

Numbers 7 and 8

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[0 : 00] Because I've got two chapters picked out, and I won't be able to read both of them. Because Numbers chapter 7 and Numbers 8, Numbers 7 is the longest, second longest chapter in Scripture.

Okay, Numbers chapter 7 is the longest chapter in the Pentateuch, that is the first five books of the Bible. It is the second longest chapter in Scripture, which follows what? Psalm 119, right? So, it's amazing. Psalm 119 is a chapter, the longest chapter in Scripture, and it's all about the Word of God. It's all about God's Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart that I may not sin against it, right? Psalm 119. Numbers chapter 7 is the second longest chapter in all of Scripture, and it's about offerings.

It's about giving unto the Lord. It's about giving and contributing freely to Him. What's amazing about Numbers 7, and I'm not going to take time to read all of it, okay?

[0 : 58] Numbers 7 and 8, we kind of look at them together, and we're looking at them together, and I'll kind of put it in context for you in just a moment. You will need to go home and read it. I'm not going to read it to you. But Numbers 7 and 8, Numbers 7 speaks of an offering that was not given to them, or an offering that was freely given, okay?

It was an offering that God did not require. God didn't say, make this offering to me. It was a freewill offering. It was a freewill gift. And it was something that was spontaneous.

And it was something that the people did in response to something else. So let's see what they did in response to, or while they made this offering. And then we'll see what this offering is, because I'll go ahead and tell you, there is the offering repeated 12 times, okay?

There's 12 successive days of offerings, and each day is repeated in Numbers 7. That's why it's so long. Okay, so we're going to read the first part of Numbers 7, and then we'll move on. It says, Remember, the book of Numbers is not written in chronological order.

For those of us who see things lineal, that kind of is a problem. But Moses, in writing the book of Numbers, wasn't so concerned about making sure he wrote them in order, because he's highlighting God's dealing with his people.

[2 : 12] So if we want to see where Numbers 7 fits in, we have to go all the way back to the end of the book of Exodus. Whenever Moses and the people constructed and finished the tabernacle, these things happen that day, right?

The day they set the tabernacle up. So we have to jump over the book of Leviticus. We have to jump over Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. And then we get to here, so read Exodus, the end of Exodus, and read this chapter.

And that's where it fits chronologically. But it says, Now on the day that Moses had finished up setting the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it. And all its furnishings and the altar and its utensils. And he anointed them and consecrated them also.

Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of the fathers' households, made an offering. They were the leaders of the tribes. They were the ones who were over the numbered men. Remember, in Numbers 1, we were introduced to these leaders.

And I told you that these weren't just random men. They were men who gave first to the Lord. And it says, And when they brought up their offering before the Lord, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two of the leaders and an ox for each one.

[3 : 11] And they presented them before the Lord. At the tabernacle. Or before the tabernacle. Remember when we saw the tribe of Levi. We see these are the tools that they were given. And they were given out of this offering.

Go down with me to verse 10. It says, The leaders offered the dedication offering for the altar when it was anointed. So the leaders offered their offering before the altar.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Let them present their offering one liter each day for the dedication of the altar. So a twelve day dedication. Because there's a leader of each tribe. There's twelve leaders.

And it says in verse 12, Now the one who presented his offering on the first day was Nishon, the son of Aminadab of the tribe of Judah. By the way, if you read number seven and you read all of it, you will find that the leaders are ordered in the number they would leave the camp.

Judah's not the firstborn, but Judah's always the first mentioned. Judah is in a place of prominence. It's a lion from the tribe of Judah, right?

[4 : 14] Who is Jesus Christ. So Judah is the first one mentioned here. It's Nishon, the son of Aminadab of the tribe of Judah. And we won't have to read all of them, because all we have to do is read Nishon's offering, and you'll know what every one of them is.

And his offering was one silver dish whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver bowl of 70 shekels according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, one gold pan of 10 shekels full of incense, one bull, one ram, one male lamb, one year old for a burnt offering, one male goat for a sin offering and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs, one year old.

This was the offering of Nishon, the son of Aminadab. Now, if we were to read the rest of number seven, the other 11 would offer the exact same offering.

Okay? I'm not going to read all of it for the sake of time, and it's repetitive. We're going to get to that in just a minute. They offer the same offering. Now, go with me, if you will, to the end of that chapter.

