice, though a private person, and eat the passover at evening with purity, when he had been cleansed: yet he says elsewhere<sup>f96</sup>, that such that had issues, and menstruous women, and those that lay with them, and women in childbed, were unclean, and were put off to the second passover; and so the Targum of Jonathan here adds,

“or that has an issue, or a leprous person:”

*or [be] in a journey afar off*; which, according to Ben Gersom, was fifteen miles; so in the Misnah<sup>f97</sup>, and the commentators on it:

*yet he shall keep the passover of the Lord*; not the first, but second, according to the directions given in (<sup>1011</sup>Numbers 9:11-14).

**Ver. 11.** *The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it*, etc.] The month Ijar, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our April and part of May; so that there was a month allowed for those

that were defiled to cleanse themselves; and for those on a journey to return home and prepare for the passover, which was not to be totally omitted, nor deferred any longer; and it was to be kept on the same day of the month, and at the same time of the day the first passover was observed; still the more to keep in mind the saving of their firstborn; and their deliverance out of Egypt at that time: an instance of keeping such a passover we have in (<sup><401></sup>2 Chronicles 30:1,2), etc.

*[and] eat it with unleavened bread and bitter [herbs]*; in the same manner as the first passover was eaten, (<sup><027></sup>Exodus 12:8); only no mention is made of keeping the feast of unleavened bread seven days, which some think those were not obliged unto at this time, only to keep the feast of the passover.

**Ver. 12.** *They shall leave none of it unto the morning*, etc.] None of the flesh of the passover lamb, what was left was to be burnt with fire, (<sup><020></sup>Exodus 12:10);

*nor break any bone of it*; the same was enjoined, (see Gill on “<sup><024></sup>Exodus 12:46”);

*according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it*: as when observed in its time, excepting the feast of unleavened bread, which followed the first passover, and those rites which were peculiar to the passover, as kept at their first coming out of Egypt; as the sprinkling the blood of the lamb on the doorposts, eating it in haste, etc.

**Ver. 13.** *But the man that [is] clean*, etc.] Free from any pollution by a dead body, or the like:

*and is not in a journey*; in a distant country; for if he was on a journey in his own nation, he ought to return and attend the passover, which all the males from the several parts of the land were obliged unto; wherefore the Vulgate Latin version of (<sup><090></sup>Numbers 9:10); is a wrong one; “or in a way afar off in your nation”; for at whatsoever distance they were in their own nation, they were bound to appear:

*and forbearth to keep the passover*; the first passover in the first month, the month Nisan, wilfully, through negligence, or not caring to be at the expense and trouble of it, or on any pretence whatsoever: Ben Gersom interprets it of one that will not keep neither the first nor the second passover:

*even the same soul shall be cut off from his people*; either be excommunicated from them, or cut off by death by the immediate hand of God:

*because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season*: this is the ground and reason of the resentment; it was a breach of the divine command, which required this offering; ingratitude to God, being a thank offering for a singular deliverance; and this aggravated by its not being brought at the appointed time, which was the fit time for it:

*that man shall bear his sin*; be chargeable with the guilt of it, and bear the punishment of it; he on himself, as Aben Ezra notes, he, and he only; not his wife and family, for he being the head and master of the family, it lay upon him to provide the passover lamb for himself and his house.

**Ver. 14.** *And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the Lord*, etc.] Then he must become a proselyte of righteousness, and be circumcised, or otherwise he might not eat of the passover, (<sup>(123)</sup>Exodus 12:48); Ben Gersom interprets this of the second passover, and of a proselyte that was not obliged to the first, he not being then a proselyte, but became one between the first and the second; and so Aben Ezra understands it of a second passover, though he observes, that some say the first is meant:

*according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do*; according to the several rites and ceremonies, whether of the first or second passover, that an Israelite was obliged to observe, the same a proselyte was to observe, and what they were has been already taken notice of:

*ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and for him that was born in the land*: for a proselyte, and a native of Israel; (see <sup>(124)</sup>Exodus 12:49).

**Ver. 15.** *And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up*, etc.] Which was the first day of the first month in the second year of the people of Israel's coming out of Egypt, (<sup>(125)</sup>Exodus 40:1,2,17);

*the cloud covered the tabernacle, [namely], the tent of the testimony*; that part of the tabernacle in which the testimony was, that is, where the ark was, in which the law was put, called the testimony; and this was the most holy place; and over the tent or covering of that was this cloud, which

settled upon it, as Ben Gersom thinks, after the seven days of the consecration of Aaron and his sons; on the eighth day, when it was said unto the people of Israel, “today will the Lord appear unto you”, (<sup><RB1></sup>Leviticus 9:1,4); “and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you”, (<sup><RB5></sup>Leviticus 9:6); and here the Targum of Jonathan calls this cloud the cloud of glory, because of the glory of God in it; of which (see <sup><RB4></sup>Exodus 40:34-38);

*and at even there was upon the tabernacle, as it were, the appearance of fire until the morning*; the same phenomenon, which looked like a cloud in the daytime, appeared like fire in the same place in the nighttime, throughout the whole of it until morning light, when it was seen as a cloud again: this was a token of the presence of God with the people of Israel, of his protection of them, and being a guide unto them by night and day, while in the wilderness; and was a figure of his being the same to his church and people, in the present state of things; (see <sup><RB5></sup>Isaiah 4:5).

**Ver. 16.** *So it was alway*, etc.] Night and day, as long as the people of Israel were in the wilderness, (see <sup><RB2></sup>Exodus 13:21,22 <sup><RB9></sup>Nehemiah 9:19);

*the cloud covered it [by day]*: the phrase, “by day”, is not in the text, but is easily and necessarily supplied from (<sup><RB8></sup>Exodus 40:38); and as it is in the Targum of Jonathan, and in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and which the following clause requires:

*and the appearance of fire by night*; when as a cloud it could not be because of the darkness of the night; as in the daytime it could not be discerned as a body of fire or light, because of the light of the sun; but being seen under these different forms, was serviceable both by day and night, for the following purposes.

**Ver. 17.** *And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle*, etc.] Or went up from it, higher than it was before, yet not out of sight, but hung as it were hovering in the air over the tabernacle, but at some distance from it; this was done by the Lord himself:

*then after that the children of Israel journeyed*; as soon as they saw the cloud moving upwards, the Levites took down the tabernacle, and each took their post assigned them in the carriage of it, and the priests blew their trumpets mentioned in (<sup><RB10></sup>Numbers 10:2,4,8-10), and the whole camp moved and marched on in their journey:

*and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents;* when it stopped and remained without any motion, it was a signal to the children of Israel to stop also, and to set up the tabernacle, and pitch their tents about it by their standards, and according to the order of encampment which had been given them.

**Ver. 18.** *At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed,* etc.] Or “mouth of the Lord”; not that there was any command in form given, or any audible voice heard, directing when to march; but the removal of the cloud was interpretatively the order and command of God for them to move also:

*and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched;* their tents; when the cloud stopped, they understood that as a signal to them, as a token of the will of God that they should stop likewise; it was to them as an authoritative command, which they obeyed:

*as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle, they rested in their tents;* whether a longer or a shorter time, as is after expressed.

**Ver. 19.** *And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days,* etc.] Or years, for days are sometimes put for years, and in some places the cloud tarried several years; or however, if it stayed but a month or a year in any place, as in (<sup>4012</sup>Numbers 9:22);

*then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not;* they not only kept watching when it would move, or set sentinels for that purpose to observe it, but they kept the charge, order, or commandment, which the tarrying of the cloud was a token of, and did not attempt to proceed in their journey until they had an intimation so to do by its motion; and all this while, likewise, the tabernacle being up, they observed all the precepts and ordinances of the Lord in the service of it.

**Ver. 20.** *And [so] it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle,* etc.] Or “days of number”, which were so few that they might be easily numbered: the Targum of Jonathan interprets them of the seven days of the week, as if the sense was, when the cloud rested a week on the tabernacle:

*according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents;* during these few days, be they a week, or more, or less:

*and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed;* when it removed from the tabernacle.

**Ver. 21.** *And [so] it was when the cloud abode from even unto the morning,* etc.] The whole night, during which time they rested in their beds:

*and [that] the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed; whether [it was] by day or night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed;* whether at morning or midnight; for sometimes, as Aben Ezra observes, they travelled in the night; whensoever their sentinels gave notice that the cloud was taken up, even though at midnight, they arose and prepared for their journey; and by this it is evident, that the appearance by day and night was the same body called the cloud, though beheld in a different view, in the daytime as a cloud, in the nighttime as fire.

**Ver. 22.** *Or [whether it were] two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle,* etc.] Sometimes it tarried but half a day, sometimes a whole day, sometimes two days, at other times a whole month, and even a year; a full year, as the Targum of Jonathan and Aben Ezra; or a longer time, as the Vulgate Latin version, for in one place it tarried eighteen years, as Maimonides says<sup>f98</sup>; some say<sup>f99</sup> nineteen years, as in Kadeshbarnea:

*remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not;* so that, as the same writer observes, it was not because the children of Israel lost their way in the wilderness and wandered about, not knowing where they were, or which way they should go; hence the Arabians call the wilderness, the wilderness of wandering, nor that they were so long wandering in it as forty years, but because it was the will of God that should stay so long at one place, and so long at another, whereby their stay in it was protracted to such a length of time, according to his sovereign will:

*but when it was taken up they journeyed;* though they had continued ever so long, and their situation ever so agreeable.

**Ver. 23.** *At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents,* etc.] Though ever so disagreeable:

*and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed;* though the circumstances might be such, that they could have liked a continuance; but

whether agreeable or disagreeable, they were obedient to the divine will: this, or what is equivalent to it, is frequently observed in this paragraph, to show that the Israelites, though they were an obstinate and perverse people, and must in general be desirous of getting as soon as they could into the land of promise, yet in this case, in all their stations and journeys, were submissive and obedient to the divine will, as all good men should be with respect to happiness; and happy are they who have God to be their guide through it, even unto death:

*they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses*; observed the rest or motion of the cloud, the order and command of God signified thereby, as it was made known unto them by the ministry and means of Moses.

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 10

This chapter gives an account of the directions given for making two silver trumpets, and of the use of them, the ends and purposes for which they were to be made, (<sup><OH01></sup>Numbers 10:1-10); and of the time of taking up of the cloud from the tabernacle, and of the removal of the camp of Israel from the wilderness of Sinai, and of the order of their march, (<sup><OH01></sup>Numbers 10:11-28); when Moses most earnestly passed Hobab, his brother in law, to continue with him, (<sup><OH02></sup>Numbers 10:29-32); and the chapter is closed with the prayer of Moses at the setting forward of the ark, and the resting of it, (<sup><OH03></sup>Numbers 10:33-36).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] When the following directions concerning the trumpets were given is not certain; it may be at the time when the order of the camps of Israel was fixed, and is here recorded before the journeying of them, which was one use they were to be put unto, (<sup><OH02></sup>Numbers 10:2);

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Make thee two trumpets of silver*, etc.] A metal very valuable and precious, durable, and fit for sound; only two are ordered, Aaron having but two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, who were to blow with them, (<sup><OH03></sup>Numbers 10:8); for though Moses's order is, "make thee", or for thee, yet not for his own use, but for the priests to use when he should order them: the Targum of Jonathan adds, of what is thine own, as if they were to be made at his own expense; but others say, and which is more probable, that they were to be made at the public expense: Josephus<sup>f100</sup> gives a description of them, and says, that they were little less than a cubit long, the pipe of them narrow, but broader about the mouth to receive the breath, and ended like a bell; they seem to be much of the shape of our trumpets: these trumpets were an emblem of the ministry of the Gospel, called the great trumpet, and in the ministration of which, the preachers of it are to lift up their voice like a trumpet, to show men their perishing condition through sin, and to encourage them, as such who are ready to



perish, to come to Christ for salvation, (<sup>22713</sup>Isaiah 27:13 58:1); the Gospel is comparable to silver, being fetched out of the mines of the sacred Scriptures, pure and free from the dross of errors and human inventions, will bear to be tried by the standard of the word, and is lasting and durable, yea, the everlasting Gospel; as well as valuable and precious, containing the unsearchable riches of Christ, etc. treasures of divine truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, it is more valuable and precious than silver, not to be obtained by that, more profitable and useful, more satisfying and lasting: the number two may be applicable to the two dispensations, under which the Gospel has been ministered, directing to the same Saviour, and to the same way of salvation, by his grace, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and to the two Testaments, which agree in the same truths respecting his person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death; and to the prophets and apostles of both dispensations and testaments, who have united in laying Christ as the foundation; and also to the two witnesses that are still to prophecy in sackcloth, that is, preach the Gospel and blow the trumpet of it: (<sup>6113</sup>Revelation 11:3)

*of an whole piece shall thou make them;* of one solid mass of silver, beaten with an hammer, as Jarchi, such a piece as the candlestick was made of in (<sup>1258</sup>Exodus 25:31), where the same word is used as here, and rendered “beaten work”: this may denote the pure and unmixed Gospel of Christ, having no dross, nor bad nor base metal of human corruptions in it; no jar, discord, or contradiction in it, but all in perfect harmony and agreement; and the whole of it, no part of it dropped or concealed; and the ministry of it, laboured by those employed in it, who study to show themselves workmen that need not be ashamed:

*that thou mayest use them for the calling the assembly;* the body of the people of Israel, either on civil or sacred accounts, (see <sup>2015</sup>Joel 1:15,16); the ministry of the Gospel is for the calling and gathering of souls to Christ, and to his churches; even the remnant of Israel, all that are given to Christ and redeemed by his blood, whether Jews or Gentiles; these are gathered out of the world, which is an act of distinguishing grace; it is by means of the Gospel trumpet that they are awakened, and quickened, and directed to Christ:

*and for the journeying of the camps:* both of the four camps of the Israelites, and the camp of the Levites, to direct them when they should set forward on a journey: and of like use is the ministry of the Gospel; saints

are pilgrims and travellers here; they are passing through a wilderness, their way is attended with many difficulties; Canaan is the place they are travelling to, and the Gospel is of singular use to them by the way, both to refresh them with its joyful sound, and to direct them in the path in which they should go.

**Ver. 3.** *And when they shall blow with them*, etc.] With both the trumpets, in an even and continued sound, that is, the sons of Aaron:

*all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; to hear what was to be said unto them: blowing both the trumpets together was a token that the whole congregation was called to meet together at the tabernacle, the door of which was the usual place of assembling, especially on religious counts, for there also the Lord met them, (<sup>129E</sup>Exodus 29:42,43).

**Ver. 4.** *And if they blow [but] with one [trumpet]*, etc.] With only one of them, or but once, with one sounding, and that an even one as before:

*then the princes, [which are] the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee*: and they only or alone, as Aben Ezra: by this token, or by this difference of blowing both trumpets, or only one, it was, easily known when the whole congregation or when the princes only were to meet Moses at the same place, the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and all are to attend divine service, and the ministry of the word, even the whole church of God, and all the members of it, high and low, rich and poor, princes and people.

**Ver. 5.** *When ye blow an alarm*, etc.] Making a broken, uneven, and quavering sound, which is called a “tara-tan-tara”:

*then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward*; the camps of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, which lay to the east of the tabernacle, at the front of it; (see <sup>400B</sup>Numbers 1:3,5,7); this was to be the token for their march, which was first of all; (<sup>401A</sup>Numbers 10:14).

**Ver. 6.** *When ye blow an alarm the second time*, etc.] Another “tara-tan-tara”:

*then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey*; the camps of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, which were encamped on the south side of the tabernacle, (<sup>402B</sup>Numbers 2:10,12,14); and, as Josephus <sup>f101</sup>says,

at the third sounding of the alarm, that part of the camp which lay to the west moved, which were the camps of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, (<sup><4128></sup>Numbers 2:18,20,22); and at the fourth sounding, as he says, those which were at the north, the camps of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, (<sup><4125></sup>Numbers 2:25,27,29); which, though not expressed in the Hebrew text, are added in the Septuagint version, as they are to be understood:

*they shall blow an alarm for their journeys*; for the journeys of the said camps, as a signal or token when they should begin to march.

**Ver. 7.** *But when the congregation is to be gathered together*, etc.] At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and not to move in separate camps or bodies one after another:

*you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm*; blow with an even and uninterrupted sound, and not with a broken and quavering one; by which the congregation and camps were distinguished from one another, the same certain sound being given to each constantly, whereby they knew which were called to motion: (see <sup><4148></sup>1 Corinthians 14:8); according to Ben Gersom blowing was a voice drawn out, and joined or continued; an alarm, a voice not joined, but broken.

**Ver. 8.** *And the sons of Aaron the priests shall blow with the trumpets*, etc.] Eleazar and Ithamar, the one with the one and the other with the other, there being at first but two, as there were but two priests; but in Solomon's time there were an hundred twenty priests, and as many trumpets, (<sup><4152></sup>2 Chronicles 5:12); hence Maimonides says <sup>f102</sup>, there were never fewer than two trumpets, nor more than an hundred twenty;

*and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations*: for they were not only for present use, for the journeying of the camps in the wilderness, but for calling together the assembly in later times, as well as for other uses next mentioned; which would obtain in future ages till the coming of Christ, and even under the Gospel dispensation the mystical use of them continues, the preaching of the everlasting Gospel.

**Ver. 9.** *And when ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you*, etc.] That enters in to invade it, to besiege cities, and distress the inhabitants of it:

*then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets:* a “tara-tan-tara” with both of them, to call the several tribes together to join against the enemy; or to call them to fasting and humiliation, to repentance and prayer, to seek the Lord in the exercise of these, and cry for help and assistance, for victory and salvation; for, as Ben Gersom observes, by this alarm their hearts would be broken and become contrite, and they would return to the Lord, and he would have mercy on them when they pray unto him; for such a sound makes a man’s heart shake and tremble, according to (<sup><3186></sup>Amos 3:6); (see <sup><3049></sup>Jeremiah 4:19); this is a third use of the trumpets, and in a mystical sense it may be observed, that saints are in a militant state, and have many enemies that come in to them to oppress them, sin, Satan, and the world; and the Gospel calls and encourages them to fight, furnishes them with armour, and assures them of victory, and directs them where to fight and with whom, and bids them endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ:

*and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God;* for a book of remembrance is written for them that fear God, humble themselves before him, and pray unto him:

*and ye shall be saved from your enemies;* as Israel from their temporal, so the people of God from their spiritual enemies, being made more than conquerors through him that loved them.

**Ver. 10.** *Also in the day of your gladness,* etc.] When they should return from the enemy’s country conquerors, or have vanquished the enemy that came against them into their own land, and so would fix a day of rejoicing, like the days of Purim, and the seven days when Hezekiah rejoiced, as Aben Ezra observes; and so any time of rejoicing on account of any extraordinary deliverance and salvation:

*and in your solemn days;* or festivals, as the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, which were proclaimed by sound of trumpet, (<sup><0812></sup>Leviticus 23:2);

*and in the beginnings of your months;* their new moons, especially on the first day of the seventh month, which was a feast of blowing of trumpets, (<sup><0824></sup>Leviticus 23:24);

*ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over your peace offerings;* expressing joy for the acceptance of them, and especially when they had, by faith, a view of the great sacrifice of Christ typified by

them: this is a fourth use of the trumpets, and may denote the spiritual joy had by believers, through the ministration of the Gospel, and ordinances of it on the Lord's day, and other seasons, and particularly at the feast of the Lord's supper, in the view of peace and reconciliation, and atonement made by the sacrifice of Christ:

*that they may be to you for a memorial before your God*; as it were, to put him in mind of the promises he has made, and the blessings he has laid up as a covenant God for his people:

*I [am] the Lord your God*; who had a right to appoint such things to be observed by them, and by whom, as their covenant God, they were laid under obligation to regard them.

**Ver. 11.** *And it came to pass, on the twentieth [day] of the second month, in the second year,* etc.] Which was the twentieth of the month Ijar, in the second year of the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt; who, as it appears from hence, compared with (<sup><0290></sup>Exodus 19:1); had been in the wilderness of Sinai twelve months wanting ten days; so Jarchi and other Jewish writers <sup>f103</sup>, with whom Aben Ezra agrees, who says it was near a year:

*that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony*; that part of the tabernacle where the ark of the testimony stood, even the most holy place, over which the cloud was, the token of the divine Presence, and which it covered; but now was taken up from it, and went up higher above it, and was a signal for the motion of the camps of Israel to set forward in their journey towards Canaan's land.

**Ver. 12.** *And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai,* etc.] Each of their camps removed from thence, and so everyone took their journey;

*and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran*; which was a signal for the camps to rest and pitch their tents; this was after they had gone three days journey, and were come to Taberah, which, it is probable, was in the wilderness of Paran; otherwise we read of their pitching in the wilderness of Paran, after they had been a month at Kibrothhattaavah, (<sup><04134></sup>Numbers 11:34,35), and seven days at Hazeroth, (<sup><04216></sup>Numbers 12:16); so they went from one wilderness to another; of this wilderness, (see Gill on "<sup><01221></sup>Genesis 21:21").

**Ver. 13.** *And they first took their journey, according to the commandment of the Lord, etc.]* Which was virtually contained in and signified by the taking up of the cloud, (see <sup><O018></sup>Numbers 9:18);

*by the hand of Moses*; by his means and ministry, who had informed them, that it was the will of God, that when they saw the cloud taken up to set forward in their journey, and they were obedient thereunto.

**Ver. 14.** *In the first [place] went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah, etc.]* Which tribe had the honour to go foremost and lead the van, the chief ruler, the Messiah being to come of it, as he did; who is King of Israel, and has gone forth at the head of them, fighting their battles for them:

*according to their armies*: having, besides the army of the tribe of Judah, the armies of the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun under his standard:

*and over his host [was] Nahshon the son of Amminadab*; he was captain general of the army of the tribe of Judah, as Nethaneel was over the host of the tribe of Issachar, (<sup><O015></sup>Numbers 10:15); and Eliab over the host of the tribe of Zebulun, (<sup><O016></sup>Numbers 10:16); the same commanders as were fixed at the time of settling the order of their encampment, (<sup><O017></sup>Numbers 2:3,5,7).

**Ver. 15.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar [was] Nethaneel the son of Zuar.]* (See Gill on "<sup><O014></sup>Numbers 10:14").

**Ver. 16.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun [was] Eliab the son of Helon.]* (See Gill on "<sup><O014></sup>Numbers 10:14").

**Ver. 17.** *And the tabernacle was taken down, etc.]* By the Levites, as Aben Ezra, and which appears to be their work, from (<sup><O015></sup>Numbers 1:51); this began to be done by them as soon as the cloud was perceived to move upwards, and the camp of Judah was preparing to march; and after Aaron and his sons had taken the holy vessels out of the holy and most holy place, and had packed up and covered them as directed, (<sup><O015></sup>Numbers 4:5-15); this was an emblem of the taking down of the Jewish church state, the abolition of the service of the sanctuary, as well as of the changeable condition of the Gospel church in the wilderness, which is not always in one and the same place, but is moved from place to place, and that by the ministers of the word, signified by the Levites, who are sent and carry the Gospel here and there:

*and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle*; the former, the hangings and vail, and the latter the boards, pillars, sockets, etc. each of them having wagons for their assistance: these followed immediately after the camp of Judah.

**Ver. 18.** *And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies*, etc.] Next proceeded the standard of Reuben, having under it the tribes of Simeon and Gad, (<sup><CH09></sup>Numbers 10:19,20); as “Reuben” signifies, “behold the son”, and he had the tabernacle borne before him and the holy things behind him, which way soever this camp looked, it had in view what was a type of Christ the Son of God, the object of faith, the ark.

*and over his host [was] Elizur the son of Shedeur*; over which respective armies were the same captains as in (<sup><CH20></sup>Numbers 2:10,12,14);

**Ver. 19.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon [was] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai*. (See Gill on “<sup><CH08></sup>Numbers 10:18”).

**Ver. 20.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad [was] Eliasaph the son of Deuel*. (See Gill on “<sup><CH08></sup>Numbers 10:18”).

**Ver. 21.** *And the Kohathites set forward*, etc.] After the standard of the camps of Reuben, and between that and the standard of the camp of Ephraim, to, which there is an allusion in (<sup><PS102></sup>Psalms 80:2);

*bearing the sanctuary*, or the holy things, as Jarchi; the ark, as Aben Ezra; though not that only, which indeed might be eminently called so, it standing in the most holy place, over which were the mercy seat and cherubim, the residence of the divine Majesty; but all the holy things in the holy place, the candlestick, shewbread table, and the two altars, the altar of incense in the holy place, and the altar of burnt offerings in the court these they bore on their shoulders, and had no wagons allowed for their assistance:

*and [the other] did set up the tabernacle against they came*; that is, the sons of Gershon and Merari, who went before between the standard of Judah and the standard of Reuben, carrying the heavier and more cumbersome parts of the tabernacle; which, when Judah pitched their tents, at the signal of the cloud, they immediately put together, and erected, and got it ready, by such time as the Kohathites came up to them, that so the ark and other holy things might be at once put into it, and set in their proper places.



**Ver. 22.** *And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies*, etc.] Next followed the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were Manasseh and Benjamin, (<sup>Q4123</sup>Numbers 10:23,24);

*and over his host [was] Elishama the son of Ammihud*; over whom were the same captains, as in (<sup>Q4123</sup>Numbers 2:18,20,22).

**Ver. 23.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh [was] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q4122</sup>Numbers 10:22”).

**Ver. 24.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin [was] Abidan the son of Gideoni.* (See Gill on “<sup>Q4122</sup>Numbers 10:22”).

**Ver. 25.** *And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward*, etc.] Next after that of Ephraim, the last of all: which was the rearward of all the camps throughout their host; which brought up the rear, and was fittest for that purpose, being the most numerous, next to that of Judah, which led the van; or, the gatherer up of all the camps<sup>f104</sup>, under which were collected and brought on all that belonged to the other tribes; as all under twenty years of age, which were not taken into the camps, and the women and children, and weak and sickly persons, the mixed multitude, and all stragglers: these were all under the care and charge of this camp, and under the standard of which were Asher and Naphtali, (<sup>Q4125</sup>Numbers 10:26,27); over whom were the same captains as in (<sup>Q4125</sup>Numbers 2:25,27,29).

**Ver. 26.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher [was] Pagiel the son of Ocran.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q4125</sup>Numbers 10:25”).

**Ver. 27.** *And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali [was] Ahira the son of Enan.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q4125</sup>Numbers 10:25”).

**Ver. 28.** *Thus [were] the journeyings of the children of Israel*, etc.] Or this was the order of them, as Jarchi; in this form and manner they marched, and a most wise, beautiful, and regular order it was; first the standard of Judah, a camp consisting of 186,400 able men fit for war, then followed the Gershonites and Merarites with six wagons carrying the heavier parts of the tabernacle; next to them the standard of the camp of Reuben, having in it 151,450 warlike men; next to them were the Kohathites, bearing the holy things of the sanctuary on their shoulders, who were followed by the standard of the camp of Ephraim, which was



formed of 108,100 men fit for military service; and last of all the standard of the camp of Dan, which consisted of 157,600 men, able to bear arms, and which had under their care all that were not able which belonged to the other tribes; an emblem of the church of God in its militant state, walking according to the order of the Gospel, and in all the ordinances of it, which is a lovely sight to behold, (<sup>2164</sup>Song of Solomon 6:4 <sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 58:8 <sup>3105</sup>Colossians 2:5); thus they marched

*according to their armies*; ranged under their several standards:

*when they set forward*; in their journey through the wilderness; as now, so at all other times, this order was carefully observed by them.

**Ver. 29.** *And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses's father in law*, etc.] Some think this Hobab was the same with Jethro, whose father's name was Raguel or Reuel; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom; but rather Raguel or Reuel, and Jethro, seem to be the same, and was Moses's father-in-law, and this Hobab was the son of him, and brother of Zipporah, Moses's wife; and the same relation is designed whether the word is rendered his "father-in-law" or his "wife's brother", so Aben Ezra; as it may be either; if the former, then it may be joined to Raguel, if the latter, then to Hobab: Jethro or Raguel, Moses's father-in-law, came to see him as soon as he came to Horeb, and after some short stay with him returned to Midian, and left this his son Hobab, who remained with Moses unto this time; but now, as Israel was about to remove from the wilderness of Sinai, he showed a disposition to return to his own country, when Moses addressed him in order to persuade him to continue with them:

*we are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you*; that is, the land of Canaan, which God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their posterity: Moses puts himself among the children of Israel as journeying towards Canaan, with an expectation to possess it; for as yet the decree, as Jarchi observes, was not made, or made manifest, that he should not enter it; or he said this, as others think, because he would not discourage the Israelites nor Hobab, who might argue from thence, that if he, by whom God had brought Israel out of Egypt, and had done such wonders by him, should not enter into the good! and, how should they? but as yet Moses himself knew not that he should not enter into it; however, he speaks of it as a certain thing, that God had promised to give it to Israel, and it might be depended upon; and now they were just going to set

forward in their journey, in order to take possession of it, he entreats that Hobab would go with them:

*come thou with us, and we will do thee good*; by giving him a part of the spoils of their enemies, and a settlement in the land:

*for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel*; and he is faithful, who has promised and will perform.

**Ver. 30.** *And he said unto him, I will not go*, etc.] Which was a very peremptory answer, he seemed determined, and at a point about it for the present, though it is, probable he afterwards changed his mind, like the young man in the parable, (<sup>417D</sup>Matthew 21:29);

*but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred*; which were prevailing motives with him, his native country, his relations, and father's house; to this resolution he came, both because of his substance, and because of his family, as Jarchi.

**Ver. 31.** *And he said*, etc.] That is, Moses, he replied to Hobab, unwilling to take him at his word and go without him:

*leave us not, I pray thee*; or “not now”; as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; at this present time, under our present difficulties, while we are in the wilderness; though Jarchi says the particle **an** signifies beseeching or supplication:

*forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness*; that this will be our case, that we shall be obliged, before we get to the promised land, to pitch our tents in the wilderness, in our passage through it; and thou knowest which are the best and most convenient places for that purpose, and therefore must entreat thee to go with us:

*and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes*; not to show the way, as Aben Ezra notes, or guide and direct them in the road through the wilderness; for the cloud by day and the fire by night were of that use to them, as well as when it rested, it directed them when and where to pitch their tents; rather to assist with his advice in difficult matters, when they should be in pressing circumstances: the Targum of Jonathan is,

“thou hast been dear unto us, as the apple of our eyes, and therefore we cannot part with thee.”

**Ver. 32.** *And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be,* etc.] This repetition is for the confirmation of it, more strongly assuring him of what follows:

*that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee;* signifying that whatsoever they enjoyed in the land of Canaan he should have his share with them: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“in the division of the land;”

Jarchi says, when the land was divided, the fatness of Jericho was given to the sons of Jethro, to Jonadab, the son of Rechab, (see <sup><OR16></sup>Judges 1:16); from whence, however, as well as from other places, (<sup><OR11></sup>Judges 4:11,17 <sup><OR16></sup>1 Samuel 15:6); it appears that the posterity of this man had a settlement in the land of Canaan, and from his silence it may be thought that he was prevailed upon to go along with Moses; or if he departed into his own country, as he said he would, he returned again; at least some of his children did.

**Ver. 33.** *And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey,* etc.], From Mount Sinai, so called, because the Lord descended upon it, and gave the law from it; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

“from the mount on which the glory of the Lord (or of his Shechinah or divine Majesty) was revealed.”

This they left, after they had been nearly twelve months about it, and travelled three days' journey from it before the cloud rested, so as to abide, otherwise is stopped no doubt to give them time to eat their food, and take sleep and rest. The Targum of Jonathan expressly says, they went thirty six miles on that day; but, according to Bunting <sup>f105</sup>, Taberah or Kibrothhattaavah, to which the children of Israel first came, and where they abode a month, was but eight miles from Sinai; wherefore the three days' journey were not successively one after another, but the first day's journey was to Taberah, where they continued a month; the second day's journey was to Hazeroth, where they stayed seven days; and the third day's journey was to the wilderness of Paran, and there the cloud rested, (<sup><OR12></sup>Numbers 10:12); and there was their resting place, for there they continued long, from whence the spies were sent to the good land, and whither they returned after forty days, (<sup><OR13></sup>Numbers 13:1-3,25);

*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*; the ark being carried by the Kohathites, must proceed in the middle of the camps, after the camps of Judah and Reuben, and before the camps of Ephraim and Dan, according to the order of the marches of the children of Israel, (<sup><04021></sup>Numbers 10:21); wherefore Aben Ezra thinks, that this three days' journey was different from all their other journeys; and that in this the ark went before them, which in other journeys was carried in the midst of them; yet others think it may be said to go before, though in the middle; just as a general of an army may be said to go before, and lead his army, though he is not directly in the front of it; so the cloud being always over the ark, directing the march, it may be said to go before and point out a convenient place to rest in; for searching cannot be properly ascribed to the ark, nor even to the Lord himself, and can only signify pointing out or discovering a proper place to take up their abode in: this ark of the covenant, so called because the covenant or law was laid up in it, was a type of Christ the end of the law for righteousness, and who is the forerunner of his people, is gone before them to prepare a place for them; and the three days' journey may have respect to his resurrection from the dead on the third day for their justification, which is the foundation of their rest, peace, and joy.

**Ver. 34.** *And the cloud of the Lord [was] upon them by day*, etc.] Not only upon the tabernacle, and upon the ark particularly, but it spread itself in journeying over the whole body of the people, and therefore said to be a covering to them from the heat of the sun, (<sup><04539></sup>Psalm 105:39); as well as it was a guide unto them, and a token of the divine Presence with them, (see <sup><0305></sup>Isaiah 4:5);

*when they went out of the camp*; or out of the place of their encampment, when they removed from Sinai; and appears from, hence that it was in the daytime.

**Ver. 35.** *And it came to pass, when the ark set forward*, etc.] Carried by the Kohathites, (<sup><04021></sup>Numbers 10:21);

*that Moses said*; in prayer, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem express it; and it was a prayer of faith, and prophetic of what would be done, and might serve greatly to encourage and animate the children of Israel in their journeys; for the following prayer was put up not only at this time, but at all times when the ark set forward; and so Ben Gersom says, it

was the custom of Moses, at whatsoever time the ark was moved, to pray as follows:

*rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered;* the Jerusalem Targum is,

“rise up now, O Word of the Lord;”

and the Targum of Jonathan,

“be revealed now, O Word of the Lord;”

the essential Word of God, the Messiah, to whom these words may be applied; either to his incarnation and manifestation in the flesh, his end in, which was to destroy all his and his people’s enemies, particularly the devil and his works, (<sup><S24></sup>Hebrews 2:14,15 <sup><S18></sup>1 John 3:8); or to his resurrection from the dead, these words standing at the head of a prophecy of his ascension to heaven, which supposes his resurrection from the dead, (<sup><S18></sup>Psalms 68:1,18); at the death of Christ all the spiritual enemies of his people were defeated, scattered, confounded, and conquered; Satan and his principalities were spoiled, sin was made an end of, death was abolished, and the world overcome; at his resurrection the keepers of the sepulchre fled; and after his ascension wrath came upon the Jewish nation, those enemies of his, that would not have him to rule over them, and they were scattered about on the face of the whole earth, as they are to this day:

*and let them that hate thee flee before thee;* the same petition expressed in different words, but to the same sense; enemies, and those that hate the Lord, are the same, as their defeat, conclusion, and destruction, are signified by their flight and dispersion; and it may be observed, that those who were the enemies and haters of Israel were reckoned the enemies and haters of God himself; as the enemies of Christ’s people, and those that hate them, are accounted Christ’s enemies, and such that hate him. Perhaps Moses may have a special respect to the Canaanites, whose land was promised unto Israel, and they were going to dispossess them of it, in order to inherit it, and Moses might expect it would be quickly done, at the end of these three days; which brought them to the wilderness of Paran, so near the good land that they sent from thence spies into it, and in all probability they would have then entered the possession of it, had it not been for their complaints and murmurs, and the ill report brought on the good land, on which account they were stopped thirty eight years in the wilderness.

**Ver. 36.** *And when it passed,* etc.] The ark, and the cloud over it:

*he said*; Moses stood and prayed, as before, according to the above Targums, in the following manner:

*return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel*; who were six hundred thousand footmen, besides women and children, (<sup><041121></sup>Numbers 11:21); the import of this petition is, that upon the resting of the ark God would take up his abode with them, grant them his presence, and manifest his love, grace, mercy, and goodness unto them; or, as it may be rendered, that he would “return the many thousands of Israel”; that is, to the land which he had sworn to their fathers, as Ben Gersom interprets it; and who observes that the word “return” is used, because of the holy fathers who dwelt in the land of Israel; or else, as the same writer further observes, the sense of the petition is, that it might be the will of God to turn the thousands of Israel into myriads, or increase and multiply them ten times more than they were; and so the Targum of Jerusalem is,

“bless the myriads, and multiply the thousands of the children of Israel.”

Perhaps Moses, under a spirit of prophecy, might have a further view, even to the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, when they shall return and seek the true Messiah, and be turned to him, and when all Israel shall be saved.

# CHAPTER 11

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 11

This chapter informs us of the complaints of the people of Israel, which brought the fire of the Lord upon them, and consumed many of them; and which, at the intercession of Moses, was quenched, and the place from thence called Taberah, (<sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:1-3); and of the lusting of the mixed multitude after flesh, to increase which, they called to mind their food in Egypt; and to show their folly and ingratitude in so doing, the manna is described, (<sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:4-9); and of the uneasiness of Moses, and his complaints of the heavy burden of the people upon him, (<sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:10-15); and to make him easy, it is promised, that seventy of the elders of Israel should partake of his spirit, and assist in bearing the burden, (<sup><0416></sup>Numbers 11:16,17); and that the people should have flesh to serve them a whole month, (<sup><0418></sup>Numbers 11:18-20); at which last Moses expressed some degree of unbelief, (<sup><0421></sup>Numbers 11:21-23); however God fulfilled his promise with respect to both. Some of the spirit of Moses was taken and given to seventy elders, who prophesied, and two men are particularly taken notice of, who did so, (<sup><0424></sup>Numbers 11:24-30); quails in great numbers were brought by a wind to the people; but while they were eating them wrath came upon them, and they were smitten with a plague, whence the place was called Kibrothhattaavah, (<sup><0431></sup>Numbers 11:31-34); and from thence they removed to Hazereth, (<sup><0435></sup>Numbers 11:35).

**Ver. 1.** *And [when] the people complained*, etc.] Or “were as complainers”<sup>f106</sup>; not merely like to such, but were truly and really complainers, the **k**, “caph”, here being not a note of similitude, but of truth and reality, as in (<sup><3510></sup>Hosea 5:10). This Hebraism is frequent in the New Testament, (<sup><0445></sup>Matthew 14:5 <sup><0414></sup>John 1:14 <sup><0407></sup>Philippians 2:7). What they complained of is not said, it being that for which there was no foundation; it is generally supposed to be of their journey; but if they were come but eight miles, as observed on (<sup><0403></sup>Numbers 10:33); they could not be very weary; and especially as they were marching towards the land of Canaan, it might be thought they would be fond and eager of their journey. Some think it was for want of flesh, being weary of manna, and that this was only

the beginning of their complaints on that head, which opened more afterwards; but if that is the case, one would think that the fire, which consumed many of them, would have put a stop to that. Jarchi says, the word signifies taking an occasion, and that the sense is, that these men sought an occasion how to separate from the Lord; they wanted to return to Egypt again, that was what they were meditating and contriving; so the Targum of Jonathan,

“and the ungodly of the people were in distress, and intended and meditated evil before the Lord:”

*it displeased the Lord:* a murmuring complaining spirit is always displeasing to him, when a thankful heart for mercies received is an acceptable sacrifice; murmurers and complainers God will judge at the great day, (<sup><6014></sup>Jude 1:14-16);

*and the Lord heard [it]:* though it was an inward secret complaint, or an evil scheme formed in their minds; at most but a muttering, and what Moses had not heard, or had any knowledge of; but God, that knows the secrets of all hearts, and every word in the tongue before it is well formed or pronounced, he heard what they complained of, and what they whispered and muttered to one another about:

*and his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burnt among them;* from the pillar of fire, or from heaven, such as destroyed Nadab and Abihu, (<sup><6000></sup>Leviticus 10:1,2); the two hundred fifty men that had censers in Korah’s company, (<sup><0465></sup>Numbers 16:35); and the captains of fifties that came to take Elijah, (<sup><1204></sup>2 Kings 1:14); and might be lightning from heaven, or a burning wind sent by the Lord, such as is frequent in the eastern countries. Thevenot <sup>f107</sup> speaks of one in 1658, which destroyed at once twenty thousand men:

*and consumed [them that were] in the uttermost parts of the camp;* who very likely were the principal aggressors; or it began to arouse and terrify the body of the people, and bring them to repentance, who might fear it would proceed and go through the whole camp, the hinder part or rearward of which was the camp of Dan; and so the Targum of Jonathan.

**Ver. 2.** *And the people cried unto Moses,* etc.] And entreated him to pray for them, being frightened at the fire which consumed many of them, lest it should spread and become general among them:



*and when Moses prayed unto the Lord*; as he did, in which he was a type of Christ, the mediator between God and man, the advocate of his people, an intercessor for transgressors:

*the fire was quenched*; it stopped and proceeded no further; as through Christ's mediation God is pacified with his people for all that they have done, and his wrath, and all the effects of it, are turned away from them, and entirely cease with respect to them; or it "sunk down"<sup>f108</sup> into its place, as the Targum of Jonathan, as if it rose out of the earth. This may serve to confirm the notion of its being a burning wind, to which the idea of sinking down and subsiding well agrees.

**Ver. 3.** *And he called the name of the place Taberah*, etc.] That is, "burning": Moses called it so; or it may be rendered impersonally, it was called<sup>f109</sup> so in later times by the people:

*because the fire of the Lord burnt among them*; to perpetuate the, memory of this kind of punishment for their sins, that it might be a terror and warning to others; and this history is indeed recorded for our caution in these last days, that we murmur not as these Israelites did, and were destroyed of the destroyer, (~~400~~1 Corinthians 10:10,11).

**Ver. 4.** *And the mixed multitude that [was] among them fell a lusting*, etc.] These came out of Egypt with them, (~~028~~Exodus 12:38); having either contracted affinity with them, or such intimacy of conversation, that they could not part, or being proselyted to the Jewish religion, at least in pretence; these were not only Egyptians, but a mixture of divers people, who having heard or seen the wonderful things done for Israel, joined them in hopes of sharing the blessings of divine goodness with them; so the Targum of Jonathan calls them proselytes, that were gathered among them: these "lusted a lusting"<sup>f110</sup>, as the words may be rendered; not after women, as some Jewish writers<sup>f111</sup> think, even after such that were near akin to them, with whom they were forbidden to marry, and therefore desired to have those laws dissolved; but they lusted after eating flesh taken in a proper sense, as the latter part of the verse and the whole context show:

*and the children of Israel also wept again*; they lusted after flesh likewise, following the example of the mixed multitude; thus evil communication corrupts good manners, (~~453~~1 Corinthians 15:33); and a little leaven leavens the whole lump, (~~416~~1 Corinthians 5:6 ~~410~~Galatians 5:9); wicked

men prove great snares to, and do much mischief among good men, when they get into their societies, (<sup><34B></sup>Jeremiah 5:26): and because the Israelites could not have what they would to gratify their lusts, they wept as children do, when they cannot have what they are desirous of; and they wept “again”, for it seems they had wept before, either when they complained, (<sup><040C></sup>Numbers 11:1); or at Rephidim, where they wanted water, (<sup><070C></sup>Exodus 17:1), as here flesh, or before that when they wanted bread, (<sup><024B></sup>Exodus 16:3);

*and said, who shall give us flesh to eat?* shall Moses, or even the Lord himself? from lusting they fell to unbelief and distrust of the power and providence of God; for so the Psalmist interprets this saying of theirs, (<sup><478D></sup>Psalm 78:19,20).

**Ver. 5.** *We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely*, etc.] Fish was food the Egyptians much lived upon; for though Herodotus says the priests might not taste of fish, the common people ate much; yea, he himself says that some lived upon nothing else but fish gutted and dried in the sun; and he observes, that the kings of Egypt had a great revenue from hence <sup>f112</sup>; the river Nile, as Diodorus Siculus <sup>f113</sup> says, abounded with all kind of fish, and with an incredible number, so that there was a plenty of them, and to be bought cheap; and so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret the word freely, of a small price, as if they had them for nothing almost; but surely they forgot how dear they paid for their fish, by their hard toil, labour, and service. Now this, with what follows, they call to mind, to increase their lust, and aggravate their present condition and circumstances:

*the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic*; in the Hebrew language, the word for “cucumbers” has the signification of hardness, because they are hard of digestion In the Talmud <sup>f114</sup> they are so called, because they are as harmful to the body as swords; though it is said in the same, that Antoninus always had them at his table; and Suetonius <sup>f115</sup> and Pliny <sup>f116</sup> say, that they were in great esteem with the emperors Augustus and Tiberias; though some think what they call cucumbers were melons. We are told <sup>f117</sup>, that the Egyptian cucumbers are very different from our European ones, which in the eastern countries serve only to feed hogs with, and not men; but the Egyptian cucumber, called “chate”, differs from the common one in size, colour, and softness; and not only its leaves, but its fruit, are different from ours, being sweeter to the

taste, and of more easy digestion, and reckoned to be very wholesome to the bodies of men: and so their “melons” are different from ours, which they call “abdellavi”, to distinguish them from others called “chajar”, which are of little use for food, and not pleasant, and more insipid, and of a softer pulp<sup>f118</sup>: as for the “leeks, onions, and garlic”, that these were commonly and in great plenty eaten of by the Egyptians appears from the vast sums of money spent upon the men that worked in building one of the pyramids, in radishes, onions, and garlic only, which Herodotus<sup>f119</sup>, Diodorus Siculus<sup>f120</sup>, and Pliny<sup>f121</sup> make mention of. Indeed, in later times these were worshipped as gods, and not suffered to be eaten, as Pliny<sup>f122</sup> and Juvenal<sup>f123</sup> inform us; but there is little reason to believe that this kind of idolatry obtained so early as the time of Israel’s being in Egypt; though some have thought that these were cheaper because of that, and so the Israelites could more easily come at them; but if that had been the case, it is more reasonable to believe that the Egyptians would not have allowed them to have eat of them at all: however, these are still in great plenty, and much used in Egypt to this day, as Vansleb<sup>f124</sup> relates, who says, for desserts they have fruits, as onions, dried dates, rotten olives, melons, or cucumbers, or pompions, or such like fruits as are in season: thus carnal men prefer their sensual lusts and pleasures, and self-righteous men their righteousness, to Christ, the heavenly manna, his grace and righteousness.

**Ver. 6.** *But now our soul is dried away*, etc.] Meaning their bodies, which, for want of flesh food, they pretended had no moisture in them, or they were half starved, and in wasting and consuming circumstances:

*[there is] nothing at all besides this manna [before] our eyes*; which in itself was a truth and matter of fact; they had nothing to look to, and live upon but the manna, and that was enough, and with which, no doubt, many of them were contented, and satisfied and thankful for it, though the greater part were not; and therefore this, though a truth, was foolishly and wickedly spoken, being said in disdain and contempt of the manna: so Christ, the heavenly manna, the antitype of this, of which (see Gill on “<sup>(264)</sup>Exodus 16:14-18”); is indeed the only food that is set before us in the Gospel to feed and live upon; nor is there anything at all besides him, nor do true believers in him desire any other, but pray that evermore this bread may be given them; but carnal men and carnal professors slight the Gospel feast, of which Christ is the sum and substance; and at least would have something besides him, something along with him, something of their own in justification for him, or to give them a right unto him, or to trust in along

with him; they cannot bear to have nothing at all but Christ; or that he, and he alone, should be exalted, and be all in all, as he is justification and salvation, and in the Gospel provision, in which nothing is set before us but him.

**Ver. 7.** *And the manna [was] as coriander seed*, etc.] Not in colour, for that is black or darkish, whereas the manna was white, as is generally observed; of which (see Gill on “<sup>(2163)</sup>Exodus 16:31”); however it might be like the coriander, because of its form and figure, being round, and because of its quantity, being small, (<sup>(2164)</sup>Exodus 16:14); Some think the mustard seed is meant, as Aben Ezra observes, which is the least of all seeds; it seems that the manna fell in small round grains, like to such seed. This, with what follows, is observed, to expose the folly and ingratitude of the Israelites, that having such bread from heaven, angels food, that they should slight it, and hanker after other food:

*and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium*; not an aromatic gum, which Pliny<sup>f125</sup> speaks of, which is clear as wax, for that is black or blackish, and not white as the manna; besides, this should be read, not “bdellium”, but “bdeloah”, and is a precious stone, and, according to Bochart, the pearl; so Ben Melech observes, that it is a precious stone; some say the diamond, and others a round white stone, which they bore and join stones together, and make a chain of, he doubtless means a pearl necklace; though Jarchi says it is the crystal, and so the Jewish writers commonly; (see Gill on “<sup>(2172)</sup>Genesis 2:12”); hence it appears the manna was very pleasant to look at, being of a round form, and of a pearl or crystal colour.

**Ver. 8.** *[And] the people went about and gathered [it]*, etc.] Went about the camp on all sides, where it fell in plenty; this they did every morning, and this was all the trouble they were at; they had it for gathering, without any expense to them:

*and ground [it] in mills*: in hand mills, as Aben Ezra; for though it melted through the heat of the sun, and became a liquid, yet, when gathered in the morning, it was hard like grains of corn, or other seeds, and required to be ground in mills:

*or beat [it] in a mortar*; with a pestle, as spices are beaten and bruised:

*and baked [it] in pans*; or rather boiled it in a pot, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, since it follows:

*and made cakes of it*; which were baked on the hearth; all which may denote the sufferings of Christ, who was beaten, and bruised, and broken, that he might become fit food for faith, (<sup>2854</sup>Isaiah 53:4,5,10);

*and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil*; which is very grateful and pleasant, as well as very fattening and nourishing; so that the Israelites had no reason to complain of their being dried away by continual eating of it; (see Gill on "<sup>2165</sup>Exodus 16:31").

**Ver. 9.** *And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night*, etc.] As it usually, and even constantly did:

*the manna fell upon it*; as constantly, and had thereby a clean place to fall on; and then another dew fell upon that, which kept it the cleaner still, and from any vermin creeping upon it; (see <sup>2164</sup>Exodus 16:14); so careful was the Lord of this their provision, and so constantly every morning were they supplied with it: and which fell in the night when they were asleep, and at rest, and without any labour of theirs; and was ready to their hands when they arose, and had nothing to do but gather it; and yet were so ungrateful as to make light of it, and despise it.

**Ver. 10.** *Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families*, etc.] So general was their lusting after flesh, and their discontent for want of it; and so great their distress and uneasiness about it, that they wept and cried for it, and so loud and clamorous, that Moses heard the noise and outcry they made:

*every man in the door of his tent*: openly and publicly, were not ashamed of their evil and unbecoming behaviour, and in order to excite and encourage the like temper and disposition in others; though it may have respect, as some have observed, to the door of the tent of Moses, about which they gathered and mutinied; and which better accounts for his hearing the general cry they made; and so in an ancient writing of the Jews it is said <sup>f126</sup>, they were waiting for Moses until he came out at the door of the school; and they were sitting and murmuring:

*and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly*; because of their ingratitude to him, their contempt of the manna he had provided for them, and their hankering after their poor fare in Egypt, and for which they had endured so much hardship and ill usage, and for the noise and clamour they now made:

*Moses also was displeased*; with the people on the same account, and with the Lord also for laying and continuing so great a burden upon him, as the care of this people, which appears by what follows.

**Ver. 11.** *And Moses said unto the Lord, wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant?* etc.] Or “done evil”<sup>f127</sup> to him, that which was distressing to him, and gave him trouble; namely, setting him at the head of the people of Israel, and laying the government of them on his shoulders; which surely was doing him honour, though that is not to be expected without care and trouble; Moses does not seem to be in a good frame of spirit throughout the whole of this discourse with the Lord: the best of men are not always alike in their frames, and sometimes act contrary to that for which they are the most eminent, as Moses was for his, meekness and humility:

*and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight*; he had found much favour in the sight of God, to have so many wonderful things done by him in Egypt, to be the instrument of the deliverance of Israel from thence, to be the leader of them through the Red sea, to be taken up to the mount with God, and receive the law from him to give to that people; but the favour he complains of that was denied him, is, his not being excused, when he desired it, from taking on him the office he was called unto, of being the deliverer and ruler of the people, (<sup><DISC></sup>Exodus 4:10-13);

*that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?* with respect to matters heavier and more difficult; for as to lighter and lesser things, he was assisted and relieved by the officers placed over the various divisions of the people at the advice of Jethro, (<sup><DISC></sup>Exodus 18:21,22); government is a burdensome thing, and especially when a people are prone to mutiny and rebellion, as the people of Israel were.

**Ver. 12.** *Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them?* etc.] Conceived them as a mother, or begotten them as a father? am I a parent of either sort to them, in a literal sense, that I should have the like care of them as parents of their children? but though this was not the case, yet, in a civil and political sense, he was their parent, as every king and governor of a country is, or should be, the father of it, and should have a paternal affection for his subjects, and a tender care of them, and a hearty concern for their good and welfare: this, in a spiritual sense, may denote the weakness of the law of Moses, as Ainsworth observes, which has no concern in the regeneration of the spiritual Israel of God; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of men, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God; he

only does and can regenerate men by his Spirit and grace; and though ministers of the word are instruments, yet it is not through the law, but through the Gospel that they beget souls to Christ, even by the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, by that word which lives and abides for ever; it is not through the doctrine of the law, but through the doctrine of faith, that the Spirit, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, is received; faith, hope, and love, and every other grace, come the same way; (see <sup><4015></sup>1 Corinthians 4:15 <sup><4023></sup>1 Peter 1:23 <sup><5018></sup>James 1:18 <sup><4022></sup>Galatians 3:2);

*that thou shouldest say unto me*; as in (<sup><0234></sup>Exodus 32:34); “go, lead the people unto the place”, etc. which words, Jarchi thinks, are here referred to:

*carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest to their fathers?* the land of Canaan: kings should be nursing fathers; civil governors should rule with gentleness and mildness; such are most beloved, and most cheerfully obeyed by their people: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret the word for “nursing father”, by “pedagogue”, which is the same word the apostle uses of the law, (<sup><4024></sup>Galatians 3:24); that indeed was a severe schoolmaster, that menaced, whipped, and scourged for every fault, and not a tender nursing father; there is not one kind tender word in the law; it accuses of sin, pronounces guilty of it, curses and condemns for it; but the Gospel ministry, and ministers of it, use men gently; the apostles of Christ were gentle, as a nurse cherisheth her children, (<sup><5007></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:7,8); fed men as they were able to bear it; and when they delivered out their charges, it was in a kind manner, and even their reproofs were in love; and especially Christ himself was so, by whose meekness and gentleness the Apostle Paul beseeches men, (<sup><4001></sup>1 Corinthians 10:1); who gathers the lambs in his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young; and supplies them with food, and brings them all safely to Canaan’s land, the heavenly glory, where the law and the deeds of it will never bring men, (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 40:11).

**Ver. 13.** *Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?* etc.]

This seems to countenance the Israelites in their lusting after flesh, as if it was no evil in them, and as if it was but right they should have what they desired, though it was out of his power to give it them:

*for they weep unto me, saying, give us flesh, that we may eat*; he seems to pity them, whereas he ought to have reproved them for their murmurings



and ingratitude, and put them in mind of the manna which was provided for them every day, and with which they ought to have been content.

**Ver. 14.** *I am not able to bear all this people alone*, etc.] The burden of government of them, to take care of them and provide sustenance for them; but he was not alone, for, not to take notice of the rulers and officers in the several divisions of the people that assisted and eased him in lighter matters, advised to by Jethro, (<sup>(128)</sup>Exodus 18:21,22), the Lord himself was with him in all matters of moment and difficulty; to whom he could apply at any time for advice, and who had promised to supply and did supply the people with suitable and proper provisions every day:

*because [it is] too heavy for me*; to answer the requests, redress the grievances, and supply the necessities of this people.

**Ver. 15.** *And if thou deal thus with me*, etc.] Let the whole weight of government lie upon me, and leave the alone to bear it:

*kill me, I pray thee, out of hand*; take me out of the world at once, or “kill me now, in killing”<sup>f128</sup>; dispatch me immediately, and make a thorough end of me directly:

*if I have found favour in thy sight*; if thou hast any love for me, or art willing to show me a kindness, to remove me by death, I shall take as one:

*and let me not see my wretchedness*; or live to be the unhappy man I shall be; pressed with such a weight of government, affected and afflicted with the wants of a people I cannot relieve, or seeing them bore down with judgments and punishments inflicted on them for their sins and transgressions I am not able to prevail upon them to abstain from: so the Targum of Jerusalem,

“that I may not see their evil, who are thy people;”

so Abendana, and in the margin of some Hebrew copies, it is read,

“this is one of the eighteen words, the correction of the scribes;”

who, instead of “my wretchedness” or evil, corrected it, “their wretchedness” or evil; but Aben Ezra says there is no need of this correction.



**Ver. 16.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] Without making any reflection upon him, or upbraiding him with his unbecoming speeches to him, but in a kind and tender manner directs for his assistance and case:

*gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel*; out from among them, such as were not only men in years, but men of gravity, prudence, and wisdom; elders there were among the people in Egypt, (<sup><11816></sup>Exodus 3:16,18); and it was from among such as those the seventy men were to be taken; we read of seventy elders before this time, that went up to the mount with Moses, (<sup><12411></sup>Exodus 24:1,9); but they are supposed only to be selected for that purpose at that time, and did not continue as a separate body, or in any office: according to this number seventy, the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature the sat at Jerusalem in later times, consisted of seventy persons, with a prince or president at the head of them, as Moses was at the head of those: and so our Lord, besides his twelve apostles, sent out seventy disciples to be assisting in his work and service, (<sup><2101></sup>Luke 10:1);

*whom thou knowest to be elders of the people*; either in age, or in some sort of office and authority among them, or, however, to be good and just men, and had a considerable share of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom:

*and officers over them*; such as Jethro advised to constitute, (<sup><12821></sup>Exodus 18:21,22); and it is not improbable that these seventy were chosen out of them:

*and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee*; and be seen by all the people what honour was done them, what authority was conferred upon them, and what gifts were bestowed on them, qualifying them for their office, in which they were to be treated with respect by them.

**Ver. 17.** *And I will come down and talk with thee there*, etc.] Descend from heaven, by some visible token of his power and presence, and in a friendly manner converse with him face to face; which was an instance of great condescension and grace, and especially when Moses had showed a very froward peevish spirit; yet all is overlooked, and the Lord vouchsafes the most intimate communion with him, and does him honour before the people:

*and I will take of the spirit which [is] upon thee*; the spirit of government, and the spirit of prophecy, the gifts of the spirit qualifying for these things, of which Moses had a large measure:

*and will put [it] upon them*; that is, gifts of the same kind with his; not that his gifts were diminished, or that properly speaking anything was taken from Moses and given to the seventy elders; but from the same fountain and fulness of the spirit Moses partook of, they were furnished with like gifts and qualifications, he having not at all the less for what was communicated to them; (see [1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#) [2 Kings 2:9,15](#)); several of the Jewish writers, and particularly Jarchi, illustrate it by the lamp in the golden candlestick in the sanctuary, which was always burning, and at which all the rest were lighted, without any diminution of its light at all:

*and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear [it] not thyself alone*: assist in the government of them, take part in all weighty and difficult matters, hear the complaints of the people, and bear a share of the blame and reproach they at any time should cast upon their rulers.

**Ver. 18.** *And say thou unto the people*, etc.] For what follows respects them, as what goes before regarded himself:

*sanctify yourselves against tomorrow*; or prepare yourselves, as the Targums of Onkelos, and Jonathan, either to receive mercies, or to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments; so Jarchi interprets it,

“prepare for punishments,”

for what is said should be, and what they had, was not as a blessing, but in a way of punishment:

*and ye shall eat flesh*; which they lusted after, wept for, and could not be easy without:

*for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord*; complaining of him, and which he has taken notice of:

*saying, who shall give us flesh to eat?* for though they so earnestly desired it, they despaired of it, and even called in question the power of God to give it:

*for [it was] well with us in Egypt*; where they had their fleshpots, as well as their cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic, (<sup><D1618></sup>Exodus 16:3); but they forgot how ill it went with them by reason of their hard bondage, when their lives were made bitter by it, notwithstanding their fleshpots, and of which there is not much reason to believe any great share came to them: like to them were their posterity in later times, (<sup><24417></sup>Jeremiah 44:17,18);

*therefore the Lord will give you flesh*; to show his power:

*and ye shall eat*; to your shame and confusion, not for pleasure or profit.

**Ver. 19.** *Ye shall not eat one day*, etc.] Only, as in (<sup><D1612></sup>Exodus 16:12);

*nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days*; but even thirty days, a whole month, as in (<sup><04112></sup>Numbers 11:20).

**Ver. 20.** [*But*] *even a whole month*, etc.] So long the Israelites continued at Taberah or Kibrothhattaavah, as the Jews <sup>f129</sup> conclude from this clause:

*until it come out at your nostrils*; being vomited up, through a nausea of it, the stomach being overfilled and glutted with it; in which case, it will make its way through the nostrils, as well as out of the mouth:

*and it be loathsome unto you*; being surfeited with it; or it shall be for “dispersion” <sup>f130</sup>, scattered about from the mouth and nostrils:

*because that ye have despised the Lord which [is] among you*; who dwelt in the tabernacle that was in the midst of them, whom they despised by treating the manna with contempt he so plentifully spread about their camp, and by distrusting his power to give them flesh, and by murmuring and complaining against him on the account of their having none: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

“because ye have loathed the Word of the Lord, whose Shechinah (or the glory of whose Shechinah, as Jonathan) dwelleth among you;”

the essential Word, and who was figured by the manna they tasted and despised:

*and have wept before him*; complaining of him, and murmuring against him:

*saying, why came we forth out of Egypt?* suggesting it would have been better for them if they had stayed there; thus reflecting on the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, displayed in the deliverance of them, and for which they had the utmost reason to be thankful.

**Ver. 21.** *And Moses said*, etc.] By way of objection to what God had promised, distrusting his power to perform:

*the people amongst whom I [am]*; among whom he dwelt, of whom he was a part, and over whom he was a ruler:

*[are] six hundred thousand footmen*; that were able to travel on foot, and were fit for war: this was the number of them when they came out of Egypt, (<sup><01237></sup>Exodus 12:37); they amounted in their last numbering to 3,550 more, which lesser number is here omitted, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi observe, and only the round number given: some say that all above the six hundred thousand were destroyed by the fire at Taberah, (<sup><01101></sup>Numbers 11:1);

*and thou hast said, one will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month*; this Moses could not tell how to credit.

**Ver. 22.** *Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them?* etc.] Suggesting that if all their cattle, their sheep, and oxen were killed, which they and the mixed multitude brought out of Egypt, they would not be sufficient for them to live upon a whole month; and intimating also, that it would be an unwise thing, and very improper, to slay them all, were they sufficient, since then they would have none for sacrifice, or to breed when they came into the land of Canaan; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“shall the sheep that are in Arabia and the oxen that are in Nabatea be slain for them, and be sufficient for them?”

*or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?* of the great sea, as Jonathan; which, to gather together, is, humanly speaking, impossible; indeed, if it could be done, they would not suffice such a number of people a month together: Moses takes notice only of the flesh of beasts and of fishes, and seems not to have thought of the flesh of fowls with which, and not the other, the Lord afterwards fed them a whole month.

**Ver. 23.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] In answer to his objection, without upbraiding him with his sin of unbelief:

*is the Lord's hand waxed short?* or his power diminished since the creation, when he formed all things out of nothing, and what is it then he is not able to do? or since he wrought the wonders in Egypt, divided the Red sea, rained down manna from heaven, and smote the rock at Horeb, from whence waters flowed sufficient for all this people, and their flocks and herds; and he that did all this could give them flesh that would suffice them a whole month, (see <sup>2300</sup>Isaiah 59:1);

*thou shall see now whether my words shall come to pass unto thee or no;* whether I am able to make good my promise; a short time will decide it, it shall be seen presently whether I am and will do what I have said.

**Ver. 24.** *And Moses went out*, etc.] Either out of his own tent, about which the people assembled, complaining and weeping, (<sup>04110</sup>Numbers 11:10); or rather, as Aben Ezra, out of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the sanctuary where he had been conversing with God, about the affairs complained of both by the people and by himself; so the Targum of Jonathan says, he went out of the tabernacle, the house of the Shechinah or divine Majesty:

*and told the people of the words of the Lord;* what he had ordered him to do for his ease in the government of them, and how he had promised to give them flesh on the morrow:

*and gathered the seventy men of the elders of Israel;* sent for them by name, and ordered them to assemble at such a time and place; and though two of them came not, after mentioned, (<sup>04125</sup>Numbers 11:26), yet the full number of seventy is given:

*and set them round about the tabernacle;* they seem to be set not promiscuously in a body together, but distinctly, one by another, in a circular form; that they might be seen, observed, and taken notice of by the people that came about the tabernacle, who they were, what were done to them, and what befell them.

**Ver. 25.** *And the Lord came down in a cloud*, etc.] In a cloud of glory, or a glorious one, as the Targums; either in the same that went before the people in the wilderness, or in one distinct from it, and only used on this occasion, as a visible token of the presence of God:

*and spake unto him*; to Moses, talked with him, as he said he would, (<sup>Q117</sup>Numbers 11:17);

*and took of the Spirit which [was] upon him, and gave [it] unto the seventy elders*; (see Gill on “<sup>Q117</sup>Numbers 11:17”);

*and it came to pass [that] when the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied*; either they sung the praises of God, which is sometimes the sense of prophesying, (<sup>R301</sup>1 Chronicles 25:1-3); blessing God for the honour done them, and the gift bestowed on them; or they opened and explained the laws of God, in virtue of the gifts they had received, according to which they were to assist Moses in the government of the people, or they foretold things come: the Jews say they prophesied of the quails, but that is not very likely:

*and did not cease*; from prophesying; the spirit of prophecy continued with them, which, in some cases, might be necessary: or, they ceased not to prophesy all that day, though they afterwards did: and in the Hebrew text it is, “they added not”<sup>f131</sup>, that is, to prophesy, and Jarchi says they only prophesied that day, as it is interpreted in an ancient book of theirs, called Siphre: wherefore this spirit of prophecy is thought only to be given them as a temporary thing, for the confirmation of their having received the spirit of government, or gifts qualifying them for that, and to make them respectable among the people, and to show that they were appointed it by divine authority, and that this was not a device of Moses to ease himself.

**Ver. 26.** *But there remained two [of the] men in the camp*, etc.] Of the seventy who were summoned, that came not out of the camp of Israel to the tabernacle when the rest did:

*the name of the one [was] Eldad, and the name of the other Medad*: who, according to the Targum of Jonathan, were brethren of Moses by his mother’s side; for it says, they were the sons of Elizaphan the son of Parnac, whom Jochebed the daughter of Levi brought forth at the time that Amram her husband dismissed her, and she was married to him before she brought forth Moses; but it is elsewhere said<sup>f132</sup>, that Elizaphan married her after the death of Amram; and Eldad and Medad were born unto them:

*and the Spirit rested upon them*; as it did upon the rest of the seventy that came to the tabernacle; these two had the same gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon them as they had:

*and they [were] of them that were written*; among the seventy whose names were put down in the summons Moses gave them to attend the tabernacle; for as for the notion of the Jews about schedules and pieces of paper put into an urn to draw lots with, there is no foundation in the text:

*but went not out unto the tabernacle*; out of the camp to it, when they were summoned to come together; which they declined, as is commonly said, out of modesty, thinking themselves unfit for such an high office; and therefore, as Saul hid himself among the stuff when he was about to be chosen king, so did they, or something like it: the Targum of Jonathan is express for it, which adds, because they hid themselves to flee from government; but the Spirit of God found them out, and filled them with his gifts, and constrained them to prophesy, whereby they were discovered:

*and they prophesied in the camp*; perhaps in a private manner, it may be in their own houses; which, how it came to be known is after related: what they prophesied of cannot be said; according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, and other Jewish writers<sup>f133</sup>, they prophesied of the quails, and of the death of Moses, and the succession of Joshua, of Gog and Magog, and their armies, and of their destruction by the Messiah, and of the resurrection of the dead; but these are things not to be depended on.

**Ver. 27.** *And there ran a young man*, etc.] From the camp to the tabernacle, who had heard Eldad and Medad prophesy; which he thought was not right, being done without the knowledge and approbation of Moses, and in a private tent in the tabernacle, not among the elders, but the common people: who this young man was is not material to know; some of the Rabbins, as Jarchi says, affirm he was Gershon the son of Moses; whoever he was, no doubt, it was with a good design, consulting the glory of God and the honour of Moses, and therefore in great haste ran to him with the information:

*and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp*; who seem by this, to be persons well known, and of some note and figure; since not only the young man could call them by their names, but there needed no other description of them to Moses and those with him.

**Ver. 28.** *And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses*, etc.] That waited upon him, and ministered to him, and executed his orders, especially in civil things, and was to be his successor:

*[one] of his young men*; not that Joshua was a young man in age, for he must be now between fifty and sixty years of age, (see Gill on “<sup>(1231)</sup>Exodus 33:11”); nor does the word necessarily suppose that those men were young among whom Joshua was; but choice excellent persons, the principal servants of Moses, at the head of whom Joshua was being his prime minister: the Targum of Onkelos and the Syriac version render it, “from his youth”, joining it with the word servant, as if he was the servant of Moses from his youth, or ever since he was a young man; but Moses had not been out of Midian but about two years, where he had kept his father’s sheep; however, he

*answered and said, my lord Moses, forbid them*; prophesying, restrain them from it, suffer them not to go on in it; he would have him exert his authority as the chief magistrate, which he thought was affected by their prophesying without his knowledge and consent; and because a word from the root here used signifies a prison, some here interpret it,

“put them in prison,”

which is a sense Jarchi mentions; but it can hardly be thought that Joshua meant that such rigorous measures should be taken, only that they should be rebuked for what they had done, and be charged for the future to be silent.

**Ver. 29.** *Moses said unto him, enviest thou for my sake?* etc.] Lest his authority should be weakened, and his honour lessened, because they began not to prophesy in his presence, and at the tabernacle, and among the rest of the elders, and so seemed not to have received of the Spirit that was upon him, and to be independent of him:

*would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets*; this is not to be understood in the most absolute sense, as if Moses wished that every individual person among the people of Israel were prophets, as the word may signify a set and order of men, and an office in the church or state, as ministers of the word extraordinary or ordinary; for then there would be none to prophesy to, or to teach and instruct; and so likewise not rulers, or helps and assistants in government, for then there would be none to be governed; but it is to be taken comparatively, and is designed to show how far Moses was from an envious spirit at the gifts of others, that he could wish, if it was the will of God, and consistent with the order of things, that every man had as great or greater gifts than he had, qualifying them for



public service and usefulness; such was the modesty and meekness of Moses: there is a sense indeed, in which all the Lord's people, all good men, are and should be prophets, and for which by the grace of the Spirit of God they are qualified; and should act as such, by praying and singing praises, which are sometimes meant by prophesying, and by spiritual conferences in private with one another, building up each other on their most holy faith, and by teaching and instructing all under their care in their families:

*[and] that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them;* the gifts of it, which are necessary to fit men for public service in church or state, or for private usefulness, (~~4827~~ 1 Corinthians 12:7).

**Ver. 30.** *And Moses got him into the camp,* etc.] From the door of the tabernacle, where he had been settling the elders in their office, and now betook himself to the camp of Israel, perhaps to look more particularly into the affair of Eldad and Medad, and settle that, and put them among the elders; for they were of them that were written, whose names were put down for elders in the paper Moses had written for that purpose, and in the summons that were given; or more generally to do public business, to exercise rule and government, with this new assistance granted him, as follows:

*he and the elders of Israel;* he went in company with them, to impart to them the honour and glory they were to share with him in the government, as Aben Ezra observes; or they went together, to observe what would be done for the people, according to the promise of the Lord, to give them flesh; who had made good his word to Moses, by taking of his Spirit and putting it on seventy men for his assistance; the other remained to be done, and was done as follows.

**Ver. 31.** *And there went forth a wind from the Lord,* etc.] Both an east wind and a south wind, according to (~~4786~~ Psalm 78:26); either first one wind, and then another; one to bring the quails, or whatever are meant, to a certain point, and then the other to bring them to the camp of Israel; or a southeast wind, as the Jewish writers interpret it: however, it was not a common wind, but what was immediately raised by the Lord for the following purpose:

*and brought quails from the sea;* the Red sea, from the coasts of it, not out of it. Josephus<sup>f134</sup> says, there were great numbers of this sort of fowl about

the gulf of Arabia; and Diodorus Siculus <sup>f135</sup> says, near Rhinocalura, a place not far from those parts, quails in flocks were brought from the sea, which the people caught and lived upon. After Job Ludolphus, who has wrote a learned dissertation on locusts, many are of opinion with him, that locusts are intended here, and think that what is hereafter related best agrees with them; it is pretty difficult to determine which is most correct; there are learned advocates, and much to be said, for both <sup>f136</sup>:

*and let [them] fall by the camp*: the camp of Israel, and round about it on all sides, as follows; which agrees well enough with locusts, which are usually brought by a wind, as the locusts of Egypt were by an east wind, which fall, rest, and settle on the earth, and sometimes in heaps, one upon another; and these, whatever they were, fell as thick as rain, and were as dust, and as the sand of the sea. The Jewish writers, who understand them of quails, interpret this not of their falling to the ground, but of their flying low, two cubits from the earth, about the breast of a man, so that they had no trouble in taking them; so the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Abendana; but this seems to be without any foundation:

*as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp*; on the north side, and on the south side, as the Targum of Jonathan explains it; but it doubtless means on all sides, since they fell round about the camp; and from thence they lay thick upon the ground, a day's journey every way; which some compute at sixteen, others at twenty miles on which space there must be a prodigious number of quails or locusts; and it is certain the latter do come in great numbers, so as to darken the air, and to cover a country, as they did Egypt; and the quails also, in some countries, have been taken in great numbers; in Italy, on the coast of Antium, within a month, in the space of five miles, 100,000 quails were taken every day <sup>f137</sup>:

*and as it were two cubits [high] upon the face of the earth*; as they fell they lay one upon another, the height of two cubits; which it is thought better agrees with locusts than with quails, since the quails, by lying one upon another such a depth, must be suffocated; whereas the locusts, through the length of their feet, and the thinness of their wings, would not.

**Ver. 32.** *And the people stood up all that day*, etc.] The day on which they fell in the morning:

*and all [that] night*; the night following:

*and all the next day*; after that, even the space of thirty six hours:

*and they gathered the quails*; not took them flying, as the Jewish writers suggest, before observed, but from the earth where they fell, in order to lay them up as a provision for time to come; or otherwise, had they taken them only for present use, they would not have been so long in gathering them; but they seemed greedy of them, and therefore took up all they could, or knew what to do with:

*he that gathered least gathered ten homers*; or so many ass loads, as some interpret it; the words for an ass and an homer being near the same: an homer in measure is the same with the “cor”, and held ten ephahs; and, according to Bishop Cumberland<sup>f138</sup>, contained seventy five wine gallons, seven pints, and somewhat more, which must hold a vast quantity of quails; though not the measure, but the number of fowls, is commonly given. Some render the word “heaps”, as in (<sup><0004</sup>Exodus 8:14); and is supposed better to agree with locusts; but then it will be difficult to assign a reason why the number of them should be given, since heaps might be greater or lesser:

*and they spread [them] all abroad for themselves round about the camp*; according to some, they were taken alive, and put into cages, which were hung round the camp, so that all places were full of them, in which they were kept, and used as they wanted them; but they seem rather, be they what they will, to be dead, and to be spread about to be dried in the sun, being salted; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders the word, “and they dried them”<sup>f139</sup>; and agrees both with quails, which, according to some writers<sup>f140</sup>, used to be salted for food for time to come; and with locusts, on which the inhabitants of some parts of Ethiopia always lived, as Pliny<sup>f141</sup> says, being hardened in smoke, and with salt, and was their food for the year round. And this custom was used in Arabia; for Leo Africanus<sup>f142</sup> relates, that the people of Arabia Deserta, and of Lybia, reckon the coming of the locusts an happy omen; for either boiled, or dried with the sun, they beat them into meal (or powder) and eat them: and of the Nasamones, a people in Africa, it is said<sup>f143</sup>, that they hunt locusts, and dry them in the sun, and grind them, and then, sprinkling milk upon them, sup them up.

**Ver. 33.** *And while the flesh [was] yet between their teeth*, etc.] When they had just got it into their mouths, and were about to bite it:

*ere it was chewed*; or “cut off”; or cut into pieces by the “incisores”, or fore teeth, and then ground by the “molaes”, or grinders, and so became fit to be swallowed. Both quails and locusts were eaten as food; the former is a fat and delicious fowl, and the latter, some sorts of them, at least, were allowed clean food for the Jews, and were fed on by many people:

*the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people*; for their lusting after flesh, and despising the manna:

*and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague*; the pestilence, as Aben Ezra; or with fire, as Bochart<sup>f144</sup>, who gives the following reasons why the people were so severely punished now, and not before, when they murmured on a like account; because their sin’s were greater, and more aggravated, they falling again into the same sin which had been forgiven them; and besides, they were before pressed with famine, now they had a plenty of manna every day; and also were better instructed, having received the law, which was not yet given when they were just come out of Egypt. Sulpitius<sup>f145</sup> the historian says, 23,000 perished at this time.

**Ver. 34.** *And he called the name of that place Kibrothhattaavah*, etc.] That is, Moses called it so, or it was called by the children of Israel, and by others in later times, by this name, which signifies “the graves of lust”; dug by lust, or which lust was the cause and occasion of, and where those that indulged it were buried, as follows:

*because there they buried the people that lusted*; not all that lusted, for the lusting was pretty general; but all that died through their gluttony and intemperance, and the judgment of God on them; or who were the most inordinate in their lust, and encouraged others in it, and were the ringleaders in the murmur and mutiny.

**Ver. 35.** *[And] the people journeyed from Kibrothhattaavah unto Hazeroth*, etc.] After having stayed there a month or more, as is gathered from (<sup>40113</sup>Numbers 11:20);

*and abode at Hazeroth*; at least seven days, as appears from (<sup>40125</sup>Numbers 12:15,16); which, according to Bunting<sup>f146</sup>, was eight miles from Kibrothhattaavah, or Taberah, which were the same place.

# CHAPTER 12

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBER 12

In this chapter we have an account of Aaron and Miriam speaking against Moses, and for what reason, whose amiable character is given, (<sup><0422></sup>Numbers 12:1-3); and of the Lord's calling them to him, and rebuking them for it, giving an excellent testimony to Moses, and then departing in anger, (<sup><0424></sup>Numbers 12:4-9); and of Miriam's being smitten with leprosy, and Aaron's entreating Moses on his and her account, who prayed to the Lord to heal her, (<sup><0426></sup>Numbers 12:10-13); and of her being ordered to be shut out of the camp seven days, during which time the Israelites stayed at Hazeroth, and then removed to the wilderness of Paran, (<sup><0428></sup>Numbers 12:14-16).

**Ver. 1.** *And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses*, etc.] Miriam is first mentioned, because she was first in the transgression, and so was only punished; Aaron was drawn into the sin by her, and he acknowledged his fault, and was forgiven: it must be a great trial to Moses, not only to be spoken against by the people, as he often was, but by his near relations, and these gracious persons, and concerned with him in leading and guiding the people through the wilderness, (<sup><3304></sup>Micah 6:4);

*because of the Ethiopian woman, whom he had married, for he had married an Ethiopian woman*; not a queen of Ethiopia, as the Targum of Jonathan; nor Tharbis, a daughter of a king of Ethiopia, whom Josephus<sup>f147</sup> says he married, when he was sent upon an expedition against the Ethiopians, while he was in Pharaoh's court; nor the widow of an Ethiopian king whom he married after his death, when he fled from Pharaoh into Ethiopia, and was made a king there, as say some Jewish writers<sup>f148</sup>: for there is no reason to believe he was married before he went to Midian; nor was this some Ethiopian woman he had married since, and but lately, Zipporah being dead or divorced, as some have fancied; but it was Zipporah herself, as Aben Ezra, Ben Melech, and so the Jerusalem Targum, which represents her not as truly an Ethiopian, but so called, because she was like to one; indeed she was really one; not a native of Ethiopia, the country of the Abyssines, but she was a Cushite, a native of

Arabia Chusea, in which country Midian was, from whence she came; hence the tents, of Cushan, and the curtains of Midian, are spoken of together, (<sup><387></sup>Habakkuk 3:7). Now it was not on account of Moses's marriage with her that they spoke against him, for that was an affair transacted in Midian some years ago, which at first sight may seem to be the case; nor because he now had divorced her, as Jarchi, which perhaps would have given them no uneasiness; and for the same reason, not because he abstained from conversation with her, that he might give up himself to the service of God in his house, and perform it in a more holy and faithful manner, which is the common sentiment of the Jewish writers: but rather, as it is thought by others, because of a suspicion they had entertained, that she had interested herself in the affair of the choice of the seventy elders, and had prevailed upon Moses to put in such and such persons into the list she had a mind to serve; at least this seems to be the case, for the displeasure was against Moses himself; they were angry with him, because he transacted that affair without them, and chose whom he pleased, without consulting them; and therefore, though they cared not to ascribe it entirely to him, and his neglect of them, they imputed it to his wife, as if she had overpersuaded him, or her brother through her means, to take such a step as he did.

**Ver. 2.** *And they said, hath the Lord, indeed spoken only by Moses?* etc.] They own he had spoken by him; this was so notorious that it could not be denied:

*hath he not spoken also by us?* are we not prophets as well as he? the Lord spake to Aaron while he was in Egypt, and had made him a good spokesman in his name, and bore this testimony of him, that he could speak well, and Miriam is expressly called a prophetess, (<sup><1014></sup>Exodus 4:14,27) (<sup><1050></sup>Exodus 15:20); and this being the case, they stomached it that they should have no concern in the choice and appointment of the seventy elders:

*and the Lord heard [it];* for perhaps this was said secretly between themselves; but God, that sees, and hears, and knows all things, took notice of what was spoken by them, and resented it; for it was ultimately against himself, who had ordered Moses to do what he did.

**Ver. 3.** *Now the man Moses [was] very meek,* etc.] So that they might say anything against him, and he not be affronted, nor resent any injury; and this therefore is introduced as a reason why the Lord undertook the cause,

and vindicated him, resenting the obloquies of Miriam and Aaron against him; because he knew he was so exceeding meek, that he himself would pass it by without taking notice of it, though he might hear it: hence the Targum of Jonathan

“and he cared not for their words;”

they gave him no concern or uneasiness, so meek, mild, and gentle was he: and this is to be considered; not as a self-commendation of Moses, but as a testimony of his character by God himself, by whom he was inspired in writing it; though it is possible this might be added by another hand, Joshua or Ezra, under the same direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God; who chose that such a character of Moses should stand here, in opposition to the calumnies cast upon him, and as giving a reason why not he himself, but the Lord, appeared in his vindication, he being so meek and lowly, as is said of his antitype, and by himself, (<sup>40129</sup>Matthew 11:29);

*above all the men which [were] upon the face of the earth;* being seldom angry, and when he was, it was generally, if not always, when the honour of God was concerned, and not on account of his own person and character; though it must not be said of him that he was perfect in this respect, or free from passion, or from blame at any time on account of it, but, when compared with others, he was the meekest man that ever lived; whereby he became the fittest person to have to do with such a peevish, perverse, and rebellious people as the Israelites were, whom no other man could well have bore with.

**Ver. 4.** *And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam,* etc.] As one greatly provoked, and highly displeased, and which was shown at once; and in order to prevent the complaint getting among the people, and spreading, which might have been of bad consequence, as they were pretty much disposed to murmur and mutiny; as also to show that it was not through any solicitation of Moses that the Lord took this matter in hand, time not being allowed to him to make any application to him; for, as soon as ever Miriam and Aaron had uttered their speech against him, the Lord spake to them:

*come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation;* everyone out of his tent, as Aben Ezra; though it is not improbable that they were all together in the tent of Moses, whither Aaron and Miriam were come to

contend with him; the words seem to be spoken quick, and in haste, as being angry:

*and they three came out:* of the place where they were, to the tabernacle of the congregation, that so the people might not hear what was said unto them, and what was the occasion of it.

**Ver. 5.** *The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud,* etc.] Which was over the most holy place of the tabernacle, and which was a symbol of the presence of the Lord; and who is said to come down, because that was above the tabernacle; whereas he came, as is next expressed,

*and stood [in] the door of the tabernacle;* where he set up his tribunal, and called them to his bar, courts of judicature being usually held in the gate; not suffering them to go into the tabernacle as they were wont to do, being delinquents:

*and called Aaron and Miriam;* to come nearer to him, and hear what he had to say to them; Moses keeping at a greater distance, it not being so proper that he should be within hearing of those commendations which were about to be given of him;

*and they both came forth;* Aaron and Miriam, and stood before the Lord.

