**Organizing the Census of the Israelites**

1:1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the

---

1 sn The book of Numbers is the fourth book of the Pentateuch, traditionally called the Law of Moses. It provides a record of the experience of the Israelites during the wilderness wanderings, and records the laws for the camp as they traveled from place to place. The book focuses on the difficulties of the Israelites due to their lack of faith, rebellion, and apathy. It also records God’s protection of his people from opposition from without. The book makes a fitting contribution to the collection of holy writings as it shows the spiritual and physical progression of the company of the redeemed toward the promised land. The book has to be studied in conjunction with the other books of the Pentateuch. It builds on the promises made to Abraham in Genesis and the redemption from bondage in Exodus; it completes the cultic instructions for Israel that were laid down in Leviticus, and it concerns the worship in and the movement of the tabernacle that was built in Exodus. But the information here, both legal and historical, was not the major concern in those books. The book gets its title in English (following the Greek tradition) from the two censuses taken of the people, one at the beginning of the wanderings and the other at the end (although the Hebrew title is taken from the beginning of the book, בָּנָמָדִּים, “in the wilderness”). In these lists particular emphasis is given to the leaders of the clans, a theme that will continue in the book as the focus is on how the leaders function in all the trials and temptations of the journey. The material in this book is essentially a theological interpretation of historical events, and as such it stands as an integral part of the revelation of God. In the study of the book of Numbers, when these issues of the nature of the text are significant to the interpretation and acceptance of the text, the notes will comment on them briefly. The indication at the outset of the book is that Moses had a good number of people who were able to help him compile the statistics and the facts of the wandering community. In Num 11:16-18 there is a group of leaders known as short-trim. This term was used in Exod 5:16-19 to describe the officers or foremen of the Israelites. They were appointed supervisors of the clans by Moses, and by the time of Joshua (Josh 1:10) they were a literary guild. The Hebrew word, cognate with Akkadian šarātu, means “to write.” These people were to Israel what the scribes and chroniclers were to the pagan nations. They assisted Moses and the priests in their keeping of records. So no matter what they were called from time to time, there was a group of literate people who could keep the records and preserve the information from the very beginning. Their work matches the activities of scribes in the ancient world who used all the literary devices to preserve the material. There is no reason to doubt that the events recorded were attested to and preserved by such eyewitnesses. But their work would have been essentially to serve the leader, Moses. The book essentially follows the order of the events chronologically, more or less. Where it departs from that order it does so for literary or theological reasons. At the center of the theological concern is the tabernacle, its significance to the faith, and therefore the care in using it and in moving it. Its importance explains the presence and the arrangement of the ritual laws. With the records and statistics provided for him, Moses could then introduce into the record the great events in the wilderness experience of Israel, which were to become warnings and encouragements for all time. Most of this material comes from the two years at the beginning of the experience and the two years at the end. But this itself may be a literary device (memorism) to show the nature of the wanderings throughout. The Hebrew text of the book of Numbers has been preserved fairly well. It has not been preserved as well as Leviticus, which was most important to the ministry of the priests and Levites. But in comparison with some of the prophetic writings, Numbers represents a well-preserved text. The problems will be discussed in the relevant passages. So Numbers is essentially a part of the unfolding revelation of the Torah, the Law. It shows God’s faithfulness to his covenant plan and to his covenant people, but it also shows the problems incurred by the people’s lack of faith and obedience. The book focuses frequently on the nature of the holy Lord, God, for at the center of all this material is the person and the works of the Lord. This provided the standard for the faith and practice of the people. For more information on chapter one, see W. F. Albright, “The Administrative Divisions of Israel and Judah,” JPOS 5 (1925): 17-54; A. Cody, A History of Old Testament Priesthood; A. Lucas, “The Number of the Israelites at the Time of the Exodus,” PEQ 76 (1944): 351-64; G. E. Mendenhall, “The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,” JBL 77 (1958): 52-66; E. Nielsen, “The Levites in the Old Testament,” AST 3 (1964): 16-27; L. A. Snijders, “The Meaning of שליח in Numbers” (Theological Study,” OTS 10 (1954): 1-154; and J. W. Wenham, “Large Numbers in the Old Testament,” Tyh 18 (1967): 19-53.

2 sn The holy name is יָהְウェָה יִצְרָאֵל, “Yahweh.” This is the ancient name for the God of the covenant community. The name was explained or interpreted by Moses for the Israelites by the etymological connection to the verb “to be.” God said that its significance was I will be what I will be, יָהְウェָה שְׁמוֹנֵי, “Yahweh Shōnē,” using the verb שָׁמַי, “to be” or “to exist” (Pesh. šemay, “to be”). The personal name of the verb, if it is limited in its form and meaning to the first and second person of the verb, would therefore mean “He is.” The name indicates that God is the sovereign לֹוֹד, “the Eternal One,” etc. of creation, the eternal God, the covenant Lord; he is sovereignly independent of all creation, but he is intimately involved with all his people. Most English translations do not use it, but follow the Jewish custom of using substitute words for the holy name, such as “the Lord,” “the Eternal One,” etc.

3 tn The book begins with the vav (ו) consecutive and the preterite, “and he spoke.” This does not indicate that the book is a continuation of the previous material, for in that case certain other books in the canon would have to be linked with the writings of other people just because they followed them. This form is simply the narrative verb; the conjunction need not be translated. The verb should not be limited to a literary formula, but does indicate the divine source of the command for Moses. God was speaking to Moses throughout the wilderness wanderings from the tent, and so the ideas are from him, and not from the “will of man.”

4 sn This was one of several names by which the tabernacle was known. This was the tent with its furnishings that the Israelites built according to the book of Exodus. While the tabernacle was being built, the Lord met with Moses in a tent of meeting nearby (Exod 33:7), but when the project was finished, the title was transferred to the tabernacle. It may be that the expression “tent of meeting” refers to the inner tabernacle where God revealed himself to Moses and Aaron, and the word “tabernacle” refers to the whole shrine, the curtained structure with all its contents. This would mean that God addressed Moses from between the cherubim in the
wilderness\textsuperscript{4} of Sinai\textsuperscript{2} on the first day of the second month of the second year after\textsuperscript{3} the Israelites\textsuperscript{3} departed from the land of Egypt.\textsuperscript{9} He said,\textsuperscript{16} 1:2 “Take a census\textsuperscript{8} of the entire\textsuperscript{8} Israelite community\textsuperscript{9} by their clans and families,\textsuperscript{10} counting the name of every individual male.\textsuperscript{11} 1:3 You and Aaron are to number\textsuperscript{12} all in Israel who can serve in the army,\textsuperscript{13} holy of holies (see R. A. Cole, Exodus [TOTC], 191). The point is clear, though – the shrine was functioning as the sign of God’s actual presence and leadership among his people.

1 sn The English word “wilderness” is workable for the Hebrew term, because it describes land that is wild. The term “desert” works if one thinks of land deserted by people. But to many modern readers “desert” suggests the idea of an arid land without growth. The word must not be pressed to mean only sand dunes; it describes land that has rocks, canyons, oases, shrubs and trees occasionally, some animal life, and of course sand.

2 sn The exact location of Mount Sinai has been debated for some time. The traditional view from very early times is that it is located in the south, Jebel Musa, south of the monastery of St. Catherine. The other plausible suggestion is Ras es-Safsafeh, which is on the other end of the valley near the monastery. The mountain is also called Horeb in the Bible. The wilderness of Sinai would refer to the large plain that is at the base of the mountain. See further G. E. Wright, IDB 4:376-78; and G. J. Davies, The Way of the Wilderness.

3 tn The construction uses the infinitive construct of וָאוֹד (vata’a’; “to go out”), with a suffix serving as the subjective genitive, and the קָוִם (qam) preposition providing the temporal indication: “according to the going out of them.” The Israelites are clearly intended as the subject.

4 tn Heb “they,” the referent (the Israelites) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

5 sn This means that the Israelites had spent nine months at Sinai, because they had arrived there in the third month following the exodus. This account does not follow a strict chronology (see Num 9:1). The difference of one month in the narrative is not a critical difference, but a literary general reference. Here begins a new section of major importance to the future of the nation – the numbering for war and for settlement.

6 tn Heb “saying,” A new sentence was started here in the English translation for stylistic reasons.

7 tn The construction is literally “lift up the head[s],” (יהָּשֶׁר נַעֲשֶׁר, šâ‘er ne’əšer) “to lift up.” This idiom for taking a census occurs elsewhere (e.g., Exod 30:12; Num 26:2). The idea is simply that of counting heads to arrive at the base for the standing army. This is a different event than that one recorded in Exod 30:11-16, which was taken for a different purpose altogether. The verb is plural, indicating that Moses had help in taking the census.

8 tc Smr lacks the Hebrew word “all” here.

9 tn Heb “the congregation of Israel.”

10 tn The tribe (טֹבֶת, match or שבת, shevet) is the main category. The family groups or clans (ץָשֶׁר קָחָה, mishpÿkhot/khot) and the households or families (ץָשֶׁר לֹא, bet ‘avot) were sub-divisions of the tribe.