It is verse 84. Okay? Verse 84 says, This was the dedication offering for the altar from the leaders of Israel. When it was anointed, 12 silver dishes, 12 silver bowls, 12 gold pans, each silver dish weighing 130 shekels, and each bowl 70.

[5 : 29] All the silver of the utensils was 2,400 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. The 12 gold pans full of incense weighing 10 shekels apiece. According to the shekel of the sanctuary, all the gold of the pans, 120 shekels.

All the oxen for the burnt offering, 12 bulls. All the rams, 12. The male lambs, one year old, with their grain offering, 12. The male goats for a sin offering, 12.

And all the oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings, 24 bulls. All the rams, 60. The male goats, 60. The male lambs, one year old, 60. This was the dedication offering for the altar after it was anointed.

So there's the offering. Okay? Then we transition. Now it says in verse 89. Now when Moses went to the tent of meeting to speak with him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat. This was on the ark of the testimony from between the two cherubim.

He spoke to him. Now go in with me to verse 8, or chapter 8. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and say to him, When you mount the lamps, the seven lamps will give light in the front of the lampstand.

[6 : 35] Aaron therefore did so. He mounted its lamps at the front of the lampstand, so as the Lord had commanded Moses. Now this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold from its base to its flowers.

It was hammered work according to the pattern which the Lord had shown Moses. So he made the lampstand. Again, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel and cleanse them.

Thus you shall do to them for their cleansing, sprinkle purifying water on them, and let them use a razor over their whole body, and wash their clothes, and they will be clean. Then let them take a bull with its grain offering, and fine flour mixed with oil, and a second bull you shall take for a sin offering.

You shall present the Levites before the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, and present the Levites before the Lord. And the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites. Aaron there shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering, and the sons of Israel that they may qualify to perform the service of the Lord.

Now the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, then offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering to the Lord. To make atonement for the Levites, you shall have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons, so as to present them as a wave offering to the Lord.

[7 : 46] Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. So we read here of their separation. Now, I'm just going to stop right there, because we could get into it, but we won't have time just to kind of flesh it out.

You could read, if you read the rest of Numbers chapter 8, which I would encourage you to do, read Numbers 7 and Numbers 8, even read the repetitive things of Numbers 7, and I'll show you why in just a moment. Because both of these things, and even what happens in the first part of Numbers chapter 9, are those things that took place as soon as they finished the tabernacle.

So these things, because Numbers chapter 9, will be the keeping of the Passover. What we have is their response to God's revealed presence.

I want you just to see something very quickly tonight, and I think it's encouraging to us, the concern of God for his set-apart people. The concern of God for his set-apart people. God's people are set-apart.

He has called them out of the land of Egypt. He has redeemed them. He has set them free from slavery, and he is sanctifying them, or he is about to start sanctifying them in the wilderness. He has set them apart in that he has manifested his presence among them.

[8 : 58] Wherever God is present, he sets it apart, right? It has been set-apart. It is now holy. It is completely his, and it is completely set-apart from everything else. But God has a concern for his people.

God is concerned about their details. And it's not that just God set them apart and said, okay, go about your merry little way. It is not that God called them and redeemed them and said, okay, live your life however you want to. God is concerned.

And we know that God is concerned from Numbers 7 and Numbers 8, and we see it in these three ways. And I want you to see them, and you'll have to go back and kind of dig a little bit, but that's okay. We can do that. We are, right?

We're able to get into scriptures and see this. We see that God has a concern for their offering. God has a concern for their offering and for our offering. And we know this because God shows us what the people freely gave, and he repeats it 12 times.

It would have been very easy for God to say, and all the people gave the same thing. Right? There are 12 leaders. Here are the 12 leaders. This is what they gave. And each one did the same thing. Number 7 would be a very short chapter if God did that.

[10 : 03] You know, the 12 leaders are mentioned twice. Each of their names are mentioned twice in that one chapter. And they're also mentioned in Numbers chapter 1 and Numbers chapter 2. If we don't ever think anything else from scripture, we know this.

God knows the names of his people. When we read the Old Testament, we have to admit that. God knows his people's names. He knows who they are.

He who calls the stars forth by name and tells them where to go in the heavens also knows our name. We say it when we looked at the book of Revelation.

Satan gives people a number. God gives people a name. Satan gives people the same number. 666. God gives you a name and me a name.