**Ver. 6.** *And he said, hear now my words,* etc.] The Targum of Jonathan reads, "I beseech you"; and Jarchi says, this particule always so signifies; but it is not so agreeable to the language of the divine Being:

*if there be a prophet among you;* not as making a doubt of it, but rather allowing that there was, and that there were others besides Moses, as even they themselves, Aaron and Miriam, and the seventy elders, and perhaps others; or at least there had been, and would be again, as there were in later times:

*[I] the Lord will make myself known to him;* that is, declare my mind and will concerning things present, or things to come:

*in a vision;* when awake, either by day or by night, representing objects to the bodily sight; as the almond tree rod, and the boiling pot, to Jeremiah, (<sup><2011></sup>Jeremiah 1:11-13); the visions of the chariots, (<sup><2234></sup>Ezekiel 23:24 26:7,10), and dry bones, (<sup><2501></sup>Ezekiel 37:1-14), to Ezekiel, and such as were shown to Amos, (<sup><3001></sup>Amos 7:1-9:15): or to the mind by night, as if really discerned by the senses; as the visions of the man riding on a red



horse, (<sup><3008></sup>Zechariah 1:8), and of the four horns, (<sup><3018></sup>Zechariah 1:18), and four carpenters, (<sup><301D></sup>Zechariah 1:20), with several others shown to Zechariah:

*[and] will speak unto him in a dream*; as he had done to Jacob, (<sup><0311></sup>Genesis 31:11), and as he did afterwards to Daniel, (<sup><2001></sup>Daniel 7:1), and many others.

**Ver. 7.** *My servant Moses [is] not so*, etc.] Or such a prophet; he is not so used; it was not in such a manner the Lord spake to him; not in visions and dreams, as he had to Abraham and Jacob, and did to others in later times:

*who [is] faithful in all mine house*; in the house of Israel, or among that people which were the Lord's family, where Moses was a servant and steward, and did all things according to the will of the Lord, the master of the family; he faithfully delivered to them all the laws, statutes, and ordinances, which he appointed to be observed by them: unless this is to be understood of the tabernacle, which was the house of God, in which he dwelt, and which was made, and all things in it, exactly according to the pattern given by the Lord to Moses: (see <sup><301D></sup>Hebrews 3:2,5 8:5).

**Ver. 8.** *With him will I speak mouth to mouth*, etc.] And face to face, as he had done, (<sup><0311></sup>Exodus 33:11); in a free, friendly, and familiar manner, as one friend speaks to another, without injecting any fear or dread, and consternation of mind, which was sometimes the case of the prophets; or without a middle person, a mediator, as Aben Ezra, not by means of an angel, as in some cases, but the Lord himself spake to him:

*even apparently, and not in dark speeches*; the word "apparently", or "vision", being opposed to "dark speeches", shows that this is not to be understood of the appearance or vision of an object presented to the sight, or to the mind, which is denied of Moses, though usual with other prophets; but of the vision, or plain sense and meaning of words, which are so plainly expressed, that the sense is easily seen and understood; it was not under figures and allegories, and parables and dark representations of things, that the law of the decalogue, and other laws, statutes, and ordinances, and the proclamation the Lord made of himself, as the Lord gracious, merciful, etc. were delivered unto Moses, but in plain words and clear expressions; not in such enigmatical, parabolical, and allegorical terms as many of the visions and prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, and Zechariah, were exhibited to them; (see Gill on "<sup><0116></sup>Numbers 12:6"):

*and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold:* as he had at the burning bush, and at Mount Sinai, with the elders of Israel, and when the Lord proclaimed his name before him; at which several times it is highly probable he beheld the Lord, even the Lord Christ, in an human form, as a presage of his future incarnation, and as he might also after this: the Targum of Jonathan is,

“the similitude which is after my Shechinah (or divine Majesty) he saw;”

that is, his back parts, as Jarchi, and other Jewish writers, interpret it; but Bishop Patrick thinks the word not should be repeated from the preceding clause, and that the sense is, that he did not behold him in similitudes, nor did the Lord speak to him by them, as to other prophets, (see <sup><820></sup>Hosea 12:10);

*wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?* or against my servant, against Moses; against any servant of mine, but especially against Moses, so faithful in my house, so much approved of and honoured by me, and so superior to all other prophets.

**Ver. 9.** *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them,* etc.] Which might be visible by some outward token, as by lightning from the cloud, or, however, what follows was sufficient to show it:

*and he departed;* from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where he had stood in the pillar of cloud for some time; but as soon as he had given his testimony of Moses, and expressed his displeasure at Aaron and Miriam, he went away directly from them; not staying to hear what they had to say for themselves, which was a plain indication of his anger against them.

**Ver. 10.** *And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle,* etc.] Not from off the door of the tabernacle, as Aben Ezra, for that is implied in the last clause of (<sup><0420></sup>Numbers 12:9), but from off that part of the tabernacle, the most holy place, where it had used to abide; but now it went up higher in the air, or removed at some distance from thence, which was a further indication of the sore displeasure of God; that as he would not stay with Aaron and Miriam at the door of the tabernacle, so neither would he suffer the cloud to continue over it, as it was wont to do, so long as they were there:

*and, behold, Miriam [became] leprous, [white] as snow*; was smote immediately with a leprosy by the Lord, as the hand of Moses was in a miraculous way, (<sup><1046></sup>Exodus 4:6); and as Gehazi was, who was smitten of God in like manner, (<sup><1157></sup>2 Kings 5:27); in an ordinary and gradual leprosy, when it was all white, the man was clean, (<sup><1833></sup>Leviticus 13:13); but in an extraordinary one, and which was immediately from God, and at once, in this case it was a sign it was incurable. Miriam only, and not Aaron, was smitten with a leprosy; though Chaskuni says, that some of their Rabbins were of opinion, that Aaron was; but this does not appear, nor is it likely that he should be thus defiled and dishonoured, being the priest of the Lord, and since he was not so deep in the transgression as Miriam, and was drawn into it by her, and also repented of it:

*and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, [she was] leprous*; he not only cast his eye upon her, as it were accidentally, and saw what was her case; but, as the priest of the Lord, looked upon her, as it was the business of his office to do, and perceived she was leprous, and was obliged to pronounce her so; and perhaps she was the first, after the law of the leprosy, that he was called to look upon, and pronounced her unclean, which must be a great mortification to him.

**Ver. 11.** *And Aaron said unto Moses, alas, my lord!* etc.] The word for “alas” is generally interpreted by the Jewish writers as a note of beseeching and entreating, as it is here by the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

“I beseech thee, my lord,”

or “upon me, my lord”<sup>f149</sup>, be all the blame; such was his tenderness to his sister, and the compassion he had on her; and such reverence and respect did he show to Moses his brother, though younger than he, because of his superior dignity as a prophet, and chief magistrate, and prime minister, and servant of the Lord, calling him “my lord”:

*I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us*; the punishment of it, bear not hard upon us, or suffer us to be punished in a rigorous manner, without interceding to the Lord for us, for the abatement or removal of it; such a powerful and prevailing interest he knew he had with God, that by his prayers their punishment would be mitigated, or not laid, or, if laid, removed:

*wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned*; he owns they had sinned, but suggests, and so he would have it understood, that it

was not through malice, and purposely and presumptuously, but through and ignorance, inadvertency and weakness, and hoped it would be forgiven.

**Ver. 12.** *Let her not be as one dead*, etc.] As she was in a ceremonial sense, being to be shut up and excluded from the society of people, and as defiling by touching as a dead carcass; and, in a natural sense, her flesh, by the disease upon her, was become as dead flesh, putrid and rotten, and unless miraculously cured it would issue in her death:

*of whom the flesh is half consumed, when he cometh out of his mother's womb*; like an abortive, or one stillborn, that has been dead some time in its mother's womb; and therefore when brought forth its flesh is almost wasted away, or at least half consumed: and in such a plight and condition was Miriam already, or quickly would be, through the force of her disease.

**Ver. 13.** *And Moses cried unto the Lord*, etc.] With a loud voice, and with great earnestness and importunity, being heartily affected with the miserable condition Miriam was in:

*saying, heal her now, O God, I beseech thee*; in the original text it is, "O God now, heal her now"; for the same particle is used at the close as at the beginning of the petition; and the repetition of it shows his earnestness and importunity that she might be healed directly, immediately, without any delay; and Moses uses the word "El", which signifies the strong and mighty God, as expressive of his faith in the power of God, that he was able to heal her; and at the same time suggests that none but he could do it; and so Aben Ezra interprets it,

"thou that hast power in thine hand, now heal her;"

this prayer is a proof of his being of a meek, humble, and forgiving spirit.

**Ver. 14.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] By a voice out of the cloud, though at a distance; unless it was by a secret impulse upon his spirit, darting such words into his mind as if he heard an audible voice:

*if her father had but spit in her face*; or, "in spitting spitted"<sup>f150</sup>; spit much, and continued spitting till he had covered her face with spittle; which, as it would have been a token of anger and displeasure in him, an earthly father, who is meant, and of shame and disgrace to her; so there is some likeness in spittle to leprosy, both being white, and in such a case to the abundance

of it, her thee being covered with leprosy; and which came as it were from the mouth of the Lord, by his order and appointment, immediately, as spittle from a man, and like that, in a way of detestation and contempt, and to make abhorred and despised:

*should she not be ashamed seven days?* hide herself, and never appear in the family, and especially in her father's presence, because of the shame she was put unto, for the space of seven days; how much more ashamed then should she be, now her heavenly Father did spit in her face, and covered it with a white leprosy and for as long a time at least, or indeed longer? fourteen days, say the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, but no more than seven are required, when more might have justly been, for her separation and shutting up from company and conversation:

*let her be shut out from the camp seven days;* for so long the leper was to be shut up at the trial of his leprosy, and so long he was to be out of his tent at the cleansing of him, (<sup><0815></sup>Leviticus 13:5,6 14:8);

*and after that let her be received [again];* into the camp and into society with her relations and friends.

**Ver. 15.** *And Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days,* etc.] And so in later times lepers dwelt alone, and in a separate house, as long as the leprosy was upon them, (see <sup><0821></sup>2 Chronicles 26:21); Miriam no doubt was healed at once, but, as a punishment for her sin, she was obliged to keep out of the camp of Israel for such a space of time:

*and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in [again];* partly out of respect unto her, she being a prophetess, and one that went before them, and led them with Moses and Aaron, (<sup><0804></sup>Micah 6:4); and partly for want of the cloud to direct them, which had departed at a distance from them.

**Ver. 16.** *And afterwards the people removed from Hazeroth,* etc.] After seven days, where they had been so long at least; the cloud being returned to the tabernacle, and having been taken up, which was the signal for motion, the camps of Israel, in their order, removed and marched forward:

*and pitched in the wilderness of Paran;* at a place in it called Rithmah, (<sup><0838></sup>Numbers 33:18); which, according to Bunting <sup>f151</sup>, was eight miles from Hazeroth, near to which was another place called Kadesh, or else this was another name of Rithmah, (see <sup><0438></sup>Numbers 13:3,26); and now the

Israelites were very near the land of promise, and from hence they sent spies to make their observations on it, and bring a report of it; and had it not been for their ill conduct in that affair, in all probability would have been quickly in it, but on that account were kept out thirty eight years longer: it was on the twenty eighth or twenty ninth of the month Sivan the Israelites came to this place, according to the Jewish writers<sup>f152</sup>, which month answers part of our May and part of June.

# CHAPTER 13

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 13

In this chapter an order is given by the Lord, to send twelve men into the land of Canaan, to search and spy it, and which was accordingly executed, (<sup><04E3E></sup>Numbers 13:1-3); and the names of the twelve persons are given, (<sup><04E3E></sup>Numbers 13:4-16); the instructions they received from Moses, what part of the land they should enter into first, and what observations they should make on it, (<sup><04E37></sup>Numbers 13:17-20); which they attended to, and on their return brought some of the fruit of the land with them, (<sup><04E32></sup>Numbers 13:21-26); and gave an account of it, that it was a very fruitful land, but the inhabitants mighty, and their cities walled, (<sup><04E37></sup>Numbers 13:27-29); which threw the people into confusion, but that they were stilled by Caleb, one of the spies, who encouraged them, (<sup><04E3D></sup>Numbers 13:30); but all the rest, excepting Joshua, brought an ill report of it, as not to be subdued and conquered by them, (<sup><04E3E></sup>Numbers 13:31-33).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord Spake unto Moses*, etc.] When in the wilderness of Paran, either at Rithmah or Kadesh; this was on the twenty ninth day of the month Sivan, on which day, the Jews say <sup>f153</sup>, the spies were sent to search the land, which was a scheme of the Israelites' own devising, and which they first proposed to Moses, who approved of it as prudential and political, at least he gave his assent unto it to please the people, and carried the affair to the Lord, and consulted him about it; who, rather permitting than approving, gave the following order; for the motion carried in it a good deal of unbelief, calling in question whether the land was so good as had been represented unto them, fearing it was not accessible, and that it would be difficult to get into it, and were desirous of knowing the best way of getting into it before they proceeded any further; all which were unnecessary, if they would have fully trusted in the Lord, in his word, promise, power, providence, and guidance; who had told them it was a land flowing with milk and honey; that he would show them the way to it, by going before them in a pillar of cloud and fire; that he would assuredly bring them into it, having espied it for them, and promised it unto them; so

that there was no need on any account for them to send spies before them; however, to gratify them in this point, he assented to it:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Send thou men*, etc.] Which is rather a permission than a command; so Jarchi interprets it,

“send men according to thy mind, I do not command thee, but if thou pleasest send;”

this he observed was agreeable to Moses, and to the Israelites, and therefore granted it, or allowed them to take their own way, and which issued badly, as it always does, when men are left to their own counsel:

*that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel*; called the land of Canaan, though it consisted of seven nations, from the principal of them; this God had given in promise to the children of Israel, and had now brought them to the borders of it; nay, had given them orders to go up and possess it; but they were for searching it first, to know what sort of a land it was, and which was the best way of entering into it, which is here permitted them, (see <sup>(R12)</sup>Deuteronomy 1:21,22);

*of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man*; excepting the tribe of Levi; the reason of which was because they were to have no inheritance in the land, (<sup>(R10)</sup>Deuteronomy 10:9 18:1,2); but then, to make up the number twelve, the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, are reckoned as two tribes:

*everyone a ruler among them*; a prince in his tribe; so were men of honour and credit, of power and authority, of prudence and probity, and who might be trusted with such an affair, and their report believed: they were not indeed princes of the highest rank, not the same that assisted in taking the numbers of the people, who were captains over their several tribes, as in (<sup>(R10)</sup>Numbers 1:4-16 2:2-31), etc. but were inferior princes and rulers, perhaps rulers of thousands.

**Ver. 3.** *And Moses, by the commandment of the Lord*, etc.] By his power, permission, and leave, as Jarchi, that there might be no delay through his means:

*sent them from the wilderness of Paran*; from Rithmah or Kadeshbarnea, which seem to be one and the same place in that wilderness: this, as before



observed, was on the twenty ninth day of Sivan: (see Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:1”);

*all those [were] heads of the children of Israel;* were not mean and vulgar men, but persons of rule, who bore some office of magistracy ant government among the people in their respective tribes.

**Ver. 4.** *And these [were] their names, of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur.*] From (<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4-15), there is nothing but the names of the said persons, whose sons they were, and of what tribe; and the several tribes are mentioned, not according to the order of the birth of the patriarchs, nor according to the dignity of their mothers that bore them, but, very likely, according to the order in which they were sent, two by two, to search the land; for had they gone all twelve in a body, they would have been liable to suspicion: the signification of their names is of no importance to know, and will give us no light into their characters or the reason of their choice, nor are their parents elsewhere taken notice of, nor any of them but Joshua and Caleb, of whom we shall hear more hereafter.

**Ver. 5.** *Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 6.** *Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 7.** *Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 8.** *Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 9.** *Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 10.** *Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 11.** *Of the tribe of Joseph, [namely], of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 12.** *Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.*] (See Gill on “<sup>Q1E30</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 13.** *Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael.*] (See Gill on <sup>(-0130)</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 14.** *Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.*] (See Gill on <sup>(-0130)</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 15.** *Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.*] (See Gill on <sup>(-0130)</sup>Numbers 13:4”).

**Ver. 16.** *These [are] the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land,* etc.] Which is observed after the catalogue is given of them, (<sup>(-0130)</sup>Numbers 13:4-15); and this is repeated that their names may be taken notice of, which stand on record to the disgrace of the greater number of them, and to the honour of two only, Joshua and Caleb; and on the former the following remark is made;

*and Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua;* whether it was at this time that Moses gave him this name is not certain; if it was, then he is called so before by anticipation, for he is several times called so before this, and even the first time we hear of him, (<sup>(-0170)</sup>Exodus 17:9); wherefore Chaskuni reads it, Moses had called; but Jarchi thinks it was now given him, and that Moses prayed for him  $\text{Æ}[\text{y}\text{ç}\text{w}\text{y}\text{ hy}$ , “Jah” or “Jehovah” save thee from the counsel of the spies: the name is the same with Jesus, as appears from (<sup>(-3048)</sup>Hebrews 4:8); and a type he was of Christ the Saviour, whose name is so called, because he saves his people from their sins, (<sup>(-4012)</sup>Matthew 1:21); and brings them to heaven, as Joshua was the instrument of saving the Israelites and bringing them into the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 17.** *And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan,* etc.] He sent them from Kadeshbarnea, as Caleb affirms, (<sup>(-0147)</sup>Joshua 14:7);

*and said unto them, go ye up this [way] southward;* pointing as it were with his finger which way they should go, even up such a hill southward; and which, as Aben Ezra observes, was not the south of the camp, but the south of the land of Canaan; and who further observes, that it is well known that Egypt, from whence the Israelites now came, was to the south of the land of Israel, of which this is a demonstration; the latitude of Egypt is less than thirty degrees, and the latitude of Jerusalem is thirty three, and the wilderness of Paran was in the south of the land of Egypt: it should be rendered by “the south”, as in (<sup>(-0132)</sup>Numbers 13:22); or from the “south”

<sup>f154</sup>, since the Israelites must go northward, as a learned man <sup>f155</sup> observes, to enter into the land of Canaan: now this south part of Canaan afterwards belonged to the tribe of Judah, and lying southward, and mountainous, was dry and barren, (<sup><06104></sup>Joshua 15:1,19); and was, as Jarchi says, the dregs of the land of Israel; and here, as he observes, the same method was taken as merchants do, who, when they show their goods, show the worst first, and then the best:

*and go up into the mountain*; which was inhabited by the Amorites, (<sup><06104></sup>Deuteronomy 1:44); and was afterwards called the mountainous or hill country of Judea, (<sup><06109></sup>Luke 1:39,65).

**Ver. 18.** *And see the land what it [is], and the people that dwelleth therein*, etc.] The situation and condition of the country, and the nature, temper, disposition, and constitution of the inhabitants, by which it might be judged whether it was a desirable thing to possess it, and whether it was practicable to subdue and take it;

*whether they [be] strong or weak, few or many*; whether able-bodied men fit for war, and of spirit, strength, and courage, or feeble and pusillanimous, weak and timorous; and whether their number was small or great, by which they would be capable of judging whether they were in a state and condition to defend themselves or not, and whether a conquest of them was easy or not; the last of the two things in the preceding clause is first particularly explained and enlarged upon, as is usual in the Hebrew language.

**Ver. 19.** *And what the land [is] that they dwell in, whether it [be] good or bad*, etc.] Whether the air is good, the climate temperate, and the earth well watered, and has good convenience of springs, fountains, and rivers, and so wholesome or healthful; or otherwise, which is the first thing they were directed to observe, though here put in the second place:

*and what cities [they be] they dwell in, whether in tents or strong holds*; whether in tents, as the Israelites now lived, and as the Kedarenes, as Aben Ezra notes, and other Arabians, who encamped in tents, or who dwelt in villages, and unwall'd towns, unfortified cities, according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; or whether in fortified cities, towns, and garrisons; by which it would appear whether it would be easy to come at them, and fall upon them, or difficult to subdue and conquer them; for if their cities were fortified, it would not be so easy to take them, and would

require time. Jarchi thinks, that by this it might be known whether they were men of strength and courage, or whether weak and fearful persons; seeing if they dwelt in villages they were strong men, and depended on their own strength, but if they dwelt in fortified cities, they were weak.

**Ver. 20.** *And what the land [is], whether it be fat or lean,* etc.] That is, what the soil of it is, whether it be rich and fertile, or whether it be poor and barren, which would be seen by the fruits it produced, this being now the fruitful season of the year; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

“and what is the praise of the land, whether its fruits are fat or lean;”

plump and full, rich and juicy, or otherwise, as their grapes, olives, etc. whether it was a land flowing with milk and honey, (<sup>(233)</sup>Exodus 33:3), abounding with all good things, and those of the best sort, or not:

*whether there be wood thereon or not;* timber for building, and other manual operations, or wood for fuel, which are great conveniences in a country; though the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of fruit-bearing trees, which bear fruits fit for eating, or not, as apples, pears, figs, pomegranates, etc.

*and be ye of good courage;* and not be afraid of being taken up for spies, suggesting, that the power and providence of God would protect and preserve them, in which they should put their trust, and be of good heart:

*and bring of the fruit of the land;* as a sample and specimen of what it brought forth, which would serve to encourage and animate the people in general, to go up and possess it:

*now the time [was] the time of the first ripe grapes;* when they and the other summer fruits were coming to their perfection; and which was a proper season to see them in, and bring a sample of them; though Chaskuni suggests, that it was a more dangerous time to bring off fruit, because the keepers of the vineyards were then there; and hence they needed strengthening, and are bid to be of good courage; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“the day on which they went was the twenty ninth of the month Sivan, the time of the first ripe grapes;”

and as this month answers to part of our May and part of June, and it being at the latter end of that month, it must be about the middle of June; by which we may observe the forwardness of grapes in the land of Canaan, the time of vintage now drawing nigh.

**Ver. 21.** *So they went up and searched the land*, etc.] Went up the mountains as they were directed, and passed through the whole land; diligently inquired into everything material belonging to it, according to their instructions, and made their observations on it, and on the inhabitants, and their habitations:

*from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath*; this wilderness, from whence they went, seems to be the same with the wilderness of Paran, called Zin; perhaps from the multitude of thorns in it; but different from the wilderness of Sin, (<sup><0260></sup>Exodus 16:1), which was nearer Egypt; but this was on the south quarter of the land of Canaan, along by the coast of Edom, (<sup><0648></sup>Numbers 34:3 <sup><0650></sup>Joshua 15:1); Rehob, they are said to come to first from thence, was in the tribe of Asher in later times, (<sup><0628></sup>Joshua 19:28); and lay to the north or northwest of the land of Canaan. Jerom says <sup>f156</sup>, that in his times there was a village called Rooba, four miles from Scythopolis. Hamath was the northern boundary of the land of Israel, and was in the tribe of Naphtali, when it came into the hands of the Israelites, and lay to the northeast, as the former place to the northwest, (<sup><0647></sup>Numbers 34:7,8 <sup><0625></sup>Joshua 19:35); so that their direction, as they went, was south and north, and west and east: their journey is described by Jarchi thus; they went on the borders of it, length and breadth, in the form of the capital of the letter  $\gamma$ , “gamma”; they went on the south border from the east corner to the west corner, as Moses commanded them: “get you up this [way] southward”, (<sup><0437></sup>Numbers 13:17); the way of the southeast border unto the sea, which is the western border; and from thence they returned, and went on all the western border by the sea shore, until they came to Hamath, which is by Mount Hor, at the northwest corner; but Hamath was on the northeast; nor did they go thither, it was too far off for them, but they went as far as Rehob, which was “as men go to Hamath”, as it should be rendered, that is, it lay in the way to Hamath.

**Ver. 22.** *And they ascended by the south*, etc.] When they returned, after they had searched the land, then they came into the south country again, which was in their way to Kadesh, where the camp of Israel remained; they are said to ascend, because of the hill country they again came to; for their

coming to Hebron, and carrying a cluster of grapes from that place, not far from thence, was upon their return:

*and came unto Hebron*; which was in the hill country of Judea, in the tribe of Judah afterwards, which before was called Kirjatharba; in the original text it is, “he came”<sup>f157</sup>, Caleb, and he only, according to Jarchi and the Rabbins in Abendana; and certain it is that he was there, and he had this place on which his feet trod given him for an inheritance, (~~f149~~) Joshua 14:9,13-15); and it is very probable that the spies did not go together, but perhaps singly, and at most but two together, which seems to be the case here by what follows:

*where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, [were]*; where Anak, and these his three sons, dwelt, who were giants; and perhaps from thence Hebron before this was called Kirjatharbah, “the city of the four”; or from Arba, the father of Anak:

*now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt*; or Tanais, as the Targum of Jonathan, whence one of the nomes of Egypt was called the Tanitic nome: it was the metropolis of that country, and may be observed, to abate the pride and vanity of that kingdom, which boasted of its antiquity. Josephus says<sup>f158</sup>, that the inhabitants of Hebron not only reckoned it more ancient than any of the cities of the land, but than Memphis in Egypt, accounting it (then in his time) 2300 years old; but who it was built by is not certain; Jarchi thinks it is possible that Ham built Hebron for Canaan his younger son, before he built Zoan for Mizraim his eldest son; which does not seem likely.

**Ver. 23.** *And they came unto the brook of Eshcol*, etc.] Or “valley of Eshcol”<sup>f159</sup>, which is here so called by anticipation from the following circumstance; and perhaps had not this name given it, until the children of Israel were possessed of the land, and then they called it so, in memory of what was done here at this time; it was not far from Hebron, as may be concluded from thence; and so Jerom, relating the travels of Paula in those parts, says<sup>f160</sup>, she came from Betzur to Eshcol, where having seen the little cells of Sarah, the cradle of Isaac, and the traces of the oak of Abraham, under which he saw the day of Christ, and was glad, rising up from thence, she went up to Hebron; which shows this Eshcol to be near Hebron, and to lie low, and was a valley; (see ~~f124~~ Deuteronomy 1:24);

*and cut down from thence a branch, with one cluster of grapes*; in this valley was a vineyard, or at least a vine tree, on which they observed one cluster, which perhaps was of an uncommon size, as it seems by what follows, and they cut down the branch, and that with it:

*and they bare it between two upon a staff*; it was so big; and which was not done only for the ease of carrying it, but that it might not have any of its grapes squeezed, bruised, and broken off, but that they might carry it entire and whole for the Israelites to behold: these two men were probably Caleb and Joshua; though Jarchi says they carried nothing, which is more than he could say with certainty. Some historians report very surprising things of the size of vines, and the largeness of their clusters, which, when observed, this account will not at all seem incredible. Strabo says <sup>f161</sup>, it is reported, that in Hyrcania, a vine produced a firkin of wine, and, the trunk of a vine was so large, that it was as much as two men could grasp with both arms, and bore clusters of two cubits long <sup>f162</sup>; the same he says <sup>f163</sup> of the size of vines in Mauritania, and of their clusters being a cubit long; and of others in Carmania being two cubits long, as before <sup>f164</sup>: it is reported of the Indian fig tree, that it sometimes has an hundred figs more or less on a branch, and all in a cluster like grapes; and some of the clusters are sometimes so large as to be carried by two men on a staff <sup>f165</sup>, as here; and some have thought, that it is the fruit here meant; but this is expressly called a cluster of grapes. About half a mile from Eshcol, as Adrichomius <sup>f166</sup> says, was the brook or valley of Sorek, which was famous for vines; and it is affirmed by many writers and travellers, that to this day there are vines in that place, which produce clusters of twenty five pounds weight and more; and that in Lebanon, and other parts of Syria, the kernels of grapes are as big as a man's thumb <sup>f167</sup>. Leo Africanus speaks <sup>f168</sup> of grapes in some parts of Africa somewhat red, which, from their size, are called hens' eggs: and the Talmudists <sup>f169</sup> are extravagant, and beyond all belief, in the account they give of the vines in the land of Canaan, and of the clusters of them, and the quantity of wine they had from them; and of this cluster they suppose <sup>f170</sup>, that the "two" spoken of are not to be understood of men, but of bars or staves; and that this cluster was carried by eight, four at the four ends of the two staves, and that there were, besides, two staves or bars that went across, at the ends of which were four more men, who carried the cluster hanging in the middle; a figure of which Wagenseil <sup>f171</sup> has given us: but Philo the Jew <sup>f172</sup> has given a better account of it, and more agreeable to the

Scripture, as that it was put upon a staff, and hung at the middle of it, the ends of which were laid on the shoulders of two young men, who carried it; though he adds, that such was the weight of it, that these were relieved by others in succession:

*and [they brought] of the pomegranates, and of the figs;* that is, others of them did; which seems to favour the notion that they were in a body, and that there were more than two together at this place; but even these two might be able to bring some of this sort of fruit along with them, as well as bear the cluster of grapes; besides, the text does not oblige us to understand it of the same persons in the same place.

**Ver. 24.** *The place was called the brook of Eshcol,* etc.] That is, in later times:

*because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence;* the word “Eshcol” signifying a “cluster”; and this cluster was typical of Christ, who may be compared to this, as he is to a cluster of camphire, (<sup>2014</sup>Song of Solomon 1:14); there being in him a “cluster” of all perfections, of all the perfections of deity, the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him; and of all human perfections, he being in all things like unto his people, excepting sin; and there being also a cluster of all the graces and gifts of the Spirit without measure in him, as man; and of all the blessings of grace for his people, as Mediator; and of all the exceeding great and precious promises of the covenant of grace. The “staff”, on which this was carried, may denote the ministration of the Gospel, which may seem mean and despicable in itself, but is the means of carrying the name of Christ, and the things of Christ, about in the world; (see <sup>4095</sup>Acts 9:15); and the “two” men which bore it, may signify the prophets of the Old Testament, and the ministers of the New, who both agree and join together in setting forth the person, offices, and grace of Christ. Moreover, this cluster may be an emblem of the Spirit of God, and his grace, and of the rich experience the people of God have of it in this present life, while travellers in the wilderness, as a taste and earnest of the future glory and happiness in the heavenly Canaan.

**Ver. 25.** *And they returned from searching the land after forty days.*] The Targum of Jonathan adds, on the eighth day of the month Ab, which answers to part of July and part of August; so that this must be towards the latter end of July: some Jewish writers <sup>f173</sup> say it was the ninth of Ab; hence



the tradition, that it was decreed on the ninth of Ab concerning their fathers, that they should not enter into the land <sup>f174</sup>.

**Ver. 26.** *And they went, and came to Moses, and to Aaron*, etc.] They proceeded on their journey from Eshcol, till they came to the camp of Israel; and as soon as they came there, went directly to Moses and to Aaron, before they went into their own tents, as Aben Ezra observes:

*and to all the congregation of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh*; that is, Kadeshbarnea, as appears from (<sup>¶174B</sup>Joshua 14:7); called for brevity's sake Kadesh; but is by some thought to be different from the Kadesh in (<sup>¶174C</sup>Numbers 20:1); to which the Israelites came not until thirty eight years after this time: this Kadesh was in the wilderness of Paran, and the same with Rithmah, or was near it, where the Israelites were now encamped, and had remained all the time the spies were gone: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call this place Rekem, as they do in (<sup>¶174D</sup>Genesis 16:14);

*and brought back word unto them, and to all the congregation*: to Moses and Aaron, and the principal heads of the body of the people assembled together: to these they related an account of their tour through the land of Canaan, what they had met with, and what observations they had made, agreeably to the instructions that had been given them when they set out:

*and showed them the fruit of the land*; which they had brought with them, the bunch of grapes, pomegranates, and figs.

**Ver. 27.** *And they told him*, etc.] Moses, who was the chief ruler whom they addressed, and to whom they directed their speech:

*and said, we came unto the land whither thou sentest us*; the land of Canaan, which they were sent by Moses to spy; this was said by ten of them or by one of them as their mouth; for Caleb and Joshua did not join with them in the following account, as appears from (<sup>¶174E</sup>Numbers 13:30);

*and surely it floweth with milk and honey*; they own that the land answered to the description which the Lord had given of it when it was promised them by him, (<sup>¶174F</sup>Exodus 3:8);

*and this [is] the fruit of it*; pointing to the bunch of grapes, the pomegranates and figs; not that these were a proof of its flowing with milk and honey, at least in a literal sense, but of the goodness and fruitfulness of

the land: though the luxury of Bacchus, the god of wine, is by the poet <sup>f175</sup> described, not only by a fountain of wine, but by rivers of milk and flows of honey.

**Ver. 28.** *Nevertheless the people [be] strong that dwell in the land,* etc.] Though so plentiful and fruitful and desirable to enjoy, yet this objection lay against all hopes and even attempts to possess it, as they thought; the strength of the people, its present inhabitants, both in body and mind, being persons of a large, and some of a prodigious stature, and to all appearance men of valour and courage;

*and the cities [are] walled and very great;* and so inaccessible, and able to hold out a long siege, and repel what force may be brought against them; so that to attack them would be to little purpose:

*and moreover we saw the children of Anak there:* whom they had heard of before, and so had the congregation of Israel, and many terrible and frightful stories were told of them, and these they now saw with their eyes, and very formidable they appeared to them; this seems to prove that others beside Caleb and Joshua were at Hebron, where the sons of Anak lived, (<sup><0132></sup>Numbers 13:22); and so they might, and yet not be together with them.

**Ver. 29.** *The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south,* etc.] On the southern side of the land of Canaan: not in it, for they were not Canaanites, but neighbours to them, and lay nearest to the camp of Israel, and at the entrance into the land of Canaan; and as they were enemies of Israel, as appears from an attack upon them quickly after they came from the Red sea, in Rephidim, (<sup><0278></sup>Exodus 17:8); and friends to the Canaanites, they would no doubt oppose their passage into their land, as they did, (<sup><0443></sup>Numbers 14:43,45); this is one difficulty in the way of possessing the land hinted at, others follow:

*and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains;* and guard the passes there; so that should they escape the Amalekites, or get the better of them, they would not be able to pass the mountains, being so well inhabited and defended; the Hittites seem to dwell about Mount Lebanon, (<sup><0604></sup>Joshua 1:4); the Jebusites inhabited the mountains about Jerusalem, and that itself, which was called by them Jebus, and from which they were not dispossessed until the times of David, (<sup><1304></sup>1 Chronicles 11:4,5); and the Amorites were possessed of the

mountain which was on the borders of the land, next to the place where Israel now were, (<sup>(R12)</sup>Deuteronomy 1:20);

*and the Canaanites dwell by the sea*; these dwelt both on the east and on the west of the land, (<sup>(R13)</sup>Joshua 11:3); so that the western Canaanites dwelt on the shore of the Mediterranean sea, which is often put for the west in Scripture; and the eastern Canaanites dwelt by the Dead sea, or by the sea of Tiberias, called sometimes the lake of Gennesaret, and seems the rather to be meant here by what follows:

*and by the coast of Jordan*; so that this river was not passable by them; for by all this they would suggest that all avenues and passes were stopped up, so that it was a vain thing to attempt entrance into the land, or to expect ever to possess it.

**Ver. 30.** *And Caleb stilled the people before Moses*, etc.] In his presence, they standing before him; or “unto Moses”<sup>f176</sup>, as they were coming to him with open mouth against him; for upon the above report of the spies they began to murmur and mutiny, and to speak against Moses for bringing them out of Egypt into a wilderness, feeding them with vain hopes of a country which they were never likely to enjoy; and in their wrath they might be making up to him, threatening to pull him to pieces, but were restrained by Caleb, who signified he had something to say to them, to which they attended, he being one of the spies, and for their principal tribe, the tribe of Judah, that went foremost; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“Caleb silenced the people, and they attended to Moses;”

or hearkened to him, to what he said, which though not here related, is in (<sup>(R12)</sup>Deuteronomy 1:29,30); which yet they did not give credit to, though they heard what he had to say:

*and said, let us go up at once and possess it*; without any delay, there is nothing more to be done than to enter and take possession; this he said, trusting to the promise of God, who is faithful, and to his power who is able to perform:

*for we are well able to overcome it*; especially having God on their side, who had promised to bring them into it, and put them in the possession of it; and indeed, humanly speaking, they seemed quite sufficient for such an undertaking, being upwards of six hundred thousand men fit for war, (<sup>(R14)</sup>Numbers 1:46), marshalled under their proper standards, with captains

over each tribe, and having such brave, wise, and courageous commanders and generals, Moses and Joshua, who had given signal instances of their prudence and bravery already. What is it such an army, under proper directions, might not undertake? One would think, in all human probability, they were able to conquer a much greater country than the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 31.** *But the men that went up with him*, etc.] With Caleb, all but Joshua: the other ten

*said, we be not able to go up against the people*; this they had not said before, though they plainly suggested it, and, to make the people believe this, had represented the inhabitants of the land of Canaan in the light they did; but now, in direct opposition to Caleb, fully expressed it, giving this reason for it:

*for they [are] stronger than we*; being both of a larger size and more numerous.

**Ver. 32.** *And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel*, etc.] Before, they gave a good report of the land itself, as a very fruitful one, answering to their expectations and wishes; but now they change their language, and give a different account of it; which shows their want of integrity, and to what length an opposition carried them, to say things contrary to their real sentiments, and to what they themselves had said before:

*saying, the land through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof*; the meaning seems to be, that it was so barren and unfruitful that it did not produce food sufficient for the inhabitants of it, who were ready to starve, and many did starve through want, and so was the reverse of what they had before said; for which reason, Gussetius<sup>f177</sup> thinks the sense is, that the land was the food and nourishment of its inhabitants, and that there was such plenty in it that it wanted not any foreign assistance in any respect whatever. Some think that it was continually embroiled in civil wars, in which they destroyed one another; but then this was no argument against, but for their going up against them, since through the divisions among themselves they might reasonably hope the better to succeed; or it ate them up with diseases, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, and so they would represent it, though a fruitful land, yet a very unhealthful one, in which the natives could not live, and much less strangers; and so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret it of

the badness of the air of the country, as being very unwholesome and pernicious. Jarchi represents them as saying, that wherever they came they saw them burying their dead, as if there was a plague among them; and be it so that there was, which is not unlikely, since the Lord promised to send hornets before them, which some interpret of diseases sent, (<sup><0238></sup>Exodus 23:28); and which was in their favour, since hereby the number of their enemies would be lessened, and they would be weakened, and in a bad condition to oppose them:

*and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature*; or men of measures <sup>f178</sup>, of a large measure, above the common measure of men; but it may be justly questioned whether they spoke truth; for though they might see some that exceeded in height men in common, yet it is not credible that all they saw were of such a size; since they were not only at Hebron and saw the giants there who were such, but they went through the land, as in the preceding clause, and all they met with cannot be supposed to be of such a measure.

**Ver. 33.** *And there we saw the giants*, etc.] Not throughout the land, and yet it is so expressed, and in such connection with what goes before, that it might be so understood, and as they might choose it should; that as there were men everywhere of an uncommon size, and were generally so, there were some larger than they in all places, of a prodigious size, of a gigantic stature; and yet this was only in Hebron where they saw them;

*the sons of Anak*; whose names are given, (<sup><0432></sup>Numbers 13:22); and there were but three of them:

*[which came] of the giants*; they, were of the race of giants; for not only Anak their father, but Arba their grandfather was one; (<sup><0445></sup>Joshua 14:15) (<sup><0453></sup>Joshua 15:13);

*and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers*; little diminutive creatures in comparison of them; an hyperbolic exaggeration of the greatness of the giants, and of their own littleness:

*and so we were in their sight*; but this they could not be so certain of, and could only make conjectures by their neglect or supercilious treatment of them. Jarchi makes them to speak of them more diminutively still, as that they heard those giants saying one to another,

“there are ants in the vineyards like men.”

# CHAPTER 14

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 14

This chapter treats of the murmurings of the children of Israel upon the evil report of the spies, which greatly distressed Moses and Aaron, (<sup><0440></sup>Numbers 14:1-5); and of the endeavours of Joshua and Caleb to quiet the minds of the people with a good account of the land, and of the easy conquest of it, but to no purpose, (<sup><0446></sup>Numbers 14:6-10); and of the Lord's threatening to destroy the people with the pestilence, (<sup><0441></sup>Numbers 14:11,12); and of the intercession of Moses for them, which so far succeeded as to prevent their immediate destruction, (<sup><0443></sup>Numbers 14:13-20); nevertheless they are assured again and again, in the strongest terms, that none of them but Joshua and Caleb should enter into the land, but their carcasses should fall in the wilderness, even all the murmurers of twenty years old and upwards, (<sup><0421></sup>Numbers 14:21-35); and the ten men that brought the evil report of the good land died of a plague immediately, but the other two lived, (<sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:36-38); and the body of the people that attempted to go up the mountain and enter the land were smitten and discomfited by their enemies, after they had with concern heard what the Lord threatened them with, (<sup><0449></sup>Numbers 14:39-45).

**Ver. 1.** *And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried*, etc.] This is not to be understood of every individual in the congregation of Israel, but of the princes, heads, and elders of the people that were with Moses and Aaron when the report of the spies was made; though indeed the report might quickly spread throughout the body of the people, and occasion a general outcry, which was very loud and clamorous, and attended with all the signs of distress imaginable, in shrieks and tears and lamentations:

*and the people wept that night*: perhaps throughout the night; could get no sleep nor rest all the night, but spent it in weeping and crying, at the thought of their condition and circumstances, and the disappointments they had met with, as they conceived, of entering into and possessing the land.

**Ver. 2.** *And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron,* etc.] They being the instruments of bringing them out of Egypt, and conducting them hither:

*and the whole congregation said unto them;* some of them, the rest assenting to it by their cries and tears and gestures;

*would God we had died in the land of Egypt;* and then what they left behind they thought might have come into the hands of their children or relations; but now they concluded it would become a prey to the Canaanites:

*or would God we had died in this wilderness;* the wilderness of Paran, at Taberah, where many of them had been destroyed by fire, (<sup>CHOD</sup>Numbers 11:1-3), and now they wish they had perished with them.

**Ver. 3.** *Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land,* etc.] Unto the borders of it: their murmuring did not cease at Moses and Aaron, the instruments, but proceeded against God himself, who had done such wonderful things for them, not only in bringing them out of Egypt, but since they had been in the wilderness; and yet so ungrateful to complain of him and argue with him about favours bestowed on them, as if they were injuries done to them; and particularly as if God had no other intention in bringing them out of Egypt to the place where they were, but

*to fall by the sword:* the sword of the Canaanites, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

*that our wives and our children shall be a prey?* to the same people; they supposed they should be killed, their wives abused, and their children made slaves of:

*were it not better for us to return into Egypt?* and so escape the hands of the inhabitants of Canaan, of whom they had terrible apprehensions from the report made of them.

**Ver. 4.** *And they said one to another, let us make a captain,* etc.] An head over them instead of Moses, who they knew would never take the government and care of them, should they resolve to return to Egypt as they proposed, and besides were now so disaffected to him, that they might not care he should. Captains they had over their several tribes, but they chose to have one chief commander and general over them all; Nehemiah

says they did appoint one; which they either actually did, or this proposal was interpreted as if really put in execution, they being so desirous of it, and bent upon it; wherefore their will is taken for the deed, and so understood; (see <sup><1697></sup>Nehemiah 9:17);

*and let us return into Egypt:* which was downright madness, as some interpreters have justly observed; they must not only expect to be deserted by Moses, through whose means so many miracles had been wrought for them, and who was so wise and faithful a governor of them; and by Aaron their priest, who offered their sacrifices, and prayed for them, and blessed them; and by such a valiant general as Joshua, who had fought for them against their enemies; but by the Lord himself, so that they could not expect the manna to be continued as food for them, nor the pillar of cloud and fire as a guide unto them, nor to be protected from their enemies, on the borders of whose countries they must pass; so that their destruction in the wilderness seemed inevitable; and if they could have surmounted these and other difficulties, what manner of reception could they expect to find in Egypt, on whose account all the firstborn of man and beast among them were slain, whom they had spoiled of their riches, and whose king and his army, and in it perhaps the, flower of the nation, were drowned in the Red sea, for their sakes? What therefore could they think of, if they had any sober thought at all, but utter ruin, should they return there again?

**Ver. 5.** *Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces,* etc.] Through shame and confusion of face for them, at hearing so shocking a proposal made, and such wretched ingratitude expressed; they blushed at it, and were in the utmost distress on account of it, and therefore threw themselves into this posture; or it may be this was done either to beg of them that they would lay aside all thoughts of this kind, or to supplicate the divine Majesty that he would convince them of their sin and folly, and give them repentance for it and forgiveness of it; and this they did

*before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel;* to affect them the more with a sense of their sin and danger.

**Ver. 6.** *And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh,* etc.] Rose up and interposed in this affair, looking upon themselves under a special obligation so to do, as they were capable of confronting the other spies, and contradicting what they had said:



*[which were] of them that searched the land;* they were two of that number, and were the more concerned to hear such a false account given, and distressed to observe the mutiny of the people, and therefore judged themselves in duty bound to do all they could to stop it:

*rent their clothes;* in token of sorrow for the sins of the people; and at their blasphemy and ingratitude against God, and in dread of his wrath and fury breaking forth upon them.

**Ver. 7.** *And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel,* etc.] To as many as could hear them, to the heads of them:

*saying, the land which we passed through to search it, [is] an exceeding good land;* they observe that they were of the number of the spies that were appointed and sent to search the land of Canaan, and they had searched it, and therefore could give an account of it from their own knowledge; and they had not only entered into it, or just looked at a part of it, but they had gone through it, and taken a general survey of it; and they could not but in truth and justice say of it, that it was a good land, delightful, healthful, and fruitful; yea, “very, very good”<sup>f179</sup>, exceeding, exceeding good, superlatively good, good beyond expression; they were not able with words to set forth the goodness of it; this they reported, in opposition to the ill report the other spies had given of it.

**Ver. 8.** *If the Lord delight in us,* etc.] Continue to delight in them as he had, and as appears by what he had done for, them in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; (see <sup><6105></sup>Deuteronomy 10:15);

*then he will bring us into this land, and give it us,* as he has promised, *a land which floweth with milk and honey;* as the Lord himself hath described it, and as the unbelieving spies themselves had owned it; (<sup><4137></sup>Numbers 13:27).

**Ver. 9.** *Only rebel not ye against the Lord,* etc.] Nothing, it is suggested, could hinder them from the, possession of it but their rebellion against the Lord; which might provoke him to cut them off by his immediate hand, or to deliver them into the hands of their enemies; for rebellion is a dreadful sin, and highly provoking, (<sup><4153></sup>1 Samuel 15:23);

*neither fear ye the people the land*; on account of their number, strength, the walled cities they dwell in; they had nothing to fear from them, so be it they feared the Lord, and were not disobedient to him:

*for they [are] bread for us*; as easy to be cut to pieces, and to be devoured, consumed, and destroyed as thoroughly, as bread is when eaten; and their fields, vineyards, all they have without and within, even all their substance, will be a prey to us, and furnish out sufficient provision for us, on which we may pleasantly and plentifully live, as on bread: (see ~~194~~ Psalm 14:4);

*their defence is departed from them*; they had no heart nor spirit left in them; no courage to defend themselves, and therefore the strength of their bodies and their walled towns would be of no avail unto them; (see ~~194~~ Joshua 2:9-11); or “their shadow” <sup>f180</sup>, which covered and protected them, the providence of God which was over them, and continued them in the land, and quiet possession of it, until the measure of their iniquity was filled up, and the time come for his people Israel to inhabit it; but now it was departed:

*and the Lord [is] with us*; as was evident by the cloud upon the tabernacle, and by the manna being spread around their camp every morning: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

“the Word of the Lord is for our help:”

*fear them not*; the Canaanites, notwithstanding the strength of their bodies, or of their cities, the Lord is mightier than they.

**Ver. 10.** *But all the congregation bade stone them with stones*, etc.]

Namely, Joshua and Caleb, who had made such a faithful report of the good land, and had delivered such an animating and encouraging speech to the people. This is not to be understood of the body of the people, and of all the individuals thereof, for who then should they bid to stone Joshua and Caleb? unless the sense is, that they stirred up and animated one another to it; but rather it means the princes and heads of the congregation, who commanded the common people to rise up and stone them; for notwithstanding the affecting behaviour of Moses and Aaron, and the arguments of Joshua and Caleb, they still persisted in their mutiny and rebellion, until the Lord himself appeared as he did:

*and the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel*; the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, which

dwelt between the cherubim in the most holy place, came into the court of the tabernacle; for neither in the holy nor in the most holy place could the people see it, or the token of it: in (~~0615~~ Deuteronomy 31:15) it is said, “the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle”; and Noldius <sup>f181</sup> renders it here, “and the glory of the Lord appeared above the tabernacle of the congregation”; with which agree the Targum of Jonathan and the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions; and so Jarchi says, the cloud descended there, and from thence very probably some coruscations, or flashes of lightning came forth, which plainly showed the Lord was there; and this was done to terrify the people, and restrain them from their evil purposes; and to encourage the servants of the Lord, who hereby might expect the divine protection.

**Ver. 11.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] Out of the cloud upon the tabernacle:

*how long will this people provoke me?* which suggests that they had often provoked him, and had done it long ago, and still continued to do so; and he had long bore their provocations; but it was not reasonable, nor could it be expected by Moses or any other, that he would bear them much longer,

*and how long will it be ere they believe me;* unbelief was a sin they had often and long been guilty of, and which greatly prevailed among them, and was the root of all their murmurings, mutiny, and rebellion; and what was highly provoking to the Lord, since they ought to have believed him, and that he was able to make good, and would make good his promises to them:

*for all the signs which I have showed among them;* the wonders and miracles he had wrought in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and in their sight; on account of which they should have given credit to his word, and which were strong aggravations of their unbelief; and is the true reason why they entered not into the good land, (~~0818~~ Hebrews 3:18,19).

**Ver. 12.** *I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them*, etc.] Deprive them of inhabiting the land; so as many as died of the pestilence were even all the spies who brought an evil report of the good land, (~~0447~~ Numbers 14:37); with respect to the body of the people, this is to be considered not as a preemprory decree or a determined point; but is delivered partly by way of proposal to Moses, to draw out from him what

he would say to it; and partly by way of threatening to the people, to bring them to a sense of their sin and repentance for it:

*and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they:* this anticipates an objection that might be made, should the people of Israel be cut off by the plague, and so disinherited of the land of Canaan, what will become of the oath of God made to their fathers? to which the answer is, it would be fulfilled in making the posterity of Moses as great or a greater and more powerful nation than Israel now was, and by introducing them into the land of Canaan, who would be of the seed of the fathers of Israel, as Jarchi observes, as those people were; and this was said to prove Moses, and try his affection to the people of Israel; and give him an opportunity of showing his public and disinterested spirit.

**Ver. 13.** *And Moses said unto the Lord,* etc.] In an abrupt manner, as the following words show, his mind being greatly disturbed and distressed by the above threatening,

*then the Egyptians shall hear [it];* that the Lord had smitten the Israelites with the pestilence; the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of the children of the Egyptians who were suffocated in the sea:

*for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;* they were once sojourners among them, and slaves unto them, and they were delivered from them by the mighty hand of the Lord upon the Egyptians, destroying their firstborn; and therefore when they shall hear that the Israelites were all destroyed at once by a pestilence in the wilderness, it will be a pleasure to them, as follows.

**Ver. 14.** *And they will tell [it] to the inhabitants of this land,* etc.] The land of Canaan, between which and Egypt there was an intercourse, though not by the way of the wilderness, being neighbours, and their original ancestors brethren, as Mizraim and Canaan were; or “they will say”<sup>f182</sup>, and that with joy, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; but what they would say does not appear so plain; either it was that the Israelites were killed in the wilderness, a tale they would tell with pleasure; but that the Canaanites would hear of doubtless before them, and not need their information, since the Israelites were upon their borders; or that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt indeed, but could carry them no further, could not introduce them into the land he had promised them; or rather they would say to them

what follows, for the preposition “for” is not in the text, and may be omitted; and so the sense is, they will tell them,

*they have heard that thou Lord [art] among this people*; in the tabernacle that was in the midst of them, in the most holy place of it:

*that thou Lord art seen face to face*: as he was by Moses, who was at the head of them:

*and [that] thy cloud standeth over them*; and sheltered and protected them from the heat of the sun in the daytime, when it rested upon them in their encampment:

*and [that] thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night*; in their journeys; they will tell of those favours thou hast shown Israel; and yet, after all, will observe that thou hast destroyed them, which will not redound to thine honour and glory.

**Ver. 15.** *Now [if] thou shall kill [all] this people, as one man*, etc.] Suddenly, and at once, as might be done by a pestilence; and as 185,000 were smitten at once, and as thought by the same disease, by the Angel of the Lord in the camp of the Assyrians, in later times, (<sup>12085</sup>2 Kings 19:35);

*then the nations which have heard the fame of thee*; the Egyptians, Canaanites, and others, as Aben Ezra observes; who had heard the report of the wonderful things done by him for Israel, and of the great favours he had bestowed upon them, and so of his power, and goodness, and other perfections displayed therein, which made him appear to be preferable to all the gods of the Gentiles:

*will speak, saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 16.** *Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them*, etc.] That though he brought them out of Egypt, he was not able to bring them through the wilderness into Canaan; and that though he had wrought many signs and wonders for them, he could work no more, his power failed him, he had exhausted all his might, and could not perform the promise and oath he had made:

*therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness*; because he could not fulfil his word, and so made short work of it, destroying them all together, which Moses suggests would greatly reflect dishonour on him; and in this

he shows, that he was more concerned for the glory of God than for his own.

**Ver. 17.** *And now, I beseech thee, let the power of Lord be great,* etc.]

That is, appear to be great; the power of God is great, not only mighty, but almighty; it knows no bounds, nothing is impossible with him, he can do whatever he pleases, (<sup>497B</sup>Psalm 147:5); his power, and the greatness of it, had been seen in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, and through the Red sea, and in providing for them, protecting and defending them in the wilderness; and the request of Moses is, that it might appear greater and greater in bringing them into the land of promise; or else he means an exceeding great display of the grace and mercy of God in the forgiveness of the sins of the people; for as the power of God is seen in his forbearance and longsuffering with the wicked, (<sup>492</sup>Romans 9:22); much more in the forgiveness of the sins of men, there being more power and virtue in grace to pardon, than there is in sin to damn; and as it is an indication of strength in men, and of their power over themselves, when they can rule their own spirits, keep under their passions, and restrain their wrath, and show a forgiving temper, (<sup>4162</sup>Proverbs 16:32); so it is an instance of the power of God to overcome his wrath and anger stirred up by the sins of men; and, notwithstanding their provocations, freely to forgive: pardon of sin is an act of power, as well as of grace and mercy, (see <sup>4006</sup>Matthew 9:6); and this sense agrees with what follows. The first letter in the word for “great” is larger than usual, that it might be taken notice of; and to signify the exceeding greatness of the power of God, Moses desired might be displayed in this case: and the letter numerically signifies ten, and has been thought to respect the ten times that Israel tempted the Lord, (<sup>40422</sup>Numbers 14:22); and to suggest, that though they had so done, yet the grace and mercy of God should ten times exceed the ingratitude of the people <sup>f183</sup>:

*according as thou hast spoken, saying;* as in (<sup>42306</sup>Exodus 34:6,7); and is as follows.

**Ver. 18.** *The Lord [is] longsuffering,* etc.] Towards all men, and especially towards his own people:

*and of great mercy,* being abundant in goodness, and keeping mercy for thousands:

*forgiving iniquity and transgression,* all sorts of sin:

*and by no means clearing [the guilty], visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation];* which may seem to make against the plea of Moses for mercy and forgiveness; but the reason of these words being expressed seems to be, because they go along with the others in the passage referred to, and are no contradiction to the forgiving mercy of God in a way of justice; nor did Moses request to have the guilty cleared from punishment altogether, but that God would show mercy, at least to such a degree as not to cut off the whole nation, and leave no posterity to inherit the land; which is supposed in visiting the sin of the fathers to the third or fourth generation.

**Ver. 19.** *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy,* etc.] Intimating, that though the sin of this people was great, the mercy of God to pardon was greater; and therefore he entreats that God would deal with them, not according to the greatness of their sins, and the strictness of justice, but according to the greatness of his mercy, who would, and does, abundantly pardon;

*and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now;* which shows both that these people had been continually sinning against the Lord, ever since they came out of Egypt, notwithstanding the great goodness of God unto them, and that he had as constantly pardoned; and therefore it was hoped and entreated that he would still continue to pardon them, he being the same he ever was, and whose mercy and goodness endure for ever: he had pardoned already sins of the like kind since their coming out of Egypt, as their murmurings for bread in the wilderness of Sin, (<sup><1266></sup>Exodus 16:1-7), and for water at Rephidim, (<sup><1270></sup>Exodus 17:1-7), and even a greater sin than these, idolatry, or the worship of the calf, (<sup><1281></sup>Exodus 32:1-10).

**Ver. 20.** *And the Lord said, I have pardoned, according to thy word.*] So as not to kill them utterly as one man: which is an instance of his being plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive; and of the virtue and efficacy of the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, and of the great regard the Lord has to the prayers of a good man for others. The Jerusalem Targum is,

“and the Word of the Lord said, lo, I have remitted and forgiven according to thy word;”

which must be understood of Christ, the essential Word, and shows, according to the sense of the Targumist, that he has a power to forgive sin, and must be a divine Person, for none can forgive sin but God; (see <sup><4117></sup>Mark 2:7,10).

**Ver. 21.** *But [as truly as] I live*, etc.] Which is the form of an oath, as the Targum; the Lord swears by his life, or by himself, because he could swear by no greater:

*all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*; this is not the thing sworn unto or confirmed, but that by which the oath is made and confirmed; and the sense is, that as sure as the earth “had been” filled with the glory of the Lord, as it may be rendered, as it had been with the fame of what he had done in Egypt, and at the Red sea; or as it “should be” filled with it in later times, especially in the kingdom of the Messiah in the latter day; (see <sup><2068></sup>Isaiah 6:3 <sup><3514></sup>Habakkuk 1:14); so sure the men that had provoked him should not see the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 22.** *Because all those men which have seen my glory*, etc.] His glorious Majesty, or the emblem of it in the cloud, on the tabernacle, which had often appeared to them, and the glorious things done by him; the glory of his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and truth, displayed in bringing them out of Egypt, through the Red sea, and thus far in the wilderness, even to the borders of the land of Canaan; it should be rendered, not “because”, but “that”, for this is the thing sworn to, or the matter of the oath:

*and my miracles which I did in Egypt*; by the hand of Moses, both before them, when he was sent to them, as a proof of his divine mission, and before Pharaoh and all his court, (<sup><0170></sup>Exodus 7:10), inflicting plagues upon him and his people, (<sup><0170></sup>Exodus 7:20 8:6,20,24 9:6,10,23 10:13,22 12:29):

*and in the wilderness*; in raining manna from heaven about their tents, (<sup><0164></sup>Exodus 16:14); sending them quails, (<sup><0163></sup>Exodus 16:13 <sup><0413></sup>Numbers 11:31); and giving them water out of the rock, (<sup><0176></sup>Exodus 17:6):

*and have tempted me now these ten times*; which the Jews understand precisely and exactly of such a number, and which they reckon thus <sup>f184</sup>; twice at the sea, (<sup><0141></sup>Exodus 14:11,12); twice concerning water, (<sup><0153></sup>Exodus 15:23,24 17:2); twice about manna, (<sup><0142></sup>Exodus 16:2,20,27 <sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:4); twice about quails, (<sup><0162></sup>Exodus 16:12 <sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:4); once by the calf, (<sup><0231></sup>Exodus 32:1-7); and once in the wilderness of



Paran, (<sup><Q44E></sup>Numbers 14:1-4), which last and tenth was the present temptation: these are reckoned a little otherwise elsewhere<sup>f185</sup>; but perhaps it may be better, with Aben Ezra, to interpret it of many times, a certain number being put for an uncertain, they having frequently tempted the Lord:

*and have not hearkened to my voice*; neither to his word of promise, nor to his word of command, and particularly his late order to go up and possess the land, (<sup><R02E></sup>Deuteronomy 1:21,26).

**Ver. 23.** *Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers*, etc.] Not possess and enjoy the land of Canaan, which the Lord by an oath had promised their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give it to their seed; and now he swears that these men, who had so often tempted him, and been disobedient to him, should not inherit it; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem take it for an oath; (see <sup><R01E></sup>Hebrews 3:11,18);

*neither shall any of them that provoked me see it*; that provoked him by the ill report they had brought of the land, by their unbelief, by their murmurings, and mutiny.

**Ver. 24.** *But my servant Caleb*, etc.] Who was one of the spies, and brought a good and true report of the land; and so in that, as well as in other things, approved himself to be a faithful servant of the Lord, and who had stilled the people at the beginning of their murmur, and with Joshua had attempted to quiet them afterwards; and though Joshua is not here mentioned, because, as some say, he had no children, and therefore it could not be said of him that his seed should possess the land, as is said of Caleb; or rather, because he was to be the general and commander of the people, who was to introduce them into the land of Canaan, and therefore there was no necessity of expressing him by name, yet he is afterwards mentioned, (<sup><Q44E></sup>Numbers 14:30,38);

*because he had another spirit with him*; different from that of the rest of the spies, excepting Joshua; a spirit of faith, and of the fear of the Lord, of might and courage, of truth and faithfulness; believing in the promise of God, which the spies distrusted, being persuaded the land might easily be conquered, which they feared; and bringing a true report of the land, the reverse of the ill and false one they brought. For this is to be understood not of the Holy Spirit of God, nor of his work upon the hearts of good

men, which is different from the spirit of the world, though Caleb was possessed of that also:

*and hath followed me fully*; with full purpose of heart whithersoever he led him, or directed him, in every path of duty, and in the exercise of every grace; or “hath fulfilled after me”<sup>f186</sup>; obeyed his word of command, fulfilled his mind and will, by going after him, and acting according to the rules and directions he gave him:

*him will I bring into the land whereinto he went*; the land of Canaan he went into to spy and search:

*and his seed shall possess it*; not the whole land, but Hebron, and the parts about it, where he particularly went, and which he and his posterity afterwards enjoyed, (see <sup><0432></sup>Numbers 13:22 <sup><0443></sup>Joshua 14:13-15). The Targum of Onkelos is, “shall expel it”; the inhabitants of it; for the word signifies both to inherit and disinherit; and so Jarchi interprets it, shall disinherit the Anakim, and the people that are in it, that is, drive them out of it, as Caleb did, (<sup><0513></sup>Joshua 15:13,14).

**Ver. 25.** *And now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley*, etc.] By the Canaanites are meant the Amorites, as Aben Ezra, which were a principal people of the land of Canaan, and which may be confirmed by (<sup><0119></sup>Deuteronomy 1:19,20); this may seem contrary to what is said (<sup><0439></sup>Numbers 13:29); where they are said to dwell in the mountain; but it may be reconciled by observing, that indeed their proper settled habitation was in the mountain; but now they went down from thence, and “sat”<sup>f187</sup> in the valley, as it may be rendered, in ambush, there lying in wait for the children of Israel, as in (<sup><0908></sup>Psalm 10:8); and so Aben Ezra interprets it of their sitting there, to lie in wait for them: and now, though these people had so sadly provoked the Lord, yet such was his goodness to them, as to warn them of the design of their enemies, and of the danger by them, to provide for their safety, by giving them the following instruction:

*tomorrow turn you*; do not go forward, lest ye fall into their ambushment, but turn about, and go the contrary way; return in the way, or towards the parts from whence ye came: this they are bid to do tomorrow, but did not till some time after; for, contrary to the command of God, they went up the mount, where they were defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites, after which they stayed in Kadesh some days, (<sup><0144></sup>Deuteronomy 1:44-46);

*and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea;* or in the way towards it; and so they would be in the way to Egypt, where the people were desirous of returning again; but as they were always a rebellious and disobedient people, and acted contrary to God, so in this case; for when he bid them go back towards the Red sea again, then they were for going forward, and entering into the land of Canaan, (<sup>0440</sup>Numbers 14:40); though when he bid them go up, and possess it, then they were for returning to Egypt, (<sup>0440</sup>Numbers 14:4).

**Ver. 26.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,* etc.] Before he had been only speaking to Moses, who had interceded with him to pardon the people, which he had granted; but at the same time assured him they should not enter into and possess the land of Canaan, and the same he repeats to him and Aaron together:

*saying:* as follows.

**Ver. 27.** *How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me?* etc.] Bear with their murmurings, spare them, and not cut them off? how long must sparing mercy be extended to them? the Lord speaks as one weary of forbearing, so frequent and aggravated were their murmurings. The Jews understand this not of the whole congregation of Israel, but of the ten spies, from whence they gather, that ten make a congregation; and they interpret the phrase, “which murmur against me”, transitively, “which cause to murmur against me”; made the children of Israel murmur against him, so Jarchi; but rather all the people are meant, as appears from (<sup>0448</sup>Numbers 14:28), and from the following clause:

*I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me;* for their murmurings were not only against Moses and Aaron, but against the Lord himself, (<sup>0442</sup>Numbers 14:2,3).

**Ver. 28.** *Say unto them, [as truly as] I live, saith the Lord,* etc.] The form of an oath, as in (<sup>0442</sup>Numbers 14:21);

*as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you;* what they had wished for, and expressed in the hearing of the Lord, he threatens them should be their case.

**Ver. 29.** *Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness,* etc.] They had wished they had died in it, (<sup>0442</sup>Numbers 14:2), and the Lord here declares they should, which is signified by the falling of their carcasses in it, or their

bodies, which when dead fall to the ground, having no strength to support themselves:

*and all that were numbered of you:* but a few months before this time, when their number was 603,550, (<sup><0046></sup>Numbers 1:46);

*according to your number from twenty years old and upward;* which is observed, as Jarchi thinks, to except the Levites, for they were not numbered with the other tribes; and when they were numbered by themselves, their number was taken from a month old and upwards; wherefore it need not be wondered at, if we find that there were of them who did not fall in the wilderness, but entered into the land of Canaan, as it is certain Eleazar the priest, the son of Aaron, did, (<sup><0047></sup>Numbers 34:17 <sup><0048></sup>Joshua 14:1);

*which have murmured against me;* which shows, that not the spies only, who caused the people to murmur, but the people themselves who murmured, and had been numbered, from twenty years old and upward, are the evil congregation the Lord thus threatened with death.

**Ver. 30.** *Doubtless ye shall not come into the land,* etc.] The land of Canaan; or “if ye shall come” <sup>f188</sup>; that is, I swear ye shall not, so the Targum of Jonathan:

*[concerning] which I swear to make you dwell therein;* not them personally, but the people and nation of which they were, and to which they belonged, the seed and posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the oath was made:

*save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun;* who brought a good report of the land. Caleb is mentioned first, as Aben Ezra thinks, because he first appeased and quieted the people; but in (<sup><0049></sup>Numbers 14:38) Joshua stands first, so that nothing is to be inferred from hence; these were the only two of the spies that went into the land of Canaan, (<sup><0050></sup>Numbers 13:4-15); and the only two of the Israelites that were numbered, from twenty years old and upwards, (<sup><0051></sup>Numbers 14:29); those of the tribe of Levi, not being in that account, must be remembered to be excepted also.

**Ver. 31.** *But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey,* etc.] To the Canaanites, (<sup><0052></sup>Numbers 14:3);

*them will I bring in*; into the land of Canaan, and so fulfil the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for the unbelief of this congregation did not make the faith, or faithfulness of God, of none effect:

*and they shall know the land which ye have despised*; shall know what a good land it is by experience, and shall possess and enjoy it with approbation, delight, and pleasure, which they, believing the spies, rejected with, loathing and disdain.

**Ver. 32.** *But [as for] you, your carcasses*, etc.] Which way of speaking seems to be used to distinguish them from their children;

*they shall fall in this wilderness*: which is repeated for the confirmation and certainty it, and an emphasis is laid on the words, this which are pronounced with an accent, to put them in mind of their wish, (<sup>4042</sup>Numbers 14:2).

**Ver. 33.** *And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years*, etc.] Or “feed”<sup>f189</sup>, as shepherds, who go from place to place, and seek fresh pasture for their sheep; it being the custom of a shepherd, as Aben Ezra observes, not to stand or rest in a place; and so like sheep grazing in a wilderness, where they have short commons, and wander about in search, of better. These forty years are to be reckoned from their coming out of Egypt, from whence they had now been come about a year and a half:

*and bear your whoredoms*; the punishment of their idolatries, which are frequently signified by this phrase, and particularly of the idolatry of the calf, which God threatened to punish whenever he visited for sin, (<sup>4034</sup>Exodus 32:34); and of other sins, as their murmurings, etc. for it was on account of them their children wandered so long in the wilderness, and were kept out of the possession of the land of Canaan:

*until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness*; everyone of them be consumed by death, save those before excepted, (<sup>4040</sup>Numbers 14:30).

**Ver. 34.** *After the number of days in which ye searched the land, [even] forty days*, etc.] For so long they were searching it, (<sup>4035</sup>Numbers 13:25);

*each day for a year*; reckoning each day for a year, forty days for forty years, as in (<sup>4006</sup>Ezekiel 4:6);

*shall ye bear your iniquities, [even] forty years*: which number is given, being a round one, otherwise it was but thirty eight years and a half ere they were all cut off, and their children entered the land:

*and ye shall know my breach of promise*; God never makes any breach of promise; his covenant he will not break, nor alter what is gone out of his lips; men break their promises, and transgress the covenant they have made with him, but he never breaks his, (<sup><1884></sup>Psalm 89:34); this should rather be rendered only, “ye shall know my breach”; experience a breach made upon them by him, upon their persons and families by consuming them in the wilderness: the Targum of Jonathan is,

“and ye shall know what ye have murmured against me;”

this same word is used in the plural in (<sup><1830></sup>Job 33:10), and is by the Targum rendered “murmurings” or “complaints”; and so the sense is, ye shall know by sad experience the evil of complaining and murmuring against me. The Vulgate Latin version is,

“ye shall know my vengeance;”

and so the Septuagint,

“ye shall know the fury of my anger”

which give the sense, though not a literal version of the words.

**Ver. 35.** *I the Lord have said*, etc.] Determined, resolved on doing what I have declared, and again repeat it; the decree is absolute and peremptory, and will never be revoked:

*I will surely do it to all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me*; against his ministers, Moses the chief magistrate, and Aaron the high priest; and this is interpreted gathering, conspiring, and rebelling against the Lord himself, on account of which they might be truly called an evil congregation, and therefore it was a determined point with him to destroy them:

*in this wilderness they shall be consumed*; by wasting diseases:

*and there they shall die*; as they wished they might, (<sup><0442></sup>Numbers 14:22); with respect to which this was so often repeated, (<sup><0263></sup>Exodus 16:3); and which the Jews interpret not only of a corporeal death, but of an eternal one; for they say <sup>f190</sup>

“the generation of the wilderness (of those that died there) have no part in the world to come, nor shall stand in judgment, as it is said, “in this wilderness”, etc. (<sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:35).”

**Ver. 36.** *And the men which Moses sent to search the land*, etc.] Ten of them,

*who returned*; as they all did, who were sent to search it:

*and made all the congregation to murmur against him*; against, Moses that sent them; they murmured themselves, and made others murmur:

*by bringing up a slander upon the land*; that it ate up its inhabitants, and that the inhabitants of it were of such a stature, and so gigantic and strong, and dwelt in such walled cities, (<sup><0433></sup>Numbers 13:28,29), that there was no probability of subduing them, (<sup><0431></sup>Numbers 13:31-33).

**Ver. 37.** *Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land*, etc.] They, and they only at this time:

*died by the plague before the Lord*; either by the pestilence immediately sent upon them by the Lord, or by a flash of lightning from him, or in some other way; however, by the immediate hand of God, and in his presence, being in the tabernacle of the congregation, (<sup><0410></sup>Numbers 14:10); though the Jews differently relate the manner of their death; some say worms came out of their navels, and up to their jaws, and ate them and their tongues; and others that they came out of their tongues, and entered their navels, which they take to be a just retaliation for sinning with their tongues: and the time of their death they differ about; some say, as the Targum of Jonathan, that it was upon the seventh, and others that it was on the seventeenth of Elul or August they died <sup>f191</sup>.

**Ver. 38.** *But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh*, etc.] Here Joshua is set first, as Caleb is in (<sup><0430></sup>Numbers 14:30); which shows that they were equal in dignity, and therefore are indifferently put, sometimes the one first, and sometimes the other:

*[which were] of the men that went to search the land*; were two of the spies, and were for the tribes of Judah and Ephraim, (<sup><0406></sup>Numbers 13:6,8),

*lived [still]*; were not stricken with death, when the other spies were; though perhaps upon the very spot, and in the same place, and among

them, when they were struck dead; but these remained alive, and continued many years after, and entered the good land, and possessed it.

**Ver. 39.** *And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel,* etc.]

That all that had murmured, who were of twenty years old and upwards, should die in the wilderness, and never see nor enter into the land of Canaan, on the borders of which they now were:

*and the people mourned greatly;* because of their unhappy case, that they should be cut off by death in the wilderness, and be deprived of the enjoyment of the good land; their sorrow seems to have been not a godly sorrow, or true repentance for sin committed, but a worldly sorrow that works death; it was not on account of the evil of sin, the pardon of which they did not seem to seek after, but on account of the evil that was likely to come to them by it.

**Ver. 40.** *And they rose up early in the morning,* etc.] The next morning after they had heard the bad news of their consumption in the wilderness; not being able, perhaps, to sleep that night with the thoughts of it, and being now in a great haste to go up and possess the land of Canaan, as they were before to return to Egypt:

*and gat them up into the top of the mountain;* which was the way the spies went into the land of Canaan, (<sup>Q1E37</sup>Numbers 13:17); this they did not actually ascend, as appears from (<sup>Q1H44</sup>Numbers 14:44,45); but they determined upon it, and got themselves ready for it:

*saying, lo, we [be here];* this they said either to one another, animating each other to engage in the enterprise; or to Moses and Joshua, signifying that they were ready to go up and possess the land, if they would put themselves at the head of them, and take the command and direction of them;

*and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised:* the land of Canaan:

*for we have sinned;* in not going up to possess it, when they were bid to go, and in listening to the spies that brought an ill report of it, and by murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and the Lord himself, and proposing to make them a captain and return to Egypt, (<sup>Q1H42</sup>Numbers 14:2-4); but this acknowledgment and repentance were not very sincere, by what follows.



**Ver. 41.** *And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord?* etc.] Which was to turn back into the wilderness, and go the way that leads to the Red sea, (<sup><04:25></sup>Numbers 14:25); instead of which now they were for going forward into the land of Canaan, though averse to it just before:

*but it shall not prosper*; their attempt to enter into it.

**Ver. 42.** *Go not up, for the Lord [is] not among you*, etc.] And therefore could not expect success, for victory is of the Lord; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“the ark, and the tabernacle, and the cloud of glory move not,”

which were a plain indication that the Lord would not go with them, and therefore could not hope to prevail over their enemies and enter the land, but on the contrary might expect to be defeated by them, as follows:

*that ye be not smitten before your enemies*; of which they would be in great danger should they attempt to go up the hill, and the Lord not with them.

**Ver. 43.** *For the Amalekites and the Canaanites [are] there before you*, etc.] Having removed from the valley, (<sup><04:25></sup>Numbers 14:25); or else had detached a party to defend the pass on the top of the mountain, and where perhaps they designed to feign a retreat if they found it proper, and draw them into a combat in the valley:

*and ye shall fall by the sword*: by the sword of the Amalekites and Canaanites:

*because ye are turned away from the Lord*: from the word of the Lord, from hearkening to and obeying his command:

*therefore the Lord will not be with you*; the consequence of which must be bad for them.

**Ver. 44.** *But they presumed to go up unto the hill top*, etc.] In a bold, audacious, and presumptuous manner; they attempted to go up to the top of the hill, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Moses against it, and the danger they would be exposed unto; but withdrawing themselves from God and his ministers, and lifted up in themselves, and confident of their own strength, ventured on this rash enterprise: the Vulgate Latin version is,

“being darkened they went up”: either having their understandings darkened, and being given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; or else they went up in the morning while it was dark, before daylight; which latter sense is favoured by the Targum of Jonathan,

“and they girded (or armed) themselves in the dark, before the morning light;”

and the former by an ancient exposition, called Tanchuma, mentioned by Jarchi,

“they went obscure (as it were in the dark) because without leave:”

*nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp*; the cloud not being taken up, but abiding on the tabernacle, which was the signal for resting, both for the ark, and for the camp, the Kohathites did not move with the ark: the Jews<sup>f192</sup> have a notion, that there were two arks which went with Israel in the wilderness, one in which the law was put, and another in which the broken pieces of the tables were left; that in which the law was, was placed in the tabernacle of the congregation, and of this it is written, “the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not”, etc. but that in which the broken pieces of the tables were, went in and out with them: but this does not clearly appear; and it is highly probable no ark went with them at this time; nor did Moses, the leader and commander of the people, stir from the camp of the Levites; wherefore it was a bold and hazardous undertaking the other camps engaged in without God going with them, and their general before them, or Joshua his minister; for if one did not go, the same may be concluded of the other.

**Ver. 45.** *Then the Amalekites came down*, etc.] The hill; met the Israelites as they ascended: and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill; the same with the Amorites, one of the seven nations of Canaan, (<sup>(Q1139)</sup>Numbers 13:29);

*and smote them*; with the sword, having the advantage of them in coming down the hill upon them:

*and discomfited them even unto Hormah*; the name of a place, so called from what happened there; as Jarchi says; either from this destruction of the Israelites at this time by these their enemies, or from the destruction of the Canaanites by Israel, (<sup>(Q2104)</sup>Numbers 21:4); and so here has its name by anticipation; or it may be from both these events, and seems to be

confirmed by a third of the like kind, having been in former times called Zephath, (<sup><0017></sup>Judges 1:17); (see <sup><0650></sup>Joshua 15:30); though some take it to be an appellative here, and not the proper name of a place, and render it even unto destruction, as the Targum of Jonathan, denoting the very great destruction and havoc that were made among them: how many were destroyed is not certain; the judgment threatened them of God soon began to take place, that their carcasses should fall in that wilderness.

# CHAPTER 15

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 15

In this chapter the children of Israel are instructed about the meat offerings and drink offerings, and the quantities of them, which were always to go along with their burnt offerings and peace offerings they should offer when they came into the land of Canaan, (<sup><04151></sup>Numbers 15:1-12); and they are told that the same laws and ordinances would be binding equally on them that were of the country, and on the strangers in it, (<sup><04153></sup>Numbers 15:13-16); and an order is given them to offer a cake of the first dough for an heave offering, (<sup><04157></sup>Numbers 15:17-21); and they are directed what sacrifices to offer for sins of ignorance, both of the congregation and particular persons, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:22-29); but as for presumptuous sinners, they were to be cut off, (<sup><04143></sup>Numbers 14:30,31); and an instance is recorded of stoning a sabbath breaker, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:32-36); and the chapter is concluded with a law for wearing fringes on the borders of their garments, the use of which is expressed, (<sup><04145></sup>Numbers 14:35-41).

**Ver. 1.** *The Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] After the murmurings of the Israelites by reason of the spies, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:2); and their being threatened with a consumption of them in the wilderness on that account, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:12); and their defeat at Hormah, (<sup><04145></sup>Numbers 14:45): and lest their posterity should be discouraged, and despair of ever enjoying the good land:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] The younger sort of them, such as were under twenty years of age; for those of that age and upwards, who had murmured against the Lord, had been assured by him with an oath that they should die in the wilderness, and not see the land of Canaan, (<sup><04143></sup>Numbers 14:29); whereas those Moses is here bid to speak to were such that should possess it:

*when ye come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto, you*; the land of Canaan, the grant of which is here renewed to them, and an

assurance given of their coming into it and settlement in it; and that they should have dwelling places there for their several tribes and families.

**Ver. 3.** *And will make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering,* etc.] The first of these respects such offerings by fire, which were not wholly burnt, but part of them were eaten by the priests, (<sup><680></sup>Deuteronomy 18:1); and the latter such as were wholly burnt, unless the latter can be thought to be only an explanation of the former:

*or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a freewill offering;* these were peace offerings, some of which were for thanksgiving, and others were either a vow or a freewill offering, as here: (see <sup><870></sup>Leviticus 7:11,12,16);

*or in your solemn feasts;* as the passover, pentecost, etc. of which, and the offerings in them, (see <sup><820></sup>Leviticus 23:4-37 <sup><870></sup>Numbers 28:1-29:40);

*to make a sweet savour unto the Lord;* for acceptance with him:

*of the herd or of the flock;* a bullock of the one, a lamb or kid of the goats of the other; fowls are not mentioned, because burnt offerings of them required no drink offerings <sup>f193</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the Lord,* etc.] Be it of either kind before mentioned:

*bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour, mingled with the fourth [part] of an hin of oil;* this was made of the tenth part of an ephah, or of an omer of fine wheaten flour, which was the quantity of about three quarts; and which was mixed and macerated with the fourth part of an hin, or with a quart and more than half a pint of oil: (see <sup><120></sup>Exodus 29:40); rather this should be called a bread offering.

**Ver. 5.** *And the fourth [part] of an hin of wine,* etc.] The same measure with the oil, and this was wine of the grapes, as the Targum of Jonathan; other sorts of wine might not be used for the purpose mentioned:

*for a drink offering shalt thou prepare;* with the meat offering, to go along with every burnt offering and peace offering; which, as they were the food of God and the provision of his house, it was proper there should be of every kind fit for an entertainment, as flesh, bread, and wine. These were to go

*with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb*; if there were more than one, then a greater quantity in proportion was required.

**Ver. 6.** *Or for a ram*, etc.] Whether for a burnt offering or a peace offering; or rather and for a ram <sup>f194</sup>, as many versions:

*thou shalt prepare [for] a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third [part] of an hin of oil*: which was the quantity of six quarts of fine flour, and about three pints and a quarter of a pint of oil.

**Ver. 7.** *And for a drink offering thou shalt offer a third [part] of an hin of wine*, etc.] The same quantity of wine was to be used in the drink offering as of oil in the meat offering, (<sup>Q154</sup>Numbers 15:4,6):

*[for] a sweet savour unto the Lord*, that it might be acceptable to him.

**Ver. 8.** *And when thou preparest a bullock [for] a burnt offering*, etc.] Which was a larger offering, and required a larger meat offering and drink offering, as (<sup>Q159</sup>Numbers 15:9,10) show:

*or [for] a sacrifice in performing a vow or peace offerings unto the Lord*; by which latter are meant freewill offerings; for though both sorts here mentioned were peace offerings, yet these were more particularly called so.

**Ver. 9.** *Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering*, etc.] Much larger than either for a lamb or ram, even one consisting

*of three tenth deals of flour*; or nine quarts of it:

*mingled with half an hin of oil*; two quarts and a pint, and somewhat more.

**Ver. 10.** *And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine*, etc.] The same quantity as of oil, and a little more:

*[for] an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord*: this, according to Jarchi, refers only to the meat offering and the oil: for the wine was not a fire offering, not being put upon the fire.

**Ver. 11.** *Thus shall it be done for one bullock*, etc.] Such a quantity of flour and oil for the meat offering, and such a quantity of wine for the drink offering as before expressed; making no difference between one young or old:

*or for a ram*: which, Jarchi says, was thirteen months and one day old:

*or for a lamb, or a kid*; for a young one of the flock, whether of the sheep or goat, whether a lamb or a kid of the goats; which, according to Jarchi, were within a year, not a year old.

**Ver. 12.** *According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to everyone, according to their number.*] That is, in proportion to the number of the cattle, be they of which sort they would, should be the quantity of the meat and drink offerings.

**Ver. 13.** *All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner,* etc.] Meaning that all Israelites should with their sacrifices bring their meat and drink offerings of the quantity directed to as above:

*in offering an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord*; when they offered any burnt offerings or peace offerings: the Jews say, that all sacrifices, whether of the congregation or of a private person, require drink offerings, excepting the firstborn, the tithes, the passover, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; but the sin offering of the leper, and his trespass offering, require them<sup>f195</sup>: the Targum of Jonathan is,

“all that are born in Israel, and not among the people, shall make these drink offerings thus;”

for though an uncircumcised Gentile might bring burnt offerings and peace offerings, yet not meat offerings and drink offerings with them; (see Gill on “<sup>(-0228)</sup>Leviticus 22:18”); only such as were proselytes of righteousness, as in (<sup>(-0154)</sup>Numbers 15:14).

**Ver. 14.** *And if a stranger sojourn with you,* etc.] A stranger, or proselyte, not of the gate, but of righteousness, as Ben Gersom and the Jewish, writers in general interpret it;

*or whatsoever [be] among you in your generations*; whether such a proselyte settled and continued among them, or only stayed with them awhile:

*and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord*; is desirous of offering a burnt offering or a peace offering to the Lord in an acceptable manner:

*as ye do, so shall he do*; bring the same meat offering and drink offering, according to the nature and number of the cattle he brings for sacrifice.

**Ver. 15.** *One ordinance [shall be both] for you of the congregation,* etc.] Or “O congregation”<sup>f196</sup>, as Ben Melech, and so the Targum of Jonathan, “O whole congregation”; though Aben Ezra denies it to be vocative:

*and also for the stranger that sojourneth [with you];* the same ordinance, statute, or appointment, respecting the above things, were equally binding on one side as on the other, an homeborn Israelite and a proselyte of righteousness:

*an ordinance for ever in your generations;* to be observed by them, one and the other, in all ages, until the Messiah came and abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances:

*as ye [are] so shall the stranger be before the Lord;* not in things civil, but religious, and particularly with respect to the above sacrifices and offerings: Ben Gersom and Aben Ezra say this respects the burnt offering only, which was before the Lord.

**Ver. 16.** *One law, and one manner,* etc.] One law respecting these sacrifices, and one manner of offering them; one and the same precept to be observed, and one and the same judgment or punishment inflicted in case of non-observance:

*shall be for you, and the stranger that sojourneth with you;* for Israelites and proselytes; which is said to invite and encourage the latter, and may have a distant view to the calling of the Gentiles in Gospel times, when there should be no difference between Jews and Gentiles called by grace in matters of religion, but would be one in Christ, (~~CHR~~ Galatians 3:28).