11 tn This clause simply has “in/with the number of the names of every male with respect to their skulls [individuals].” Counting heads, or every skull, simply meant that each person was to be numbered in the census. Except for the Levites, no male was exempt from the count.

12 tn The verb (מַעֲבַד, paqad) means “to visit, appoint, muster, number.” The word is a common one in scripture. It has as its basic meaning the idea of “determining the destiny” of someone, by appointing, mustering, or visiting. When God “visits,” it is a divine intervention for either blessing or cursing. Here it is the taking of a census for war (see G. André, Determining the Destiny [ConBOT], 16).

13 tn The construction uses the participle “going out” followed by the noun “army.” It describes everyone “going out in a military group,” meaning serving in the army. It was the duty of every able-bodied Israelite to serve in this “peoples army. There were probably exemptions for the infirm or the crippled, but every male over twenty was chosen. For a discussion of warfare, see P. C. Craigie, The Problem of War in the Old Testament, and P. D. Miller, “The Divine Council and the Prophetic Call to War,” VT 18 (1968): 100-107.

14 tn The text simply has “from twenty years old and higher.”

15 tn Heb “and up.”

16 tn The noun (כָּתָב, katab) means “army” or “military group.” But the word can also be used for nonmilitary divisions of labor (Num 4:3).

17 tn Heb “and without you.”

18 tn The construction uses the noun in a distributive sense: “a man, a man for a tribe,” meaning a man for each tribe.

19 tn The clause expresses a distributive function: “a man” means “each man.”


21 tn Heb “the house of his fathers.”

22 tn The verb is פָּעַד (pa‘ad, “to stand”). It literally then is, “who will stand with you.” They will help in the count, but they will also serve as leaders as the camp moves from place to place.

23 tn The preposition לק (lak) prefixed to the name could be taken in the sense of “from;” but could also be “with regard to” (specification).

24 sn This name and the name Ammishaddai below have the theophoric element (שַׁדַּי, shaddai; “the Almighty”). It would mean “the Almighty is my rock”; the later name means “the Almighty is my kinsman.” Other theophoric elements in the passage are “father,” “brother,” and “God.”

25 sn Nahshon was an ancestor of Boaz and David, and therefore of Christ (Luke 3:32-33).

26 tc There is a textual difficulty with this verb. The Greek for Δραυτύς uses ῥ and not δ, giving the name Ra’oul. There is even some variation in the Hebrew traditions, but DRS (following the Leningrad codex of א.א. 1008) has preferred the name Deuel.
These were the ones chosen\(^4\) from the community, leaders\(^5\) of their ancestral tribes.\(^3\) They were the heads of the thousands\(^4\) of Israel.

1:17 So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been mentioned specifically by name, \(1:18\) and they assembled\(^6\) the entire community together on the first day of the second month.\(^6\) Then the people recorded their ancestry\(^7\) by their clans and families, and the men who were twenty years old or older were listed\(^8\) by name individually, \(1:19\) just as the LORD had commanded Moses. And so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

1:20 And they were as follows:

The descendants of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name individually. \(1:21\) Those of them who were numbered\(^9\) from the tribe of Reuben were 46,500.\(^10\)
1:22 From the descendants of Simeon: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males numbered of them 2 ten years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name individually. 1:23 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Simeon were 59,300.

1:24 From the descendants of Gad: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:25 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Gad were 45,650.

1:26 From the descendants of Judah: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:27 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Judah were 74,600.

1:28 From the descendants of Issachar: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:29 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Issachar were 54,400.

1:30 From the descendants of Zebulun: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:31 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Zebulun were 57,400.

1:32 From the sons of Joseph:

From the descendants of Ephraim: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:33 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Ephraim were 40,500. 1:34 From the descendants of Manasseh: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:35 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Manasseh were 32,200.

1:36 From the descendants of Benjamin: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:37 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Benjamin were 35,400.

1:38 From the descendants of Dan: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:39 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Dan were 62,700.

1:40 From the descendants of Asher: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:41 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Asher were 41,500.

1:42 From the descendants of Naphtali: According to the records of their clans and families, all the males twenty years old or older who could serve in the army were listed by name. 1:43 Those of them who were numbered from the tribe of Naphtali were 53,400.

1:44 These were the men whom Moses and Aaron numbered along with the twelve leaders of Israel, each of whom was from his own family. 1:45 All the Israelites who were twenty years old or older, who could serve in Israel’s army, were numbered according to their families. 1:46 And all those numbered totaled 603,550.

The Exemption of the Levites

1:47 But 7 the Levites, according to the tribe of their fathers, 8 were not numbered among them. 1:48 The Lord had said to Moses, 9

---

3 tc The verse does not have the preposition, only "the descendants of Naphtali."
4 tn The construction uses both the passive participle (happy qaddim) and the verb (paqad), giving a literal translation of "these were the numbered ones, whom Moses and Aaron numbered."
5 tn Heb “they were one man for the house of his fathers.”
6 tn Literally the text has, “and all the numbered of the Israelites were according to their families.” The verb in the sentence is actually without a complement (see v. 46).
7 tn The vav (ı) on this word indicates a disjunction with the previous sequence of reports. It may be taken as a concessive clause, translated “but” or “however.”
8 tn The construction is unexpected, for Levites would be from the tribe of Levi. The note seems more likely to express that all these people were organized by tribal lineage, and so too the Levites, according to the tribe of their fathers – individual families of Levites.
9 tc The form in the text is (hopaqqadu); if this is correct, then it is an isolated instance of the reflexive of the Qal of (paqad). Some, however, explain the form as the Hitpael without the doubling of the middle letter and with a compensatory lengthening of the vowel before it (G. B. Gray, Numbers [ICC], 10).
10 tc Heb “had spoken to Moses, saying.” The infinitive construct of (lammayn), sometimes rendered “saying” in older English translations, does not need to be translated, but can be taken simply as the indicator of direct discourse. Most re-
Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number\(^1\) or count\(^2\) with the other Israelites. 1:50 But appoint\(^3\) the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony,\(^6\) over all its furnishings and over everything in it. They must carry\(^7\) the tabernacle and all its furnishings; and they\(^8\) must attend to it and camp around it.\(^9\) 1:51 Whenever the tabernacle is to move,\(^10\) the Levites must take it down, and whenever the tabernacle is to be reassembled,\(^11\) the Levites must set it up.\(^12\) Any unauthorized person\(^13\) who approaches it must be killed.

1:52 “The Israelites will camp according to their divisions, each man in his camp, and each man by his standard. 1:53 But the Levites must camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that the LORD’s anger\(^14\) will not fall on the Israelite community. The Levites are responsible for the care\(^15\) of the tabernacle of the testimony.”

1:54 The Israelites did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron:

The Arrangement of the Tribes

2:1\(^17\) The LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron:

2:2 “Every one\(^18\) of the Israelites must camp\(^21\) under his standard with the emblems of his family;\(^20\) they must camp at some distance\(^21\) around the tent of meeting."\(^22\)

The Tribes on the East

2:3 “Now those who will be camping\(^23\) on the east, toward the sunrise,\(^24\) are the divisions\(^25\) of the camp of Judah under their standard. The

leader of the people of Judah is 4 Nahshon son of Amminadab. 2:4 Those numbered in his division2 are 74,600. 2:5 Those who will be camping next to them3 are the tribe of Issachar. The leader of the people of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar. 2:6 Those numbered in his division are 54,400. 2:7 Next will be 4 the tribe of Zebulun. The leader of the people of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon. 2:8 Those numbered in his division are 57,400. 2:9 All those numbered of the camp of Judah, according to their divisions, are 186,400. They will travel5 at the front.

The Tribes on the South

2:10 “On the south will be the divisions of the camp of Reuben under their standard.6 The leader of the people of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. 2:11 Those numbered in his division are 46,500. 2:12 Those who will be camping next to them are the tribe of Simeon. The leader of the people of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. 2:13 Those numbered in his division are 59,300. 2:14 Next will be7 the tribe of Gad. The leader of the people of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel.8 2:15 Those numbered in his division are 45,650. 2:16 All those numbered of the camp of Reuben, according to their divisions, are 151,450. They will travel second.

The Tribe in the Center

2:17 “Then the tent of meeting with the camp of the Levites will travel in the middle of the camps. They will travel in the same order as they camped, each in his own place9 under his standard.

The Tribes on the West

2:18 “On the west will be the divisions of the camp of Ephraim under their standard. The leader of the people of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. 2:19 Those numbered in his division are 40,500. 2:20 Next to them will be the tribe of Manasseh. The leader of the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. 2:21 Those numbered in his division are 32,200. 2:22 Next will be10 the tribe of Benjamin. The leader of the people of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gideoni. 2:23 Those numbered in his division are 35,400. 2:24 All those numbered of the camp of Ephraim, according to their divisions, are 108,100. They will travel third.

The Tribes on the North

2:25 “On the north will be the divisions of the camp of Dan, under their standards. The leader of the people of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. 2:26 Those numbered in his division are 62,700. 2:27 Those who will be camping next to them are the tribe of Asher. The leader of the people of Asher is Pagiel son of Ocran. 2:28 Those numbered in his division are 41,500. 2:29 Next will be11 the tribe of Naphtali. The leader of the people of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan. 2:30 Those numbered in his division are 53,400. 2:31 All those numbered of the camp of Dan are 157,600. They will travel last, under their standards.”