A name which only he knows. God knows the name of his people. That's an intimate concern, right? That's knowing them in a special way. And we see this. That God's just not concerned about them and that he knows their name and he names them twice.

[11 : 06] God names them as they give their offering and he doesn't belittle any of them. He doesn't speak here of, let's go, if we go to number 7, the last one to give it, on the 12th day was Ahira, the son of Enan, the leader of the sons of Naphtali.

God doesn't belittle Ahira. Ahira, God puts Ahira on the same platform that he puts Nashon on because he gives him the same amount of space, right?

He speaks of his offering just as much as he speaks of Nashon's offering. He speaks of the first offering on equal terms as he speaks of the 12th offering. This was 12 days later.

And God doesn't go, oh, this is the same thing I've got every day. Why don't we bring in the same thing? No, God acknowledges this and confesses this. Each one brought this offering and he numbers each offering and he tells you in the same wording exactly what they brought.

And he's doing that to show us he knows what we give and he's concerned about each one of us as we give it. He's concerned about the offering of his people.

[12:16] And he knows it and he pays attention to it. And that's refreshing. Now, undoubtedly, these leaders had gotten together and said this is what we ought to give for the dedication of the tabernacle.

And they would went, each one of them had went respectively back to their tribe. Nason would have went back to the tribe of Judah and he would have collected this offering from the tribe of Judah and brought it. But yet, God acknowledges that each one by name brought this, these things. And then he puts them together collectively and tells us what the number is collectively. God's concerned about our offerings. Secondly, we see that God is concerned about order.

God is concerned about order. In the New Testament, we are reminded that God is not the God of confusion, but God is the God of order. Probably one of the things that testify in creation to the reality of God more than anything is the perfect order in which things happen.

The perfect order. I mean, scientists will even tell you that if some things were just a little bit off tilt, if some things were just a little bit out of order, things wouldn't work.

[13:26] The order of creation, the way everything is designed, the way the heavens declare his order, God has a perfect order to everything.

God is not the God of confusion, he is a God of order. And he maintains that order among his people that are set apart. And we see that because it says that Moses would go into the tent of meeting and God would speak to Moses.

We know the Bible tells us that God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to another face to face. That does not mean that Moses saw the face of God, that just means that they had that type of relationship, right?

God was speaking to him personally. But the order was this, think about it, Aaron is high priest, Moses is never a high priest. Right? He's not. But yet he is maintaining the order, the consistent order which is held with them from the very beginning.

When God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, God said, I will speak to you and you will speak to Aaron and Aaron will speak to the people. And God maintains that order even after he sets them apart.

[14:32] Moses goes into the tent of meeting. The Lord God speaks to Moses. Moses leaves the tent. Moses speaks to Aaron and Aaron and Moses tell the people. God is a God of order. He maintains that order.

He keeps that order. He was even concerned about how they lit the lamps in the tabernacle. Think about this. Only Aaron and his sons would ever see that light.

Only Aaron and his sons would ever see that light. Now we don't know exactly how big that lamp was. We know the way it was made. We know it's got the flowers and the buds and it's made out of hammered gold and it's all one piece.

We don't know how big it is but we know that God told them where to put it. Right? So it would be opposite the table of the showbread. There were three things inside the holy place. One thing inside the holy of holies. Inside the holy of holies was the ark of the covenant with the cherubim and the mercy seat above it.

And then there was a veil and you step outside that veil and you step outside that veil there was a table of showbread on one side. There was the lamp on the other side and then there was the altar of incense in the middle. Nobody ever saw these things besides Aaron and his sons.

[15:33] But God was concerned about how they lit the lamp. I can't remember the pastor's name but he gave a great illustration of this. J. Sidlow Baxter referenced this pastor so it's a pastor somewhere in Europe and I don't know the gentleman's name but he said everything in the tabernacle pointed to Jesus.

And it does. Right? Every altar, every piece of furniture points to Jesus. The table of the showbread, he is the bread of life. The altar of incense, he is the one that our prayers ascend to the Father. That's what that is. The lamp, Jesus is the light of the world. By the way, when Jesus gave his I am the light of the world speech in the Gospels, you know where he was standing?

Anybody remember where he was standing? Standing in front of the temple, right? And he gave that I am the light of the world. You know when he gave that? What time of year he gave that? It was during the Festival of Lights. We know it as Hanukkah.