**Ver. 17.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] Or continued to speak to him; for the following law was given at the same time as those before:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 18.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,* etc.] Who only were bound to observe the following law concerning the cake of the first dough, (~~CHR~~ Numbers 15:20), and not Gentiles; so the Jews say<sup>f197</sup>, the dough of a Gentile is free from the cake, though an Israelite kneads it:

*when ye come into the land whither I bring you;* the land of Canaan: this is another assurance of their possession of the land of Canaan, notwithstanding what had been threatened; in (~~CHR~~ Numbers 15:2); it is only said, “which I give unto you”, but here, “whither I bring you”; assuring



them, that as he had given it unto them, he would certainly introduce them into it. The Jews from hence gather, that they are not bound to observe this precept concerning the cake by the law, but in the land of Israel only, and when all Israel are there; wherefore at this time, and even in the days of Ezra, it is separated only by the words of the Scribes; and the reason of it is, that this law might not be forgotten by the Israelites <sup>f198</sup>: there were three countries that were bound to bring the cake, according to the Misnah <sup>f199</sup>.

**Ver. 19.** *Then it shall be, that when ye eat of the bread of the land,* etc.] Of the land of Canaan; when they were about to eat of it, before they actually did; when they were preparing for it, had ground their corn into flour, and had mixed it with water and kneaded it into dough, in order to bake it and make it fit for food; by bread is meant bread corn, such as was the old corn of the land the Israelites first ate of when they entered into it, (<sup>(~~MSB~~)</sup>Joshua 5:11,12); the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“not of rice, or millet, or pulse,”

but what was made of corn used for bread; and the Jews say <sup>f200</sup>, there were five things only they were obliged to make the cake of, wheat, barley, “cusmin” or rye, fox ear (barley), and oats; and this is to be understood only of dough made for men’s bread, and not for dogs or any other beast <sup>f201</sup>:

*ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the Lord;* and what that is, is expressed in (<sup>(~~MSD~~)</sup>Numbers 15:20).

**Ver. 20.** *Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough [for] an heave offering,* etc.] Of the first dough made of the first corn that was threshed, winnowed and ground, they were to make a cake, and offer it an heave offering unto the Lord; the quantity of it is not expressed, but was left to the people’s generosity; no stinted measure was fixed by the law; but according to the Scribes, or the traditions of the elders, the quantity of the cake was the twenty fourth part of the first dough that was kneaded; not the forty fourth, as Buxtorf <sup>f202</sup> through mistake says; so the Targum of Jonathan,

“of the first of your dough, one out of twenty four (i.e. the twenty fourth part of it), ye shall separate a separation for the priests,”

with which agrees the Misnah <sup>f203</sup>, though according to that, if made to sell publicly it was the forty eighth part of it. Some, because (<sup><041521></sup>Numbers 15:21) begins and ends with **m**, “mem”, which numerically signifies “forty”, think this is an instruction to a bountiful person to give the fortieth part <sup>f204</sup>:

*as [ye do] the heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall ye heave it; as the two wave loaves and firstfruits of their harvest, (<sup><02316></sup>Leviticus 23:16,17).*

**Ver. 21.** *Of the first of your dough shall ye give unto the Lord,* etc.] As an acknowledgment of his being the sovereign Lord and possessor of heaven and earth, and of his being the owner and proprietor of the land of Canaan; and by way of thankfulness to him for the plenty of bread corn he had given them; and wherefore this cake was to be heaved or lifted up towards him in heaven, as follows:

*an heave offering in your generations:* for this respected not only the first time of their entrance into the land of Canaan, but was to be observed every year when they made their first dough, and was to continue as long as the ceremonial law lasted: this cake was anciently given to the priest, which is meant by giving it to the Lord, but now the Jews take it and cast it into the fire and burn it <sup>f205</sup> the apostle seems to allude to this cake of the first dough in (<sup><5116></sup>Romans 11:16).

**Ver. 22.** *And if ye have erred,* etc.] Gone astray from the law of God, and any of its precepts; every sin is an error, a missing of the mark, a wandering from the way of God’s commandments. Jarchi, and the Jews in general, interpret this of idolatry, but it rather respects any deviation from the law, moral or ceremonial, especially the latter:

*and not observed all these commandments which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses;* in this chapter, more particularly concerning the meat offerings and drink offerings, and the quantity of them, to be brought along with their burnt offerings and peace offerings, and concerning the cake of the first dough to be heaved before the Lord and given to the priest.

**Ver. 23.** *[Even] all that the Lord hath commanded you by the hand of Moses,* etc.] Recorded in this book and the two preceding, whether of a moral, ceremonial, or judicial kind; the whole body of laws given to the people of Israel from the Lord by Moses:

*from the day that the Lord commanded [Moses], and henceforward among your generations;* all that he had commanded, or should hereafter command.

**Ver. 24.** *Then it shall be, if [ought] be committed by ignorance,* etc.] Of the law of God, not clearly understanding the meaning of it, or not knowing of the several precepts of it, and the circumstances of each, and the manner of performing obedience thereunto:

*without the knowledge of the congregation;* or they being ignorant of the true intent of the law and form of obeying it; for this is to be understood not of the sin of a private person through ignorance, but of the body of the people; or of a congregation of them in some particular place, ignorantly and unawares falling into idolatry, or rather into a breach of any of the laws of God, moral or ceremonial:

*that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the Lord;* as an acceptable sacrifice to him; by which it appears that this law is different from that in (<sup><GRH3></sup>Leviticus 4:13-21); since the bullock there was for a sin offering, this for a burnt offering; and besides another creature was to be for a sin offering, as after expressed:

*with his meat offering and his drink offering, according to the manner;* a meat offering, consisting of such a quantity of flour and oil, and a drink offering of such a quantity of wine as directed to, (<sup><GRH3></sup>Numbers 15:9,10);

*and one kid of the goats for a sin offering;* which though mentioned last was offered first, as an expiatory sacrifice for sin, typical of Christ, who was made an offering for sin, and then the burnt offering by way of thankfulness for the acceptance of the other.

**Ver. 25.** *And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel;* etc.] By offering a sin offering for them, a type of Christ, the propitiation not only for the sins of the people among the Jews, but throughout the whole world, (<sup><GRH3></sup>1 John 2:2);

*and it shall be forgiven them;* as the sins of the Lord's people are forgiven them through the blood of Christ, and on account of his stoning sacrifice and satisfaction made for them:

*for it [is] ignorance*; a sin of ignorance, for which reason Christ pleads for pardon on the foot of his sacrifice, and his people receive it, (<sup><4234></sup>Luke 23:34 <sup><4013></sup>1 Timothy 1:13); for that this sin was forgiven on the score of a sacrifice appears by what follows:

*and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord*; the bullock for the burnt offering:

*and their sin offering before the Lord, for their ignorance*; a kid of the goats.

**Ver. 26.** *And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel*, etc.] Which is repeated for the certainty of it, and for the sake of what follows:

*and the stranger that sojourneth among them*; the proselyte of righteousness; so the blessing of pardon, through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, comes upon believing Gentiles as well as Jews, (<sup><4049></sup>Romans 4:9 <sup><4011></sup>1 John 2:2);

*seeing all the people [were] in ignorance*; both the congregation of Israel and the stranger; (see Gill on "<sup><4052></sup>Numbers 15:25").

**Ver. 27.** *And if any soul sin through ignorance*, etc.] Any private or particular person, by breaking any of the above commands, or any other, not rightly understanding them, or not adverting: to the circumstances required in the manner of performing them:

*then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering*; which differed in this from the sin offering of a congregation that sinned through ignorance; that was a kid of the goats, whether male or female, but this was to be a female goat and of a year old.

**Ver. 28.** *And the priest shall make atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly*, etc.] By offering his sin offering for him:

*when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord*; to whom it is known to be such, before whom all things are naked, open, and well known:

*to make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him*; upon that atonement made by sacrifice; so the forgiveness of the sins of all the Lord's people proceeds upon an atonement made by the blood and sacrifice of

Christ: full atonement of sin and free forgiveness are not contrary to each other.

**Ver. 29.** *You shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance,* etc.] Which enjoins a she goat for a sin offering for such:

*[both] for him that is born amongst the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them;* both sinning through ignorance, the same sacrifice was offered for them, by which atonement was made, and through which their sin was forgiven; by whom are meant homeborn Israelites and proselytes of righteousness, who were under the same laws, and enjoyed the same privileges, as do now believing Jews and Gentiles.

**Ver. 30.** *But the soul that doeth [ought] presumptuously,* etc.] Or with “an high hand”<sup>f206</sup>, or through pride, as the Targum of Jonathan; in an haughty, insolent, bold and daring manner; in an obstinate, stubborn, self-willed way, with purpose and design, openly and publicly, neither fearing God nor regarding man:

*[whether he be] born in the land, or a stranger;* here a stranger as well signifies a proselyte of the gate as a proselyte of righteousness; seeing this presumptuous sinning may respect idolatry and blasphemy, which sins were punishable in proselytes of the gate by the magistrates of Israel as well as by the immediate hand of God:

*the same reproacheth the Lord;* by denying him to be the true Jehovah, by worshipping other gods, and by speaking in a blaspheming manner of him the true God; and indeed every presumptuous sin, which is committed in a bold and audacious manner, in contempt of God and defiance of his law, is a reproaching him the lawgiver, and a trampling upon his legislative power and authority:

*and that soul shall be cut off from among his people,* either by the hand of the civil magistrate, upon conviction of him, or by the immediate hand of God; no sacrifice was to be offered for such, no atonement to be made or forgiveness to be had; (see <sup>4123</sup>Matthew 12:31,32).

**Ver. 31.** *Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment,* etc.] That is, has broken it through contempt of it, despising it as a command of God, paying no regard to it as a law of his; otherwise such who sin ignorantly break the commandment of God:

*that soul shall be utterly cut off*; or “in cutting off shall be cut off”<sup>f207</sup>; most certainly cut off and entirely ruined and destroyed in this world and in that to come, as the Targum of Jonathan; and Maimonides<sup>f208</sup> understands it of such a cutting off, that the soul itself perishes and is no more; but such annihilation the Scripture nowhere gives us any reason to believe:

*his iniquity [shall be] upon him*; the punishment of it, no atonement being made for it by sacrifice; it shall be upon him and him only, or be “in him”<sup>f209</sup>, not repented of and not forgiven.

**Ver. 32.** *And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness*, etc.] According to Aben Ezra, in the wilderness of Sinai; for it is a common notion of the Jews, that though this fact is recorded here, yet was committed the first year the Israelites came out of Egypt, quickly after the giving the law of the sabbath: hence Jarchi remarks, that the Scripture speaks of this to the reproach of the Israelites, that they kept only the first sabbath, and on the second this man came and profaned it; but it seems rather to be in the wilderness of Paran where this fact was committed, after the business of the spies and the discomfiture of Israel, and the above laws were given; and stands here in its proper place as an instance of a presumptuous sinner, cut off from his people, according to the above law, which it immediately follows:

*they found a man that gathered sticks on the sabbath day*; plucking them up by the roots, as the Targum of Jonathan, as stubble and the like; for the word signifies gathering straw or stubble, or such like light things, as Ben Melech observes, and binding them in bundles for fuel; and this was done on the sabbath day, by which it appears that that was to be kept in the wilderness, though the laws before mentioned concerning sacrifices, and the cake of the first dough, were not to be put in execution until Israel came into the land of Canaan; and according to the Targum of Jonathan this man was of the house of Joseph, and in the Talmud<sup>f210</sup> it is expressly said that he was Zelophehad, who was a descendant of Joseph.

**Ver. 33.** *And they that found him gathering sticks*, etc.] Admonished him, as say the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi, but he would not desist; wherefore they

*brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation*; to Moses and Aaron, and to the seventy elders, who might be at this time met together, to hear, try, and judge causes; for it cannot be thought that the

whole body of the people are meant; and it is most likely that it was not on the sabbath day, but the day following, that they brought the man to them, who were then sitting in the court; though Aben Ezra observes, that some say they brought him to them the first night.

**Ver. 34.** *And they put him in ward*, etc.] In a certain prison in the camp; perhaps the same in which the blasphemer was put, (<sup><1842></sup>Leviticus 24:12); and for much the same reason:

*because it was not declared what should be done to him*: that is, what kind of death he should die, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; it had been before declared that the sabbath breaker should die, but not what death he should die, (<sup><12315></sup>Exodus 31:15 35:2); though some think it was a matter of doubt whether gathering of sticks was a breach of the sabbath, or at least such a breach of it as required death; and the answer of the Lord seems to confirm this sense, as follows.

**Ver. 35.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] Who consulted the Lord upon this affair, in the tabernacle, even at the most holy place, from above the mercy seat, where he promised to meet him, and commune with him about whatsoever he should consult him, (<sup><10252></sup>Exodus 25:22);

*the man shall surely be put to death*; for as no fire was to be made throughout their habitations on a sabbath day, gathering sticks for such a purpose was a work that was a violation of the sabbath, punishable with death, (<sup><12312></sup>Exodus 35:2,3); and the kind of death follows:

*all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp*; as afterwards without the city: of the place and manner of stoning, (see Gill on <sup><4178></sup>Acts 7:58”).

**Ver. 36.** *And all the congregation brought him without the camp*, etc.] What was done by the order of Moses and the seventy elders is said to be done by the whole congregation, though it was by a few persons only the man was actually brought out, who were the proper officers to do such business:

*and stoned him with stones, and he died*: stoned him to death:

*as the Lord commanded Moses*: at the time he consulted him in the sanctuary, which he acquainted the court with, and they immediately ordered the execution, which was accordingly done.

**Ver. 37.** *And the Lord spoke unto Moses*, etc.] After the giving of the above laws, and the order for stoning the sabbath breaker; and the rather what follows is connected with them, because it was to put them in mind of these and all other commands; and of so much importance is the precept directed to, that the Jews say, and Jarchi particularly, that it is equivalent to all the commands, and which he makes to be the reason of its being placed here:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 38.** *Speak unto the children of Israel*, etc.] Whom it only concerned, and all of them, except women and children; for priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and freed servants, were bound to wear the fringes, but not Gentiles; nor might the Gentiles make them, what were made by them were not to be used <sup>f211</sup>, since it follows:

*and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations*: the garments on which these fringes were put were such that were made either of linen or of woollen; no other were obliged to them by the law; but according to the Rabbins other garments were also, yet only square garments, which they call the Talith; and if that had not four skirts to it, it was free from them <sup>f212</sup>: on this square garment, and the four corners or skirts of it, were the fringes put; which were a sort of pendants or tassels, which hung down from it, which consisted of eight white woollen threads, sometimes four, sometimes eight or twelve fingers broad <sup>f213</sup>; there were four of them, one at each skirt or corner of the garment: they were, as another writer says <sup>f214</sup>, made of eight threads broad, each of them being knit to the middle with five knots, and of wool spun on purpose for this use; and these were to be wore by them throughout their generations until the Messiah came, and they seem to have been worn by him, (<sup><4000></sup>Matthew 9:20) however, it is certain they were worn by the Pharisees in his time, (<sup><4025></sup>Matthew 23:5); at present this four cornered garment is not any where in common use among the Jews, instead of which they wear, under their other garments, a kind of square frock, with the fringes or tassels fastened to it, and this they call Arbah Canfot; and in their schools, and at certain times of prayer, they put on a certain square woollen vestment, with the said pendants fastened at each corner, and this they call Talith <sup>f215</sup>:

*and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue*; or a blue lace, a piece of blue tape, which bound and kept the fringe tight and close,



and being of a different colour, the fringe being white, made it the more conspicuous: the reason why this colour was used, the Jews say <sup>f216</sup>, was, because it was like the sea, and the like the sky, and the sky like the throne of glory: this blue, hyacinth, or purple colour, as the Jews generally take it to be, was of a peculiar dye; the manner of making which is now unknown to them, and therefore they use only the white <sup>f217</sup>.

**Ver. 39.** *And it shall be unto you for a fringe*, etc.] The blue ribbon or lace shall be in or upon the fringe to fasten it:

*that ye may look upon it*; the blue lace making the whole the more conspicuous: from hence the Jews gather, that the night is not the time for wearing fringe, which lessens the sight, and it is not so easily seen; and that night garments are not obliged to have the fringe on them; and yet, they say, a blind man is bound to wear it, because, though he cannot see it, others can <sup>f218</sup>:

*and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them*: this is the general use, end, and design of the fringes, that upon sight of them they might be put in mind of the commandments and put upon the practice of them; these being at the four corners of their vestments, let them look which way they would downwards, before or behind, or on either side, they could not but see them: and the many threads in them might put them in mind of the many precepts they were to observe; and the white colour, the purity and holiness of them; and the blue or sky-coloured lace might lead them to observe the heavenly original of them; or being of a purple colour rather, might direct them to the blood of Christ, for the remission of the transgressions of them: the Jews have many fanciful things about the use and virtue of these fringes, not worthy of notice; and they say, that such who are careful to observe this law of the fringe, are worthy to see the face of the divine Majesty, and will be preserved from evil spirits <sup>f219</sup>:

*and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes*; to have and enjoy, and do those things, in matters of worship, which were of their own devising, and pleasing in their sight, as well as in moral things, what were agreeable to their carnal hearts, and make for the gratification of their senses:

*after which ye use to go a whoring*; which seems to restrain the sense pretty much to idolatry, to false and superstitious worship, which are often

in Scripture expressed by fornication and whoredom; though other sins and lusts also are sometimes signified by the same words.

**Ver. 40.** *That ye may remember and do all my commandments*, etc.]

Which is repeated, that the end and use of these fringes might be particularly taken notice of, and attended to; that so they might not satisfy themselves with and rest in this ceremony of wearing the fringes, but be found in the observance of every moral precept, and of every religious ordinance and duty:

*and be holy unto your God*: as in his presence, according to his will, and for his honour and glory, by keeping his holy commands, and living an holy life and conversation, well pleasing in his sight.

**Ver. 41.** *I [am] the Lord your God*, etc.] Their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, their Lord and Sovereign, their covenant God and Father:

*which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God*; to make it appear that he was their God in a special relation, and that he took the special care and government of them; and which was manifest by the system of laws he gave them to observe, as well as by his provision for them on all accounts, and by his protection of them:

*I [am] the Lord your God*; who had a right to enact laws, and enjoin the observance of them, as he was the Lord Jehovah; and they were under obligation to regard them, as he was not only their Creator but their covenant God and Father, who had bestowed his favours liberally on them.

# CHAPTER 16

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 16

This chapter gives an account of a sedition of Korah and others against Moses and Aaron, (<sup><0461></sup>Numbers 16:1-4), with whom Moses expostulates, and shows the unreasonableness of their clamour against Aaron, (<sup><0465></sup>Numbers 16:5-11); sends for Dathan and Abiram, who were in the confederacy, but refused to come, which greatly angered Moses, (<sup><0462></sup>Numbers 16:12-15); orders Korah and his company to appear before the Lord the next day, with Aaron, to have the controversy decided, (<sup><0466></sup>Numbers 16:16-18); when all the congregation gathered together would have been, consumed had it not been for the intercession of Moses and Aaron, (<sup><0469></sup>Numbers 16:19-22); and who, being separated from the rebels by the command of the Lord, some of the rebels were swallowed up in the earth, and others destroyed by fire from heaven, (<sup><0463></sup>Numbers 16:23-35); and their censers were made a covering for the altar, as a memorial of their sin, (<sup><0468></sup>Numbers 16:36-40); on which there was a new insurrection of the people, which brought a plague upon them, and destroyed 14,700 persons, and which was stopped at the intercession of Aaron, (<sup><0464></sup>Numbers 16:41-50).

**Ver. 1.** *Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi,* etc.] A great grandson of Levi's, and own cousin to Moses and Aaron, being brothers children; for Amram the father of Moses and Aaron, and Izhar the father of Korah, were own brothers, both of them the sons of Kohath, and Amram the eldest, and Izhar the next, (<sup><0466></sup>Exodus 6:16,18,21); this man is mentioned first, being the contriver, and plotter, and ringleader of the following sedition, and which is called "the gainsaying of Core", (<sup><0461></sup>Jude 1:11); when this was made is not certain; Aben Ezra thinks this affair happened in the wilderness of Sinai, when the firstborn were exchanged, and the Levites were separated for holy service, (<sup><0468></sup>Numbers 3:1,6,12,14); but, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it was after the law concerning the fringes was given, which it here follows, and was on that account; for it says, that Korah took his coat, which was all blue, and that the men with him rose up, and in the face of Moses taught

the rite concerning the blue ribbon; when Moses declared he had it from God, that the fringe should be of white, and one thread of blue should be in it; but Korah and his company made their coats and fringes all of blue, which the Lord commanded not: but what Korah is said to take is either himself, or men, or both, and not clothes, as follows:

*and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took [men]*; which men are described in (<sup>4042</sup>Numbers 16:2), even princes of the assembly, etc. or he, Korah, took himself, as Ben Melech, or divided himself, as Onkelos, separated himself from the congregation, and set himself at the head of a party he gathered together; and the “vau” or “and” before “Dathan” may be additional or superfluous, as Chaskuni observes, and so Abendana; and then the sense is, that Korah took Dathan, Abiram and On, apart by themselves, and entered into a consultation and confederacy with them against Moses and Aaron, with whom he was offended on account of the priesthood being bestowed on the latter by the former; and these men he associated to him, being the sons of Reuben, who would the rather listen to him, and join with him, because the right of the firstborn was taken from them, and the camp of Judah was placed before them; and with these men he could more easily commune, because the camp of Reuben and the Kohathites lay on the same side of the tabernacle, (<sup>4020</sup>Numbers 2:10 3:29); Eliab, the father of Dathan and Abiram, was the son of Pallu, the second son of Reuben, (<sup>4015</sup>Numbers 26:5,8); but as for On, no mention is made of him elsewhere, nor any more in this place; it is thought he separated from his company after he had heard what Moses said to them; and the Rabbins say, his wife delivered him out of their hands, as Abendana observes.

**Ver. 2.** *And they rose up before Moses*, etc.] To his face, openly and publicly, in a bold and audacious manner; with impudence, as the Targum of Jonathan:

*with certain of the children of Israel*; some out of the several tribes, but perhaps chiefly of the tribe of Reuben, as Jarchi:

*two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly*; or “congregation”<sup>f220</sup>, who were princes in the several tribes to which they belonged, heads of houses and families of their fathers, rulers of thousands, hundreds, etc.

*famous in the congregation*; or “called” <sup>f221</sup> to the tabernacle of the congregation; who, when the great men among the people were gathered together to consult about any affair, were called, as Ben Melech observes:

*men of renown*, or “of name” <sup>f222</sup>; in high esteem among the people for their birth and rank, their wealth and riches, wisdom and prudence; and were so before they came out of Egypt, as Aben Ezra remarks; so that the persons concerned in this rebellion were not the mob and dregs of the people, but men of the greatest figure and fame, and therefore was likely to be of bad consequence.

**Ver. 3.** *And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron*, etc.] They met together by appointment, and went up in a body to Moses and Aaron:

*and said unto them, [ye take] too much upon you*; the one to be king, and the other to be priest; for they imagined that Moses took the civil government into his hands, and Aaron the priesthood, of themselves, without any call of God to either; but the contrary is most certain, (~~SRD~~ Hebrews 3:2 5:4); the Israelites, those of the other tribes besides Levi and Reuben, thought that Moses took too much upon him of his own head, to take the Levites instead of the firstborn, and confer a dignity on his own brethren, the sons of Kohath, who were near akin to him, and on all the sons of Levi, as Aben Ezra observes; and the Levites they conspired against him, because they were given to Aaron and his sons; and Dathan and Abiram entered into a conspiracy, as the same writer thinks, because he had removed the birthright from Reuben their father, and had given it to Joseph; for it is probable they suspected him, because of Joshua his minister; and Jarchi conjectures that Korah was angry because Moses had conferred the government of the Kohathites on Elizaphan, the son of Uzziel, the youngest son of Kohath, when he himself, Korah, was the eldest son of an elder son of Kohath: or “it is”, or “let it be enough for you” <sup>f223</sup>; or more than enough, as Jarchi; it is sufficient that you have had the government, both in things civil and religious, so long as you have; it is time to give it up to others, who are as well qualified as yourselves. The time past may suffice for the exercise of your despotic and arbitrary power; though it seems to be chiefly levelled against Aaron, and his priesthood, which they thought Moses had conferred on his brother of himself, any instruction from God:

*seeing all the congregation [are] holy, everyone of them*; having all heard the words of the Lord on Sinai, as Jarchi notes; and were all fit to be priests, and to offer sacrifice in and for their families, as they had used to do, before the separation of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood:

*and the Lord [is] among them*; in the tabernacle, to whom they could approach and offer their offerings without a priest to do it for them:

*wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?* since they were all upon a level, everyone holy to the Lord, and might draw nigh unto him, and officiate as priests; wherefore they represent it as great pride and vanity in them; in Moses to take upon him to dispose of the priesthood at his pleasure, and make Aaron the high priest of the people; and in Aaron to take this office upon him, and to be an high priest, and not all the sons of Levi, but over all the children of Israel.

**Ver. 4.** *And when Moses heard [it]*, etc.] What they said, their complaint against him, for setting up Aaron for an high priest, and against Aaron for taking this honour to himself:

*he fell upon his face*; through shame, as the Targum of Jonathan, blushing at their sin, in opposing the ordinance of God; and through fear of the divine displeasure, and of the wrath of God coming upon them for such wickedness; and in order to pray to God for them to make them sensible of their sin, and give them repentance for it, and pardon of it, and avert his judgments from them such a conduct called aloud for.

**Ver. 5.** *And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company*, etc.] The two hundred fifty princes that were with him; what follows was said to them apart from Dathan and Abiram, who seem not to be present at this time; and this was after Moses had finished his prayer to God, and had received instructions from him, by an impulse on his mind, what he should say unto them, and was now risen up from the earth he fell upon:

*saying, even tomorrow the Lord will show who [are] his*; his priests, whom he had chosen, and put into that office; this he would make known so clearly and plainly, that there would be no room left to doubt of it, and which was revealed to Moses while upon his face in prayer to God:

*and [who is] holy*; or whom he has separated to such an holy office and service:

*and will cause [him] to come near unto him*; and do his work as a priest, without fear of danger, and without any hurt, which is suggested would befall others; and they may expect it, who intrude themselves into such an office, and engage their hearts in a bold audacious manner, to draw nigh to God in it:

*even [him] whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him*: meaning Aaron with his sons, whom the Lord would make to appear that he had chosen, and put into the office of priesthood, and that it was not what Moses did of himself.

**Ver. 6.** *This do, take you censers*, etc.] Vessels to put incense in to offer, which was the business of the priests:

*Korah, and all his company*; the two hundred fifty princes that were with him, for so many we read took censers, and offered incense, (<sup><04618></sup>Numbers 16:18,35).

**Ver. 7.** *And put fire therein*, etc.] Into the censers:

*and put incense in them*; on the coals of fire in the censers:

*before the Lord*; not at the altar of incense in the holy place, into which none but Aaron and his sons might come, but at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where the glory of the Lord appeared, (<sup><04618></sup>Numbers 16:18,19); and this they were to do

*tomorrow*; the day following that on which the insurrection was made, and in the morning of that day, which was the usual time of judgment; this was delayed until the morrow, that they might have opportunity to reflect upon what they had done, and repent of their sin, and consider what they were to do, and the danger which might attend it; as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, who, though sons of the high priest, yet offering strange fire, were consumed by fire, (<sup><04610></sup>Numbers 10:1,2); and so might they for assuming the priesthood, and officiating in any part of it, which did not belong to them:

*and it shall be, [that] the man whom the Lord doth choose, he [shall be] holy*: meaning Aaron, with his sons; for though the Lord had already chosen him, and ordered him and his family to be separated from the rest of the Israelites, to exercise the priestly office, and he was actually invested with it, and had entered upon it; yet he would at this time, in a visible way

and manner, make it manifest that he had done it, and therefore should be as it were afresh set apart for holy service, and be continued in it:

*[ye take] too much upon you, ye sons of Levi:* of which tribe Korah was; and it looks as if those with him were chiefly of that tribe; however, these here addressed certainly were, and Moses retorts their own language upon them; they had said, that he and Aaron had taken too much upon them, though no more than what God had called them to; and now he says that they had taken too much upon them, to resist the ordinance of God, and to endeavour to remove from their office whom God had put into it, in order to substitute themselves: or “it is enough for you”, or “let it suffice you”; be content with the honour put upon you, the dignity you are raised to, to be next to the priests, and assistants to them; be not ambitious of more; let what you have satisfy you.

**Ver. 8.** *And Moses said unto Korah,* etc.] Continued his discourse to him, as the head of the conspiracy, and the ringleader of it:

*hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi;* to whom also he had been before speaking; though Aben Ezra thinks the first speech was made to Korah and his company, and what follows to the Levites.

**Ver. 9.** *[Seemeth it but] a small thing unto you,* etc.] It should not; for it was a great thing which the Lord had done for them, and with which they should have been satisfied, and for it thankful:

*that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel:* this was a special favour, and ought to have been esteemed such, that God, who was the God of the whole people of Israel in common, should separate the tribe of Levi from all the rest of the tribes of Israel:

*to bring you near to himself;* next to the priests their brethren of the same tribe, to be joined to them, and assist them in their service, and officiate in the court of the tabernacle, where the divine Majesty dwelt:

*to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord;* to watch it, and guard it, and keep out persons until to enter into it; to take it down and set it up, as occasion required, and bear and carry the holy things in it, and take care of them:

*and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?* which Jarchi interprets of their singing in the desk songs of praise before them; but Aben



Ezra, better, of the service they did for them, when they brought their offerings and sacrifices, which they took of them, and carried to the priests to offer for them.

**Ver. 10.** *And he hath brought thee near [to him]*, etc.] To be in his courts, to watch in his house, and wait on his priests, for which an ample provision was made by tithes. Korah is there personally addressed:

*and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee*; the whole tribe of them, excepting Aaron and his family, who were advanced to be priests:

*and seek ye the priesthood also*? the high priesthood, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; this opens the true cause of their discontent and rebellion; they could not be satisfied with being the ministers of the priests, but wanted to be priests themselves, and Korah perhaps to be high priest.

**Ver. 11.** *For which cause, both [thou] and all thy company [are] gathered together against the Lord*, etc.] For gathering together against his ministers, whom he had put into office to act under him, and endeavouring to overturn a constitution of his erecting, and resisting and not submitting to an ordinance of his, is interpreted gathering against him, and acting in opposition to him; (see <sup><5131></sup>Romans 13:1,2);

*and what [is] Aaron, that ye murmur against him*? what is his transgression? what has he done? as Aben Ezra paraphrases it; he is not chargeable with any fault, he did not take upon him the office of high priest of himself, God called him to it, and put him in it; he is only his minister, and by no means to be blamed, and therefore it is unreasonable to envy him, or murmur against him; and, indeed, murmuring against him is murmuring against the Lord.

**Ver. 12.** *And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab*, etc.] He sent messengers to call them to the house of judgment, as the Targum of Jonathan, to the court of judicature, where the Jews suppose Moses, with the seventy elders, were now sitting: it seems these two men departed either before. Moses rose up from prayer, or however before he had finished his speech to Korah and the Levites; which being particularly directed to them, these men might think they had no concern in it, and went away to their own tents:

*which said, we will not come up*; this answer they returned to the messengers, and by them to Moses, declaring that they denied his power,

despised his authority, and would not obey his orders, and therefore refused to come up to the tabernacle, or to the tent of Moses, or to the court of judicature, wherever it was; perhaps the first is best. Aben Ezra thinks, that as the tabernacle was in the midst of the camp, it was on an eminence, wherefore those that came to it might be said to come up to it.

**Ver. 13.** [*Is it*] *a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey?* etc.] Meaning Egypt, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; which, though a plentiful country, never had, nor deserved to have this epithet given it, which is peculiar to the land of Canaan, and is here given, in opposition to the description of that land, which the Lord himself had so described; and argues great impudence and want of reverence of the divine Being, as well as great ingratitude to Moses, the instrument of their being brought out of Egypt, where they laboured under bondage and servitude intolerable; and yet here represent it as an injury done to them, and as if the intent and design of it was purely to destroy them: for they add,

*to kill us in the wilderness;* with want of food, of which they had plenty in Egypt, they suggest; referring, it may be, to what the Lord by Moses had said to them, that their carcasses should fall in the wilderness; but that would not be for want of provisions, but because of their sins. It was bad enough, they intimate, to be brought out of such a plentiful country, into a barren wilderness; but what was still worse, the despotic and tyrannical government of Moses, as they represent it, they were brought under:

*except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?* ruling in an arbitrary way, making laws, and setting up offices and officers at pleasure, so that it is more eligible to be in bondage in Egypt than under thy government. Aben Ezra takes their meaning to be, as if the end of bringing them out of Egypt was to assume and exercise such rule and authority over them. His words are,

“hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, that thou mayest exercise dominion over us as a prince, yea, many dominions, thou and thy brother?”

and who also observes, that Egypt lay to the south of the land of Israel, so that one that came from Egypt to the land of Canaan may be truly said to come up, that part of Canaan lying higher than Egypt.

**Ver. 14.** *Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey*, etc.] Meaning the land of Canaan; but this was no fault of Moses, he had brought them to the borders of it, he had bid them go up and possess it; but they refused, and chose to have spies first sent into it, who brought an ill report of it, which they listened to, and had so provoked the Lord thereby, that he ordered them to turn back, and threatened them with a consumption of them in the wilderness; or “certainly”<sup>f224</sup>, verily thou hast not brought us, etc. though the Septuagint version renders it affirmatively, “thou hast brought us”; and the Vulgate Latin version, indeed thou hast brought, directly contrary to the text; unless it is to be understood ironically, as it is by some:

*or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards*; that is, in the land of Canaan, as were promised them; they suggest, had this been the case, they could have been content that he should have been their prince, and they would have submitted to his government; but having received no advantage from him, but a great deal of hurt and damage, they could not but consider him not only as a tyrant, but as an impostor and deceiver:

*wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?* or “dig” them out<sup>f225</sup>; either in a literal sense, wilt thou be so cruel and merciless as to put out the eyes of these men, Korah and his company, and us for our opposition to thy government? or though thou shouldst do so,

*we will not come up*; we are determined not to obey thee, but to shake off the yoke, let our punishment be what it will; or figuratively, dost thou take us for blind persons, whose eyes thou hast put out, and think to lead us at thy pleasure? or dost thou cast a mist before the eyes of this whole congregation, that they are not able to see through thy designs? are the people so bewitched by them, as not to see thy deceits and impostures? pretending to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey, which thou art not able to do, and now sayest that thou hast a message from God to return again towards the Red sea, and talkest of our posterity inheriting the land forty years hence; who is it that cannot see through all this? Aben Ezra thinks, by “these men” are meant the elders that were with Moses, whom he led as he pleased, and so blinded them with his delusions, as these pretended, that they could not see through them.

**Ver. 15.** *And Moses was very wroth*, etc.] Or “it heated Moses exceedingly”<sup>f226</sup>; made him very angry, caused him to burn with wrath against them; even the speech they made, the words they uttered, not so

much on account of their ill usage of him, as for the dishonour cast upon the Lord:

*and said unto the Lord, respect not thou their offering*; their “Minchah”, the word is commonly used for the meat or bread offering. Aben Ezra observes, that Dathan and Abiram were great men, and had offered such kind of offerings before this fact; and therefore Moses desires that the Lord would have no respect to any they had offered, but have respect to him, who had never injured any of them. Jarchi gives it as the sense of some, that whereas these men had a part in the daily sacrifices of the congregation (with which a meat offering always went), the request is, that it might not be received with acceptance by the Lord; but he himself thinks it is to be understood of the offering of incense they were to offer on the morrow; and Moses desires that God would show his disapprobation of it, and which is the common interpretation. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it, “their gift”:

*I have not taken one ass from them*; either by force, or as a bribe, or by way of gratuity for any service done them; the sense is, that he had not taken from them the least thing in the world, anything of the meanest worth and value, on any consideration. Aben Ezra interprets the word “take”, of taking and laying any burden upon an ass of theirs; so far was he from laying any burdens on them, and using them in a cruel and tyrannical manner, as they suggested, that he never laid the least burden on any ass of theirs, and much less on them:

*neither have I hurt any of them*; never did any injury to the person or property of anyone of them, but, on the contrary, had done them many good offices.

**Ver. 16.** *And Moses said unto Korah*, etc.] Who was still with him, when the messenger returned from Dathan and Abiram, and who heard what Moses said in his own defence;

*be thou and all thy company before the Lord*; at the tabernacle, at the door of it; the Targum of Jonathan is, at the house of judgment, the court of judicature, where this affair was to be tried, and that was at the tabernacle, as appears by what follows:

*thou, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow*; the day after Moses had sent to Dathan and Abiram, on the morning of the next day; which as it was the time of sitting in judgment, so of offering incense; meaning Korah and his

company, the two hundred fifty men with him, and not Dathan and Abiram; and Aaron also, he was ordered to appear, whom they opposed, and with whom the trial was to be made.

**Ver. 17.** *And take every man his censer, and put incense therein,* etc.]

Which they were to bring with them the next day from their own tents; and these might be censers which they had in their several families, and which they had used in them before the order of priesthood was set up in Aaron's family, and limited to that; or they might be a sort of chafing dishes, or vessels like censers, and would serve the present purpose; they were ordered to put fire into them, that was to be taken from the altar of burnt offering; for strange fire might not be used;

*and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers:* according to the number of the men that were gathered with Korah:

*thou also, and Aaron, each [of you] his censer;* Korah and Aaron were to bring each their censers, between whom lay the contest concerning the high priesthood; which was to be determined by their offering incense before the Lord, and by his approbation or disapprobation of it.

**Ver. 18.** *And they took every man his censer, and that fire in them,* etc.]

That is, they came the next morning, according to order, prepared with their censers and incense; and they took fire from off the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

*and laid incense thereon:* upon the fire in their censers, and so burned it:

*and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;* not in the holy place, where the altar of incense was, for that would not hold them; nor indeed in the court of the tabernacle, but at the door of it, or the outside of it, that so they might be seen by all the people who came to be spectators and witnesses of this affair: and they stood

*with Moses and Aaron;* in a bold and presumptuous manner, as if they were their equals, disputing their authority, and putting themselves upon their trial before the Lord about it: the Targum of Jonathan says, these men stood on one side (of the door of the tabernacle), and Moses and Aaron stood on the other side of it.

**Ver. 19.** *And Korah gathered all the congregation against them*, etc.] Not his own company only, but as many of the whole congregation of Israel as he could get together, and especially the principal men; so that it seems there was a, general prevailing inclination in the people to take part with him against Moses and Aaron, who wished him success in his undertaking, and readily came together to animate and encourage him in it, and to see the issue of it. Jarchi suggests, that all night he was going to the several tribes, persuading them that it was not for his own private interest, but for the public good, that he acted against two men, who had taken to themselves, the one the kingdom, and the other the priesthood, and by this means got a great multitude together:

*unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; that is, before it, where Korah and his company stood, whose part they took, and had like to have suffered severely for it, had it not been for the interposition of Moses and Aaron:

*and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation*; the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, which dwelt between the cherubim in the most holy place, removed and came to the door of the tabernacle, where the people were assembled, in the sight of them, showing some visible token of his presence, though no similitude of himself was seen; or, however, he appeared in the cloud that was over the tabernacle, in which was seen a glory, a brightness and splendour, or such coruscations and flashes of lightning as were very unusual and amazing, and plainly showed the Lord was there; so Jarchi says, that he came in the pillar of cloud.

**Ver. 20.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron*, etc.] Out of the cloud:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 21.** *Separate yourselves, from among this congregation*, etc.] Not only from Korah's company, but from the congregation of the children of Israel, whom Korah had got together, besides the two hundred fifty men that were at first with him; who by their words and behaviour, and particularly by their association and standing along with him, showed them to be on his side, which greatly provoked the Lord:

*that I may consume them in a moment*; by fire from him, as the two hundred fifty men were afterwards consumed, (<sup>CHRS</sup>Numbers 16:35).

**Ver. 22.** *And they fell upon their faces*, etc.] That is, Moses and Aaron, in order to deprecate the wrath of God, and beseech him to avert the threatened judgment; and so the Targum of Jonathan has it,

“they bowed themselves in prayer upon their faces;”

*and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh*; the Maker of all men, as of their bodies, which are flesh, so of their souls or spirits, which are immaterial and immortal; hence he is called “the Father of spirits”, (<sup><S13D></sup>Hebrews 12:9), who, as the Targum, puts the spirit in the bodies of men; or, as others, who knows the spirits of men; their thoughts, as Jarchi, the inward frames and dispositions of their minds; who knows who have sinned, and who not; and whether their sins proceed from weakness, and being misled, or whether from a malevolent disposition, presumption, and self-will:

*shall one man sin*: meaning Korah, who was the ringleader:

*and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?* who, through ignorance and weakness, and by artifice and imposition, are drawn in to join with him; the plea is much the same with that of Abraham, (<sup><O1825></sup>Genesis 18:25).

**Ver. 23.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] When on his face in prayer, and bid him rise up, and told him he had granted his request, and then spoke to him:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 24.** *Speak unto the congregation*, etc.] Not to Korah’s company, but to the people of Israel, of the several tribes that were assembled together:

*saying, get ye up from about the tabernacle of Korah, and Dathan, and Abiram*; which was either the same with their tents, as in (<sup><O1165></sup>Numbers 16:26); though, as they were of different tribes, Korah of the tribe of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram of the tribe of Reuben, their tents must be in distinct and different places, though both encamped on the same side of the tabernacle, and pretty near to each other; the camp of Levi was nearest the tabernacle, and the camp of Reuben next to it. It may be, there was a single tabernacle erected on this occasion, for all these men to meet at when they judged it necessary. Aben Ezra is of opinion, Korah had a tent for his men and substance, at a distance from the camp of the Levites, and to his tent joined the tents of Dathan and Abiram.

**Ver. 25.** *And Moses rose up*, etc.] Either from the ground, upon which he fell on his face, or from the seat on which he sat at the door of the tabernacle; though he seems to have stood there; it may be, it only signifies that he obeyed the divine order, and went about it directly, as often in Scripture persons are said to arise, when they go about any thing they are directed, or choose to do:

*and went unto Dathan and Abiram*; to endeavour to convince them of their evil, and bring them to repentance for it, and to reclaim them from their folly:

*and the elders of Israel followed him*; either some principal persons of the tribes, called elders, both from their age and prudence; or the seventy elders lately chosen to assist Moses in the affairs of government, as Aben Ezra thinks these followed him to show their respect unto him, and their approbation of his conduct, and for vindication of his character, which had been aspersed by those men, and to give the more weight to what should be said unto them, for their conviction and reformation.

**Ver. 26.** *And he spake unto the congregation*, etc.] To the people of Israel assembled together on this occasion: some, out of ill will to Moses and Aaron, inclining to the side of Korah and his accomplices, and some out of curiosity to see the issue of this affair

*saying, depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men*; these turbulent, seditious, and ill-designing men, disturbers of the commonwealth and church of Israel, enemies to the peace of its civil and ecclesiastic state: and when Moses desires the people to depart from their tents, he means not only that they would remove in person, and stand at a distance, but such who had their tents, and families, and substance near them, would take care to remove, lest they should be destroyed with them:

*and touch nothing of theirs*; not carry off anything belonging to them along with their own, being all devoted to destruction:

*lest ye be consumed in all their sins*; lest partaking of their sins they should of their plagues, and die in their sins, as they would, or for them.

**Ver. 27.** *So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side*, etc.] The place where they met together and made their general rendezvous; this it seems was encompassed on all sides by



people out of the several tribes, who either wished them well in their undertaking, or were curious to know how it would issue;

*and Dathan and Abiram came out;* out of the tabernacle of Korah, and went to their own tents; and came out of them,

*and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children;* in an audacious manner, as not fearing God nor man; they carried their heads high, and were not in the least daunted at what they were threatened with; and by their looks and gestures bid defiance to Moses and the elders with him.

**Ver. 28.** *And Moses said, hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works,* etc.] To bring the people of Israel out of Egypt, to exchange the firstborn for the Levites, to make Aaron and his sons priests, to give the Levites to them, and to set Elizaphan over the Kohathites, things which these men found fault with, and questioned his authority for doing them:

*for [I have] not [done them] of my own mind;* or “not out of my heart” <sup>f227</sup>; he had not devised them himself, and done them of his own head, and in any arbitrary way, without the will of God or any authority from him, as these men suggested.

**Ver. 29.** *If these men die the common death of all men,* etc.] Or “as every man dies” <sup>f228</sup>, or the generality of men, who for the most part die of one disease or another, as a fever, and the like, or through old age:

*or if they be visited after the visitation of all men;* with such visitations as men in all ages for their sins are visited with, meaning public calamities, such as pestilence, famine, and sword:

*[then] the Lord hath not sent me;* it may be concluded that I had no mission nor commission from the Lord to do what I have done, but may be reckoned a deceiver and an impostor; and I am content to be accounted so, should either of the above things be the case of these men.

**Ver. 30.** *But if the Lord make a new thing,* etc.] Or “create a creation”, or “creature” <sup>f229</sup>, what never was before, or put those persons to a death that none ever in the world died of yet; what that is he means is next expressed:

*and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that [appertain] unto them;* their persons, their wives, children and substance:

*and they go down quick into the pit*; alive into the grave the opening earth makes for them; this is the new thing created; though the Rabbins say <sup>f230</sup>, the mouth of the earth, or the opening of the earth, was created from the days of the creation, that is, it was determined or decreed so early that it should be:

*then ye shall understated that these men have provoked the Lord*; by rising up against Moses and Aaron, and so against the Lord; by falsely accusing his servants, and endeavouring to set the people against them, and so alter the constitution of things in church and state.

**Ver. 31.** *And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these things*, etc.] As soon as he had finished his discourse, which was addressed to the congregation, and, according to Josephus <sup>f231</sup>, after a long prayer to God, which that writer gives at large; immediately so it was,

*that the ground clave asunder that [was] under them*; on which they stood, not from any natural cause, as by subterranean volcano, forcibly making their way and bursting the earth, and so getting vent, which has been thought to be the cause of earthquakes; but this was by the immediate hand and almighty power of God, and came to pass just as Moses suggested it would, and as soon as he had uttered his words, which made it the more observable.

**Ver. 32.** *And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up*, etc.] Dathan and Abiram, their wives, sons, and little ones, that stood at the door of their tents with them, and all their goods, as follows: the earth, as if it was a living creature or a beast of prey, opened its mouth and swallowed them up, as such a creature does its prey:

*and their houses*; which may be meant both of their families or households, and of the tents they dwelt in, which were their houses; (see <sup><BOOK></sup>Deuteronomy 1:6);

*and all the men that [appertained] unto Korah*: not Korah himself, for he was with the two hundred fifty men that had censers, and with Aaron at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation offering incense, and thereby making trial to whom the priesthood belonged; and who, it is highly probable, perished by fire with the two hundred fifty men, as Josephus, Aben Ezra, and others are of opinion; but the family of Korah, and not all of them, for his sons died not at that time, (<sup><OBS></sup>Numbers 26:11); and there were of his posterity in the times of David, to whom several of the psalms

are inscribed, (<sup>1901</sup>Psalm 42:1 44:1 45:1 46:1 47:1) (<sup>1901</sup>Psalm 48:1 49:1 84:1 85:1 87:1 88:1); these were either out of the way upon business, the providence of God so ordering it for their safety; or they disliked the proceedings of their father, and joined not with him; or if they did at first, repented of it and forsook him, as it is probable on of the tribe of Reuben also did, since no mention is made of him in the destruction:

*and all [their] goods*: their household goods, their substance and riches, their gold, silver, cattle, and whatever they were possessed of: a very extraordinary case this and which perhaps gave rise to some fabulous things among the Heathens; however, if they can be credited, this ought not to be thought incredible; as Amphiaraus, who with his chariot and its rider are said to be swallowed up in the earth, struck by a thunderbolt from Jupiter, and were never seen more <sup>f232</sup>; and other stories are told of persons praying to their deities for secrecy and shelter, and the earth has opened and hid them; as Althemenes, when he had slain his father <sup>f233</sup>; and the nymph Thalia pregnant by Jupiter, who, for fear of Juno, wished the earth might open and take her in, and it accordingly did, as is reported <sup>f234</sup>.

**Ver. 33.** *They, and all that [appertained] unto them, went down alive into the pit*, etc.] The grave which the opening earth made for them, they and their families:

*and the earth closed upon them*; and covered them over; this it did of itself, as Aben Ezra remarks: this was a wonderful instance of almighty power, that it should open in such large fissures as to swallow up such a number of men, with their tents, goods, and cattle, and then close again so firmly, as not to have the least appearance upon it of what had happened, as Josephus observes <sup>f235</sup>,

*and they perished from among the congregation*; and had a name and a place no more with them.

**Ver. 34.** *And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them*, etc.] Or because of it, as Aben Ezra; their cry was so loud, their shrieks so dreadful and piercing, that the Israelites about them fled to get out of the sound of them, as well as for their own safety. The Targum of Jonathan not only represents their cry as terrible, but gives the words they expressed at it;

“and all Israel that were round about them fled, because of the terror of their voice, when they cried and said, the Lord is righteous

and his judgments truth, and truth are the words of Moses his servant, but we are wicked who have rebelled against him:”

*for they said, lest the earth swallow us up [also];* which they might fear, since they had provoked the Lord, by associating with these men, and countenancing them by their presence, as they had done; who would have consumed them in a moment at first, had it not been for the intercession of Moses and Aaron.

**Ver. 35.** *And there came out a fire from the Lord,* etc.] Flashes of lightning from the cloud in which he was:

*and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense;* not that it reduced them to ashes, but took away their lives, struck them dead at once, in like manner as Nadab and Abihu were, who though said to be devoured by the fire, yet their bodies remained, (<sup>¶</sup>Leviticus 10:2,4,5); and is often the case of persons killed by lightning; though Josephus<sup>f236</sup> thinks they were so consumed as that their bodies were no more seen, and who is express for it that Korah perished with them in this manner; which is not improbable, since he took his censer and offered incense with them, and was the ringleader of them, and the person that contended with Aaron for the priesthood, which was to be determined in this way; and though he is not mentioned it may be concluded, as Aben Ezra observes, by an argument from the lesser to the greater, that if the men he drew in perished, much more he himself; and the same writer observes, that in the song of the Red sea, no mention is made of the drowning of Pharaoh in it, only of his chariots and his host, and yet he himself was certainly drowned: now these men burning incense which belonged only to the priests of the Lord, were by just retaliation consumed by fire, and which made it plainly appear they were not the priests of the Lord; and the judgment on them was the more remarkable, that Moses and Aaron, who stood by them, remained unhurt. This was an emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire, of everlasting burnings, (<sup>¶</sup>Jude 1:11).

**Ver. 36.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] Immediately after these men were consumed by fire from him; out of the same cloud from whence that proceeded, he spake:

*saying:* as follows.

**Ver. 37.** *Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest,* etc.] His eldest son, that was to succeed him as high priest, and who perhaps was upon the

spot to see the issue of things; and who, rather than Aaron, is bid to do what follows, partly because Aaron was now officiating, burning incense, and that he might not be defiled with the dead bodies; and partly because it was more proper and decent for the son to do it than the father; and it may be also because it was for the further confirmation of the priesthood in the posterity of Aaron:

*that he take up the censers out of the burning*; either out from among the dead bodies burnt with fire from the Lord, or out of the burning of the incense in them; these were the censers of Korah and the two hundred fifty men with him:

*and scatter thou the fire yonder*; the fire that was in the censers; the incense burning in them was to be cast out and scattered here and there, or carried to some unclean place at a distance, as a token of the rejection of the services of these men: and thus the Lord answered the prayer of Moses, that he would not have respect to their offering, (<sup><01615></sup>Numbers 16:15); if incense is intended there; though that seems to refer only to Dathan and Abiram, and not to these two hundred fifty men:

*for they are hallowed*, incense being offered in them before the Lord, and therefore were not to be made use of in common service.

**Ver. 38.** *The censers of these sinners against their own souls*, etc.] Who by burning incense in them sinned, and by sinning hurt and ruined their souls:

*let them make them broad plates [for] a covering of the altar*; the altar of burnt offering, which, though it had a covering of brass, another made of these were to be over it, for the further security of it, being of from the fire continually burning on it; these censers were to be beaten into broad plates, by the workmen who understood how to do it:

*for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed*; they offered them in his presence, they burned incense in them, and to him, though it was not their business, but the business of the priests; yet these being done, and by his orders, for an open trial who were his priests and who not, they were not to be put to common use:

*and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel*; a memorial sign, a sign bringing this affair to remembrance, as it is explained in (<sup><01640></sup>Numbers 16:40); this was a sign to the priests, that they only were to offer every

kind of offerings, and to the Levites, who attended the priests at the altar continually, and so had every day a sight of it and of those plates upon it, which would remind them of this fact, and teach them not to usurp the priest's office; and to all the children of Israel, to learn from hence that none were to burn incense but the priests of the Lord, for doing which Uzziah, though a king, was punished, (<sup><1438></sup>2 Chronicles 26:18-23).

**Ver. 39.** *And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers*, etc.] The metal of which these censers were made is particularly observed, to show that they were fit for the use they were ordered to be put unto, namely, for a covering of the altar of burnt offering, which was covered with brass, that being very suitable, since fire was continually burning on it; and by this it appears that these censers were different from those of Aaron and his sons, for theirs were silver ones; the high priest on the day of atonement indeed made use of golden one, but at all other times he used a silver one <sup>f237</sup>; and so did the common priests every day, morning and night, when they offered incense <sup>f238</sup>,

*wherewith they that were burnt had offered*; the two hundred fifty men burnt with fire from the Lord, having offered incense to him with the brazen censers:

*and they were made broad [plates for] a covering of the altar*; not by Eleazar, but by workmen skilled in the art of drawing or beating any kind of metal into thin plates, by the direction and order of Eleazar.

**Ver. 40.** *[To be] a memorial unto the children of Israel*, etc.] The whole body of them; this explains what is meant by sign, (<sup><0463></sup>Numbers 16:38); that it was to put or keep in mind what follows:

*that no stranger which [is] not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord*; not only any Gentile but any Israelite, and not any Israelite only, but any Levite; none but those of the family of Aaron might offer incense before the Lord;

*that he be not as Korah and as his company*; this makes it clear that Korah perished at this time, though it is nowhere expressed; and it seems pretty plain from hence that he perished by fire, as his company, the two hundred fifty men with censers, did:

*as the Lord said unto him by the hand of Moses*; either to Korah, who is the immediate antecedent, and who perished as the Lord had told him by

Moses he should; so some understand it, mentioned by Aben Ezra and Jarchi; or else to Aaron, as they interpret it; and then the sense is, that none but those of Aaron's seed should offer incense, as the Lord had declared to him by Moses; (see <sup>(Q1B)</sup>Numbers 3:10); or it may be rather to Eleazar, as Abendana, who did as the Lord spake to him by Moses, took up the censers of the men that were burnt, and got them beaten into broad plates, and covered the altar of burnt offering with them.

**Ver. 41.** *But on the morrow*, etc.] The day following the dreadful catastrophe, the earth swallowing up Dathan and Abiram, and all that belonged to them, the burning of Korah and the two hundred fifty men of his company:

*all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron*; not the princes and heads of the people only, but the whole body of them; though the above persons that murmured against them had but the day before been made such dreadful examples of divine vengeance. This is a most surprising instance of the corruption and depravity of human nature, of the blindness, hardness, and stupidity of the hearts of men, which nothing but the grace of God can remove; the images of the awful sights many of them had seen must be strong in their minds; the shrieks of the wretched creatures perishing must be as yet as it were in their ears; the smell of the fire was scarce out of their nostrils; and yet, notwithstanding this shocking scene of things, they fell into the same evil, and murmur against the men, whose authority, being called in question, had been confirmed by the above awful instances:

*saying, ye have killed the people of the Lord*; so they called the rebels, and hereby justified them in all the wickedness they had been guilty of; and though their death was so manifestly by the immediate hand of God, yet they lay it to the charge of Moses and Aaron, because it was in vindication of them that it was done, and because they did not intercede by prayer for them; though it is certain they did all they could to reclaim them from their sin, and prevent their ruin; yet the people insist on it that they were the cause or occasion of their death, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan express it.

**Ver. 42.** *And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron*, etc.] To kill them, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; who, perhaps, upon uttering their murmurs, made up to them, and by their gestures showed an intention to murder them:

*that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation*; either the people did, to see whether they could observe any appearance of the displeasure of God against them; or rather Moses and Aaron looked that way for help and deliverance in this extreme danger, knowing there was no salvation for them but of the Lord, (<sup><4823></sup>Jeremiah 3:23);

*and, behold, the cloud covered it*; as when it was first erected, and which was a token of the divine Presence, (<sup><4815></sup>Numbers 9:15,16); perhaps it had dispersed immediately upon the death of the rebels, and now returned again in favour of the servants of the Lord:

*and the glory of the Lord appeared*; in the cloud, as in (<sup><4816></sup>Numbers 16:19); to encourage Moses and Aaron, and to deliver them out of the hands of the people, and to the terror of them.

**Ver. 43.** *And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.*] Whose tent was not far from it, about which the people of Israel were gathered; and from whence they came to the tabernacle, both for shelter and safety, and for advice and instruction how to behave in this crisis; they did not go into it, but stood before it; the Lord being in the cloud over it, they stood in the door of it, (<sup><4817></sup>Numbers 16:50); so the Targum of Jonathan,

“and Moses and Aaron came from the congregation to the door of the tabernacle.”

**Ver. 44.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] Out of the cloud:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 45.** *Get you up from among this congregation,* etc.] That is, withdraw from them, and be separate, that they might not be involved in the same destruction with them, as well as that they might have no concern for them, or plead with the Lord in prayer on their account, but let him alone to destroy them, as follows:

*that I may consume them in a moment*; as he was able to do, and had proposed to do it before, but they entreated him that he would not, (<sup><4818></sup>Numbers 16:21,22); as they again do:

*and they fell upon their faces*; in prayer, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; and so Aben Ezra observes, it was to pray to deprecate the wrath of God, and to implore his pardoning mercy for this sinful people;



which shows what an excellent temper and disposition these men were of, to pray for them that had so despitefully used them as to charge them with murder, and were about to commit it on them; (see <sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:44 <sup><4234></sup>Luke 23:34).

**Ver. 46.** *And Moses said unto Aaron, take a censer,* etc.] Which lay in the tabernacle:

*and put fire therein from off the altar;* the altar of burnt offering, from whence fire only was to be taken for burning incense; and lest Aaron in his hurry should forget to take it from thence, but elsewhere, and offer strange fire as his sons had done, Moses expresses the place from whence he should take it:

*and put on incense:* upon the fire, in the censer, which he was to do when he came into the camp, and not as soon as he took the fire from the altar: the censer with fire in it he carried in one hand, and the incense in the other; and when he was in the midst of the congregation, he put the incense on the fire, and burnt it, as appears from (<sup><4167></sup>Numbers 16:47): this was an emblem of prayer, and a figure of the intercession and mediation of Christ, (<sup><4160></sup>Psalms 141:2 <sup><4083></sup>Revelation 8:3,4);

*and go quickly unto the congregation;* the case required haste:

*and make an atonement for them;* which was usually done by the sacrifice of a sin or trespass offering, but now there was no time for that, and therefore incense, which was of quicker dispatch, was used for that purpose instead of it:

*for there is wrath gone out from the Lord;* some token of it, some disease was inflicted, which Moses had information of from the Lord, and therefore expressly says,

*the plague is begun;* a pestilence was sent among the people.

**Ver. 47.** *And Aaron took as Moses commanded,* etc.] A censer with fire in it from the altar, and also incense:

*and ran into the midst of the congregation:* though a man in years and in so high an office, and had been so ill used by the people; yet was not only so ready to obey the divine command, but so eager to serve this ungrateful people, and save them from utter destruction, that he ran from the tabernacle into the midst of them:

*and, behold, the plague was begun among the people*; he saw them fall down dead instantly in great numbers:

*and he put on incense*; upon the fire in the censer, which though it was not in common lawful to burn but in the holy place on the altar of incense, yet, upon this extraordinary occasion, it was dispensed with by the Lord, as it had been the day before when he offered it at the door of the tabernacle with the two hundred fifty men of Korah's company; and perhaps the reason of it now was, that the people might see Aaron perform this kind office for them, and give them a fresh convincing proof of his being invested with the office of priesthood from the Lord, or otherwise he could have done this in its proper place, the sanctuary:

*and made an atonement for the people*; by offering incense, which God smelt a sweet savour in, and accepted of, and his wrath was appeased and the plague stayed: in this Aaron was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his mediation, atonement, and intercession; wrath is gone forth from God for the sins of men, which is revealed in the law; and death, the effect of it, has taken place on many in every sense of it, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal: Christ, as Mediator, in pursuance of his suretyship engagements, has made atonement for the sins of his people by the sacrifice of himself; and now ever lives to make intercession for them, which is founded upon his sacrifice and satisfaction, his sufferings and death, signified by the fire in which the incense was put.

**Ver. 48.** *And he stood between the dead and the living*, etc.] The plague beginning at one end of the camp, and so proceeded on, Aaron placed himself between that part of it wherein it had made havoc, and that wherein yet it was not come; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“he stood in prayer in the middle, and made a partition, with his censer, between the dead and living;”

in this he was a type of Christ, the Mediator between God and man, the living God and dead sinners; for though his atonement and intercession are not made for the dead in a corporeal sense, nor for those who have sinned, and sin unto death, the unpardonable sin, nor for men appointed unto death, but for the living in Jerusalem, or for those who are written in the Lamb's book of life; yet for those who are dead in sin, and as deserving of eternal death as others, whereby they are saved from everlasting ruin:

*and the plague was stayed*; it proceeded no further than where Aaron stood and offered his incense, and made atonement: so the consequence of the atonement and intercession of Christ is, that the wrath of God sin deserves comes not upon those that have a share therein, the second death shall not seize upon them, nor they be hurt with it; for, being justified by the blood of Christ, and atonement for their sins being made by his sacrifice, they are saved from wrath to come.

**Ver. 49.** *Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred*, etc.] 14,700. Thus what they were threatened with, that their carcasses should fall in the wilderness, (<sup>41423</sup>Numbers 14:29), was more and more fulfilled:

*beside them that died about the matter of Korah*; these are not taken into the number here, even the two hundred fifty men of Korah's company, and the families of Dathan and Abiram, (<sup>41462</sup>Numbers 16:32); how many they were is not certain, but they were but few in comparison of these.

**Ver. 50.** *And Aaron returned unto Moses*, etc.] After he had by his atonement and intercession put a stop to the wrath of God broken forth upon the people:

*unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; where Moses was waiting for his return, and to know the issue of this affair:

*and the plague was stayed*: even before Aaron left the camp, and is here repeated for the certainty of it, and to intimate that it continued to cease, and broke not out again.

# CHAPTER 17

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 17

In this chapter the priesthood of Aaron is further confirmed and established by the budding and blossom of his rod, as it lay among the princes of the several tribes, when theirs did not, (<sup><0470></sup>Numbers 17:1-9); which rod of Aaron was ordered to be laid up before the ark, as a token against the rebels, and to put an end to all murmurings against Aaron for the future; which was accordingly done, (<sup><0471></sup>Numbers 17:10,11); upon which the people expressed their fear of perishing because of their sins, (<sup><0472></sup>Numbers 17:12,13).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] After the plague ceased, for the further confirmation of the priesthood in Aaron's family, another method is directed to by the Lord:

*saying*: as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Speak unto the children of Israel*, etc.] The principal men among them of the several tribes:

*and take of everyone of them*; not of every individual of the people of Israel, but of their princes, as afterwards explained:

*a rod, according to the house of [their] fathers*; or "father", of whom their house or tribe was called, as Reuben, Simeon, etc. this rod was either a common walking staff, as some think, or rather the ensign of their princely office and dignity, peculiar to each tribe; though some think it was now freshly cut off from an almond tree, and that all the rods were of one and the same tree; but supposing they were all of the almond kind, as Josephus <sup>f239</sup> thinks, yet being dry rods, and of long use, served to make the miracle appear the greater:

*of all their princes, according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods*; this explains who they were to be taken of, the princes of the several tribes, whose names are given, (<sup><0405></sup>Numbers 1:5-15); and the number of them twelve, according to the number of the twelve tribes:

*write thou every man's name upon his rod*; the name of each prince, or head of a tribe, either by cutting it into the rod, or fastening a writing to it, after the manner of those times; as, for instance, the name of Elizur for the tribe of Reuben; by which it was to be made and was made to appear, that to none of these tribes belonged the priesthood, but to the tribe of Levi, and to none of that tribe but the family of Aaron; whereby it should seem that some of all the tribes made pretensions to it, as being all holy, and especially the chief firstborn of every tribe, as such their princes were.

**Ver. 3.** *And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi*, etc.] Or upon the rod that was for the tribe of Levi; the name of "Aaron" was to be written, not the word "Levi", or a "Levite", as Josephus<sup>f240</sup>; for that would not have decided the controversy about the priesthood, which chiefly lay between the Levites and the family of Aaron, who were of the same tribe:

*for one rod [shall be] for the head of the house of their fathers*; one rod for the head or prince of every tribe, every prince representing his own tribe he was the head of, and the rod the prince; and though the tribe of Levi was divided into two families, the family of the priests, and the family of the Levites; yet, as Jarchi observes, they were but one tribe, and so one rod for them, as for the other tribes.

**Ver. 4.** *And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation*, etc.] In the most holy place:

*before the testimony*; that is, the ark in which the testimony or the law was; here they were laid as in the presence of God, who was in a miraculous way to decide the controversy by them, and put an end to it; for upon the ark was the mercy seat, over which were the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty, and where none could come at them, and where no fraud could be supposed to be committed:

*where I will meet with you*; not with the people in person, who might not go at any time into the most holy place; nor with Aaron, who only might go into it on the day of atonement; but with Moses, the chief ruler and representative of the whole body of the people, and who might go in there at any time, to consult with God about matters of moment and difficulty, and where the Lord had said he would meet him, (<sup><1252></sup>Exodus 25:22); and now would, in a miraculous way, clearly show him, and the people of Israel by him, who was the priest he had chosen of all the tribes.

**Ver. 5.** *And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod whom I shall choose,* etc.] Or make it manifest that he had chosen him, and so confirm the choice he had made of him and his family, for the priesthood to be and continue in:

*shall blossom;* bud and blossom, and yield fruit, as it afterwards did, which is here declared beforehand, that the miracle might appear the greater, exactly answering to a prediction delivered out before of it:

*and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you;* against Moses for setting up his brother as an high priest, and establishing the priesthood in his family; and against Aaron for accepting of it, and officiating in it; but by this method now taken, God would for ever silence their murmurings, so that they should never be able, with any face, to object any more to the authority of the Aaronic priesthood, which should appear by the predicted miracle beyond all dispute and contradiction.

**Ver. 6.** *And Moses spake unto the children of Israel,* etc.] What the Lord had bid him say unto them concerning the rods, which they hearkened unto and observed:

*and everyone of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one;* every prince of the several tribes, and so a rod for every tribe, as well as for each prince:

*according to their father's houses, [even] twelve rods;* there being twelve tribes named after their fathers, or the patriarchs, the twelve sons of Jacob; and Joseph having two tribes which sprung from him, called after his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, there were twelve rods besides that of Aaron; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders the words with the next clause,

“and there were twelve rods besides the rod of Aaron;”

in all thirteen; though the Jews say there were but twelve with it, allowing but one rod for Joseph, under whom were comprehended Ephraim and Manasseh, and reckoning the tribe of Levi one of the twelve so Aben Ezra observes, that the rod of Levi was among the twelve and Joseph had but one rod:

*and the rod of Aaron [was] among their rods:* in the middle of them, and was so placed, as Jarchi thinks, that it might not be said, because it was put

on the side of the Shechinah or divine Majesty, therefore it budded; but being in the middle of them there could be no difference in that respect.

**Ver. 7.** *And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.*] In that part of the tabernacle where the testimony or witness was, that is, the law, which was in the ark, over which was the mercy seat, with the cherubim between which Jehovah dwelt, and this was the most holy place; and the rods being laid here, might be said to be laid before the Lord, who, by making a difference in one of those rods from the rest, would decide the controversy about the priesthood, which was the end of their being laid before him.

**Ver. 8.** *And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness,* etc.] Where none but he could go at any time; this was the day after the rods had been placed there:

*and, behold, the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi;* the rod that had Aaron's name upon it, which was to represent the tribe of Levi, of which he was:

*was budded, and brought forth buds;* knobs of blossom, such that are seen on trees before they open; for the almond tree puts forth its blossoms before its leaves; though the Targum of Jonathan renders it "branches", as do some versions; and some think this is to be understood of its putting out its leaves first, contrary to the nature of the almond tree, and so makes the miracle the greater; thus Ben Melech:

*and blossomed blossoms;* open flowers or blossoms, such as appear on the almond tree in the spring, and look very beautiful:

*and yielded almonds;* ripe almonds, in their full perfection, as the Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan; the latter of which is,

"in the same night it perfected and brought forth almonds:"

the word used has the signification of weaning, and alludes to children grown up to some ripeness and maturity, (<sup>01218</sup>Genesis 21:8); the case seems to be this, that in one part of the rod were buds, swelling and just putting out, in another part open flowers quite blown, and in others full ripe fruit: now this clearly showed it to be supernatural, since the almond tree, though quick and early in its production of buds and flowers, yet never has those and ripe fruit on it at the same time; to which may be added, that this

was not the time of year the almond tree blossoms; not the spring, but rather autumn, as it should seem, since it was after the affair of the spies and the murmurs of the people on their report; now it was the time of the first ripe grapes, when they went into the land, and they were forty days searching it, and it was after their return the insurrections before recorded were: the design of this was to confirm the priesthood in Aaron's family, and show that it would continue there, in a flourishing condition, and that there would be a succession of priests from him to the time of the Messiah, as there were; and the almond tree having its name in Hebrew from watchfulness and haste, (see <sup>2011</sup>Jeremiah 1:11,12); may denote the vigilance of the priests in their office, and the haste punishment makes to come upon such that should oppose them, or usurp the priesthood, as in the case of Uzziah; so Jarchi remarks: this rod of Aaron's may be an emblem of the Gospel ministry of that rod that should come out of Zion, (<sup>1810</sup>Psalm 110:2); which in the eyes of men is mean and despicable, like a dry stick, but becomes a fruitful one through the power of divine grace; and an almond tree rod may denote the vigilance and watchfulness of Gospel ministers over themselves and others, and their doctrine; and oftentimes whom God puts into the ministry he early calls them by his grace, and frequently makes the first part of their ministry most useful, and fruit is brought forth which remains: moreover, this rod may be considered as a type of Christ; it being a dry rod or stick, may denote the meanness of his descent and appearance in the world, and the unpromising aspect of his being the King, Messiah, and Saviour of men; and being an almond tree rod, may signify his speedy incarnation in the fulness of time, which the Lord hastened; his being the firstborn, and his right to the priesthood, and his vigilance in it; its lying among other rods, and budding, and blossoming, and bringing forth fruit, may point at Christ's assuming the common nature or man, his being cut off by death, his resurrection from the dead, and the fruits arising from thence, justification, peace, pardon, and eternal life; and as Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by the budding, etc. of this rod, so the deity and Messiahship of Christ are, by his resurrection from the dead; (see Gill on <sup>1800</sup>Hebrews 9:4").

**Ver. 9.** *And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord, unto all the children of Israel,* etc.] He brought them out of the holy place, and showed them to the princes of the several tribes:

*and they looked, and took every man his rod;* which they knew by their names upon them; by their own handwriting, as Aben Ezra; for though



Moses is bid to write their names on them, (<sup>-047D</sup>Numbers 17:2,3); yet no more may be meant by that than that he should order them to be written, and take care that they were.

**Ver. 10.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] After the rods had been viewed, and every prince took his rod, and full satisfaction was given that the priesthood belonged to Aaron, by the budding and blossoming of his rod, when the rest remained as they were:

*bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony*; before the ark, in which the testimony or law was; here it was placed and continued, but how long cannot be said with certainty; no doubt for many ages; which increases the wonder, that it should, as it probably did, continue with its buds, blossoms, and fruit on it: the apostle speaks of it, as in the holy of holies, with the ark, the pot of manna, and the tables of the covenant, (<sup>-300E</sup>Hebrews 9:4); the Jews say <sup>f241</sup>, that when Josiah the king ordered the ark to be laid up in that place which Solomon had built, that it might not be carried with the captives into captivity, as it is said, (<sup>-488B</sup>2 Chronicles 35:3), “put the holy ark”, etc. they hid with the ark the rod of Aaron, and the pot of manna, and the anointing oil, and which were not in the second temple; and they say <sup>f242</sup>, particularly of Aaron's rod, that at the time it was laid up by Josiah it had its buds and almonds: now this was ordered to be put in the most holy place before the ark:

*to be kept for a token against the rebels*; to be a token of their sin and wickedness in rebelling against God, his ordinance and ministers; which occasioned this miracle to be wrought, for the confirmation of the priesthood in Aaron's family, which they opposed, and to be a caution to others not to attempt anything against it for the future; so Christ and the Gospel ministry will be swift witnesses against the opposers of him and that; (see <sup>-308E</sup>Malachi 3:5 <sup>-488E</sup>John 3:19);

*and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not*; quite silence all the murmurings of the people with respect to the priesthood being so fully convinced by this miracle of the divine authority Aaron and his family had to exercise the priestly office, and they only, and so such destruction of the people be prevented as had been lately made.

**Ver. 11.** *And Moses did so; as the Lord commanded him, even so did he.*] Took Aaron's rod, and laid it up before the ark for the purpose mentioned, being a faithful servant to God in all his house.

**Ver. 12.** *And the children of Israel spake unto Moses*, etc.] The princes of the tribes, who had seen the miracle of the rod, and knew that it was laid up in the most holy place, and for what purpose, which gave them a sensible concern: these, and as many as were acquainted with it, addressed Moses upon it, as follows:

*saying, behold, we die, we perish, we all perish*; which being expressed without the copulative, and in different words, show that they were spoken quick and in haste, and discover the passion of mind and distress they were in, and the sense they had of their sin and danger, fearing they should all die and perish, as many had already; it has respect, as some think, to punishments past and future, so the Targum of Jonathan,

“some of us have been consumed by flaming fire, and others of us have been swallowed up in the earth and are lost, and, lo, we are accounted as if all of us would perish.”

**Ver. 13.** *Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die*, etc.] They who before were so bold and daring as to think the priesthood was common to them with Aaron, or they had as good a right to it, and might go into the sanctuary of the Lord where he did, are now so frightened at the rod being laid up as a token against them, that they thought they must not come near the tabernacle at all, and, if they did, would be in the utmost danger of death:

*shall we be consumed with dying?* such violent deaths, until there are none left of us? but the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words affirmatively; we are near or about to be consumed; and so the Targum of Onkelos, lo, we are to be consumed; which agrees best with the preceding clause, for they would scarcely make a question of what they had affirmed.

# CHAPTER 18

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 18

This chapter gives an account of the distinct work and service of the priests and Levites, (<sup><Q181E></sup>Numbers 18:1-7); and of several things given to the priests for their maintenance, (<sup><Q181B></sup>Numbers 18:8-19); and of the tithes the Levites should have to live upon, since they were to have no inheritance in the land of Israel, (<sup><Q181D></sup>Numbers 18:20-24); and of the tenth out of those tithes they were to give to the high priest, (<sup><Q1825></sup>Numbers 18:25-32).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Aaron*, etc.] As the things spoken were such as concerned Aaron, he might be only and immediately spoken unto: thou,

*and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee*; meaning both priests and Levites, the priests by him and his sons, and the Levites by his father's house:

*shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary*; the blame of any evil committed there, the punishment of it; the priests, Aaron and his sons, if they did not perform the duty of their office aright, he in the most holy place, and they in the holy place, and at the altar of burnt offering in the court; and the Levites, if they did not take care to watch in the tabernacle, and keep out strangers and polluted persons:

*and thou, and thy sons with thee, shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood*; be answerable for my sins, errors, and mistakes that should be committed by them in the discharge of their office, through their own remissness, or not taking care that the Levites did their duty; this shows that the office of priesthood, though honourable, was burdensome, and not to be envied; and that the people needed not to be under such terrible apprehensions as they were, lest they should come too near the sanctuary, as to be in danger of death, since it lay upon the priests and Levites especially to take care thereof, and who, if negligent, would suffer.

**Ver. 2.** *And to thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father*, etc.] For his father Amram was of that tribe, and so the Levites were his

brethren, as he is directed to consider them; which might serve to conciliate their minds, and make them easy with respect to his enjoyment of the priesthood:

*bring them with thee*; into the court of the tabernacle, for further they might not go:

*that they maybe joined unto thee*: as their name of Levites signifies, persons joined and united to others, as they were to the priests: see reason of their patriarch's name Levi in (<sup>01284</sup>Genesis 29:34);

*and minister unto thee*: be assisting to the priests in killing the sacrifices, receiving the blood, and flaying the beasts, and in other things about the sanctuary, (<sup>04036</sup>Numbers 3:6);

*but thou, and thy sons with thee, [shall minister] before the tabernacle of witness*; which was the most holy place, where were the ark of the testimony or witness, and the tables of the covenant; and they might be said to minister before that, when they ministered in the holy place, which was before it, when they burned incense upon the altar of incense, ordered the shewbread, and trimmed the lamps of the candlestick, which none but the priests the sons of Aaron might do.

**Ver. 3.** *And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle*, etc.] That is, the Levites, whatever Aaron and his sons, the priests, should charge them to do, or commit to their care and charge, that they should observe; as to watch and keep out all unfit persons, to take down and set up the tabernacle when needful, etc.

*only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary*; as the ark and mercy seat in the holy of holies, the shewbread table, and candlestick in the holy place; wherefore when these were removed from place to place in journeying, they were covered, that they might not touch them as they carried them:

*and the altar*; both of incense and burnt offering, on neither of which might they offer:

*that neither they nor you also die*: the priests for suffering them to meddle with things that did not belong to them, and the Levites for intruding themselves.

**Ver. 4.** *And they shall be joined unto thee*, etc.] As assistants in the sacred service:

*and keep the charge of tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle*; (see Gill on “<sup>-0482</sup>Numbers 3:7”) and (see Gill on “<sup>-0483</sup>Numbers 3:8”);

*and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you*; not any of the other tribes, only such as were of the tribe of Levi; they only were to be brought with them, and joined unto them, and assist them, and minister to them, as in (<sup>-0482</sup>Numbers 18:2); though the Jews <sup>f243</sup> understand by a stranger anyone that was not a priest.

**Ver. 5.** *And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary*, etc.] That is, the priests, Aaron and his sons; the high priest was to keep the charge of the most holy place particularly, and do what was to be done in that on the day of atonement; and the common priests to keep the charge of the holy place, and do everything relating to the altar of incense, the shewbread table, and candlestick:

*and the charge of the altar*; of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

*that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel*: as had been upon Korah and his company, (<sup>-0482</sup>Numbers 16:32,33), and as afterwards came on Uzziah, (<sup>-4459</sup>2 Chronicles 26:19-21).

**Ver. 6.** *And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites, from among the children of Israel*, etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>-0482</sup>Numbers 3:12”); where the same is said, only they, are here called the brethren of the priests for the reason given, (<sup>-0482</sup>Numbers 18:2);

*to you [they are] given [as] a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation*; (see Gill on “<sup>-0482</sup>Numbers 3:7”), (see Gill on “<sup>-0483</sup>Numbers 3:8”), and (see Gill on “<sup>-0482</sup>Numbers 3:9”).

**Ver. 7.** *Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest’s office*, etc.] Observe all the duties of it, and keep out others from intruding into it:

*for everything of the altar*: both of incense and of burnt offering with respect to burning incense on the one, and offering sacrifices on the other; both were to be done by priests, and by no other:

*and within the vail*; in the most holy place, where the high priest entered but once a year, and he only with incense, and the blood of sacrifices, (see <sup><807></sup>Hebrews 9:7);

*and ye shall serve*; do all the business that is to be done at either altar, whether in the court, or in the holy place, and whatsoever is to be done in the most holy place within the vail:

*I have given your priest's office [unto you] as a service of gift*; it was not what they had taken to themselves of their own will, or had thrust themselves into, but what the Lord had called them to, and had freely invested them with, (see <sup><808></sup>Hebrews 5:4);

*and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death*; any common person, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; any Israelite, one that is a stranger from the priests, though a Levite, as Aben Ezra; such an one might not come either to the altar of burnt offering to offer any sacrifice upon it, or the altar of incense, to burn incense on that, or trim the lamps, or put the shewbread in order, or to do anything peculiar to the priest's office.

**Ver. 8.** *And the Lord spake unto Aaron*, etc.] Having pointed out to him the duty of his office, he now informs him of the perquisites of it; or having told him what was his work, now what his wages, or what was his service, and now his maintenance:

*behold, I also have given thee the charge of my heave offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel*; such as the heave shoulder and wave breast, and firstfruits, and all other holy things in general, such as were the most holy things; as in (<sup><0189></sup>Numbers 18:9); and the lighter holy things, as the Jews call them, (<sup><0181></sup>Numbers 18:11); the charge of these was given to keep for themselves, and for their families:

*unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing*: because of his office as a priest, to which he was consecrated by anointing:

*and to thy sons by an ordinance for ever*; (see <sup><0134></sup>Leviticus 7:34-36).

**Ver. 9.** *This shall be thine of the most holy things*, etc.] For, as observed, there were some lighter and lesser holy things or sacrifices, and others superlatively so: and those are begun with, such as were

*[reserved] from the fire*; those parts of sacrifices which were not burnt with fire on the altar of burnt offerings:

*every oblation of theirs*; which is a general word, including various offerings, the particulars follow;

*every meat offering of theirs*: or bread offering, for they were made of fine flour and oil, and burnt on the altar, the remainder of which was eaten by Aaron and his sons, (<sup><RB54></sup>Leviticus 6:14-18);

*every sin offering of theirs*; which was offered to make atonement for sin, which also belonged to the priests and their sons, excepting such whose blood was carried into the most holy place, (<sup><RB55></sup>Leviticus 6:25-30);

*and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me*; which was offered for a trespass committed; what remained of this also, when burnt on the altar, was eaten by the priest and his sons, (<sup><RB56></sup>Leviticus 7:5,6); and this sacrifice was a ram, when a trespass was committed, either in the holy things of the Lord, or in wrongs done to men, (<sup><RB57></sup>Leviticus 5:15 6:6); Jarchi interprets it of an offering for a trespass committed by rapine or violence to a stranger: these, all of them, it is added,

*[shall be] most holy for thee and for thy sons*; for their use, and for theirs only.

**Ver. 10.** *In the most holy [place] shalt thou eat it*, etc.] Not in the holy of holies, eminently so called, nor in the holy place, for they were neither of them places to eat in; but in the tent of the congregation, as Aben Ezra, or court, as Jarchi; called most holy, in distinction from and in comparison of the camp of Israel, and their tents, as afterwards of Jerusalem, and their houses there, where they might not eat the most holy things:

*every male shall eat it*; the sons of priests, and they only, not their wives, nor their daughters, and therefore not to be eaten at home, or in their own houses:

*it shall be holy unto thee*; separated only for the use of him and his sons.

**Ver. 11.** *And this [is] thine*, etc.] What follow, which appertained to the priests, are the less or lighter holy things:

*the heave offering of their gift*: the right shoulder, given to the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of peace offerings, (<sup><RB58></sup>Leviticus 7:32);

according to Jarchi, it was what was lifted up or heaved from the thank offering, the peace offerings, and the ram of the Nazarites, (see <sup><R74></sup>Leviticus 7:14,32 <sup><H19></sup>Numbers 6:19,20);

*with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel*; which were waved to and fro before the Lord, as the breast of the peace offerings, called therefore the wave breast, (<sup><R73></sup>Leviticus 7:30,34);

*I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever*; for these were to be eaten in their own houses, and by their families, wives, children, and servants bought with their money, or born in their houses; but not hired servants, nor sojourners, nor strangers; nor their daughters married to strangers though, if widows, or divorced, and without children, and returned to their father's house, they might eat of them, (<sup><R20></sup>Leviticus 22:10-13); thus a provision was made for the maintenance of the priests of the Lord and their families, until the Messiah should come; who has also appointed that they that preach the Gospel should live of it, (<sup><H13></sup>1 Corinthians 9:13,14);

*everyone that is clean in thy house shall eat of it*: that was clean in a ceremonial sense; had not touched a dead body, etc. Jarchi says, this is said to comprehend his wife; but that might be concluded from what is said before, for if his children, much more might his wife eat of it.

**Ver. 12.** *All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat*, etc.] Or the "fat" <sup>f244</sup> of them; the fat of anything being the best, (see <sup><R14></sup>Deuteronomy 32:14);

*the firstfruits of them*: the oil, and wine, and wheat:

*which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee*; this Jarchi calls the great heave offering, the firstfruits of their harvest and vintage, which being offered to the Lord, was given to the priests: the quantity is not fixed, but left to the generosity of the people, and was a free gift; liberal men would give a fortieth part, those of a meaner spirit a fiftieth, and niggardly ones a sixtieth, and less than that was not given (see Gill on <sup><R29></sup>Exodus 22:29"); compare with this (<sup><R53></sup>Ezekiel 45:13).

**Ver. 13.** *[And] whatsoever is first ripe in the land*, etc.] Of any other sort of fruit, figs, pomegranates, apples, plums, pears, etc. besides olives and vines;



*which they shall bring unto the Lord, shall be thine*; which they shall bring in a basket to the tabernacle, where it was, or to the temple, when built: this the priests were to have, (see <sup><OR12></sup>Deuteronomy 26:2-4);

*everyone that is clean in thine house shall eat of it*; (see Gill on <sup><OR11></sup>Numbers 18:11”).