Summary

2:32 These are the Israelites, numbered according to their families.12 All those numbered in the camps, by their divisions, are 603,550. 2:33 But the Levites were not numbered among the other Israelites, as the Lord commanded Moses. 2:34 So the Israelites did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses; that is the way13 they camped under their standards, and that is the way they traveled, each with his clan and family.

---

1 tn Or “will be.”
2 tc The expression “and his divisions and those numbered of them” is somewhat tautological. The words are synonyms used for statistical purposes, and so neither should be simply deleted.
3 tn Heb “by him” [i.e., Judah].
4 tn This part has been supplied; the text simply has “the tribe of Zebulun.”
5 tn The verb is נָסָע (nasa’: “to journey, travel, set out,” and here, “to move camp.” Judah will go first, or, literally, at the head of the nation, when they begin to travel.
6 tn Here and throughout the line is literally “[under] the standard of the camp of Reuben...according to their divisions.”
7 tn The Hebrew word simply has “and the tribe of Gad.”
8 tc The Leningrad codex, upon which BHS is based, has “Reuel” here. In reading “Deuel” the translation presented above follows many medieval Hebrew manuscripts, Smr, and the Latin Vulgate. Cf. Num 1:14.
9 tn The Hebrew expression is יִרְכָּב (‘al-yado, “upon his hand”). This clearly refers to a specifically designated place for each man.
10 tn Here too the Hebrew text simply has “and the tribe of Benjamin.”
11 tn The Hebrew text has “and the tribe of Naphtali.”
12 tn The Hebrew text has “the house of their fathers.” So also in v. 34.
13 tn The Hebrew word is כֵּן (ken, “thus, so”).
The Sons of Aaron

3:1 Now these are the records of Aaron and Moses when the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. 3:2 These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3:3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests. 3:4 Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord when they offered strange fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children. 3:5 So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father.

The Assignment of the Levites

3:5 The Lord spoke to Moses: 3:6 “Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. 3:7 They are responsible for his needs and the needs of the whole community before the tent of meeting, by attending to the service of the tabernacle of the congregation as was told them by Moses, the servant of the Lord.”

The Levites were to serve the Lord as his chosen people.
3:8 And they are responsible for all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and for the needs of the Israelites, as they serve in the tabernacle.
3:9 You are to assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they will be assigned exclusively to him out of all the Israelites.
3:10 So you are to appoint Aaron and his sons, and they will be responsible for their priesthood, but the unauthorized person who comes near must be put to death.”

3:11 Then the Lord spoke to Moses:
3:12 “Look, I myself have taken the Levites from among the Israelites instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the Israelites. So the Levites belong to me, 3:13 because all the firstborn are mine. When I destroyed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I set apart for myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They belong to me. I am the Lord.”

The Numbering of the Levites

3:14 Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai: 3:15 “Number the Levites by their clans and their families; every male from a month old and upward you are to number.” 3:16 So Moses numbered them according to the word of the Lord, just as he had been commanded.

The Summary of Families

3:17 These were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
3:18 These are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei. 3:19 The sons of Kohath by their families were: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 3:20 The sons of Merari by their families were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites by their clans.

The Numbering of the Gershonites

3:21 From Gershon came the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimeites; these were the families of the Gershonites. 3:22 Those of them who were numbered, counting every male from a month old and upward, were 7,500. 3:23 The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle toward the west. 3:24 Now the leader of the clan of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of Lael.
3:25 And the responsibilities of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting included the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the curtain at the entrance of the tent of meeting, 3:26 the hangings of the courtyard, the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard that surrounded the tabernacle and the altar, and their ropes, plus all the service connected with these things.

---

1 tn The construction uses the infinitive construct (exepetically) followed by its cognate accusative. It would convey “to serve the service of the tabernacle,” but more simply it may be rendered as “serving.” Their spiritual and practical service is to serve.
2 sn The Levites had the duty of taking care of all the tabernacle and its furnishings, especially in times when it was to be moved. But they were also appointed to be gate-keepers (2 Kgs 22:4; 1 Chr 9:19) in order to safeguard the purity of the place and the activities that went on there. Their offices seem to have then become hereditary in time (1 Sam 1:3); they even took on more priestly functions, such as pronouncing the benediction (Deut 10:8). See further R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 348-49.
3 tn This emphasis is derived from the simple repetition of the passive participle, נַעֲנַתָּה (n‘unatātah) normally “give.” Here, though, the context refers to the assignment of the Levites to the priests for their duties. The form is the perfect tense with vav (v) consecutive, continuing the sequence for the imperfect of instruction.
4 tn The Hebrew text simply has the preposition, “from the Israelites.”
5 tc The LXX includes the following words here: “and all things pertaining to the altar and within the veil.” Cf. Num 18:19.
6 tn The word is בָּעָר (bā‘ar), usually rendered “stranger, foreigner, pagan.” But in this context it simply refers to anyone who is not a Levite or a priest, an unauthorized person or intruder in the tabernacle. That person would be put to death.
7 tn The particle בָּנֵיהּ (bīnehā) here carries its deictic force, calling attention to the fact that is being declared. It is underscoring the fact that the Loew himself chose Levi.
8 tn Literally “in the place of.”
9 sn The form לֹא (lō‘ā) is the Hiphil infinitive construct of the verb לָכָה (lakha; “to strike, smite, attack”). Here, after the idiomatic “in the day of,” the form functions in an adversative clause of time – “when I destroyed.”
10 sn In the Exodus event of the Passover night the principle of substitution was presented. The firstborn child was redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and so belonged to God, but then God chose the Levites to serve in the place of the firstborn. The ritual of consecrating the firstborn son to the Loew was nevertheless carried out, even with Jesus, the firstborn son of Mary (Luke 2:22-23).
11 tn Heb “the house of their fathers.” So also in v. 20.
12 tn Heb “you are to/shall number them.”
13 tn Heb “at the mouth of the Lord.”
14 tn The Pual perfect may be given the past perfect translation in this sentence because the act of commanding preceded the act of numbering.
15 tn The word “sons of” does at the outset refer to the sons of Levi. But as the listing continues the expression refers more to the family groups of the various descendants.
16 tn The vav (v) disjunctive on the noun at the beginning of the verse here signals a greater emphasis on the individual rather than another item in the numbering of the clans.
17 tn Heb “a father’s house.” So also in vv. 30,35.
18 tn The disjunctive vav (v) here introduces a new section, listing the various duties of the clan in the sanctuary. The Gershonites had a long tradition of service here. In the days of David Asaph and his family were prominent as musicians. Others in the clan controlled the Temple treasuries. But in the wilderness they had specific oversight concerning the tent structure, which included the holy place and the holy of holies.
19 tc The phrases in this verse seem to be direct objects without verbs. BHS suggests deleting the sign of the accusative (for which see P. P. Saydon, “Meanings and Uses of the Particle כָּל,” VT 14 [1964]: 263-75).
20 tn Heb “all the service of it [them].”
The Numbering of the Kohathites

3:27 From Kohath came the family of the Amramites, the family of the Izharites, the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these were the families of the Kohathites.  
3:28 Counting every male from a month old and upward, there were 8,600. They were responsible for the care of the sanctuary.  
3:29 The families of the Kohathites were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle.  
3:30 Now the leader of the clan of the families of Kohathites was Elizaphan son of Uzziel.  
3:31 Their responsibilities included the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the curtain, and all their service.  
3:32 Now the head of all the Levitical leaders was Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. He was appointed over those who were responsible for the sanctuary.

The Numbering of Merari

3:33 From Merari came the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these were the families of Merari.  
3:34 Those of them who were numbered, counting every male from a month old and upward, were 6,200.  
3:35 Now the leader of the clan of the families of Merari was Zuriel son of Abihail. These were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle.  
3:36 The appointed responsibilities of the Merarites included the frames of the tabernacle, its crossbars, its posts, its sockets, its utensils, plus all the service connected with these things, and the pillars of the courtyard all around, with their sockets, their pegs, and their ropes.

3:38 But those who were to camp in front of the tabernacle on the east, in front of the tent of meeting, were Moses, Aaron, and his sons. They were responsible for the needs of the sanctuary and for the needs of the Israelites, but the unauthorized person who approached was to be put to death.  
3:39 All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered by the word of the Lord, according to their families, every male from a month old and upward, were 22,000.

The Substitution for the Firstborn

3:40 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Number all the firstborn males of the Israelites from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names.  
3:41 And take of the Levites for me—I am the Lord—instead of all the firstborn males among the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the livestock of the Israelites.”  
3:42 So Moses numbered all the firstborn males among the Israelites, as the Lord had commanded him.  
3:43 And all the firstborn males, by the number of the names from a month old and upward, totaled 22,273.

3:44 Then the Lord spoke to Moses:  
3:45 “Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn males among the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock. And the Levites will be mine. I am the Lord.  
3:46 And for the redemption of the 273 firstborn males of the Israelites who exceed the number of the Levites, 3:47 collect five shekels for each one.