And the reason he gave it there is because they were celebrating the fact that God and Jewish people had done this. This was Intertestament time which means it happens between the Old and

the New Testament. The reason Hanukkah came up is during the Maccabee revolt.

[16:34] When they lighted the candles, they lit the candles, they were about to run out of oil. We see this here because the priest's job was to keep the candles to trim up and the oil to fill. When they were locked up inside the temple at this time during the Maccabee revolt and the Roman soldiers were out there and they were in the temple and they had to stay locked up in the temple because they left and they were going to be killed so they were purifying the temple and had been desecrated during the Antioch and Antiochus Epiphanes reign.

He had taken a cow in and offered it on the altar. He actually barbecued not a cow, a pig. He barbecued a pig on the altar inside the temple which desecrated the temple so during the Maccabean revolt they went in and they cleansed the temple and they lit the lamp again as God had called them to and they barred the doors and didn't let the Roman soldiers in.

One of the problems was the light had to burn continually so they thought how are we going to do that if we can't leave the temple to get the oil. The reason we have Hanukkah is because the testimony goes the oil never ran out.

And God calls the oil to stay there. Now I believe that's a historical reality he did that because that festival was celebrated in the time of Christ and when Jesus says the true light of the world is not a candle in the temple.

The true light of the world is not the candle lumber you put in your windows. I am the light of the world. So the lamp in the tabernacle and later on in the temple was to be a reflection of Jesus. This pastor said God says I want the lights to face the candle.

[17:57] Okay? Follow this illustration. Oil is always the presence of the Spirit of the Spirit in Scripture. So the oil which causes the light to burn is to be a representation of the Holy Spirit.

And what God was commanding is that the Holy Spirit or the oil would shine on one thing and that was the lamp. Because Jesus is the lamp.

It is always the Spirit's job to illuminate the cross. God was concerned about how the... He even said He was concerned about where that light would shine to put it in this way, this manner.

God's concerned about order. You say, what does that have to do with me? What does all this have to do with me, Pastor? Here it is. When God calls us to do something, He is concerned about how we do it.

He is concerned. He is the God of order and not in confusion. Now, sometimes that's really hard for me to do because some of my things I do in a disorderly fashion.

[19:01] But God is concerned about how we do things, the details and the way we do things.

Okay? So God is concerned with our offerings. God is concerned with order. Third, and finally, and we'll see this and then we'll end tonight.

God is concerned about our obligations or our obligated service, that which He's called us to do.

And we see this with the tribe of Levi because here again, we're not looking at just the Levites who were called to work.

We're looking at the entire tribe here. And when we get into Numbers chapter 8, God is setting apart the tribe of Levi. Now, they were set apart not because they chose it. Remember that, right? God chose them as they were.

God chose them. The tribe of Levi is mine. They didn't earn it. He chose them. But after He chose them as they were, He commanded them to purify themselves, to set themselves apart.

God chose them as they were. But as someone has once said, He didn't leave them there. He was going to use them.

[20:06] He was calling them to a work. And in calling them to a work, He called them to cleanse and purify themselves. They were to be sprinkled with the water of purification or better known as the water of sin.

They were to shave their entire body, probably signifying really the head and the hair because it would really set men apart to be clean and shaven at the time, right? And He was calling them to wash their clothes and then put them back on.

He was calling them to completely set themselves apart and to stand before the nation of Israel.

And the nation of Israel was to lay their hands on them, therefore putting their sins upon the Levites who had cleansed themselves.

And then the Levites were to lay their hands on the bulls, therefore putting the sins of the nation of Israel on the head of the bulls and then Aaron and his sons were to offer those sin offerings. But

what we see is that God's concern, He had called them to serve Him but He did not give them the freedom to serve them however they wanted to.

He didn't give them the freedom to serve them as they were. He said, I'm calling you to Myself but now there's some responsibility you have to take upon yourself in order to serve Me.

[21 : 17] That is, you're going to have to set yourself apart, you're going to have to purify yourself and you're going to prepare yourself because God is concerned when He calls us to serve Him and He calls us to labor for Him, He is concerned about how we do it, the manner in which we do it and the purity we do it with in our lives.

We see God is concerned about His set apart people. I know that was very quick tonight but you can go back and dig through that text and see those great truths there. Let's pray. God, I thank You so much.

Thank You that we have an opportunity to be here tonight to discuss the things of Your Word. Lord, I pray these truths would move us to a greater devotion for You.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

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