**Ver. 14.** *Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.*] Fields, houses, cattle, etc. if absolutely devoted to the Lord, they were the priest’s; but if devoted to certain uses, they were appropriated to those uses, as the repairs of the temple, etc. (see <sup><OR20></sup>Leviticus 27:1-34).

**Ver. 15.** *Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh,* etc.] The firstborn of every creature:

*which they bring unto the Lord*; as they were obliged, he claiming it as his own, (<sup><OR13></sup>Exodus 13:2);

*[whether it be] of men or beasts, shall be thine*; every firstborn of either, being the Lord’s, became the priest’s by his gift:

*nevertheless, the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem*; that is, take the redemption price for it, which was five shekels, as in (<sup><OR16></sup>Numbers 18:16); for the original proprietor was, strictly speaking, the redeemer, and paid the money, and the priest was the receiver, to whom it was paid; (see <sup><OR13></sup>Exodus 13:13);

*and the firstlings of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem*; with lambs, as an ass, which is put for unclean beasts, is ordered to be redeemed with a lamb, or its neck to be broken, (<sup><OR13></sup>Exodus 13:13); the Africans, the shepherds among them, as Herodotus relates <sup>f245</sup>, of their firstlings they cut off the ear of the beast and throw it over a house, and then turn its neck back, for they worship only the sun and moon; which seems to be an imitation of this law.

**Ver. 16.** *And those that are to be redeemed,* etc.] Which is to be understood not of unclean beasts last mentioned, for they were redeemed with lambs and not with money; and after they were eight days and not a month old, as follows, (<sup><OR13></sup>Exodus 13:13 22:30); but of the firstborn of men:

*from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation*: that is, take the redemption money next mentioned; and though both time and

price are fixed, yet said to be according to the estimation of the priest; (see <sup><R276></sup>Leviticus 27:5,6);

*for the money of five shekels*; which was about eleven or twelve shillings of our money, and is the price given for the redemption of the firstborn, when the Levites were taken in their stead, (<sup><O137></sup>Numbers 3:47);

*after the shekel of the sanctuary, which [is] twenty gerahs*, (see Gill on <sup><O137></sup>Numbers 3:47"); of the manner of redeeming the firstborn, (see Gill on <sup><O135></sup>Exodus 13:15").

**Ver. 17.** *But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem*, etc.] That is, shalt not take the redemption price for them, but the creatures themselves; which they, the priests, were to take for their own use:

*they [are] holy*; separated to the Lord, and therefore not to be used in common by men, but were sacred to the Lord, or became the property of his priests; (see <sup><B519></sup>Deuteronomy 15:19); how they were to be made use of follows:

*thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar*; for they were to be sacrificed, and their blood used as in other sacrifices:

*and shalt burn their fat [for] an offering made by fire; for a sweet savour unto the Lord*; as the fat of other sacrifices was, and particularly of the peace offerings, which were wholly eaten otherwise, (<sup><R173></sup>Leviticus 7:31).

**Ver. 18.** *And the flesh of them shall be thine*, etc.] For him and his family to eat of, whether blemished or perfect the Jews say <sup>f246</sup>:

*as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine*: which were his part of the peace offerings, for him and his sons to eat of, (<sup><R173></sup>Leviticus 7:34); and the Jews observe <sup>f247</sup>, that as the wave breast and heave shoulder of the peace offerings might be eaten in two days and one night, so might those of the firstlings.

**Ver. 19.** *All the heave offerings of the holy things*, etc.] All before mentioned, and whatsoever comes under that name:

*which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord*; either by his commandment, or of their own freewill;

*have I given thee, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever:* so providing for their maintenance by an irrevocable law as long as their priesthood lasted, even until the Messiah should come:

*it [is] a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto thee, and thy seed with thee:* an incorruptible, inviolable, durable covenant, which should last for ever, even until the Gospel dispensation or world to come should take place; and it would remain ever before the Lord in his sight, who would take care it should never be made void, but stand fast with Aaron and his posterity as long as his priesthood endured.

**Ver. 20.** *And the Lord spake unto Aaron,* etc.] What is said, being what concerned the tribe of Levi, at the head of which Aaron was, even concerning the maintenance of the Levites:

*thou shalt have no inheritance in their land;* in the land of Israel when they come to possess it, as the rest of the tribes had:

*neither shalt thou have any part among them;* any part of the land when it is divided by lot, as it was in the times of Joshua, when taken from the Canaanites; no tract of land was peculiarly assigned to them as were to the other tribes, as fields, nor vineyards; they had cities appointed them, and they had houses and fields devoted to the Lord which fell to them, and others they had by gift or legacy, or by purchase, as had Jeremiah the priest and Barnabas the Levite, (<sup>281b</sup>Jeremiah 32:9) (<sup>406b</sup>Acts 4:36,37); but they had no share in the distribution of the land of Canaan at the time of the division of it among the tribes; no, not even in the spoil of the cities of the land of Canaan, when they were conquered; this Maimonides <sup>f248</sup> says they were warned not to take; and a son of Levi that took any part of the spoil was to be beaten; but the spoil of other lands, subdued by the kings of Israel, they might take, as other Israelites did: the reason of all this was, because they had a sufficient provision made for them in another way, and that they might not be entangled in worldly affairs, or spend their time in the culture of fields and vineyards, but wholly give themselves to the service of God in his house:

*I [am] thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel;* in things temporal, the offerings, tithes, firstfruits, etc. which were given to the Lord, being bestowed upon them; and in things spiritual, they being employed in the work and service of God, and having a peculiar nearness to him, and communion with him: so all that are made priests unto God, as

all believers in Christ are, (<sup><4015></sup>1 Peter 2:5,9), have God for their portion and inheritance; God, in his persons and in all his perfections, and under every character, as the God of nature, providence, and grace, is the portion of his people; and a rich, large, and satisfying portion he is, and which is inexhaustible, and will endure for ever; he is their portion in life and at death, in time and to all eternity; (see <sup><1973></sup>Psalm 73:26 142:5 <sup><1034></sup>Leviticus 3:14).

**Ver. 21.** *And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance,* etc.] The tenth part of the produce of the land; of the wheat, barley, oil, and wine; the tenth part of their harvest and vintage; so that though they were the least of the tribes, they had the greatest share of the increase of the land, and that without any labour or expense; the other having but nine parts among them all, and at the charge and labour of manuring, cultivating, etc. and this they were to have

*for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation;* (see <sup><0483></sup>Numbers 18:3-6).

**Ver. 22.** *Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] To do any part of the priest's office, as to burn incense, as Korah and his company had done; or to do any part of the work of the Levites, by watching in the tabernacle, by taking it down and setting it up, and bearing the vessels of it; otherwise they might come to it, to bring their sacrifices, to pay their vows, and for their purification when necessary, and such like things:

*lest they bear sin and die;* lest sin be charged upon them, and punishment be inflicted, even the punishment of death; for it was death to intrude into the priest's office.

**Ver. 23.** *But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] In guarding the tabernacle, that no unclean persons enter into it, or any others take anything out of it, and in assisting the priests in their service, and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary when required:

*and they shall bear their iniquity:* that is, when they fail in the duty of their office, are not careful in their service and work, and business appointed them; if either they did not do their business themselves, or suffered others to do it, or such to come to the tabernacle who should not, they would be blameworthy and suffer for it:

*[it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations, that the children of Israel they have no inheritance;* having such a plentiful provision made for them, by a statute as durable as this.

**Ver. 24.** *But the tithe of the children of Israel,* etc.] The tenth of the produce of their land, as before:

*which they offer [as] an heave offering unto the Lord:* by way of gratitude to him for giving them the land, and for making it so fruitful to them, and as an acknowledgment of his being the sovereign Lord and proprietor of it:

*I have given to the Levites to inherit;* so that the Levites had the tithe not immediately from the Israelites, nor were they dependent on them for them; but they were first given to the Lord, and then by him to the Levites, who held them of him, and not of the Israelites; and were a portion and an inheritance, settled upon them by the Lord himself, which they had as good a right and title unto as the rest of the tribes had to their several inheritances:

*therefore have I said unto them, among the children, of Israel they shall have no inheritance;* as in (<sup>04823</sup>Numbers 18:23).

**Ver. 25.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] And not unto Aaron, because a tithe out of the tithe was to be given to Aaron, as Aben Ezra observes, and it was not so proper that he should have this order to deliver to the Levites, in which he and his sons were so much concerned, and therefore it was given to Moses to acquaint them of it:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 26.** *Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them,* etc.] Aaron was to tell them what a provision would be made for them on account of their service, but Moses was to inform them what part Aaron was to have out of it:

*when ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance;* which was done at the time of their harvest, and of the ingathering of the fruits of the earth:

*then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord;* in token of gratitude for the liberal provision he had made for the maintenance of them:

*[even] a tenth [part] of the tithe*; a tenth part out of the tenth of the produce of the land of Israel.

**Ver. 27.** *And [this] your heave offering*, etc.] The tithe of the tithe, which though not properly heaved or lifted up, as the heave offerings, strictly so called, were, any more than the tithe itself, (<sup><04824></sup>Numbers 18:24); yet is so called, because separated to the use and service of the Lord, as they were:

*shall be reckoned unto you, as though [it were] the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress*; that is, it should be as acceptable to God as if they had fields and vineyards, threshing floors, and wine presses of their own, from whence corn and wine were taken, as the Israelites when they received their tithes from them; and what remained they had as good a right unto, and might make use of as their own, as well as they; (see <sup><04830></sup>Numbers 18:30).

**Ver. 28.** *Thus you also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord*, etc.] As the Israelites did when they paid tithes to them, (<sup><04824></sup>Numbers 18:24);

*of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Israel*; which heave offering was a tenth part of them:

*and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest*; that is, the said tenth part of the tithe was to be given not to Aaron only, as the high priest, as some have thought, and so to his successors in the high priesthood; but to him and his sons, even to all the priests in common, the high priest having his share of it; and Josephus <sup>f249</sup> is clear for it, that the tithe of the annual fruits was paid to the Levites, and to the priests. Hecataeus, an Heathen writer, who lived in the times of Alexander the great, says <sup>f250</sup>, that all the priests of the Jews received the tenth of whatsoever was produced, and ministered things in common, and were 1500 in number.

**Ver. 29.** *Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord*, etc.] Not only out of their tithes, but out of whatsoever gifts were given by the Israelites to them, and out of the produce of the fields which belonged to their cities, (<sup><04834></sup>Numbers 35:4); the Levites were to take a tenth, and bring it to the Lord as an heave offering; that is, they were to give it to the priests, to testify their gratitude for everything they had, and to sanctify the rest unto them, and confirm their right and title to it, and give them the free use of it:

*of all the best thereof, [even] the hallowed part thereof, out of it;* which was the tenth part, for that Was holy, as Aben Ezra says, and that was to be the best of it, which was always to be given to the Lord.

**Ver. 30.** *Therefore thou shalt say unto them,* etc.] The Targum of Jonathan is,

“thou shalt say to them the priests;”

but the words seem manifestly spoken to the Levites:

*when ye have heaved the best thereof from it;* taken out the tenth part of it, and that the best:

*then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the wine press;* then what remains shall be reckoned as much their own, and may be as lawfully enjoyed, as the corn of the threshing floor, and the wine of the wine fat, of any Israelite whatever.

**Ver. 31.** *And ye shall eat it in every place,* etc.] In any of their tents or dwelling houses, not being obliged to eat it in the tabernacle, where the priests, were obliged to eat many of their holy things, and second tithes were only to be eaten at Jerusalem, (<sup><5142></sup>Deuteronomy 14:22,23); but the Levites might eat theirs any where, in any place, clean or unclean, according to Jarchi; for, he says, it might be eaten even in a graveyard; but Aben Ezra much better, in a clean place, be that where it would:

*ye, and your households;* they and their wives, their sons and daughters, their servants, whether bought or hired; and they might sell it to strangers, to purchase other necessaries with. The Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the priests; but the Levites only are plainly spoken of:

*for it [is] your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation;* which is said to encourage them in their work, and animate them to it, as well as to clear their right to such a maintenance against all objections; for the labourer is worthy of his reward, as those that labour in the word and doctrine are of theirs, (<sup><5487></sup>1 Timothy 5:17,18).

**Ver. 32.** *And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it,* etc.] Shall have no blame laid upon them, or guilt imputed to them, or punishment inflicted on them, on account of their having and enjoying their tithes and gifts:

*when ye have heaved from it the best of it*; took out the tenth, and that the best, and given it to the priests; or otherwise they would be blameworthy, guilty, and liable to punishment:

*neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel*; the gifts they have given for holy uses, and so are holy; which would be the case if they ate of them, or enjoyed them, without giving the priests the tenth part of them:

*lest ye die*; for it seems such a neglect was punishable with death.



# CHAPTER 19

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 19

This chapter contains a law for making a water for purification for sin, the ingredients of which are the ashes of a red heifer burnt, about which many things are observed, (<sup><0491></sup>Numbers 19:1-10); the use of the water made of them, to purify such as were unclean by the touch of a dead body, (<sup><0491></sup>Numbers 19:11-13); some rules are given, by which it might be known who were unclean on account of a dead body, (<sup><0494></sup>Numbers 19:14-16); the manner of purifying such persons, (<sup><0497></sup>Numbers 19:17-19); and the punishment of those that should neglect purification, (<sup><0499></sup>Numbers 19:20-22).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron*, etc.] Not at this time, after the business of the spies, and the affair of Korah, but before the children of Israel departed from Sinai; and so Aben Ezra observes, that this was spoken in the wilderness of Sinai, when the Lord commanded to put unclean persons out of the camp, and when some were defiled with a dead body, and unfit for the passover, (<sup><0492></sup>Numbers 5:2 9:6); and mention is made of the “water of purifying”, (<sup><0497></sup>Numbers 8:7);

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *This [is] the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded*, etc.] By which it appears, that this law was not of the moral, but of the ceremonial kind, being called an ordinance, a statute, a decree of God, the King of kings; and which was founded not on any clear plain reason in the thing itself, but in the will of God, who intended it as a type and shadow of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, and of the efficacy of that to cleanse from sin; and it also appears by this, that it was not a new law now made, but which had been made already: “which the Lord hath commanded”: as is plain from what has been observed, (see Gill on <sup><0491></sup>Numbers 19:1”); and the Jews <sup>f251</sup> say, that the red heifer was slain by Eleazar the day after the tabernacle was erected, even on the second day of the first month of Israel’s coming out of Egypt; and it was now repeated both on account of the priests and people, because of the priest to whom it

belonged, as Aben Ezra observes, Aaron being now established in the priesthood; and because of the people, who were afraid they should die if they came near the tabernacle; now hereby they are put in mind of a provision made for the purification of them, when under any uncleanness, which made them unfit for coming to it:

*saying, speak unto the children of Israel*; whom this law concerned, and for whose purification it was designed; and it was at the expense not of a private person, but of the whole congregation, that the water of purifying was made; and that, as the Jews say <sup>f252</sup>, that the priests might have no personal profit from it:

*that they bring thee a red heifer*; or “young cow”, for so the word properly signifies; one of two years old, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so says the Misnah <sup>f253</sup>; though some of the Rabbins say one of three years, or of four years, or even one of five years old, would do. This instance, with others, where females are ordered to be slain, (see <sup><BR></sup>Leviticus 3:1); confutes the notion of such, who think the laws of Moses were made in conformity to the customs of the Egyptians, this being directly contrary to them; if they were the same in the times of Moses, they were in the times of Herodotus, who expressly says <sup>f254</sup>, male oxen the Egyptians sacrifice; but it is not lawful for them to sacrifice females, for they are sacred to Isis. Indeed, according to Plutarch <sup>f255</sup> and Diodorus Siculus <sup>f256</sup>, the Egyptians in their times sacrificed red bullocks to Typhon, who they supposed was of the same colour, and to whom they had an aversion, accounting him the god of evil; and because red oxen were odious to them, they offered them to him; as red-haired men also were slain by them for the same reason, at the tomb of Osiris, who they say was murdered by the red-haired Typhon; but these were superstitions that obtained among them after the times of Moses, and could not be retorted to by him; a better reason is to be given why this heifer or cow was to be of a red colour:

*without spot, wherein [is] no blemish*; the first of these, without spot, the Jews understand of colour, that it should have no spots in it of any other colour, black or white, nor indeed so much as an hair, at least not two of another colour; and so the Targum of Jonathan, in which there is no spot or mark of a white hair; and Jarchi more particularly,

“which is perfect in redness; for if there were in it (he says) two black hairs, it was unfit;”

and so Ben Gersom, with which agrees the Misnah <sup>f257</sup>; if there were in it two hairs, black or white, in one part, it was rejected; if there was one in the head, and another in the tail, it was rejected; if there were two hairs in it, the root or bottom of which were black, and the head or top red, and so on the contrary; all depended on the sight: and it must be owned, the same exactness was observed in the red oxen sacrificed by the Egyptians, as Plutarch relates <sup>f258</sup>; for if the ox had but one hair black or white, they reckoned it was not fit to be sacrificed; in which perhaps they imitated the Jews: it being without blemish was what was common to all sacrifices, such as are described in (~~f222~~ Leviticus 22:22-24);

*[and] upon which never came yoke*; and so among the Heathens in later times, very probably in imitation of this, they used to offer to their deities oxen that never had bore any yoke; as appears from Homer, Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and Seneca, out of whom instances are produced by Bochart <sup>f259</sup>. Now, though this red cow was not properly a sacrifice for sin, yet it was analogous to one, and was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all these characters meet, and are significant. It being a female may denote the infirmities of Christ's human nature, to which it was subject, though sinless ones; he was encompassed with, and took on him, our infirmities; and may have some respect to the woman, by whom the transgression came, which brought impurity on all human nature, which made a purification for sin necessary; and the red colour of it may point at the flesh and blood of Christ he partook of, and the sins of his people, which were laid upon him, and were as crimson and as scarlet, and the bloody sufferings he endured to make satisfaction for them; and its being without spot and blemish may denote the perfection of Christ in his person, obedience, and sufferings, and the purity and holiness of his nature; and having never had any yoke upon it may signify, that though he was made under the law, and had commands enjoined him by his father as man, yet was free from the yoke of human traditions, and from the servitude of sin, and most willingly engaged, and not by force and compulsion, in the business of our redemption and salvation.

**Ver. 3.** *And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest*, etc.] The son of Aaron; the Sagan of the priests, as the Targum of Jonathan calls him, the second or deputy priest; it was not to be given to Aaron, that he might not be defiled, though but for a small time, that so he might not be hindered in his office at all; but to Eleazar, to inure him to his office, and to confirm him in it:

*that he may bring her forth without the camp*; without the camp of Israel; Jarchi says, without the three camps, as afterwards without Jerusalem; it used in later times to be burnt on the mount of Olives; it was brought forth as impure, and was a type of Christ, having the sins of his people on him, and who in conformity to this type suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, (see <sup>f261</sup>Hebrews 13:11-13);

*and [one] shall slay her before his face*; the Targum of Jonathan says, another priest; but it was not necessary that it should be slain by a priest, any man might do it. Jarchi says, a stranger slew, and Eleazar looked on; though it was not slain by him, yet it was slain before him, that it might look like a sacrifice, though not offered on the altar; and slaying of it denotes the putting of Christ to death, which was done in the presence, and with the approbation, of the priests and elders of the people.

**Ver. 4.** *And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger*, etc.] He took the blood in his left hand, and sprinkled it with the finger of his right hand, as Maimonides says <sup>f260</sup>; and so the Targum of Jonathan, which says, he did not receive it into a vessel, but into the palm of his hand, and from thence sprinkled it with his finger <sup>f261</sup>: which Ainsworth thinks signified the Spirit of Christ, our high priest, called “the finger of God”, (<sup>f262</sup>Luke 11:20); who takes the blood of Christ, and sprinkles it on the hearts of his people, whereby they are freed from an evil conscience:

*and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times*; or “towards the tabernacle”, so Noldius <sup>f262</sup>; as sprinkling of the blood was the principal action in sacrifices, this was to be done directly before the tabernacle, from whence its purifying virtue was expected, though it was not shed in it, that it might have all the appearance of a sacrifice it could have; and being done seven times, denotes the perfection of it: the priest, when he sprinkled, stood on the east side, with his face to the west. When the temple was built at Jerusalem, this affair was transacted on the mount of Olives, which was east of Jerusalem. Jarchi says, the priest stood in the east of Jerusalem, and placed himself so that he might see the door of the temple at the time of sprinkling the blood. Now it appears, as Maimonides says <sup>f263</sup>, that the floor of the temple was higher than the floor of the eastern gate of the mountain of the house twenty two cubits, and the height of the gate of the mountain of the house was twenty cubits; wherefore one that stood over against the eastern gate could not see the door of the temple, therefore they made the wall, which was over

the top of this gate (the battlement of it), low, so that he (the priest), that stood on the mount of Olives, might see the door of the temple, at the time he sprinkled the blood of the cow over against the temple; otherwise he could only have seen the eighth step of the porch of the temple, as the same writer observes <sup>f264</sup>, with which agrees the Misnah <sup>f265</sup>, that all the walls there (about the mountain of the house) were high, except the eastern wall, that so the priest that burnt the cow might stand on the top of the mount of Olives, and look and behold the door of the temple, when he sprinkled the blood.

**Ver. 5.** *And [one] shall burn the heifer in his sight*, etc.] Another priest, as the Targum of Jonathan, Eleazar looking on, as that expresses it; the Jews say <sup>f266</sup>, that when the priest came to the mount of Olives, accompanied by the elders of Israel, before he burnt the cow, he dipped himself in a dipping place there; and the wood being laid there in order, wood of cedar, ash, fir, and fig trees, made in the form of a tower, with holes opened in it (to put in the fire, and that it might burn the quicker), and its aspect being to the west, he bound the cow, and laid her upon the pile, with her head to the south, and her face to the west; and then having slain it, and sprinkled its blood, as before related, he set fire to it by the help of some small wood: the burning of it may signify the dolorous sufferings of Christ, when the wrath of God was poured forth like fire upon him; the same was signified by roasting the passover lamb:

*her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn*; which may denote the extent of Christ's sufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, skin, flesh, and blood, and the shame and reproach that attended them, signified by dung; as well as how impure and accursed he was accounted when he was made sin for his people, bore their sins and suffered for them, even not in body only, but in his soul also; for his soul as well as his body were made an offering for sin.

**Ver. 6.** *And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet*, etc.] Another priest, according to the Targum of Jonathan; but it seems to design Eleazar the priest, and so, in later times, the same priest that burnt the cow took these things; the Jews say <sup>f267</sup>, when he took them he said, is this cedar wood? is this hyssop? is this scarlet? so he said three times for everyone of them, and he was answered, yes, three times to each of them: these were the same that were used at the cleansing of the leper, (<sup><BR44></sup>Leviticus 14:4);

*and cast [it] into the midst of the burning of the heifer*; these were rolled or bound up together, as the Jews say <sup>f268</sup>, and made one bundle of, that they might the more easily be cast into the fire; the hyssop was wrapped about the cedar wood with the scarlet wool: the true reason of the use of these, Maimonides says <sup>f269</sup>, was never clear to him; but the cedar wood, being durable, may denote the continued efficacy of Christ's sufferings; the hyssop, being purgative and of a good smell, the purging nature of Christ's sacrifice, who by himself purged away our sins, and the sweet odour thereof ascended to the Lord; and the scarlet, the sins of his people destroyed thereby.

**Ver. 7.** *Then the priest shall wash his clothes*, etc.] The Targum of Jonathan has it,

“he that slew the cow,”

and Aben Ezra, the priest that burnt it; but it seems to mean Eleazar, the priest that sprinkled the blood, and by touching that was defiled and needed washing; and so the Jews <sup>f270</sup> say, all that were employed about it, from the beginning to the end, were defiled in their garments; not only he that slew it, and burnt it, and sprinkled its blood, but he that took and cast in the cedar wood, etc. as we find also he that gathered the ashes of it as well as burnt it: this creature was reckoned so impure, though its ashes were for purifying, that whoever had anything to do with it was unclean, as the scapegoat, which had the sins of all Israel on it; and this as that was typical of Christ, made sin for his people, that he might cleanse them from sin: it may point at the sin of the priests and people of Israel, in putting Christ to death, and yet there was cleansing from that sin, in the precious blood of Christ, as well as from all others:

*and he shall bathe his flesh in water*; in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan; not his clothes only, but his body was to be dipped in water:

*and afterward he shall come into the camp*: when his clothes and flesh are washed, but not before:

*and the priest shall be unclean until the even*; though washed, and therefore, though he is said to go into the camp upon washing, this is to be understood, after the evening is come: so Jarchi directs to interpret the passage, transpose it, says he, and so explain it; and he shall be unclean

until the evening, and after that he may come into the camp, not only the camp of Israel, but the camp of the Shechinah, as the same writer.

**Ver. 8.** *And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water*, etc.] In forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan: this shows that one different from this is designed in (<sup><4090></sup>Numbers 19:7); and that this is one distinct from him that sprinkled the blood, (<sup><4090></sup>Numbers 19:4,5);

*and bathe his flesh in water*: in a like quantity, as the above Targum:

*and shall be unclean until the even*: and, though washed, might not go into the camp until that time: this may signify, as before, that though the crucifixion of Christ was a very great sin, and done by wicked hands, yet was pardonable through the very blood that was shed by them, (<sup><4123></sup>Acts 2:23,36,38,41).

**Ver. 9.** *And a man [that is] clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer*, etc.] A man, a clean priest, as the Targum of Jonathan; in later times great care was taken that the priest concerned in the burning of the red cow should be pure; he was separated from his own house seven days before the time, and every day he was sprinkled with the blood of all sin offerings then offered, that it might be sure he was free from any pollution by a grave, or a dead body; and for the same reason they made a causeway on double arches from the temple to the mount of Olives, over the valley of Kidron, lest any unseen grave should be in the way; and when he came thither he was obliged to wash or dip himself, as before observed <sup>f271</sup>; and so he that gathered up the ashes was to be clean from all ceremonial pollution: the Jews say <sup>f272</sup>, that they pounded the ashes; if there were any black coal in them or bone, they did not leave it in them, but sifted them in stone sieves; and not the ashes of the heifer only they took, but the ashes of the cedar wood, etc. mixed with them; and these they put, as the Targum of Jonathan says, into an earthen vessel enclosed in a covering of clay:

*and lay [them] up without the camp in a clean place*; they were divided into three parts, according to the Targum of Jonathan, one part was put in the Chel (or the enclosure of the court of the tabernacle), another in the mount of Olives, and the third part was divided among all the wards of the Levites, with which the Misnah <sup>f273</sup> agrees; Jarchi makes mention of the same division, and of the use of each; that the wards had was without the court, that the citizens might take of it, and all that needed to be purified;

that in the mount of Olives was for the priests, to sanctify other heifers with it; and that in the Chel was for a reserve:

*and it shall be kept [for a reserve] for the congregation of Israel;* as ashes may be kept a long time, if well taken care of, because they are not subject to any corruption or putrefaction; and so was, as Bishop Patrick observes from Dr. Jackson, a figure of the everlasting efficacy of Christ's blood: and, according to the Jews, these ashes of the first heifer must last more than a thousand years; for they say <sup>f274</sup> the second that was burnt was in the time of Ezra, though they reckon seven more afterwards before the destruction of the second temple, in all nine; and the tenth they expect in the days of the Messiah, which are past; he, being come, has put an end to this type by fulfilling it in himself: and the use of them was

*for a water of separation;* being put into water, and mixed with it, was for the cleansing of such as were separated from others for their uncleanness, and was a purification of them for it, as follows:

*it [is] a purification for sin:* or "it [is] sin" <sup>f275</sup>, not an offering for sin, properly speaking; the heifer, whose ashes they were, not being sacrificed in the tabernacle, nor on the altar, and wanted other rites; yet it answered the purposes of a sin offering, and its ashes in water were typical of the blood of Christ, which purges the conscience from dead works, when this only purified to the sanctifying of the flesh, (<sup><3013></sup>Hebrews 9:13,14); and is the fountain set open for sin and uncleanness, (<sup><3811></sup>Zechariah 13:1); where both the words are used which are here, and in the preceding clause: ashes are known to be of a cleansing nature, and so a fit emblem of spiritual purification by Christ; and the duration of them of the perpetuity of it.

**Ver. 10.** *And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes,* etc.] Whom the Targum of Jonathan calls a priest, though it does not seem necessary he should be one:

*and be unclean until the even;* (see Gill on "<sup><4017></sup>Numbers 19:7");

*and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever;* until the Messiah came, whose sufferings and death are for the expiation of, and purification for the sins of Jews and Gentiles, of all the people of God throughout the world, signified by the burning of this heifer; (see <sup><6112></sup>1 John 2:2).



**Ver. 11.** *He that toucheth the dead body of any man*, etc.] A man and not a beast, as Aben Ezra observes; for he that touched the dead body of a beast was unclean only until evening, (<sup>18124</sup>Leviticus 11:24); any man, Jew or Gentile, as the same writer notes: this is instanced in, as being the principal pollution, though not the only one, yet so some think, for which the water of purification made of the ashes of the burnt heifer was appointed:

*shall be unclean seven days*; the reason of which is, because death is the fruit of sin, which is of a defiling nature, and to show that all that are dead in sins are defiled and defiling, and are not to be touched, or to have communion and fellowship held with them but to be abstained from.

**Ver. 12.** *He shall purify himself with it*, etc.] That is, with the ashes of the water of purification made of them: and this was to be done first

*on the third day*; from the time of his touching the dead body. Aben Ezra intimates, that there is a secret or mystery in this and the following number seven; it may respect the third day of Christ's resurrection, who, as he shed his blood for the expiation and purification of sinners, so he rose again the third day for the justification of them:

*and on the seventh day he shall be clean*; which may denote the perfect state, or sabbath of rest, which remains for the people of God, when all Christ's purified and justified ones shall be clear of all sin, and be the spirits of just men made perfect:

*but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean*; whoever is not cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of them, and is not justified from them by him that rose from the dead the third day, will never be cleansed in the world to come, or in the eternal sabbath; but it will then be said, "let him that is filthy be filthy still", (<sup>18211</sup>Revelation 22:11).

**Ver. 13.** *Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself*, etc.] With the ashes of the heifer, or water of purification, and so neglects the means which God has appointed for his cleansing:

*defileth the tabernacle of the Lord*; that is, if he goes into it in his uncleanness, which it was not lawful for him to do: from the Jews the Assyrians seem to have borrowed some customs of theirs, as related by

Lucian<sup>f276</sup>, who upon burying a dead cock reckoned seven days, (see ~~<491>~~Numbers 19:11); and then went into the temple, for before they might not go in, nor perform holy service; such laws they use, that if anyone sees a dead carcass, he may not go that day into the temple; but he goes in the day following, after he has purified himself:

*and that soul shall be cut off from Israel*; either be excommunicated from the church, or die by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by the immediate hand of God; that is, if he knew he had touched a dead body, and wilfully neglected the means of his purification, and so sinned presumptuously; otherwise, if all this was done ignorantly, an atonement was made for it, (~~<488>~~Leviticus 5:3-6)

*because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean*; as all are who are not sprinkled with the blood of Christ:

*his uncleanness is yet upon him*; and will remain, nothing can remove it; as nothing can remove the stain and blot of sin but the blood of Christ; and where that is not applied it will remain marked before God, and will lie upon the sinner to his utter condemnation and ruin; (see ~~<412>~~Jeremiah 2:22).

**Ver. 14.** *This is the law when a man dieth in a tent*, etc.] A tent is only mentioned, because the Israelites now dwelt in tents, as Aben Ezra remarks; otherwise the law holds equally good of an house as of a tent:

*all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days*; the meaning of which is, that all persons that come into a tent or house where a dead body is are equally unclean as those that were in it when it died; and the same is to be supposed of all vessels brought into it, as well as those that are in it, that is, open ones, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 15.** *And every open vessel*, etc.] An earthen one, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Jarchi interprets it; and Maimonides<sup>f277</sup> observes, that this is only to be understood of an earthen vessel:

*which hath no covering bound upon it*; a linen or a woollen cloth wrapped and tied about it:

*[is] unclean*; the air of the house getting into it by its being uncovered.

**Ver. 16.** *And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields*, etc.] That is killed by another, that dies a violent death, either

by the sword or other means; one that touched such an one was unclean, or that touched the sword with which he was slain, as the Targum of Jonathan adds: “or a dead body”: that dies a natural death, or suddenly, or in any way:

*or a bone off a man*; dug out of a grave, and lying by itself:

*or a grave*; the Targum adds, either the covering or side of a grave:

*shall be unclean seven days*; all which has respect to the defiling nature of sin, which is the cause of death and the grave.

**Ver. 17.** *And for an unclean person*, etc.] Defiled by any of the above means:

*they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin*; from the place where they were laid up for this use; (see Gill on “<sup>408B</sup>Numbers 19:9”) and some have thought that they were laid up in various cities and places in the country, as well as at Jerusalem, that they might be come at easily upon occasion; otherwise they could not be had without great trouble and expense, and in some places not so soon as the law required for their purification, namely, on the third day after their defilement:

*and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel*; the Targum Jonathan is,

“fountain water in the midst of earthen vessel;”

for no water but fountain, spring, or river water, was made use of; and it should seem by what is said that ashes were first put into the vessel, and then the running water was put to them; and yet the Jewish writers say <sup>f278</sup>, that if the ashes were put in first, and then the water, it was not right; and the meaning of what is said here is, that the water and ashes should be mixed together; for it is urged from the words: “running water in a vessel”, that it is plain, that the water is put in the vessel and not to the ashes; and therefore that which is said, “shall be put thereto”, is to caution the person, that after he has put the ashes upon the water, that he mixes them well with his finger, and cause the water below to rise above <sup>f279</sup>.

**Ver. 18.** *And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water*, etc.] Three stalks of hyssop bound together, as the Targum of Jonathan, and this man was to be a clean priest, according to the same; but it does not seem necessary that he should be a priest, but that anyone free from ceremonial pollution might do it:

*and sprinkle it upon the tent*; where there was a dead body: but this, we are told, is to be understood not of a tent made of wood, or stone, or clay, but made of anything woven, as linen: or of skins <sup>f280</sup>:

*and upon all the vessels*; in such a tent, that is, open ones, as before observed:

*and upon the persons that were there*: when the man died in it, or came into it since, and while the dead body was in it;

*and upon him that touched a bone*; of a dead man, or, as the Targum of Jonathan, the bone of a living man that is separated from him:

*or one slain, or one dead*; slain with a sword, or dead of the pestilence, as the same Targum, or of any other disease, or in any other way:

*or a grave*; or the covering or side of one, as the same Targum adds.

**Ver. 19.** *And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean*, etc.] The clean priest shall sprinkle upon the unclean man, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, he shall sprinkle the water of purification upon him that is unclean in any of the above ways:

*on the third day, and on the seventh day*; (see Gill on “<sup><41912></sup>Numbers 19:12”),

*and on the seventh day he shall purify himself*; either the unclean person, who shall perfect his purification, as Jarchi interprets it, that is, by doing what follows; or else the clean person, who becomes in some measure unclean, by sprinkling and touching the water of separation, as appears from (<sup><41921></sup>Numbers 19:21) as the priest that sprinkled the blood of the heifer, and the man that burnt it and gathered its ashes, (<sup><41907></sup>Numbers 19:7-9)

*and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even*; in like manner as the man that let go the goat into the wilderness, (<sup><41915></sup>Leviticus 16:26).

**Ver. 20.** *But the man that shall be unclean*, etc.] By touching any dead body, bone, or grave:

*and shall not purify himself*; with the water of purification:

*that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation:* (see Gill on “<sup><0193></sup>Numbers 19:13”).

*because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord:* by going into it in his uncleanness:

*the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean;* and will remain so, for nothing else could purify him, (see <sup><0193></sup>Numbers 19:13).

**Ver. 21.** *And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them,* etc.] To the children of Israel, throughout their generations, unto the coming of the Messiah, when the ceremonial law, which stood in divers washings and purifications, was abolished:

*that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes;* the priest that sprinkled, according to the Targum of Jonathan, or any other person that did it; so that the same purifying water, which made an unclean person clean, defiled a clean one; for though it was purifying, it had uncleanness in it; having the ashes not only of the cow itself, but of its skin, blood, and dung; and so a lye made of ashes is impure in itself, and yet serves to scour cloth: Ainsworth thinks this signifies the imperfection and insufficiency of legal rites, which, in their greatest virtue, only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, and left the purifier himself in uncleanness he had not before; by consideration of which, the people might be led to Christ, and his Spirit, for cleansing, (<sup><3013></sup>Hebrews 9:13, 14 7:25) but it rather signifies, that the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, and answers to this purifying water, that its cleansing virtue is owing to Christ being made sin for his people; and that some may be instruments of directing souls to the blood of Christ for cleansing, and yet be defiled themselves: it does not appear that this man, thus unclean, was to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but was only to wash his clothes; (see <sup><0174></sup>Revelation 7:14)

*and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even:* but was not clean until he had washed, as Aben Ezra observes, though not expressed; for if one that only sprinkled it had need to be washed, much more one that touched it, and which was unavoidable, if, when he mixed the water and ashes together, he stirred them with his finger, (see Gill on “<sup><0197></sup>Numbers 19:17”), though Maimonides <sup>f281</sup> understands this of

sprinkling and touching the water when there was no necessity for it, when a person was not employed in doing the duty of this law.

**Ver. 22.** *And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean,* etc.] Not the person unclean by sprinkling, or touching the water of purification, but the unclean person spoken of throughout the chapter, that was unclean by touching a dead body, bone, or grave; whatever that man touched, any vessel or thing, that was unclean also; or “whomsoever”, any person, man or woman, for it respects both persons and things:

*and the soul that toucheth it;* that which the unclean person hath touched; or “him”, the unclean person, whether the unclean person touched him, or he the unclean person, or touched anything he had touched, he was unclean; denoting the spreading and infectious nature of sin, and how much sin and sinners are to be avoided; (see ~~CRF30~~ Leviticus 15:4-12,19,20).

# CHAPTER 20

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 20

In this chapter is an account of the children of Israel coming to the wilderness of Zin, where Miriam died, and where wanting water they murmured, (<sup>-04016</sup>Numbers 20:1-5), upon which Moses and Aaron applied to the Lord, who ordered Moses to speak to a rock, which should give forth water, and which being smitten by him, accordingly did, (<sup>-04016</sup>Numbers 20:6-11), but Moses and Aaron, in their conduct of this affair, displeased the Lord, (<sup>-04012</sup>Numbers 20:12,13), after this, Moses sent to the king of Edom to desire a passage through his country, which request was refused, (<sup>-04014</sup>Numbers 20:14-21), upon Israel's coming to Mount Hor, Aaron, by order, went up to the mount, and, when stripped of his clothes, which were put on his son Eleazar, he died, lamented by all the people, (<sup>-04012</sup>Numbers 20:22-29).

**Ver. 1.** *Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation,* etc.] Not immediately after the transaction of the above things, recorded in the preceding chapters; as the sending of the spies into the land of Canaan, and their report of it; the business of Korah, and the giving of several laws respecting the priesthood, and the purification of the people; but thirty eight years after: nor was this the congregation that came out of Egypt; their carcasses, by this time, had fallen in the wilderness, as had been threatened, excepting some few, so that this was a new generation: what passed during this time we have very little account of, excepting their journeyings from place to place, in (<sup>-04016</sup>Numbers 33:1-56), by which it appears, there were eighteen stations between the place they encamped at when the spies were sent, and this they now came to; and that the place from whence they came hither was Ezion Geber; from hence they journeyed,

*and came unto the desert of Zin;* which is different from the wilderness of Sin, (<sup>-02401</sup>Exodus 16:1) as appears by their names, which are different, and by the stations of the Israelites, (<sup>-04016</sup>Numbers 33:11,36), hither they came

*in the first month*; the month of Nisan, on the tenth day of it, according to the Targum of Jonathan, which was the first month of the fortieth year of their coming out of Egypt, so Aben Ezra; with which agrees the Jewish chronologer<sup>f282</sup>, which says, this was the fortieth year, and the beginning of the month Nisan:

*and the people abode in Kadesh*: which is by some thought to be different from Kadeshbarnea, from whence the spies were sent, and lay to the south of the land of Canaan, whereas this was upon the borders of Edom; but Doctor Lightfoot<sup>f283</sup> shows them to be the same: it is supposed to be eight hours north or northnorth-west of Mount Sinai, which may be computed to be about twenty miles<sup>f284</sup>; here the Israelites abode about four months, (see ~~4938~~Numbers 33:38) the above Jewish chronologer says three months, wrongly:

*and Miriam died there, and was buried there*; the Jews say<sup>f285</sup> she died there the tenth day of the month Nisan, which was ten days after the Israelites came to this place; though, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it was the same day they came thither: Patricides, an Arabian writer, says<sup>f286</sup> she died on the seventh day of Nisan, aged one hundred and twenty seven; no mention is made of the people mourning for her as for Aaron, (~~4919~~Numbers 20:29) and for Moses, (~~4948~~Deuteronomy 34:8) perhaps because of their distress for want of water, as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *And there was no water for the congregation*, etc.] Which was so ordered, for the trial of this new generation, to see whether they would behave any better than their fathers had done in a like circumstance, the first year they came out of Egypt, (~~4970~~Exodus 17:1-8)

*and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron*; just as their fathers had done before them, being of the like temper and disposition.

**Ver. 3.** *And the people chode with Moses*, etc.] Contended with him in a wrangling and litigious manner, showing no reverence nor respect unto his person on account of the dignity of his office, and the many favours they had received from him; and this at a time, when, instead of quarrelling with him, they should have condoled him on the loss of his sister, and bewailed their own loss also of one who had been a prophetess to them, and a leader of them, (~~3004~~Micah 6:4)



*and spake, saying, would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord;* either at Taberah by fire, or as Korah and his company in like manner, or as the fourteen thousand and seven hundred by a pestilence, (<sup>Q110E</sup>Numbers 11:1-3 16:35,49) which they thought a much easier death, either of them, than to die of thirst: they might well call them brethren, not only because of the same nation, and nearly related to them, but because they were of the same temper and disposition, and indeed brethren in iniquity; and they seem to use this appellation, as being of the same sentiments with them, and in vindication of them, and adopt almost their very language; (see <sup>Q142E</sup>Numbers 14:2).

**Ver. 4.** *And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness,* etc.] The wilderness of Zin, whither by various marches and journeys, and through different stations, they were at length come:

*that we and our cattle should die there?* with thirst; they seem to represent it, as if this was the end, design, and intention of Moses and Aaron in bringing them thither; their language is much the same with their fathers on a like occasion; which shows the bad influence of example, and how careful parents should be of their words and actions, that their posterity be not harmed by them; (see <sup>Q173E</sup>Exodus 17:3).

**Ver. 5.** *And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt,* etc.] They represent that affair in such a light, as if they were forced out of Egypt by Moses and Aaron against their wills; or at least were overpersuaded by them to do what they had no inclination to, namely, to come out of Egypt; though they were in the utmost bondage and slavery, and their lives were made bitter by it, and they cried by reason of their oppression, and the hardships they endured; but this was all forgot. Aben Ezra says, it is a strange word which is here used, which shows the confusion they were in:

*to bring us unto this evil place;* dry and barren, where there were neither food nor drink, as follows:

*it is no place of seed;* or fit for sowing, as the Targum of Jonathan, any sort of seed, as wheat, barley, rye, rice, etc.

*or of figs, or vines, or pomegranates;* it is not a soil fit to plant such trees in, nor would they grow were they planted:

*neither is there any water to drink*; for them and their cattle, and therefore must be a miserable place for so large a body of people to subsist in.

**Ver. 6.** *And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly*, etc.] Like fugitives, as Aben Ezra; they fled from them through fear, lest they should rise and fall upon them, and stone them, as their fathers were ready to do in a like case, (<sup>1070</sup>Exodus 17:4). It is very likely this assembly gathered about the tents of Moses and Aaron, who went from thence unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; where the Lord had promised to meet Moses, and speak unto him, (<sup>1070</sup>Exodus 29:42)

*and they fell upon their faces*; to pray, as Aben Ezra, that God would forgive the sin, of the people, and not break forth in his wrath against them, as he sometimes had done, and as their sin deserved, and that he would grant them what was needful for them. In the Vulgate Latin version the following words are added as their prayer,

“and they cried unto the Lord, and said, Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them thy treasure, the fountain of living water, that they being satiated, their murmuring may cease.”

But they are not neither in the Hebrew text, nor in the Greek version, nor the Chaldee paraphrases:

*and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them*; either to Moses and Aaron, to encourage them to expect their prayers would be answered; or to the people, to terrify them, and silence their murmurings; (see <sup>0469</sup>Numbers 16:19).

**Ver. 7.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Out of what was the token of his glory, which perhaps was the cloud, with an uncommon lustre and brightness in it: saying; as follows.

**Ver. 8.** *Take thy rod*, etc.] The rod of miracles, as the Targum of Jonathan; not the rod of Aaron, miraculous for its blossom and fruit, as some Jewish writers think; but the rod of Moses, with which he had done many wonders in Egypt, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and particularly by smiting the rock at Horeb, when the Israelites wanted water, as they did now:

*and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother*; not only the heads of the people, but the body of them, as many as could be got together to see the miracle, and to receive the benefit of it:

*and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes*; which was near, but a little way off, within sight, and might be pointed to: it was not the same rock that was smote before; that was in Horeb, this in the extremity of the land of Edom, as Aben Ezra observes; this was to be spoken to, and by a word speaking it would give out water; which was a trial of the faith of Moses and Aaron, as well as of the people, before whom, in a public manner, the rock was to be addressed, as if it was intelligent and all-sufficient:

*and it shall give forth his water*; not as though there was a fountain of water in it, but that water should flow from it, or God by it give water:

*and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock*; by speaking to it: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink; sufficient for them both.

**Ver. 9.** *And Moses took the rod from before the Lord.* etc.] Which was laid up somewhere in the sanctuary, as well as the rod of Aaron, (<sup><CHITD></sup>Numbers 17:7,10):

*as he commanded him*; being always faithful and obedient to him that appointed him.

**Ver. 10.** *And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock,* etc.] To which they were directed, and were to speak unto; before this they gathered not only the elders of the people, but as many of the congregation as could be well assembled together:

*and he said unto them*; Moses, who was bid to take the rod, and was the principal person concerned in this affair:

*hear now, ye rebels*; such their fathers had been, and such they now were, a rebellious generation ever since they were known by him; not only rebellious against him their chief magistrate, but against the Lord himself, murmuring against him, being discontented and disobedient, (see <sup><RUBD></sup>Deuteronomy 9:23,24):

*must we fetch you water out of this rock?* not only signifying their unworthiness of having such a miracle wrought for them, and as showing some degree of reluctance to attempt it, but as expressing diffidence about

it; not of the power of God to bring water out of the rock, but of his will to do it for such a rebellious people; or else their unreasonableness to expect any such thing should be done for them: when they were so wicked, how could they think that such a miracle should be wrought for them? so the Targum of Jonathan,

“out of this rock is it possible for us to fetch out water for you?”

so Aben Ezra, have we power to bring out water to you from it? This was said in a passion, as the manner of speaking shows; (see <sup><19462></sup>Psalm 106:32,33) many of the congregation as could be well assembled together:

**Ver. 11.** *And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice*, etc.] At first it only brought out some drops, as Jarchi conjectures, and therefore Moses smote again, when it brought forth water plentifully: the Targum of Jonathan says,

“at the first time it dropped blood, at the second time came out much water.”

Could this be credited, it would make the agreement between this rock and Christ appear very manifest, from whom, when his side was pierced with a spear, there came out blood and water, (<sup><43934></sup>John 19:34) for justification and sanctification. In what respect this rock was a type of Christ, as the other at Horeb, and the smiting of it an emblem of Christ being smitten with the rod of justice, according to the law of God, and of the abundance of water flowing from it, as typical of the abundance of grace, and the blessings of it, as coming through a smitten wounded Saviour, (see Gill on <sup><42706></sup>Exodus 17:6”), where the same things are said of another rock as of this, and both types of Christ;

*and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also*; there was enough for them and their cattle; for it came out in great quantities, in large streams, so that it ran down like a river, and which gave them drink as out of the great depths, (<sup><49785></sup>Psalm 78:15,16), where the Psalmist makes mention of rocks in the plural number, for there were two that were smitten in two different places, and at two different times; the one was at Rephidim, the other, as here, in Kadesh; the one was in the first year of Israel’s coming out of Egypt, this in the fortieth year of it; that was struck but once, this twice; of this second stone no mention is made by any traveller but one <sup>f287</sup>, who coming from Mount Sinai, says,

“we passed by a large rock on our left hand, in which, as in the other rock which Moses struck with his rod, appear, from the bottom to the top, openings where water hath gushed out.”

**Ver. 12.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron*, etc.] Out of the cloud, where his glory appeared, and still continued:

*because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel*; that Moses and Aaron committed an evil which was displeasing to the Lord is certain, but what that was is variously represented. Some say their sin was, that the order was to speak to the rock, whereas it was smitten, and not spoken to; but why then was Moses bid to take the rod with him, if it was not to smite with it, as he had done before at Horeb? and besides, this would only have been the sin of Moses, and not of Aaron; others think, that what provoked the Lord was, that the Israelites were called “rebels”; but this is a name the Lord himself gave them, (<sup>(H170)</sup>Numbers 17:10), and was what they justly deserved; and what after this Moses says of them, which, had this been the case, he would have been careful to have abstained from, (<sup>(R924)</sup>Deuteronomy 9:24). Others are of opinion, that what was displeasing to the Lord was, that the bringing the water out of the rock was ascribed to themselves, and not to him; “must we fetch you water”, etc. Others suppose the sin was in smiting the rock twice, and in anger; but this could only be the fault of Moses at most. Dr. Lightfoot <sup>f288</sup> thinks the particular fault was this, that Moses expressed his displeasure and resentment to the Israelites, that on their murmuring a new rock was opening, which portended a new and long stay in the wilderness, as the opening of the first rock at Horeb did when he and Aaron were in expectation of being soon out of the wilderness, and now they feared they were beginning anew their abode in it; but it is certain from the text that unbelief was their sin; they were diffident about the will of God to bring water out of the rock for such a rebellious people, and they did not put them in mind of the miracles God had wrought in former time, to encourage their faith; and so the Lord was not sanctified by them before the people, as he ought to have been:

*therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them*; the land of Canaan, a grant of which was made to their fathers, and particularly to this generation, and into which they would certainly be brought; but not by Moses and Aaron, who were excluded because of their unbelief, and accordingly both died before the entrance of the people into

the land. This, according to the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, was said with an oath; (see <sup><S1818></sup>Hebrews 3:18,19).

**Ver. 13.** *This is the water of Meribah*, etc.] Or “strife”: this is the name by which the water had in this place, and from this rock, was called; and which is the same name given to the place at Horeb, where a rock had been smitten, and water had flowed, as now, the first year they came out of Egypt; and to distinguish this from that, this is sometimes called Meribah-Kadesh, (<sup><S1825></sup>Deuteronomy 32:51), this being at Kadesh, as that was at Rephidim:

*because the children of Israel strove with the Lord*: for their chiding and striving with Moses was interpretatively striving with the Lord himself, whose ministers and servants they were:

*and he was sanctified in them*; that is, the glory of his divine perfections was displayed in them; either in the waters fetched out of the rock, which was a proof of the almighty power of God, and of his truth and faithfulness to his promises; or in the children of Israel, in whose sight, and for whose sake this miracle was wrought: the Targum of Jonathan expressly says, in Moses and Aaron, in not sparing these his saints, but expressing severity towards them for their sin; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it.

**Ver. 14.** *And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom*, etc.] This country was sometimes governed by kings, and sometimes by “dukes”, (see <sup><S1344></sup>Genesis 36:14-43). At the time of the passage of the Israelites through the Red sea, we read of the dukes of Edom, (<sup><S1515></sup>Exodus 15:15), and here, thirty nine years after, of a king of Edom, but who he was is not certain. Bishop Usher takes him to be the same with Hadar, the last of the race of kings mentioned in (<sup><S1339></sup>Genesis 36:39), to him Moses sent messengers with a request, which follows after a preamble to it; who were the messengers is not said; the place from whence they were sent is Kadesh, a city on the borders of the land of Edom; but not Kadeshbarnea, Aben Ezra says, though some are of opinion it is the same, (see <sup><S1811></sup>Numbers 20:1):

*thus saith thy brother Israel*; the Israelites and Edomites springing from two men, Jacob and Esau, who were twin brothers, and is observed to ingratiate themselves to the Edomites, and gain their request, pleading relation to them:

*thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us*; what an uncomfortable condition they had been in for many years, which was well known to Edom, a neighbouring country, as is reasonable to suppose; since the fame of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, passing through the Red sea, and being so long in the wilderness, was spread everywhere; this was said to move their pity.

**Ver. 15.** *How our fathers went down into Egypt*, etc.] Jacob and his twelve sons, with their children:

*and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time*; even the space of four hundred and thirty years, (<sup>(121)</sup>Exodus 12:40,41)

*and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers*; used them ill, brought them into bondage, and made their lives bitter, laid heavy tasks and burdens upon them, as well as slew their male children, (see <sup>(122)</sup>Exodus 1:7-22).

**Ver. 16.** *And when we cried unto the Lord*, etc.] By reason of their bondage, and to be delivered from it, (<sup>(123)</sup>Exodus 2:24 3:7):

*he heard our voice*; their prayer to him, as the Targum of Jonathan, for help and deliverance, (<sup>(124)</sup>Exodus 2:24 3:7):

*and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt*; one of the ministering angels, as the same Targum, and so Aben Ezra; though he observes that some interpret it of Moses, as do Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech, which is not likely; since Moses is the person that sent this message to the king of Edom, who would not easily understand it of him, if so he meant; nor would the mention of it be of any consequence and avail with him; whereas to understand it of some divine and heavenly agent, sent by the Lord on so important an affair, might make it the more remarkable, and to be regarded by him: and indeed no other is meant than the Angel of God's presence, who appeared to Moses in the bush, and sent him to Pharaoh to demand the dismissal of the children of Israel; and who, by him, wrought the wonders in Egypt, and brought Israel from thence, and went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire:

*and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border*; not that they were properly in the city, but near it, for they dwelt in tents in the wilderness; nor would that, or anyone city, hold so large a number as they consisted of.

**Ver. 17.** *Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country*, etc.] That being the nearest and shortest way to the land of Canaan, from the place where they now were:

*we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards*; to harm them, and injure any man in his private property, by gathering the fruit of them, if the season of the year for it, or by trampling them down:

*neither will we drink of the water of the wells*; which private persons had dug, for the watering of their fields and vineyards, and for other uses, at least without paying for it; or only of the waters of the rivers, common to all passengers; from hence it appears, that the country of Edom was not then such a barren country as in later times, and as travellers<sup>f289</sup> now report it is; (see Gill on “<sup><300B></sup>Malachi 1:3”)

*we will go by the king's highway*; not the way in which the king used to walk, or which he should order them to walk in, as Aben Ezra; but the public roads, common to all his subjects, and travellers to walk in by his allowance; and such roads are now called by us the king's highway:

*we will not turn to the right hand, or to the left*; to do any injury to any person's property, but go straight forward:

*until we have passed thy borders*; from one to another, and got quite through the country.

**Ver. 18.** *And Edom said unto him*, etc.] The king of Edom replied to Israel, represented by the messengers sent in their name:

*thou shall not pass by me*; through my country:

*lest I come out against thee with the sword*; or with those that use the sword, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; that is, with an army of soldiers with their drawn swords in their hands, to slay them as enemies.

**Ver. 19.** *And the children of Israel said unto him*, etc.] The messengers sent by the children of Israel made answer to the king of Edom:

*we will go by the highway*; we desire no other favour but that of the public road; we propose not to go through any part of the country that is enclosed and cultivated, to do any damage to it:

*if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it*; as it was usual, and still is, to buy water in those countries near the Red sea, where it is



scarce. We are told <sup>f290</sup>, that at Suess, a city on the extremity of the Red sea, there is no water nearer than six or seven hours journey towards the north east, which is brought from thence on camels; and a small vessel of it is sold for three or four medinas, and a larger vessel for eight or ten, according to the demand for it; a medina is an Egyptian piece of money, worth about three halfpence of our English money:

*I will only (without doing anything else) go through on my feet*; as fast as I can, without saying anything to the inhabitants to terrify and distress them, and without doing them any injury. Some render it, I will only go “with my footmen” <sup>f291</sup>; foot soldiers, an army on foot, as Israel were.

**Ver. 20.** *And he said, thou shall not go through*, etc.] Which is an absolute and peremptory denial:

*and Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand*; the king raised the militia of his country, and came at the head of a powerful army to hinder their passing into it; being fearful and jealous, lest such a large body as they were should seize on his country, or spoil it, not relying on their promises; and this might arise also from the old grudge of Esau against Jacob, and which continued in his posterity, and might now be revived upon their going to Canaan to possess the earthly blessing conferred on Jacob and his seed: however, it seems, though the Edomites would not let Israel pass through their country, yet they furnished them with food and drink for their money, (<sup><828></sup>Deuteronomy 2:28,29).

**Ver. 21** *Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his country*, etc.] Notwithstanding their near relation to each other, and the fair promises Israel made:

*wherefore Israel turned away from him*: patiently bearing the refusal, and not resenting it; being ordered, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, by the Word of heaven, not to make war with them, because the time was not yet come to take vengeance on Edom by their hands; and to the same purpose the Targum of Jerusalem.

**Ver. 22.** *And the children of Israel, [even] the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh*, etc.] Not directly, but after they had continued there some time, and had furnished themselves with provisions for their journey, which they bought of the Edomites, (see <sup><8117></sup>Judges 11:17), “the whole congregation” is observed to Journey from hence, not one of them

being lost by the king of Edom's coming out against them; these went out complete and perfect, safe and sound:

*and came unto Mount Hor*; which, according to Bunting<sup>f292</sup>, was forty eight miles from Kadesh; this had not its name from the Horim or Horites, nor they from that, their name being written with a different letter, but from Harar, a mountain, for the word itself signifies a mountain; wherefore it may be rendered, "a mountain of the mountain", which Jarchi interprets a mountain on the top of a mountain. Josephus<sup>f293</sup> says, that here stood a city, formerly called Arce, since Petra, surrounded with an high mountain, where Aaron went and died; and Pliny says<sup>f294</sup> of Petra, that it is encompassed with inaccessible mountains.

**Ver. 23.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor*, etc.] When they were at the foot of that mountain, in the valley adjoining to it:

*by the coast of the land of Edom*; which they were still upon the borders of, and were going round it, not being permitted to go through it:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 24.** *Aaron shall be gathered unto his people*, etc.] That is, shall die, for this phrase is a periphrasis of death, and is used in common both of good and bad men, and designs death in general, without regard to persons and places men go to at death:

*for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel*; the land of Canaan; and Aaron the priest, and so Moses the lawgiver, not being suffered to enter into that land, show the weakness and imperfection of the law, and of the Levitical priesthood, and the insufficiency of them, and of obedience to them to bring men to, and give them an entrance into the heavenly glory; that is done by another person, the antitype of Joshua, even Jesus:

*because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah*; that is, you Moses and Aaron; their unbelief is called a rebelling against the word of the Lord, for which it was threatened them, that they should not bring the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, and now the threatening begins to take place, (see <sup>40112</sup>Numbers 20:12).

**Ver. 25.** *Take Aaron and Eleazar his son*, etc.] His eldest son, who was to succeed him in the priesthood, and did:

*and bring them up unto Mount Hor*; to the top of it, they being now at the foot of it, where the people of Israel lay encamped.

**Ver. 26.** *And strip Aaron of his garments*, etc.] His priestly garments, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi:

*and put them upon Eleazar his son*; thereby declaring him to be high priest in his father's stead:

*and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there*; the phrase of gathering to his people is here explained of his dying.

**Ver. 27.** *And Moses did as the Lord commanded*, etc.] Though it must be very cutting, distressing, and afflicting to him, to part with a brother so dear to him, and who had been so many years a companion of him, and a partner with him in the care and government of the people of Israel; but it being the Lord's will, he submits unto it, and faithfully and readily obeyed his orders, as he always did:

*and they went up into Mount Hor*, in the sight of all the congregation; that is, Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar, and perhaps there might be some others that went with them as servants, to attend them and assist them in some things to be done, particularly in the burial of Aaron; they all saw Aaron go up, but he came down no more, and so it was ordered in this public manner, that they might be witnesses of the translation of the priesthood from Aaron to Eleazar, who, after this affair was over, came down with Moses.

**Ver. 28.** *And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments*, etc.] His priestly garments, which, very probably, were put on at the foot of the mountain, on purpose for the transaction of this affair, since they were not in common worn, but only when in service; the same hands that clothed Aaron with them at first, stripped him of them, and both were done at the command of God; as the stripping of those garments was a divesting Aaron of his office, so it was a figure of the disannulling of his priesthood, when the Messiah should come, a priest after another order:

*and put them upon Eleazar his son*; which was an investing him with the office of high priest in his father's room; and which, as it must give Aaron pleasure and satisfaction to see his son put into his office before he died, so it signified the continuance of it in succession in his posterity, and was a confirmation of it; and it must be pleasing to Moses and the people of

Israel to observe the care and faithfulness of God in providing for the succession of the priesthood:

*and Aaron died there in the top of the mount*; quietly, comfortably, and contentedly, without the least murmuring or repining: this was on the first day of the fifth month, as appears from (<sup><0838></sup>Numbers 33:38), that is, of the month Ab, as the Targum of Jonathan here says; and in this the Jewish writers <sup>f295</sup> agree in general, which month answers to part of July and part of August; and in this same place where he died he was buried, as is evident from (<sup><0506></sup>Deuteronomy 10:6), wherefore no credit is to be given to the Arabs, who show a stone not far from Mount Sinai, about two feet high from the ground, on which are seen some unknown characters, which, they say, were engraven by Jeremiah the prophet, in honour of Moses and Aaron, who were buried there <sup>f296</sup>:

*and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount*; after Aaron was dead and buried.

**Ver. 29.** *And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead*, etc.] Not that they saw his dead body, but they perceived by the relation of Moses, and by various circumstances, as not seeing Aaron come down, whom they saw go up, and seeing Eleazar with Aaron's garments on him, and perhaps by tokens of mourning in Moses and Eleazar; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, they saw them come down from the top of the mountain, with their garments rent, and ashes on their heads, weeping and lamenting:

*they mourned for Aaron thirty days*; the whole month out; so long public mourning with the Jews lasted, as Josephus <sup>f297</sup> relates:

*[even] all the house of Israel*; men and women, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi: no doubt it was for the amiable virtues and abundant grace that were in him, and the many services he had done for them, both before and since he was invested with the priestly office; and oftentimes the memory of such things is revived after the death of a good man, which are not so much taken notice of in his life, nor he be thanked for them, or have honour and respect shown him on account of them; but when dead, he, and what he has done, are spoken well of, and his loss lamented.

# CHAPTER 21

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 21

This chapter gives an account of the defeat of King Arad, the Canaanite, (<sup><0210></sup>Numbers 21:1-3) of the murmurings of the children of Israel, because of difficulties in travelling round, the land of Edom, for which they were punished with fiery serpents, (<sup><0214></sup>Numbers 21:4-6) and how that upon their repentance a brazen serpent was ordered to be made, and to be erected on a pole, that whoever looked to it might live, (<sup><0217></sup>Numbers 21:7-9) and of the several journeys and stations of the children of Israel, until they came to the land of the Amorites, (<sup><0210></sup>Numbers 21:10-20), when they sent a message to Sihon their king, to desire him to grant them a passage through his country; but he refusing, they fought with him, smote him, and possessed his land, concerning which many proverbial sayings were used, (<sup><0221></sup>Numbers 21:21-32) and the chapter is concluded with the defeat of Og, king of Bashan, (<sup><0233></sup>Numbers 21:33-35).

**Ver. 1.** *And [when] King Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south,* etc.] Arad seems rather to be the name of a place, city, or country, of which the Canaanite was king, than the name of a man, since we read of the king of Arad, (<sup><0214></sup>Joshua 12:14) see also (<sup><0216></sup>Judges 1:16) and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem here render it, the king of Arad; and the Targum of Jonathan says, he changed his seat and reigned in Arad, which might have its name from Arvad, a son of Canaan, (<sup><0118></sup>Genesis 10:18) and Jerom says <sup>f298</sup>, that Arath, the same with Arad, is a city of the Amorites, near the wilderness of Kadesh, and that to this day it is shown, a village four miles from Malatis and twenty from Hebron, in the tribe of Judah; and so Aben Ezra observes, that the ancients say, this is Sihon (the king of the Amorites), and he is called a Canaanite, because all the Amorites are Canaanites; but, according to Jarchi, the Amalekites are meant, as it is said, “the Amalekites dwell in the land of the south”: (<sup><0139></sup>Numbers 13:29) and so the Targum of Jonathan here,

“and when Amalek heard, that dwelt in the land of the south;”

what he heard is particularly expressed in the following clause:

*heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies*: either after the manner of spies, or rather by the way in which the spies went thirty eight years ago, which was the way of the south, where this Canaanitish king dwelt, (see <sup><01517></sup>Numbers 13:17,22,29), the Septuagint version leaves the word untranslated, taking it for the name of a place, and reads, “by the way of Atharim”, so the Samaritan Pentateuch and Arabic version; and did such a place appear to have been hereabout, it would be the most likely sense of the passage; for as the spies were never discovered by the Canaanites, the way they went could not be known by them; nor is it very probable that, if it had been known, it should be so called, since nothing of any consequence to them as yet followed upon it:

*then he fought against Israel*; raised his forces and marched out against them, to oppose their passage, and engaged in a battle with them:

*and took some of them prisoners*; according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, great numbers of them; but Jarchi says, only one single maidservant.

**Ver. 2.** *And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord*, etc.] The Israelites made supplication to the Lord for help against their enemies, and that he would give them victory over them, and made promises to him:

*and said, if thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand*; certainly and entirely deliver them, so as that a complete victory shall be obtained over them:

*then will I utterly destroy their cities*; or “anathematize”, or devote them to utter destruction <sup>f299</sup>; slay man and beast, burn their houses and take their goods, not for a spoil, for their own private use, but reserve them for the service of God; all which is implied in the vow made, as was done to Jericho, (<sup><0162></sup>Joshua 6:21,24) and so it is a vow, as Abendana observes, of what they would do when they came to the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 3.** *And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel*, etc.] In their prayers and vows; with acceptance heard, and answered them according to their wish:

*and delivered up the Canaanites*: into their hands, gave them victory over them:

*and they utterly destroyed them and their cities*; that is, “anathematized” them, and devoted them to destruction; for as yet they did not actually destroy them, since we read of Arad afterwards, (<sup><06214></sup>Joshua 12:14), but this they did in Joshua’s time, when the whole land of Canaan came into their hands; for had they entered the land now, and took and destroyed the cities belonging to Arad, they would doubtless have proceeded, and pursued their conquests, and not have returned into the wilderness again to go round about Edom, in order to enter another way; many think, as Aben Ezra observes on (<sup><02101></sup>Numbers 21:1) that this section was written by Joshua, after the land was subdued:

*and he called the name of the place Hormah*; which before was called Zephath, and it seems to have its name from various disasters which happened at this place; as the defeat of the Israelites by the Amalekites, (<sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:45), and here of the Canaanites by the Israelites, and afterwards of the inhabitants of this place by Judah and Simeon, (<sup><00117></sup>Judges 1:17) it had its name from “Cherem”, the anathema or destruction it was devoted to.

**Ver. 4.** *And they journeyed from Mount Hor*, etc.] After the battle with the king of Arad, and the defeat of him:

*by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom*; which lay by it, and from whence it had the name of the Red sea, Edom signifying red; and by the way of that the Israelites must needs go, to go round that country:

*and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way*; because it was going back instead of going forward to Canaan’s land, and because of the length of the way; it was a round about way they were going; when, could they have been admitted to have passed through the country of Edom, the way would have been short; or had they pursued their victory over the Canaanite, they would have gone directly into the land; and this perhaps was what fretted, vexed, and discouraged them, that they were obliged to go back, and take such a circuit, when they had such an opportunity of entering; and they might be distressed also with the badness and the roughness of the way, the borders of Edom being rocky and craggy: it is in the original text, “their soul or breath was short” <sup>f300</sup>; they fetched their breath short, being weary and faint with travelling, or through anger, as angry persons do, when in a great passion: so the people of God travelling through the wilderness of this world are often discouraged, because of the difficulties, trials, and troubles they meet with

in the way, from sin, Satan, and the world, and are fretful and impatient; but though they are led about and walk in a round about way, and in a rough way, yet in a right way to the city of their habitation, (~~19470~~ Psalm 107:7).

**Ver. 5.** *And the people spake against God,* etc.] Who went before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, for leading them in such a way; that is, against Christ, as the apostle has taught us to interpret it, (~~4300~~ 1 Corinthians 10:9), and is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

“and the people thought in their heart, and spake against the Word of the Lord,”

the essential Word and Son of God:

*and against Moses;* his servant, for obeying the orders of the Lord, and leading and guiding the people as he directed him:

*wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?* ascribing this equally to God and to Moses; using a strange word, as Aben Ezra calls it, being in a great passion, and not considering well what they said; showing great ingratitude for such a mercy, and representing it in a wrong light, as if the intent of bringing them from thence was to slay them in the wilderness:

*for [there] is no bread;* no bread corn, nothing in the wilderness to make bread of; nothing that they called and accounted bread, otherwise they had manna, as is presently owned:

*neither [is there] any water;* any fresh water fit to drink, otherwise they were near the sea; what they had from the rock, lately, perhaps was now spent, and it did not follow them as the other rock had:

*and our soul loatheth this light bread;* the manna; this very light, this exceeding light bread, the radicals of the word <sup>f301</sup> used being doubled, which increases the signification: if to be understood of light and easy digestion, it was the more to be valued; but perhaps they meant, it had but little substance and virtue in it, and was not filling and satisfying; or rather that it was exceeding vile, mean, and despicable; so they called the bread of heaven, angel's food, this wonderful gift of Providence; in like manner is



Christ, the hidden manna, treated, and his Gospel, and the precious truths of it, by unregenerate men and carnal professors, (<sup>4023</sup>1 Corinthians 1:23).

**Ver. 6.** *And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people*, etc.] Of which there were great numbers in the deserts of Arabia, and about the Red sea; but hitherto the Israelites were protected from them by the cloud about them, but sinning, the Lord suffered them to come among them, to punish them; these are called fiery, either from their colour, for in Arabia, as there were serpents of a golden colour, as Aelianus <sup>f302</sup> relates, to which the brazen serpent, after made, bore some likeness, so there were others in the same parts of Arabia of a red or scarlet colour, as Diodorus Siculus says <sup>f303</sup>, of a span long, and their bite entirely incurable; or else they are so called from the effect of them, exciting heat and thirst in those they bit; so Jarchi says, they are so called because they burn with the poison of their teeth: these, very probably, were flying ones, as may seem from (<sup>2349</sup>Isaiah 14:29) and being sent of God, might come flying among the people and bite them; and such there were in the fenny and marshy parts of Arabia, of which many writers speak <sup>f304</sup>, as flying from those parts into Egypt, where they used to be met by a bird called Ibis, which killed them, and for that reason was had in great veneration by the Egyptians; and Herodotus <sup>f305</sup> says they are nowhere but in Arabia, and also <sup>f306</sup> that they of that kind of serpents, which are called Hydri, their wings are not feathered, but like the wings of bats, and this Bochart <sup>f307</sup> takes to be here meant:

*and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died*; for, as before related from Diodorus Siculus, their bites were altogether incurable; and Solinus <sup>f308</sup> says, of the same Arabian flying serpents, that their poison is so quick, that death follows before the pain can be felt; and of that kind of serpent, the Hydrus, it is said by Leo Africanus <sup>f309</sup>, that their poison is most pernicious, and that there is no other remedy against the bite of them, but to cut off that part of the member bitten, before the poison can penetrate into the other parts of the body: the Dipsas, another kind of serpent, which others are of opinion is designed, by biting, brings immediately a thirst on persons, intolerable and almost not extinguishable, and a deadly one, unless help is most speedily had; and if this was the case here it was very bad indeed, since there was no water: Solinus <sup>f310</sup> says, this kind of serpent kills with thirst; Aristotle <sup>f311</sup> speaks of a serpent some call the sacred one, and that whatsoever it bites putrefies immediately all around it: these serpents, and their bites, may be emblems of the old serpent the devil, and of his fiery darts, and of sin brought in by him, and

which he tempts unto, the effects of which are terrible and deadly, unless prevented by the grace of God.

**Ver. 7.** *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned,* etc.] Being bitten with serpents, and some having died, the rest were frightened, and came and made an humble acknowledgment of their sins to Moses:

*for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee;* murmuring at their being brought out of Egypt, and because they had no better provision in the wilderness; concluding they should die there for want, and never enter into the land of Canaan, of which evils they were now sensible, and confessed them:

*pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us;* or “the serpent”<sup>f312</sup>, in the singular, which is put for the plural, as it often is; or the plague of the serpent, as the Targum of Jonathan, that it might cease, and they be no more distressed by them: they were sensible they came from God, and that none could remove them but him; and knowing that Moses was powerful in prayer, and had interest with God, they entreat him to be their intercessor, though they had spoken against him and used him ill:

*and Moses prayed for the people;* which proves him to be of a meek and forgiving spirit; who, though he had been so sadly reflected on, yet readily undertakes to pray to God for them.

**Ver. 8.** *And the Lord said unto Moses,* etc.] Out of the cloud; or, it may be, Moses went into the sanctuary, and there prayed, and the Lord answered him from between the cherubim:

*make them a fiery serpent;* not a real one, but the likeness of one, one that should very much resemble the fiery serpents Israel had been bitten with:

*and set it upon a pole;* a standard, banner, or ensign, as the word signifies; perhaps meaning one of the poles on which their ensigns were carried: the Targum of Jonathan renders it, on an high place, that so it might be seen by all in the camp:

*and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live;* which is very wonderful, that by looking to the figure of a serpent, men should be cured of the bites of real ones, and which bites were deadly; the virtue of healing could not come from the figure, but from

God, who appointed it to be made, the Targum of Jonathan adds, that one bitten should live,

“if he directed his heart to the Word of the Lord,”

even to that divine Logos or Word of God, whose lifting up was figured hereby; (see ~~RB4~~ John 3:14).

**Ver. 9.** *And Moses made a serpent of brass*, etc.] Which was the most proper metal to make it of, that it might resemble the fiery serpents, whether of a golden or scarlet colour: and Diodorus Siculus <sup>f313</sup> speaks of some of the colour of brass, whose bite was immediately followed with death, and by which, if anyone was struck, he was seized with terrible pains, and a bloody sweat flowed all over him; and this was chosen also, because being burnished and bright, could be seen at a great distance, and with this metal Moses might be furnished from Punon, the next station to this, where they now were, Zalmonah, as appears from (~~RB2~~ Numbers 33:42) a place famous for brass mines, and which Jerom <sup>f314</sup> says, in his time, was a little village, from whence brass metal was dug, by such that were condemned to the mines:

*and put it upon a pole*; as he was directed:

*and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived*: which was very marvellous, and the more so, if what physicians say is true, as Kimchi relates <sup>f315</sup>, that if a man bitten by a serpent looks upon a piece of brass he dies immediately: the lifting up of this serpent on a pole for such a purpose was a figure of the lifting up of Christ, either upon the cross, or in the ministry of the word, that whosoever looks unto him by faith may have healing, (see Gill on ~~RB4~~ John 3:14”), where this type or figure is largely explained: the station the Israelites were now at, when this image was made, is called Zalmonah, which signifies an image, shadow, or resemblance, as the brazen serpent was; from Mount Hor, where they were last, to this place, according to Bunting <sup>f316</sup>, were twenty eight miles: this serpent did not remain in the place where it was set, but was taken with them, and continued until the days of Hezekiah, (~~RB4~~ 2 Kings 18:4).

**Ver. 10.** *And the children of Israel set forward*, etc.] From Zalmonah, and came to Punon, which, according to the above writer, was twenty miles from it; though here indeed, some think, the brazen serpent was set up, here being, as before observed, brass mines to furnish with that metal:

*and pitched in Oboth*; which was twenty four miles from Punon, as says the same writer: the word signifies bottles; perhaps here the Israelites got water and filled their bottles, or, as others think, they filled them with the wine of Moab, and called the name of the place from thence; it is perhaps the same with the Eboda of Ptolemy<sup>f317</sup>, which he places in Arabia Petraea; and of which Pliny<sup>f318</sup> also makes mention.

**Ver. 11.** *And they journeyed from Oboth*, etc.] How long they stayed there is not certain:

*and pitched at Ijeabarim*; which, according to Bunting<sup>f319</sup>, was sixteen miles from Oboth; Jarchi says it was the way that passengers pass by Mount Nebo to the land of Canaan, and which divides between the land of Moab and the land of the Amorites:

*in the wilderness which is before Moab*; called the wilderness of Moab, (<sup><0618></sup>Deuteronomy 2:8)

*towards the sunrise*; the east side of the land of Moab, (<sup><0718></sup>Judges 11:18).

**Ver. 12.** *From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zered.*] Or the brook Zered, as in (<sup><0534></sup>Deuteronomy 13:14) that is near it: this seems to be the same station with Dibongad, (<sup><0635></sup>Numbers 33:45), and which, according to the above writer, was sixteen miles from Ijeabarim.

**Ver. 13.** *From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon*, etc.] A river on the borders of Moab:

*which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites*; according to Jarchi, they went round the land of Moab, all to the south and east, and came not into the border of Moab, as Jephthah said, (<sup><0718></sup>Judges 11:18) but before they came hither they had a station at Almondiblathaim, (<sup><0635></sup>Numbers 33:46,47)

*for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites*; a river which divided these two countries, and bounded them; and Moses is the more particular in this account, to show that the Israelites took nothing from the Moabites, but what the Amorites had taken from them, they being charged not to distress the Moabites and Ammonites, (<sup><0619></sup>Deuteronomy 2:9,19), see Jephthah's defence, (<sup><0715></sup>Judges 11:15-27).

**Ver. 14.** *Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord*, etc.] A history of wars in former times, which the Lord had suffered to be in the world; and which, as Aben Ezra thinks, reached from the times of Abraham and so might begin with the battle of the kings in his time, and take in others in later times, and particularly those of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and his conquests of some parts of Moab; and to this book, which might be written by some one of those nations, Moses refers in proof of what he here says:

*what he did in the Red sea*; that is, what Sihon king of the Amorites did, or the Lord by him, “at Vaheb in Suphah”, as the words may be rendered; either against a king, or rather city, of Moab, whose name was Vaheb, in the borders of the land of Moab, or how he destroyed that city Vaheb with a storm or terrible assault <sup>f320</sup>:

*and in the brooks of Arnon*: some places situated on the streams of that river, which were taken by the Amorites from the Moabites, as the book quoted plainly testified.

**Ver. 15.** *And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar*, etc.] All that part of the country which lay upon the stream, as far as the city of Ar, the metropolis of Moab, called Ar of Moab, (<sup>2350f</sup>Isaiah 15:1),

*and lieth upon the border of Moab*; as that city did; so far goes the quotation out of the aforesaid book, as a proof of what was taken by the Amorites from the Moabites, and were not in their possession when Israel were upon their borders; and therefore, in taking them from the Amorites, did no wrong to Moab.

**Ver. 16.** *And from thence they went to Beer*, etc.] A place so called from a well which sprung up here, of which the following account is given:

*that is, the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses*; promising him to give it to the children of Israel, without asking for it; which was a very singular favour, and for which they were thankful: saying to him,

*gather the people together, and I will give them water*; for as they were now gone from the river Arnon, and the streams and brooks of it, they might be in want of water, though they did not murmur as they had been used to do; and without their petition for it, the Lord promises to give it to

them; and that they might be witness of the miracle that would be wrought for them, they are ordered to be gathered together.

**Ver. 17.** *Then Israel sang this song*, etc.] Being affected with the free favour and good will of God towards them:

*spring up, O well*; for the springing up of which they prayed in faith, believing in the promise of God, that it would spring up; and so encouraged one another not only to believe it, but even to sing on account of it before it actually did:

*sing ye unto it*; or on account of it praise the Lord for it; or “answer to it”<sup>f321</sup>, it being their manner to sing their songs by responses, or alternately.

**Ver. 18.** *The princes digged the well*, etc.] The princes and heads of the several tribes:

*the nobles of the people digged it*; the seventy elders, according to the Targum of Jonathan:

*by the direction of the lawgiver*; either the Lord himself, the lawgiver of his people, who pointed out the spot, and directed the princes where to dig, that is, he did this by Moses; and who, as Jarchi thinks, is the lawgiver, and not amiss: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render the word by Scribes, in the plural number, and interpret them of Moses and Aaron: and this the princes and nobles “dug with their staves”; either their walking sticks, or their rods, the ensigns of their authority; with these they smote the ground, or stuck them in a soft and sandy place, upon which the waters bubbled up and flowed out. Dr. Shaw<sup>f322</sup> chooses to render the words, “with their united applause”, or “clapping of hands”, as the word  $\text{^}[\text{ç}]$  in Chaldee signifies; or it may be expressed, as by Dr. Hunt, quoted by him, “by describing” or “marking out” the figure or fashion of the well “with staves”. Mr. Ainsworth thinks that this well signified Christ, the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters; and the waters of it the Spirit and his graces, which are a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life; the means of which are the labours of the governors of the church, the ministers of Christ,

by preaching the word, and opening the Scriptures; and such grace is worthy of a song, and to be had with joy out of the wells of salvation, (<sup>211B</sup>Isaiah 12:3):

*and from the wilderness they went to Mattanah*; from the wilderness near Arnon, which came out of the coasts of the Amorites, (<sup>40213</sup>Numbers 21:13) to a place which signifies a gift. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it,

“and from the wilderness it was given to them for a gift”

that is, the well; and so the people of God, that are called out of the wilderness of this world, and come up from it, are called to partake of the gifts and blessings of grace, which are freely given unto them of God.

**Ver. 19.** *And from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth.*]

All the Targums interpret this, and the following verse, not of the journeying of the children of Israel, but of the motion of the well, that that, from the place from whence it was given them, descended with them into the valleys, and from thence to the high places, as these words signify: and indeed those places are not mentioned in the journeys of the children of Israel, (<sup>40811</sup>Numbers 33:1-56) and were not stations where they pitched, but places they passed through before they came to Abarim, and the wilderness of Kedemoth.

**Ver. 20.** *And from Bamoth, [in] the valley*, etc.] Or rather “to the valley”, as the Targum of Onkelos, since Bamoth signifies high places; though, according to the Jerusalem Talmud <sup>f323</sup>, Bamoth, Baal, which seems to be the same place, was in a plain:

*that is in the country of Moab*; the valley belonged to Moab, into which Israel came:

*to the top of Pisgah*; not that the valley reached to the top, nor did the children of Israel go to the top of it, only Moses, but rather to the bottom, which indeed is meant; for it intends the beginning of it, where Pisgah, which was an high mountain near the plains of Moab, began, and which was properly the foot of it:

*which looketh towards Jeshimon*; that is, Pisgah, as Jarchi rightly interprets it, which looked over a place called Jeshimon; and which signifies a wilderness, and is no other indeed than the wilderness of Kedemoth, (<sup>4826</sup>Deuteronomy 2:26) for from thence the following messengers were sent.

**Ver. 21.** *And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites,* etc.] Who were one of the nations of the Canaanites, and a principal and powerful one, and who were devoted to destruction, and their land designed for the people of Israel; (see <sup><0156></sup>Genesis 15:16), at this time Sihon was their king, to whom Moses, in the name of Israel, sent a very peaceable message from the wilderness of Kedemoth, which lay near his country, (<sup><0125></sup>Deuteronomy 2:26):

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 22.** *Let me pass through thy land,* etc.] Through some part of it, which would have been a shorter way to the river Jordan, over which Israel was to pass into the land of Canaan; the terms proposed, or things to be observed in their passage, which they would bind themselves strictly to, are the same that were made to the king of Edom. (See Gill on “<sup><0117></sup>Numbers 20:17”).

**Ver. 23.** *And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border,* etc.] Because he could not trust them, and confide in the promises they made, and thought it not safe to let such a body of people into any part of his dominions, (<sup><0112></sup>Judges 11:20) and chiefly because his heart was hardened by the Lord, that he might be delivered into the hands of Israel, as was determined, (<sup><0120></sup>Deuteronomy 2:30):

*but Sihon gathered all his people together*; all that were able to bear arms out of his cities, and which made no doubt a very numerous and powerful army; but then these being defeated, as they were, it became more easy to the Israelites to take their cities, where there were none left but women and children:

*and went out against Israel into the wilderness*; the wilderness of Kedemoth; not content to reject a peaceable message, he went out in an hostile manner against Israel, even out of his own dominions; so that he was the aggressor and unprovoked, which made his ruin appear the more just, and the children of Israel to have a better claim to his country conquered by them:

*and he came to Jahaz*; a frontier town in the land of Moab, (see <sup><0104></sup>Isaiah 15:4 <sup><0434></sup>Jeremiah 48:34) and which, according to Bunting <sup>f324</sup>, was sixteen miles from Abarim:



*and fought against Israel*; at the above place, where they had a pitched battle.