---

2 sn Both Moses and Aaron came from this line (6:16-20). During the Hebrew monarchy this branch of the line of Levi was exemplary in music (1 Chr 6:33-48). They were also helpful to Hezekiah in his reforms (1 Chr 29:12-14).

2 tn The construction here is a little different. The Hebrew text uses the participle in construct plural: יִשָּׂרְתוּ (yÿsharÿtu, “they will serve/minister”). The form specifies the duties of the 8,600 Kohathites. The genitive that follows this participle is the cognate נְשִׂיאֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת (nesii’ye mishmeret) that has been used before. So the expression indicates that they were responsible for the care of this part of the cult center. There is no reason to delete one of the forms (as does J. A. Paterson, Numbers, 42), for the repetition stresses the central importance of their work.

2 tn The form חַיַּת (chayat, “they will serve/minister”), the imperfect tense in this place, however, probably describes what the priests would do, what they were to do. The verb is in a relative clause: “which they would serve with them,” which should be changed to read “with which they would serve.”

4 tn The word is literally “its [their] service.” It describes all the implements that were there for the maintenance of these things.

6 tn The Hebrew construction has “the leader of the leaders of,” אֲבִיאָן נְשִׂיאֵי (’abian nesiyey). The Hebrew text has “these they the families of Mera-rī.” The independent personal pronoun has an anaphoric use, somewhat equivalent to the copula “and” (see R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 23, §115).
individually; you are to collect this amount in the currency of the sanctuary shekel (this shekel is twenty gerahs). 3:48 And give the money for the redemption of the excess number of them to Aaron and his sons.”

3:49 So Moses took the redemption money from those who were in excess of those redeemed by the Levites. 3:50 From the firstborn males of the Israelites he collected the money, 1,365 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel. 3:51 Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Service of the Kohathites

4:1 So the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron: 4:2 “Take a census of the Kohathites from among the Levites, by their families and by their clans, 4:3 from thirty years old and upward to fifty years old, all who enter the company to do the work in the tent of meeting. 4:4 This is the service of the Kohathites in the tent of meeting, relating to the most holy things. 4:5 When it is time for the camp to journey, Aaron and his sons must come and take down the screening curtain and cover the ark of the testimony with it. 4:6 Then they must put over it a covering of fine leather and spread over that a cloth entirely of blue, and then they must insert its poles. 4:7 “On the table of the presence they must spread a blue cloth, and put on it the dishes, the pans, the bowls, and the pitchers for pouring, and the Bread of the Presence must be on it continually. 4:8 They must spread over them a scarlet cloth, and cover the same with a covering of fine leather; and they must insert its poles. 4:9 “They must take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand of the light, with its lamps, its wick-trimmers, its trays, and all its oil vessels, with which they service it. 4:10 Then they must put it with all its utensils in a covering of fine leather, and put it on a carrying beam. 4:11 “They must spread a blue cloth on the gold altar, and cover it with a covering of fine leather; and they must insert its poles. 4:12 Then they must take all the utensils of the service, with which they serve in the sanctuary, put them in a blue cloth, cover them with a covering of fine leather, and put them on a carrying beam. 4:13 Also, they must take away the ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth over it. 4:14 Then they must place on it all its implements with which they serve there—the trays, the meat forks, the shovels, the basins, and all the utensils of the altar—and they must spread on it a covering of fine leather, and then insert its poles.

---

1 tn The verb form now is the imperfect of instruction or legislation.
2 tn Heb “them,” referring to the five shekels.
4 sn The word used is “silver.” Coins were not in existence until after 700 B.C. (starting with Lydia).
5 tn The chapter has four main parts to it: Kohathites (1-20), Gershonites (21-28), Merarites (29-33) and the census of the Levites (34-49).
6 tn Heb “lift up the head.” The form מְנָשֵׂה (manaseh) is the Qal infinitive absolute functioning here as a pure verb form. This serves to emphasize the basic verbal root idea (see GKC 346 §113.bb).
7 sn The census of chapter 3 was to register all male Levites from a month old and up. It arranged the general duties of each of the tribes. The second census of Levites now will focus on those between 30 and 50 years of age, those who were actually in service. These are the working Levites. The duties here will be more specific for each of the families. The Kohathites, although part of the ordinary ministry of Levites, were a special group chosen to handle the most holy furnishings. This special service (1) skilled labor (מְנָשֵׂה, mtnash she’ah); (2) physical labor (פָּרֹות, parot); (3) serving the priests (עַל הָעָון, al ha’amon); (4) ministering (עַל הָעָון, sharet) (see his Studies in Levitical Terminology, 1:60-70).
8 tn The word “company” is literally “host, army” (עֹדֵד, ‘otad). The repetition of similar expressions makes the translation difficult: Heb “all [who] come to the host to do work in the tent.”
9 tn The Hebrew text simply has “the holy of holies,” or “the holy of the holy things” (קְדוֹשִׁיקָדֹשִׁים, qdosh haqodoshim). The context indicates that this refers to all the sacred furnishings.
10 tn The exact meaning of the Hebrew word here is difficult to determine. The term מְנָשֵׂה (manash) has been translated ‘badgers’ [skins]” by KJV, ASV has “sealskin” while RSV uses “goatskin”; NEB and NASB have “porpoise skin,” and NIV has “hides of sea cows.” This is close to “porpoise,” and seems influenced by the Arabic. The evidence is not strong for any of these meanings, and some of the suggestions would be problematic. It is possible the word is simply used for “fine leather,” based on the Egyptian tls. This has been followed by NRSV (“fine leather”) and NLT (“fine goatskin leather”) along with the present translation. See further HALOT 1720-21 s.v. מְנָשֵׂה.
11 sn The Hebrew actually has the “table of faces,” and this has been traditionally rendered “table of shewbread.”
12 tn The Greek has “violet” instead of blue. This is also the case in vv. 8, 10, and “their service” (1) skilled labor (מְנָשֵׂה, mtnash she’ah) or “work,” (2) physical labor (פָּרֹות, parot) or “service,” and (3) assisting the priests (עַל הָעָון, sharet) or “ministering” (see his Studies in Levitical Terminology, 1:60-70).
13 tn The “pole” or “bar” (מָטָה, mota) is of a different style than the poles used for transporting the ark. It seems to be a flexible bar carried by two men with the implements being transported tied to the bar. The NEB suggests the items were put in a bag and slung over the bar, but there is no indication of the manner.
14 tc The Greek text has “and he must place the cover upon the altar” instead of “and they must take away the ashes from the altar.” The verb is the Piel form; its nuance seems to be privative, i.e., stating that the object is deprived of the material—the ashes are removed. This is the main altar in the courtyard.
15 tc For this passage the Greek and Smr have a substantial addition concerning the purple cloth for the laver and its base, and a further covering of skin (see D. W. Gooding. “On the Use of the LXX for Dating Midrashic Elements in the Targums,” JTS 25 [1974]: 1-11).
4:15 “When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is ready to journey, then the Kohathites will come to carry them; but they must not touch any holy thing, or they will die. These are the responsibilities of the Kohathites with the tent of meeting.

4:16 “The appointed responsibility of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest is for the oil for the light, and the spiced incense, and the daily grain offering, and the anointing oil; he also has the appointed responsibility over all the tabernacle with all that is in it, over the sanctuary and over all its furnishings.”

4:17 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron: 4:18 “Do not allow the tribe of the families of the Kohathites to be cut off from among the Levites; 4:19 but in order that they will live and not die when they approach the most holy thing, do this for them: Aaron and his sons will go in and appoint each man to his service and his responsibility.

4:20 But the Kohathites are not to go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, or they will die.”

The Service of the Gershonites

4:21 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 4:22 “Also take a census of the Gershonites, by their clans and by their families. 4:23 You must number them from thirty years old and upward to fifty years old, all who enter the company to do the work of the tent of meeting. 4:24 This is the service of the families of Gershon, as they serve and carry it. 4:25 They must carry the curtains for the tabernacle and the tent of meeting with its covering, the covering of fine leather that is over it, the curtains for the entrance of the tent of meeting, 4:26 the hangings for the courtyard, the curtain for the entrance of the gate of the court, which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their ropes, along with all the furnishings for their service and everything that is made for them. So they are to serve.