**Ver. 24.** *And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword*, etc.] Slew him and his army, entirely routed them, and got a complete victory over them; God giving them up into their hands, who otherwise were a very strong, powerful, and warlike people; (see <sup><311B></sup>Amos 2:9)

*and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok*; two rivers, the one to the south, the other to the north of his country; the one was the boundary of his country between him and the Moabites, the other the boundary of his country between him and the Ammonites, as it follows:

*even unto the children of Ammon; for the border of the children of Ammon was strong*; which is given as a reason why the Israelites proceeded no further in their conquest; there was another reason for that, which was the order of the Lord not to distress the Ammonites, nor meddle with them; though Jarchi makes this prohibition to be their strength, (<sup><R29></sup>Deuteronomy 2:19), but this is given as a reason why Sihon could not extend his conquests further, because it was so well fortified, either by nature or art, or both, by the river Jabbok, by mountains and frontier towns, and particularly by Rabbah, as the Targum of Jonathan suggests, which was their royal city in later times, and a very strong place; (see <sup><126></sup>2 Samuel 12:26).

**Ver. 25.** *And Israel took all these cities*, etc.] Which lay between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok; their particular names may be seen in (<sup><31B></sup>Numbers 32:3,34-38),

*and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites*; being given to the Reubenites and Gadites, who inhabited them, as their possession and inheritance, (<sup><31D></sup>Numbers 32:2,33 <sup><R12></sup>Deuteronomy 3:12,16):

*in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof*; or “daughters thereof” <sup>f325</sup>. Heshbon was the metropolis or mother city, and all the towns and villages adjacent were as daughters to it; of which city more is said in the following verses, (See Gill on <sup><215B></sup>Isaiah 15:4”).

**Ver. 26.** *For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites*, etc.] His royal city, where he kept his palace, where he had resided for some time, and perhaps some of his predecessors; and therefore being now in his

possession when taken by the Israelites, they had a good right and title to keep it, and dwell in it: and indeed this is here given as a reason of it,

*who had fought against the former king of Moab*; either the king that reigned before Balak, or some king of Moab, that reigned formerly, against whom one of the name of Sihon, which might be a common name to the kings of the Amorites, as Pharaoh to the Egyptians, had engaged in war:

*and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon*; and had been in the hands of the Amorites some years; and therefore the Moabites had no reason to object to the Israelites dwelling in it, and possessing it, which they had not taken from them, but from the Amorites in a lawful war. And for proof of this, reference is had to the bards and poets of those times, who were the persons that transmitted in verse the history of famous actions to posterity.

**Ver. 27.** *Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say*, etc.] The historical writers of those times, among the Amorites, who were usually poets, and wrote the history of the wars between the Moabites and Amorites in verse; as Homer among the Greeks wrote the wars of Troy; and the compositions of those ancient bards were short and compendious, and wrapped up in proverbial sayings, and enigmatical and figurative expressions, that they might be the better retained in memory, and therefore were called proverbialists. Jarchi says, they were Balaam and Beor that took up their parables, and said,

*come into Heshbon*; which words are the beginning of the song, and in which the Amorites are represented as inviting Sihon, and his nobles, to enter Heshbon, which he had taken, and make it his royal seat; or as encouraging one another to go into it and repair it, having suffered much at the taking of it, which seems to be confirmed by what follows:

*let the city of Sihon be built and prepared*; that is, let us set about rebuilding of the city, and let us fit it up for Sihon our king, and let it be called his city, and made the place of his residence, his palace, and where his court may be kept.

**Ver. 28.** *For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon*, etc.] Not before, but after Sihon had subdued it, as Jarchi observes; and is to be understood of his soldiers going out from thence, and making desolations in the adjacent parts, like a strong fire, and the fierce flames of it there is no resisting; and so the Jerusalem Targum,

“for a people mighty, and burning like fire, are gone out of Heshbon:”

(see Amos 1:4,7,12,14): a flame from the city of Sihon: which is the same thing in other words, the city of Sihon being Heshbon, and a flame the same with fire; warriors, as both the Targums of Oakehos and Jerusalem interpret it; this seems to be what those composers undertook in their poetical way to foretell would be the case in future times; concluding, from the conquests already made, that they would be extended much further, and that no opposition could hinder:

*it hath consumed Ar of Moab*; the metropolis of the country of Moab, that is, they were as sure of it, and endeavoured to make the people by these their compositions as confident of it, that this city would fall into the hands of their armies, and be destroyed, as if it was already done; otherwise it does not appear that it ever was taken out of the hands of the Moabites, until taken by the Assyrians or Chaldeans; of this city (see Gill on <sup><2151></sup>Isaiah 15:1”)

*and the lords of the high places of Arnon*; who had the government of the high, strong, and fortified places all along the river Arnon; these it is suggested would be conquered by the Amorites; all the three Targums interpret it of the priests and worshippers in the temples, and at the altars of the idols in Arnon; and it may be rendered, “the Baals of the high places of Arnon”, as if the gods of those places should fall into the victors’ hands; and which seems to have some confirmation from what follows; and it may be observed, that in these parts there were some places called Bamoth Baal, or the high places of Baal, (see <sup><0241></sup>Numbers 22:41), and Beth Baal Meon, which has its name from its being the temple and habitation of Baal, (<sup><0317></sup>Joshua 13:17).

**Ver. 29.** *Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone*, etc.] The whole country ruined, or likely to be so:

*O people of Chemosh*; which was the name of their idol, who is called the abomination of the Moabites, (<sup><1110></sup>1 Kings 11:7 (see Gill on <sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:7”)):

*he hath given his sons that escaped*; that is, the idol Chemosh had given his sons, the men of the country that worshipped him, who escaped the sword of the Amorites, these,

*and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites*; who took captive what he slew not, or would do so, Chemosh their god not being able to preserve them, but obliged to deliver them up: thus the composers of this song insult the god of the Moabites, as it was usual for conquerors so to do; (see <sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 10:10,11 36:18-20), though some think these are the words of the Israelites, making their observations upon the above song, which ends at verse twenty eight, and scoffing at the idol of the Moabites.

**Ver. 30.** *We have shot at them*, etc.] Either the Amorites at the Moabites, or else the Israelites at the Amorites; for, according to Aben Ezra, these are the words of Moses, though they, with (<sup><0212></sup>Numbers 21:29), seem rather to be a continuation of the song of the old Amorite bards, describing the ruin of the country of Moab by them; and this clause may be rendered with the next, “their light, or lamp, is perished from Heshbon” <sup>f326</sup>; or their yoke, as Jarchi, and so the Vulgate Latin version; that is, their kingdom, and the glory of it, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret it, and so Jarchi:

*even unto Dibon*; which was another city in the land of Moab; (see <sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 15:2):

*and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which [reached] unto Medeba*; Nophah perhaps is the same with Nebo, mentioned along with Medeba, (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 15:2), however, they were both places in Moab, and are mentioned to show how far the desolation had or would spread; and the whole is observed to prove, that this part of the country of Moab, now possessed by the Israelites, was taken from them, not by them, but by the Amorites, a people Israel now conquered, and so had a right to what they found them in the possession of.

**Ver. 31.** *Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.*] Not the land of the Moabites; and by those means before mentioned; by conquering Sihon their king, they came into the possession of it, and took up their dwelling in it; this was the beginning of the conquest of the Canaanites, and an earnest and pledge of inheriting their land promised unto them; the Israelites that dwelt here were the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

**Ver. 32.** *And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer*, etc.] Or Jazer, as it is called in (<sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 16:9 <sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 48:32), another city that belonged to the Amorites, and which they had taken from the Moabites; and which came

into the hands of the latter again, after the captivity of the ten tribes, as appears from the above places; according to Jerom <sup>f327</sup>, it was fifteen miles distant from Heshbon:

*and they took the villages thereof*; not the spies, as Jarchi, but the Israelites under Moses; who upon the return of the spies, and the report they made, marched towards it, and took it, and all the towns and villages round about it; for it seems to have been a principal city:

*and drove out the Amorites that were there*; that dwelt there, and were in possession of it; otherwise they would not have attacked it, had it, and its villages, been in the hands of the Moabites.

**Ver. 33.** *And they turned*, etc.] From Jaazer, after they had taken it, and came back a little way:

*and went up by the way of Bashan*; which was a nearer way to Canaan, a fine country abounding with oxen and sheep, having rich pastures, and very famous for its oaks; it had its name from the mountain of Bashan in it, and has been since called Batanea; it was at this time in the hands of the Amorites, and from them it was taken by Israel, as follows: who marched this way for that purpose, or at least were so directed by the providence of God for that end:

*and Og king of Bashan went out against them*; who was of the race of the giants, and he himself of a gigantic stature, and was a king of the Amorites, as well as Sihon, (<sup><f328></sup>Deuteronomy 3:8,11), he came out in an hostile manner against Israel, to stop them going any further:

*he, and all his people*: out of his many cities, a numerous army no doubt:

*to the battle at Edrei*; where it was fought between him and Israel. Jerom says <sup>f328</sup> it was in his time called Adara, a famous city of Arabia, twenty four or twenty five miles from Bozra, and six from Ashtaroth Karnaim, the ancient seat of the Rephaim, or giants from whom Og sprung, (<sup><f329></sup>Genesis 14:5), and was the seat of Og now, from whence he came to Edrei or Adara, to meet and fight Israel there; (see <sup><f330></sup>Deuteronomy 1:4).

**Ver. 34.** *And the Lord said unto Moses, fear him not*, etc.] Og being of a gigantic stature, and his forces numerous, might cause some fear in Moses, and in the people, and therefore the Lord encouraged them not to be afraid of him and his army:

*for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land;* that is, he had determined to do it, and now promised it, and it might be depended on and looked upon as if actually done:

*and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon;* slay him and his people, and take possession of his country.

**Ver. 35.** *So they smote him and his sons, and all his people,* etc.] They engaged in battle with him, slew him and his sons that came with him, and all his armies; and which consisted, as is probable, of all able to bear arms in all his cities; which the more easily came into the hands of the Israelites after this battle, in which such a carnage was made:

*until there was none left him alive;* so universal was the slaughter at the battle, and in the cities that fell into their hands; they utterly destroyed men, women, and children, (<sup><HRB></sup>Deuteronomy 3:3,6):

*and they possessed his land;* in which were sixty cities fenced with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many unwall'd towns; these were possessed by the half tribe of Manasseh, (<sup><HRB></sup>Deuteronomy 3:4,5,13-15).

# CHAPTER 22

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 22

The children of Israel being come into the plains of Moab, put the king of Moab into a panic, who expressed his fears to the elders of Midian, (<sup>-0221</sup>Numbers 22:1-4) and sent for Balaam the soothsayer to curse the people of Israel, but he, upon consulting the Lord refused to come, (<sup>-0225</sup>Numbers 22:5-14), on which the king of Moab sent to him a second time, making large promises of preferment to him, and who at this time got leave from the Lord to go with the messengers, (<sup>-0225</sup>Numbers 22:15-21), but was met with in the way by an angel of the Lord, who would have slain him had it not been for his ass, of which a very wonderful revelation is given, (<sup>-0222</sup>Numbers 22:22-35), and the chapter is closed with the interview between Balak king of Moab and Balaam, and an account of what passed between them, and what was done by them, (<sup>-0226</sup>Numbers 22:36-41).

**Ver. 1.** *And the children of Israel set forward*, etc.] From the country of Bashan, where we read of them last, after they had conquered Og the king of it, and also Sihon king of the Amorites, and settled some of their tribes in both kingdoms; the particular place from whence they came hither, according to the account of their journeys, were the mountains of Abarim, (<sup>-0338</sup>Numbers 33:48):

*and pitched in the plains of Moab* the part of them they encamped in reached from Bethjesimoth to Abelshittim, (<sup>-0339</sup>Numbers 33:49),

*on this side Jordan by Jericho*; or Jordan of Jericho, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; a river that flowed near to Jericho, running between the plains of Moab and the plains of Jericho; according to Josephus <sup>f329</sup> it was sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half from Jericho; but, according to Jerome <sup>f330</sup>, it was but five miles: or rather, as some versions render it, “over against Jericho” <sup>f331</sup>; for Jericho was on the other side of the river Jordan, and the plains of Moab, or that part of them where Israel now pitched, were right against that city; and so Josephus says <sup>f332</sup>.

**Ver. 2.** *And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.*] The word “Amorites” being particularly pointed, shows, as

Aben Ezra observes, that Sihon and Og are both meant, and that there were not among the kings of the land of Canaan any so great as they; wherefore when Balak, who was the present king of Moab, saw what Israel had done to them, that they had conquered them, and seized upon their kingdoms: he reasoned within himself, and said, as Jarchi represents him, that if they could not stand before Israel, much less could he and his people; and the rather, since those kings Israel had subdued were too powerful for the king of Moab, and had taken part of his country from him, and yet Israel was too strong for them.

**Ver. 3.** *And Moab was sore afraid of the people*, etc.] Lest they should enter into their country and do to them as they had done to Sihon and Og, and their countries; on this account the king of Moab, his nobles, and the people of the land, were in an exceeding great panic, which was a fulfilling of the prophecy of Moses in (<sup>40515</sup>Exodus 15:15):

*because they were many* the number of them taken a little after in this place, where they now were, in the plains of Moab, even after 24,000 had died of the plague, was 601,730, (<sup>40519</sup>Numbers 25:9 26:51):

*and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel*; though they had no reason for it, had they considered their relation to them, being the descendants of Abraham, the uncle of Lot, whose posterity they were; and that the Israelites had done them service in delivering them from such bad neighbours, who had taken much of their country from them, and were doubtless making continual encroachments on them; and especially had they known the orders the Israelites had from the Lord not to distress them, nor contend with them in battle, (<sup>40519</sup>Deuteronomy 2:9), but this they were ignorant of, and being of a different religion from the Israelites, had them in abhorrence, or loathed them, as the word signifies; though the meaning rather seems to be, that they had a nausea, a loathing in their stomachs, and could not eat their food, because of the dread of the Israelites that was upon them; or they were weary of their lives, as Jarchi interprets it, and as the word is used, (<sup>40274</sup>Genesis 27:46).

**Ver. 4.** *And Moab said unto the elders of Midian*, etc.] Whom the king of Moab sent for to consult with what to do in the present case, for the good and safety of both people; for, according to the Targum of Jonathan, they were one people and one kingdom unto this time, at least had been confederates, by what is said (<sup>40355</sup>Genesis 36:35) though Jarchi thinks there was always a mutual hatred of each other, and that Midian now came



against Moab to war, but for fear of Israel a peace was made between them, just as it was with Herod and Pontius Pilate in another case, (<sup><0231></sup>Luke 23:12), however, they were friends as well as neighbours now; and by which it appears, that this Midian was not that where Jethro lived, which was on the Red sea, near Mount Sinai, in Arabia Felix; this was near the river Arnon, and the Moabites in Arabia Petraea; and though both the one and the other descended from Midian, the son of Abraham by Keturah, yet they had spread themselves, or the one was a colony from the other, and might be distinguished into southern and northern Midianites; the latter were those near Moab; and these elders of Midian, addressed by the king of Moab, being now at his court, whether sent for or not, are the same with the five kings or princes of Midian, as they are called, (<sup><0308></sup>Numbers 31:8 <sup><0321></sup>Joshua 13:21) as Aben Ezra observes:

*now shall this company lick up all [that are] round about us;* consume us, and all our people, and all adjoining to us, and depending on us:

*as the ox licketh up the grass of the field;* as easily, and as soon, and as completely and entirely; nor are we any more able to oppose them than the grass of the field is to resist and hinder the ox from devouring it:

*and Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time;* according to the Targum of Jonathan, Midianites and Moabites reigned by turns so long a time; and that Balak was a Midianite, and so says Jarchi, and unfit for the kingdom, and was set over them through necessity for a time: but it seems rather that he was king in succession after his father Zippor; and the design of the expression is only to show, that he who was before mentioned, (<sup><0221></sup>Numbers 22:2) was the then reigning prince when this affair happened.

**Ver. 5.** *He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor,* etc.] In consequence of the consultation held by the king of Moab with the elders of Midian; and very probably through a motion of theirs, and by advice they gave, Balak dispatched messengers of both people to the person here described by his name and parentage; but who he was is not easy to say: the Jews sometimes make him to be a magician in Pharaoh's court, at the time when Moses was born <sup>f333</sup>, which is not probable; and it is still more improbable that he should be Laban the Syrian, as the Targum of Jonathan here, and the Targum on (<sup><0344></sup>1 Chronicles 1:44) though others say <sup>f334</sup> he was the son of Beor, the son of Laban, and so was the grandson of Laban; and with as little probability is he said to be Elihu, that answered

Job according to a tradition of the Jews, mentioned by Jerom <sup>f335</sup>; nor is there any reason to believe that he was ever a good man, and a true prophet of the Lord; he is expressly said to be a diviner or a soothsayer, (<sup>(f332)</sup>Joshua 13:22), a sort of men abhorred of God, and not to be suffered to be among his people, (<sup>(f330)</sup>Deuteronomy 18:10) but were of great credit and esteem among the Heathens, for their pretensions to foretell things to come, or to discover lost goods, and the like; and by their enchantments to drive away evils, or bring on curses, for which Balaam was famous: and therefore, by the advice of the Midianites, Balak sent for him

*to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people;* the land of his people, of his birth or habitation, was Aram or Syria, (<sup>(f337)</sup>Numbers 23:7) that is, Aram Naharaim, which lay between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, or what is sometimes called Mesopotamia, as is clear from (<sup>(f334)</sup>Deuteronomy 23:4), and the river of that land, which was eminently so called, is the river Euphrates, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it here, and by that river was Pethor, where Balaam now lived; and is by some thought to be the same with the Pacoria of Ptolemy <sup>f336</sup>, which was by that river: the messengers were sent

*to call him:* to invite him to Balak's court:

*saying, behold, there is a people come out from Egypt;* Balak speaks of them, as if he knew not who they were, only that they were come from Egypt, and were seeking a new habitation to settle in, and so were in danger from them, lest they should invade his country, and settle there:

*behold, they cover the face of the earth;* not the face of the whole earth, unless an hyperbolical expression is supposed, to set forth the greatness of their numbers; but a large part of the earth, all within sight almost, even the plains of Moab:

*and they abide over against me;* were very near him, lay encamped before his country, and his metropolis, and so he thought himself in great danger, and threatened with an invasion, as the pitching of their tents so near made him surmise.

**Ver. 6.** *Come now, therefore, I pray thee,* etc.] To my country, city, and court:

*curse me this people*; by imprecations on them; and which being attended with various rites and ceremonies, brought calamities on persons, which men of Balaam's character were supposed to have power to do:

*for they are too mighty for me*; to oppose and subdue by force of arms; and therefore was obliged to have recourse to such arts and methods he was master of; suggesting, that he was able to do more by his divinations than could be effected by an army of men:

*peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land*; there is hope, by taking such measures, that they may be prevailed over and conquered; and that, together with your curses, and my army, we may be able to smite them, and destroy them; you with your tongue, and I and my people with the sword, and so drive them quite out of the land, and get a clear riddance of them:

*for I wot that he whom thou blessest [is] blessed, and he whom thou cursest [is] cursed*; so high an opinion had the king of Moab of this soothsayer and diviner, from the report he had had of the mighty feats done by him; as, that those for whom he asked for blessings from heaven had them, and those on whom he imprecated evils, they came upon them; and this was a prevailing custom among the Heathens in later times, and particularly the Romans; not only to endeavour to get the gods of the people from them they were at war with, and whose cities they besieged, praying that they would leave such places, cities, and their temples; but also wished evils to cities and armies, and prayed the gods to fill them with flight, fear, and terror, and that such evils might come upon them, which had on others<sup>f337</sup>.

**Ver. 7.** *And the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian, departed*, etc.] By which it appears that they were princes and nobles; for such the elders were, that were sent on this errand to Balaam; and that they were some of both people, Midian and Moab, that went upon it, (see <sup>4024</sup>Numbers 22:14) which shows, that if they were not one people, under one king, which yet seems likely, nevertheless they made a common cause of it, and joined in this expedient to save their country:

*with the rewards of divination in their hands*; not that diviners were sent along with them to Balsam, as Aben Ezra interprets it, that he might not deceive them, and put them off, by saying it was not a fit and proper day or hour to go out and curse, which these men would be able to refute; but if

they were skilled in the art of divination as well as he, what need was there to send to him, when they had such at hand? nor instruments of divination, as Jarchi, which so famous a soothsayer could not be thought to be without; but, as we rightly render it, the rewards of divination, which were either fixed or left to the generosity of those that had recourse to such persons, and were presents which they brought them, in order to engage them to use the utmost of their art for them; and this sense is confirmed by the Apostles Peter and Jude, (see <sup>¶125</sup>2 Peter 2:15, <sup>¶111</sup>Jude 1:11):

*and they came unto Balaam*; at Pethor:

*and spake unto him the words of Balak*: told him the errand they were sent on to him by the king of Moab.

**Ver. 8.** *And he said unto them, lodge here this night*, etc.] Which shows that he was at once inclined to do their business for them, and would readily engage in it if he could be permitted; and it looks as if it was in the night season that he got knowledge of things, either in dreams, or by familiar spirits, or by consulting the stars, or other methods used by him at such seasons; or it may be, this was only said to get time before he gave them a peremptory answer, that he might, if he could, get leave to do what they desired, to which he showed a good inclination:

*and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me*; by which it appears he had some knowledge of the true God, and pretended great familiarity with him, thereby to make himself the more respectable; and indeed he was surprisingly favoured with some degree of intimacy with him, which, for the sake of Israel, he was now admitted to; whether at any other time, or on any other occasion, is not certain; however, he promised the princes he would let them know the next morning what was said to him, and so accordingly what he should or could do:

*and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam*; that is, that night, and so very probably the princes of Midian likewise; though some of the Jewish writers think <sup>f338</sup> they departed as soon as they heard Balaam say he would consult the Lord about this matter; from whence they concluded there was no room to hope for success, since he would never consent to destroy a nation so dear unto him, and for whose sake he had wrought so many miracles; but if this was the case, how came the princes of Moab to stay, with whom the same objection would have place? but the reason why they only are named may be what Aben Ezra gives an hint of, that these were

the principal persons in the embassy, in whom the rest were included, as Balak their king was the principal person that sent them.

**Ver. 9.** *And God came unto Balaam*, etc.] In a dream very probably, as he did to Abimelech and Laban, (<sup>0118</sup>Genesis 20:3 31:24):

*and said, what men are these with thee?* who lodged with him that night. This he said, not as ignorant who they were, or from whence they came, or what they came about; but in order to lead on to a discourse with Balaam, and to have from him the account of the men, and their business, and to try his fidelity in relating the affair.

**Ver. 10.** *And Balaam said unto God*, etc.] In answer to the question he put to him:

*Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me;* these men, and a message by them:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 11.** *Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt*, etc.] In this, and the following part of the verse, he faithfully and punctually relates the words of Balak to him by his messengers, as well knowing he could not deceive the omniscient God, or hide anything from him, though he could deceive men; and conceal the truth from them, to serve a purpose; (see Gill on <sup>0215</sup>Numbers 22:5”) (see Gill on <sup>0216</sup>Numbers 22:6”).

**Ver. 12.** *And God said unto Balaam, thou shalt not go with them*, etc.] Which is a denial of the first thing Balak requested, “come now, therefore”, etc. (<sup>0216</sup>Numbers 22:6)

*thou shalt not curse the people;* which was the principal thing desired, and in order to which he was solicited to go with the messengers; but this is absolutely forbidden:

*for they are blessed;* by the Lord himself, with an irrevocable blessing, and therefore it would be vain and fruitless, as well as dangerous for him to attempt to curse them, (<sup>0118</sup>Genesis 12:3) this may have a special respect to the blessing of Jacob by Isaac, which could not be reversed by the solicitations of Esau, and which descended to Jacob’s posterity, the Israelites, (<sup>0273</sup>Genesis 27:33).

**Ver. 13.** *And Balaam rose up in the morning*, etc.] With the impression of the dream upon his mind, and of what had passed between God and him in it:

*and said unto the princes of Balak*; which shows what the elders were that were sent, of what honour and dignity, and may include both those of Moab and of Midian:

*get you into your land*; as soon as you can; set forward on your journey, it is to no purpose to stay here:

*for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you*; he only relates one part of the answer he had from the Lord, respecting his going with them, but says not a word of his being forbid to curse Israel, and of the reason given why he should not; had he reported this, in all probability it would have prevented any further application to him, and so any attempt to get this done, which Balaam seemed aware of; and therefore, by concealing this, hoped for fresh solicitations and entreaties, and that in time the Lord might be prevailed on to let him go and curse them; he having a covetous desire of riches, honour, and preferment, in Balak's court.

**Ver. 14.** *And the princes of Moab rose up*, etc.] And the princes of Midian also, immediately, without entering into a parley with him, to persuade him to go with them; perceiving by his answer that it would be to no purpose, and that he was determined to do as the Lord directed him:

*and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us*; as Balaam told them less than what God had said to him, so they related less to Balak than what Balaam had said to them; saying nothing of the Lord's refusing to let him go with them, but represent it as a piece of pride and obstinacy in Balaam, and which Balak was left to understand; and it seems as if he did understand it as a piece of policy in Balaam, to get a larger offer of money or honour, or both, from him, and which the following account seems to confirm.

**Ver. 15.** *And Balak sent yet again princes more, and more honourable than they*.] More in number, and greater in quality, princes of the first rank in his court; supposing that Balaam thought he was not treated with respect enough, they being princes of the meaner sort, and but few, that were sent unto him before, which he imagined was the reason, at least one reason, why he refused to come with them; persons of Balaam's character in those days being highly revered.

**Ver. 16.** *And they came to Balaam*, etc.] Though men of such rank and dignity, they did not decline the embassy, being sent by their king; nor did they think it below them to wait upon this soothsayer:

*and said unto him, thus saith Balak the son of Zippor*; representing their master, and addressing the diviner in his name, as his ambassadors; at the same time doing honour to Balak that sent them, of whom they speak respectfully, and to Balaam, to whom they were sent:

*let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me*; no business, though ever so important, that might be upon his hands; nor any want of respect to him he might imagine; nor if the rewards offered were not thought sufficient; nor any persuasions of men to the contrary; and if it could be thought he knew anything of the prohibition of God, that may be included; so urgent was he upon his coming to him.

**Ver. 17.** *For I will promote thee unto very great honour*, etc.] In his court, by making him some great officer there, perhaps his prime minister; so that as before he laid a bait for his covetousness, sending him large presents, and rewards of divination; here, for his pride and ambition, promising him court preferment; though Aben Ezra interprets it of mammon or riches, of which he could give him an immense sum: “in honouring I will exceedingly honour thee”<sup>f339</sup>; or load thee with wealth and riches; and so Balaam seems to understand it, since in his answer he says, “if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold”; both civil honour and worldly wealth may be taken into the account, since they are both heavy and weighty things, and very desirable and ensnaring:

*and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me*; give him what money he should ask of him, put him into whatsoever place and office he should desire; and though he was a sovereign prince, would be at his beck and command, and do whatever he should direct him to do in his kingdom, as well as in what concerned the affair of cursing Israel; as we find he afterwards did, with respect to sacrifices and rites relative thereunto:

*come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people*; renewing the request made in the first embassy with great importunity, (<sup>40216</sup>Numbers 22:6) but using here a different word for “cursing”; there, as Munster observes, the word signifies to curse lightly; here, to blaspheme and utterly devote to ruin; to which may be added, to curse expressly and by name, to pierce through and through, to deprive of all benefits, and to destroy utterly.

**Ver. 18.** *And Balaam answered, and said unto the servant's of Balak,* etc.] Who were not only princes of the land, but officers of state in the court of Balak:

*if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more;* which is well spoken, had it been from his heart: he speaks very respectfully of God, calling him by his great and incommunicable name Jehovah, the Being of beings; representing him as the object of his worship and adoration, as he might be along with other gods, which was the practice of the Heathens in those times, particularly the Syrians, among whom Balaam lived; so did Laban and others before him: likewise he makes a profession of him, and claims an interest in him, which he might the rather do, to make himself look greater, as being the servant of the most high God; for the Gentiles in those times, and indeed in later times, had a notion of one supreme God, superior to all the rest; and this Jehovah Balaam claimed as his God: he speaks very well of the word of God, to which he pretended so strict a regard, that he would not transgress it in the least, for all that Balak could give him or more, no, not for all the money in the world; and yet his heart at the same time went after his covetousness, and he was eagerly desirous and greedy of getting the advantages into his hands that were offered him; for he hoped that God would change his mind, and alter his word, and give him leave to go and get the money, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 19.** *Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night,* etc.] As the former messengers had; this shows his strong inclination to go along with them, and do what was desired of him, could he be permitted; otherwise he might and ought to have told the messengers at once that Balak needed not to have given himself and them so much trouble, since it was not in his power to do for him what he requested; nor would he attempt it, as being contrary to the will of God, and therefore it would be their best way to return as soon as they could; but instead of that, he desires them to stay that night, which must give them some hope of succeeding in their embassy:

*that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more;* he hoped he would change his mind, and say something to him different from, and contrary to what he had before declared unto him, which to suppose of God is great vileness and wickedness; to such a pitch did his greedy desire after riches



and honour work him up into; he ought to have been satisfied with the answer already given him, and not to have inquired more.

**Ver. 20.** *And the Lord came unto Balaam at night*, etc.] As before, (<sup>(022B)</sup>Numbers 22:9) it may be in a dream; the Targum of Jonathan is as there,

“a word came from the Lord:”

*and said unto him, if the men come and call thee, rise up, and go with them*; this was said, as some think, not seriously, but sarcastically, or rather in an angry manner, bidding him go, if he would; so giving him up to his own heart’s lusts, or, at most; only permitting him to go with them, but not to curse Israel; and this permission to go seems to be on this condition, if the princes first called him, and were urgent on him to go with them: this was a trial of Balaam, whether he would be eager and forward to go, or patiently wait until he should be called; or the words may be rendered, “seeing”, or because <sup>f340</sup>,

*they are come to call thee: but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shall thou do*; whether he would or not, he should be forced to do it, as Jarchi; and therefore go not with any intention to curse Israel, which shall never be done; wherefore to go would be vain and fruitless, since he would never be able to answer the design of Balak: but still Balaam hoped, it not being so fully and clearly expressed as before, that he should not curse Israel; that God would say something else unto him, though he had no reason at all for it, but all the reverse; so blinded was he with a greedy desire of riches and honour.

**Ver. 21.** *And Balaam rose up in the morning*, etc.] Early, not waiting for the call of the princes, which showed how eager he was to be gone, and how intent upon the journey:

*and saddled his ass*; which, if he did himself, as Jarchi suggests, this is a further proof of the haste he was in; though, as he had two servants with him, it is more likely that they did it by his order: the same is said of Abraham, (<sup>(022B)</sup>Genesis 22:3), it was usual for persons of note and figure, in those times and countries, to ride on asses, (<sup>(0150)</sup>Judges 5:10) and went with the princes of Moab; in company with them, and with as good a will as they, his heart and theirs being alike, as Jarchi notes; though it seems by what follows that by some means or another they soon parted company;

for when the affair of the ass happened, Balaam was alone, only attended by his two servants.

**Ver. 22.** *And God's anger was kindled because he went*, etc.] Though he had given him leave to go; but then it was upon condition that the princes called him to go with them, whereas he went without their call, and did not wait for it; and besides, he did not acquaint them, as he did not the messengers before, of what God had said, that he should not curse Israel, nor say anything contrary to this his will, which, had he told them, they would not have taken him with them; moreover, he went with an intention, with a good will to curse Israel, which must be displeasing to God, who knew his heart; so the Targum of Jonathan,

“and the anger of the Lord was strong, because he went to curse them;”

likewise, though he had a permission to go, it was in an angry manner, and was not agreeable to the Lord he should go, and therefore should not have gone notwithstanding; or, at least, he might expect some marks of the divine displeasure; so Jarchi observes, he saw that the thing was evil in the eyes of the Lord, or displeasing to him, and yet he desired it; just as the people of Israel, when the Lord bid them go up and possess the land, which case Aben Ezra instances in; they desired persons might be sent before hand to spy out the land, which, though permitted, they smarted for it: for not whatsoever God permits is well pleasing to him; besides, the words may be rendered <sup>f341</sup>, “when he went”, or, “as he was going”; and so not a reason of the Lord’s anger, but expresses when it was kindled or broke forth:

*and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him*; that this was not a created angel, one of the ministering spirits, but the eternal one, the angel of Jehovah’s presence, appears from (<sup>4025</sup> Numbers 22:35) that went before the people of Israel in the wilderness, not only to guide but to guard and protect them; and who was an adversary to their adversaries, and at all times stood up for their help and assistance against all those that hated and opposed them: Jarchi calls him an angel of mercy, who would have restrained Balaam from sinning, that he might not sin and perish, and so was rather a friend than an adversary, had he attended to him:

*now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him*; who, the Targum of Jonathan says, were Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt, of whom (see <sup><518></sup>2 Timothy 3:8) these only were with him, the princes of Midian on some account or another being separated from him.

**Ver. 23.** *And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way*, etc.] Which Balaam did not; his eyes being held from seeing him by the power and providence of God, that he might be reprov'd and rebuk'd by his ass, to whom God gave power to see, more than to him, as Jarchi notes, so that he had little reason to boast of his visions and revelations, and that he was the man whose eyes were open: the angel stood in the very pathway on which the ass was carrying Balaam: and his sword drawn in his hand; as threatening to destroy him, and as if he was just about to push at him, and signifying hereby not only that he deserved to die, but what death he should die of, namely, by the sword, as he did, (<sup><618></sup>Numbers 31:8 <sup><1216></sup>1 Chronicles 21:16)

*and the ass turned aside out of the way*; out of the common road, to save its master and itself, from a natural principle of self-preservation: and went into the field; adjoining to, and that lay along the road side:

*and Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way*; with his staff, as in (<sup><427></sup>Numbers 22:27) to bring her into the common road again.

**Ver. 24.** *But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyard*, etc.]. Which were in the field into which the ass went, and before Balaam could turn her back she got into a narrow path, between the vineyards, as the Targum of Jonathan; a footpath which lay between them, or a footpath where foxes ran and had their holes, who used to lie near vineyards and among them, (see <sup><2114></sup>Song of Solomon 1:14) however, it was a very narrow path, and here the angel placed himself, so that there was no passage for Balaam and his ass, at least not without great difficulty and danger;

*a wall [being] on this side, and a wall on that side*; and therefore there was no going out into the field, as before, to avoid the difficulty and danger; this being, as Jarchi observes, a stone wall that was on each side.

**Ver. 25.** *And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord*, etc.] In the same position as before, with a drawn sword in his hand, and being frightened again, and in a narrow path, and no way to turn aside:

*she thrust herself unto the wall*; to one of the walls, as close as she could, in order to get by the angel:

*and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall*; running up so very closely to it:

*and he smote her again*; having done it once before, (<sup>40223</sup>Numbers 22:23) the times of smiting are observed, for the sake of what the ass after said, and for the confirmation of it.

**Ver. 26.** *And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place*, etc.] More narrow than the other, at a further distance:

*where was no way to turn, either to the right hand or to the left*; it was so strait and close a place that the angel filled the whole breadth of it, that there was no passing him; so that there was no getting forward nor backward; not forward, because the angel filled up the way, and there was no slipping by him; nor backward, because it could not turn itself to the right or left.

**Ver. 27.** *And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord*, etc.] The third time; for it seems that he was not always in sight, but disappeared as he removed from place to place, and at every new place where he stood the ass saw him, though her master did not:

*she fell down under Balaam*; upon her knees on the ground, not being able to go backwards nor forwards, nor to turn out of the way to the right or left:

*and Balaam's anger was kindled*; he was displeased and out of humour before, when it turned into the field, and when it squeezed his foot against the wall, and therefore he smote it; but now falling down with him, he was in a fume and fury, quite enraged:

*and he smote the ass with a staff*; which he rode with, perhaps his divining staff, (see <sup>3912</sup>Hosea 4:12), it is not said what he smote it with before but probably with the same: Aben Ezra says, at the first and second time he smote it with a small stick, or with a thong.

**Ver. 28.** *And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam*, etc.] This was a very extraordinary and miraculous affair, and effected by a supernatural power, that a dumb creature, which had not organs endued with speech, should speak so plainly and distinctly, as is

after expressed; and yet it should not be thought incredible, for what is it that Omnipotence cannot do? wherefore there is no need to say, as some Jewish writers <sup>f342</sup>, that this was all done in a visionary way, and not really and literally performed; nor can Heathens well object to the verity of it, if they believe what they themselves report concerning one of the asses which carried Bacchus over a river, to which, for reward, he gave the power of speaking with an human voice <sup>f343</sup>; though it is very probable the fable was framed from this story, and frequently do their writers speak of other brute creatures endued with speech; so Homer <sup>f344</sup> represents Xanthus, the horse of Achilles, having the faculty of speech given it by Juno: Pliny says <sup>f345</sup>, it is commonly reported among the wonderful things of the ancients, that an ox spoke; and Livy <sup>f346</sup> frequently makes mention of an ox spoke speaking in divers places, and of one particularly that said,

“Rome, take heed to thyself;”

not to take notice of a lamb in Egypt in the times of Bocchoris that spoke, related by Aelianus <sup>f347</sup> and others; nor of the ram of Phrixus, or the dog at Ariminum, and the elephant of Porus in India, with others Bochart <sup>f348</sup> has collected together: the words spoken by the ass were as follow:

*what have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?* and just so many times she had been smitten by him, (<sup><0223></sup>Numbers 22:23-27).

**Ver. 29.** *And Balaam said unto the ass, because thou hast mocked me,* etc.] Or rather “defiled me”, as the word is rendered in (<sup><18165></sup>Job 16:15) by running with him against a wall, and by lying down with him in the dust and dirt, and so the Arabic version renders it, “because thou hast rolled me in the dirt;”

the sense of mocking is not easy to be understood, unless it be that it exposed him to be mocked and laughed at by others, by turning aside, and lying down, and being so unruly; but then there were only his servants with him, to whom only he could be exposed in such a manner, which one would think would not have given him so much concern, and put him into such a passion: the word sometimes is used for seeking occasion, and such a sense it may have here, as that it sought an opportunity or occasion to throw him, and so to kill him, or at least to do him harm, (see <sup><2704></sup>Daniel 6:4)

*I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee:* so enraged was he, and his passion was so great, that he was not at all frightened and amazed to hear the ass speak, though Josephus<sup>f349</sup> represents him as disturbed and astonished at it; but some think, he being used to converse with spirits in the shapes of various creatures, it was no surprise to him to hear it speak.

**Ver. 30.** *And the ass said unto Balaam,* etc.] Made a reply to him, as if it understood what he said, and had the faculty of reasoning and discoursing, as well as of speaking, which is very amazing:

*am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day?* or rather, “ever since thou wast”; not ever since he was in being, but ever since he could ride, so Aben Ezra; according to which, it seems that this was the first he rode upon, and which he had always been used to; hence the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

“upon which thou hast rode from thy youth unto this day;”

and be it that Balaam was a man pretty well advanced in years, an ass is a creature that lives a long time: Pliny says<sup>f350</sup> it lives thirty years; and an Arabic writer<sup>f351</sup> makes mention of an ass that the owner of it rode on forty years:

*was I ever wont to do so unto thee?* to start out of the way, or lie down with him, could anyone instance be given of it? suggesting that she was a sure footed creature, and had always carefully and safely carried him, for which it appeals to him:

*and he said, nay;* she had never been used to serve him in such a manner as she had now, and therefore he might have concluded that something more than ordinary was the matter; and it is much his conscience had not accused him that he was wrong in coming with the princes, taking the alarm from these circumstances, had he not been an hardened creature, or, at least, had he not been so eagerly bent on riches and honour.

**Ver. 31.** *Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam,* etc.] Who either was struck with blindness, as the men of Sodom were, so some think, or rather his eyes were held, that he could not see the angel; he could see other objects, as his ass, but he could not see that; as Elisha’s servant could see the host that compassed the city, but not the chariots and horses of fire about Elisha, till his eyes were opened, (<sup><del>2</sup>2 Kings 6:15,17) and so it was

with Balaam until the Lord uncovered his eyes, or rolled away the vail over them, or took that off which by his power and providence hindered his sight:

*and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand;* in the same position as in (<sup>40223</sup>Numbers 22:23)

*and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face;* from off his ass upon the ground, in reverence of the illustrious object before him, and through fear of being slain by his sword in his hand.

**Ver. 32.** *And the angel of the Lord said unto him,* etc.] When risen up, and standing before him:

*wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times?* the brute creatures are not to be beaten without cause, nor to be misused and abused by men, even their owners:

*behold, I went out to withstand thee;* the ass was not to be blamed, nor to be beaten for turning aside, or lying down, it was I that stood in the way, and hindered its going forward, and this was done by me on purpose to oppose and stop thee:

*because thy way is perverse before me;* the journey he took was not with his good liking and approbation, and especially seeing he went with an intention, if possible, to serve Balak, and curse Israel; the way of his heart was bad, which the Lord knew; it was not directed according to his will, but swerved from it; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“it is manifest before me that thou seekest to go and curse the people, and the thing is not agreeable to me.”

**Ver. 33.** *And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times,* etc.] The ass saw the angel when Balaam did not, and that was the reason of its turning aside; and it was well for him it did, and therefore he should not have smote it:

*unless she had turned from me;* if she had pushed on, endeavouring to make her way:

*surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive;* had certainly and only slain him, and not the ass; and from hence the Jewish writers<sup>f352</sup>

gather, that the ass was now slain, lest it should be said, this is the ass that spoke, and so be made an idol of.

**Ver. 34.** *And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned,* etc.] That is, in beating the ass; not that he was sensible of his sin of covetousness, and of the evil disposition of his mind, and of his wicked intention in going along with the princes to curse Israel, if possible, and get Balak's presents and preferments:

*for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me;* signifying, that if he had known it, he should not have smitten the ass, but submitted himself to the will of the angel:

*now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again;* which he spoke very coldly and faintly, not caring heartily to go back, unless forced to it; for seeing a drawn sword in his hand, he might be afraid of his life should he persist in his journey, and therefore feigns a readiness to go back, quitting it on condition that his going forwards was displeasing; whereas he knew it was, especially his going with an evil mind to hurt Israel if possible.

**Ver. 35.** *And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, go with the men,* etc.] Which was not a command, but a concession, or rather a permission, leaving him to go if he would, suffering him to follow his own heart's lusts, and giving him up to them to his own destruction; and besides, it was not his going barely that was displeasing to God, but his going with such a bad intention:

*but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak;* which expresses not only what he ought to do, but what he should be obliged to do, even to bless the people against his will, when his mind was to curse them, it being for his worldly interest; and therefore it is suggested he had better not go at all, since he never would be able to carry his point, yea, would be brought to shame and confusion before Balak and his nobles: the angel speaking in the same language as God did before to Balaam, (<sup>(422)</sup>Numbers 22:20) shows that not a created angel, but a divine Person, is here meant:

*so Balaam went with the princes of Balak;* whom after this he quickly overtook, or they him, or they met together at some appointed place, and proceeded on in their journey.



**Ver. 36.** *And when Balak heard that Balaam was come*, etc.] Messengers being sent to acquaint him with it, either by Balaam, or by the princes:

*he went out to meet him*; overjoyed at the news that his princes had succeeded, and to show him respect, and do him honour, and all to encourage him to do his utmost for him:

*unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast*; by the situation of it, being on the border of the river Arnon, which river was in the extreme parts of Moab, and divided between the Moabites and Amorites, it is generally thought to be the city Ar, called “Ar of Moab”, (see <sup><0013></sup>Numbers 21:13,28), and the king coming to meet Balaam so far as the uttermost border of his dominions showed the greater respect to him.

**Ver. 37.** *And Balak said unto Balaam*, etc.] Upon their meeting together:

*did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee?* or “in sending send” <sup>f353</sup>; the first messengers in a very pressing manner, with great importunity, to give thee an invitation to come to me, and those men of rank and quality, with rewards of divination in their hands, and yet the invitation was rejected; and after them other messengers, more in number and greater in dignity, with larger offers and promises; and now indeed thou art come, but with much ado, what is the meaning of all this?

*wherefore camest thou not unto me?* at first, without showing so much indifference and reluctance, and which obliged me to send another message to thee:

*am I not able to promote thee to honour?* to give thee wealth and riches, and put thee into high places of honour and profit? hadst thou any doubt in thy mind about it, either concerning my ability or will to do it?

**Ver. 38.** *And Balaam said unto Balak, lo, I am come unto thee*, etc.] And therefore let nothing more be said of what is past: and as for future things,

*have I now any power at all to say anything?* that would be agreeable to the king, and answer his purpose in sending for him, namely, to curse the people of Israel; he suggests that he had not, he was under the powerful restraint of God; he could not say what he himself was inclined to say, and what the king would have him say, and he expected he should; he could not say as some in (<sup><0113></sup>Psalm 12:4): the word

*that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak*; whether agreeable to Balak's will and design or not, and whether for or against Israel: however, it being expressed in such indefinite terms might leave room for Balak to hope it might answer his expectations and wishes.

**Ver. 39.** *And Balaam went with Balak*, etc.] From Ar of Moab, or, however, from the place where they met, to the royal city where Balak had his palace, and seems to be the place following:

*and they came to Kirjathhuzoth*; which Jarchi interprets a city full of streets, a populous place, having a multitude of men, women, and children in the streets of it; and the same writer suggests as if Balak's view in this was to move the pity of Balaam, that such a number of people might not be rooted out and destroyed.

**Ver. 40.** *And Balak offered oxen and sheep*, etc.] Or "slew"<sup>f354</sup> them, either for sacrifice; and if so Balak was the sacrificer, as it was common for kings to be priests; and then Balaam, who was sent for, was the prophet, that was to observe and explain any omen at the time of sacrificing, as Calchas did, when the chiefs of Greece sacrificed<sup>f355</sup>; or rather for a feast, as the following words seem to show; though it might be for both, it being usual, when sacrifices were offered to idols, to eat part of them in a festival way, in imitation of the peace offerings of the Jews, (see <sup><0212></sup>Numbers 25:2):

*and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him*; either part of it to them, or he sent for them to come, and partake of the feast, he and the princes of Moab and Midian, that had been to fetch him, and still attended him; and this the king did in a way of rejoicing, being glad that Balaam was come, and as expressing his well pleasedness with the conduct of the princes, and their success, as well as to keep Balaam in high spirits, hoping to have his end answered by him.

**Ver. 41.** *And it came to pass on the morrow*, etc.] The day after the arrival of Balaam at Balak's royal seat, and after the entertainment given him, and the princes, "on the morning"<sup>f356</sup> of that day, as the word signifies; and perhaps early in the morning, the king eager to be about business, and get the people of Israel cursed if possible as soon as could be:

*that Balak took Balaam and brought him up into the high places of Baal*; where groves were planted, and altars erected to that "idol" and which the Targum of Jonathan calls the idol Peor, the same with Baalpeor,

(~~025B~~ Numbers 25:3) which might be their god Chemosh, the same with Bacchus or Priapus:

*that thence he might see the utmost part of the people*; the whole host of Israel, even to the extreme part of it; the camp of Dan, as the Targum of Jonathan, which brought up the rear; he had him to those high places, both that he might have a better view of the whole body of the people, and know how they lay, and to direct his curses at them, and that success might attend the undertaking, these being places of religious worship. Josephus says <sup>f357</sup> those high places were sixty furlongs or seven and one half miles from the camp of Israel.

# CHAPTER 23

## INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 23

This chapter gives an account of the sacrifices offered by Balak and Balaam, and how God met Balaam, and put a word into his mouth, which he delivered in the presence of the king of Moab and his princes, (<sup>-0231</sup>Numbers 23:1-7), the substance of which are, the separate state and condition of Israel from other nations, their number, and the happiness of the righteous at death, (<sup>-0238</sup>Numbers 23:8-10), which made Balak uneasy, since instead of cursing he blessed Israel, and therefore he had him to another place to take a view of the people, (<sup>-0231</sup>Numbers 23:11-13) where having offered sacrifices, another word was put into the mouth of Balaam, and which he also delivered before the king and his nobles, (<sup>-0234</sup>Numbers 23:14-18), in which were expressed the unchangeableness of God, the irreversibility of the blessing of Israel, the strength, safety, happiness, and glory of that people, (<sup>-0239</sup>Numbers 23:19-24) which made Balak more uneasy still; but willing to try him a third time, he carried him to another place, and there built altars, and offered sacrifices, the consequence of which is related in the next chapter, (<sup>-0235</sup>Numbers 23:25-30).

**Ver. 1.** *And Balaam said unto Balak*, etc.] When upon one of the high places of Baal, and after having taken a view of the people of Israel as they lay encamped:

*build me here seven altars*; this was purely Heathenish; for not only the Israelites after the law of Moses had but one altar, but the patriarchs before that never built but one altar at a time. Some have thought regard is had to the seven planets worshipped by Heathens; though no doubt Balaam pretended to sacrifice to Jehovah the true God, in order to gain him over to him to agree to it to curse Israel, and persuaded Balak, though an idolater, to join with him; and, the more easily to bring him to it, mixes Heathen rites and customs in sacrifice to him:

*and prepare me here seven oxen, and seven rams*; which were creatures offered in sacrifice according to the law of Moses, and before that was given, and by persons who were not under it; and even by seven of each

sort, and that by the express command of God, (<sup>3818</sup>Job 42:8). It may be observed, that both in this, and the preceding clause, the word here is carefully expressed, namely, in one of the high places; there the altars were erected, and thither the oxen were brought to be sacrificed; so that both the place, and the number of the altars, savoured of Heathenish worship, in which he complied to induce the king to sacrifice to Jehovah.

**Ver. 2.** *And Balak did as Balaam had spoken*, etc.] Ordered seven altars to be built, and prepared seven bullocks and rams for sacrifice:

*and Balak and Balsam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram*; both seem to be concerned in offering the sacrifices; Balak, though a king, it being usual for kings to be priests also, as Melchizedek was, and Balaam as a prophet; and these sacrifices were offered to the true God, as seems clear from (<sup>0206</sup>Numbers 23:4) and to which Balak, at the direction of Balaam, agreed, in order to gain the Lord on his side, that he might prevail over the people of Israel.

**Ver. 3.** *And Balaam said unto Balak*, stand by thy burnt offering, etc.] By which it appears that the sacrifices offered were of this sort, and there might be one, which was more peculiarly the burnt offering of Balak; though he might be more or less with Balaam concerned in them all; at which he was directed to stand while it was burning, presenting that and himself to the Lord, that he would have respect to both:

*and I will go*; depart from thence, at some little distance, unto some private place:

*peradventure the Lord will come to meet me*; upon the offering of these sacrifices to him, though he could not be certain of it, he having lately shown some displeasure and resentment unto him; and this was also in the daytime, when it was in the night he usually came unto him:

*and whatsoever he showeth me I will tell thee*; the whole of it, truly as it is, whether agreeable or not:

*and he went to an high place*; but he was in one already, and therefore if this is the sense of the word, he must go to another, into a grove in one of the high places, where he might be retired, and so fit for a divine converse; and the Targum of Onkelos renders it alone: but rather the sense is, that he went into a plain, as De Dieu has shown from the use of the word in the Syriac language; he was upon a high place, and he went down from thence

into the plain, perhaps into a cave at the bottom of the hill, a retired place, where he hoped the Lord would meet him, as he did.

**Ver. 4.** *And God met Balaam*, etc.] Not in a kind and gracious manner; not out of any respect to him and his offerings; not to indulge him with any spiritual communion with him; nor to communicate his mind and will to him as a friend of his; not to gratify his desires, and grant the request of the king of Moab, or to smile upon and succeed the scheme that they had concerted; but for the sake of his people Israel, to counterwork the designs of their enemies; to blast and confound them, and turn their curses into blessings; and particularly to oblige Balaam to bless the people he was so desirous of cursing for the sake of gain:

*and he said unto him*; in a bragging boasting way, in order to gain his favour, and carry his point:

*I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram*: that is, to him the Lord; for had they been offered to Baal, he could never have had the nerve to have spoken of them to God; and which he could never have proposed as a reason why he should be regarded by him, or expect on account of them any favour from him: and indeed these altars and sacrifices were not at his expense, though they were prepared and offered at a motion of his; nor were they offered in a right manner, nor with a right end, nor from a right principle, and were far from being acceptable unto God, yea, were abominable unto him; (see <sup><1027></sup>Proverbs 21:27).

**Ver. 5.** *And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth* etc.] Not grace into his heart, nor the fear of God within him, but suggested to him what to say; impressed it strongly on him, that he could not forget it, and with such power and weight, that he was obliged to deliver it:

*and said, return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak*; that is, unto him, and what is expressed in (<sup><1028></sup>Numbers 22:7-10).

**Ver. 6.** *And he returned unto him*, etc.] Immediately, as soon as he was told what to say:

*and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice*; continued in his devotions, hoping for success, and waiting for Balaam's return:

*he and all the princes of Moab*; not only those that were sent to Balaam, but perhaps all the princes of the kingdom who were got together on this occasion, and by reason of the imminent danger they apprehended the nation was in account of Israel.

**Ver. 7.** *And he took up his parable, and said*, etc.] Pronounced the word, the prophetic word, which God had put into his mouth; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it, the parable of his prophecy; so called, because, in prophecies, often figurative and enigmatical expressions are used, and also sententious and weighty ones, either of which are sometimes called parables; (see <sup><978E></sup>Psalm 78:2 <sup><870E></sup>Job 27:1 29:1 <sup><3006></sup>Proverbs 1:6),

*Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram*; or Syria, that is, from Mesopotamia, as the Septuagint translate it; and so the Targum of Jonathan, from Aram or Syria, which is by Euphrates:

*out of the mountains of the east*: it being the mountainous part of Mesopotamia or Chaldea, where Balaam dwelt, which lay to the east of the land of Moab:

*saying, come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel*; he owns that this was Balak's view in sending for him; nor does he deny that he himself came with such an intention, could he be able to execute it; even curse the people of Israel, with the utmost abhorrence and detestation of them, and in the most furious and wrathful manner, as the last word used signifies.

**Ver. 8.** *How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?* etc.] The sense is, that it was impossible for him to curse those that God did not curse himself, or would not have cursed by others; not but that he had a good will to it, to get Balak's money and honour, but he knew not how to accomplish it; yea, he saw it was in vain to attempt it, it was a thing that could not possibly be done: God does not, nor will he curse his spiritual Israel; they are blessed by him in Christ, and they shall be blessed; nor is it in the power of their enemies to curse them, or do them any harm: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, instead of God and the Lord in this and the following clause, use the phrase,

“the Word of the Lord;”

the essential Word, the Son of God, who is so far from cursing his people, that he has delivered them from the curses of the law, being made a curse for them, that the blessings of the everlasting covenant of grace might

come upon them; and they are blessed of God in him, and for his sake, with all spiritual blessings:

*or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?* which is the same thing in other words, only this last word is expressive of more contempt and indignation.

**Ver. 9.** *For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him,* etc.] That is, Israel in their camps; Balaam being at this time on the top of a rock, or on an high hill, from whence he had a view of Israel, encamped in the plains of Moab below him:

*lo, the people shall dwell alone;* this certainly respects their dwelling in the land of Canaan, where they dwelt a separate people from all others, distinguished by their language, religion, laws, customs, and manner of living, being different both in their clothing, and in their food, from other people; nor had they dealings, nor did they company with those of other nations; (see <sup><1708></sup> Esther 3:8 <sup><404></sup> John 4:9 <sup><4108></sup> Acts 10:28) “or shall dwell safely” <sup>f358</sup>, or securely, not so much because of the situation of their country, but because of the protection of the Almighty; (see <sup><638></sup> Deuteronomy 33:28)

*and shall not be reckoned among the nations;* as belonging to them, shall not be made of any account by them, but be despised and reproached for their religion chiefly; nor reckon themselves of them, nor mix with them; so the Targum of Jerusalem, “they shall not be mixed;”

or, as Jonathan, “they shall not be led in the laws of the people;”

and though they are now scattered among the people and nations of the world, yet they are not mixed with them, nor reckoned to be a part of them; nor do they reckon themselves to be of them, but are a separate distinct people from them. Thus Israel, or the people of God in a spiritual sense, dwell alone; not solitarily, or without company, in every sense, for they have the company of Father, Son, and Spirit, of angels and saints; but they dwell in God, in Christ, in the house of God, and with one another, separately and distinctly from the world: they are a separate people in the love of God; in the choice of them in Christ; in the covenant of grace made with them in him; in redemption by him; in his intercession for them; in effectual calling; as they will be in the resurrection morn, and in heaven to all eternity: and they shall dwell safely, God being around them; Christ the rock and fortress of them; the Spirit in them being greater than he that is in



the world; angels their guardians, and they in a strong city, whose walls and bulwarks are salvation: nor are they reckoned among the nations; they are chosen, redeemed, and called out of them, and are not accounted of by them any other than the refuse and offscouring of all things; nor do they reckon themselves to be of the world, but as pilgrims and strangers in it. Baal Hatturim refers this prophecy to the days of the Messiah; (see <sup><4275></sup>Jeremiah 23:5,6).

**Ver. 10.** *Who can count, the dust of Jacob*, etc.] The people of Israel, their posterity so called, not because of their original, the dust of the earth, but because of their numbers, being as numerous as the dust of the earth, or sand of the sea, as it was promised they should be, (<sup><0284></sup>Genesis 28:14) and which is here confirmed by the prophecy of Balaam:

*and the number of the fourth part of Israel*; one of the four camps of Israel, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; for this people was divided into four camps, under so many standards, which were those of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan, (see <sup><0411></sup>Numbers 2:1-34), and one of them is represented by Balaam as so numerous, as not to be counted, or should be so, (see <sup><3010></sup>Hosea 1:10,11). The spiritual Israel of God, though comparatively few, are in themselves, and will be when all together, a great number, which no man can number, (<sup><6109></sup>Revelation 7:9):

*let me die the death of the righteous*; which are among them, as Jarchi, among the Israelites; for they were not all righteous, nor are any, of themselves, or by their own works, but by the righteousness of Christ: or the death of the upright ones <sup>f359</sup>; such as are upright in heart and life, who have right spirits renewed in them, and walk uprightly according to the rule of the divine word; such as are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; the word used is pretty near, in sound and signification, to Jeshurun, one of the names of Israel, (<sup><6325></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15 33:5), the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it, ``the death of the true ones,’’

who are truly righteous and upright, truly gracious persons; who have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter in them: these die as well as others, yet their death is different from others, not in the thing itself, but in the concomitants and consequences of it; they die in the Lord, in union to him, in faith of him, in hope of eternal life by him, and their death is precious to him; and in consequence of this they are carried by angels to glory at death are immediately in heaven with Christ, and it will be well with them to all eternity. Balaam had some notion of this; and though he

did not care to live the life of such, he wished to die their death, or that he might be as happy at death as they; by which he bears a testimony to the immortality of the soul, to a future state after death, and to an eternal life and happiness to be enjoyed by good men:

*and let my last end be like his*; which is a phrase expressive of much the same thing as before: death is the end of a man in this world; and the end of a righteous man in it is peace, rest, salvation, and eternal life, or is what follows upon it, and he then enters into: some render it, “my reward”<sup>f360</sup>, which comes to much the same sense, the above being the righteous man’s reward, not in a way of debt, but grace; others render the word, “my posterity”<sup>f361</sup>; but it is not certain Balaam had any, and if he had, his concern seems to be more for himself than for them.

**Ver. 11.** *And Balak said unto Balaam, what hast thou done unto me?* etc.] Or “for me”<sup>f362</sup>; nothing at all, to answer his purpose, or his end in sending for him;

*I took thee to curse mine enemies*: so he calls the Israelites, though they had never done him any wrong; nor committed any acts of hostility against him, nor showed any intention to commit any; nay, were forbidden by the Lord their God to contend in battle with him and his people;

*and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether*; or, “in blessing blessed”<sup>f363</sup>, done nothing but bless them, and that with many blessings, or pronounced them blessed, and prophesied of their blessedness, for their number, their safety, and of their happiness, not only in life, but at and after death.

**Ver. 12.** *And he answered and said*, etc.] By reply to Balak:

*must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?* pretending a great regard to the word of God, and to great carefulness to speak it, exactly and punctually as he received it, whereas he was forced to it, and could not do otherwise.

**Ver. 13.** *And Balak said unto him*, etc.] Seemingly satisfied with his answer, however, he could not help himself, and was willing to make the best of him he could, and try what he could do with him another time and elsewhere:

*come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them*; for he had a mighty notion that both the sight of the people, and the place from whence they were seen, would greatly contribute to answer the end he had in view, cursing the people:

*thou shall see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all*; for he thought, either that he was so charmed with so glorious a sight as the regular encampment of such a body of people was, that he could not find in his heart to curse them; or that he was so terrified at the sight of such a vast number of people, that he dared not attempt it; and therefore Balak proposed to have him to a place where he could only see a part of them and not the whole:

*and curse me them from thence*: that part, hoping that when he had cursed them he would gradually go on till he had cursed them all: but there is this objection to our version, and the sense it directs to, that Balaam had been brought to a place already, where he had seen the utmost part of the people, (<sup>021</sup>Numbers 22:41) wherefore some read <sup>f364</sup> the middle clause in a parenthesis, and in the past tense “(for thou hast seen but the utmost part of them, and hast not seen them all)”; and therefore would have him come to a place where he might see them all, and curse them from thence.

**Ver. 14.** *And he brought him into the field of Zophim*, etc.] Or Sede Tzophim, as Hillerus <sup>f365</sup> reads it, so called from the watch tower, and watchmen in it: Jarchi says, it was a high place, where a watchman stood to observe if an army came against a city, and so a very proper place to take a view of the armies of Israel from:

*to the top of Pisgah*; a high hill in this place, where perhaps the watch tower was, or, however, the watchman stood: this looked towards Jeshimon or Bethjesimoth, in the plain of Moab, where Israel lay encamped, (see <sup>021</sup>Numbers 21:20 33:49): and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar: as he had done before, (<sup>021</sup>Numbers 23:2).

**Ver. 15.** *And he said unto Balak, stand here by thy burnt offering*, etc.] As he had before directed him, (<sup>021</sup>Numbers 23:3)

*while I meet the Lord yonder*; pointing to some place at a little distance, where he expected to meet the Lord, and have some instructions from him, which he seemed confident of, having met with him once already.

**Ver. 16.** *And the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth,* etc.] As he did before, (<sup>40215</sup>Numbers 23:5).

*and said, go again unto Balak, and say thus;* the words which are expressed in (<sup>40238</sup>Numbers 23:18-24).

**Ver. 17.** *And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering,* etc.] As before; (<sup>40216</sup>Numbers 23:6) and the princes of Moab with him; Jarchi observes, that before it is said, all the princes of Moab, but not so here; for when they saw there was no hope of succeeding, some of them went away, and only some were left:

*and Balak said unto him, what hath the Lord spoken?* being in haste to know what it was, whether agreeable or not.

**Ver. 18.** *And he took up his parable,* etc.] Pronounced the word put into his mouth,

*and said, rise up Balak, and hear;* not from his seat, as Eglon a successor of his did, (<sup>40021</sup>Judges 3:20) for he was now standing by his burnt offering; but the sense is, that he would raise his attention, and stir up himself with all diligence to hear what he was about to say:

*hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor;* or to his word, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, which follow.

**Ver. 19.** *God is not a man, that he should lie,* etc.] Man is a creature consisting of a body of flesh and blood, and of a soul, a created and finite spirit; but God, though he has the parts of an human body ascribed to him in a figurative sense, yet is not to be conceived of in a corporeal manner; and though he is a Spirit, yet eternal, immense, and infinite; and much less is as a sinful man, who goes astray from the womb speaking lies; no, let God be true, and every man a liar: he is God, that cannot lie; his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; his promises yea and amen in Christ; the Scriptures inspired by him are true, and the prophecies of them are punctually accomplished, particularly what he foretold of the people of Israel, and promised unto them; that they should be happy, and inherit the land of Canaan; that he would be true and faithful to them, and there could be no hope, by any means whatever, to make him false and unfaithful to his word: neither the son of man, that he should repent; repentance is found in men, who repent for what they have done, or change their minds, as to what they intended to do or set about; perceiving it to be wrong to do it, or

that they are able to do it, some unforeseen thing turning up they were not aware of: but nothing of this kind belongs to God, or can befall him; he never changes his mind, alters his counsels, purposes, and decrees, and never varies in his affections to his people, nor makes void his choice of them, or covenant with them; and his calling of them by his grace, and his gifts of grace bestowed upon them, are without repentance: and particularly with respect to the people of Israel, there was no reason to hope or believe that God would change his purposes or promises respecting their outward happiness, and enjoyment of the land of Canaan; or that ever he would be prevailed upon to curse them, or admit them to be cursed, when he was determined, and had so peremptorily promised that he would bless them:

*hath he said, and shall he not do it?* or “hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” whether it be with regard to things temporal, spiritual, or eternal; for there is no variableness nor shadow of turning in his mind; he never forgets his word, he foresees all events, he is able to perform, and is true and faithful; and therefore whatever is gone out of his lips will never be altered, but will be most certainly fulfilled, (~~1884~~ Psalm 89:34) (~~2342~~ Isaiah 14:24,27).

**Ver. 20.** *Behold, I have received [commandment] to bless*, etc.] The people of Israel, to pronounce a blessing upon them, to declare them a happy people:

*and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it*; God has blessed them, has determined to bless them, has promised to bless them, has blessed them in the victories he has given them, and will complete the blessing of them, by bringing them into the land he has given them: so the blessings which God has designed for his spiritual Israel, and bestows upon them, are irreversible; they are blessings indeed, spiritual ones, and are for ever; he blesses them with himself, as their covenant; God, their portion here and hereafter, with Christ his Son, and all things with him, with righteousness, peace, and pardon, with his Spirit and the grace thereof, with sonship, heirship, and eternal life.

**Ver. 21.** *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel*, etc.] Not that there was no sin in them, nor any observed by the Lord; yet not so as to mark it in strict justice, and punish for it; but he forgave it, hid his face from it, and did not impute it to them; all the three Targums restrain it to idolatry, that there were none among

them that worshipped idols, which was the reason why the Lord could not be prevailed upon to curse them: and Aben Ezra observes, that from hence Balak learnt to send women to the Israelites, to entice them to lewdness, and so to idolatry, that he might be able to carry his point: this is true of the spiritual Israel of God; for though there is sin in them, and which is continually done by them, yet their sins are removed from them, and have been laid on Christ, and he has bore them, and made reconciliation for them, and made an end of them, and has redeemed and saved them from them; and God, by imputing his righteousness to them, has justified them from all their sins, has forgiven all their iniquities, and blotted out all their transgressions, and has cast them behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, and has removed them as far from them as the east is from the west: and when God is said not to see or behold iniquity in his people, it is to be understood, not of his eye of Omniscience, with which he sees not only the sins of all men, but those of his own people also, and takes notice of them in a providential way, and chastises them for them; but of his eye of avenging justice, and purity regards the article of justification, which is a full discharge from all sin, and a perfect covering of it from the justice of God, (see <sup><sup>366</sup> Jeremiah 50:20),</sup>

*the Lord his God is with him* and which is his protection and defence, and in vain it is for any to be against him, or seek to hurt him; nothing is a greater happiness, or can be a greater safety, than to have the presence of God; it is this makes ordinances pleasant and delightful; by this saints are assisted in duty, and supported under trials; it is an instance of distinguishing and amazing goodness, and is what will make heaven be the happy place and state it is: all the three Targums interpret it of the Word of the Lord that is with them, and for their help; who is the Angel of God's presence, Immanuel, God with us; and who has promised to be with his churches and ministers to the end of the world, and will be with them through life, at death, and to all eternity:

*and the shout of a king is among them*; of God their King, the Shechinah of their King, as the Targum of Onkelos; his glorious Majesty, to whom they make their joyful acclamations, upon his appearing among them, and on the account of the victories he gives them over their enemies: or of the King Messiah, as the Targum of Jonathan, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; and so, in an ancient writing of the Jews <sup>f366</sup>, this passage is referred to the days of the Messiah: and this shout may respect the joyful sound of the Gospel, one part of which is, that Zion's King reigns, and which

proclaims him to be King, and speaks of the things concerning his kingdom, both the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory; some respect may be had to the sounding of the silver trumpets by the priests on various occasions in Israel; (see <sup><0400></sup>Numbers 10:1-11).

**Ver. 22.** *God brought them out of Egypt*, etc.] With a mighty hand and stretched out arm, and he will conduct them through the wilderness, and bring them safe to Canaan's land; he that brought them from thence will not suffer them to perish by any means; it is in vain to attempt to curse a people that is in such hands, and for whom he has done such great things: Jarchi thinks this stands opposed to what Balak had said, (<sup><0215></sup>Numbers 22:5), thou sayest, "lo, a people is come out of Egypt";

"they did not come out of themselves, but God brought them:"

*he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn*; that is, not God, but the people he brought out of Egypt, being a mighty people, able to push their enemies and subdue them, being numerous and strong, especially as strengthened by the mighty God of Jacob; and therefore their strength is expressed by the strength of this creature; for be it what it will, whether the rhinoceros or the wild ox, or one kind of goats, as Bochart <sup>f367</sup> thinks; whatever is meant by the term here must be a strong creature, (see <sup><0537></sup>Deuteronomy 33:17 <sup><0390></sup>Job 39:10,11) and great is the strength of the spiritual Israel of God, which they have from him to exercise grace, perform duty, withstand and overcome all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world.

**Ver. 23.** *Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel*, etc.] Balaam here owns, that all his enchantments and divinations signified nothing, and would never prevail to bring a curse upon Israel; it was a vain thing for him to use them, and as vain for Balak to expect anything from them; neither he nor any other enchanter and soothsayer, using all the arts they are masters of, could ever do any hurt to such a people, who were the peculiar care of God, and were his church, against which the gates of hell could not prevail: or "in Jacob" and "in Israel" <sup>f368</sup>; and this is the sense of all the Targums, that there are no enchantments nor enchanters, no divinations nor diviners in Israel; these were not agreeable to them, nor suffered among them, and therefore they were acceptable and well pleasing in the sight of God and indeed this sense agrees both with the literal version of the words, and is the sense Jarchi gives of them; that these people were fit for the blessing, because there

were no enchanters and diviners among them; though he mentions another, and that is, that Israel had no need of enchanters and diviners, and of their enchantments and divinations, because they had the prophets to inform them, and the Urim and Thummim to declare things unto them:

*according to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, what hath God wrought!* as with respect to this time as well as to time past, and with respect to time to come, even with respect to all times; it shall be said with wonder and amazement, what great things has God done for this people! as bringing them out of the land of Egypt, leading them through the Red sea, feeding and supplying them in the wilderness, protecting them from their enemies there, expelling the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and setting them there in their stead; and wonderful things has God done for his spiritual Israel, in the redemption of them by Christ, in the beginning and carrying on the work of grace upon their hearts, by his Spirit; and at last he will bring them all to the heavenly Canaan of rest and happiness, and where this will be matter of admiration with them to all eternity, what has God done for us!

**Ver. 24.** *Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion,* etc.] Or rather, “as the lioness” <sup>f369</sup>, which, as Aelianus says <sup>f370</sup>, is the strongest and most warlike beast, the most fierce and furious, as is believed both by Greeks and Barbarians; and he mentions the heroism of Perdiccas the Macedonian, and Semiramis the Assyrian, in engaging with and killing, not the lion or leopard, but lioness:

*and shall lift up himself as a young lion;* both phrases denoting the courage and strength of the people of Israel, in attacking their enemies and engaging them:

*he shall not lie down;* being once roused up and engaged in war:

*until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain;* as the lion does when it has seized on a creature, tears it to pieces, eats its flesh and drinks its blood: this may refer to the slaughter of the Midianites that would be quickly made, and among the slain of whom Balaam himself was, (<sup>-QEB07</sup>Numbers 31:7,8), and to the slaughter and conquest of the Canaanites under Joshua, and taking their spoils.

**Ver. 25.** *And Balak said unto Balaam, neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.*] Signifying that it would be as well or better to do nothing at all, than to do what he did; but the sense is not, that he would not have him



curse them, that he could never say, since he had pressed it both before and after this; wherefore the words should be rendered, as they are by some <sup>f371</sup>, “if in cursing thou dost not curse”, or will not curse, “neither in blessing bless”, or, however, do not bless: if he could not or would not curse Israel, he would not have him bless them on any account; if he could do him and his people no good in ridding them of their enemies, yet he desires him by no means to do them any harm by discouraging them and encouraging Israel.

**Ver. 26.** *But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, told not I thee*, etc.] He appeals to him for his honesty and faithfulness, for honest and faithful he would be thought to be, both to God and man; that when he first met him, he plainly told him what he must expect: from him:

*saying, all that the Lord speaketh, that I must do*; which was very true, he was obliged to do as he had bid him, and speak what he had said unto him, though it was sore against his will; he would fain both have spoken and done otherwise, if he might have been permitted.

**Ver. 27.** *And Balak said unto Balaam, come, I pray thee*, etc.] Come along with me: I will bring thee unto another place: if not better for the view of the people, yet a more religious place, on which account the king hoped for success:

*peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence*; it may be God will give thee leave to curse the people from that place, being devoted to sacred service: this is the first time that Balak makes mention of the name of God; and he now seems to be satisfied that it was not Balaam’s fault that he did not curse Israel, but that he was hindered by God, who would not suffer him to do it.

**Ver. 28.** *And Balak brought Balaam to the top of Peor*, etc.] The name of an high mountain in Moab, so called from a gap or opening in it; here the idol Baal was worshipped, and from hence had the name of Baalpeor, (<sup><0253></sup>Numbers 25:3) and here, very probably, was a temple built to the honour of him, called Bethpeor, the house or temple of Baalpeor, (<sup><0346></sup>Deuteronomy 34:6),

*that looketh towards Jeshimon*; as Pisgah also did, and very likely it was not far from it, since from thence they came hither, (<sup><0234></sup>Numbers 23:14 21:20). Jeshimon is the same with Bethjesimoth, and so the Targum of Jonathan here calls it, a part of the plains of Moab, where Israel lay

encamped, (<sup><039></sup>Numbers 33:49) so that from hence Balaam could have a full view of them.

**Ver. 29.** *And Balaam said unto Balak*, etc.] Being willing to try again what could be done, and to gratify the king, and especially to get the wages of unrighteousness, if possible, which he dearly loved, as the apostle says, (<sup><015></sup>2 Peter 2:15)

*build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams*; which had been done in two places before, (<sup><021></sup>Numbers 23:1,14) the same sort of creatures, and the same number here as there, and these only clean creatures, such as were used in sacrifice by the true worshippers of God, and which, no doubt, Balaam had knowledge of, and therefore judged that those would be most acceptable to the Lord.

**Ver. 30.** *And Balak did as Balaam had said*, etc.] Though the sacrifices were expensive, he did not grudge them; he spared no cost to gain his point, though he now could have but little hope of it: and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar; as he had done before, (<sup><022></sup>Numbers 23:2,14).

# CHAPTER 24

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 24

In this chapter we are told, that Balaam leaving his enchantments, the Spirit of God came on him, and he spake of the happiness of Israel, and prophesied of their future greatness and glory, (<sup>-0240</sup>Numbers 24:1-9) which so exasperated Balak, that he ordered him at once to depart from him, (<sup>-0240</sup>Numbers 24:10,11). Balaam justified himself in what he said and did, and suggested that before they parted, he had something to say in a prophetic manner, concerning what Israel should do to Moab in “future” times, (<sup>-0242</sup>Numbers 24:12-14) and then prophesies concerning the Messiah, and the destruction of Moab, and of some neighbouring nations, and even of some at a greater distance, as the Assyrians and Romans, (<sup>-0245</sup>Numbers 24:15-25).

**Ver. 1.** *And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel*, etc.] That it was good in his sight, what he approved of, and was well-pleasing to him, and that it was his determined mind that Israel should be blessed, and not cursed, from which there was no turning him, by offering sacrifices to him, and much less by his sorceries and divinations:

*he went not as at other times*; or, “as at a time in a time”<sup>f372</sup>, at two times, of which (see <sup>-0238</sup>Numbers 23:3,15), he abode in the place where the sacrifices were offered, and did not depart to another at some distance, as he had twice before done:

*to seek for enchantments*; which it seems he used before, for he not only offered sacrifices to the true God, which yet were attended with superstitious rites, but he made use of his divining art also; and not only went to meet with God, and hear what he would say to him, but consulted the devil also, being willing to have two strings to his bow, and that, if possible, he might carry his point, and get what his covetous and ambitious mind was desirous of: the words may be literally rendered, “to meet enchantments”<sup>f373</sup>; but what should be meant by the phrase is not easy to say; I should rather choose to render them, “to meet serpents”, and make use of them in his divinations, make observations on them, and predictions

from them: one sort of divination is called “ophiomancy”, or divining by serpents; so Calchas, on seeing a serpent devour eight sparrows with their dam, foretold the duration of the siege of Troy <sup>f374</sup>:

*but he set his face towards the wilderness*: where the people of Israel lay encamped, not with an intention to bless them, though he saw it pleased the Lord, but to take an opportunity, if he could, without his leave, to curse them; and therefore he did not go out as he did before, to know his will, but stood by the sacrifice, with his face to the wilderness, where the people were, to take any advantage that offered.

**Ver. 2.** *And Balaam lifted up his eyes*, etc.] Being on Mount Peor:

*and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes*; in that exact order in which they were directed to encamp under four standards, and so many tribes under each standard, (~~4011~~Numbers 2:1-34)

*and the Spirit of God came upon him*; not in his grace but in his gifts; not as a spirit of sanctification, but as a spirit of prophecy, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it; and so sometimes the Spirit of God in this sense has come upon wicked men, as on Caiaphas and others, (~~4815~~John 11:51 ~~4072~~Matthew 7:22,23).

**Ver. 3.** *And he took up his parable*, etc.] His parable of prophecy, as the Targums, his prophetic speech, which, with a loud voice, he expressed in the hearing of Balak and his nobles:

*and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said*; the preface to his prophecy is pompous, and seems to be full of pride and vanity, and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem represent him;

“the man who is more excellent than his father hath said, to whom hidden secrets, even what was hidden from the prophets is revealed to him;”

and the Jews have a saying <sup>f375</sup> that he that has an evil eye, a haughty spirit, and a large soul, or is covetous, is one of the disciples of Balaam the wicked:

*and the man whose eyes are open hath said*; or, as some <sup>f376</sup> render it, whose eyes were shut, but now open; either the eyes of his body, which were shut when the angel met him, and the ass saw him and not he, but afterwards were open, and he saw him also; or the eyes of his

understanding blinded with ambition and covetousness, but were open to see his mistake, at least so far as to be sensible that he could never prevail upon God to allow him to curse Israel; or rather open, by the spirit of prophecy coming on him, whereby he saw and foretold things to come.

**Ver. 4.** *He hath said, which heard the words of God,* etc.] God speaking to him, which he did several times, and with which he was greatly elated, (see <sup><402D></sup>Numbers 22:9,20 23:4,5,16):

*which saw the vision of the Almighty;* not that he had a sight of any similitude of God, though the angel that appeared to him, which was Christ the uncreated angel, might appear in an human form, for some visible form was seen both by the ass and him; but rather this respects the visions of God to him in the night; it may be in a dream, as has been already observed, and which the following words seem to confirm:

*falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:* or falling into a deep sleep, and yet the eyes of his body open, which sometimes is the case with persons asleep; or the eyes of his mind open, to receive the instructions given him in a dream or vision of the night; unless this is to be understood of his falling on his face, when he had his vision, as sometimes the prophets did, (see <sup><402S></sup>Ezekiel 1:28 <sup><402T></sup>Deuteronomy 8:17 <sup><402U></sup>Revelation 1:17), so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it; and the latter says, he prophesied of himself, that he should fall by the sword; which is better than to interpret it of his falling when his ass lay down with him, as some do: so men may have a great deal of light and knowledge in their heads, and yet not have true grace in their hearts; great gifts, which puff up with pride and vanity, but not sanctifying grace, which is of an humbling nature, (<sup><402V></sup>1 Corinthians 8:1,2 13:1,2,3), what he said under a spirit of prophecy follows.

**Ver. 5.** *How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,* etc.] Not that the matter of which they were made was so rich, or their structure so admirable, but the order in which they were placed was so beautiful and agreeable:

*and thy tabernacles, O Israel;* which is the same thing in other words, and which may be applied figuratively to the church of God, which often goes by the names of Jacob and Israel; and agrees with particular congregations and assemblies of saints, where they dwell as in tents in a movable state, like pilgrims and sojourners; and which are the dwelling places of Father, Son, and Spirit, and of the people of God with one another; and are

goodly, pleasant, and delightful, because of the presence of God with them, and on account of the provisions there made for them, and the company they there enjoy; (see <sup><BR></sup>Psalm 84:1,4,10).

**Ver. 6.** *As the valleys are they spread forth*, etc.] Long and broad, lying between several mountains, and reaching from hill to hill; so the armies of Israel lay encamped in the plains and villages of Moab, making a very considerable length and breadth; the camp of Israel is said to be twelve miles long, and twelve miles broad; so the Targum on (<sup><BR></sup>Numbers 2:3) and this may denote the lowness of the saints and people of God in their own eyes, and their largeness in themselves; and especially when the place of their tents shall be enlarged, and the curtains of their habitations be stretched forth in the latter day; and also their fruitfulness, meads, and valleys abounding with herbs and flowers, as the churches of God do with the fruits of the Spirit, grace, and righteousness, and with plants of the Lord's right hand planting. Some render it as brooks and torrents of water, so the Targum of Jonathan; which diffuse and spread themselves, and on the banks of which stand beautiful trees in goodly order:

*as gardens by the river's side*: laid out in a delightful manner, full of flowers, plants, and trees, and well watered; like to these, in several spots, were the people of Israel formed into several camps; and to these may the churches of God be compared, who are distinguished and enclosed by sovereign grace, full of trees of righteousness of the Lord's planting, watered by the river of divine love, and from Christ the fountain of gardens; (see <sup><BR></sup>Song of Solomon 4:12-15 <sup><BR></sup>Psalm 1:3):

*as the trees of lign aloes, which the Lord hath planted*: which are not planted and raised by the art and industry of man, but grow up without culture, as the mere produce of nature, under a divine providence; these are called lign wood or tree aloes, to distinguish them from another sort of aloes, which are no other than plants; but these are what the Indians call Calambra or Calembac, and, physicians Xyloaloes and Agallochium, and are of a very aromatic and fragrant scent. This tree is said to be about eight or ten feet high; at the head of it is a large bunch of leaves, which are thick and indented, broad at bottom, but growing narrower towards the point, and about four feet in length; the blossom of it is red, intermixed with yellow, and double like a pink; from this blossom comes fruit, round like a large pea, white and red; the juice of these leaves is drawn out by cutting them with a knife, and received into bottles; the smell of the wood is

exquisite <sup>f377</sup>. P. Martyr <sup>f378</sup> speaks of a trunk of lign aloes, which being cut, a sweet savour proceeds from it. It may be observed what Isidore <sup>f379</sup> remarks, that it grows in Arabia, as well as in India, and so might be well known to Balaam. And to these the Israel of God may be compared for their fragrancy, being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, all whose garments smell of or like these aloes, (<sup><498B></sup>Psalm 45:8) and having the graces of the Spirit of God in them, the smell of which is preferable to all spices, and they themselves are signified by the same, (<sup><2040></sup>Song of Solomon 4:10,14):

*and as cedar trees beside the waters*; which are tall and high, large and spreading, durable lasting, to which the righteous are compared, (see Gill on "<sup><492D></sup>Psalm 92:12").

**Ver. 7.** *He shall pour the water out of his buckets*, etc.] That is, God shall plentifully send down rain out of the clouds upon these valleys, gardens, and trees, and make them fruitful; and this may be a figure of the grace of God, with which his churches are watered, and become fruitful by means of the word and ordinances, which is conveyed through them out of the fulness which is in Christ:

*and his seed [shall be] in many waters*; the seed and offspring of Israel shall be in a place of many waters, in a land of brooks and waters, shall dwell in a well watered land, the land of Canaan, (<sup><488E></sup>Deuteronomy 8:7) or shall be like seed sown near water, or in well watered places, which springs up and brings forth much fruit, (see <sup><232D></sup>Isaiah 32:20) or shall become, or be over many waters, to which people, kingdoms, and nations, are sometimes compared; and so may denote the multitude of Israel, and the large extent of their dominions, (see <sup><670E></sup>Revelation 17:1,15):

*and his king shall be higher than Agag*; who might be the then present king of Amalek, reckoned one of the greatest kings on earth; and this name, some think, was common to all the kings of Amalek, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt; and according to Jarchi and Aben Ezra, this is a prophecy of the first king of Israel, Saul, and of his conquering Agag king of Amalek, for there was one of this name in his time, (<sup><495E></sup>1 Samuel 15:7,8):

*and his kingdom shall be exalted*; that is, the kingdom of the people of Israel, as it was more especially in the days of David and Solomon; and will be abundantly more in the days of the Messiah, when his kingdom shall be

from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, and the kingdoms of this world shall become his, and he shall reign over all the earth; and so the Jerusalem Targum,

“and the kingdom of the King Messiah shall become very great;”

and so other Jewish writers <sup>f380</sup> refer this prophecy to the days of the Messiah.

**Ver. 8.** *God brought him forth out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn,* etc.] Here he repeats what he had said in a former prophecy, (see Gill on “<sup>(0272)</sup>Numbers 23:22”): he shall eat up the nations his enemies: the seven nations of Canaan, which should be subdued by Israel, and that with as much ease as a lion devours its prey; nor would the Canaanites be able to make any more resistance to them than a creature in the paws of a lion; and the phrase denotes the utter destruction of them:

*and shall break their bones;* as the lion breaks the bones of such creatures that fall a prey to him; signifying that all their strength should be taken from them, their mighty men slain, and their fortified cities taken:

*and pierce [them] through with his arrows:* slay them utterly.

**Ver. 9.** *He couched,* etc.] Which may respect the posture of the armies of Israel in the plains of Moab:

*he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion;* as he would do, and did in the land of Canaan, when conquered by Israel; they took up their residence on it quietly, and dwelt in it securely, and in no more fear of their enemies than a lion, which lays itself down and sleeps without concern anywhere:

*who shall stir him up?* who dare do it? as it would be a very rash, bold, daring, and dangerous thing to rouse up a lion lying down; so it is suggested it would be alike to provoke Israel to war at some certain times, in the days of David more especially:

*blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee;* which are the very words in which Isaac blessed Jacob, the ancestor of these people, (<sup>(0272)</sup>Genesis 27:29) and which blessing is confirmed by Balaam against his will, and whereby he cursed himself instead of Israel; for though he could not curse him with words, he had cursed him in his heart, and would have done it verbally if he could <sup>f381</sup>.



**Ver. 10.** *And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam*, etc.] He had bore much and long, but he could bear no longer, he was quite impatient, his last words more especially must exceedingly nettle him:

*and he smote his hands together*; as expressive of his indignation, vexation, and disappointment:

*and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse my enemies*; he had sent princes to him, one set of them after another, to invite him into his country, and to his court, with great promises of reward to curse Israel, whom he reckoned his enemies, and not to bless them:

*and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times*; done nothing else but bless them with blessing upon blessing, time after time; even everyone of the three times he opened his mouth, as Balak expected, to have cursed them.

**Ver. 11.** *Therefore now flee thou to thy place*, etc.] His own country, from whence Balak had sent for him, and he came; begone directly, make all haste away; he speaks as one so provoked, that he could not bear him in his presence, and as threatening him if he did not at once get out of his sight:

*I thought to promote thee unto great honour*; to bestow much wealth and riches upon him, and to prefer him in his court to high offices of honour and dignity; he had promised that he would, and he thought as he said, he was determined upon it, had he performed as he expected:

*but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour*; the Lord thou hast so much talked of, and at whose beck and command thou hast been, and by whom thou hast been checked and controlled, he has hindered thee from riches and honour; see what thou hast got, or rather lost, by hearkening to him, and how he will pay thee for it.

**Ver. 12.** *And Balaam said unto Balak*, etc.] In order to mitigate his wrath, and bring him into a better temper:

*spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me*: those that came to him a second time; for to the first he said nothing of what is after related, but to the last he did much the same as he had afterwards said to Balak himself: saying,

**Ver. 13.** *If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, etc.*] Which are the very words he said to the princes of Moab, (<sup>4218</sup>Numbers 22:18),

*I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad*; for though here it is the “commandment”, and there the “word” of the Lord, yet it is the same word in both places in the original text: indeed, here he omits the relation to the Lord he there claims, saying “my God”; and instead of “little or great”, here it is “good or bad”, but the sense is the same: and he adds, for explanation sake,

*of mine own mind*: or out of my heart, which was disposed well enough to serve Balak, but was laid under a restraint by the Lord:

*but what the Lord said, that will I speak*; and he had not only said this to the messengers, but to the king himself, and therefore he thought, that as he had openly and honestly told him this at first, he had no reason to be so angry with him; (see <sup>4238</sup>Numbers 22:38).

**Ver. 14.** *And now, behold, I go unto my people, etc.*] According to thine order, I shall not stay to make thee uneasy with my company, only I crave thy patience to hear me a little before we part:

*come therefore, and I will advertise thee*; about some things that shall come to pass in future time, respecting this people, and thine, and other nations, both near and remote; and he hoped by this to bring him into a better temper, and part good friends: or “I will counsel thee”; what thou shall do, as the Targum of Onkelos, and so makes a sentence of this of itself, independent of, and distinct from what follows, beginning the next clause thus,

*and I will show them what this people*, etc. referring the former to the counsel Balaam gave to Balak, how to seduce the people into idolatry; and the Targum of Jonathan expresses it at large;

“come, I will counsel thee, go and prepare victualling houses, and place lewd women there to sell food and drink at a low price, and bring this people to eat, and drink, and be drunken; and let them lie with them, and deny their God, and they will be delivered into thine hands in a little time, and many of them will fall;”

which advice was followed, (<sup><0251></sup>Numbers 25:1,2) and is referred to, (<sup><0316></sup>Numbers 31:16 <sup><0124></sup>Revelation 2:14) but though Balaam did give him such advice before he left him, which is highly probable, yet it is not what is intended here, since what follows is closely connected with the above clause, and contains the thing he advertised or advised him of:

*what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days*; not what the Moabites should do to the Israelites now, as the Vulgate Latin version, quite contrary to the original text, but what the Israelites should do to the Moabites in future times; not only in the times of David, by whom they were subdued, (<sup><0082></sup>2 Samuel 8:2) but in much later times, even in the times of Alexander, or King Jannaeus, who overcame them, as Josephus <sup>f382</sup> relates. Now this might be said to Balak to make him easy, that it would not be until the latter days, many hundreds of years hence, ere the people of Israel would fight with Moab, and subdue it; and therefore he need be under no concern about them, since he would meet with no trouble from them in his time, nor his people for years to come.

**Ver. 15.** *And he took up his parable, and said*, etc.] In this and the following verse; the same preface, in the same words, is made to his prophecy as before, (see Gill on "<sup><0243></sup>Numbers 24:3") (see Gill on "<sup><0244></sup>Numbers 24:4"); only one clause is added, "and knew the knowledge of the Most High"; that Balaam had some knowledge of God is certain from the names by which he calls him, being such that he made himself known by to the patriarchs, and by which he is frequently called in the sacred writings; but then this knowledge of his was merely notional and speculative, and not spiritual and supernatural, and was such as men may have who are destitute of the grace of God: he was one that professed to know him in words, but in works denied him, (see <sup><0112></sup>1 Corinthians 13:2 <sup><0016></sup>Titus 1:16) and he also was admitted to much nearness to God, and converse with him, of which he boasted; but then this was not for his own sake, or as a mark of friendship to him, but for the sake of the people of Israel, and to prevent his doing them mischief. His prophecy follows.

**Ver. 17.** *I shall see him, but not now*, etc.] Meaning not Israel, for he now saw him encamped, and at no great distance; but one that should descend from him, a famous and excellent person, and who is no other than the Messiah, as appears by what follows; him he should see, not spiritually with an eye of faith, nor corporeally with his bodily eyes in his state of

incarnation, but at the day of judgment; and now, indeed, he saw him by a spirit of prophecy:

*I shall behold him, but not nigh*; signifying, that the coming of this illustrious Person, who should smite the borders of Moab, was not near, and therefore Balak had no reason to indulge any present fears; and that when he was come either into the world to save men, or to judgment, Balaam would have no nearness to him, nor interest in him; he would see him at the last day, but not for himself, as Job says he should, (~~18925~~ Job 19:25-27)

*there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel*; which Aben Ezra interprets of David, though he says many interpret it of the Messiah; and there are some writers, both Jewish and Christian, that understand it partly of David, and partly of Christ, and chiefly of him, and of David as a type of him; the fulfilment of which was only in part in David, but principally and completely in Christ. Maimonides <sup>f383</sup> parts the prophecy between them: the whole undoubtedly agrees with Christ, and belongs unto him: the “star” and “sceptre” may be considered as names and titles of the Messiah; he is called the “morning star”, (~~6216~~ Revelation 22:16) for his glory, brightness, and splendour, and for the light that comes by him, and the influence of his grace, and the blessings of it on the sons of men; and hence a false Messiah took the name of Bar Cochab, the son of a star, to answer to this prophecy; and he may be called a “sceptre”, that is, a sceptre bearer, because of his royalty; he not only has the name of a king, but has a kingdom, both of nature, providence, and grace, and rules with a sceptre of grace, mercy, and righteousness; and as he was to spring from Jacob or Israel, so he did, being a son of Abraham, a descendant of Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, (~~4001~~ Matthew 1:1 ~~4004~~ Romans 1:4 9:4,5), but I rather think that the star is to be considered as a sign and circumstance of his coming, and that the words may be rendered, “when a star steers its course from Jacob”, or “unto Jacob, then a sceptre”, or “sceptre bearer”,

*shall rise out of Israel*, or “rise up unto Israel”; for the particle **m** sometimes signifies “unto” <sup>f384</sup>; and that the appearance of a star in Israel was a sign of the Messiah’s coming is certain from (~~4001~~ Matthew 2:1,2) of which the Magi were informed by Zoroastres <sup>f385</sup> their founder, who, being of Jewish extract, had got it from this prophecy of Balaam; and it is as evident that the Jews expected the appearance of an extraordinary star at

the time of the Messiah's coming; for so they say more than once, in an ancient book of theirs <sup>f386</sup>, that when the

“Messiah shall be revealed, a bright and shining star shall arise in the east;”

which expectation must be founded on this prophecy:

*and shall smite the corners of Moab*; not only the corners of their houses and cities, but the extreme parts and borders of the land, even all the sides, and the whole of it; or the princes and great men of the land, sometimes called “corners”, (see <sup><380E></sup>Zechariah 10:4) and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

*and shall kill the princes of Moab* or the mighty ones of Moab, as the Jerusalem Targum; this was literally fulfilled in David, (<sup><408E></sup>2 Samuel 8:2) (<sup><380E></sup>Psalms 60:1-12) and figuratively and mystically in Christ, by subduing his enemies, signified by Moabites, as being the enemies of Israel; either by reducing them through the power of his grace to obedience to him, or by smiting and breaking them in pieces with a rod of iron; and which will be more plainly and fully accomplished when he shall destroy those Moabites, the antichristian nations, (<sup><660E></sup>Revelation 19:15-21)

*and destroy all the children of Sheth*; some take Sheth to be the name of some famous king among the Moabites, as Grotius; others, the name of some city of Moab, which David utterly destroyed, as R. Nathan <sup>f387</sup>; others suppose some particular nations are meant, as either the Edomites, so called because they put confidence in their foundations, and fortified places, so Vitringa <sup>f388</sup>; or the Egyptians, from Seth or Sethos, one of their kings, who was known by the name Egyptus, as a late learned writer <sup>f389</sup> of ours conjectures; but rather by the children of Seth are meant all nations, as Jarchi observes, for all come from Seth, the son of the first man; and so the words may be rendered, as they are by Onkelos,

“he shall rule over all the children of men;”

which will be fulfilled in Christ, when he shall have put down all rule and authority, and all will be subject to him, and his kingdom be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth; unless rather by the children of Seth are meant the special people of God, in distinction from others, and in allusion to the distinction between the Sethites and Cainites, the one being the people of God, the other not; and so it may be

interpreted of Christ's gathering them to him, by clucking as it were for them, as a hen gathers her chickens; so the word is used in Jewish writings, and of God himself; for it is said <sup>f390</sup> the holy blessed God **rqrqm**, clucks over them, as hens do, which is the simile our Lord himself uses, (<sup><4237></sup>Matthew 23:37) the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret this prophecy of the Messiah by name; and so do many other Jewish writers, both ancient <sup>f391</sup> and modern <sup>f392</sup>.

**Ver. 18.** *And Edom shall be a possession*, etc.] Of the children of Israel, which was fulfilled in part when the Edomites became the servants of David, (<sup><4084></sup>2 Samuel 8:14) and when they were smitten and spoiled by Judas Maccabeus, them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils." (1 Maccabees 5:3)

and still more so when all the Edomites or the Idumaeans were subdued by Hyrcanus, and they became one people with the Jews, and conformed to their religious rites; which is not only related by Josephus <sup>f393</sup>, but by Strabo <sup>f394</sup>, an Heathen historian, who says, that they joined themselves to the Jews, and embraced their laws: but in a spiritual sense this has had a greater accomplishment in the calling of the Gentiles, and introducing them into the church of God; (see <sup><3092></sup>Amos 9:12) compared with (<sup><4454></sup>Acts 15:14-17).

*Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies*; which was a mount in the land of Edom where Esau formerly dwelt, and so signifies the same as before: and also that the most strong and fortified places of the land should fall into the hands of their enemies; (See Gill on "Obadiah 1:17-19")

*Israel shall do valiantly*; in fighting with and conquering the Edomites, or shall get much wealth and riches by the spoil of them, (see <sup><3909></sup>Psalm 60:9,12). This, and the following verse, are in some ancient writings of the Jews <sup>f395</sup> interpreted of the times of the Messiah.

**Ver. 19.** *Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion*, etc.] Meaning either David, or rather the Messiah; and so Jarchi interprets this of another ruler out of Jacob, even of the Messiah, of whom it is said, he shall have dominion from sea to sea; (<sup><4978></sup>Psalm 72:8),

*and shall destroy him, that remaineth of the city*; chief city of Edom, or of any of the cities of it, signifying that there should be none left, (see Obidiah

1:18), this is also applied to the days of the Messiah, in the ancient writings of the Jews <sup>f396</sup>.

**Ver. 20.** *And when he looked on Amalek*, etc.] The country of Amalek, which lay to the south of the land of Canaan, (<sup><0413></sup>Numbers 13:29) and which Balaam had a view of from the mountain of Peor, where he now was:

*and he took up his parable, and said*; the parable of his prophecy, as the Targum of Jonathan, and pronounced it aloud:

*Amalek was the first of the nations*; not the first nation in the world, nor the chief and principal for numbers, riches, or strength, but the first that made war with Israel, as all the three Targums paraphrase it, as they did, (see <sup><0278></sup>Exodus 17:8),

*but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever*; this was threatened to them by the Lord upon that battle, and is confirmed by this prophecy of Balaam: and after this, orders were given to Israel to blot out their remembrance, (<sup><0259></sup>Deuteronomy 25:19), and which, in a good measure, though not completely, was done in the times of Saul, (<sup><0158></sup>1 Samuel 15:8,9) and after that they were distressed by David, (<sup><0270></sup>1 Samuel 27:9 30:17,18 <sup><0182></sup>2 Samuel 8:12) and the rest of them were smitten by the sons of Simeon, in the days of Hezekiah, (<sup><1344></sup>1 Chronicles 4:41-43), after which we hear of them no more: Amalek may be considered as a type of antichrist, the son of perdition, who shall go into it, shall come to his end, and there shall be none to help him; which will be true of all the antichristian party, the enemies of Christ, who will be destroyed by him, and perish eternally; (see <sup><2745></sup>Daniel 11:45 <sup><6678></sup>Revelation 17:8).

**Ver. 21.** *And he looked on the Kenites*, etc.] Not the family and posterity of Jethro, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Abendana; for they were not a people by themselves, but were now encamped with Israel, and went with them into the land of Canaan, and were not carried captive with the ten tribes, though some might that dwelt in Naphtali, (<sup><0704></sup>Judges 9:4,11,17), for they after that remained with Judah under the name of Rechabites, (<sup><248D></sup>Jeremiah 35:2) and returned with the two tribes, being carried captive with them, (<sup><1325></sup>1 Chronicles 2:55) but they were a people, though of the same original and family Jethro descended from, which dwelt near, and afterwards among the Amalekites, and therefore were seen by Balaam, and taken

notice of at the same time they were; (see <sup><0956></sup>1 Samuel 15:6). Abarbinel takes them to be the same with those in (<sup><0159></sup>Genesis 15:19)

*and took up his parable*; or prophecy concerning them, and delivered it:

*and said, strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock,* they dwelling in craggy rocky places, where they thought themselves secure and out of danger; and this their habitation he calls “Ken”, a nest, in allusion to their name Kenites.

**Ver. 22.** *Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted,* etc.] Though they were so strongly fortified, and closely immured and surrounded with rocks and mountains, yet they should gradually waste away, as they were but few in Saul’s time, (<sup><0956></sup>1 Samuel 15:6)

*until Ashur shall carry thee away captive*; Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, when he carried captive the people of Syria, took these with them, (<sup><1269></sup>2 Kings 16:9), though Jarchi thinks they were carried captives with the ten tribes, that is, by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; and the Targum of Jonathan, by Sennacherib, king of Assyria; and others think by Nebuchadnezzar, who was sometimes reckoned a king of Assyria; taking them to be the same with the Amalekites, who were carried captives and returned with the two tribes.

**Ver. 23.** *And he took up his parable, and said,* etc.] Or delivered another prophecy, having made some little pause:

*alas, who shall live when God doeth this?* referring not to what goes before, but to what follows; though Jarchi and Aben Ezra think it refers to the Assyria conquering and carrying captive, not only the Kenites, but all the nations of the world, so that there was no living comfortably in it on his account; but this is said after Balaam had taken up his parable again, and so respects what follows, as the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander, in which Ashur or the Assyrians were included; and the destruction of the Jews by the Romans more especially; which was such as had not been the like from the beginning of the world, (<sup><1221></sup>Matthew 24:21,22), and perhaps may have a further respect to the affliction of the witnesses and church of Christ by antichrist; (see <sup><1211></sup>Daniel 12:1).

**Ver. 24.** *And ships [shall come] from the coast of Chittim,* etc.] Kittim was the son of Javan, (<sup><0104></sup>Genesis 10:4) and so designs some part of Greece: Josephus<sup>f397</sup> says that Kittim possessed the island now called



Cyprus, in which was a city now called Citium, after his name; Macedonia, a considerable part of Greece, is called the land of Cittim,

“And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece,” (1 Maccabees 1:1)

“Beside this, how they had discomfited in battle Philip, and Perseus, king of the Citims, with others that lifted up themselves against them, and had overcome them:” (1 Maccabees 8:5)

but the Targum of Jonathan interprets it, of the country of Italy; the Jerusalem Targum, of the Roman legions; and perhaps both Greeks and Romans are intended, and so ships from Cittim, in (<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:30), design Romans in Grecian ships; for in such were the Roman ambassadors carried, who distressed Antiochus, king of Syria, (see Gill on “<sup>2713</sup>Daniel 11:30”); and both may be intended here: it is affirmed <sup>f398</sup> that Noah with his son Japheth, came into the country now called Italy, and built a city, and gave it the name of Cethim, since called Volterra, and was the metropolis of Etruria, and gave name to all Italy; and that in the year two hundred and twenty from the building of that city, Cethim the son of Javan, and grandson of Noah, took two colonies with him, and sailed to an island which he called after his own name Cethim, now Cyprus:

*and shall afflict Ashur*; which being a part of the Persian empire, was afflicted, conquered, and subdued by Alexander the Macedonian, who is said to come out of the land of Cittim,

“And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece,” (1 Maccabees 1:1)

*and shall afflict Eber*; or the Hebrews, as the Septuagint version; not that the Grecians or Macedonians should do this, for they under Alexander did not afflict the Jews; unless this is to be understood of the Seleucidae, the kings of Syria, the successors of Alexander, who did distress the Jews; but rather this respects the Romans under Pompey, and especially under Titus Vespasian, who destroyed their city, and carried them captive, and who ever since have been dispersed among the nations:

*and he also shall perish for ever*: not Eber, but those that afflicted him, even the Romans; and indeed both monarchies, Grecian and Roman, are prophesied of as what should be destroyed, and that by a son of Eber, the Messiah; the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, said to break in pieces all these kingdoms, (<sup><27B4></sup>Daniel 2:44,45) and not Rome Pagan only, but Rome Papal also, antichrist and all the antichristian powers, (<sup><31B></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:8). and so the Targum of Jonathan says, that the end both of the one and the other, that is, that shall afflict Eber, shall be, to fall by the hand of the King Messiah, and they shall perish for ever.

**Ver. 25.** *And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place*, etc.] The country from whence he came, that is, he went from Balak, according to his command, in order to return to his own land; for he seems not to have reached it, but stayed by the way among the Moabites and Midianites, and was slain in a battle between Israel and them, (<sup><61B></sup>Numbers 31:8), or if he did reach Mesopotamia, he returned again, as Chaskuni says; and either before he left Balak, or in his journey homewards, or when he returned, he gave that advice, to seduce the Israelites first to whoredom, and by that to idolatry, the effects of which are observed in the following chapter, *see Gill* "<sup><61B></sup>*Numbers 24:14*" and Balak also went his way; to his royal city, court, and family, attended, very probably, by the princes of Moab, who had been with him all this while; though how long these things were transacting is not certain.

# CHAPTER 25

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 25

The contents of this chapter are, the sin of the people of Israel, their whoredom and idolatry, (<sup><0251></sup>Numbers 25:1-3), their punishment for it, multitudes being slain, (<sup><0254></sup>Numbers 25:4,5), whose number is given, (<sup><0259></sup>Numbers 25:9), the zeal of Phinehas in slaying two notorious offenders, (<sup><0256></sup>Numbers 25:6-8), whose names are observed, (<sup><0254></sup>Numbers 25:14,15) for which he is commended, and the covenant of priesthood was given and confirmed unto him, (<sup><02510></sup>Numbers 25:10-13), and the chapter is concluded with an order to vex the Midianites, for vexing Israel with their wives, (<sup><02516></sup>Numbers 25:16-18).

**Ver. 1.** *And Israel abode in Shittim*, etc.] A place in the plains of Moab, so called from the shittim wood, which grew here in great abundance, so often mentioned in the building of the tabernacle; which was a sort of white thorn, or rather the acacia tree, since there was scarcely any thing else grew in the deserts of Arabia, (see Gill on “<sup><0255></sup>Exodus 25:5”) its full name was Abelshittim, (<sup><02549></sup>Numbers 33:49), here the Israelites abode even to the death of Moses, for this was their last station in the wilderness; they were now on the borders of the land of Canaan, and just ready to enter into it, which is an aggravation of the sins they here fell into, and are next observed:

*and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab;* and of Midian also, as appears from (<sup><0256></sup>Numbers 25:6 31:9,16) by the advice of Balaam, the Moabites and Midianites found ways and means to become familiar with the Israelites, and to introduce their daughters into their company and conversation, and being ensnared and enamoured with them, they were drawn to commit lewdness with them, and hereby were led on to commit other abominations, which brought the divine displeasure upon them; so that what they dared not attempt by war, and could not effect by sorceries and divinations, they accomplished by those iniquitous arts, namely, bringing the wrath, the curse, and plague of God upon them.

**Ver. 2.** *And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods,* etc.] That is, the daughters of Moab and Midian, with whom the children of Israel carried on an unlawful correspondence, invited them, their gallants, to come and partake of the feasts which attended the sacrifices of their idols; for part of what was offered to idols a feast was kept with, to which great numbers were invited, and which was observed with all the circumstances of joy and pleasure imaginable, and which was very ensnaring, especially to young people; and the children of Israel being so much enamoured with the beauty of the Moabitish women, and so strong were their lusts and passions, that they could not refuse the invitation:

*and the people did eat:* of the things sacrificed to idols, and so became guilty of idolatry, even by so doing, and then when they had eaten and drank, and were merry, they were led on to other acts of idolatry:

*and bowed down to their gods:* which was a plain and open act of idolatry, whereby they testified their faith in their divinity, their reverence of them, and their homage and obedience to them: Jarchi says, when the evil concupiscence or lust was strong in them, and they solicited the daughters of Moab to hearken to them, and comply with them, they used to take the image of Peor out of their bosom, and said, worship this, signifying that on that condition they would gratify them; and thus whoredom led them on to idolatry, and they committed the one for the sake of being indulged in the other.

**Ver. 3.** *And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor,* etc.] The name of an idol; one of the Baals, Baal being a general name for an idol; and, to distinguish this from other Baals or idols, it was called Peor, either from its opening its mouth in prophecy, as Ainsworth; or from some obscene posture and action used in the worship of it, being, as it is by many thought to be, the same with Priapus; or rather from the mountain Peor, where it was worshipped, as Jupiter is called Jupiter Olympius, Capitolinus, etc. from the mountains where he had a temple, or was worshipped; or from the name of some great personage, called Lord Peor, who was deified after his death; hence these Israelites are said to “eat the sacrifices of the dead”, (~~f398~~ Psalm 106:28). Mr. Bedford <sup>f399</sup> takes him to be Mizraim the son of Ham, the Osiris of the Egyptians, and the Priapus of other Heathens: and Father Calmet <sup>f400</sup> is of opinion that he is the same with Orus, Osiris, and Adonis; and that Pe is only a prepositive article, and that Or is the name, and no other than Orus; but such a criticism the word will not bear: this

idol, the chief god of the Moabites, was, in all probability, the same with Chemosh, who is expressly called the abomination of Moab, (<sup><11107></sup>1 Kings 11:7) of whom (see Gill on "<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 48:7") so Chemosh and Peor are thought to be the same by our English poet <sup>f401</sup>: to him the Israelites joined themselves, forsook the true God in a great measure, and were initiated into the rites of this deity, and constantly attended the worship of it, and cleaved unto it with their hearts and directions, and joined with their harlots in all parts of service performed unto it; (see Gill on "<sup><3990></sup>Hosea 9:10"),

*and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel*; for no sin is more provoking to God than idolatry, that being so directly opposite to his nature, honour, and glory, as well as to his will and worship; and hereby the end of Balaam and Balak was, in a great measure, answered, and Balaam obtained that by his evil counsel which he could not by all his conjuring; this was seen by the plague sent among them; (see Gill on "<sup><0244></sup>Numbers 24:14").

**Ver. 4.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] Being provoked with the sins of the people, he called to him out of the tabernacle, or out of the cloud:

*take all the heads of the people*, the princes of the tribes, not to hang them, but to judge those that worshipped Peor, as Jarchi interprets it; though some think that these having sinned, were ordered to be taken and hanged, and made public examples of; but it can hardly be thought, though there were some that might be guilty of the above sins, as Zimri, yet not all of them:

*hang them up before the Lord against the sun*; that is, those that were guilty of idolatry: the meaning is, and which all the Targums give into, that these heads of the people were to assemble at some proper place, the court of judicature, and order the delinquents to be brought before them, and try, judge, and condemn those they found guilty, and cause them to be hanged somewhere near the tabernacle, and before it, having neglected the worship of God there, and served an idol; and this was to be done openly in the daytime, that all might see and fear; and if it was the sun that was worshipped in this idol, as some think, they were hanged against the sun, to show that the idol they worshipped was not able to deliver them; but, in the face of it, and as it were in defiance of it, they were ordered to be hanged up; and this, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was in the morning

against the rising sun, and where they hung all day, and were taken down at sun setting:

*that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel*; when justice had taken place, and proper punishment was inflicted upon the criminals, whereby a just resentment was made against sin, and God glorified.

**Ver. 5.** *And Moses said unto the judges of Israel*, etc.] Either the same with the heads of the people, or the rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, according to the distribution by the advice of Jethro:

*slay ye everyone his men, that were joined unto Baalpeor*; all that were under their several districts and jurisdictions, that were found guilty of that crime; these they are ordered to slay, either with their own hands, or rather cause to be slain by proper persons they should appoint to be executioners.

**Ver. 6.** *And, behold, one of the children of Israel came*, etc.] From one of the cities of Moab or Midian, the latter rather, by what follows; where he had been, very probably, to an idolatrous feast, and had eaten of the sacrifices, and worshipped idols, and committed fornication with the daughters of the land; and not content with indulging himself with those impurities at a distance and where he was less known:

*brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman*; into his father's family, into a tent where his brethren dwelt:

*in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel*; in the most open and undisguised manner, into the midst of the camp, passing by Moses, and a great number of the people, who were gathered together on this solemn occasion, to seek the Lord, and humble themselves before him:

*who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; the place where the people used to assemble together for religious exercises; here they were weeping and mourning for the sins and abominations that were committed among them, and on account of the punishment inflicted on many of them, by the hand of the civil magistrate, and because of the plague that was broke out upon them, from an angry God; by which it appears, that though there were many who had fallen into those foul sins, yet there were a great number which were not defiled with them, and sighed and cried for the abominations in the midst of them: and

because the fact here recorded was such an amazing piece of impudence, the word “behold” is prefixed to the account of it, it being done in such a public, bold, and audacious manner, and at such a time, when so many had been hanged up for it, and the plague of God was broke out among the people on account of it, and good men were bewailing the sin, and the punishment of it; and if this was on a sabbath day, as the Samaritan Chronicle<sup>f402</sup> relates, it was a further aggravation of it.

**Ver. 7.** *And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it,* etc.] Saw the man pass by in this impudent manner, and his whore with him; his spirit was stirred up, he was filled and fired with zeal for the glory of God, and with an holy indignation against the sin and sinner, and with a just concern for the honour of the righteous law of God; and, to prevent others from falling into the same sin, led by the public example of so great a personage, as it appears afterwards this man was:

*he rose up from among the congregation;* who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle, or from the midst of the court of judicature, set for trying and judging such persons who were charged with idolatry; for he was not only the son of the high priest and his successor, but a ruler over the Korahites, and had, besides his priestly office, a civil authority, (~~1~~1 Chronicles 9:20)

*and took a javelin in his hand;* a spear or pike; the Jews say<sup>f403</sup> he snatched it out of the hand of Moses; and, according to Josephus<sup>f404</sup>, it was a sword; but the word rather signifies an hand pike; this being ready at hand, he took it up and pursued the criminal.

**Ver. 8.** *And he went after the man of Israel into the tent,* etc.] Into which he went with his harlot; the word here used is different from what is commonly used for a tent: Aben Ezra observes that in the Kedarene or Arabic language there is a word near to it, which Bochart, putting the article “al” to it, says<sup>f405</sup>, is “alkobba”, from whence is the word “alcove” with us; and Aben Ezra says, there was some little difference between the form of a tent and this, as well as others observe<sup>f406</sup> there was in the matter of it, this being of skins and leather, and the other of hair, boughs of trees, etc. the author of Aruch<sup>f407</sup> says, it was short, or narrow above and broad below, and interprets it a place in which whores were put; and so it is used in the Talmud<sup>f408</sup> for a brothel house, and is so translated here by some interpreters<sup>f409</sup>:

*and thrust both of them through;* with his javelin, spear, or pike;

*the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly;* by which, it seems, they were killed in the very act of uncleanness; this was an extraordinary action, done by a person of public authority, and under a more than common emotion of spirit, and not to be drawn into an example by persons of a private character:

*so the plague was stayed from the children of Israel;* which had broke out among them and carried off many; even a disease, the pestilence, according to Josephus<sup>f410</sup>; it ceasing upon this fact of Phinehas, shows that that was approved of by the Lord.

**Ver. 9.** *And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.*] The apostle says 23,000 (<sup><408></sup>1 Corinthians 10:8). Moses includes those that were hanged against the sun, in the time of the plague, as well as those that were taken off by it, even all that died on this account; the apostle only those that “fell”, which cannot with propriety be said of those that were hanged, who might be 1000 and so their numbers agree; but of this and other ways of removing this difficulty (see Gill on <sup><408></sup>1 Corinthians 10:8”).

**Ver. 10.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] Out of the cloud, or out of the tabernacle, at the door of which Moses now was, (<sup><026></sup>Numbers 25:6), this was after so many had died of the plague, and after the fact of Phinehas, by which it was stopped: saying; as follows.

**Ver. 11.** *Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest,* etc.] His descent and genealogy is observed as before, partly to show that he was not a private person, but a man of public authority that did the above fact; perhaps one of the judges that Moses ordered to slay every man his man, and therefore what he did by the order of the supreme magistrate; and partly to show that he was heir apparent to the office of high priest, who in course was to succeed in it; nor should this action of his hinder it, but rather serve to secure and confirm it to him:

*hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel;* caused the effects of it to cease, by slaying the two persons, as before related:

*while he was zealous for my sake among you;* for the glory of God, the honour of his law, the credit of religion, and the good of his people, which is a good cause to be zealously affected in, (<sup><408></sup>Galatians 4:18) in which he



was a type of Christ, whose zeal for the house of God, for the doctrine, discipline, and worship of it, for the salvation of his people, and the glory of God thereby, ate him up, (<sup><1880></sup>Psalm 69:9) as well as in his turning away wrath from Israel; sin is the cause of wrath, and for it is revealed from heaven; the people of God are deserving of it as others; but Christ has bore it for them, and so has delivered them from it and all the effects of it, and they are secure from its coming upon them:

*that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy*; by the plague sent among them, being so highly provoked with their shocking abominations.

**Ver. 12.** *Wherefore say*, etc.] Moses is bid to tell what follows to Phinehas himself, for his comfort and encouragement, and to the people of Israel, that they might take notice of it, and give him honour and respect, as one highly esteemed by the Lord:

*behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace*; not only hereby assuring him that he had nothing to fear from the brethren and relations of the person he had slain, as Aben Ezra; but that he should enjoy all peace and happiness, external, internal, and eternal: Baal Hatfurira on the place says, that “Shalom”, peace, is by geometry, or numerically, the Messiah; who is the peace, the peace maker, and peace giver, and in whom all the blessings of grace and peace are: and if this covenant is the same with the covenant of the priesthood in the next verse, it may be so called, because the priests had a peculiar nearness to God, and enjoyed his friendship, favour, and peace with him, and because the right administration of their office was the means of peace between God and his people; in this also Phinehas was a type of Christ; the covenant of grace made with him is called the covenant of peace, (<sup><2540></sup>Isaiah 54:10 <sup><3015></sup>Malachi 2:5) for in this covenant the scheme of peace and reconciliation was formed, agreed to, and settled; Christ was appointed the peace maker, which he agreed to be; and in consequence of it was sent and obtained peace by the blood of his cross, which is published in the everlasting Gospel, called therefore the Gospel of peace.

**Ver. 13.** *And he shall have it, and his seed after him*, etc.] The covenant, and all the blessings of it; so the covenant stands fast with Christ, and all his spiritual seed, (<sup><1883></sup>Psalm 89:28,29):

*even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood*; or this may be read in connection with the preceding words, and the sense be, and he and his shall

have the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, beside the covenant of peace before promised to him: the Aaronic priesthood is called everlasting, because it was to continue, and did continue, throughout the whole Jewish dispensation, unto the coming of the Messiah, in whom it had its fulfilling end. Now though Phinehas in course was to have the priesthood at his father's death, yet it is here promised him on account of his zeal, both to assure him that he should survive his father, and that nothing should befall him that should render him incapable of the priesthood; and moreover, that he should have a seed in whom it should be continued; there was indeed an interruption of it in his line for a little while, on some account or other, it being translated into the family of Eli, a son of Ithamar; but then it was restored again in the time of Solomon to the family of Phinehas, where it continued unto the captivity, and even to the times of Herod, and so of the Messiah: in this also Phinehas was a type of Christ, the covenant made with him not only being from everlasting and to everlasting, a covenant that cannot be broken, and will never be removed; but the priesthood founded on it is so too, being established by the oath of God, who swore to him, "thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek": Christ's priesthood is an unchangeable one, and does not pass from one to another; his sacrifice has a perpetual virtue and efficacy in it to take away sin, and he ever lives to make intercession for his people, (~~sc172~~ Hebrews 7:21,24,25, 27):

*because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel*; by executing judgment upon the delinquents, as Christ has made atonement for the sins of his people by satisfying law and justice: and, besides what has been observed, it may be remarked, that there is an agreement between Phinehas and Christ in his very name; Phinehas signifies either "the face of him that spares", that is, of God, that spares; Christ is the face of God, the express image of his person, even of him, who, though he spared not Christ himself, yet he spares his people for Christ's sake; or else "he shall look that spares", or "and spare"<sup>f411</sup>; that is, God, who looks upon the person, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice of his Son, and spares his people.

**Ver. 14.** *Now the name of the Israelite that was slain*, etc.] By Phinehas, as before related:

*[even] that was slain with the Midianitish woman*; who was slain also, both together with one thrust:

was *Zimri, the son of Sela, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites*; or a prince of his father's house, or family; there were five families of the Simeonites, and this man was a prince of one of them, (see <sup><0912></sup>Numbers 26:12,13) though Josephus <sup>f412</sup>, and so the Samaritan Chronicle <sup>f413</sup>, make him to be a prince of the tribe of Simeon. His name is mentioned partly to the reproach of him, and partly for the honour of Phinehas, whose zeal and courage were such, that he feared not to take away the life of a person of such figure, authority, and interest among the people.

**Ver. 15.** *And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur*, etc.] One of the five kings of Midian, (<sup><0918></sup>Numbers 31:8) and so the Samaritan Chronicle says <sup>f414</sup>, it was the daughter of a king that came to a prince of the tribe of Simeon, and enticed him to eat of her food, and worship her idols. The Targum of Jonathan says she was called Selonae, the daughter of Balak, chief of the nation of Moab, whose habitation was in Midian:

*he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian*; that is, Zur, the father of Cozbi, was; there were five sons of Midian, whose names are given, (<sup><0204></sup>Genesis 25:4) from whence Jarchi concludes, that there were five principal families in Midian, and that this man was the head or chief of one of them, which is not improbable; and that also makes for the honour of Phinehas, that he spared not any for their rank and quality, of whatsoever nation they were.

**Ver. 16.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] This was some time after the above affair happened; how long it was is not certain; and a little time before the death of Moses, (see <sup><0910></sup>Numbers 31:1,2):

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 17.** *Vex the Midianites, and smite them.*] Go to war with them, and smite them with the sword; not the Moabites, but the Midianites, though they were both confederates against Israel; but God had given a charge not to contend in battle with Moab, (<sup><0819></sup>Deuteronomy 2:9), they were spared for the sake of Lot, from whom they sprang; and, as Jarchi says, for the sake of Ruth, who was to come from them; and so in the Talmud <sup>f415</sup>; though they did not entirely escape the divine resentment, as appears from (<sup><0923></sup>Deuteronomy 23:3,4) but the Midianites were the first that advised to send for Balaam, and with them he stayed and was entertained, after he had

been dismissed by Balak; and it seems as if it was to them he gave the wicked counsel, to draw Israel into fornication, and so into idolatry, and thereby bring the curse of God upon them; which advice they communicated to the Moabites, and both were concerned in putting it into execution; (see <sup>4023H</sup>Numbers 22:4,7 25:1,6 31:9,16).

**Ver. 18.** *For they vex you with their wiles*, etc.] Not with wars, but with wiles, with cunning stratagems, and artful methods to draw them into sin, that thereby they might be exposed to the wrath of God:

*wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor*; the idol Peor, that is, Baalpeor; which seems to countenance the notion that Peor was the name of a man, some great personage, who was deified after his death; now the Midianites beguiled the Israelites, by sending their daughters among them, with whom they committed fornication, and by whom they were inveigled to worship the idol Peor:

*and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian*, their sister; their countrywoman, as it was common with eastern people to call those of the same country with them their brethren and sisters: now the Midianites beguiled the Israelites, by prostituting a person of such quality to a prince of theirs, which was setting an example to other daughters of Midian to follow her, and so hereby many of the children of Israel were ensnared into whoredom, and into idolatry:

*which was slain in the day of the plague, for Peor's sake*: or for the business of Peor, as the Targum of Jonathan, because of the worship of that idol; not that Cozbi was slain upon that account, but the plague came upon Israel by reason of their worshipping of it, and it was on the day that the plague was that she was slain; by which it seems that the plague lasted but one day.

# CHAPTER 26

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 26

In this chapter an order is given to number the people of Israel a second time, (<sup><0401></sup>Numbers 26:1-4) and the account begins with Reuben, the firstborn, and the families that sprung from him, and the number of them, (<sup><0405></sup>Numbers 26:5-7) and Dathan and Abiram being of this tribe, the affair of them and Korah is afresh related, (<sup><0408></sup>Numbers 26:8-11), then the tribe of Simeon, its families and number, (<sup><0412></sup>Numbers 26:12-14), next the tribe of Gad, and their families and number, (<sup><0415></sup>Numbers 26:15-18), after that the tribe of Judah, its families and number, (<sup><0419></sup>Numbers 26:19-22) then follows the tribe of Issachar, its families and number, (<sup><0423></sup>Numbers 26:23-25), next to that the tribe of Zebulun, its families and number, (<sup><0426></sup>Numbers 26:26,27) then the sons of Joseph, and first Manasseh, his families and number, (<sup><0433></sup>Numbers 26:28-34) and then the tribe of Ephraim, its families and number, (<sup><0435></sup>Numbers 26:35-37), after that the tribe of Benjamin, its families and number, (<sup><0438></sup>Numbers 26:38-41) next the tribe of Dan, its families and number, (<sup><0442></sup>Numbers 26:42,43) and which is followed by the tribe of Asher, its families and number, (<sup><0444></sup>Numbers 26:44-47), and the muster is closed with the tribe of Naphtali, its families and number, (<sup><0448></sup>Numbers 26:48-50), and the sum total of all the numbers is given, (<sup><0451></sup>Numbers 26:51) and then follows another order to divide the land of Canaan by lot, when conquered, to the several tribes, according to their names and number, (<sup><0452></sup>Numbers 26:52-56) and an account is given of the number of the Levites and their families, their number being taken not with the other tribes, but by themselves, and which is summed up, (<sup><0457></sup>Numbers 26:57-62) and the chapter is concluded with observing, that it appeared upon this numbering of the people, that there were but two persons living of those that were first numbered among the children of Israel, (<sup><0463></sup>Numbers 26:63-65).

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass after the plague*, etc.] Related in the preceding chapter; how long after is not certain, perhaps before the war with Midian, exhorted to in the latter part of the foregoing chapter, and of which an account is given, (<sup><0401></sup>Numbers 31:1-54):

*that the Lord spake unto Moses*; out of the tabernacle, or out of the cloud:

*and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest*; the Lord had been used to speak to Moses and to Aaron; but now Aaron being dead, and Eleazar his son succeeding him in the priesthood, is joined with Moses, and the order here given is directed to them both:

*saying*: as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel*, etc.]

Excepting the Levites, who were to be numbered by themselves, and at a different age; this sum was to be taken, that it might appear that all of the old generation that came out of Egypt, of the age at which this sum was taken, were now dead, excepting two, as the Lord had threatened; and partly that as they were now about to enter the land of Canaan, it might be divided to them according to their number; as well as to show the faithfulness of God to his word and promise, that he would multiply and make them fruitful, notwithstanding all their provoking sins and transgressions:

*from twenty years old and upwards, throughout their father's house*; all of that age in every tribe, house, and family:

*all that are able to go to war in Israel*; for which they must prepare, being about to enter the land of Canaan, and dispossess and drive out the inhabitants of it.

**Ver. 3.** *And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them*, etc.] With the children of Israel, with the heads of them, their chief and principal, to assist in taking the number of the people; as when they were numbered thirty years ago, when a prince out of each tribe was taken to be with Aaron and Moses in doing that business; but those princes were now all dead, and another race succeeded, who were now employed in this service; so the Targum of Jonathan says, they spoke with the rulers, and ordered them to number them:

*in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, [near] Jericho*: or of Jericho, as the same Targum, on the other side of Jordan to that on which Jericho stood; for as yet the children of Israel had not passed that river, nor entered into the land of Canaan, in which Jericho was, but they were now opposite it; (see Gill on “<sup>Q201</sup>Numbers 22:1”):

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 4.** [*Take the sum of the people*], *from twenty years old and upward*, etc.] At the same age at which the sum was taken before, (<sup>0008</sup>Numbers 1:3) so that there could not be one that was more than sixty years of age, of all those that went into the land of Canaan, except Joshua and Caleb, and besides some few in the tribe of Levi, which did not come into either of these musters:

*and the Lord commanded Moses, and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt*; as Moses had a command to number the people before, so he had now. The sin of David was, that he numbered the people when he had no command for it; Moses, when he brought the people out of Egypt, had them committed to him by number; and now being about to die, he delivers them up as it were by number again, as Jarchi observes.

**Ver. 5.** *Reuben, the eldest son of Israel*, etc.] the number of his tribe is taken first on that account; there were four families that descended from him, the Hanochite, Palluite, Hesronite, and Carmite, and the number of men from twenty years old and upwards, fit for war, were 43,730; so that, since the last numbering, this tribe was decreased 2770; which may in part be accounted for by the families of Dathan and Abiram being cut off for their rebellion, who were this tribe, and whose affair is briefly related in the following verses, and it may be to point out this unto us.

**Ver. 8.** *And the sons of Pallu*, etc.] Or son, the plural for the singular, Pallu having but one son, whose name was Eliab, the father of Dathan and Abiram; (<sup>0019</sup>Numbers 26:9).

**Ver. 9.** *And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram*, etc.] Of Nemuel we nowhere else read either he died without children, or he and his family perished with his brethren, being concerned with them in the conspiracy; or the family of the Palluite was in his line; one of the same name may be observed in the tribe of Simeon:

*this is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation*; either before their rebellion, for their power and authority, being heads of their fathers' houses; or for their parts and abilities, being men of great wisdom and sense; or for their zeal, activity, and usefulness; or after it, and became famous, or rather infamous, on account of it, (see <sup>0012</sup>Numbers 16:2)

*who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the Lord*; who joined with Korah and his company, and quarrelled with Moses and Aaron about the priesthood; with Moses for putting Aaron into it, and with Aaron for accepting it, and officiating in it; and so with the Lord himself, by whose orders he was invested with it.

**Ver. 10.** *And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up*, etc.] Not only Dathan and Abiram, but their wives and children, their houses and tents, and all their goods, (see <sup><04162></sup>Numbers 16:32,33) together with Korah; the words being thus rendered, and standing in such close connection with the preceding, some have concluded from hence that Korah was swallowed up with them in the earth; whereas he seems rather to have been at that time with the two hundred and fifty men that had censers at the door of the tabernacle, and was consumed by fire with them, (see <sup><04165></sup>Numbers 16:16-19,40) and, indeed, it is suggested here, for the phrase may be rendered, “and the things of Korah” <sup>f416</sup>; what appertained unto him, his men, tents, goods, and substance, which agrees with (<sup><04162></sup>Numbers 16:32) or, “and as for Korah” <sup>f417</sup>; with respect to him: “when that company died”: he was at the head of, he died also, the same death they died, by fire, as follows:

*what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men*; which was the number his company consisted of, who took censers, and offered incense, and were consumed by fire, (<sup><04162></sup>Numbers 16:2,17,35), and with whom, in all probability, he perished:

*and they became a sign*, were made an example of, to deter others from the like practices, and particularly usurping any part of the priest’s office: some connect the words with the following, and take the sense to be, that this was the sign or miracle, that when they perished, Korah’s sons died not, but were preserved; which sense is countenanced by the Vulgate Latin, but the other sense is best.

**Ver. 11.** *Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not*.] Neither of the pestilence, nor by fire, nor by the swallowing up of the earth; they not being in the counsel of their father, but followed the doctrine of Moses the prophet, as the Targum of Jonathan; they either disliked their father’s scheme, or, if they engaged with him in it, they repented and departed from him, and were not present when the judgments of God came upon him and his company; there were several of his posterity who were singers in the times of David, and to whom many of the psalms were sent to be sung.



**Ver. 12-14.** *The sons of Simeon, after their families,* etc.] This tribe was next numbered, not only because Simeon was next to Reuben by birth, but because his tribe was under the standard of Reuben; two of his sons are a little differently named here than they are in (<sup>(0430)</sup>Genesis 46:10), there the eldest is called Jemuel, here Nemuel; there the youngest but one is named Zohar, here Zerah; and one of them is here omitted, namely Ohad, perhaps because he died without children, and so no family sprang from him; wherefore the families of Simeon were but five, and the number of them were 22,200; by which it appears there was a very great decrease in this tribe since the last muster, even 37,100 which in some measure is to be accounted for by the great number of this tribe supposed to have died of the plague, on account of fornication and idolatry, made mention of in the preceding chapter; a prince in this tribe having set a bad example, it is probable he was followed in it by many of it, for which great numbers were cut off. Jarchi, from Tanchuma, says, that all the 24,000 that died of the plague was of the tribe of Simeon; and so says the Samaritan Chronicle <sup>f418</sup>; but that is not likely.

**Ver. 15-18.** *The children of Gad, after their families tribe was numbered next to Simeon,* etc.] because it lay encamped with that under the standard of Reuben. There is a little variation in the names of two or three of his sons, from those by which they are called (<sup>(0456)</sup>Genesis 46:16), instead of Ziphion, here Zephon; and for Haggai, here Haggi; and what is much wider, for Ezbon, here Ozni. Seven families sprang from Gad, whose number now was 40,500; they were diminished since their last numbering 5150; it is probable this tribe, being a warlike tribe, suffered very much in their attempt to enter the land of Canaan contrary to the will of God, and were repulsed and defeated by the Amalekites, (<sup>(0460)</sup>Numbers 16:40-45).

**Ver. 19-22.** *And the sons of Judah were Er and Onan,* etc.] And besides these he had Shelah, Pharez, and Zerah, from whom families sprang, but none from the two first: for

*Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan;* where they were born; and that because of their sins, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, see <sup>(0480)</sup>Genesis 38:7-10 so that there were but three families sprang from Judah, the Shelanites, Pharzites, and Zarhites; only the family of the Pharzites was divided into two families, the Hesronites and the Hamulites, so called from two sons of Pharez; the number of these families amounted to 76,500, so that there was an increase of 1900 since the last muster, which answers to

Jacob's blessing, that he should be a praise among his brethren, (<sup>(0408)</sup>Genesis 49:8).

**Ver. 23-25.** *Of the sons of Issachar, after their families,* etc.] This tribe was numbered next to Judah, because it was under his standard. Two of his sons are a little differently named than they are (<sup>(0413)</sup>Genesis 46:13) instead of Phuvah one is called Pua, and instead of Job another is called here Jashub; this tribe consisted of four families, and the number of warlike men in it was 64,300; their increase since the last numbering of them is 9900.

**Ver. 26, 27.** *Of the sons of Zebulun, after their families,* etc.] This is numbered next to Issachar, because it was encamped under the standard of Judah; it consisted of three families, whose numbers were 60,500, so that this tribe was increased 3100.

**Ver. 28-34.** *The sons of Joseph, after their families, were Manasseh and Ephraim.*] Manasseh is here mentioned first, though Ephraim was preferred to him by Jacob, and the standard belonged to him; not because he was the firstborn, but because he had now the greater increase, though he had but one son, Machir, of whom was the family of the Machirites, and a grandson, whose name was Gilead, from whom was the family of the Gileadites, and who had six sons; of whom were the families of the Jeezerite, Halekite, Asrielite, Shechemite, Shemidaite, and Hephherite. Hephher, of whom was the last, had a son named Zelophehad, but he had no son, only five daughters, whose names are given; the number of men in this tribe, of twenty years old and upwards, fit for war, was 52,700, so that the increase was 20,500, a large increase indeed!

**Ver. 35-37.** *These are the sons of Ephraim, after their families,* etc.] Which were but three, the Shuthalhite, the Bachrite, and the Tahanite, only from the former sprung another family, called the Eranite; the number of the whole was 32,500; there was a decrease in this tribe of 8000.

**Ver. 38-41.** *The sons of Benjamin, after their families,* etc.] This tribe was numbered next to Ephraim, being under his standard. Five of the sons of Benjamin are omitted, perhaps because they died without issue, and so no families sprang from them; the names of the five sons mentioned vary a little from the names of them in (<sup>(0421)</sup>Genesis 46:21) instead of Ehi, it is here Ahiram; and instead of Huppmim and Muppmim, it is here Shupham and Hupham; from these last five were the families of the Belaite, Ashbelite, Ahiramite, Shuphamite, and Huphamite; and from the eldest of them

sprang two other families, the Ardite and Naamite, from Ard and Naaman, two sons of Bela; the number of men in these families was 45,600, so that here was an increase of 10,200.

**Ver. 42,43.** *These are the sons of Dan, after their families,* etc.] Though he had but one son, the plural being put for the singular; or by sons are meant his posterity; his son's name was Shuham, and by transposition Hushim, in (<sup>0463</sup>Genesis 46:23) from him was the family of the Shulamite; and yet, though but one, consisted of 64,400 men; there was an increase of 1700 in this tribe.

**Ver. 44-47.** *Of the children of Asher, after their families,* etc.] This tribe was numbered next to Dan, because it was under his standard; one of his sons is omitted, very probably dying childless, and so had no family; from the rest sprang the families of the Iimnite, Jesuite, and Benite; and, from the latter, two others, the Heberite and Malchielite; and it is remarked that Asher had a daughter named Serah, and who also is particularly mentioned as a sister of Asher's sons in (<sup>0467</sup>Genesis 46:17) no doubt but she was a remarkable woman, either for religion, or for wisdom and prudence, or some amiable virtue or grace or another, that she is so particularly taken notice of: according to Maimonides <sup>f419</sup> she was an heiress; for though Asher had many sons, this was his wife's daughter by another man, who had no sons, and the inheritance was his daughter's, and therefore is so particularly mentioned; she inheriting as the daughters of Zelophehad did: the number of persons in this tribe was 53,400, the increase was 11,900.

**Ver. 48-50.** *Of the sons of Naphtali, after their families,* etc.] This tribe, which is the last of them, was numbered next to Asher, because it was with that under the standard of Dan; it had four families in it, the Jahzeelite, Gunite, Jezerite, and Shillemite, and its number was 45,400, being less by 8000 than it was when first numbered.

**Ver. 51.** *These were the numbered of the children of Israel,* etc.] The twelve tribes, consisting of so many families, as above named; and the sum total of persons in them of twenty years old and upwards, and fit for war, was

*six hundred and one thousand and seven hundred and thirty;* so that though all those that were numbered thirty years ago were now dead, excepting Joshua and Caleb, yet there wanted but 1820 of that number; so mindful was the Lord of his promise, and so faithful to keep it,

notwithstanding the provocations of these people, to increase and multiply them, that they had pretty near the number to go into the land of Canaan which they had when they came out of Egypt.

**Ver. 52.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] After the sum of the people of Israel had been taken:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 53.** *Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance*, etc.] That were numbered, and to none else:

*according to the number of their names*; and for this end was the number of them now taken, that the land might be equally divided among them; women and minors, or such as were under twenty years of age, had no share in it; and even only those who were at that age at this time; so Jarchi says, it was not divided to any that were less than twenty years of age, even though they came to be full twenty before the division of the land; for they were seven years subduing it, and seven years dividing it, yet none took any part of it but these 601,730: nay, he says, if a man had six children they took but their father's part only.

**Ver. 54.** *To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance*, etc.] To a tribe more numerous, and consisting of more and larger families, a greater part of the land was to be given to them to possess; and to a smaller tribe, and of the fewer families and persons in them, a lesser share of it: this direction is given to Moses, but is not designed for him personally, for he never entered the land, but died before Israel went into it; but for the chief ruler that would be then in being, namely, Joshua, his successor:

*to everyone shall his inheritance be given, according to those that were numbered of him*; that is, to every tribe, and so to every family in it, according to the number of men in it, that were of the above age when the sum of them was taken: because it is in the original text, "to a man according to those numbered of him", etc.<sup>f420</sup>; hence the Jewish writers<sup>f421</sup> gather, that the land was distributed not to women, but to men only.

**Ver. 55.** *Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot*, etc.] That the division might appear to be according to the determination and will of God, and not left to the judgment and discretion of the chief magistrate, though bound by the above rule:

*according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit*; that is, according as to whatsoever name of a tribe such a part or portion of the land comes up by lot, that shall their inheritance be: Jarchi says, the names of the twelve tribes were written on twelve scrolls of parchment, and twelve borders or limits of land on twelve others, and they were mixed together in an urn, and the prince put his hand into it and took two scrolls; a scroll came up with the name of a tribe, and a scroll with a border or limit expressed on it; and the lot, he says, was by the Holy Ghost, for Eleazar, at the same time, was clothed with Urim and Thummim <sup>f422</sup>; so that the people were certain that the disposition and division of the land was of God; but there were but nine tribes and a half, among whom the land of Canaan was divided, two tribes and a half settled on the other side Jordan, namely, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

**Ver. 56.** *According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided*, etc.] It was by the determination of the lot that the land was divided by inheritance, and that was by the Lord, according to (<sup>2163</sup>Proverbs 16:33)

*between many and few*; it was so ordered of the Lord by the lot, that the many should have a larger share, and the few a lesser.

**Ver. 57-62.** *And these are they that were numbered of the Levites, after their families*, etc.] And they were numbered not with the rest of the tribes of Israel, but by themselves, as they were at the first numbering of the tribes; the three principal families of which were, the Gershonite, the Kohathite, and Merarite, so called from the three sons of Levi; but all their sons are not mentioned, of the sons of Gershon only Libni, from whom was the family of the Libnites; not Shimei, because, as Aben Ezra conjectures, either he had no sons, or, if he had, they died without any, and so there was no family from them; and of the sons of Kohath no mention is made of Uzziel, nor of Izhar, but in the Korhites, only of the Hebronite family from Hebron; and of Amram, whose wife Jochebed is spoken of as a daughter of Levi, whom Levi's wife, as Jarchi rightly supplies it, bore to him in Egypt, and which Jochebed was the mother of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam; and it is observed that Aaron had four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, the two first of which died for offering strange fire to the Lord, and the two last were now living: from Merari, another son of Levi, sprang two families, the Mahlite, and the Mushite; and the whole number of the Levites at this time taken was 23,000 males of a month old and upward; so that here was an increase of 1,000 males since the former numbering of

them: the reason why they were not numbered with the other tribes was, because they had no part of the land of Israel divided to them, and had no inheritance in it.

**Ver. 63.** *These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest,* etc.] That is, these were the Levites, their families, and the number of males in them, which was taken by Moses and Eleazar, who might be only concerned in numbering the Levites, of which tribe they were: and *who also numbered the children of Israel;* all the tribes of them, with the assistance of their princes:

*in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho;* as they were commanded by the Lord.

**Ver. 64.** *But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered.* etc.] About thirty eight years before this time: this, as Aben Ezra observes, respects the numbering of the Israelites, not of the Levites; for there were some of the tribe of Levi numbered then who were living, as Eleazar, and very probably Ithamar, and perhaps some few more, though it may be Eleazar, being now a numberer, was not reckoned among the numbered:

*when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai;* (see <sup><0001></sup>Numbers 1:1-54) for as there were none of the tribe of Levi among the spies, there might be but few of them among the murmurers.

**Ver. 65.** *For the Lord had said of them, they shall surely die in the wilderness,* etc.] This was threatened them, (<sup><0442></sup>Numbers 14:32) and now it was fulfilled:

*and there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun;* the only two of the spies that brought a good report of the land of Canaan; all the rest of them, and those that murmured on the ill report of theirs, were now dead.

# CHAPTER 27

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 27

This chapter relates, that, upon a petition of the daughters of Zelophehad, the affair of inheritances was settled; and it is directed that, in case of want of male issue, inheritances should pass to females, and in failure of them to the next of kin, whether father's brethren or any near kinsman, (<sup>-042708</sup>Numbers 27:1-11), also an order to Moses to go up to the Mount Abarim, and take a view of the good land, and die; with the reason of it, (<sup>-042712</sup>Numbers 27:12-14), upon which Moses desires a successor of him might be appointed, (<sup>-042715</sup>Numbers 27:15-17), in answer to which Joshua is nominated, and being presented before the high priest and the people, was invested with his office, by imposition of hands, and had his charge given him, (<sup>-042718</sup>Numbers 27:18-23).

**Ver. 1.** *Then came the daughters of Zelophehad*, etc.] Who are mentioned among the families of Manasseh, under that of the Hephertites, (<sup>-042533</sup>Numbers 26:33), their father being dead, and they having no brethren, when they heard the land was to be divided among those that were numbered, and who were only males of twenty years old and upwards, were concerned, lest they should have no share in the division of the land; and therefore came, according to the Targum of Jonathan, to the house of judgment, or court of judicature, where Moses, the princes, etc. were now sitting: the genealogy of Zelophehad is given;

*he was the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, the son of Joseph*; by which it appears he was of the tribe of Manasseh, and of the fourth generation from him:

*and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, Noah, ann Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah*; in the same order their names are given in (<sup>-042533</sup>Numbers 26:33 <sup>-042713</sup>Joshua 17:3), but in (<sup>-042811</sup>Numbers 36:11), it is a little altered, Noah and Tirzah change places, which Jarchi says shows they were upon an equality one with another.

**Ver. 2.** *And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes, and all the congregation*, etc.] Who were now sitting

in court, to hear and try causes brought before them; here were Moses the chief magistrate, Eleazar the high priest, the princes of the several tribes, and the representatives of the whole congregation, or it may be the seventy elders; a very grand and august assembly, before whom these ladies appeared, and from whom they might expect to have justice done them:

*by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; near to which this court was held, both for the convenience of the people, to apply to in case of need, when they came thither to worship, and of Moses, to seek the Lord in case of any difficulty that might arise, as now did:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 3.** *Our father died in the wilderness*, etc.] As all the generation of the children of Israel did, that came out of Egypt, who were twenty years old and upwards, excepting Joshua and Caleb:

*and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah*; which is observed, not so much to obtain the favour and good will of Moses as to clear the memory of their father from any reproach upon it, he dying in the wilderness; and chiefly to show that the claim of his posterity to a share in the land was not forfeited, he not being in that rebellion, nor in any other; so that he and his were never under any attainder:

*but died in his own sin*; which though common to all men, every man has his own peculiar way of sinning, and is himself only answerable for it, (<sup>2516</sup>Isaiah 53:6 <sup>25804</sup>Ezekiel 18:4) he sinned alone, had no partner or confederate, whom he had drawn into any notorious and public sin, as mutiny, etc. to the prejudice of the state, and the rulers in it; so the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“and he did not cause others to sin,”

so Jarchi; some take him to be the sabbath breaker, (<sup>04152</sup>Numbers 15:32), others that he was one of those that went up the hill, (<sup>04144</sup>Numbers 14:44,45), most likely his sin was that of unbelief, disbelieving the spies that brought the good report of the land, and giving credit to those that brought an ill report of it; and so with the rest of the people murmured, for which his carcass, with others, fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the good land, through unbelief: a sin not punished in their children:



*and had no sons.* which was the reason of this application.

**Ver. 4.** *Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son* etc.] Or be withdrawn, and his family lose their part and share on that account; this they thought was unreasonable: according to the Targum of Jonathan, to prevent the name of their father being lost, and his part in the land, their motion was, that their mother might marry their father's brother, according to the law in (<sup><0285></sup>Deuteronomy 25:5,6), with which Jarchi agrees; but it does not appear that that law was as yet in being; though how otherwise the name of their father would be preserved, than by raising up seed in that way, is not easy to say; except, as some think, it was done by a son of one of those heiresses, or by the first son of everyone of them, being called after the name of their grandfather Zelophehad, or their mother's grandfather Hephher; though the Jews<sup>f423</sup> commonly by the "name" understand no other than the "inheritance", which seems to be confirmed by what follows:

*give us therefore a possession among the brethren of our fathers;* a part with their uncles, or their children; by which they express their faith that the children of Israel would inherit the land, though as yet it was not conquered, nor even entered into; and might signify, as some think, their concern to have a part and portion in the heavenly inheritance the land of Canaan was typical of; and if so, as Ainsworth observes, they may be considered as five wise virgins indeed.

**Ver. 5.** *And Moses brought their cause before the Lord.*] For it seems it was too difficult for this court to decide; and it devolving upon Moses, as the president of it, and who only could have recourse to God at all times, he carried it to him and consulted with him about it: this, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, was one of the four causes that came before Moses the prophet, that he solved according to the mind of the Lord, which he consulted; one was concerning the blasphemer, (<sup><0341></sup>Leviticus 24:11), the other concerning those defiled by the dead, (<sup><0418></sup>Numbers 9:8), the third concerning the sabbath breaker, (<sup><0454></sup>Numbers 15:34) and the fourth was this; (see Gill on "<sup><0342></sup>Leviticus 24:12").

**Ver. 6.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] From off the mercy seat, where he consulted him, and from whence he promised to commune with him about any difficult matter that came before him, (<sup><0252></sup>Exodus 25:22), *saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 7.** *The daughters of Zelophehad speak right*, etc.] What is just and reasonable:

*thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren*; their uncles, or rather the children of them; for it is reasonable to suppose their father's brethren, or their uncles, were dead also: or "in giving thou shall give"<sup>f424</sup>; which, according to Jarchi, denotes two parts or portions they should receive; the part of their father, who was of them that came out of Egypt, and his part with his brethren in the goods of Hopher: in the Misnah<sup>f425</sup>, from whence he seems to have taken it, it is;

"the daughters of Zelophehad took three parts for inheritance; the part of their father, who was with them that came out of Egypt, and his part with his brethren in the goods of Hopher, and because he was the firstborn he was to take two parts:"

and though this strict command was given to Moses, yet it does not respect him personally, who lived not to enter into the land to see it divided; but him who should be his successor, and chief magistrate at the time of the division of it, which was Joshua, and of whom these ladies claimed their part, and had it, (<sup>f426</sup>Joshua 17:3,4),

*and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them*; that is, that part which would have fallen to him by lot, had he been living, these were to take, they standing in his place; and so the portion of the land he would have had was to be divided between these live daughters of his.

**Ver. 8.** *And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel*, etc.] The above affair occasioned a law to be made, in which all the people would have a concern, among whom such cases should happen, as after related:

*saying, if a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter*; as in the above case of the daughters of Zelophehad; what was determined as to their particular case was made into a general law.

**Ver. 9.** *And if he have no daughter*, etc.] Dies without any issue:

*then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren*; and the children descending from them; that is, if his father was dead; otherwise, if he was living, he was to be preferred to them, according to the Jewish writers; though, according to our law, no estate in fee simple ascends lineally, or

goes from a son, who has made a purchase of it, to a father: in the Misnah it is said <sup>f426</sup>, the order of inheritances is thus,

“if a man dies and has no son, then they cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter; a son is before a daughter, and all that descend from the son are before the daughter; the daughter is before the brethren (of her father), and those that descend from the daughter are before the brethren; the brethren (of a man) are before his father’s brethren (or his uncles); and they that descend from his brethren are before his father’s brethren: this is the general rule, everyone that is before in the inheritance, those that descend from him are before others, and a father is before all that descend from him.”

**Ver. 10.** *And if he have no brethren*, etc.] Nor any descendants from them: *then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father’s brethren*; that is, to his uncles, and to their children.

**Ver. 11.** *And if his father have no brethren*, etc.] Nor any descending from them:

*then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family*: that is nearest of kin to him, though ever so remote; that is, of his father’s family, not his mother’s, which was no family:

*and he shall possess it*: here the Jews have a saying, that an Israelite is never without heirs <sup>f427</sup>:

*and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment*; a judicial law, that should ever remain firm, and sure, and unalterable:

*as the Lord commanded Moses*; and therefore no man could dispose of his estate or inheritance by will, otherwise than is set forth by this command.

**Ver. 12.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] After the covenant made with Israel in the plains of Moab, and the song delivered to them, (~~630~~ Deuteronomy 29:1 ~~631~~ Deuteronomy 32:1-49)

*get thee up to this Mount Abarim*; which was a range of mountains, so called from the passages by them over Jordan into the land of Canaan; one part of which was Nebo, and the top of that Pisgah, from whence Moses

had the view of the good land here directed to; (see <sup><0637></sup>Numbers 33:47, <sup><0639></sup>Deuteronomy 32:49 34:1).

*and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel;* for though he was now one hundred and twenty years old, his eyes were not dim, he could see at a great distance; and the height of this hill gave him an advantage of taking a prospect of the land, a great way into it; and very probably his sight might be greatly strengthened and increased at this time by the Lord, for the purpose; this may be an emblem of that sight by faith, which believers have at times of the heavenly Canaan, and sometimes are favoured with an enlarged one of it before their death.

**Ver. 13.** *And when thou hast seen it,* etc.] Which was all he was admitted to; for to go into it and see it was not allowed him, though he importuned it, (<sup><0625></sup>Deuteronomy 3:25,26),

*thou shalt be gathered unto thy people,* as Aaron thy brother was gathered; die as he did, in the same sudden, easy, quiet, and cheerful manner; (see <sup><0626></sup>Numbers 20:26-28).

**Ver. 14.** *For ye rebelled against my commandment the desert of Zin,* etc.] Both Moses and Aaron, which was the reason why they were not suffered to go into the land of Canaan, but died a little before the children of Israel came into it: what their sin was, called here a rebelling against the commandment of the Lord; (see Gill on "<sup><0612></sup>Numbers 20:12"), and is next suggested:

*in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me before their eyes;* when the congregation of Israel strove against the Lord for want of water, they did not sanctify the Lord by believing in him; but expressed some degree of diffidence before the congregation about fetching water out of the rock, or questioning whether the Lord would give it to such a rebellious people, though they had his order for it:

*that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin;* so called to distinguish it from another Meribah, or water of strife, at Rephidim, (<sup><0617></sup>Exodus 17:7 <sup><0625></sup>Deuteronomy 32:51).

**Ver. 15.** *And Moses spake unto the Lord,* etc.] Having requested to go into the land and see it, which was denied him; and perceiving he must quickly die, and being a man of a public spirit, and concerned for the

welfare of the people of Israel, prays that a successor might be nominated and appointed:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 16.** *Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh*, etc.] The Maker of the souls of men, called the spirits of all flesh, or of corporeal beings, to distinguish them from the angels, who, though spirits, are incorporeal; and who knows the different qualities of the souls of men, their powers, and capacities, and fitness for service, what gifts and talents they have for business; and who can bestow such upon them, which will qualify them for it:

*set a man over the congregation*: meaning in his room and stead.

**Ver. 17.** *Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in*, etc.] Which may lead them out, and go before them in war, and command them in battle and bring them in peace, having conquered their enemies; or these phrases only mean the administration of civil government among them, and diligence and assiduity in it, (see <sup><4010></sup>2 Chronicles 1:10), unless it has any peculiar respect to the leading the people of Israel out of the wilderness, and introducing them into the land of Canaan:

*that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd*; and so wander about, having none to guide them into proper pastures, or to protect them from beasts of prey; which is to be in a most forlorn and distressed condition; (see <sup><4085></sup>Matthew 9:36).

**Ver. 18.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] In answer to his request:

*take thou Joshua the son of Nun*, who had been a servant of his near forty years, and of whose humility, diligence, faithfulness and integrity he had sufficient proof, as well as of his skill and courage in military affairs, particularly at the battle with Amalek, (<sup><0173></sup>Exodus 17:9-13 24:13 33:11):

*a man in whom is the Spirit*: not only in whom is a spirit or soul, which is in every man; but the Spirit of God, and that not only as a spirit of grace and sanctification, which is in every good man; but as a spirit of prophecy, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; or rather it respects the more than ordinary gifts of the Spirit qualifying him for government, as courage and conduct, wisdom, prudence, and greatness of mind:

*and lay thine hand upon him*; thereby transferring the government to him, pointing him out to the people as his successor; to show to the children of Israel that he was in his place, as Aben Ezra notes; upon which followed a larger measure of the gifts of the Spirit of God; (see <sup>f640</sup>Deuteronomy 34:9).

**Ver. 19.** *And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation*, etc.] Declaring before them all that he was his successor, and that they might be witnesses of what was said and done unto him, and receive and acknowledge him as such, and as having power and authority over them, which it became them to submit unto:

*and give him a charge in their sight*: to take care of the people committed to him; to rule them in the fear of God, and according to his laws; and to be of good courage, and go before the people and introduce them into the land of Canaan; assuring him of the divine Presence and help, so that he need not fear any enemy whatever; of this charge, and as confirmed by the Lord himself, (see <sup>f630</sup>Deuteronomy 31:7,8,23).

**Ver. 20.** *And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him*, etc.] Meaning not the Spirit that was on Moses, and the gifts of the Spirit; for to do this was the work of the Lord, and not Moses, (see <sup>f4117</sup>Numbers 11:17,25), but of the honour of civil government; suggesting that he should give him a share in it, and use him not as a minister and servant, as he had been, but as his colleague and partner; and let him have some of the ensigns of power and authority, and some exercise of it; not only to inure him to government, but to make him respectable among the people:

*that all the congregation of Israel may be obedient*; to him as their ruler and governor, hearken to his words, and obey his commands.

**Ver. 21.** *And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest*, etc.] This was for the honour of God, whose priest Eleazar was, and whose oracle was consulted by him; for it is said <sup>f428</sup>, the high priest did not come into the presence of the king but when he pleased; and he did not stand before him, but the king stood before the high priest, as it is said, “and before Eleazar the priest shall he stand”; though it is commanded the high priest to honour the king, and to rise up and stand when he comes unto him; and the king does not stand before him, but when he consults for him by the judgment of Urim; and his posture seems to be different from other persons that consulted; for the same writer <sup>f429</sup> observes, in answer to a question,

“how do they consult? the priest stands, and his face is before the ark, and he that consults is behind him, and his face to the back of the priest;”

whereas here Joshua stood before the priest, and so any king or supreme governor:

*who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord:* of the Urim and Thummim which were in the breastplate of judgment, and of consultation by them, (see Gill on “~~Exodus~~ Exodus 28:30”) and from this place the Jews<sup>f430</sup> infer that consultation was not made by them for a private person, but for a king, or for one the congregation stood in need of:

*at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in;* go out to war, and return from it, or do any service enjoined them; that is, either at the word of the Lord, or rather at the word of Eleazar the priest, declaring the will of God, which comes to much the same sense; or at the word of Joshua, directed by the high priest, according to the oracle of God; and he being under such direction, the people could never do amiss in obeying him, or be in any fear or danger of being led wrong by him; but he is mentioned in the next clause, as included in those that went out, and came in:

*[both] he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation;* which Maimonides<sup>f431</sup> interprets thus, “he”, this is the king; “and all the children of Israel”, this is the anointed for war, or he whom the congregation hath need of; “and all the congregation”, these are the great sanhedrim, or seventy elders.

**Ver. 22.** *And Moses did as the Lord commanded him,* etc.] Being faithful and obedient to him in all things, though ever so contrary to his own private interest and to that of his family:

*and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation;* as his successor, whom God had named and appointed as such.

**Ver. 23.** *And he laid his hands upon him,* etc.] Jarchi observes, that he did this cheerfully, and did more than he was commanded; for the Lord said to him, “lay thine hand”, but he laid both his hands:

*and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded Moses;* (<sup>-0279</sup>Numbers 27:19), this is a clear proof that Moses was no imposter, since he sought not to aggrandize his family, or serve the interest of that; nor did he in the least repine or murmur that the priesthood was given to his brother Aaron and sons, and now the civil government to his servant of the tribe of Ephraim; and as for his own posterity, they were only common Levites that waited upon the priests.



# CHAPTER 28

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 28

In this chapter is a repetition of several laws concerning sacrifices, as the law of the daily sacrifice morning and evening, (<sup><0431></sup>Numbers 28:1-8) of those that were offered every week on the sabbath day, (<sup><0439></sup>Numbers 28:9,10) and every month on the first day of the month, (<sup><0431></sup>Numbers 28:11-15) and on the seven days of unleavened bread, (<sup><0436></sup>Numbers 28:16-25), and at the feast of weeks, (<sup><0435></sup>Numbers 28:26-31).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] The number of the children of Israel being taken, and orders given to divide the land unto them, according to their numbers; it was thought proper by the Lord to renew, or to put in mind of, the laws concerning sacrifices which had been made, and which they were to observe when they came into the land of Canaan; and the rather this was necessary, as it was now thirty eight years ago since these laws were first made, and during that time were much in disuse, at least some of them: and besides, this was a new generation of men that were sprung up, those that were at Mount Sinai at the giving of the law being all dead, except a very few; and now Moses also was about to die, and would be no more with them to remind them of these laws, and see that they were observed; and a successor of him being appointed and constituted, it may be likewise on his account, as well as the people's, that these laws were repeated:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Command the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] For what follows concerned them all; namely, the offering of their daily, weekly, monthly, and anniversary sacrifices, which were not for private persons, but for the whole congregation; and these might be considered by them not merely as commands and duties to be observed, but as tokens of the divine favour to them, that notwithstanding all their rebellions and provocations in the wilderness, sacrifices for sin were ordered, continued, and accepted of by the Lord; and his acceptance of them, and well pleasedness in them, may easily be observed in the expressions used concerning them:

*my offering, and my bread*; by “offering” may be meant in general all sacrifices which were offered to the Lord, and by his command; and more especially the burnt offering, which was wholly and peculiarly his, and is after explained by sacrifices made by fire, and it is chiefly of burnt offerings this chapter treats; and by “bread” may be meant either the shewbread, which was set upon a table before the Lord continually, as his bread; so the Targum of Jonathan,

“my oblation, the bread of the order of my table, shall the priests eat, but what ye offer on the altar no man has power to eat;”

or else the meat offering, or rather, as it may be called, the bread offering, which always went along with burnt offerings; though the copulative “and”, which is not in the text, may be omitted, and both may signify the same, “my offering”, that is, “my bread”; for the sacrifices were the food of God, the provisions of his house, of which there were all sorts in the sacrifices, flesh, bread, and wine; particularly the daily sacrifice was his food every day, and the fat of sacrifices burnt is called the food of the offering made by fire, (<sup><ORIG></sup>Leviticus 3:16), so Jarchi interprets it, “my offering”, this is the blood; “my bread”, the “amurim”, or fat that covereth the inward parts, which were burnt on the altar:

*for my sacrifices made by fire for a sweet savour unto me*; which respects burnt offerings, wholly consumed by fire, and were entirely the Lord’s, and which he smelled a sweet savour in, or were acceptable to him: these the children of Israel were

*to observe to offer unto him in their due season*; the daily sacrifice, morning and evening; not before morning, nor after evening, as Aben Ezra observes; and so all the rest at the proper time fixed, whether weekly, monthly, or yearly. The Jews, from this phrase, “observe to offer unto me”, conclude the necessity of fixing stations, or stationary men, as Jarchi notes; so the tradition is,

“these are the stations, as it is said, “command the children of Israel, etc.” but how can the offering of a man be offered, and he not stand by it? wherefore the former prophets appointed twenty four courses, and to every course there was a station at Jerusalem of priests, Levites, and Israelites; and when the time of each course came to go up, the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem, and

the Israelites who belonged to that course went into their cities, and read the history of the creation <sup>f432</sup>.”

now these stations, or stationary men, were substitutes for, or representatives of all Israel, and stood by the sacrifices when they were offered, in which all Israel were concerned, as particularly in the daily sacrifice, which is here first taken notice of.

**Ver. 3.** *And thou shalt say unto them*, etc.] Having directed Moses to command the people of Israel to observe to offer all the sacrifices of God in general, the Lord proceeds to order him to speak of them to them particularly and distinctly; this, according to Jarchi, is an admonition to the sanhedrim:

*this is the offering made by fire, which ye shall offer unto the Lord*; the daily burnt offering, which was wholly consumed by fire:

*two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day for a continual burnt offering*; this law was made before, and is directed to in (<sup><1238></sup>Exodus 29:38) where the same things are said as here, only, as a further descriptive character of the lambs, they are here said to be “without spot”; so all sacrifices were to be without blemish, whether expressed or not; and in this, as in other things, these lambs were typical of Christ, the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish; and are said to be a “continual” burnt offering, because they were offered every day in the week, without any intermission, on any account whatever, which is frequently observed in this chapter: and this was to continue, and did continue until the Messiah came, who put an end to it by the sacrifice of himself, as to any real use of it; and was in fact made to cease a few years after, by the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and was before that a little while interrupted in the times of Antiochus, (<sup><2781></sup>Daniel 8:11,12 9:27).

**Ver. 4.** *The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning*, etc.] Every morning, to make atonement for the sins of the night, as the Targum of Jonathan:

*and the other lamb shall thou offer at even*; or “between the two evenings”, to make atonement for the sins of the day, as the same Targum; in which they prefigured Christ, the Lamb of God, who continually, every day, morning and night, and every moment, takes away the sins of his people, through the virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice, (<sup><412></sup>John 1:29), (see Gill on “<sup><1238></sup>Exodus 29:39”).

**Ver. 5.** *And the tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering,* etc.] Which always went along with the burnt offering:

*mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil:* which in those times and countries was used instead of butter; and fine flour and this mingled together made a “minchah”, or bread offering, as it should rather be called; of the measures used, (see Gill on “~~4290~~Exodus 29:40”).

**Ver. 6.** *It is a continual burnt offering,* etc.] For the meat offering was burnt as well as the lambs, at least part of it:

*which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord;* that is, this law concerning the daily burnt offering was made on Mount Sinai, so long ago as the children of Israel were there; and it was then ordered that they should continually offer such a sacrifice by fire, which would be grateful and acceptable unto God, especially when done in faith of the sacrifice of his Son it was a type of; or which sacrifice was “made”<sup>f433</sup> or offered at Mount Sinai, when the law of it was first given there: hence Aben Ezra observes, that this is a sign that they did not offer burnt offerings in the wilderness after they journeyed from Sinai; but then, though sacrifices were not so frequently offered by them as afterwards, yet one would think that the daily sacrifice would not be omitted, which seemed to be always necessary; nor would there be any, or but little use of the altar, and the fire continually burning on it, if this was the case; (see ~~4085~~Amos 5:25).

**Ver. 7.** *And the drink offering thereof [shall be] the fourth [part] of an hin for the one lamb,* etc.] For the lamb offered in the morning, along with the meat offering of which went a drink offering, which was of wine, and strong wine too, as the next clause expresses it; the quantity of which was the fourth part of an hin, which was about a quart and half a pint of our measure:

*in the holy [place] shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord [for] a drink offering;* that is, in the court of the tabernacle upon the altar of burnt offering, which stood there: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it of old choice wine, old wine being reckoned best, (see ~~4159~~Luke 5:39), and though this wine was poured out on the altar, and not properly drank by any, yet it was to be the strongest, best, and choicest that could be got, as it was reasonable it should; since it was poured out as a libation or drink offering to the Lord, which was his way of drinking it, as

the burning of the sacrifice was his way of eating that; all which was typical of the sufferings, sacrifice, and bloodshed of Christ, which are well pleasing and acceptable to the Lord; (see <sup><B></sup>Isaiah 53:10 <sup><B></sup>Ephesians 5:2).

**Ver. 8.** *And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even*, etc.] As before directed, (<sup><B></sup>Numbers 28:4):

*as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, shalt thou offer it*; some think that “caph”, “as”, is put for “beth”, “with”, the letters being similar, and so render the words, “with the meat offering of the morning, and with the drink offering thereof”; but there is no need of such a version, nor is it with propriety; and the meaning is, that a meat offering and a drink offering were to go with the lamb offered at evening, of the same sort, and in like manner, as were offered with the lamb of the morning:

*a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord*; this is repeated, to encourage the people to offer it, and to show how very acceptable it was to the Lord, especially the antitype of it.

**Ver. 9.** *And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot*, etc.] Just such as were appointed for the daily sacrifice:

*and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil*; that is, two tenth parts of an ephah of flour mixed with two fourth parts of an hin of oil; of oil olive, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, which is always meant, wherever oil is mentioned; which made one meat offering to them doubled for both lambs, or two meat offerings of the same quantity with those of the daily sacrifice, one for one lamb, and the other for the other:

*and the drink offering thereof*: which was of a like quantity of wine doubled, in proportion to the meat offering; when these lambs, with the meat and drink offerings, were offered up, is not said, whether the one in the morning after, and the other in the evening before the daily sacrifice, which is not improbable, or both together.

**Ver. 10.** *This is the burnt offering of every sabbath*, etc.] Or, “of the sabbath in its sabbath”<sup>f434</sup>, that is, as Jarchi observes, the burnt offering of one sabbath was not to be offered on another, but only on its own; so that if the sabbath was past, and the offering not offered, it ceased; it was not to be renewed the following sabbath; every sacrifice was to be offered in its own season, (<sup><B></sup>Numbers 28:2),

*beside the continual burnt offering, and its drink offering*; and meat offering also, over and above the two lambs of the daily sacrifice; with the offerings that were appendages to them, two other lambs, with proportionate meat and drink offerings, were offered also; the other were not to be omitted on account of these, showing that more religious service was to be performed on sabbath days than on others: it may be rendered “after” or “upon”, to which sense Aben Ezra interprets it, after the daily sacrifice; because, says he, he puts upon it the burnt offering of the sabbath; which seems to confirm what has been suggested on the preceding verse, that these lambs were offered morning and evening after the daily sacrifice, and indeed there was nothing offered before that.

**Ver. 11.** *And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord*, etc.] On the first day of every month, when the new moon appeared; that this was religiously observed appears from the blowing of the trumpets over the sacrifices on this day, from attendance on the word of the Lord, by his prophets, on this day, and from abstinence from worldly business on it, (<sup><04010></sup>Numbers 10:10 <sup><1023></sup>2 Kings 4:23 <sup><1085></sup>Amos 8:5)

*two young bullocks, and one ram, seven rams of the first year without spot*; this was the burnt offering, and a very large and costly one it was: more creatures were offered on this day than on a sabbath day; not that this was a more holy day than that, but this was but once a month, and therefore the expense might be the more easily bore, whereas that was every week.

**Ver. 12-14.** *And three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock*, etc.] The quantities of flour in the meat offering, for each bullock, and for the ram, and for each lamb, are the same as in (<sup><0454></sup>Numbers 15:4-10) only the quantity of oil for each is not here expressed, which for a bullock was half an hin of oil, for a ram the third part of an hin, and for a lamb the fourth part; and likewise the quantity of wine in the drink offerings for each of them is the same here as there; which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was to be wine of grapes, and not any other:

*this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the year*; or, “of the month in its month”<sup>f435</sup>; it was to be offered at its appointed time every month, and not to be deferred to another: Jarchi has the same remark here as on verse ten. (See Gill on <sup><0810></sup>Numbers 28:10”).

**Ver. 15.** *And one kid of the goats, for a sin offering unto the Lord, shall be offered,* etc.] This was an offering of a different sort, not a burnt offering, but a sin offering, typical of Christ, who was made an offering for sin; and it was of that sort of sin offerings which were to be eaten, as the Jews say <sup>f436</sup>; for there were some that were not, even such whose blood was brought into the sanctuary, (<sup><0830></sup>Leviticus 6:30). Maimonides <sup>f437</sup> observes, that this phrase, “unto the Lord”, is very particular and expressive, and that the design of it is, to observe that it was offered to the Lord, and not to the moon, as the Egyptians did:

*besides the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering;* though the burnt offering of this day was so very large, consisting of so many creatures; and besides that a goat for a sin offering; yet the daily sacrifice was not to be omitted, and what belonged to that.