4:27 “All the service of the Gershonites, whether carrying loads or for any of their work, will be at the direction of Aaron and his sons. You will assign them all their tasks as their responsibility. 4:28 This is the service of the families of the Gershonites concerning the tent of meeting. Their responsibilities will be under the authority of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

The Service of the Merarites

4:29 “As for the sons of Merari, you are to number them by their families and by their clans. 4:30 You must number them from thirty years old and upward to fifty years old, all who enter the company to do the work of the tent of meeting. 4:31 This is what they are responsible for:

---

4:15tn The verb form is the Piel perfect with a vav (ו) consecutive; it continues the future sequence, but in this verse forms a subordinate clause to the parallel sequential verb to follow.
4:15tn The Piel infinitive construct with the preposition serves as the direct object of the preceding verbal form, answering the question of what it was that they finished.
4:15tn Heb “after this.”
4:15tn The form is the Qal infinitive construct from massa (massa’), “to lift, carry”; here it indicates the purpose clause after the verb “come.”
4:15tn The imperfect tense may be given the nuance of negated instruction (“they are not to”) or negated obligation (“they must not”).
4:15tn Here the article expresses the generic idea of any holy thing (R. J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax, 19, §92).
4:15tn The verb is the perfect tense with a vav (ו) consecutive, following the imperfect tense warning against touching the holy thing. The form shows the consequence of touching the holy thing, and so could be translated “or they will die” or “lest they die.” The first is stronger.
4:15tn The word massa (massa’) is normally rendered “burden,” especially in prophetic literature. It indicates the load that one must carry, whether an oracle, or here the physical responsibility.
4:15tn This is supplied to the line to clarify “appointed.”
4:15tn Heb “and.”
4:15sn One would assume that he would prepare and wrap these items, but that the Kohathites would carry them to the next place. Although the RSV and NIV translate massa as “burden,” in other cases in the OT it is clearly understood to mean “vessel” (cf. 1 Chr 28:10).
4:15sn The verb is simply the Qal, “do not cut off.” The context calls for a permissive nuance – “do not let them be cut off.” It was a difficult task to be handling the holy things correctly; Moses and Aaron were to see to it that they did it right and did not handle the objects, that is, Moses and Aaron were to safeguard their lives by making certain that proper procedures were followed.
4:15tn The word order is different in the Hebrew text: Do this...and they will live. Consequently, the verb “and they will live” is a perfect tense with a vav (ו) consecutive to express the future consequence of “doing this” for them.
4:15tn The perfect tense with vav (ו) consecutive continues the instruction for Aaron.
4:15tn The distributive sense is obtained by the repetition, “a man and a man.”
4:15tn In the Hebrew text the verse has as the subject “they,” but to avoid confusion the antecedent has been clarified in the translation.
to carry as their entire service in the tent of meeting: the frames of the tabernacle, its crossbars, its posts, its sockets, 4:32 and the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their sockets, tent pegs, and ropes, along with all their furnishings and everything for their service. You are to assign by names the items that each man is responsible to carry. 4:33 This is the service of the families of the Merarites, their entire service concerning the tent of meeting, under the authority of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.”

Summary

4:34 So Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the community numbered the Kohathites by their families and by clans, 4:35 from thirty years old and upward to fifty years old, everyone who entered the company for the work in the tent of meeting; 4:36 and those of them numbered by their families were 2,750. 4:37 These were those numbered from the families of the Kohathites, everyone who served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the Lord by the authority of Moses.

4:38 Those numbered from the Gershonites, by their families and by their clans, 4:39 from thirty years old and upward to fifty years old, everyone who entered the company for the work in the tent of meeting – 4:40 those of them numbered by their families, by their clans, were 2,630. 4:41 These were those numbered from the families of the Gershonites, everyone who served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the Lord.

4:42 Those numbered from the families of the Merarites, by their families, by their clans, 4:43 from thirty years old and upward to fifty years old, everyone who entered the company for the work in the tent of meeting – 4:44 those of them numbered by their families were 3,200. 4:45 These are those numbered from the families of the Merarites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the Lord by the authority of Moses.

4:46 All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel numbered by their families and by their clans, 4:47 from thirty years old and upward to fifty years old, everyone who entered to do the work of service and the work of carrying9 relating to the tent of meeting – 4:48 those of them numbered were 8,580. 4:49 According to the word of the Lord they were numbered,4 by the authority of Moses, each according to his service and according to what he was to carry.5 Thus were they numbered by him, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Separation of the Unclean

5:17 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 5:2 “Command the Israelites to expel9 from the camp every leper,9 everyone who has a one place to the next.

4 tn The verb is the simple perfect tense – “he numbered them.” There is no expressed subject; therefore, the verb can be rendered as a passive.

5 tn Or “his burden.”

6 tn The passive form simply reads “those numbered by him.” Because of the cryptic nature of the word, some suggest reading a preterite, “and they were numbered.” This is supported by the Greek, Syriac, Targum, and the MT. It would follow in the emendation that the relative pronoun be changed to “just as” (נָשַׁלְךָ, ka-asher). The MT is impossible the way it stands; it can only be rendered into smooth English by adding something that is missing.

7 sn The fifth chapter falls into four main parts: separation of the unclean (vv. 1-4), restitution for sin (vv. 5-10), the jealousy ordeal (vv. 11-28), and the summary (vv. 29-31). There is a good deal of literature on the biblical theme of holiness (for which see the notes on Leviticus primarily). But with regard to this chapter, see (with caution), Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger; J. Neusner, The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism; and K. Milgrom, “Two Kinds of Nathan,” VT 26 (1976): 333-37.

9 tn The construction uses the Piel imperative followed by this Piel imperfect/jussive form; it is here subordinated to the preceding volitive, providing the content of the command. The verb נַשַׁלָּח (nashalakh) in this verbal stem is a strong word, meaning “expel, put out, send away, or release” (as in “let my people go”).

9 sn The word נַשַׁלָּח (nashalâh), although translated “leper,” does not primarily refer to leprosy proper (i.e., Hansen’s disease). The word was used to describe other skin diseases (including leprosy when that actually showed up). True leprosy was known and feared by the time of Amos (ca. 760 b.c.). There is evidence that the disease was known in Egypt by 1500 B.C. So this term would include that disease in all probability. But in view of the diagnosis and healing described in Leviticus 13 and 14, the term must be broader. The whole basis for the laws of separation may be found in the book of Leviticus. The holiness of the Lord who dwelt among his people meant that a high standard was imposed on them for their living arrangements as well as access to the sanctuary. Anything that was corruptible, diseased, or contaminating was simply not to be touched or used, and none of this was to defile the people. The laws of holiness and purification were practical for the immediate audience; they have far-reaching implications for theology. The purity regulations have been done away with in Christ – the problem is dealt with differently in the new covenant. There is no earthly temple, and so the separation laws are not in force. Wisdom would instruct someone with an infectious disease to isolate, however. But just because the procedure is fulfilled in Christ does not mean that believers today are fit for glory just as they are. On the contrary, they must be...
discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse. You must expel both men and women; you must put them outside the camp, so that they will not defile their camps, among which I live.”

5:4 So the Israelites did so, and expelled them outside the camp. As the Lord had spoken to Moses, so the Israelites did.

Restitution for Sin

5:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 5:6 “Tell the Israelites, ‘When a man or a woman commits any sin that people commit, thereby breaking faith with the Lord, and that person is found guilty. 5:7 Then he must confess his sin changed before going into his presence. In like manner the sacrifices have been done away in Christ— not what they covered. Sin is still sin, even though it is dealt with differently on this side of the cross. But the ritual and the regulations of the old covenant at Sinai have been fulfilled in Christ.

The word used here for this violation is (ma'alah), which means to “defraud, violate, trespass against,” or “to deal treacherously, do an act wronged.” The idea of “guilt” lies behind the second two uses as well as the first. In the second he must repay his guilt (meaning what he is guilty of); and here it can also mean “the one against whom he is guilty of sinning.”

5:8 This type of law is known as casuistic. The law is introduced with “when/it” and then the procedure to be adopted follows it. The type of law was common in the Law Code of Hammurabi.

The “holy gifts” are described with the root of (qinnathah). This is now the third use of the word. For more information on the word, see A. R. Johnson, “The Primary Meaning of ‘qin,” VTsup 1 (1953): 67-77.

5:9 The editors of BSCH prefer to follow the Greek, Syriac, and Latin and not read “for the priest” but “for the person,” and therefore must bring him a ram of atonement by which atonement is made for all the Israelites’ holy things that they bring to the priest will be his.

5:10 Every man’s holy things will be his; whatever any man gives the priest will be his.”

The Jealousy Ordeal

5:11 The Lord spoke to Moses: 5:12 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘If any man’s wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, 5:13 and a man has sexual relations with her without her husband knowing it, and it is hidden that she has defiled herself, since there was no witness against her, nor was she defiled—5:14 and if jealous feelings come

---

1 sn The rules of discharge (Lev 12 and 15) include everything from menstruation to chronic diseases (see G. Wypers, ISBE 1:347, as well as R. K. Harrison, Leviticus (TOTC), 159-66, and G. J. Wenham, Leviticus (NICOT), 217-25.
2 tn The word is (nefesh), which usually simply means “[whole] life,” i.e., the soul in the body, the person. But here it must mean the corpse, the dead person, since that is what will defile (although it was also possible to become unclean by touching certain diseased people, such as a leper).
3 tn The imperfect tense functions here as a final imperfect, expressing the purpose of putting people outside the camp. The two preceding imperfects (repeated for emphasis) are taken here as instruction or legislation.
4 tn The perfect tense is here given a past perfect nuance to stress that the word of the Lord preceded the obedience.
5 sn This type of law is known as casuistic. The law is introduced with “when/it” and then the procedure to be adopted follows it. The type of law was common in the Law Code of Hammurabi.
6 tn The verse simply says “any sin of a man,” but the genitive could mean that it is any sin that a man would commit (subjective genitive), or one committed against a man (objective genitive). Because of the similarity with Lev 5:22 HT (6:3 ET), the subjective is better. The sin is essentially “missing the mark” which is the standard of the Law of the Lord.
8 tn Heb “and a man lies with her with the emission of semen.” This makes it clear that there was adultery involved, so that the going astray is going astray morally. The indication in the text is that if she had never behaved suspiciously the sin might not have been detected.
9 tn The sign of the accusative (vatidah) is probably to be repointed to the preposition with the suffix, (lait). The word means either “zeal” or “jealousy,” depending on the context. It is a passionate feeling to guard or protect an institution or relation-
over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is defiled, or if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is not defiled — 5:15 then the man must bring his wife to the priest, and he must bring the offering required for her, one tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he must not pour olive oil on it or put frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of suspicion, a grain offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

5:16 “Then the priest will bring her near and have her stand before the Lord. 5:17 The priest will then take holy water in a pottery jar, and take some of the dust from that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and put it into the water. 5:18 Then the priest will have the woman stand before the Lord, uncover the woman’s head, and put the grain offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of suspicion. The priest will hold in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 5:19 Then the priest will put the

woman under oath and say to her, “If no other man has had sexual relations with you, and if you have not gone astray and become defiled while under your husband’s authority, may you be free from this bitter water that brings a curse.”