**Ver. 16.** *And in the fourteenth day of the first month,* etc.] The month Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan or Abib, which, upon the Israelites coming out of Egypt, and on that account, was made the first month; otherwise Tisri or September was the first month, (see <sup><0212></sup>Exodus 12:2 13:4),

*[is] the passover of the Lord;* a feast in which a lamb was killed and eaten, in memory of the Lord’s passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he slew the firstborn in Egypt; (see <sup><0216></sup>Exodus 12:6,18,23,27).

**Ver. 17.** *And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast,* etc.] Not of the passover, that was the day before, but of unleavened bread, which began on this day, and lasted seven days, (<sup><0216></sup>Leviticus 23:6) which is what the Jews call the Chagigah:

*seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten;* (see <sup><0215></sup>Exodus 12:15,18).

**Ver. 18.** *In the first day shall be an holy convocation,* etc.] The first of the seven days, which was kept in a very religious manner:

*ye shall do no manner of servile work therein;* except by preparing food to eat; (see <sup><0216></sup>Exodus 12:16).

**Ver. 19.** *But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto the Lord,* etc.] Which was to be of the creatures next mentioned:

*two young bullocks,* etc. the same with the burnt offering on the first day of the month, (<sup><0211></sup>Numbers 28:11).

**Ver. 20, 21.** *And their meat offering*, etc.] The quantity of flour for which is the same for a bullock, a ram, and a lamb, as in (<sup><BR2></sup>Numbers 28:12,13).

**Ver. 22.** *And one goat [for] a sin offering, to make atonement for you.*] For notwithstanding all their services and sacrifices, and though this day was an holy convocation, yet there was need of a sin offering to expiate their guilt, typical of Christ, who takes away the sins of our holy things as well as all other sins: this sin offering also was of that sort which were eaten; for Maimonides says <sup>f438</sup>, the goat of the sin offering was eaten on the second day of the passover, which was the sixteenth of Nisan.

**Ver. 23.** *Ye shall offer these beside the burnt offering in the morning*, etc.]) The daily morning sacrifice, and also besides the daily evening sacrifices, though it is not expressed:

*which is for a continual burnt offering*; and not to be intermitted on any account, let the sacrifices of the day be ever so numerous; great care is taken to observe this.

**Ver. 24.** *After this manner ye shall offer daily throughout the seven days*, etc.] That is, two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, for a burnt offering, on everyone of the seven days; but then they were not all holy convocations, only the first and last:

*the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord*; it seems by this that only the burnt offering was offered up every day, but not a goat of the sin offering, that was peculiar to the first day:

*it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering*; which is again repeated, that it might be diligently observed.

**Ver. 25.** *And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation*, etc.]) As on the first:

*ye shall do no servile work*; unless in dressing food.

**Ver. 26.** *Also in the day of the firstfruits*, etc.] When the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were brought unto the Lord, which was the day of Pentecost, fifty days from the sheaf of the wave offering being brought:

*when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord*; that is, a meat offering made of the new corn, which were two wave loaves of two tenth deals of fine flour, baked with leaven, (<sup><BR25></sup>Leviticus 23:15-17)



*after your weeks be out*; the seven weeks from the passover to Pentecost, even seven complete sabbaths or weeks, (<sup><R235></sup>Leviticus 23:15)

*ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work*; (see <sup><R221></sup>Leviticus 23:21).

**Ver. 27-30.** *But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord*, etc.] Which was of the same kind, and was of the same number of creatures as on the first day of the month, and on the seven days of unleavened bread, (<sup><R311></sup>Numbers 28:11,19,24), and the meat offering which went along with this was of the same quantity of flour to each creature as in the above mentioned sacrifices; and on this day also was offered a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and there were also peace offerings which are not mentioned here, nor is there any mention of any in the whole chapter; (see <sup><R239></sup>Leviticus 23:19).

**Ver. 31.** *And ye shall offer them besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering*, etc.] The daily sacrifice of the morning and evening, so often mentioned in this chapter, and so frequently inculcated as not to be omitted, either in the weekly, monthly, or anniversary festivals; it being so necessary a sacrifice, and so eminent a type of the great sacrifice of the Messiah:

*they shall be unto you without blemish, and their drink offerings*; the flour, of which the meat offerings were made, was to be pure and clean, and free from vermin; and the wine for the drink offering was not to be palled, and dead, and dreggy: of the former, it is said in the Misnah <sup>f439</sup>,

“the treasurer puts his hand into it (the flour); if there comes any dust with it,”

it is rejected; if it produces worms, it is rejected: this, the commentators say <sup>f440</sup>, is to be understood, if the greatest part of it is such; and with respect to the latter, Jarchi says, our Rabbins learn from hence (this passage of Scripture) that wine in which flour rises (or a dregginess like flour) it is unfit for drink offerings, for they should be perfect: this denotes the purity of Christ, the bread of life, and his spotless and perfect sacrifice, when his soul was poured out unto death.

# CHAPTER 29

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 29

In this chapter an account is given of the various offerings on the several remarkable days in the seventh month of the year; at the feast of blowing the trumpets on the first day of the month, (<sup>0291</sup>Numbers 29:1-6), at the great fast or day of atonement, which was the tenth of the month, (<sup>0297</sup>Numbers 29:7-11), and at the feast of tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth day of the same month, and continued eight days, and the sacrifices of every day are particularly mentioned; of the first day, (<sup>0292</sup>Numbers 29:12-16), of the second day, (<sup>0297</sup>Numbers 29:17-19), of the third day, (<sup>0290</sup>Numbers 29:20-22), of the fourth day, (<sup>0293</sup>Numbers 29:23,24), of the fifth day, (<sup>0295</sup>Numbers 29:26-28), of the sixth day, (<sup>0299</sup>Numbers 29:29-31), of the seventh day, (<sup>0292</sup>Numbers 29:32-34), and of the eighth day, (<sup>0295</sup>Numbers 29:35-38), which sacrifices were to be offered, besides their vows and freewill offerings, of which Moses gave a faithful account, according to the command of God, (<sup>0299</sup>Numbers 29:39,40).

**Ver. 1.** *And in the seventh month*, etc.] The month Tisri, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our September and October; a month famous for days to be religiously observed, having more of them in it than any other month in the year:

*on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation*; (see <sup>0224</sup>Leviticus 23:24),

*ye shall do no servile work*; therefore, in the place referred to, is called a sabbath:

*it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you*; of which, (see Gill on <sup>0224</sup>Leviticus 23:24”).

**Ver. 2.** *And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord*, etc.] Which was as follows:

*one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish*, which was the same, only one bullock less, with the offerings on the first day of the month, the seven days of unleavened bread, and the day of the firstfruits, (<sup><0281></sup>Numbers 28:11,19,27).

**Ver. 3-5.** *And their meat offering*, etc.] Which went along with the creatures offered for a burnt offering; the quantity of flour and oil used in it was the same, for a bullock, a ram, and each lamb, as in the offerings at the new moons, feast of unleavened bread and the day of firstfruits, (<sup><0280></sup>Numbers 28:10,13,20,21,28,29) and a kid of the goats was also offered for a sin offering at this time, as in those seasons, and for the same purpose, to make atonement for the sins of their holy things.

**Ver. 6.** *Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering*, etc.] The bullock, ram, and seven lambs, were offered on this day, besides the two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, which were offered on it, on account of its being the first day of the month and besides the meat offering that went along with them; these were not omitted on account of those additional sacrifices:

*and the daily burnt offering*; the two lambs of the daily sacrifice; these also were offered as usual, so that there were offered on this day three bullocks, two rams, and sixteen lambs:

*and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according to their manner*; these also were offered with the daily sacrifice, according to the law and rule prescribed for the making of them, and all were

*for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord*; for they were burnt sacrifices, and very acceptable to the Lord, as they were types of the better sacrifice, with which he is infinitely well pleased; and it is with respect to that that such a number of sacrifices were appointed.

**Ver. 7.** *And ye shall have on the tenth day of the seventh month an holy convocation*, etc.] The month Tisri, as before; so the Targum of Jonathan:

*and ye shall afflict your souls*; or persons; their bodies by fasting, and their souls by repentance and humiliation; for this was a grand fast, as it is called (<sup><0270></sup>Acts 27:9),

*ye shall not do any work [therein]*; (see <sup><0228></sup>Leviticus 23:28).

**Ver. 8.** *But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord,* etc.] Which is the same as ordered to be offered on the first day, (<sup>402B</sup>Numbers 29:2). Aben Ezra is of opinion that the ram here is different from those in (<sup>410B</sup>Leviticus 16:3,5,24).

**Ver. 9,10.** *And their meat offering,* etc.] Which was of the same quantity of flour and oil, for a bullock, a ram, and a lamb, as for the meat offering on the first day of the month.

**Ver. 11.** *One kid of the goats for a sin offering,* etc.] This also, as it was different from that which was offered for the service of the day, so it was offered after it; as is observed by the Jewish writers, that the goat, which was offered without, though of the Musaphim, or additions, could not go before the service of the day for it is said as follows,

*beside the sin offering of atonement;* hence, say they, we learn, that the goat within, which was of the service of the day, went before it <sup>f441</sup>; after that the ram of Aaron, and the ram of the people, and after that the fat of the sin offering:

*and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings;* which were never omitted on account of the service of any day, though ever so solemn, as this was: hence it appears that there were offered on this day of atonement two bullocks, three rams, three goats, and two lambs.

**Ver. 12.** *And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation,* etc.] Of the same month Tisri, which was the seventh from Nisan or Abib, though it was formerly the first month of the year:

*ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days;* the feast of tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth day of this month.

**Ver. 13-34.** *And ye shall offer a burnt offering,* etc.] That is, on the first of the seven days, which was as follows:

*thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, they shall be without blemish;* a very large sacrifice indeed, for these were offered besides one kid of the goats, for a sin offering, and the two lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were not omitted on account of this extraordinary offering; so that there were no less than thirty two animals

sacrificed on this day: the meat and drink offerings for each, according to the kind of them, were as usual, and as before frequently observed; and the same sacrifices, meat offerings, and drink offerings, were offered on the six following days of the feast, only with this difference, that there was one bullock less every day; which it is thought may denote the decrease of sin in the people, and so an increase of holiness, or rather the gradual waxing old and vanishing away of the ceremonial law, and the sacrifices of it; and these bullocks ending in the number seven, which is a number may lead us to think of the great sacrifice these all typified, whereby Christ has perfected them that are sanctified.

**Ver. 35.** *On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly*, etc.] The day after the seven days of the feast of tabernacles were ended; for this was not properly a part of that feast, but was a sort of appendage to it;

*ye shall do no servile work therein*; (see Gill on “<sup><R236></sup>Leviticus 23:36”).

**Ver. 36-38.** *But ye shall offer a burnt offering*, etc.] Which was the same that was offered on the first and tenth days of this month, (<sup><R238></sup>Numbers 29:2,8) and the meat and drink offerings for each of the creatures were the same, as often expressed; and on this day a goat for a sin offering was also offered, besides the daily sacrifice, and what went along with that.

**Ver. 39.** *These things ye shall do to the Lord, in your set feasts*, etc.] Or rather in the times set and appointed to you, as the Jewish writers<sup>f442</sup> interpret it; and so Jarchi interprets it of a fixed time, which seems better; since these were not all feast days, on which the above sacrifices were to be offered, for one of them was a fast, even the day of atonement:

*besides your vows, and your freewill offerings*: which might be offered up at any time, notwithstanding the above sacrifices, which were necessary and obligatory; but these were at their own option:

*for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings*; of which (see <sup><R237></sup>Leviticus 7:11-16).

**Ver. 40.** *And Moses told the children of Israel*, etc.] All these things; repeated the several laws unto them concerning the above sacrifices, with the additions unto them, and explanations of them:

*according to all that the Lord commanded Moses*; being a faithful servant to the Lord in all his house, and in all things appertaining to it.

# CHAPTER 30

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 30

Mention being made, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, of vows to be performed to the Lord, besides the sacrifices directed to; here some account is given of them, and men are charged to fulfil, and not break them, (<sup>(-0810)</sup>Numbers 30:1,2) but as to women, if a maid, being in her father's house, made a vow in his hearing, and he silent at it, her vow stood; but if he disapproved of it, it was null and void, (<sup>(-0810)</sup>Numbers 30:3-5) and so a wife, when she vowed a vow in the hearing of her husband, and he said not ought against it, it was valid; but if he objected to it, it stood for nothing, (<sup>(-0810)</sup>Numbers 30:6-8), likewise a widow, or one divorced, that made a vow in her husband's house, before he died, or she was put away from him, and he did not contradict it, it remained in force and to be fulfilled; but if he made it void, it stood not, and she was forgiven, (<sup>(-0810)</sup>Numbers 30:9-12) it being in an husband's power to confirm or make null a vow or oath, made by his wife to afflict her soul; but if he made any void after he heard them, and had been silent, he himself was to bear her iniquity, (<sup>(-0810)</sup>Numbers 30:13-16).

**Ver. 1.** *And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes*, etc.] Or the princes of them, who could more easily be convened, and who used to meet on certain occasions, and on whom it lay to see various laws put in execution:

*concerning the children of Israel*; how they ought to conduct and behave in the following case, it being an affair which concerned them all:

*saying, this is the thing which the Lord hath commanded*; relating to vows. Aben Ezra is of opinion that this was delivered after the battle with Midian, of which there is an account in the following chapter, and is occasioned by what was said, to the tribes of Gad and Reuben, (<sup>(-0824)</sup>Numbers 32:24,25)

*do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth*; to which they replied, *thy servants will do as my lord commandeth*; upon which the nature of a vow, and the manner of keeping it, are observed; but the occasion of it rather seems to be what is said towards the close of the foregoing chapter,

(Numbers 29:39), that the various sacrifices there directed were to be offered in their season, besides the vows and freewill offerings; and when these were ratified and confirmed, and when null and void, and to be fulfilled or neglected, is the principal business of this chapter.

**Ver. 2.** *If a man vow a vow unto the Lord*, etc.] Which must be in a thing that is lawful to be done, which is not contrary to the revealed will and mind of God, and which may tend to the glory of God, the honour of religion, the service of the sanctuary, the good of a man's self or of his neighbour; or in things purely indifferent, which may, or may not be done, without offence to God or man; as that he will not eat such a thing for such a time, or he will do this or the other thing, as Jarchi observes; who moreover says, that he may forbid himself what is forbidden, and forbid what is free and lawful; but he may not make free or lawful what is forbidden, that is, he may not vow to do a thing which is contrary to the law of God, such a vow will not stand: and he was to be of such an age before he could make a vow that would be valid; according to the Targum of Jonathan, he must be thirteen years of age; it is said in the Misnah <sup>f443</sup>,

“a son of twelve years and one day, his vows are examined; a son of thirteen years and one day, his vows are firm, and they examine the whole thirteenth year before that time; although they say we know to whose name (or on whose account) we vow or consecrate, their vow is no vow, nor their consecration no consecration; but after that time, though they say we know not to whose name (or, on whose account) we vow or consecrate, their vow is a vow, and their consecration a consecration:”

*or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond*; to his vow adds an oath for the greater confirmation of it, and to lay himself under the greater obligation to perform it:

*he shall not break his word; or profane it* <sup>f444</sup> but punctually perform it; men should be careful how they vow, and not rashly do it; but when they have vowed, they ought to perform; (see <sup>2184</sup> Ecclesiastes 5:4,5 <sup>1821</sup> Deuteronomy 23:21-23):

*he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth*; it is not in his power to revoke his vow or make it null: the Misnic doctors <sup>f445</sup> say, a man can loose all vows, excepting his own. R. Judah says, not the vows of his wife, nor those which are between her and others; that is, as one of the



commentators <sup>f446</sup> explains it, such vows which are not made to afflict, or respect not fasting; but according to the Targum of Jonathan, though a man cannot loose his vows, or free himself from them, yet the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, can, or a wise man that is authenticated thereby, as Jarchi says, or three private persons; but these are such traditions; which make void the commandment of God, as our Lord complains, (~~4050~~ Matthew 15:1-9)

**Ver. 3.** *If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord*, etc.] Who has not passed thirteen years, as the Targum of Jonathan:

*[and] bind [herself] by a bond*; lay herself under obligation to perform her vow by an oath: being in her father's house; unto the twelfth year, as the same Targum; that is, that is under his care, tuition, and jurisdiction, whether she literally, or properly speaking, is in the house or no at the time she vows; so Jarchi interprets it of her being in the power of her father, though not in his house, she being not at age to be at her own disposal, but at his: wherefore it is added,

*in her youth*; which, as the same writer explains it, signifies that she is

“neither a little one, nor at age; for a little one's vow is no vow, and one at age is not in the power of her father to make void her vow: who is a little one? our Rabbins say, one of eleven years of age and one day, her vows are examined, whether she knows on whose account she vows and consecrates, or devotes anything; one vows a vow that is twelve years and one day old, there is no need to examine them.”

He seems to refer to a passage in the Misnah <sup>f447</sup>,

“a daughter of eleven years and one day, her vows are examined; a daughter of twelve years and one day, her vows are firm, but they are to be examined through the whole twelfth year.”

**Ver. 4.** *And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul*, etc.] Her vow, which is binding upon her, or her vow and an oath annexed to it; which makes it still more strongly binding; and this he hears himself, or it is reported to him by others: and her father shall hold his peace at her; shall not reprove her for it, nor contradict her in it: then all her vows shall stand; be they what, or as many as they may:

*and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand*; his silence being to be interpreted as approving of them, and consenting to them.

**Ver. 5.** *But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth*, etc.]

Disapproves of her vow, and expresses his dislike of it, and declares it null and void; which, if done at all, is to be done on the same day he hears it, and not on another day, as Aben Ezra observes; not the day following, and much less on a third or fourth day, etc. and it might be done on a sabbath day<sup>f448</sup>:

*not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand*; but become null and void, she being at the control of her father, and having nothing in her own power, and at her own disposal, to vow or consecrate, but wholly in the power and at the disposal of her father:

*and the Lord shall forgive her*; the breach of her vow, it shall not be imputed to her as a sin:

*because her father disallowed her*; so that it was no fault of hers that it was not fulfilled; though she might be blameworthy to make one, without previously obtaining his consent, and making it rashly without his previous knowledge, she not being at her own hands; and in this respect may be said to be forgiven by the Lord, which supposes some fault committed.

**Ver. 6.** *And if she had at all an husband with whom she vowed*, etc.] Or “when her vows were upon her”<sup>f449</sup>, was either betrothed or married to a man:

*or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul*; uttered anything, either with or without premeditation, either with thought and deliberation, or rashly and imprudently, as the word signifies, yet in such a manner that it was binding upon her.

**Ver. 7.** *And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it*, etc.] The vow she made, and by his silence consented to it:

*then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand*; or she be under obligation to perform them.

**Ver. 8.** *But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard it*, etc.] Expresses his dislike of it; and this he does as soon as he hears it, at least

that same day; according to the Jews <sup>f450</sup>, within the space of twenty four hours:

*then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect*; by contradicting it, and forbidding the performance of it; or however by declaring to her, or to others, that it is not agreeable to his mind and will that it should be fulfilled:

*and the Lord shall forgive her*; excuse her performance of the vow, and not impute sin to her on that account, nor punish for the breach of it, she being under the cover of her husband, and obliged to submit to his will. According to Jarchi, the Scripture speaks of a woman that vows to be a Nazarite; her husband hears and makes it void; but she does not know it, and transgresses her vow, and drinks wine, and is defiled with the dead, so that she has need of forgiveness, though it is made void; and if vows made void, he adds, have need of pardon, much more those that are not.

**Ver. 9.** *But every vow of a widow*, etc.] The Scripture speaks, as Jarchi says, of a widow from marriage, or that has been married, but a widow from espousals (or that has been only espoused), the husband dead, the power is transmitted, and returns to the father; and with respect to such a case, it is said in the Misnah <sup>f451</sup>

“if the father (of such a betrothed person) dies, the power is not transmitted to the husband; but if the husband dies, the power is transmitted to the father; in this case, greater is the power of a father than of an husband; in others, greater is the power of an husband than of a father, because an husband makes void (the vow of) one at age, but a father does not make void (the vow of) such an one:”

*and of her that is divorced*: from her husband on some account or another; now in each of these cases, the one being loosed from the law of her husband by death, and the other by a bill of divorce, if they vowed,

*the vows wherewith they have bound their souls shall stand against her*; against either of them, they having none over them to disapprove of, contradict, and make void their vows.

**Ver. 10.** *And if she vowed in her husband's house*, etc.] Before his death, in his lifetime, or before divorced: the Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of

explanation, “and not at age for marriage”, understanding it of a betrothed, and not a married person; but Jarchi says, the Scripture speaks of a married one, which seems most likely:

*or bound her soul by a bond with an oath*; to fulfil her vow, to abstain from this, or to do that or the other thing.

**Ver. 11.** *And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not*, etc.] Heard her make her vow, and bind it with an oath, and was silent at it, which was consenting to it, and did not contradict her, nor show any displeasure or resentment at her on account of it; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“and died before she was at age;”

but what follows held good equally of one that was at age for marriage, and actually married to him:

*then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand*; be ratified and confirmed, and she be under obligation to make them good.

**Ver. 12.** *But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them*, etc.] Declaring they were contrary to his mind and will, he disapproved of them, and forbid the carrying them into execution:

*then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand*; though her husband be dead, or she be divorced from him:

*her husband hath made them void, and the Lord shall forgive her*: she will neither incur his displeasure for not fulfilling her vow, nor have any punishment inflicted on her: the Targum of Jonathan is,

“if her husband makes them void, and she knows it not and transgresses, it shall be forgiven her by the Lord.”

**Ver. 13.** *Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul*, etc.] By fasting, as Aben Ezra observes; as when a vow was made, or a person bound herself by an oath to abstain from such and such food, or to fast on such a day; to keep a fast which was not appointed, to set apart a day for fasting, besides the grand and general fast on the day of atonement: Jarchi from hence gathers, that a man only makes vows of afflicting the soul, or

vows of fasting; but this is not said by way of limitation and restriction, but by way of amplification and illustration, giving a particular instance, by which others may be judged of:

*her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void*, just as he pleased; and this power an husband had, to prevent confusion in the family, and trouble in the affairs of it, by vowing abstinence from such and such food, or from such and such liquor, and the like; and to prevent running into expenses he was not able to answer, by vowing and dedicating, this and the other to holy uses, for sacrifices, and repairs of the temple, and the like.

**Ver. 14.** *But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day today*, etc.] Said not one word to her day after day, neither on the day he heard her vow, nor the day following:

*then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her*; by his silence:

*he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her, in the day that he heard them*; for not to contradict them was to confirm them.

**Ver. 15.** *But if he shall any ways make them void, after that he hath heard them*, etc.] Some way or other expressing his dislike of them; not at the time he heard them, but some time afterwards; one day after, as the Targum of Jonathan:

*then he shall bear his iniquity*: be accountable for the breach of the vow, the sin shall be reckoned to him, and he shall bear the punishment of it, because he ought to have declared his disapprobation of it sooner; and it may be, his doing it when he did was only in a spirit of contradiction, or through covetousness; and it would have been more advisable to have let the vow stand, and therefore acted a criminal part, and so was answerable for it; the Targum of Jonathan explains it,

“her husband or her father shall bear her iniquity,”

supposing her not to be at age: Aben Ezra gives the reason of it, because she is in his power.

**Ver. 16.** *These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses between a man and his wife*, etc.] Relating to vows made by the wife, and

confirmed or disannulled by the husband: Aben Ezra adds, if she is at age or in puberty, understanding it of a married and not a betrothed wife:

*between the father and his daughter*; if she is not at age, as the same writer observes; for if she is at age he has nothing to do with her vows:

*[being yet] in her youth*; not at age, being not twelve years and one day old:

*in her father's house*; in his power and jurisdiction, and at his disposal, and so could make her vows void or firm, as he pleased: this power of ratifying or disannulling vows an husband had over his wife, and a father over his daughter, to prevent imprudent and extravagant vows, and the too frequent use of them, the consequences of which might be bad in families.

# CHAPTER 31

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 31

This chapter contains an order to make war upon Midian, which was accordingly done, (<sup>-06101</sup>Numbers 31:1-12), but Moses was wroth, because they saved the women alive, who, through the counsel of Balaam, had been the cause of sin, and of the plague for it in Israel, and therefore orders them, and the male children, to be slain, (<sup>-06113</sup>Numbers 31:13-18), and then directs to the purification of the soldiers, their captives and spoil, (<sup>-06119</sup>Numbers 31:19-24), and by the command of God an account is taken of the prey, and a division of it made between the soldiers and the congregation, and out of each part a tribute is levied for the Lord, (<sup>-06125</sup>Numbers 31:25-31) and the sum of the whole booty is given, (<sup>-06132</sup>Numbers 31:32-35) and of the part which belonged to the soldiers, and of the tribute given to the Lord, (<sup>-06136</sup>Numbers 31:36-41) and of the part which belonged to the children of Israel, (<sup>-06142</sup>Numbers 31:42-47) and besides the above tribute to the Lord, the officers made a voluntary oblation out of their spoil, both by way of gratitude for sparing their lives, and to make atonement for their souls, (<sup>-06148</sup>Numbers 31:48-54).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] After the plague upon Israel for their fornication and idolatry, into which they were drawn by the daughters of Moab and Midian, and after the sum of the people was taken in the plains of Moab, and various laws given or repeated, and a little before the death of Moses:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites,* etc.] For the injury they had done them, by sending their daughters among them, who enticed them to commit uncleanness with them, and then drew them into the worship of their idols, which brought the wrath of God upon them, and for which 24,000 persons were slain. Now, though the Moabites had a concern in this affair as well as the Midianites, yet they were spared; which some think was for the sake of Lot, from whom they descended; but why not the Midianites for the sake of Abraham, whose offspring they were by

Keturah? Jarchi says, they were spared because of Ruth, who was to spring from them; and so she might, and yet vengeance be taken on great numbers of them: but the truer reason seems to be, either because the sin of the Moabites was not yet full, and they were reserved for a later punishment; or rather because they were not the principal actors in the above affair; but the Midianites, who seem to have advised Balak at first to send for Balaam to curse Israel, and who harboured that soothsayer after he had been dismissed by Balak, and to whom he gave his wicked counsel, and which they readily followed, and industriously pursued:

*afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people*; or die, (see <sup><0273</sup>Numbers 27:13), it being some satisfaction to him to see the good land, as he did from Abarim, and the Israelites avenged on their enemies before his death.

**Ver. 3.** *And Moses spake unto the people, saying*, etc.] In obedience to the divine command; this must be supposed to be spoken to the heads or princes of the tribes:

*arm some of yourselves unto the war*: not the whole body of the militia, 600,000 men and upwards, only some of them, and these choice and select men; and, according to the Jewish writers, good men, who, detesting the sins of lewdness and idolatry, would more strictly and severely avenge themselves on the Midianites for drawing their brethren into those sins, whereby they fell; and so Jarchi calls them righteous men:

*[and] let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian*: what the Lord calls the vengeance of the Israelites, Moses calls the vengeance of the Lord, because they were the Lord's people, and his cause and theirs the same: and because the sins they were drawn into by the Midianites were not only against themselves, and to their prejudice, but against the Lord and to the dishonour of his name.

**Ver. 4.** *Of every tribe a thousand*, etc.] So that the whole number of those that were armed were 12,000 as after given:

*throughout all the tribes of Israel*; this is observed, as Jarchi thinks, to comprehend the tribe of Levi, which in some cases was left out of the account:

*shall ye send to the war*; to fight with Midian.



**Ver. 5.** *So they were delivered out of the thousands of Israel,* etc.]]

Several thousands very probably offered themselves voluntarily to go to the war, or however were summoned together on this account, and out of them the following number was delivered of picked and chosen men:

*a thousand [of every] tribe, twelve thousand armed for war;* which was but a small number to go against so considerable a nation and people; but this was done to show that the war was of the Lord, he would fight the battle, and give them victory, it being the same to him to do it with few as with many; and to encourage the people of Israel to believe the Lord would give them success against their many and powerful enemies in the land of Canaan, on the borders of which they now were.

**Ver. 6.** *And Moses sent them to the war,* etc.] Being mustered and armed:

*a thousand of [every] tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the war;* which looks as if Phinehas was the general of this army; for Moses went not to the war, and no mention is made of Joshua, nor might it be proper for him, he being the successor of Moses, who was quickly to die; but it seems rather that there was no one person that had the command of the whole, but every captain commanded his own company; since, when Moses met them, and was angry with them for sparing the women, he does not address anyone as the chief commander, but all the officers, (<sup>0614</sup>Numbers 31:14), however, it was very proper and prudent to send Phinehas with them, both on account of his office as a priest, to encourage the people, and because of his extraordinary zeal against the Midianites for what they had done, as appears by his slaying a prince of Simeon and a Midianitish princess in their uncleanness:

*[and he went] with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand;* by “the holy instruments”, Aben Ezra understands the ark with what appertained to it, which in later times used to be carried out when the Israelites went to war, (<sup>0006</sup>Joshua 6:4 <sup>0001B</sup>1 Samuel 4:3,4), and Jarchi interprets them of the ark and plate of gold <sup>f452</sup> which was upon the forehead of the high priest; but what had Phinehas to do with this, who was but a common priest? though the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

“with the Urim and Thummim of holiness, to inquire by them;”

and it appears, that sometimes a son of an high priest was intrusted with the ephod, to which the breastplate was fastened, which had the Urim and Thummim on it, and made use thereof to inquire by, as in the times of

David, (<sup>0236</sup>1 Samuel 23:6-12), but it is the opinion of some learned men, and they may be in the right, that these instruments are no other than the trumpets, and who suppose the “vau” is not copulative, but explanative, so Ben Gersom, and read the words thus, “with the holy instruments, even”, or, “that is, the trumpets”<sup>f453</sup>, the silver trumpets ordered to be made, (<sup>0402</sup>Numbers 10:2) one of which was for the journey of the camps, and also to blow an alarm for war, and which was done by the priests; and so the Targum of Jonathan adds here,

“to cause the camp of Israel to rest, and to cause it to go;”

that is, to direct it when it should stop, and when it should move.

**Ver. 7.** *And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses*, etc.] Whether the Midianites came out against them with an army, and there was a pitched battle between them, is not certain; however the Israelites committed acts of hostility upon them, by entering their cities, plundering their houses, and slaying the inhabitants of them; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“they warred against Midian, and surrounded it in the three corners of it, as the Lord commanded Moses;”

for, as Maimonides<sup>f454</sup> observes from tradition,

“when they besiege a city to take it, they do not surround it in the four corners of it, but in the three corners of it, and leave a place to flee out, that everyone that would might escape for his life, as it is said, “and they warred against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses”; by report, or from tradition, it is learnt that so he commanded him;”

that is, in such a manner to besiege a city; but for this there is only tradition, for it is not mentioned among the rules after directed to in such a case, (<sup>0510</sup>Deuteronomy 20:10-20),

*and they slew all the males*; which fell into their hands; for, no doubt, there were multitudes that made their escape, since in later times we read of the Midianites, as a very powerful people, and very distressing to Israel, (<sup>0701</sup>Judges 6:1,2) these, as Aben Ezra observes, they slew, were such as were grown up, for as for their little ones, them they spared and carried captive, (<sup>0510</sup>Numbers 31:9).

**Ver. 8.** *And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain*, etc.] Besides the males of the common people, they slew their kings, who were petty kings or princes, perhaps under the king of Moab, or had reassumed their titles and government after the death of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who, in his time, were called dukes of Sihon, (<sup><0632></sup>Joshua 13:21), namely,

*Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian*; the Targum of Jonathan says of Zur, this is Balak, which is not probable; it is more likely, what Aben Ezra observes, that he was the father of Cosbi, whom Phinehas slew, (<sup><0655></sup>Numbers 25:15).

*Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword*; so that he died not a natural death, but a violent one, not such an one as he desired, the death of the righteous, but of bloody and deceitful men, who do not live out half their days; for if the Jewish writers <sup>f455</sup> are to be credited, he was but thirty four years of age when he was slain, which is not quite half the age of man, that being seventy, (<sup><0910></sup>Psalm 90:10), it appears by this that he was among the Midianites at the time of this war; either he stayed here till this time, when he went from Balak with an intention to go into his own country; or he had returned hither, being either sent for, by the princes of Midian, on this occasion; or, as some say, as Aben Ezra observes, that he came to Midian after he returned to his place, on hearing the plague that came upon Israel through his counsel, to receive the money of the elders of Midian for it; and so Chaskuni.

**Ver. 9.** *And the children of Israel took [all] the women of Midian captives*, etc.] The word “all” is not in the original text, nor should it be supplied; for if all had been taken, and carried captive, and put to death, as those were afterwards, how could there have been such an increase of the Midianites as there was in some time after this? (see <sup><0706></sup>Judges 6:1-6) but the meaning is, that as many as fell into their hands they took and carried captive:

*and their little ones*; both male and female:

*and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks*; their oxen and their sheep, and also their asses, as appears by the following account:

*and all their goods*: in their houses, their wealth and substance, gold, silver, etc.

**Ver. 10.** *And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt*, etc. } So far as they went into the country, which, perhaps, might not be the whole land of Midian:

*and all their goodly castles with fire*; which were either the palaces of their princes and nobles, or such like great personages; or they were fortified places, for the security of their cities and country: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret them of their houses of worship, their temples, and their altars.

**Ver. 11.** *And they took all the spoil*, etc.] In their cities and castles; and all the prey, both of men and of beasts; all sorts of cattle, oxen, sheep, and asses.

**Ver. 12** *And they brought the captives, the prey, and the spoil*, etc.] The women and children, who were the captives, and the beasts which were the prey, and the gold, silver, etc. which were the spoil:

*unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel*; that is, they were bringing the above persons things unto them, returning from the war with Midian:

*unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan [near] Jericho*: (see <sup>4021</sup>Numbers 22:1), but they were stopped, and were not admitted into the camp until seven days after.

**Ver. 13.** *And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation*, etc.] Attended, no doubt, with a proper retinue:

*went forth to meet them without the camp*; partly to do honour to them, and to congratulate them on their victory, and partly to hinder them going into the camp directly, until they were purified; (see <sup>40147</sup>Genesis 14:17,18).

**Ver. 14.** *And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host*, etc.] The general officers who had the command of the army, for there does not appear to be anyone that was one general over the whole, otherwise the displeasure would have fallen upon him:

*[with] the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle*; rather “with” should be left out, not being in the text; and these captains only explain who the officers were, and these were one hundred and thirty two, as Aben Ezra observes; twelve who were captains over thousands, and were more properly the general officers; and one

hundred and twenty over so many hundreds, into which the whole were subdivided.

**Ver. 15.** *And Moses said unto them, have ye saved all the women alive?*] Which either had been reported to him, or he concluded, by seeing so many with them; and this question is put, not for information, but by way of reproof, and as chiding them for what they had done; for they might have received orders from him to put them to death, when he sent them out; and if so, there was the more reason to be angry with them; or he might conclude they would have done this of themselves, knowing what instruments of mischief these women had been to Israel.

**Ver. 16.** *Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam,* etc.] Who advised the Midianites to send their women into the camp of Israel, and allure them to uncleanness, and so draw them into idolatry, which counsel they followed and it succeeded; for, by this means, they were brought

*to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor;* by worshipping Baalpeor, the god of the Moabites and Midianites; whereby they transgressed the commandment of God, which forbid them having and worshipping any other gods besides him, and is a sin highly offensive to him, being greatly derogatory to his honour and glory:

*and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord;* for that sin; and in that plague died 24,000 persons, (<sup><0259></sup>Numbers 25:9).

**Ver. 17.** *Now therefore kill every male among the little ones,* etc.] Which they had taken and brought captives, (<sup><0319></sup>Numbers 31:9)

*and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him;* who might be such, at least many of them, who had lain with Israelitish men; and as the adulterers had been put to death, so now the adulteresses; or they were ordered to, be slain, even all of them, lest they should entice the children of Israel to uncleanness, and so to idolatry again: now these were known to be such, either by conjecture at their age, or rather, through the examination of matrons, unless it can be thought, as it is by some, that it was by divine revelation.

**Ver. 18.** *But all the women children,* etc.] The females among the little ones:

*that have not known a man by lying with him*; which might be pretty clear, and easily concluded, from their age:

*keep for yourselves*; either to be handmaids to them, or to be married among them when grown up, and become proselytes, and initiated into their religion.

**Ver. 19.** *And do ye abide without the camp seven days.* etc.] Which was the time that anyone that touched a dead body remained unclean, (<sup><0491></sup>Numbers 19:11),

*whosoever hath killed any person*; as most of them if not all must have done; all the males of Midian that fell into their hands being slain by them, that were men grown:

*and whosoever hath touched any slain*; as they must to strip them of their garments, and take their spoil from them:

*purify both yourselves and your captives, on the third and on the seventh day*; which were the days appointed for the purification of such that were polluted by touching dead bodies, (<sup><0491></sup>Numbers 19:11) and their captives, which were the female little ones; (for as for the women, and males among the little ones, they were ordered to be slain;) though they were Heathens, yet inasmuch as they were to be for the service of the Israelites, and to be brought up in their religion, they were to be purified also; to which purpose is the note of Jarchi;

“not that the Gentiles receive uncleanness and need sprinkling, but as ye are the children of the covenant, so your captives, when they come into the covenant, and are defiled, need sprinkling.”

**Ver. 20.** *And purify all your raiment*, etc.] By washing them; and this may intend not so much their own wearing apparel, as the raiment they took off of the dead bodies of the Midianites, since the person that touched a dead body was not obliged to wash his clothes, but the clean person that sprinkled the water of purification on him, (<sup><0491></sup>Numbers 19:19,21), some render the words, “purify yourselves”<sup>f456</sup>, “together with the raiment”, etc. which seems to be the best version of them:

*and all that is made of skins*; of any sort of creatures, as the covering of tents, shoes, bottles, etc. (see <sup><0492></sup>Leviticus 11:32)

*and all work of goats' hair*; such as the covering of tents was also made of: and this, according to Jarchi and other Jewish writers <sup>f457</sup> includes vessels made of the horns, hoofs, and bones of these creatures: and all things made of wood; as beds, cups, dishes, etc. all which might be purified by washing; (see <sup><B52></sup>Leviticus 15:12).

**Ver. 21.** *And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war, which went to the battle*, etc.] To all the soldiers, officers, and common men:

*this is the ordinance of the law, which the Lord commanded Moses*; concerning the purification of unclean persons and things, hereby confirming what Moses had said.

**Ver. 22.** *Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead.*] These are excepted, and, though unclean, are not to be purified by washing, but in another way, by fire, as follows; all these metals were well known in those early times, and were made use of for instruments and vessels of various sorts.

**Ver. 23.** *Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire*, etc.] Either through the smoke of the fire, and so be purified by suffumigation; or be put into the fire itself, where though they might be melted as the above things, yet not consumed as raiment, and vessels of skins, goats' hair, and wood, would be:

*and it shall be clean*; accounted so:

*nevertheless, it shall be purified with the water of separation*; with the water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer burnt, and sprinkled on it; (see <sup><B99></sup>Numbers 19:9)

*and all that abideth not the fire*; without being consumed, as whatsoever is of wood, etc.

*ye shall make go through the water*; dip them in it, and rinse them there with a quantity sufficient; which the Targum of Jonathan says is forty seahs of water.

**Ver. 24.** *And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day*, etc.] As the leper did, (<sup><B49></sup>Leviticus 14:9):

*and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp*; into the camp of Israel, into the camp of the Levites, and into the camp of God, the tabernacle.

**Ver. 25.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] After the purification of the soldiers, their captives, and spoil:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 26.** *Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and beast*, etc.] The number of the females that were taken captive and spared, and of the cattle, the sheep, oxen, and asses:

*thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation*; who were all men of authority and character, and fit to be employed in such service, and of whose capacity and fidelity there could be no doubt.

**Ver. 27.** *And divide the prey into two parts*, etc.] Into two equal parts, both the number of the people and of the cattle, when taken:

*between them that took the war upon them, and went out to battle*; the soldiers; and by this it appears that they went voluntarily and cheerfully:

*and between all the congregation*; so that the part of them that went to battle, and of those that stayed in the camp, were alike, and which in process of time became a statute and ordinance, (~~ORIG~~ 1 Samuel 30:24,25 ~~ORIG~~ Psalm 68:12).

**Ver. 28.** *And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war, which went out to battle*, etc.] That is, out of the part of the prey which was divided to them:

*one soul of five hundred*, both “of the persons”; or one woman of five hundred, as the Targum of Jonathan:

*and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep*; that is, one out of five hundred, of each of them also.

**Ver. 29.** *And take it of their half*, etc.] Of the half part of the prey divided to the soldiers:

*and give it unto Eleazar the priest for an heave offering of the Lord*; by way of thanksgiving for the success and victory, God had given them, by means of which so much booty had fallen into their hands.



**Ver. 30.** *And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty,* etc.] Which was abundantly more than what was taken out of the part of the soldiers; and the reason of it is plain and easy to be discerned; the soldiers had taken much pains, and gone through much fatigue, as well as had hazarded their lives, and therefore less was to be taken from them; and besides the tribute levied out of their half was to be given to the priests, who were not so numerous as the Levites, among whom the part out of the half of the congregation was to be distributed:

*of the persons;* of the women, as the Targums of Jonathan, one of fifty out of them was to be given to the Levites to be their handmaids, or to be taken in marriage by them, or their sons, when fit for it:

*of the beeves, of the asses, and of the sheep, of all manner of beasts;* of oxen, asses, sheep, and goats, one out of fifty of each of these sorts were to be taken. Aben Ezra observes, no mention is made of camels, being but few, and no part taken:

*and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord;* for these being employed in the service of the tabernacle, came in for their share of the tribute levied unto the Lord.

**Ver. 31.** *And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses.*] Took an account of the booty, divided it equally between the soldiers and the congregation of Israel, and levied a part out of each as a tribute for the Lord, which was given to the priests and Levites.

**Ver. 32-47.** *And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught,* etc.] The remainder of it, besides what they had eaten in their return from the war, and during their seven days' stay without the camp: from hence to the end of (<sup>30647</sup>Numbers 31:47) is only an account of the prey or booty taken, which in general were 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beeves or oxen, 61,000 asses, and 32,000 females who had never known man; the half out of these, which fell to the share of the soldiers, were 337,500 sheep, 36,000 beeves or oxen, 30,500 asses, and 16,000 females, out of which were given as an heave offering to the Lord six hundred and seventy five sheep, seventy two beeves or oxen, sixty one asses, and thirty two women: the half divided unto the children of Israel consisted of 337,500 sheep, 36,000 beeves or oxen, 30,500 asses, and 16,000 women, out of which one in fifty, both of women and cattle, were given to the Levites; what that amounted to is not expressed, but may be easily reckoned.

**Ver. 48.** *And the officers which were over thousands of the host*, etc.] Over the twelve thousand, of which the host or army consisted: namely, the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses; of their own accord, without being sent, or required to do what they did.

**Ver. 49.** *And they said unto Moses*, etc.] Gave the following relation to him, which is a very surprising one:

*thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge*; since the war with Midian was over, they had mustered the several companies under their command, such as had thousands, and those that had hundreds:

*and there lacketh not one man of us*; which is a most amazing and unheard of thing, that in waging war with a whole nation, slaying all their males, sacking and burning so many cities, plundering the inhabitants of their substance, taking and carrying off such a vast number of captives, yet not one should fall by the sword of the enemy, or by any disease or accident whatever, but all to a man should return to the camp of Israel again; this is not to be paralleled in any history.

**Ver. 50.** *We have therefore brought an oblation to the Lord*, etc.] A freewill offering, out of the spoil, over and above the tribute levied out of the half that came unto them;

*what every man hath gotten*: or “found”<sup>f458</sup>, in the houses, and upon the bodies of the slain, or of such that were taken captives:

*of jewels of gold* either such as were set in gold; or rather, as the words may be rendered,

*vessels of gold*<sup>f459</sup>, as dishes, cups, spoons, and the like:

*chains*; which were wore about the neck, or upon the arm, as Aben Ezra:

*and bracelets*; for the hand, as the same writer, (see <sup><0120></sup>Genesis 24:22,30),

*rings*; for the finger:

*ear rings*; for the ear, as we render it, the word signifies something round:

*and tablets*; which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, were ornaments that hung down between the breasts:

*to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord*; not only this offering was brought as a token of gratitude and thankfulness, for sparing of everyone of their lives, and giving them such success and victory, and so large a spoil of the enemy; but also to expiate any sins they had been guilty of in going out, and coming in, and particularly for sparing the women they should have put to death, for which Moses was wroth with them, (<sup>QEBH</sup>Numbers 31:14).

**Ver. 51.** *And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them*, etc.] For it seems the several things before mentioned were all of gold:

*even all wrought jewels*; or “vessels of work” <sup>f460</sup> or wrought vessels, or instruments, “chains, bracelets”, etc. which were all of gold, and curiously wrought.

**Ver. 52.** *And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the Lord*, etc.] The whole amount, weight, and value of it put together:

*even of the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds*, and perhaps of every common soldier, who might contribute his part, though it is not mentioned, but included in the oblation of the officers:

*was 16,750 shekels*; which, according to the calculation of a very learned man <sup>f461</sup>, were 7,780 ounces, four drachms, two scruples, and thirty five grains.

**Ver. 53.** *For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself*.] And which he kept for himself, and did not deliver in with the prey or booty, which was brought to Moses and Eleazar, the sum of which was taken by them; and this seems to confirm what has been hinted, that, as each soldier had taken spoil for himself, so everyone contributed his quota towards this freewill offering to the Lord.

**Ver. 54.** *And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds*, etc.] Which they so freely and generously offered:

*and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation*; and laid it up in some chamber there:

*for a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord*: in remembrance of the signal victory these men obtained, and of the singular care of divine Providence in protecting them, that not one was lost in the expedition; and

of their sense of gratitude and thankfulness for the favours granted them, and to put the children of Israel in mind for their imitation, when favoured with mercies from the Lord.

# CHAPTER 32

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 32

This chapter relates, how that the tribes of Gad and Reuben requested a settlement in the country of Jazer and Gilead, being fit for the pasturage of their cattle, (<sup><0630></sup>Numbers 32:1-5) at which Moses at first was very much displeased, as being unreasonable, and tending to discourage the rest of the people; and as acting a part like that their fathers had done before them, which brought the wrath of God upon them, so that they all but two perished in the wilderness; and this he suggests would be the case again, if such measures were taken, (<sup><0636></sup>Numbers 32:6-15) upon which they explain themselves, and declare they had no intention of forsaking their brethren, but were willing to leave their children and cattle to the care of divine Providence, and go armed before Israel, until they were brought into, and settled in the land of Canaan; nor did they desire any part or inheritance in it, (<sup><0636></sup>Numbers 32:16-19), this satisfied Moses, and he agreed to it, that the land they requested should be their possession, provided the conditions were fulfilled by them, which they proposed, (<sup><0630></sup>Numbers 20:20-24), and which they again agreed unto, and promised to perform, (<sup><0625></sup>Numbers 32:25-27), wherefore Moses gave orders to Eleazar, Joshua, and the chief fathers of the tribes, to put them in possession of the land of Gilead on those conditions, (<sup><0628></sup>Numbers 32:28-30) and which were again promised that they would observe, (<sup><0631></sup>Numbers 32:31,32), and at the same time Moses made a grant of the kingdoms of Sihon and of Og to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, (<sup><0623></sup>Numbers 32:33) and the chapter is closed with an account of the cities built or repaired by the children of Gad and Reuben, (<sup><0634></sup>Numbers 32:34-38) and of the cities in Gilead taken and possessed by the children of Machir, and by Jair, who were of the tribe of Manasseh, (<sup><0639></sup>Numbers 32:39-42).

**Ver. 1.** *Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle*, etc.] By which it seems that they had more in proportion than any of the other tribes; by what means it is not easy to say; very probably they were more addicted to the pastoral life, and took more

delight in breeding cattle, and were more diligent in taking care of them: however, the reason for this observation presently follows:

*and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead*; Jazer was in the kingdom of Sihon, and Gilead in the kingdom of Og, which had been both conquered by the Israelites:

*that, behold, the place was a place for cattle*; where much cattle was fed, there being a great deal of good pasturage for them: Jazer appears to be a well watered country, (<sup>2482</sup>Jeremiah 48:32), and Gilead and Bashan which joined and belonged to the same country of Og, who was king of Bashan, were famous for good feeding of cattle: hence we read of the bulls of Bashan, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats on Mount Gilead that looked plump and sleek; (see <sup>3374</sup>Micah 7:14 <sup>4524</sup>Deuteronomy 32:14 <sup>4922</sup>Psalm 22:12 <sup>2041</sup>Song of Solomon 4:1).

**Ver. 2.** *The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses*, etc.] The children of Gad are mentioned first, though Reuben was the firstborn, and had a standard under which Gad pitched: it may be, as Aben Ezra thinks, the Gadites were the first authors of this counsel, the contrivers of this scheme; who first moved it to the Reubenites, which they had an opportunity of doing, lying encamped by them; or however, they might be the most busy and active in this affair, or the best spokesmen; for it could be only some, in the name of the whole, that addressed Moses on this account, and spoke to him about it:

*and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation*; who perhaps were the seventy elders, and with Moses the chief ruler, and Eleazar the high priest, made up the grand sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and were undoubtedly the most proper persons to apply unto:

*saying*: as follows.

**Ver. 3.** *Ataroth, Dibon, and Jazer*, etc.] These were places which belonged to the Amorites, and were taken from Sihon, their king: of Ataroth we read nowhere else but in this chapter; of Dibon (see <sup>2352</sup>Isaiah 15:2), Jazer was a city, from whence the land about it had its name; it is the same with Jaazer, (<sup>4023</sup>Numbers 21:32) and stood about fifteen miles from Heshbon <sup>f462</sup>, the capital city of the kingdom of Sihon:

*and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon*; these were all places in the same country; of Heshbon see

(<sup>-02125</sup>Numbers 21:25,26 <sup>-23504</sup>Isaiah 15:4), Nimrah is the same with Bethnimrah, (<sup>-04236</sup>Numbers 32:36) and sometimes called Nimrim, famous for its water, (<sup>-23156</sup>Isaiah 15:6). Jerom says <sup>f463</sup> the name of it in his time was Benamerium, and lay to the north of Zoar; Elealeh, according to the same writer <sup>f464</sup> was but a mile from Heshbon, of which (see <sup>-23154</sup>Isaiah 15:4). Shebam is the same with Shibmah, (<sup>-04236</sup>Numbers 32:36), and seems to be a place famous for vines, (<sup>-23158</sup>Isaiah 16:8 <sup>-24432</sup>Jeremiah 48:32); it is thought to be the same with the Seba of Ptolemy <sup>f465</sup>, and according to Jerom <sup>f466</sup>, there were scarce five hundred paces between this place and Heshbon; Nebo, the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call the grave of Moses, because on a mountain of this name Moses died, and where it is supposed he was buried; but it is certain he was buried not on a mountain, but in a valley, (<sup>-06346</sup>Deuteronomy 34:6), this perhaps had its name from the mountain near which it was, and of which (see <sup>-23152</sup>Isaiah 15:2). Beon is the same that is called Baalmeon, (<sup>-04238</sup>Numbers 32:38) and Bethbaalmeon, (<sup>-06317</sup>Joshua 13:17), where was very probably a temple of Baal; it was about nine miles from Heshbon <sup>f467</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *Even the county which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel,* etc.] In which the above cities were, and perhaps some others not named: this was now in the hands of the people of Israel, being subdued by them, the conquest of which is ascribed unto the Lord, for the victory was of him; it was he that smote their enemies; and delivered their country into their hands; and now Moses, Eleazar, and the princes of the congregation, being the representatives of the people, had a right to dispose of it, and, which these two tribes request might be given to them, because, say they:

*it is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle;* to stock it, with and great numbers of them; (see <sup>-04231</sup>Numbers 32:1)

**Ver. 5.** *Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight,* etc.] Directing their speech to Moses, the ruler of the congregation, in a very modest, decent, and respectable manner:

*let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession;* as their own portion and inheritance, to be enjoyed by them, and their children after them:

*and bring us not over Jordan;* into the land of Canaan, where as they after explain themselves, they did not desire to have any part with their brethren, but should be content with their possession here, should it be granted them.

**Ver. 6.** *And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben*, etc.] Being displeased with their motion, as his following discourse shows, it having at first sight an appearance of covetousness and cowardice:

*shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?* it is not reasonable that your brethren should be left by you and engage in a war with your common enemies, to dispossess them of their land before they can settle in it and you remain here easy and quiet in the possession of a fruitful country.

**Ver. 7.** *Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel* etc.] Which he suggests it would, should they settle on that side Jordan, since they would lose the assistance of two of their tribes, even two thirds of one of their standards in fighting with their enemies and subduing their land; and besides it might be thought that this request of theirs not only proceeded from selfish views and a love of ease, which might set a bad example to others, but carried in it a distrust of ever being able to enter into, at least to conquer and possess, the land of Canaan, and so might have a tendency to discourage their brethren:

*from going over into the land*, which the Lord hath given them? despairing of ever enjoying it, and so laying aside all thoughts of it, and not caring to make any attempt to get possession of it.

**Ver. 8.** *Thus did your fathers*, etc.] Meaning not particularly and only the fathers of these two tribes he was speaking to, but of them and the other tribes also, who acted much such a part; did not choose to go into the good land to possess it, when they were bid to do it, but were for sending spies first, which brought an ill report of it, and discouraged the people from going into it; the history of which Moses here gives:

*when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land*; called only Kadesh, (<sup><04135></sup>Numbers 13:26) the reason of the name (see Gill on "<sup><04213></sup>Numbers 32:13").

**Ver. 9.** *For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol*, etc.] That is, when they went up the hill, for they were bid to go up into the mountain, and proceeded on into the country, until they came to the valley or brook, of Eshcol, so called from the cluster of grapes they there cut down, and brought along with them, (<sup><04317></sup>Numbers 13:17,23,24)



*and saw the land*; searching it for the space of forty days:

*they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel*; by telling them that there were giants in the land, and that the people in common were strong, and their cities walled, and that they were not able to go up against them and overcome them; and by this means they disheartened the people:

*that they should not go, into the land which the Lord had given them*; and this Moses feared, and suggests would be the consequence of the request the two tribes now made.

**Ver. 10.** *And the Lord's anger was kindled, the same time*, etc.] Against the spies that brought the ill report, and against all the people that were disheartened and murmured upon it, and which, above all things, was to be dreaded now:

*and he sware, saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 11.** *Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards*, etc.] (see <sup><0448></sup>Numbers 14:28,29).

*shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob*; the land of Canaan, which at various times he sware to give to them, and to their posterity:

*because they have not wholly followed me*; the laws which he prescribed them, the directions he gave them, and particularly the orders they had to go up and possess the land at once, (<sup><6021></sup>Deuteronomy 1:21).

**Ver. 12.** *Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun*, etc.] (see <sup><0449></sup>Numbers 14:30), whether Caleb or Jephunneh is called the Kenezite is not so easy to determine; the latter rather seems to be most correct, for that Caleb should be called so from Kenaz the father of Othniel, who is said to be Caleb's brother seems not to be agreeable; since it is not likely that they were his own brothers, or Caleb would not have given his daughter to him; besides Jephunneh and not Kenaz is always said to be the father of Caleb, unless his father can be thought to have two names; it is most likely that Jephunneh, and so Caleb, might be called the Kenezite, from an ancestor of theirs of that name: Jarchi says, Caleb was the son-in-law of Kenaz, and Caleb's mother bore unto him Othniel:

*for they have wholly followed the Lord*; here what was said of Caleb, (~~Numbers 14:24~~) is said both of him and Joshua; (see Gill on ~~Numbers 14:24~~”).

**Ver. 13.** *And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel*, etc.] For murmuring against the report of the spies:

*and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years*; for though it was but about thirty eight years from that time that they were in the wilderness, the round number of forty is given; and besides it includes the time of their first coming into it, which being reckoned, makes the complete number, within a few months: Kadesh, from whence the spies were sent, and whither they returned, and where the people murmured, and had this sentence pronounced on them, that they should not see the land of Canaan, but wander and fall in the wilderness, seems to have had the addition of Barnea made unto it on that account, which signifies the son of him that wandereth:

*until all the generation which had done evil in the sight of the Lord was consumed*; as they all were at this time when Moses spake these words.

**Ver. 14.** *And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead*, etc.] Succeeded them in their families, of which they were now the heads; and in their substance, their flocks, and herds; and he suggests also, in their manners amid evil dispositions:

*an increase of sinful men*; this new generation was greatly increased, for when the number was taken, as it was but a little before this time, they were pretty near the same number as of those that came out of Egypt; but then they were not only an increase of men, but of sinful men, like fathers like sons:

*to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel*; to make it greater and fiercer towards that nation than even their fathers had by their many sins and transgressions.

**Ver. 15.** *For if ye turn away from after him*, etc.] From following him in the way of his commandments, from attending his word, worship, and ordinances, and from walking after him, who went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, as it is suggested they would, should they stop short here and not go over Jordan into the land of Canaan:

*he will yet again leave them in the wilderness*; as he did at the time of the affair of the spies, when they were ordered to turn and get into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, and where they had been ever since unto this time, (<sup>-0445</sup>Numbers 14:25),

*and ye shall destroy all this people*; be the cause of their destruction, if the Lord should in such a manner resent this step of theirs, as to order them back into the wilderness again, though they were now as they were before, on the border of the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 16.** *And they came near unto him*, etc.] The heads of the tribes of Gad and Reuben came a little nearer to Moses, having something more to say unto him, in order to explain their meaning, and in doing which they used some degree of freedom and boldness with him, (see <sup>-0448</sup>Genesis 44:18)

*and said, we will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones* not build new ones, but repair the old ones; for there were cities enough in the country, as before named, and no doubt sheepfolds too, as the land was a place of cattle, but those were through the war broken down and demolished, and needed repairing; and this they proposed to do, and leave their children and their cattle to the care of their servants, under the protection of the divine Providence, and did not mean for the present to take up their abode here.

**Ver. 17.** *But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel*, etc.] This they said to free themselves from the charge of cowardice, and that they did not mean to sit still while their brethren went to war; they were willing to put on their armour, and be ready to meet the enemy upon the borders of the land, and engage with them, and to expose their lives in favour of their brethren:

*until we have brought them unto their place*; to the land of Canaan, the place designed for them, and given unto them, to the possession of it, and a settlement in it:

*and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land*; where they might be safe from them, which they proposed to repair and refortify for the security of them, while they went with their brethren into the land of Canaan, to put them into possession of that, of which they made not the least doubt; and so served to clear them of

suspicion of any distrust they had of entering into and possessing the land, which might tend to discourage the people.

**Ver. 18.** *We will not return unto our houses*, etc.] In the cities built or repaired by them, or to their families, and their substance, their flocks and their herds; all which they should leave behind them, and never think of returning to them:

*until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance*; until all the tribes were settled in their respective places, and every family and everyone in them had their portion assigned them; and accordingly they did not return until the land was wholly subdued, nor even until every lot came up, and the land was divided by it, and the inheritance of the several tribes fixed, and even the cities of the Levites assigned to them out of the several tribes; (see ~~621~~ Joshua 22:1-34).

**Ver. 19.** *For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward*, etc.] This they said, not as being determined whether Moses and the princes were willing or not to stay where they were, and not pass over Jordan to inherit any part there, and much less as despising the good land, but as giving up all pretensions to it, should they be settled where they desired; they were not of that selfish and covetous disposition as to desire any part on the other side Jordan, if it was but granted them to continue on this side, and possess the land they requested:

*because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward*; they seem to speak as if they were assured of it, and that it was so ordered by divine Providence, and wanted nothing but the consent of Moses, and the princes of the congregation.

**Ver. 20.** *And Moses said unto them*, etc.] Being better disposed towards them, and more satisfied with the reasonableness of their request, it being explained unto him:

*if ye will do this thing*; which they had promised:

*if ye will go armed before the Lord to war*; they had said they would go ready armed before the children of Israel, but Moses expresses it “before the Lord”; which is more agreeable to their encampment and order in marching, for not the standard of Reuben but that of Judah went foremost, yet the standard of Reuben marched directly before the sanctuary bore by

the Kohathites, (<sup><CHOCIS></sup>Numbers 10:18,21), and so might be properly said to go before the Lord, who dwelt there.

**Ver. 21.** *And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord*, etc.] Moses tries them thoroughly, and is very express in his words, requiring them not only to go armed, or march from the place where they were, towards the land of Canaan, but to go over Jordan, and not some of them only, but all, and that before the Lord; though indeed, when the tribes came to the river Jordan, the ark, which was the symbol of the divine Presence, went before all the tribes into it, and there stayed till they passed over, and then these two tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh passed before the children of Israel, and before the Lord, unto battle, (<sup><CHRI></sup>Joshua 3:11,17 4:12,13)

*until he hath driven out his enemies before him*: the Canaanites, who were the enemies of the Lord, as well as of his people; and because of their sins, in which they showed their enmity to God, the land spewed them out, and he drove them out to make way for his people Israel, and till this was done the tribes of Reuben and Gad were to continue with them.

**Ver. 22.** *And the land be subdued before the Lord*, etc.] For the inhabitants fleeing before his people, and being conquered by them, might be said to be subdued before the Lord, this being done in his presence, by his power, and for his people:

*then afterward ye shall return*: to this side of Jordan, the land of Jazer and Gilead, to their cities, and families there;

*and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel*: having fulfilled all that they promised:

*and this land shall be your possession before the Lord*; be established and settled in it as their inheritance, the Lord seeing and approving of it, and protecting them in the enjoyment of it.

**Ver. 23.** *But if ye will not do so*, etc.] As they promised they would, and Moses insisted on it that they should:

*behold, ye have sinned against the Lord* making such a request, and not fulfilling the conditions on which it was granted:

*and be sure your sin will find you out*; fly in their faces, accuse them in their consciences, charge and load them with guilt, and bring deserved

punishment upon them: sin may be put, as it often is, for the punishment of sin, which sooner or later will find out and come upon the impenitent and unpardoned sinner.

**Ver. 24.** *Build ye cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep*, etc.] For their safety and security, as they proposed to do:

*and do that which proceedeth out of your mouth*; all that they had promised.

**Ver. 25.** *And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying*, etc.] In answer to his speech:

*thy servants will do as my lord commandeth*; both with respect to their march before the Lord to battle, and with respect to their provision for their children and flocks.

**Ver. 26.** *Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle*, etc.] Their families, and their substance:

*shall be there in the cities of Gilead*; such as are before mentioned, (<sup><ORIG></sup>Numbers 32:3) and which they proposed to repair and fortify, to preserve their families and possessions from the Amorites about them.

**Ver. 27.** *But thy servants will pass over*, etc.] The river Jordan, and go into the land of Canaan:

*every man armed for war*; Moses had required that all should go over, and they consent to it, and promise that everyone should, though this was not insisted on when they came to it, for only about 40,000 went over, (<sup><ORIG></sup>Joshua 4:13), whereas the two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, numbered more than 110,000; (see <sup><ORIG></sup>Numbers 26:7,18,34):

*before the Lord to battle, as my lord saith*; for now, instead of saying, “before the children of Israel”, a phrase they first used, they say, “before the Lord”, as Moses had expressed it.

**Ver. 28.** *So concerning them Moses commanded*, etc.] That they should have a grant of the land they requested: this looks as if Moses determined the case himself, though perhaps it was by the vote, and with the consent of the whole court; only Moses strictly enjoined them to observe it, namely,

*Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel*; and the rather he did this, because he knew that he should die, and not see either the thing itself or the conditions of it performed.

**Ver. 29.** *And Moses said unto them*, etc.] To Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes of the congregation:

*if the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the Lord*; as they have promised they will:

*and the land shall be subdued before you*; which must be done before their return:

*then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession*; which, no doubt, included that of Jazer too, since Jaazer, which is the same, is after mentioned as one of the cities built by the children of Gad, (<sup>DEUT</sup> Numbers 32:35).

**Ver. 30.** *But if they will not pass over with you armed*, etc.] Shall change their minds, and break their promise, and refuse to go over the river Jordan with the other tribes, and armed ready to engage in battle with the enemy:

*they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan*; take their lot there, but have no inheritance or possessions on this side Jordan.

**Ver. 31.** *And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered*, etc.], The word is in the singular number, and shows their unanimity, that they agreed to what Moses said, and replied all of them as one man, as Jarchi expresses it; and it may be there was one that was the mouth of them all, and answered for them:

*saying, as the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do*; here they make use of the word Jehovah, taking what Moses had said unto them as from the Lord, and therefore should strictly and punctually observe it, as if they heard the Lord himself speak it.

**Ver. 32.** *We will pass over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan*, etc.] This is repeated again and again, for the confirmation of it, assuring that it should be strictly performed according to the true intent of it:

*that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours;* that is, that the possession and inheritance they desired, and which had been granted them, on conditions to be performed by them, might be ratified and confirmed unto them on their fulfilment of them.

**Ver. 33.** *And Moses gave unto them,* etc.] By word of mouth, in the presence of the court, or rather by some instrument drawn up and signed by him and the sanhedrim, or witnessed by them:

*[even] to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph;* no mention is made of this half tribe joining with the other two tribes in the request to settle on this side Jordan, and therefore it is generally thought that they were encouraged, by the success of the two tribes, to make a like motion; or else Moses and the princes, observing that there was too much land for the said tribes, joined this half tribe with them, the land being suitable for them:

*the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about;* of which kingdoms, and the conquest of them, (see <sup><0224></sup>Numbers 21:24-35), and several of the cities in them are after mentioned.

**Ver. 34.** *And the children of Gad built,* etc.] Or rather repaired the walls and fortifications, and rebuilt houses which had been demolished in the wars with Sihon and Og; when the following places were taken by the Israelites:

*Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer;* the two first are mentioned in (<sup><0223></sup>Numbers 32:3). Aroer was a city situated on the river Arnon, and was after this in the hands of the Moabites: Jerom says <sup>f468</sup>, it was showed in his day on the top of the mountain, upon the bank of the river Arnon, which flows into the Dead sea, (<sup><2489></sup>Jeremiah 48:19).

**Ver. 35.** *And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah.*] Of these no mention is made elsewhere, except Jaazer, which is the same with Jazer, (<sup><0223></sup>Numbers 32:3 21:32).

**Ver. 36.** *And Bethnimrah, and Bethharan, fenced cities,* etc.] The first of these is the same with Nimrah, (<sup><0223></sup>Numbers 32:3), and the other is the same with Betharam, (<sup><0237></sup>Joshua 13:27), it is called in the Jerusalem Talmud <sup>f469</sup>, Bethramtha, and so by the Syrians, Bethramphta; and to the



same place Herod gave the name of Livias or Julius <sup>f470</sup>: these cities the children of Gad built or repaired for their families:

*and folds for sheep*; they also built for their cattle, as they promised to do, and Moses enjoined them, (<sup><0826></sup>Numbers 32:16,24,26).

**Ver. 37.** *And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim.*] Heshbon was the royal city of Sihon king of the Amorites, and Elealeh was within a mile of it, (see <sup><0826></sup>Numbers 32:3), this shows that those cities were not built anew properly, only repaired, for they were cities in being long before; besides, they had not time to build new cities, for in a few months after this they passed over Jordan; though indeed they left men enough behind to rebuild cities, whom they might set to work about them when they departed: Kirjathaim is, by the Targum of Jonathan, called the city of two streets paved with marble, and it adds, this is Beresha: Jerom <sup>f471</sup> says, it is now called Coraiatha, which is pretty near its ancient name, and that it is ten miles from Medeba, a city of Arabia, mentioned as one of the cities in the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, (<sup><0823></sup>Numbers 21:30 <sup><2352></sup>Isaiah 15:2).

**Ver. 38.** *And Nebo, and Baalmeon, (their names being changed,) etc.*] For Nebo was the name of an idol, after which perhaps the city was called: Baalmeon signifies “Baal’s habitation”, and where it is highly probable was a temple of his; and the children of Reuben, not liking to retain such idolatrous names, gave them others, but what they were it is not said; and certain it is, that when these places came into the hands of the Moabites, their ancient names were restored to them, as appears from (<sup><2352></sup>Isaiah 15:2 <sup><2482></sup>Jeremiah 48:23)

*and Shibmah*; the same with Shebam, (<sup><0826></sup>Numbers 32:3), and gave other names unto the cities which they built; but they are neither known, nor did they always continue, as has been observed.

**Ver. 39.** *And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it,* etc.] That part of it which Moses gave unto the half tribe of Manasseh, which till now was in the hand of the Amorites; for half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, were given to the Reubenites and Gadites, which is the land of Gilead they desired, and which was already conquered; for they call it the country which the Lord smote before Israel, (<sup><0826></sup>Numbers 32:1,4 <sup><0822></sup>Deuteronomy 3:12,13):

*and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it*; for though they were driven out of one part of Gilead, yet not out of the whole.

**Ver. 40.** *And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh*, etc.] That is, to the children of Machir, who went and took it; though some say, as Aben Ezra observes, that Machir himself was now alive, and that it was given to him, but that is not probable; for, supposing him to be living when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, all that came from thence, who were twenty years old and upwards, died in the wilderness, excepting two, (see <sup><0421></sup>Numbers 32:11,12),

*and he dwelt therein*; that is, the family of the Macharite; (see <sup><0429></sup>Numbers 26:29).

**Ver. 41.** *And Jair the son of Manasseh*, etc.] By his mother's side, otherwise he was of the family of Judah; for Hezron, of the family of Judah, married a daughter of Machir, the son of Manasseh, by whom he had a son called Segub, who was the father of Jair, (<sup><1322></sup>1 Chronicles 2:21,22), the same

*went and took the small towns thereof*; of that part of Gilead given to Machir:

*and called them Havothjair*; after his own name: in (<sup><0814></sup>Deuteronomy 3:14), they are called Bashanhavothjair.

**Ver. 42.** *And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof*, etc.] Who this Nobah was is not certain, very probably a descendant of Manasseh; it is said <sup>f472</sup> he was among those that were born in Egypt, and died after the death of Moses, and was buried beyond Jordan, as it is said, also did Machir and Jair, so that there were none left but Caleb, and Joshua:

*and called it Nobah*, after his name; but it seems that in later times its ancient name was restored to it; for Jerom <sup>f473</sup>, says there was a village in Arabia, called Cannatha, which is supposed to be this place; though he also tells us <sup>f474</sup>, that eight miles from Heshbon; to the south, is shown a desert place called Naba. Pliny <sup>f475</sup> places Cannatha in the Decapolis.

# CHAPTER 33

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 33

This chapter gives an account of the journeys of the people of Israel, from their first coming out of Egypt, to their arrival in the plains of Moab by Jordan, and the names of the various stations where they rested are given, (<sup><0330></sup>Numbers 33:1-49) and they are ordered, when they passed over Jordan, to drive out the Canaanites, destroy their idols, and divide the land among their families in their several tribes, (<sup><0330></sup>Numbers 33:50-54) or otherwise it is threatened the Canaanites should be troublesome and vexatious to them, even those that remained; and it might be expected God would do to the Israelites as he thought to do to those nations, (<sup><0335></sup>Numbers 33:55,56).

**Ver. 1.** *These are the journeys of the children of Israel,* etc.] Which are related in this chapter following:

*which went forth out of the land of Egypt:* whither their fathers went and stayed, and were kept in hard bondage, but in due time were delivered from it, and came out from thence:

*with their armies;* in great numbers, and in an orderly manner, in rank and file, and like so many squadrons, (see <sup><0370></sup>Exodus 7:4), under the hand of Moses and Aaron: who were sent to the king of Egypt to require their dismissal, and who were the instruments under God of their deliverance, and were the leaders of them; as of them out of Egypt, so through the wilderness, in their, several journeys here recorded.

**Ver. 2.** *And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the Lord,* etc.] Which may be understood, either that their journeys were by the commandment of the Lord; so Aben Ezra takes the connection to be, and which is undoubtedly true, and which is expressed plainly elsewhere; for so it was, that when the cloud abode on the tabernacle they rested, and had their stations, and continued as long as the cloud tarried on it, and when that was taken up, then they marched; and thus at the commandment of the Lord they rested, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed, see (<sup><0377></sup>Numbers 9:17-23) or

that Moses wrote the account of their journeys, and several stations, at the commandment of the Lord, that it might be on record, and be read in future ages, and appear to be a fact, that they were led about in a wilderness, in places which were unknown to others, and had no names but what they gave them:

*and these are their journeys according to their goings out*; from place to place; some of the ancients, as Jerom<sup>f476</sup> particularly, and some modern writers, have allegorized these journeys of the children of Israel, and have fancied that there is something in the signification of the names of the places they came to, and abode in, suitable to the cases and circumstances of the people of God in their passage through this world; but though the travels of the children of Israel in the wilderness may in general be an emblem of the case and condition of the people of God in this world, and there are many things in them, and which they met with, and befell them, that may be accommodated to them; yet the particulars will never hold good of individual saints, since they are not all led exactly in the same path of difficulties and troubles, but each have something peculiar to themselves; and it will be difficult to apply these things to the church of God in general, in the several stages and periods of time, and which I do not know that any have attempted; and yet, if there is anything pointed out by the travels, one would think it should be that.

**Ver. 3.** *And they departed from Rameses*, etc.] A city in Egypt, where the children of Israel, a little before their departure, seem to have been gathered together in a body, in order to march out all together, as they did. This place the Targum of Jonathan calls Pelusium. Dr. Shaw<sup>f477</sup> thinks it might be Cairo, from whence they set forward; (see <sup><0123></sup>Exodus 12:37) and it was

*in the first month*; in the month Nisan, as the same Targum, or Abib, which was appointed the first month on this account, and answers to part of our March and April:

*on the fifteenth of the first month, on the morrow after the passover*; that was kept on the fourteenth, when the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, and slew all the firstborn in Egypt, which made way for their departure the next morning; the Egyptians being urgent upon them to be gone:

*the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians*; openly and publicly, with great courage and boldness, without any fear of their enemies; who seeing them march out, had no power to stop them, or to move their lips at them, nay, were willing to be rid of them; (see <sup><107></sup>Exodus 11:7 12:33).

**Ver. 4.** *For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them*, etc.] Which contributed much to the more easy and safe deliverance of the children of Israel; for their hearts were heavy with sorrow, and their hands were full, and they had other work to do, namely, to bury their dead, than to molest Israel; and besides, they knew it was for detaining them this stroke came upon them:

*upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments*; they were moved at the presence, and by the power of God, and fell and were dashed to pieces, as the idols of the same land were in later times, (see <sup><301></sup>Isaiah 19:1) and this still the more intimidated and frightened the Egyptians, that they dared not attempt to hinder the departure of the Israelites from them. The Targum of Jonathan says, the Word of the Lord did this; and adds, their molten idols became soft, their strong idols were mutilated, their earthen idols were diminished, their wooden idols became ashes, and those of beasts died.

**Ver. 5.** *And the children of Israel removed from Rameses*, etc.] Or Pelusium, as the same Targum again:

*and pitched in Succoth*: where, as the same paraphrase says, they were covered with the clouds of glory, suggesting that to be the reason of its name; but that was rather because of the booths or tents the Israelites erected, pitched, and dwelt in, during their abode there: this, according to Bunting <sup>f478</sup>, was eight miles from Rameses; according to whose computation, for want of a better guide, the distances of the several stations from each other will be given.

**Ver. 6.** *And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham*, etc.] Which was eight miles from Succoth:

*which is in the edge of the wilderness*; of the name, (see <sup><230></sup>Exodus 13:20) but Dr. Shaw <sup>f479</sup> makes this particular portion of the wilderness to be fifty miles from Cairo or Rameses.

**Ver. 7.** *And they removed from Etham, and turned again to Pihahiroth*, etc.] Which was sixteen miles from Etham. This turning, Aben Ezra says,

respects the cloud, or Israel; and indeed it may respect both, for, as the cloud turned, Israel turned, being directed by it; and this does not mean that they had been at Pihahiroth before, and now returned to it again; but that they by direction turned out of the straight way in which they were to go to Pihahiroth; for the word “again” may as well, or better, be left out, (see Gill on “<sup>[Exo]</sup>Exodus 14:2”):

*which is before Baalzephon*; the name of an idol, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, supposed to be placed here, to watch and guard the passage, as Zephon signifies:

*and they pitched before Migdol*: which was either the name of a city, the same with Migdol, (<sup>[Jer]</sup>Jeremiah 44:1) or it was a tower, as the word signifies, placed here on the borders of the land, for the defence of it.

**Ver. 8.** *And they departed from before Pihahiroth*, etc.] Being forced by Pharaoh’s army pressing upon them:

*and passed through the midst of the sea*; from shore to shore, as on dry land:

*into the wilderness*: that part of it which lay on the other side, for still it was the wilderness of Etham they went into, as follows:

*and went three days’ journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah*; so called from the bitterness of the waters there, and which is computed to be forty miles from Pihahiroth.

**Ver. 9.** *And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim*, etc.] Which was eight miles from Marah:

*and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and three score and ten palm trees, and they pitched there*; being a convenient place of water for them,

**Ver. 10.** *And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.*] This encampment, is omitted in the book of Exodus, (see <sup>[Exo]</sup>Exodus 16:1) this part or arm of the Red sea, whither they came, was six miles from Elim.

**Ver. 11.** *And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin.*] Sixteen miles from the Red sea, where they were last; (see <sup>[Exo]</sup>Exodus 16:1).

**Ver. 12.** *And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin,* etc.]

According to the account in Exodus, this was after they had the manna given them, (see <sup><0270></sup>Exodus 17:1)

*and encamped at Dophkah;* twelve miles from the wilderness of Sin; and of this, and the next encampment, no mention is made in Exodus.

**Ver. 13.** *And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush.*] The strong fort, as the Targum of Jonathan calls it; this was twelve miles from Dophkah: according to the Jewish chronology <sup>f480</sup>, this Alush is the wilderness of Sin, where the Israelites came on the fifteenth day of the seventh month from their going out of Egypt; and they say, that in Alush the sabbath was given them, and that there they kept the first sabbath, as it is said,

*and the people rested on the seventh day,* (<sup><0263></sup>Exodus 16:30).

**Ver. 14.** *And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim,* etc.]

Eight miles from Alush:

*where was no water for the people to drink;* and they murmured, and a rock here was smitten by Moses at the command of God, and waters gushed out sufficient for them and their flocks, (<sup><0270></sup>Exodus 17:1-16).

**Ver. 15.** *And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.*] Eight miles from Rephidim; and from a mount of this name here were given the decalogue, with all other statutes and ordinances, judicial and ceremonial, and orders and directions for building the tabernacle, and making all the vessels appertaining to it, and which were all made during their stay here.

**Ver. 16.** *And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibrothhattaavah.*] Eight miles from the desert of Sinai; here the people lusted after flesh, and murmured, which, though given them, a pestilence came and destroyed many of them, and here they were buried, whence the place was so called, which signifies the “graves of lust”, i.e. of those that lusted: no mention is made of Taberah, either because it was the same with Kibroth, or near it; or, as Aben Ezra on (<sup><0282></sup>Deuteronomy 9:22) says, they encamped there but one day, and so is not mentioned in the journeys, though it was one of the three they journeyed from Mount Sinai to Kibrothhattaavah, (see <sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:1-3,34,35).

**Ver. 17.** *And they departed from Kibrothhattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.*] Eight miles from Kibrothhattaavah, where Miriam was smote with leprosy, (<sup><0423></sup>Numbers 12:1-16).

**Ver. 18.** *And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched at Rithmah.*] Eight miles from Hazeroth: Rethem, from whence this place seems to have had its name, is generally rendered by “juniper”, (<sup><1190></sup>1 Kings 19:4,5) and the Targum of Jonathan here adds, where the juniper trees grew; and, perhaps, it is the same with the valley of Retheme, of which some travellers <sup>f481</sup> thus write, “this valley”, called in the Hebrew Retheme, and commonly Ritma, derives its name from a yellow flower, with which the valley is covered; we found here, on the left hand, two cisterns of excellent water; and water being to be had here, might be the reason of the Israelites pitching in this place. Some learned men <sup>f482</sup> think it is the same with Kadeshbarnea, from whence the spies were sent, that being the next remove from Hazeroth, as this was; (see <sup><0421></sup>Numbers 12:16 13:26 32:8 <sup><0824></sup>Deuteronomy 2:14 <sup><0647></sup>Joshua 14:7), with which agrees the remark of Jarchi, that this place was so called, because of the evil tongue of the spies, as it is said, (<sup><3008></sup>Psalms 120:3,4) “what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper”; alluding to the signification of Rithmah; perhaps this is the same place, which by Josephus <sup>f483</sup> is called Dathema, and so in the Apocrypha:

“Then the heathen that were at Galaad assembled themselves together against the Israelites that were in their quarters, to destroy them; but they fled to the fortress of Dathema.” (1 Maccabees 5:9)

**Ver. 19-29.** *And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmonparez.*] Six miles from Rithmah, and then from Rimmon to Libnah, which was six miles also; and from thence to Rissah, which was six miles more; and from Rissah to, Kehelathah, which was the same number of miles; and from thence to Shapher, which was six miles also; and then they came to Haradah, which was four miles from thence; the next remove was to Makheloth, which was four miles and a half from the last place; then they went to Tahath, which was four miles more; and from thence to Tarah, which also was four miles; the next place they came to was Mithcah, four miles from Tarah; and then to Hashmonah, which was eight miles more.

**Ver. 30-31.** *And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.*] Thirty two miles from Hashmonah. In (<sup><0506></sup>Deuteronomy 10:6)



it is called Mosera; and according to the account there, they came hither from the following place, Benejaakan; probably they went first thither from Hashmonah, and then from Mosera or Moserot, and so to Benejaakan again, going backwards and forwards, so Jarchi; the distance of the two places was twenty four miles; for the further reconciliation this, (see Gill on <sup><500></sup>Deuteronomy 10:6") and the Samaritan version there.

**Ver. 32-37.** *And they removed from Benejaakan, and encamped at Horhagidgad.*] In the Targum Jonathan called Gudgod, as it is Gudgodah in (<sup><500></sup>Deuteronomy 10:7), where the remove to this place is said to be from Mosera; it was twenty miles from Benejaaken; from thence they went to Jotbathah, twenty four miles from Horhagidgad; and from thence to Ebronah, twenty miles more; and so to Eziongeber, of which (see <sup><100></sup>1 Kings 9:26) which was twenty eight miles from Ebrorah; and their next remove was to the wilderness of Zin, which was Kadesh, forty eight miles from Eziongeber; and from Kadesh they went to Mount Hor, forty eight miles more: which was

*in the edge of the land of Edom;* as Kadesh also was; (see <sup><000></sup>Numbers 20:16,23).

**Ver. 38.** *And Aaron the priest went up into Mount Hor, at the commandment of the Lord,* etc.] Delivered to Moses:

*and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt;* not being suffered to go with them into the land of Canaan, because of his sin of unbelief at Kadesh, the last place from whence they came: in Mount Hor he died,

*on the first day of the fifth month;* the month Ab, answering to part of July and part of August; so that he lived but four months after his sister Miriam; (see <sup><000></sup>Numbers 20:1,25-29).

**Ver. 39.** *And Aaron was one hundred and twenty three years old when he died in Mount Hor.*] He was eighty three when he stood before Pharaoh, (<sup><000></sup>Exodus 7:7), and forty years he had been with Israel since, which make this number; he was three years older than Moses.

**Ver. 40-44.** *And King Arad the Canaanite,* etc.] Or the king of Arad the Canaanite:

*which dwelt in the land of Canaan, he heard of the coming of the children of Israel*; towards the land of Canaan, in order to possess it, and he came out and fought with them, and was vanquished; (see <sup><0200></sup>Numbers 21:1-3), this was when Israel was at Mount Hor; from whence they departed to Zalmonah, twenty eight miles from the mount; and from thence to Punon, which was twenty more; and so to Oboth, which was twenty four miles from Punon: and thence

*to Ijeabarim, in the border of Moab*, which was sixteen miles, (see <sup><0209></sup>Numbers 21:9-11).

**Ver. 45.** *And they departed from Ijim, and pitched in Dibongad.*] Sixteen miles from Ijim; the remove from whence is said to be to the valley of Zared, (<sup><0212></sup>Numbers 21:12) in which Dibongad was, so called perhaps because rebuilt by Gad afterwards.

**Ver. 46.** *And they removed from Dibongad, and encamped in Almondiblathaim.*] Sixteen miles from Dibon, perhaps the same with Diblath, (<sup><2164></sup>Ezekiel 6:14), according to the account in (<sup><0216></sup>Numbers 21:16), etc. they went from hence to Beer, a place where they found a well, which gave it this name; and several other removes are mentioned there, which are not here, and which, perhaps, were small removes, and not properly stations.

**Ver. 47.** *And they removed from Almondiblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim*, etc.] Sixteen miles from Almondiblathaim; these were so called from passages near them over the river Jordan: and this station was pitched

*before Nebo*; one of those mountains, whither Moses went up and died.

**Ver. 48.** *And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab*, etc.] Sixteen miles from Abarim, where all those things were transacted, which make the history of Balak and Balaam, (<sup><0221></sup>Numbers 22:1-25:18) and where the Israelites now were by Jordan near Jericho; not on that side Jordan where Jericho stood, but on the other; Jericho, according to Eusebius, was ten miles from Bethjesimoth, where Israel now were, as follows.

**Ver. 49.** *And they pitched by Jordan from Bethjesimoth, [even] unto Abelshittim, in the plains of Moab.*] Their camp reached twelve miles, as the Jews commonly say, which we may suppose was the distance of these

two places, which were both in the plains of Moab; and the Jerusalem Targum is express for it, for mentioning Israel's encampment from Bethjesimoth to Abelshittim, it asks, how far is that? twelve miles: the latter is sometimes called Shittim, from the shittim wood which grew there, (<sup>(-0270)</sup>Numbers 25:1) and here it has the addition of Abel to it, to signify mourning, from the mourning of the children of Israel on account of the plague, in which 24,000 persons died, (<sup>(-0270)</sup>Numbers 25:1,6,9).

**Ver. 50.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho*, etc.] (See Gill on "<sup>(-0338)</sup>Numbers 33:48"), (See Gill on "<sup>(-0270)</sup>Numbers 22:1"),

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 51.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] What was to be said, being what concerned the whole body of the people:

*when ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan*; near to which they now were, and Moses was about to leave them; and therefore it was the more necessary to give them some instructions and directions what they should do, when they were come into it.

**Ver. 52.** *Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you*, etc.] Not at once, but gradually; and the sense is, that they should use their utmost endeavours wholly to extirpate them:

*and destroy all their pictures*; their idolatrous ones; the pictures of their gods, or the statues and figured stones of them: the Targum of Jonathan interprets it,

“all the temples of their worship;”

and the Jerusalem Targum,

“all their idols;”

so called, as Jarchi notes, because they covered the floor with a pavement of marble stones, to worship upon them by the stretching out of their hands and feet, according to (<sup>(-0300)</sup>Leviticus 26:1),

*and destroy all their molten images*; of gold, silver, etc.

*and quite pluck down all their high places*; their temples, groves, and altars built upon them.

**Ver. 53.** *And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein*, etc.] Turn them out of their cities, towns, and houses, and inhabit them:

*for I have given you the land to possess it*; who had a right to dispose of it, and a better title they needed not desire than the Lord could and did make them.

**Ver. 54.** *And ye shall divide the land by lot*, etc.] What is said in this verse is the same with (<sup>005</sup>Numbers 26:53-56), where it has been explained; (See Gill on "<sup>005</sup>Numbers 26:53-56"),

**Ver. 55.** *But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you*, etc.] Should be remiss and careless about it, and indifferent to it, and not make use of the proper means to get rid of them, but, on the contrary, make covenants with them, and intermarry among them; or, however, become friendly to them, and suffer them to dwell among them:

*then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them*; sparing their lives, and permitting them to dwell among them:

*shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides*; which figurative expressions show that they should be very troublesome and distressing to them, even in their most tender and nearest concerns, and dearest relations, and which are explained and more properly expressed as follows:

*and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell*; among other things by their wicked conversation, and by drawing them into sin through their ill examples, and so bring the displeasure of God upon them, and punishment for their evil doings.

**Ver. 56.** *Moreover, it shall come to pass*, etc.] This being the case, they suffering the Canaanites to dwell among them, and they mingling with them, learning their works, and serving their gods: that

*I shall do unto you as I thought I should do unto them*; deliver them up into the hands of their enemies, who should carry them captive into other lands.

# CHAPTER 34

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 34

In this chapter the bounds and borders of the land Canaan are described, according to the direction of the Lord to Moses, (<sup><0640></sup>Numbers 34:1,2), the south border, (<sup><0643></sup>Numbers 34:3-5), the western border, (<sup><0645></sup>Numbers 34:6), the north border, (<sup><0647></sup>Numbers 34:7-9), the east border, (<sup><0640></sup>Numbers 34:10-12), which is ordered to be divided by lot to the nine tribes and a half, two tribes and a half having received their inheritance on the other side Jordan, (<sup><0643></sup>Numbers 34:13-15), and the persons are nominated to divide the land, Eleazar and Joshua, with one prince out of every tribe, and who are mentioned by name, (<sup><0646></sup>Numbers 34:16-29).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] At the same time that he ordered him to direct the children of Israel, when they had passed over Jordan, to drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and divide their land among them, he proceeded to give the limits and boundaries of the land:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Command the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] Not to fix the borders, and settle the boundaries of the land, for that is done by the Lord himself, who has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations, and particularly of Israel, (see <sup><0638></sup>Deuteronomy 32:8), but to observe and take notice of the limits he had fixed, that they might know how far they were to go on every side, whom they were to drive out, and what they were to divide and inherit, and see what was their right, and preserve it from the encroachments of their neighbours, as well as observe the goodness of God unto them, in thus providing for them:

*when ye come into the land of Canaan*; to take possession of it by virtue of a grant of it to them:

*this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance*; it is said to “fall”, because it was divided by lot, each tribe having such a part of it assigned to them, according to the lot that came up unto them: even

*the land of Canaan*, with the coasts thereof; or according to its borders, which are as follow.

**Ver. 3.** *Then your south quarter*, etc.] Or border of the land; which, as Jarchi observes, was from east to west:

*shall be from the wilderness of Zin*; which is Kadesh, where Miriam died, (<sup><0810></sup>Numbers 20:1 33:36), and if this Kadesh was Kadeshbarnea, as Dr. Lightfoot seems to have proved <sup>f484</sup>, from whence the spies were sent, that was clearly on the south of the land of Canaan, for they were bid to go up their way southward, (<sup><0437></sup>Numbers 13:17), and so Kadeshbarnea is hereafter mentioned, as being in the southern border: the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

“from the wilderness of the palm trees of the mountain of iron;”

there is a smaller palm tree, which by Jewish writers is called Zin, of which there were great quantities on a mountain famous for iron mines, in this wilderness, from whence it is thought it had its name; hence we read <sup>f485</sup> of palm trees of the mountain of iron, as fit to make the bunch of branches of trees, called the “lulab”, carried in the hand on the feast of tabernacles:

*along by the coast of Edom*; the land of Canaan, to the south, bordered on three countries, Egypt, Edom, and Moab; according to Jarchi, some part of Egypt, the whole land of Edom, and the whole land of Moab; the part of the land of Egypt was in the south west corner of it; the land of Edom by it to the east; and the land of Moab by the land of Edom, at the end of the south to the east:

*and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward*; the same that is sometimes called the Dead sea, the sea of Sodom, or the lake Asphaltites, as Heathen writers generally call it.

**Ver. 4.** *And your border*, etc.] That is, the south border, which is still describing:

*shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim*; or Maalehacrabbim, as in (<sup><0853></sup>Joshua 15:3) so called from the multitude of serpents and scorpions in it, (see <sup><0885></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15), so Kimchi says <sup>f486</sup>, a place of

serpents and scorpions was this ascent: Dr. Shaw <sup>f487</sup> says Akrabbim may probably be the same with the mountains of Accaba, according to the present name, which hang over Eloth, where there is a “high steep road”, well known to the Mahometan pilgrims for its ruggedness: and he thinks <sup>f488</sup> it very probable, that Mount Hor was the same chain of mountains that are now called Accaba by the Arabs, and were the easternmost range, as we may take them to be, of Ptolemy’s black mountains: Josephus <sup>f489</sup> speaks of Acrabatene as belonging to the Edomites, which seems to be this same place:

*and pass on to Zin*; that is, which ascent goes on to it; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“and shall pass on to the palm trees of the mountain of iron;”

by which is meant the same with the wilderness of Zin: perhaps Zinnah is rather the name of a city; the Septuagint call it Ennac: the Vulgate Latin, Senna: Jerom <sup>f490</sup> makes mention of a place called Senna, seven miles from Jericho:

*and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadeshbarnea*; from whence the spies were sent southward to search the land, (<sup><04E37></sup>Numbers 13:17 32:8)

*and shall go on to Hazaraddar*; called Adar, (<sup><06E3B></sup>Joshua 15:3) and where it seems to be divided into two places, Hezron and Adar, which very probably were near each other, and therefore here put together, as if but one place:

*and pass on to Azmon*; which the Targums call Kesam.

**Ver. 5.** *And the border shall fetch a compass*, etc.] Not go on in a straight line, but turn about:

*from Azmon unto the river of Egypt*; the river Nile, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but Aben Ezra seems to deny that that river is meant: and some think that Rhinocolura, which flows into the Mediterranean sea, is meant; or the “valley of Egypt”, Casiotis, which divided Judea from Egypt, as follows:

*and the goings out of it*; not of the river, but of the border:

*shall be at the sea*; the above sea, called in the next verse the great sea; all the Targums render it to the west.

**Ver. 6.** *And as for the western border*, etc.] Of the land of Canaan:

*you shall even have the great sea for a border*; and no other, meaning the Mediterranean sea, which lies west of the land of Judea; Aben Ezra calls it the Spanish sea: it has the name of “great”, in comparison of some in the land of Canaan, as the salt sea, and the sea of Tiberias:

*this shall be your west border*; namely, the Mediterranean sea.

**Ver. 7.** *And this shall be your northern border*, etc.] What follows:

*from the great sea ye shall point out for you Mount Hor*; not that Mount Hor on which Aaron died, for that was on the southern border of the land; but rather Mount Herman, which is said to be unto the entering into Hamath, (<sup><3615></sup>Joshua 13:5) as this Mount Hor is in the following verse; or some part of Mount Lebanon might be so called, which was the northern border of the land: the Targum of Jonathan calls it Umanus; and the Jerusalem Targum, Manus or Taurus Umanus, the Mountain Umanus, which divided Syria and Cilicia; it is joined with Lebanon by Josephus <sup>f491</sup>, and with that and Carmel by Aelianus <sup>f492</sup>.

**Ver. 8.** *From Mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath*, etc.] Antiochia, as Jarchi; or rather Epiphania, as Jerom <sup>f493</sup>; the former being described by Hemath the great, (<sup><3062></sup>Amos 6:2), this entrance was a narrow pass leading from the land of Canaan to Syria, through the valley which lies between Lebanon and Antilibanus:

*and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad*; the same boundary as here is given in (<sup><2675></sup>Ezekiel 47:15).

**Ver. 9.** *And the border shall go on to Ziphron*, etc.] Which in the Jerusalem Targum is called Zapherin; and Jerom <sup>f494</sup> says, that in his time this city was called Zephyrium, a town in Cilicia; but this seems to be at too great a distance:

*and the goings out of it shall be at Hazarenan*; which was the utmost of the northern border, and so it is in (<sup><2677></sup>Ezekiel 47:17) and there called the border of Damascus: Reland <sup>f495</sup> takes it to be the same with Enhazor, a city in the tribe of Naphtali, (<sup><1687></sup>Joshua 19:37), the words only inverted:



*this shall be your northern border:* from the Mediterranean sea to Hazarenan in Naphtali.

**Ver. 10.** *And ye shall point out your east border from Hazarenan to Shepham.*] From the place where the northern border ended, which Jerom says <sup>f496</sup> the Hebrews call Apamia, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem do here. Shepham was a city between Hazarenan and Riblah in the tribe of Naphtali, where Adrichomius <sup>f497</sup> places it.

**Ver. 11.** *And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah,* etc.] Said to be in the land of Hemath, (<sup>2639</sup>Jeremiah 52:9), which, according to Jerom <sup>f498</sup>, was Antioch of Syria; and both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem understand by it Daphne, which was in the suburbs of Antioch; but this seems to be carrying the limits of the land too far: Jarchi remarks, that when the border goes from the north towards the south, it is said to go down:

*on the east side of Ain;* a city in the tribe of Judah; according to Jerom <sup>f499</sup> now a village that goes by the name of Bethennim, two miles from the turpentine tree, that is, from the tent of Abraham or oak of Mamre, and four from Hebron:

*and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward;* the same with the sea of Tiberius, and the sea of Gennesaret, frequently made mention of in the New Testament, and in (<sup>2678</sup>Ezekiel 47:18), called the east sea.

**Ver. 12.** *And the border shall go down to Jordan,* etc.] A well known river to the east of the land of Canaan:

*and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea;* the sea of Sodom; and though all sea water is generally salt, this was remarkably so, through the great quantity of bitumen and nitre in it; hence it was called Asphaltites; thus as the description of the borders of the land began with the salt sea, (<sup>2648</sup>Numbers 34:3), it ends with it:

*this shall be your land, with the coasts thereof round about:* which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was thus bounded, Rekangea (or Kadeshbarnea) on the south, Taurus Urnanus (by which he interprets Mount Hor) on the north, the great sea on the west (i.e. the Mediterranean sea), and the salt sea on the east.

**Ver. 13.** *And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying,* etc.] Strictly enjoining them to observe what he was about to say to them:

*this is the land which ye shall inherit by lot;* as above described and bounded:

*which the Lord commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe;* to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali, and the half tribe of Manasseh; though this command is not before expressed, it is very probable it was delivered to Moses at the same time he had the mind of God concerning the settlement of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan; (see <sup><0423></sup>Numbers 32:31).

**Ver. 14.** *For the tribe of the children of Reuben, according to the house of their fathers,* etc.] That tribe, and all the families belonging to it:

*have received their inheritance, and half the tribe of Manasseh* have received their inheritance; that is, it was agreed they should have it on condition of their going along with the other tribes over Jordan into the land of Canaan, and assist them in the conquest of it, (<sup><0421></sup>Numbers 32:1-42).

**Ver. 15.** *The two tribes and the half tribe,* etc.] The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh:

*have received their inheritance on this side Jordan near Jericho, eastward, toward the sun rising;* that is, they received the grant of it there, even in the plains of Moab, opposite Jericho, which lay to the east of the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 16.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] At the same time that he gave him the bounds of the land of Canaan, which was to be divided between the nine tribes and a half; and that this might be done in the most impartial manner, and to the satisfaction of them all, he gave orders to Moses:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 17.** *These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you,* etc.] Or “inherit the land for you” <sup>f500</sup>; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, they were to take possession of it in their name and stead, as their representatives, and then distribute it unto them, or divide it to be inherited

by them; but whatever may be said for the princes of the tribes, as acting for their respective tribes, and representing them, the same cannot be said of the two first named, as follow:

*Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun*; the one the principal person in ecclesiastical affairs, and the other in civil ones; to divide the land being partly a sacred work, as it was a type of the heavenly Canaan, and a civil one, as it concerned the present welfare of the people of Israel; and both were types of Christ, the priest upon his throne, who is both priest and King; who, as the one, gives a right unto it, and, as the other, introduces into it.

**Ver. 18.** *And ye shall take one prince out of every tribe*, etc.] That is, out of the nine tribes and the half, which are ten in all; of the tribes of Reuben and Gad none were taken, because they had had their inheritance granted them elsewhere; nor of the tribe of Levi, because they were to have no inheritance in the land: to divide the land by inheritance; who being men of honour, understanding, and probity, and naturally concerned for the good of the tribes to which they belonged, would take care that justice be done to each, and that no fraudulent methods were used in drawing the lot; and then take possession according to the lot, and impartially divide the portion assigned among the respective families in the tribes, according to their rank and numbers.

**Ver. 19-28.** *And the names of the men are these*, etc.] Which were not left to the tribes to choose, but were nominated by the Lord himself, who best knew their capacities and qualifications for this service:

*of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh*: who was one of the two spies that brought a good report of the land, and Joshua is the other; and these were the only two of the spies living, and who are the first that were appointed to this service, of overseeing the division of the land; the rest were all of the new generation, that were sprung up, whose fathers fell in the wilderness, and we know no more of them than their names; and therefore from hence, to the end of (<sup>-0400</sup>Numbers 34:28), no further remarks are necessary, only that the tribes and the princes are reckoned in a different order than they were at any time before, either at the first numbering of them, (<sup>-0400</sup>Numbers 1:1) or at the offerings for the dedication of the altar, (<sup>-0400</sup>Numbers 7:1-89) or at the taking the sum of them, (<sup>-0400</sup>Numbers 26:1-65) even according to the order of their situation in the land of Canaan by their lots, and which Moses did not live to see; and

which therefore shows the prescience and predisposing providence of God, and that Moses, as Bishop Patrick observes, was guided by a divine Spirit in all his writings.

**Ver. 29.** *These are they whom the Lord commanded*, etc.] Not only named and appointed them, but laid his commands upon them, and obliged them:

*to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel*; even this order was made before the land was conquered by them, so sure and certain was it unto them; and accordingly they did divide it, and that in Shiloh, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as in the presence of God, doing it in the most impartial and solemn manner; (see ~~695~~ Joshua 19:51).

# CHAPTER 35

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 35

Though the tribe of Levi had no part in the division of the land, yet cities out of the several tribes are here ordered to be given them to dwell in, to the number of forty eight, (<sup><0480E></sup>Numbers 35:1-8), six of which were to be cities of refuge, (<sup><0480B></sup>Numbers 35:9-15), but not for wilful murderers, in whatsoever way they might kill a man, (<sup><0485I6></sup>Numbers 35:16-21), but for such who had killed a man unawares, (<sup><0485D></sup>Numbers 35:22-24), and several rules are given relating to such persons, (<sup><0485S></sup>Numbers 35:25-29), but no satisfaction was to be taken in case of murder, nor to excuse a person's return to his own house before the death of the high priest, who had fled to a city of refuge, that so the land might not be defiled, (<sup><0485D></sup>Numbers 35:30-34).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake to Moses*, etc.] After he had described the borders of the land, and given instructions about the division of it among the several tribes, and named the persons that should be concerned in parting and putting it into the possession of the Israelites, he makes a provision for the Levites; for though they had no inheritance in the land as a tribe, yet it was proper they should have cities and houses to dwell in; for it would not be suitable that they should be always about the tabernacle, as they were in the wilderness; and it is concerning this the Lord is said to speak to Moses,

*in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho*: where the Israelites now were, and had been for some time:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Command the children of Israel*, etc.] All the tribes of them; it is not a bare instruction that is given them, much less a mere request that is made to them, or something proposed, and left to their option whether they would agree to it or not; but it is strictly enjoined them by the Lord, who had given them freely all they should possess, and who had a right to all they had, and to whom they were in duty and gratitude bound to do his will and pleasure: the order is,

*that they give unto the Levites, of the inheritance of their possession, cities to dwell in*; which was but reasonable and requisite, that the ministers of God, and the assistants of the priests, and who did the service of the congregation, that they should have, habitations for them and their families, as well as food and raiment was provided for them in another way:

*and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them*; which were partly for ornament to their cities, and partly for their health, that they might have air, and not be too closely confined within the walls of their cities; and also for convenience, that they have room for their cattle, and places to lay up the increase of their fields, as after suggested. Jarchi says, that a suburb was a space and place parted without the city, round about, for the beauty of it; but they were not allowed to build there an house (i.e. to dwell in), nor to plant a vineyard, nor to sow seed; other ground is after provided for such uses.

**Ver. 3.** *And cities shall they have to dwell in*, etc.] For them and their families, and indeed for nothing else, they having no trades nor worldly business to carry on in them:

*and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle*; for stables and stalls to put them up in, and for barns and storehouses to lay in provender for them:

*and for their goods*; where to bestow them, as the increase of their fields, oliveyards, and vineyards, (see <sup><D28></sup>Luke 12:18,19)

*and for all their beasts*; or living creatures; or “for their whole life”<sup>f501</sup>; or livelihood, whatsoever was for the support of it; the Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation, for all their necessities; and so Jarchi.

**Ver. 4.** *And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites*, etc.] The dimensions and bounds of them were not left to the Israelites, to give what ground they pleased for this purpose, but were fixed to what length they should be: these

*[shall reach] from the walls of the city, and outward, a thousand cubits round about*; which was half a sabbath day’s journey, and pretty near half a mile, which all around a city must contain a considerable quantity of ground, if the city was of any size, as it is certain that some of them given them at least were.

**Ver. 5.** *And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits*, etc.] Before only 1000 cubits were ordered to be

measured, and now 2000, even 2000 more, which were to be added to the other, and to begin where they ended. The first 1000 were for their cattle and goods, these 2000 for their gardens, orchards, fields, and vineyards; and so the Jewish writers understand it. Jarchi observes, that 1000 cubits are ordered, and after that 2000; and asks, how is this? or how is it to be reconciled? to which he answers, 2000 are put to them round about, and of them the 1000 innermost are for suburbs, and the outermost (i.e. the 2000) are for fields and vineyards; and with this agrees the Misnah<sup>f502</sup>, from whence he seems to have taken it; and the same was to be on every other side of the city, south, west, and north, as follows:

*and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits*; which, added to the other 1000 all around, must make a large circumference of land:

*and the city shall be in the midst*; in the midst of the circuit of three thousand cubits all around, so that it must stand very pleasant and convenient:

*this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities*; such a quantity of ground, consisting of so many cubits, shall be assigned to every city; the suburbs or glebe land to a Levite's city, on the four sides were four squares, and each square consisted of seventy six acres, one rood, twenty perches, and eighty square feet; all the four squares amounting to three hundred and five acres, two roods, one perch, besides fifty seven feet square, according to Bishop Cumberland.

**Ver. 6.** *And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites*, etc.] The number of which is not yet expressed, but is afterwards: there shall be

*six cities for refuge*; a sort of asylums, of which there were many among the Heathens, perhaps in imitation of these, for persons to have recourse to for safety, when in danger of life: the Septuagint render the words, "cities of flight"<sup>f503</sup>; or to flee unto, which certainly was the use of them: to this the apostle alludes when he speaks of some that fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them, (<sup><3068></sup>Hebrews 6:18), the word<sup>f504</sup> used for refuge signifies "gathering or receiving", for here persons in distress gathered or betook themselves; and here they were received, retained,

protected, and sheltered: what and where these six cities were to be, and were, is after shown:

*which ye shall appoint for the manslayer*; not for any and everyone, not for one that killed a man presumptuously and purposely, through enmity and malice, but for one that did it ignorantly, unawares, and without design:

*that he may flee thither*; with all haste, after the commission of the fact; and, to facilitate his flight, and that he might have no interruption in it, the sanhedrim were obliged to prepare the ways to the cities of refuge, and to make them fit and large; and they removed everything that might cause him to stumble; and they did not leave in the way neither an hillock, nor a dale, nor a river but they made a bridge over it, that nothing might retard him that fled thither, as it is said;

*thou shalt prepare thee a way*; (<sup>f505</sup>Deuteronomy 19:3) and the breadth of the way to the cities of refuge was not less than thirty two cubits; and at the parting of ways (on posts erected) were written, “refuge, refuge”, so that the slayer might know (the way) and turn there (as this directed him): and on the fifteenth of Adar or February, they met every year, to take care of this business <sup>f505</sup>; and they also appointed two disciples of the wise men, or two studious and understanding persons, to accompany him, not so much for the direction of the way, as lest the avenger of blood should meet with him, and slay him in the way; and who were to talk to him, and persuade him not to do it, suggesting to him that it was not done designedly, but unawares, and that it would be a bad thing to kill a man for what he did not intend to do, and which was done without any malice or enmity to the person killed, and with such like words to cool and appease the avenger <sup>f506</sup>:

*and to them ye shall add forty two cities*; according to the Jewish writers these also were cities of refuge; for so they say <sup>f507</sup>,

“all the cities of the Levites receive or are refuges, every one of them is a city of refuge, as it is said, “and to them ye shall add”, etc. the Scripture makes them all alike for refuge: what difference is there between cities of refuge, which are separated for refuge, and the rest of the cities of the Levites? the gates of the cities of refuge receive, whether according to knowledge or not, (which Mr. Selden <sup>f508</sup> interprets, whether the inhabitants will or not; but the sense of



Maimonides elsewhere <sup>f509</sup>, and of other writers, is plainly this, whether according to the knowledge and intention of the manslayer or not, whether he knows it to be a city of refuge or :not, and whether he purposely came thither for safety or not,) and he that enters into them is safe; but the rest of the cities of the Levites do not receive, but according to knowledge (when the manslayer knowingly and designedly came thither for shelter); and a manslayer that dwells in a city of refuge gives no more for his house, but he that dwells in the other cities of the Levites gives more (or pays for it) to the owner of the house;”

but though this is their unanimous opinion, it rather seems, according to the letter of the Scripture, that only six were cities of refuge, and the rest were for the Levites to dwell in by themselves.

**Ver. 7.** *So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty eight cities*, etc.] Of these forty eight cities, their names, and what tribes they were in, and which of them were particularly cities of refuge, an account is given in (<sup><f210></sup>Joshua 21:10-37):

*them shall ye give, with their suburbs*; according to the dimensions before prescribed.

**Ver. 8.** *And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel*, etc.] What shall fall by lot for their inheritance, and they shall be possessed of; and though they are, shall not refuse, nor grudge to give them, according to the direction of God, whose the land is, they holding it under him:

*from [them that have] many ye shall give many, but from [them that have] few ye shall give few*; which rule was observed; for out of Judah, whose lot was large, and out of Simeon, whose inheritance was within that of Judah, because it was so large, nine cities were given, whereas out of the other tribes only four cities out of each were given, and out of one of them but three, (see <sup><f210></sup>Joshua 21:1-45),

*everyone shall give of his cities unto the Levites, according to his inheritance which he inheriteth*; and the Levites, being thus dispersed among the several tribes, were of great advantage to them, to instruct them in the knowledge of divine things; so that though hereby Jacob’s curse on this tribe had its fulfilment, that it should be divided in Jacob, and scattered

in Israel, yet that became a blessing to the rest of the tribes; (see ~~440~~Genesis 49:7).

**Ver. 9.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] At the same time, or he continued his speech unto him:

*saying*: as follows.

**Ver. 10.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] Now, directly:

*when ye come over Jordan into the land of Canaan*; as they quickly would, being now very near it, and of which there was the utmost certainty, since the Lord had promised to bring them over that river, and put them in possession of that land.

**Ver. 11.** *Then ye shall appoint your cities to be cities of refuge for you*, etc.] And, according to the Jewish writers <sup>f510</sup>, these were neither to be made large nor little, but middling; and they appointed them where there were markets and fairs, at which goods were to be sold; and where there was plenty of water, and a multitude of people; and where there were but few, they fetched others from other places; and they neither made nets for hunting, nor twisted ropes in them, nor sold any warlike instruments, lest the avenger of blood should use himself to come thither, under pretence of buying such things, and kill the manslayer:

*that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares; or through error* <sup>f511</sup>, or mistake, not on purpose, with design, or through malice and enmity, as is afterwards more largely explained.

**Ver. 12.** *And they shall be unto you cities of refuge from the avenger*, etc.] Or near kinsman; for as the right of redemption of an estate that was mortgaged belonged to such an one, so of revenging the blood of any one that was killed:

*that the manslayer die not*; by the hand of the avenger, who in the heat of his passion would, could he come at him, fall upon him, and slay him, to avenge the death of his relation on him:

*until he stand before the congregation in judgment*; before the court of judicature, to be examined, tried, and judged, whether the murder was committed knowingly and willingly, or whether through mistake and at unawares: this was done either before the court of judicature in the city of

refuge, who took cognizance of such cases directly, that they might know whom to harbour and protect, and whom not; or before the court in the place where the act was committed: interpreters are divided about this; and Calmet<sup>f512</sup> is of opinion that he was examined in both courts, first more strictly in the city of refuge, and then more slightly in the place where it was done, which is not improbable; however, this seems manifest from (~~485~~)Numbers 35:25), that the court where it was committed had power to fetch him from the city of refuge, and set him before them, and examine into the case; and, if an innocent person, restored him to the city of refuge, whither he had fled.

**Ver. 13.** *And of these cities which ye shall give*, etc.] Of the forty eight cities they were to give to the Levites, (~~487~~)Numbers 35:7),

*six cities shall ye have for refuge*; which, I think, makes it clear, that not all the forty eight cities were for refuge, only six of them.

**Ver. 14.** *Ye shall give three cites on this side Jordan*, etc.] Which were Bezer in the wilderness, out of the tribe of Reuben; and Ramoth in Gilead, out of the tribe of Gad; and Golan in Bashan, out of the tribe of Manasseh, (~~488~~)Joshua 20:8),

*and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan*: which were Kadesh in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali; Shechem in Mount Ephraim; and Kirjatharba, or Hebron, in the mountain of Judah, (~~489~~)Joshua 20:7)

*[which] shall be cities of refuge*; the three on the other side Jordan, the Jews say, were separated by Moses, and the three in the land of Canaan by Joshua, but not one of them was a refuge until they were all separated<sup>f513</sup>: it may seem strange that there should be as many in the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan, as in the nine tribes and a half in the land of Canaan; let it be observed, what the Jewish writers, say<sup>f514</sup>, Moses separated three cities beyond Jordan, and opposite them Joshua separated three in the land of Canaan; and they were like two rows in a vineyard, Hebron in Judea was opposite Bezer in the wilderness; Shechem in Mount Ephraim was opposite Ramoth in Gilead; Kadesh in Mount Naphtali was opposite Golan in Bashan; and the three were so disposed, that there was as much space from the south (of the land of Israel) to Hebron as from Hebron to Shechem; and as much from Hebron to Shechem as from Shechem to Kadesh; and as much from Shechem to Kadesh as from Kadesh to the north beyond Jordan; and it should be known that the land

of the tribes beyond Jordan extended in length as far as the land of Canaan, and was equal to it, running along it; so that those in the land of Canaan could soon and easily get over Jordan to the cities of refuge there, if there was occasion; besides, there is a direction given, that if their coast should be enlarged, they were to add three cities more in the land of Canaan, (<sup>4898</sup>Deuteronomy 19:8), hence the Jews have a notion, that in the days of the Messiah those three cities will be added <sup>f515</sup>; but the Messiah is come already, and is the antitype of them all.

**Ver. 15.** *These six cities shall be a refuge both for the children of Israel and for the stranger*, etc.] For an Israelite, and a proselyte of righteousness, one that embraced the Jewish religion, and in all things conformed to it, and to whom there was but one law in things civil and religious:

*and for the sojourner among you*; the proselyte of the gate, who renounced idolatry, and observed the commands of the sons of Noah, but in other things did not comply with the Jewish ceremonies, yet had the benefit of the cities of refuge equally with the other; though the Jews say <sup>f516</sup>, such a proselyte or sojourner had only this privilege, who slew a proselyte, but not if he slew an Israelite; but for this distinction there is no foundation in the text:

*that everyone that killeth any person unawares may flee thither*; whether an Israelite, or a proselyte of righteousness or of the gate.

**Ver. 16.** *And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die*, etc.] As with an hatchet, hammer, sword, knife, etc.

*he is a murderer*; the instrument used by him, and with which he smote, shows that he had a bad design, and intended to kill, or he would never have smitten a man with such an instrument:

*the murderer shall surely be put to death*; be condemned to death, and be executed, by the order of the civil magistrate, according to the law in (<sup>4006</sup>Genesis 9:6) and not be allowed the benefit of a city of refuge.

**Ver. 17.** *And if he smite him with throwing a stone*, etc.] “Or with a stone of the hand” <sup>f517</sup>, which the Jews interpret of a stone so big as to fill a man’s hand, and so

*wherewith he may die*; at whom it is thrown; is sufficient to cause his death, if struck with it; so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it of a

“stone of fulness of hands, which is sufficient that a man may die with it,”

or be killed by it:

*and he die*; by the blow he receives from it, either immediately or in a short time after:

*he is a murderer, and the murderer shall surely be put to death*; as in the above case.

**Ver. 18.** *Or if he smote him with an hand weapon of wood*, etc.] A stick, or staff, or club:

*wherewith he may die, and he die*; which is sufficient to kill a man, as the same Targum explains it; and a man dies with the blow that is given him by it:

*he is a murderer, and the murderer shall surely be put to death*; no pardon given him, or the benefit of the city of refuge allowed him.

**Ver. 19.** *The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer*, etc.] Not only shall have power to do it, but, as it seems, should be obliged to do it; be the executioner of the murderer; but not before his case has been heard, examined, tried, and judged; wherefore the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“in judgment,”

that is, as Onkelos explains it,

“when he is condemned by judgment,”

the court of judicature:

*when he meeteth him he shall slay him*; the first opportunity he has, even though, as Jarchi says, if he meets him in the midst of one of the cities of refuge, and no judgment is passed on him.

**Ver. 20.** *But if he thrust him of hatred*, etc.] Or, “and if”<sup>f518</sup>, since the Scripture is still speaking of such that shall die for murder, though in another instance, without having the privilege of a city of refuge; if he thrusts him with a sword or knife, or rather, since, if anything of that kind

is included in the first instance of smiting with an instrument of iron, push him down from an high place, as Aben Ezra; so the men of Nazareth intended to have dispatched Christ in that way, (~~409~~Luke 4:29)

*or hurl at him by lying in wait, that he die*; as a bowing wall, as the same writer instances in, push down that upon him as he passes along, lying in wait for him; or throws anything at him, with an intention to kill him, and does; or casts down anything upon him, a large stone, or anything else, by which he dies.

**Ver. 21.** *Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die*, etc.] Give him a blow with his fist, on some part of his body where life is most in danger, and which issues in death:

*he that smote him shall surely be put to death, for he is a murderer*; and therefore, according to the original law, ought to die, without reprieve or pardon; and notwithstanding this law made for cities of refuge, which were to be denied him:

*the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer when he meeteth him*: that is, when he is condemned, as both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret it, after a hearing and trial of his case.

**Ver. 22.** *But if he thrust him suddenly, without enmity*, etc.] Push him from a precipice, before he is aware, without any malicious design against his life, but merely through accident:

*or have cast upon him anything*; from the top of a house, or from a building he is pulling down, or pushes a bowing wall upon him, not knowing that he is passing by it:

*and without lying of wait*: or having contrived to do it, just as he goes along, or in any other similar way.

**Ver. 23.** *Or with any stone wherewith a man may die*, etc.] Which is sufficient to kill a man, if thrown at him:

*seeing him not*; and so without intention: the Jews<sup>f519</sup> from hence gather, that a blind man is to be acquitted and dismissed, and not banished and so stands in no need of a city of refuge; though others say he is to be banished, and needs it, and ought to have the privilege of it:

*and cast it upon him that he die*; casting, it upon another account, and with another view, but yet falling upon a man, it kills him;

*and was not his enemy, neither sought him harm*; it was never known that they were at variance, or that the slayer had ever by any overt act discovered any malice and enmity against the deceased, by word or deed, or ever sought to do him any injury, either to his person or property.

**Ver. 24.** *Then the congregation*, etc.] That is, the court of judicature, assembled together to hear and try this cause:

*shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood*; shall hear what both have to say, and pass sentence:

*according to these judgments*; these judicial laws and rules of judgment before delivered, exemplified in various cases.

**Ver. 25.** *And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood*, etc.] Put him under the care of proper persons, to conduct him to one of the cities of refuge, or put him in the way to it; and restrain the avenger of blood from pursuing him, until such time that it may be judged he is safe arrived there:

*and the congregation shall restore him to the city of refuge, whither he was fled*; so that it seems by this, when one had been guilty of manslaughter, and fled to one of the cities of refuge, he might be taken from thence and had before a court of justice, and there take his trial; and if it appeared that the fact was committed by him, ignorantly, unawares, and without design, then he was returned to his city of refuge; but, if otherwise, he was put to death, notwithstanding he had fled thither; and so it is said in the Misnah<sup>f520</sup>, that

“at first, or formerly, one that killed another ignorantly or presumptuously, they sent him before to one of the cities of refuge, and the sanhedrim sent and fetched him from thence: he who was condemned to death by the court, they slew him; he that was not condemned was dismissed; he that was condemned to banishment they returned him to his place, according to (<sup>0825</sup>Numbers 35:25).”

*and he shall abide in it, unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil*: and then he was to be set at liberty, and return to his house and family and have his former possessions and honours, if he

had any, restored unto him, the commission or warrant for his detainer there ceasing, being made void by the death of the high priest; who was the prince of the priests and Levites, to whom those cities belonged, and so under his jurisdiction: or so it was ordered, because such was the general mourning for such a public loss as an high priest, that all private revenges would subside, and the cause of them be buried, in grief and forgetfulness; though, no doubt, this had a respect to something which will be hereafter taken notice of: the Jews say<sup>f521</sup>, that the mothers of the priests used to supply with a sufficient quantity of food and raiment such who fled to the cities of refuge, that they might not pray for the death of their sons; and according to them, a man's case was very bad when there was no high priest; for so they write<sup>f522</sup>

“he whose cause is finished (or his case determined in a court of judicature), and there is no high priest; and he that slays an high priest, or an high priest slays another, he never goes out, no not so much as to bear testimony in any cause, and even in what the congregation has need of him, but there are his dwelling, his death, and his burial.”

**Ver. 26.** *But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge*, etc.] Which seems to be the three thousand cubits assigned to every city of the Levites, and so to the cities of refuge; and which, according to the Jewish writers, were a refuge, as the city itself; and it is said<sup>f523</sup>,

“he, that kills a man there, is killed for him, but though the border is a refuge, the slayer does not dwell in it, as it is said. (<sup>-0855</sup>Numbers 35:25), “he shall abide in it”, but not in its borders:”

*whither he was fled*; on account of manslaughter.

**Ver. 27.** *And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge*, etc.] Without the suburbs, fields, and vineyards belonging to it:

*and the revenger of blood kill the slayer*; being exasperated against him, and to avenge the blood of his relation on him:

*he shall not be guilty of blood*; or be reckoned murderer, or die for it.



**Ver. 28.** *Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest*, etc.] Nothing could give him his liberty but his death; so that though this was a merciful provision made in such cases for such persons, and was a considerable benefit and privilege, yet it carried in it some appearance of a punishment; since such a person was confined within the boundaries of one of the cities of refuge as long as the high priest lived; and this was done to make persons cautious how they were any way accessory to the death of another, though without design:

*but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession*; to that part of the land, and to that tribe to which he belonged, to his house and family, and to his possessions and inheritances, whatever he had, and to all the honours and privileges he before enjoyed, and under no danger from the avenger of blood henceforward: a custom somewhat like this has prevailed in some parts of Africa, as Leo Africanus<sup>f524</sup> relates, that if a man happened to kill another, all the friends of the deceased conspired to kill him, but if they could not effect it, then the guilty person was proclaimed an exile from the city, for the whole space of seven years; and at the expiration of the whole seven years, when he returned from his exile, the chief men of the city invited him to a feast, and so he was restored to his liberty: temples, groves, altars, and statues, were common among other nations for asylums or refuges, but whole cities very rarely with the ancients; it seems there were some<sup>f525</sup>.

**Ver. 29.** *So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you*, etc.] A judicial law, according to which they were to proceed in all the above cases:

*throughout your generations in all your dwellings*; throughout all ages, as long as they dwelt in the land of Canaan, even unto the times of the Messiah, in whom the things figured hereby had their accomplishment: the cities of refuge were types of Christ: hence a divine person, even the Messiah, is often spoken of as the refuge of his people, (<sup>3009</sup>Psalm 9:9 46:1,7 62:7,8) with which compare (<sup>3018</sup>Hebrews 6:18) these were places to flee to, as the word is rendered by the Greek version; to Christ sensible sinners flee for shelter and safety, which supposes danger in themselves from the law and justice of God; a sense of that danger which makes them flee from wrath to come; a view of Christ, as a place of refuge, and that no other but he will serve their purpose, and therefore make all the haste and speed they can unto him. The word properly signifies cities of gathering, or

of reception. There was a gathering of the elect of God to Christ at his death; and there is another at effectual calling, which is an act of God's grace, and a distinguishing one, when souls gather to Christ as their Saviour for righteousness, peace, pardon, rest, and everlasting life; and when Christ receives them, though sinners, into his arms, and into his heart, and into open fellowship with him, so as to dwell in him, where they dwell pleasantly and safely; he receives them into his house here, and into heaven hereafter; and by, and in Christ, those that flee to him, and are received by him, are retained and preserved from Satan, law, hell and death. The cities of refuge were of God's appointing; so Christ, as a Saviour, and rock of refuge to his people, is appointed and foreordained of God; they were well known for refuges, as the Lord is in the places of Zion; they were open for all, at all times, as Christ is for all sinners, even the chief of sinners, Jews or Gentiles; they are all one in Christ, the Israelite, and the stranger and sojourner; all impediments were removed out of the way of them, and plain directions to them given, as are in the Gospel, and by the ministers of it; and there is always room in Christ for such that flee to him, as there was in those cities; and being in him, they are safe from the curse and condemnation of the law, from wrath to come, and from the second death; and their redemption and atonement, peace and reconciliation, liberty, life and salvation, are owing to the death of Christ, their high priest. Abendana<sup>f526</sup> observes, that the death of the high priest atoned for the offence (of manslaughter), which was the reason the manslayer continued in the city of refuge till his death, and then was released: however, certain it is, that the death of Christ, our high priest, atones for every sin of those that flee to him, and by which they are reconciled to God. In some things there is a difference between these cities of refuge and Christ; they were six, he but one; they were for such only who shed blood ignorantly, he for such that were enemies to him, and lived in malice towards others, and guilty of the most enormous crimes: to be in these cities of refuge was a kind of exile and imprisonment, but they that are in Christ are freemen; it was possible that such might die that were in them, and at most were only delivered from temporal death, but they that flee to Christ for refuge are saved with an everlasting salvation.

**Ver. 30.** *Whoso killeth any person*, etc.] Willingly, and through enmity and malice:

*the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of two witnesses*; which is repeated partly to show, that this law concerning the cities of refuge was

not designed to screen a murderer, who was guilty through malice prepense; and partly for the sake of what is added to it, that two witnesses are required in such a case, where a man's life is at stake, to prove the fact against him; which shows how careful the Lord is, and men should be, of the lives of his creatures, that no man suffer wrongfully; which is repeated again and again, that it might be observed, (see <sup><5776></sup>Deuteronomy 17:6 19:15) but one witness shall not testify against any person, to cause him to die; which looks as if in other cases, in pecuniary matters, and the like, where life is not concerned, one witness may be sufficient; though it is always best and safest to have more if they can be had, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses everything may be established, (<sup><5915></sup>Deuteronomy 19:15 <sup><0816></sup>Matthew 18:16).

**Ver. 31.** *Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer,* etc.] Though he would give all his wealth and substance, all his estates and possessions, and whatever he is worth in the world; for all that a man has he will give for his life; but these are not to be taken, nor anything, and everything his friends may offer for him; all is to be rejected, the life of such a man is not to be saved on any consideration:

*which is guilty of death;* as he is who kills a man willingly and purposely; but one may be guilty of killing another, and yet not be deserving of death, when it is done ignorantly and accidentally with respect to him, for which reason this clause is added: but he shall be surely put to death; by the order of the civil magistrate; and if this is not done either through want of evidence, or the fault of the judge, or the criminal clemency of the chief governor, God sooner or later will take vengeance on such a person.

**Ver. 32.** *Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge,* etc.] Though for killing a man unawares:

*that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest;* the high priest; such a man's liberty was not to be purchased with money, nor even his life to be bought off, should he be taken without his city; a great ransom could not deliver him from the avenger, because he was guilty of this law, which so wisely and mercifully provided for him; and consequently guilty also of great ingratitude to God, as well as of a breach of his law, and of disrespect to his high priest, under whom he was protected.

**Ver. 33.** *So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are*, etc.] The land of Canaan, as it had been by the old inhabitants of it, by idolatry, adultery, and murder:

*for blood it defileth the land*: the shedding of innocent blood defiles a nation, and the inhabitants of it, brings guilt thereon, and subjects to punishment:

*and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it*; or “there can be no expiation”<sup>1527</sup>, or “atonement made” for it in any other way; the blood of the murderer is required at his hands, and nothing short of it will satisfy law and justice, (see <sup>1006</sup>Genesis 9:6).

**Ver. 34.** *Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inherit*, etc.] By the commission of such atrocious crimes, or suffering them to go unpunished, or by taking a compensation for the life of the guilty person:

*wherein I dwell*; which is added to strengthen the exhortation, and as giving a reason why care should be taken not to pollute it, because the Holy God dwells there; as he did in the tabernacle erected for him, and in such a peculiar manner as he did not in other lands:

*for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel*; he now dwelt among them as their God, and their King; his tent or tabernacle being pitched in the midst of the camps of Israel; and so he would continue to dwell among them when they were come to the land of Canaan, so long as they observed his laws, statutes, and ordinances; and therefore it behoved them to be careful that they did not pollute themselves and their land, and cause him to depart from them.

# CHAPTER 36

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 36

This chapter gives an account of an application made by the heads of the tribe of Manasseh, concerning the inheritances of the daughters of Zelophehad, which, should they marry into other tribes, would be removed thither, and so be a loss to theirs, (<sup><0460></sup>Numbers 36:1-4), which case was judged worthy of regard; and to remedy this inconvenience, they were ordered to marry into the family of their father's tribe, and this was to be a law to all heiresses for the future in other tribes, (<sup><0465></sup>Numbers 36:5-9) and accordingly the daughters of Zelophehad married their father's brothers' sons, (<sup><0460></sup>Numbers 36:10-13).

**Ver. 1.** *And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead*, etc.] The princes, as Aben Ezra; so the Septuagint version, which was the tribe of Manasseh, whose grandson Gilead was, as follows:

*the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near*; to the house of judgment, as the Targum of Jonathan, the sanhedrim or court of judicature, consisting of the following persons:

*and spoke before Moses*; the Septuagint version adds, "and before Eleazar the priest", as in (<sup><0470></sup>Numbers 27:2 32:2)

*and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel*: the princes of the several tribes; or it may be rather the seventy elders.

**Ver. 2.** *And they said*, etc.] One in the name of the rest:

*the Lord commanded my lord*; that is, Moses, whom they address in a very respectable manner, being the chief governor of the nation under God:

*to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel*; which command may be seen, in (<sup><0465></sup>Numbers 26:53-56):

*and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother*; or kinsman, being of the same tribe:

*unto his daughters*; who sued for it, and upon Moses's consulting the Lord about it, it was ordered they should have it, (<sup>4020</sup>Numbers 27:1-11) and which these princes observed was likely to be attended with the following inconvenience.

**Ver. 3.** *And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel*, etc.] Which was not an unreasonable supposition, and perhaps was judged very probable and likely, if some method was not taken to prevent it; which they might conclude from the application of some young men of the other tribes unto them:

*then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received*; for the inheritance given unto them would of course, the above being the case, descend to their sons, and whose fathers being of other tribes, it would be fixed there:

*so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance*; which gave them some concern; for though this was no personal injury to them, nor any detriment to their families and estates, yet, as it was a lessening of their tribe, they were uneasy at it; and the rather they might be, since half their tribe was to settle on that side Jordan, where they now were: and now all this, the suit of the daughters of Zelophehad for their father's inheritance, which was granted them, the address of young men to them as heiresses, the concern of the heads of the tribe of Manasseh on this account; all this, I say, being before they entered into the land, or it was conquered by them, or divided to them by inheritance, show their strong faith and assurance that they should possess it.

**Ver. 4.** *And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be*, etc.] At which time inheritances were to be restored to the original proprietors of them; yet this would be of no service in the present case, but rather the contrary, since it would fix the inheritances of these daughters in another tribe or in other tribes into which they should marry; and so Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret it, "though" there shall be a jubilee, that will be of no advantage; it will not remedy this inconvenience: for

*then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received*; it being one principal part of the business of the jubilee year to settle the inheritances of every tribe; and these daughters being married into another tribe, of consequence their inheritance would be

placed there; or should it be sold by their husbands, or their sons, at the year of jubilee it would be restored to them as of such a tribe:

*so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers*; and thereby be a lessening of it; and every tribe being ambitious of preserving and increasing its grandeur, this affair sensibly affected the heads of this tribe.

**Ver. 5.** *And Moses commanded the children of Israel*, etc.] Even all the tribes of Israel, whom the following law concerned, as well as the tribe of Manasseh:

*according to the word of the Lord*; whom no doubt he consulted on this occasion, as he did when the daughters of Zelophehad applied unto him about the inheritance of their father:

*saying, the tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well*; in showing such a concern for the welfare of their tribe; the consideration of which would be of service to them all, and therefore was worthy of notice. Aben Ezra observes, that the heads of the fathers spoke for the sake of every tribe, what was for the good of them all, and therefore was well spoken.

**Ver. 6.** *This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad*, etc.] Concerning this affair relative to them; the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words,

“not for the generations that rise up after the division of the land, but for the daughters of Zelophehad;”

as if this order only respected them, or what might happen before the land was divided, but not after; and this is the general opinion of the Jewish writers; but it seems, that as the following law not only concerns them, but all heiresses, so all such after as well as before the division of the land, since the reason of it holds good after as before:

*saying, let them marry to whom they think best*; whom they like best, who are most acceptable to them; as it was reasonable they should, and not have such forced upon them, whose persons were disagreeable to them:

*only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry*; they were to marry not only such as were of the tribe of Manasseh, but of their father's family in that tribe; they could only marry into the family of the Hetherites; (see <sup>0052</sup>Numbers 26:32,33).

**Ver. 7.** *So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe*, etc.] Which shows that this concerns all the tribes of Israel, though yet not fully expressed, as it is afterwards:

*for everyone of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers*; or cleave <sup>4528</sup> to a wife in that tribe for marriage; this word is used in the original institution of it, (~~40124~~ Genesis 2:24) though they were not strictly obliged to marry in their own tribe; and frequently they did intermarry with other tribes, which, had it been unlawful, would not have been done, as it was by kings, and priests, and others; nor was there any danger of an inheritance going into another tribe by a man's marrying into it; wherefore this signifies only, that they were to be careful to keep their inheritances in their tribe; and therefore if any of them had no sons, only daughters, he was to marry them in his own tribe and family, that the inheritance might not remove, as follows

**Ver. 8.** *And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe if the children of Israel*, etc.] For the same law which gave the daughters of Zelophehad right to their father's inheritance, gave every other daughter in Israel a right to inherit where there were no sons, (~~40278~~ Numbers 27:8) and every such daughter, according to this law,

*shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father*; marry into her father's tribe and family; by which it appears that such who were not heiresses might marry persons of another family, and even of another tribe:

*that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers*; of his father's brethren, or of those that are near akin to him.

**Ver. 9.** *Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another*, etc.] Which was one end of the year of jubilee, but that did not sufficiently secure it without this law, as this case shows:

*but everyone of the tribes of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance*; the chief view of which was, that it might clearly appear of what tribe and family the Messiah sprang when he came.

**Ver. 10.** *Even as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad*.] They married into, the family of their father's tribe, according to the following account.



**Ver. 11.** *For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah,* etc.] The names of the daughters of Zelophehad, and the same as in (<sup>0053</sup>Numbers 26:33 27:1), only the order a little varied, Tirzah and Noah here changing places; there they are according to their birth, here they are according to their marriage, as Aben Ezra thinks; though Jarchi is of opinion, that being thus differently placed shows that they were equal to one another, and one was not preferred to the other:

*these were married unto their father's brothers' sons;* so that they were first cousins.

**Ver. 12.** *And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh, the son of Joseph,* etc.] The family of the Hephertites, of which they were. Aben Ezra observes, that their being married into families, and not a family, is a sign that their uncles' sons were not all of them brethren, or the sons of one man, but of more, though all sons of one or other of their father's, brethren:

*and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father;* by means of these marriages, even both in their father's tribe and family.

**Ver. 13.** *These are the commandments and the judgments,* etc.] The judicial laws concerning the division of the land of Canaan, the case of inheritances in it, and the cities of refuge:

*which the Lord commanded by, the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel,* in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho; where the Israelites had been ever since they were first observed by Balak king of Moab, and where the various things had been done recorded in the preceding chapters from that time.

# FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- Apud Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 6. c. 25.
- ft2 -- **μtl gl gl** “per capita sua”, Pagninus, etc,
- ft3 -- **ḥbwarl** “pro Ruben”, Samar. vers. “ipsi Reuben”, Montanus.
- ft4 -- **hd[h yayrq** “convocati coetus”, Montanus, Drusius; “convocati e coetu”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft5 -- Antiqu. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 4.
- ft6 -- **ttab** “in signis”, Pagninus, Montanus; “sub signis”, Tigurine version; “cum signis”, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius; “apud signa”, Piscator.
- ft7 -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.
- ft8 -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.
- ft9 -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.
- ft10 -- **hnj mh Æwtb** “in medio castrorum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; so Ainsworth; “in medio reliquorum castrorum”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft11 -- Bemidbar Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.)
- ft12 -- Bemidbar Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.)
- ft13 -- Torat Cohanim apud Ceseph Misnah in Maimon. Melachim, c. 1. sect. 7. Chaskuniin in loc.
- ft14 -- Which is approved by Noldius, p. 731.
- ft15 -- Chaskuni.
- ft16 -- **μynwtn μynwtn** “dati, dati”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.
- ft17 -- Vid. Outram. de Sacrificiis, l. 1. c. 4. sect. 1, 2, 3.
- ft18 -- Vid. Nold. Partic. Ebr. Concord. p. 992.

- ft19 -- T. Bab. Becoroth, fol. 5. 1.
- ft20 -- Vid. Nold. Partic. Ebr. Concord. p. 579.
- ft21 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 1.
- ft22 -- Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.
- ft23 -- Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.
- ft24 -- So Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.
- ft25 -- **abx abxl** “ad militandum militiam”, Montanus, Drusius.
- ft26 -- **µdah taj j l km** “ex omnibus peccatis hominis”, Montanus.
- ft27 -- “Exodus omnibus peccatis contra hominem”, Tigurine version; so Patrick.
- ft28 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 11. Jarchi in loc.
- ft29 -- Misn. Bava Kama, ib.
- ft30 -- Targ. Jon. Siphri & Midrash in Jarchi in loc.
- ft31 -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 195. 2.
- ft32 -- Sotah, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.
- ft33 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 11.
- ft34 -- Ut supra, (Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9.) sect. 3, 4.
- ft35 -- Hilchot Sotah, c. 3. sect. 1.
- ft36 -- Sotah, c. 2. sect. 1.
- ft37 -- Apud Muis. in loc.
- ft38 -- Sotah, c. 2. sect. 2. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 3.
- ft39 -- Sotah, c. 2. sect. 2.
- ft40 -- Sotah, c. 1. sect. 5.
- ft41 -- Sotah, c. 1. sect. 5, 6.
- ft42 -- Sotah, c. 2. sect. 1.

- ft43 -- Misn. ib. sect. 5. Targum Jon. & Jerus. & Jarchi in loc.
- ft44 -- Misnah, ut supra, (Sotah, c. 2) sect. 3.
- ft45 -- Misnah, ut supra, (Sotah) c. 3. sect. 3.
- ft46 -- Misnah, ut supra, (Sotah) c. 3. sect. 1.
- ft47 -- R. Samuel Tzartzah, Mekor Chayim, fol. 91. 3.
- ft48 -- Misn. Sotah, c. 3. sect. 4.
- ft49 -- Ibid. c. 5. sect. 1.
- ft50 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 28. 1. Gersom in loc.
- ft51 -- Misn. Sotah, c. 2. sect. 9.
- ft52 -- Orat. 2. p. 151. Ep. 16. p. 131.
- ft53 -- Vid. Salden. Otia, l. 1. Exercitat. 6. sect. 24.
- ft54 -- Achaica, sive, l. 7. p. 450.
- ft55 -- Saturnal. l. 5. c. 19.
- ft56 -- Vita Apollonii, l. 1. c. 4.
- ft57 -- Genuine Letters and Memoirs relating to the Isle of Cape Breton, etc.
- ft58 -- Maimon. Hilchot Sotah, c. 3. sect. 22.
- ft59 -- Vid. Salden. ut supra, (Otia, l. 1. Exercitat. 6.) sect. 19.
- ft60 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 49. p. 499.
- ft61 -- Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 1. Maimon & Bartenora in ib.
- ft62 -- **al py** “mirificaverit”, Montanus; “si mirandum aliquid fecerit”, Munster; and some in Fagius and Vatablus; so Aben Ezra.
- ft63 -- Misn. Nazir, c. 1. sect. 2.
- ft64 -- Misn. Nazir, c. 1. sect. 3. & c. 6. sect. 3.
- ft65 -- Misn. Nazir, c. 6. sect. 2. Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft66 -- T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 43. 1.

- ft67 -- Hilchot Nezirut, c. 5. sect. 11.
- ft68 -- De Dea Syria.
- ft69 -- Hilchot Nezirut, c. 8. sect. 6.
- ft70 -- Misn. Middoth, c. 2. sect. 5. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1.
- ft71 -- Misn. Orlah, c. 3. sect. 3.
- ft72 -- Maimon. in Misn. Challah, c. 4. sect. 9.
- ft73 -- Maimon. Hilchot Neshiut Cappim. c. 14. sect. 11. Gersom in loc.
- ft74 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 7. p. 21. Baal Hatturim in loc.
- ft75 -- Vid. Siphri apud Yalkut in loc.
- ft76 -- Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 366.
- ft77 -- Vid. Pfeiffer. Dubia vexata, cent. 2. loc. 19. p. 147.
- ft78 -- Vid. Scheuchzer. ut supra. (Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 366.)
- ft79 -- Misn. Yoma, c. 4, 4. & 5, 1.
- ft80 -- Hilchot Beth Hacbehirah, c. 3. sect. 8.
- ft81 -- **taj j ym** “aquas peccati”, Montanus; “aquam peccati”, Piscator, Drusius; “the sin water”, Ainsworth.
- ft82 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 7. p. 22.
- ft83 -- Herodot. Enterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37.
- ft84 -- Misn. Parah, c. 1. sect. 2. & Bartenora in ib.
- ft85 -- **Pynhw** “et motabit”, Tigurine version; “et faciet elevare”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; “et agitabit”, Drusius; “et agitato”, Piscator.
- ft86 -- **çar l [** “super caput”, Tigurine version. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft87 -- See Noldius, p. 289, 290, 299.
- ft88 -- **µyntn µyntn** “dati, dati”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Drusius and Ainsworth.

- ft89 -- Ben Gersom in loc. Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.
- ft90 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 6.
- ft91 -- Seder Olam Rabba. c. 7.
- ft92 -- Chaskuni in loc.
- ft93 -- Maimon. in Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 6.
- ft94 -- **μkytrdl** “generationibus vestris”, Pagninus, Montanus; “in aetatibus vestris”, Drusius.
- ft95 -- In Misn. ut supra, (c. 7. sect. 6.) T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 93. 2.
- ft96 -- Hilchot Corban Pesach, c. 6. sect. 1.
- ft97 -- Pesachim, c. 9. sect. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
- ft98 -- Moreh Nevoch. par. 2. c. 50. p. 512.
- ft99 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24.
- ft100 -- Antiqu. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 6.
- ft101 -- Ut supra. (Antiq. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 6.)
- ft102 -- Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 4.
- ft103 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 23. Abarbinel, etc.
- ft104 -- **tnj mh l kl Psam** “colligens omnia castra”, Montanus, Drusius; “[vel] collector omnium castrorum”, Fagius, Vatablus; “colligens omnia agmina”, Tigurine version, Munster.
- ft105 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 82.
- ft106 -- **μynnattmk** “ut conquerentes injuste”, Montanus, Fagius, Vatablus; “ut qui vaba moliuntur”, Drusius.
- ft107 -- Travels, par. 1. l. 2. c. 34.
- ft108 -- **[qçt** “sunk down”, so Ainsworth; “compressus est”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; “resedit”, Tigurine version.
- ft109 -- **arqyw** “et vocatum est”, Tigurine version, Fagius, Piscator.

- ft110 -- **j wat wath** “concupiverunt concupiscentiam”, Pagninus: Montanus, Drusius.
- ft111 -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 219. 1.
- ft112 -- Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37, 92, 149.
- ft113 -- Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 32.
- ft114 -- T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 11. 1.
- ft115 -- In Vit. August. c. 77.
- ft116 -- Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 5.
- ft117 -- Alpinus de Plant. Aegypt. l. 1. p. 114. apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Saer. vol. 3. p. 369.
- ft118 -- Alpinus ib.
- ft119 -- Ut supra, (Euterpe, sive, l. 2.) c. 125.
- ft120 -- Ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 58.)
- ft121 -- Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 12.
- ft122 -- lb. l. 19. c. 6.
- ft123 -- “Porrum et coepe nefas violare”, etc. Satyr. 15.
- ft124 -- Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 186.
- ft125 -- Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 9.
- ft126 -- Siphri apud Yalkut in loc.
- ft127 -- **t[rh]** “malefecisti”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.
- ft128 -- **grh an yngrh** “occide me nunc occidendo”, Drusius; “occide me jam, occide”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft129 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24.
- ft130 -- **arzl** “in dispersionem”, Munster, Fagius, Montanus: so R. Joseph Kimchi, apud Kimchi Sepher Shorash rad. **hrz** “et Aben dana”.

- ft131 -- **wpsy** “et non addiderunt”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; “et non am lin”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft132 -- Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 1.
- ft133 -- Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 1. Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.
- ft134 -- Antiqu. l. 3. c. 1. sect. 5.
- ft135 -- Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 55.
- ft136 -- Vid. Calmet’s Dictionary in the word “Quails”, & Scheuchzer. Physica Sacr. in loc. Bishop of Clogher’s Chronology, p. 375, 376. Shaw’s Travels, p. 189.
- ft137 -- Blond. Ital. Illustrat. p. 314. apud Huet. Alnetan. Quaest. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 17.
- ft138 -- Of Scripture Weights, etc. p. 86.
- ft139 -- So the word is used in Misn. Sabbat, c. 22. sect. 4. for spreading things in the sun to dry them.
- ft140 -- Athenaeus, Hipparchus, & Hesychius apud Bochart, Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 15. col. 107.
- ft141 -- Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 30.
- ft142 -- Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 769.
- ft143 -- Herodot. Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 172.
- ft144 -- Ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 15.) col. 109.
- ft145 -- Hist. Sacr. l. 1.
- ft146 -- Travels, p. 82.
- ft147 -- Antiqu. l. 2. c. 10. sect. 2.
- ft148 -- Dibre Hayamim, fol. 7. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. so some in Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft149 -- **yb** “in me”, Montanus



- ft150 -- **qry qry** “spuendo spuisset”, Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Drusius.
- ft151 -- Travels, etc. p. 82.
- ft152 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24. & Meyer. Annotat. in ib. p. 338.
- ft153 -- Ib. ut supra, (Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24. & Meyer. Annotat. in ib. p. 338.) Pesikta, Chaskuni.
- ft154 -- **bgnb** “per meridianam plagam”, V. L. “hac meridiana plaga”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft155 -- Bishop Clayton’s Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 392.
- ft156 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 94. A.
- ft157 -- **abyw** “et venit”, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius, so Onkelos; “et venit Caleb”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft158 -- De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 7.
- ft159 -- **l j n** “vallem”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.
- ft160 -- Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. G. H.
- ft161 -- Geograph. l. 2. p. 50.
- ft162 -- Ibid.
- ft163 -- Ibid. l. 17. p. 568.
- ft164 -- Ibid. l. 15. p. 500.
- ft165 -- Salmuth. in Pancirol. rer. memorab. par. 2. p. 55.
- ft166 -- Theatrum Terrae Sacr. p. 24.
- ft167 -- Huet. Alnetan. Quaest. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 22.
- ft168 -- Descript. Africae, l. 2. p. 204.
- ft169 -- T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2.
- ft170 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 34. 1.
- ft171 -- Sotah, p. 707, 708.

- ft172 -- De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 638.
- ft173 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24.
- ft174 -- Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7.
- ft175 -- “Vinique fontem”, etc. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 19.
- ft176 -- **hçm l a** “ad Moseh”, Montanus; “venientem ad Mosem”, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius.
- ft177 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 40.
- ft178 -- **twdm yçna** “viri mensurarum”, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.
- ft179 -- **dam dam ðah hbwj** “bona terra, valde valde”, Montanus, Vatablus.
- ft180 -- **µl x** “umbra eorum”, Montanus, Tigurine version, Fagius, Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft181 -- Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 164. No. 737.
- ft182 -- **wrmay** “et dicent”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, etc.
- ft183 -- Baal Hatturim in loc. & Buxtorf. Tiberias, c. 14. p. 38.
- ft184 -- T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 15. 1. Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 4. Jarchi in loc.
- ft185 -- Maimon. in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 4.
- ft186 -- **yrj a al myw** “et implevit post me”, Montanus, Tigurine version, Fagius, Drusius.
- ft187 -- **bçwy** “sedet”, Drusius, Piscator.
- ft188 -- **wabt µta µa** “si vos ingressi fueritis”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft189 -- **µy[r wyhy** “erunt pascentes”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius; “pascent”, Tigurine version, Piscator.
- ft190 -- Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3.
- ft191 -- Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

- ft192 -- T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 22. 2.
- ft193 -- Maimon. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 2. sect. 2.
- ft194 -- Vid. Nold. Concord. Ebr. part. p. 4. No. 24. so R. Jonah in Ben Melech in loc.
- ft195 -- Misn. Menachot, c. 9. 6.
- ft196 -- **l hqh** "O Congregatio", Noldius, p. 237. No. 1077.
- ft197 -- Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 330. sect. 1.
- ft198 -- Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 322. sect. 2, 3.
- ft199 -- Misn. Challah, c. 4. sect. 8. 10.
- ft200 -- Misn. Challah, c. 1. sect. 1.
- ft201 -- Schulchan Aruch, ut supra, (par. 2.) c. 330. sect. 8, 9.
- ft202 -- Synagog. Jud. c. 34. p. 602.
- ft203 -- Challah, c. 2. sect. 7. so Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 322. so Jarchi & Ben Gersom in loc.
- ft204 -- Baal Hatturim in loc.
- ft205 -- Buxtorf. ut supra, (Synagog. Jud. c. 34. p. 602.) & Leo Modena, History of the present Jews, par. 2. c. 9.
- ft206 -- **hmr dyb** "in manu excelsa", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.
- ft207 -- **trkt trkh** "excidendo excidetur", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.
- ft208 -- In Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.
- ft209 -- **hb** "in ea", Montanus, Junins & Tremellius, Drusius; "in ipso", Piscator.
- ft210 -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 96. 2.
- ft211 -- Sepher Alphes, par. 1. fol. 439. 2. & 442. 1. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 14. sect. 1.
- ft212 -- Schulchan ib. c. 9. sect. 1. & c. 10. sect. 1. & c. 24. 1.

- ft213 -- Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 9. p. 160.
- ft214 -- Leo Modena, History of the present Jews, par. 1. c. 5. sect. 7.
- ft215 -- lb. sect. 9.
- ft216 -- T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 17. 1.
- ft217 -- Maimon. in Misn. Menachot, c. 4. sect. 1.
- ft218 -- Maimon. in Misn. Ediot, c. 4. sect. 10. & Hilchot Tzitzith, c. 3. sect. 7. Schulchan Aruch, p. 1. c. 17. 1. & 18. 1.
- ft219 -- Baal Hatturim in loc. Schulchan Aruch, p. 1. c. 24. sect. 1, 6.
- ft220 -- hd[ “congregationis”, Pagninus.
- ft221 -- yarq “vocati”, Montanus, Drusius.
- ft222 -- ןַצ ןַצנא “viri nominis”, Montanus, Drusius.
- ft223 -- br “sat est vel satis sit”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Aben Ezra.
- ft224 -- l a “certe”, Noldius, p. 97. No. 468. so Onkelos.
- ft225 -- rqnt “effodies”, Pagninus, Piscator; “vis effodere”, Fagius; “fodies”, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius.
- ft226 -- dam hçml rj yw “et excanduit Mosi valde”, Drusius.
- ft227 -- ybl m al yk “quod non de corde meo”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft228 -- ןַדאח l k twmk “ut moriuntur omnes homines”, Pagninus; “reliqui homines”, Junius & Tremellius; “alii homines”, Piscator.
- ft229 -- arby hayrb “creationem, creaverit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Fagius; “creaturam”, Vatablus, Drusius.
- ft230 -- Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 6. Pirke Eliezer, c. 19.
- ft231 -- Antiqu. 1. 4. c. 3. Sect. 2.
- ft232 -- Apollodorus de Deorum Origine, 1. 3. p. 157.
- ft233 -- lb. p. 134.

- ft234 -- Macrob. Saturnal. l. 5. c. 19.
- ft235 -- Antiqu. ut supra, (l. 4. c. 3.) sect. 3.
- ft236 -- Antiq. l. 4. c. 3. sect. 4.
- ft237 -- Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4.
- ft238 -- Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 5.
- ft239 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 2.
- ft240 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 2.
- ft241 -- Kimchi in 2 Chron. xxxv. 3. Maimon. Hilchot. Beth Habechirah, c. 4. sect. 1.
- ft242 -- T. Hieros. Shekalim, c. 6. fol. 49. 3.
- ft243 -- Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 2. sect. 1.
- ft244 -- [bl j](#) “pinguedinem”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.
- ft245 -- Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 188.
- ft246 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Becerot, c. 4. sect. 2. & 5. 2.
- ft247 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 8.
- ft248 -- Hilchot Shemittah Veyobel, c. 13. sect. 10, 11.
- ft249 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 3.
- ft250 -- Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 22.
- ft251 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 7. p. 22.
- ft252 -- Misn. Shekalim, c. 7. sect. 7. & Maimon, in ib.
- ft253 -- Misn. Parah, c. 1. sect. 1.
- ft254 -- Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 41.
- ft255 -- De lside.
- ft256 -- Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 79.
- ft257 -- Parah, c. 2. sect. 5.

- ft258 -- Ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 79.)
- ft259 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 33. vol. 322.
- ft260 -- Hilhot Parah Adumah, c. 3. sect. 2.
- ft261 -- Vid. Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 7.
- ft262 -- P. 81. No. 379.
- ft263 -- Hilhot Beth Habechirah, c. 6. sect. 2.
- ft264 -- In Misn, Middot, c. 2. sect. 4.
- ft265 -- Misn. ib.
- ft266 -- Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 7, 8, 9.
- ft267 -- Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 10.
- ft268 -- Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 11. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
- ft269 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 47.
- ft270 -- Misn. Parah, c. 4. sect. 4.
- ft271 -- Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 1. 6. 7.
- ft272 -- Ib. sect. 11.
- ft273 -- Ibid.
- ft274 -- Ib. sect. 5.
- ft275 -- **ayh tajj** “peccatum ipsa”, Montanus; “peccatum enim est”,  
Tigurine version.
- ft276 -- De Dea Syria.
- ft277 -- In Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 6.
- ft278 -- Maimon. Milchot, Parah Adumah, c. 9. sect. 1.
- ft279 -- Bartenora in Misn. Temurah, c. 1. sect. 5.
- ft280 -- Maimon. in Misn. Sabbath, c. 2. sect. 3.
- ft281 -- Hilhot Parah Adumah, c. 15. sect. 1.

- ft282 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 9. p. 25.
- ft283 -- Chorograph. Cent. in Matt. c. 7. p. 8, 9.
- ft284 -- Pococke's Travels, p. 157.
- ft285 -- Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
- ft286 -- Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 457.
- ft287 -- See a Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai, 1722. p. 42, 43. Ed. 2.
- ft288 -- See his Works, vol. 1. p. 36.
- ft289 -- See Shaw's Travels, 4. 438. Ed. 2.
- ft290 -- See a Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai, p. 10, 11. Ed. 2.
- ft291 -- **yl grb** "cum meo exercitu pedestri"; so some in Fagius & Vatablus.
- ft292 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 83.
- ft293 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 7.
- ft294 -- Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.
- ft295 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 10. p. 29. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
- ft296 -- Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai, p. 40. Ed. 2.
- ft297 -- De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 5.
- ft298 -- De locis Heb. fol. 87. K.
- ft299 -- **ytmrj hw** "et anathematisabo", Montanus; "devovebo", Tigurine version.
- ft300 -- **çpn rxqtw** "et abbreviata est anima", Montanus, Munster, Fagius, Vatablus; "decurtata", Piscator.
- ft301 -- **l ql qh** "levissime", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Vatablus; "vilissimi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft302 -- De Animal. l. 10. c. 13.

- ft303 -- Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 180.
- ft304 -- Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 15. Aelian. de Animal. l. 2. c. 38. Mela, l. 3. c. 9. Solin. Polyhistor, c. 45. & alii.
- ft305 -- Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 109.
- ft306 -- Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 76.
- ft307 -- Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 13. col. 423.
- ft308 -- Polyhist. c. 45.
- ft309 -- Apud Scheuchzer, Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 386.
- ft310 -- Polyhist. c. 40.
- ft311 -- Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 29.
- ft312 -- **çj n ta** “serpentem”, Montanus; “hunc serpentem”, Piscator,
- ft313 -- Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 560.
- ft314 -- De locis Heb. fol. 91. G.
- ft315 -- Sepher Sherash. rad. **çj n**
- ft316 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. 83.
- ft317 -- Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.
- ft318 -- Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.
- ft319 -- Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. 83.)
- ft320 -- Vid. L’Empereur. Not. in Mosis Kimchi **οδοιπορια** p. 195.
- ft321 -- **hl wn** [“respondete ei”, Montanus; “alternis canite ei”, Tigurine version, Piscator.
- ft322 -- Travels, p. 67. Ed. 2.
- ft323 -- Sheviith, fol. 38. 4.
- ft324 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, p. 83.
- ft325 -- **hytnb** “filiabus ejus”, Montanus, Munster, Fagius, Grotius.



- ft326 -- ἠβϙⲓ dba μϣϣ “lucerna eorum, Heshbon (seilicet) periit”, Tigurine version; “regnum eorum periit a Chesbon”, Pagninus, Vatablus; “imperium eorum”, Munster.
- ft327 -- De locis Heb. fol. 92. G.
- ft328 -- De locis Heb. fol. 87. I. & 92. M.
- ft329 -- Antiqu. 1. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.
- ft330 -- De locis Heb. fol. 87. G.
- ft331 -- κατα ἑριχῶ Sept. “ex opposito Heiricho”, Tigurine version.
- ft332 -- Antiqu. 1. 4. c. 6. sect. 1.
- ft333 -- Dibre Hayamim Shekmoaseh, fol. 3. 2.
- ft334 -- Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.
- ft335 -- Quaest. “see Traditiones” in Gen. fol. 69. D.
- ft336 -- Geograph. 1. 5. c. 18.
- ft337 -- Vid. Macrob. Saturnal. 1. 3. c. 9.
- ft338 -- Jarchi, Ramban, & Isaac Arama, apud Muis in loc.
- ft339 -- dam Ἄδβκα δβκ “honorando honorabo te valde”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.
- ft340 -- μα “quandoquidem”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Noldius, p. 88. & Ainsworth.
- ft341 -- Ἐὶ ῥῆ γκ “quum iret”, Noldius, p. 403.
- ft342 -- Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 42. Ben Gersom in loc.
- ft343 -- Hygin. Poet. Astronomic. 1. 2. c. 23. “Lactant, de falsa Relig”. 1. 1. c. 21.
- ft344 -- Iliad. 19. “prope finem”.
- ft345 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 8. c. 45.
- ft346 -- Hist. 1. 24. c. 10. 1. 27. c. 11. 1. 28. c. 11. and 1. 35. c. 21.

- ft347 -- De Animal. l. 12. c. 3.
- ft348 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 14. col. 197, 198.
- ft349 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 3.
- ft350 -- Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 43.
- ft351 -- Algiahid in Damir. apud Bochart, ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 14.) col. 195.
- ft352 -- Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 227. 4. Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft353 -- **ytj l ç j l ç** “mittendo misi”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft354 -- **j bzyw** “cuique occidisset”, V. L.
- ft355 -- Homer. Iliad. 1.
- ft356 -- **rqbb** in matutino, Montanus; mane, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft357 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 4.
- ft358 -- **rdbl** “confidenter”, Pagninus; “securus”, Vatablus.
- ft359 -- **μyrcy** rectorum, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.
- ft360 -- **ytyrj a** see Prov. xxiv. 20.
- ft361 -- **το σπερμα μου** Sept.
- ft362 -- **yl** “pro me”.
- ft363 -- **Ærb tkrb** “benedixisti benedicendo”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.
- ft364 -- So Vatablus.
- ft365 -- Onomastic Sacr. p. 935.
- ft366 -- Pesikta in Kethoreth Hassamim in Numb. fol. 25. 4.
- ft367 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 27. col. 965.
- ft368 -- **l arçyb bq[lyb** “in Jahacob, in Israel”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.

- ft369 -- aybl k “ut leaena”, V. L. Tigurine version.
- ft370 -- Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 39. Vid. Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 108.
- ft371 -- So Fagius, Vatablus; with which agree the Arabic version, and Noldius, p. 221. No. 1024.
- ft372 -- μ[pb μ[pk “sicut vice in vice”, Montanus, Vatablus.
- ft373 -- μϣj n tarql “in occursum auguriorum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.
- ft374 -- Homer. Iliad. 2. see more instances in Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 3. col. 21, 22.
- ft375 -- Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 19.
- ft376 -- So V. L. Montanus, Tigurine version, etc.
- ft377 -- See Calmet’s Dictionary, and the Supplement to Chamber’s Dictionary, in the word “Aloes”.
- ft378 -- Decad. 1. l. 2.
- ft379 -- Origin. l. 17. c. 8.
- ft380 -- Pesikta in Ketoreth Hassamim, fol. 27. 2. Vid. Philo. de Praemiis, p. 925. Sept. vers. & Targum Jon. in loc.
- ft381 -- “Qui, quia non licuit, non facit, ille facit”. Ovid.
- ft382 -- Antiqu. l. 13. c. 13. sect. 5.
- ft383 -- Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1.
- ft384 -- Vid. Nold. Concord. Ebr. part. p. 545.
- ft385 -- Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 54.
- ft386 -- Zohar in Exod. fol. 3. 3, 4. & in Numb fol. 85. 4. & 86. 1.
- ft387 -- Apud Lyram in loc.
- ft388 -- Comment. in Isa. xxii. 5.
- ft389 -- Clayton’s Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, etc. p. 445.
- ft390 -- T. Bab. Taanith, c. 4. in En Jacob, par. 1. fol. 143. 4.

- ft391 -- Debarim Rabba, fol. 234. 4. Pesikta in Kettoreth Hassammim in Numb. fol. 27. 3. & 28. 1.
- ft392 -- Abarbinel. Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 4. 2, 3. Abendana in loc. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, p. 71, 72.
- ft393 -- Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1.
- ft394 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 523.
- ft395 -- Zohar in Numb. fol. 85. 4. & 86. 1.
- ft396 -- Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 179. 3.
- ft397 -- Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.
- ft398 -- Inghiram. Etrusc. Antiqu. apud Dickinson. Delph. Phaenic. Append. p. 153. Vid. p. 77.
- ft399 -- Scripture Chronology, p. 267.
- ft400 -- Dictionary, on word "Baal".
- ft401 -- "Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons, Peor his other name, ----" Milton, B. 1. l. 406, 412.
- ft402 -- Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.
- ft403 -- Pirke Eliezer, c. 47. fol. 56. 1.
- ft404 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 12.
- ft405 -- <Arabic> "conclave est camerati operis, quo lectus circumdatur", Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 4. c. 8. col. 1092. Vid. Schultens Animadv. Philolog. in Job. p. 183.
- ft406 -- Castel. Lex. Heptaglot. col. 3261.
- ft407 -- Baal Aruch, fol. 133. 4.
- ft408 -- T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 17. 2.
- ft409 -- **hbqh l a** "in lupanar", V. L. "ad lupanar", Montanus; "in lupanar ipsum", Junius & Tremellius; "in fornicem", Tigurine version.
- ft410 -- Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 12.)
- ft411 -- Vid. Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 476.

- ft412 -- Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 10.
- ft413 -- Apud Hottinger, Smegma Oriental, l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.
- ft414 -- Apud Hottinger, ut supra. (Smegma Oriental, l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.)
- ft415 -- T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 38. 2.
- ft416 -- **j r q taw** “et quae erant, Korachi”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft417 -- So Pool, Patrick; “deinde et Corah (qui periit) in morte congregationis”, Tigurine version.
- ft418 -- Apud Hottinger. ut supra. (Smegma Oriental, l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.)
- ft419 -- Apud Abendana in loc.
- ft420 -- **çya** “viro”, Montanus.
- ft421 -- Vid. T. Bab. Bava. Bathra, fol. 122. 1.
- ft422 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bicurim, c. 1. sect. 5.
- ft423 -- Pesikta, T. Bab. Jebamot, fol. 49. 1. Moses Cotzensis Praecept. Affirm. 51. Apud Selden. de Succession. ad leg. Ebra. c. 14. p. 97, 98.
- ft424 -- **ˆtt ˆtn** “dando dabis”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft425 -- Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 3.
- ft426 -- Ut supra, (Bava Bathra, c. 8.) sect. 2.
- ft427 -- Maimon. Hilchot Nechalot, c. 1. sect. 3.
- ft428 -- Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 2. sect. 5.
- ft429 -- Maimon. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 11.
- ft430 -- Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 5. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 12.
- ft431 -- Ibid.
- ft432 -- Taanith, c. 4. sect. 2.
- ft433 -- **hyç[h** “quod obtulistis”, V. L. “quod factum est”, Pagninus; “quod sacrificatum fuerat”, Piscator.

ft434 -- **w**tb**ç**b** **tb**ç** “sabbathi in sabbatho ejus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

ft435 -- **w**ç**d**j** **b** ç**d**j** “mensis in mense ejus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

ft436 -- Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 7. sect. 2.

ft437 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 46. p. 488.

ft438 -- Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 7. sect. 3.

ft439 -- Menachot, c. 8. sect. 2.

ft440 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 2.

ft441 -- Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 3.

ft442 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Pesach, c. 7. sect. 4.

ft443 -- Niddah, c. 5. sect. 6.

ft444 -- **l j y al**

ft445 -- Negaim, c. 5. sect. 5.

ft446 -- Bartenora in Misn. Negaim, c. 5. sect. 5.

ft447 -- Niddah, c. 5. sect. 6.

ft448 -- Misn. Sabbat, c. 24. sect. 5.

ft449 -- **h**yl** [ h**yr**d**nw****

ft450 -- Leo Modena’s History of Rites, etc. par. 2. c. 4.

ft451 -- Nedarim, c. 10. sect. 2.

ft452 -- So the Rabbins in Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.

ft453 -- **t**w**r**xx**j **w**** “erantque tubae”, Tigurine version; “id est tubae”, Vatablus; “nempe tubae”, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

ft454 -- Hilchot Melacim, c. 6. sect. 7.

ft455 -- Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

- ft456 -- wāj j tt “purgatote vos”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; Vid. L’Empereur, Not. ad Kimchii **οδοπορια**, p. 130.
- ft457 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 1.
- ft458 -- axm “invenit”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft459 -- bhz yl k “vas auri”, Montanus; “vasa aurea”, Vatablus.
- ft460 -- hç[m yl k “vas operis”, Montanus.
- ft461 -- Scheuchzer. Physica Sacr. vol. 2. p. 399.
- ft462 -- Jerom. de loc. Heb. fol. 92. G.
- ft463 -- Ibid. K.
- ft464 -- Ibid. fol. 91. A.
- ft465 -- Geograph. l. 5. c. 19.
- ft466 -- Comment. in Esaïam, c. 16. 8.
- ft467 -- Eusebius apud Reland: Palest. Illustr. par. 2. l. 3. p. 611.
- ft468 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 87. I.
- ft469 -- Sheviith, fol. 38. 4.
- ft470 -- Vid. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. par. 2. p. 643.
- ft471 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M.
- ft472 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 9. p. 27.
- ft473 -- Ut supra. (De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M.)
- ft474 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 93. H.
- ft475 -- Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.
- ft476 -- “Deuteronomy 42 mansionibus”, Fabiolae, “inter opera ejus”, T. 3. fol. 13.
- ft477 -- Travels, p. 307. Ed. 2.
- ft478 -- Travels of the Patriarchs, etc. p. 81.

- ft479 -- Travels, p. 308.
- ft480 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 5. p. 17.
- ft481 -- Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 154.
- ft482 -- Dr. Lightfoot, vol. 1. p. 35. Dr. Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 382, 383.
- ft483 -- Antiqu. 1. 12. c. 8. sect. 4.
- ft484 -- Works, vol. 2. p. 8, 9.
- ft485 -- Misn. Succah. c. 3. sect. 1.
- ft486 -- Sepher Shorash. "in voce" **brq[** .
- ft487 -- Travels, tom. 2. ch. 1. p. 279.
- ft488 -- Travels, tom. 2. ch. 1. p. 323.
- ft489 -- Antiqu. 1. 12. c. 8. sect. 1. see 1 Maccab. 5. 3.
- ft490 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 94. H.
- ft491 -- Antiqu. 1. 1. c. 6. sect. 2.
- ft492 -- De Animal. 1. 5. c. 56.
- ft493 -- Comment. in Ezek. 47. 16.
- ft494 -- Comment. in ver. 15.
- ft495 -- Palestin. Illustrat. par. 1. 1. 1. p. 123.
- ft496 -- Comment. ut supra. (cf. ver. 15.)
- ft497 -- Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 114.
- ft498 -- Comment. ut supra. (cf. ver. 15.)
- ft499 -- De loc. Heb. fol. 88. F.
- ft500 -- **μkl wl j ny** "haereditabunt vobis", Montanus; "qui haereditario jure accipient pro vobis", Tigurine not.
- ft501 -- **μtyh l kl** "ad vitam ipsorum". Vid. Drusium.
- ft502 -- Sotah, c. 5. sect. 3. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.



ft503 -- j l qmh yr [ πολεις των φυγαδευτηριων, Sept.

ft504 -- j l qm “receptus”, Junius & Tremellius; “collectionis”, Piscator; R. Sol. Ohel Moed, fol. 82. 1. “proprie significat collectionem vel retentionem”, Munster.

ft505 -- Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 5.

ft506 -- Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

ft507 -- Maimon. ut supra, ({d}) sect. 11.

ft508 -- De Jure Natarae & Gentium, l. 4. c. 2. p. 489.

ft509 -- Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maccot, l. 2. sect. 4.

ft510 -- Maimon. Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 8. Vid. T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 10. 1.

ft511 -- hggçb “per errorem”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “per imprudentiam”, Tigurine version: Vatablus; “in ignorantia”, Montanus.

ft512 -- Dictionary, on the word “Refuge”.

ft513 -- Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 2. 3. & in Pirke, c. 4. sect. 2. & Jarchi in loc.

ft514 -- T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 9. 2.

ft515 -- Maimon. Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 4.

ft516 -- Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 3.

ft517 -- dy ˆbab.

ft518 -- μaw “et si”, Pagninus, Montanus.

ft519 -- Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 3.

ft520 -- Misn. Maccot. c. 2. sect. 6.

ft521 -- Misn. Maccot. c. 2. sect. 3.

ft522 -- Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 7.

ft523 -- Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 11. Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 7.

ft524 -- Descriptio Africae, l. 2. p. 135, 136.

ft525 -- Vid. Marmor. Oxon. & Not. in ib. p. 25. & Rittershusium de Jure Asylorum, c. 2.

ft526 -- Not. in Miclöl Yophi in ver. 25.

ft527 -- **rpky al** “non posset expiatio”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; to the same sense Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

ft528 -- **wqbdy** “adhaerebunt”, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.