But if you have gone astray while under your husband’s authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has had sexual relations with you…” 5:21 Then the priest will put the woman under the oath of the curse and will say to her, “The Lord make you an attested curse among your people.” if the Lord makes your thigh fall away and your abdomen over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is defiled, or if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is not defiled — 5:15 then the man must bring his wife to the priest, and he must bring the offering required for her, one tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he must not pour olive oil on it or put frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of suspicion, a grain offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

5:16 “Then the priest will bring her near and have her stand before the Lord. 5:17 The priest will then take holy water in a pottery jar, and take some of the dust from that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and put it into the water. 5:18 Then the priest will have the woman stand before the Lord, uncover the woman’s head, and put the grain offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of suspicion. The priest will hold in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 5:19 Then the priest will put the

woman under oath and say to her, “If no other man has had sexual relations with you, and if you have not gone astray and become defiled while under your husband’s authority, may you be free from this bitter water that brings a curse.”

But if you have gone astray while under your husband’s authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has had sexual relations with you…” 5:21 Then the priest will put the woman under the oath of the curse and will say to her, “The Lord make you an attested curse among your people.” if the Lord makes your thigh fall away and your abdomen

“bitter” in view of the consequences it held for her if she was proven to be guilty. That is then enforced by the wordplay with the last word, the Piel participle הַמְאָרֲרִים (hamararim). The bitter water, if it convicted her, would pronounce a curse on her. So she was literally holding her life in her hands.

This ancient ritual seems to have functioned like a lie detector test, with all the stress and tension involved. It can be compared to water tests in the pagan world, with the exception that in Israel it was stacked more toward an innocent verdict. It seems to have been a temporary provision, for this is the only place that it appears, and no provision is made for its use later. It may have served as a didactic force, warning more than actually legislating. No provision is made in it for an additional charge to be brought against the man, but in the case of the suspicion of the woman the man would be very hesitant to demand this test given the harshness on false witnessing in Israel. The passage remains a rather strange section of the Law.

The word “other” is implied, since the woman would not be guilty of having sexual relations with her own husband.

Although there would be stress involved, a woman who was innocent would have nothing to hide, and would be confident. The wording of the priest’s oath is actually designed to enable the potion to keep her from harm and not produce the physical effects it was designed to do.

The pronoun is emphatic — “but you, if you have gone away.”

This is an example of the rhetorical device known as apopisepsis, or “sudden silence.” The sentence is broken off due to the intensity or emphasis of the moment. The reader is left to conclude what the sentence would have said.


Heb “the priest will say.”

This interpretation takes the two nouns as a hendiadys. The literal wording is “the Lord make you a curse and an oath among the people.” In what sense would she be an oath? The point of the whole passage is that the priest is raising her take an oath to see if she has been sinful and will be cursed.

The outcome of this would be that she would be quoted by people in such forms of expression as an oath or a curse (see Jer 29:22).

The construction uses the infinitive construct with the preposition to form an adverbial clause: “in the giving of the oath…,” meaning, “if and when the Lord makes such and such to happen.”
men swell; 2 5:22 and this water that causes the curse will go 2 into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your throat rot. 3 Then the woman must say, "Amen, amen." 4

5:23 "Then the priest will write these curses on a scroll and then scrape them off into the bitter water. 5 5:24 He will make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness. 5:25 The priest will take the grain offering of suspicion from the woman's hand, wave the grain offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar. 5:26 Then the priest will take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial portion, burn it on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water. 5:27 When he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness – her abdomen will swell, her thigh will fall away, and the woman will become a curse among her people. 5:28 But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she will be free of ill effects 6 and will be able to bear children.

5:29 "This is the law for cases of jealousy, 7 when a wife, while under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself, 5:30 or when jealous feelings come over a man and he becomes suspicious of his wife; then he must have the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest will carry out all this law upon her. 5:31 Then the man will be free from iniquity, but that woman will bear the consequences 8 of her iniquity. 9

The Nazirite Vow

6:1 10 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 6:2 "Speak to the Israelites, and tell them, 'When either a man or a woman 11 takes a special vow, 12 to take a vow, 13 as a Nazirite, 14 to separate 15 himself from the LORD; 6:3 he must separate 16 himself from wine and strong drink; he must drink neither vinegar 17 made from wine nor vinegar made from strong drink, nor may he drink any juice 18 of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. 19
6:4 All the days of his separation he must not eat anything that is produced by the grapevine, from seed² to skin.²

6:5 “‘All the days of the vow³ of his separation no razor may be used on his head⁴ until the time⁵ is fulfilled for which he separated himself to the Lord. He will be holy,⁶ and he must let⁷ the locks of hair on his head grow long.

6:6 “‘All the days that he separates himself to the Lord he must not touch⁸ a dead body.⁹ 6:7 He must not defile himself even¹⁰ for his father or his mother or his brother or his sister if they die,¹¹ because the separation¹² for¹³ his God is on his head. 6:8 All the days of his separation he must be holy to the Lord.

Contingencies for Defilement 6:9 “‘If anyone dies very suddenly¹⁴ beside him and he defiles¹⁵ his consecrated head,¹⁶ then he must shave his head on the day of his purification – on the seventh day he must shave it. 6:10 On the eighth day he is to bring¹⁷ two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. 6:11 Then the priest will offer one for a purification offering¹⁸ and the other¹⁹ as a burnt offering,²⁰ and make atonement²¹ for him, because of his transgression²² in regard to the corpse. So he must reconsecrate²³ his head on that day. 6:12 He must rededicate²⁴ to the Lord the days of his separation and bring a male lamb in its first year as a
reparation offering, but the former days will not be counted because his separation was defiled.

Fulfilling the Vows

6:13 “Now this is the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he must be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting, 6:14 and he must present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish for a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish for a purification offering, 6:15 and a basket of bread made without yeast, cakes of fine flour mixed with olive oil, wafers made without yeast and smeared with olive oil, and their grain offering and their drink offerings.

6:16 Then the priest must present all these before the LORD and offer his purification offering and his burnt offering.

6:17 Then he must offer the ram as a peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of bread made without yeast; the priest must also offer his grain offering and his drink offering.

6:18 “Then the Nazirite must shave his consecrated head at the entrance to the tent of meeting and must take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire where the peace offering is burning.

12 In Some versions simply interpret this to say that he shaves his hair, for it is the hair that is the sign of the consecration to God. But the text says he shaves his consecrated head. The whole person is obviously consecrated to God – not just the head. But the symbolic act of cutting the hair shows that the vow has been completed (see Acts 21:23-24). The understanding of the importance of the hair in the ancient world has been the subject of considerable study over the years (see R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 436; and J. A. Thompson, "Numbers," New Bible Commentary; Revised, 177).

13 sn Some commentators see this burning of the hair as an offering (McNeile, Numbers, 35; G. B. Gray, Numbers [ICC], 68). But others probably with more foundation see it as destroying something that has served a purpose, something that if left alone might be venerated (see R. de Vaux, Israel, 436).

14 tn Heb “which is under the peace offering.” The verse does not mean that the hair had to be put under that sacrifice and directly on the fire.

15 tn The line does not include the word “head”; it literally has “after the consecrating of himself his consecrated head.” The infinitive construct is here functioning in the temporal clause with the suffix as the subject and the object following.

16 sn The ritual of lifting the hands filled with the offering and waving them in the presence of the LORD was designed to symbolize the transfer of the offering to God in the sight of all. This concludes the worshiper’s part; the offering now becomes the property of the priest – his priest’s due (or “raised/heave offering”).

17 tn The “wave offering” may be interpreted as a “special gift” to be transferred to the LORD, and the “heave offering” as a “special contribution” to God – the priest’s due. These two offerings have inspired a good deal of study.

18 In The imperfect tense here would then have the nuance of permission. It is not an instruction at this point; rather, the prohibition has been lifted and the person is free to drink wine.

19 tn Actually, “law” here means a whole set of laws, the basic rulings on this topic.

20 tn Heb “whatever else his hand is able to provide.” The imperfect tense has the nuance of potential imperfect – “whatever he can provide.”

21 tn Heb “according to the vow that he vows, so he must do.”
6:22 The Lord spoke to Moses: 6:23 “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is the way you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

6:24 “The Lord bless you and protect you;
6:25 The Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
6:26 The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.’" 6:27 So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

The Leader’s Offerings

7:10 When Moses had completed setting up the tabernacle,11 he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings, and he anointed and consecrated the altar and all its utensils. 7:2 Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their clans,12 made an offering. They were the leaders of the tribes; they were the ones who had been supervising the numbering. 7:3 They brought their offering before the Lord, six covered carts15 and twelve oxen — one cart for every two of the leaders, and an ox for each one; and they presented them in front of the tabernacle.

The Distribution of the Gifts

7:4 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 7:5 “Receive these gifts16 from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tent of meeting:

---

1 sn This brief section records the blessing of the priest, especially the high priest after he emerges from the holy of holies to bless the people (see Lev 9:22). The two main elements in the oracle are “grace and peace.” It is probable that the Apostle Paul based his salutations on this oracle. For additional information, see L. J. Liebreich, “The Songs of Ascent and the Priestly Blessing,” JBL 74 (1955): 33-36; R. D. Miller, “The Blessing of God: An Interpretation of Num 6:22-27,” JBL 29 (1975): 240-51; and A. Murttonen, “The Use and Meaning of the Words ḫarek and ṭrakah in the Old Testament,” VT 9 (1959): 158-77.

2 tn Or “thus.”

3 tn The Priestly Benediction has the nuance of instruction. The particle “thus” explains that the following oracle is the form to be imitated.

4 tn Here is the only use of the verb ḥamēj (‘amar) as an infinitive absolute: its functions as a verb form, an imperative or an imperfect of instruction. Several commentators have attempted to emend the text to get around the difficulty, but such emendations are unnecessary.

5 tn The short blessing uses the jussive throughout, here the Priestly jussive with a pronominal suffix. While the jussive has quite a range of nuances, including wish, desire, prayer, or greeting, the jussives here are stronger. The formal subject of the verb is the Lōrō, and the speaker pronouncing the blessing is the priest, notably after emerging from the holy of holies where atonement has been made. The Lōrō says in this passage that when the priest says this, then the Lōrō will bless them. The jussive then is an oracle, not a wish or a prayer. It is a declaration of what the Lōrō imparts. It is as binding and sure as a patriarchal blessing which once said officially could not be taken back. The priest here is then pronouncing the word of the Lōrō, declaring to the congregation the outcome of the atonement.

6 tn The verb “to keep” concerns the divine protection of the people; its basic meaning is “to exercise great care over,” “to guard,” or “to watch” (see TWOT). No one but the priestly blessing informed the prayer and promise that makes up Ps 121, for the verb occurs six times in the eight verses. So in addition to the divine provision (“bless” basically means “enrich” in a number of ways) there is the assurance of divine protection.

7 tn Whereas the first line of the blessing had three Hebrew words the second has five, and the third has seven. In this second line and the following third, the blessing takes the form of an emblem followed by the truth. For the Lōrō to make his face shine on them would mean to be gracious to them. M. Noth rightly calls this image of the shining face “a figure of speech for benevolence and favour” (Numbers [OLT]; 59); see, for example, Ps 4:6; 31:16; 44:3; 67:1; 80:3; 7, 19; 119:135; Dan 9:17). The image may have its inspiration in the theophanies. The picture is of divine favor — the beaming face of a parent for his beloved.

8 tn The last line of the blessing also has first the image and then the parallel interpretation — for God to lift up his face is for God to give peace. The idea of the fallen face is one of anger (see Gen 4:6,7); and the idea of the hidden face is that of withholding support, favor, or peace (see Deut 31:18; Ps 30:9; Ps 44:25). If God lifts his face toward his people, it means he has given them peace — peace, prosperity, completeness, health, safety, general well-being, and the like. 9 tn The idea of their putting the name of Yahweh on the people is somewhat problematic. The pronouncing of the name of Yahweh in this context over the people was taken to be the effectual means of blessings. “Putting the name on them” is an expression that emphasizes the truth that he is their God and they are his people or that having his name is having his blessing.

10 sn This long and repetitious chapter has several parts to it: the introduction (vv. 1-3), the assigning of gifts (vv. 4-9), the time of presentation (vv. 10-11), and then the tribes (vv. 12-83), and then a summary (vv. 84-89).

11 tn The construction of this line begins with the temporal indicator (traditionally translated “and it came to pass”) and then after the idiomatic “in the day of” (= “when”) uses the Priestly infinitive construct from ṭiqū (kalāh). The infinitive is governed by the subjective genitive, “Moses,” the formal subject of the clause. The object of the infinitive is the second infinitive, “to set up” (ṭiqūn, ṭiqūm). This infinitive, the Hiphil, serves as the direct object, answering the question of what it was that Moses completed. The entire clause is an adversative clause of time.

12 sn This chapter belongs chronologically after Lev 8:11, because Aaron and his sons were not yet made the celebrants and officiants of the new shrine (completed in Exodus). Here then chapters 7-9 are actually earlier than chapters 1-6, and form a supplement by adding information not found in Exodus and Leviticus. The first verse here recapitulates the first act of Moses in consecrating the shrine (Exod 30:23-31).

13 tn The form is the Qal active participle from the verb “to stand” (yadā, ‘amad). The form describes these leaders as “the ones standing over [the ones numbered].” The expression, along with the clear indication of the first census in chapter 1, shows that this was a supervisory capacity.

14 tn Heb “the house of their fathers.”

15 tn The object is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied.

16 tn The verb is the perfect tense with vav (ו) consecutive; following the imperative, this could be given an independent volitive translation (“they shall be”), but more fittingly a subordinate translation expressing the purpose of receiving the gifts.

17 tn The sentence uses the infinitive construct expressing purpose, followed by its cognate accusative: “[that they may be] for doing the work of” (literally, “serving the service of”).
and you must give them to the Levites, to every man as his service requires.\(^2\)

7:6 So Moses accepted the carts and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. 7:7 He gave two carts and four oxen to the Gershonites, as their service required; 7:8 and he gave four carts and eight oxen to the Merarites, as their service required, under the authority\(^3\) of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

7:9 But to the Kohathites he gave none, because the service of the holy things, which they carried\(^4\) on their shoulders, was their responsibility.\(^5\)

The Time of Presentation

7:10 The leaders offered\(^6\) gifts\(^7\) for the dedication\(^9\) of the altar when it was anointed.\(^10\) And the leaders presented\(^11\) their offering before the altar.

7:11 For the Lord said to Moses, “They must present their offering, one leader for each day,\(^12\) for the dedication of the altar.”

The Tribal Offerings

7:12 The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah.\(^13\) 7:13 His offering was one silver platter weighing 130 shekels,\(^3\) and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shkel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:14 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels, full of incense; 7:15 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:16 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:17 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Nahshon son of Amminadab.

7:18 On the second day Nethanel son of Zuur, leader of Issachar, presented an offering. 7:19 He offered for his offering one silver platter weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70, both according to the sanctuary shkel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:20 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels, full of incense; 7:21 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:22 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:23 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Nethanel son of Zuur.

7:24 On the third day Eliab son of Helon, leader of the Zebulunites, presented an offering.\(^15\) 7:25 His offering was one silver platter weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shkel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:26 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels, full of incense; 7:27 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:28 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:29 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Eliab son of Helon.

7:30 On the fourth day Elizur son of Shedeur, leader of the Reubenites, presented an offering. 7:31 His offering was one silver platter weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shkel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:32 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels, full of incense; 7:33 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:34 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:35 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Elizur son of Shedeur.

7:36 On the fifth day Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, leader of the Simeonites, presented an offering. 7:37 His offering was one silver platter weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shkel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:38 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels, full of incense; 7:39 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:40 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:41 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

---

\(^1\) tn The noun הַשָּׁם (‘ish) is in apposition to the word “Levites,” and is to be taken in a distributive sense: “to the Levites, [to each] man according to his service.”

\(^2\) tn The expression פָּרָן (k’fî) is “according to the mouth of.” Here, it would say “according to the mouth of his service,” which would mean “what his service calls for.”

\(^3\) tn Heb “hand.”

\(^4\) tn The verb is the imperfect tense, but it describes their customary activity – they had to carry, they used to carry.

\(^5\) tn Heb “upon them,” meaning “their duty.”

\(^6\) tn The expression מָשַׁח (mashakh), “to anoint, smear”).

\(^7\) tn The sign of the accusative here must indicate an adverbial accusative and not the direct object; they offered their gifts for the dedication of the altar.

\(^8\) tn Some commentators take the word “dedication” in the sense of a dedication gift, and so make it the direct object. Many modern scholars assume that this is a late word, belonging only in P, the Chronicler, and the heading of Ps 30 (a Davidic psalm).

\(^9\) tn The adverbial clause uses the Niphal infinitive construct as the main verb. The word is the well-known מֵשָׁךְ (mashakh, “to anoint, smear”).

\(^10\) tn “offered,” but this is redundant and has been translated as “presented” for stylistic reasons. The same phrase occurs in vv. 11 and 12.

\(^11\) tn The distributive sense is achieved by repetition: “one leader for the day, one leader for the day.”

\(^12\) sn The tribe of Judah is listed first. It seems that it had already achieved a place of prominence based on the patriarchal promise of the Messiahship in Judah (Gen 49:10).

\(^13\) tn The word “shekels” has been supplied in the translation for clarity. So also in vv. 19, 20, 25, 26, 31, 32, 37, 38, 43, 44, 49, 50, 55, 56, 60, 62, 66, 68, 73, 74, 79, 85, 86.

\(^14\) tn The phrase “presented an offering” is not found in the Hebrew text at this point, but has been supplied to clarify what action is being done. The same phrase is absent from the Hebrew text in the following verses which tell who makes the offerings (7:30, 36, 42, 48, 54, 60, 66, 72, 78).
full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:38 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels; 7:39 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:40 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:41 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Gideon.

7:63 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:64 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:65 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Abidan son of Gideoni.

7:66 On the tenth day Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai, leader of the Danites, presented an offering. 7:67 His offering was one silver platter weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:68 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels, full of incense; 7:69 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:70 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:71 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

7:72 On the eleventh day Pagiel son of Ocran, leader of the Asherites, presented an offering. 7:73 His offering was one silver platter weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:74 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels, full of incense; 7:75 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:76 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:77 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Pagiel son of Ocran.

7:78 On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, leader of the Naphtalites, presented an offering. 7:79 His offering was one silver platter weighing 130 shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each of them full of fine flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 7:80 one gold pan weighing 10 shekels; 7:81 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering; 7:82 one male goat for a purification offering; 7:83 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Ahira son of Enan.

Summary

7:84 This was the dedication for the altar from the leaders of Israel, when it was anointed: twelve silver platters, twelve silver sprinkling bowls, and twelve gold pans. 7:85 Each silver platter weighed 130 shekels, and each silver sprinkling bowl weighed 70 shekels. All the silver of the vessels weighed 2,400 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel. 7:86 The twelve gold pans full of incense weighed 10 shekels each, according to the sanctuary shekel; all the gold of the pans weighed 120...
shekels. 7:87 All the animals for the burnt offering were 12 young bulls, 12 rams, 12 male lambs in their first year, with their grain offering, and 12 male goats for a purification offering. 7:88 All the animals for the sacrifice for the peace offering were 24 young bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats, and 60 lambs in their first year. These were the dedication offerings for the altar after it was anointed. 1

7:89 Now when Moses went into 2 the tent of meeting to speak with the Lord, 3 he heard the voice speaking to him from above the atonement lid 4 that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim. 5 Thus he spoke to him.

**Lighting the Lamps**

8:16 The Lord spoke to Moses: 8:2 “Speak to Aaron and tell him, ‘When you set up’ the lamps, the seven lamps are to give light 6 in front of the lampstand.’”

8:3 And Aaron did so; he set up the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the Lord commanded Moses. 8:4 This is how the lampstand was made: 9 It was beaten work in gold; 10 from its shaft to its flowers it was beaten work. According to the pattern which the Lord had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

The Separation of the Levites

8:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 8:6 “Take the Levites from among the Israelites and purify 11 them. 8:7 And do this 12 to them to purify them: Sprinkle water of purification 13 on them; then have them shave 14 all their body 15 and wash 16 their clothes, and so purify themselves. 17

---

1 tn Even though the chapter seems wearisome and repetitious to the modern reader, it is a significant document. A. Rainey shows how it matches the exact ledgers of ancient sanctuaries (see ZPEB 5:202). The recording would have been done by the priestly scribes. Of the many points that can be observed here, it should not be missed that each tribe, regardless of its size or relative importance, was on equal footing before the Lord. Each tribe shared in the work of the Lord equally. Each tribe approached the sanctuary in precisely the same way on this memorable occasion. All such devotion to the work of the Lord was to receive the blessing of God.

2 tn The adverbial clause of time is constructed with the infinitive construct of the verb “to enter” (‘n̄î’a, bo’) with the preposition and with the subjective genitive that follows serving as the subject of the clause. The verse is strategic in the structure of the book: At the completion of the dedication with the offerings Moses received more revelations from the Lord in the Tent of Meeting. This verse therefore lays the foundation for what follows.

3 tn The MT is obscure here, simply giving the purpose infinitive and the prepositional phrase (“with him”). But the following clause using the Hitpael of the same verb, introducing a reflexive sense; “then he heard the voice speaking with him.” The Greek clarified it by inserting “Lord” after the word “voice.”

4 tn The Hebrew word הָעָלָה (hə’alah) means that Moses was “to purify” or “to make ceremonially clean” the Levites so that they could enter the sanctuary and do the work prescribed for them. Whatever is “unclean” is not permitted in the sanctuary at all.

5 tn The imperfect tense forms part of the instruction, and so the translation has to indicate that. The instruction would seem obvious, but the light was to shine in the area immediately in front of the lampstand, so that it would illumine the way and illumine the table that was across the room (hence, “in front of”).

6 tn The Hebrew text literally has “and this is the work of the lampstand,” but that rendering does not convey the sense that it is describing how it was made.

7 tn The verb is כְּפֹרֶת (kapporet). The Hiphil infinitive construct functions in a temporal clause. The idea of arranging the lamps on the lampstand certainly involved raising the lamps and placing them on the tops of each shaft and branch. Some have taken the idea to mean cause the flame to go up, or light the lamps.

8 tn The imperfect tense forms part of the instruction, and so the translation has to indicate that. The instruction would seem obvious, but the light was to shine in the area immediately in front of the lampstand, so that it would illumine the way and illumine the table that was across the room (hence, “in front of”).

9 tn The Hebrew text literally has “and this is the work of the lampstand,” but that rendering does not convey the sense that it is describing how it was made.

10 tn The idea is that it was all hammered from a single plate of gold.

11 tn The verb כְּפֹרֶת (kapporet) means that Moses was “to purify” or “to make ceremonially clean” the Levites so that they could enter the sanctuary and do the work prescribed for them. Whatever is “unclean” is not permitted in the sanctuary at all.

12 tn Or, more literally, “and thus you shall do.” The verb is the imperfect tense of instruction or legislation. Here it introduces the procedures to be followed.

13 tn The genitive in this expression indicates the purpose of the water – it is for their purification. The expression is literally “the waters of sin.”

14 tn The verb כָּפֹרֶת (kapporet) is some what misleading. The word is etymologically connected to the verb “to make atone ment.” A technical translation would be “place of atonement” or “propitiatory”; a more common translation would be “cover, lid” — provided that the definition “to cover” does not get transferred to the verb “to atone,” for that idea belongs to a homonym. See also Exod 25:17.

15 tn This chapter has three main sections to it: the lighting of the lamps (vv. 1-4), the separation of the Levites (vv. 5-22), and the work of the Levites (vv. 23-26). Many modern scholars assume that the chapter belongs to P and was added late. But the chapter reiterates some of the Mosaic material concerning the work of the Levites in the new sanctuary. For the chapter to make sense the historical setting must be accepted; if the historical setting is accepted, the chapter is necessary as part of that early legislation. For more reading, see M. Haran, “The Nature of the ’ohel mo’edh in the Pentateuch,” JSOT 5 (1969): 50-56, and “The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle.” HUC 36 (1965): 191-226; and C. L. Meyers, The Tabernacle Menorah.
8:8 Then they are to take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with olive oil; and you are to take a second young bull for a purification offering.\(^1\)

8:9 You are to bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the entire community of the Israelites. 8:10 Then you are to bring the Levites before the LORD, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on the Levites;\(^2\) 8:11 and Aaron is to offer\(^3\) the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, that they may do the work\(^4\) of the LORD. 8:12 When\(^5\) the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, offer\(^6\) the one for a purification offering and the other for a whole burnt offering to the LORD,\(^7\) to make atonement for the Levites. 8:13 You are to have the Levites stand before Aaron\(^8\) and his sons, and then offer them as a wave offering to the LORD. 8:14 And so\(^9\) you are to separate the Levites from among the Israelites, and the Levites will be mine.

8:15 “After this, the Levites will go in\(^10\) to do the work\(^11\) of the tent of meeting. So you must cleanse them\(^12\) and offer them like a wave offering.\(^13\) 8:16 For they are entirely given\(^14\) to me from among the Israelites. I have taken them for myself instead of\(^15\) all who open the womb, the firstborn sons of all the Israelites. 8:17 For all the firstborn males among the Israelites are mine, both humans and animals; when I destroyed\(^16\) all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I set them apart for myself. 8:18 So I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn sons among the Israelites. 8:19 I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the Israelites, to do the work for the Israelites in the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the Israelites, so there will be no plague among the Israelites when the Israelites come near the sanctuary.”\(^17\)

8:20 So Moses and Aaron and the entire community of the Israelites did this with the Levites. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, this is what the Israelites did with them. 8:21 The Levites purified themselves,\(^18\) and washed their clothing; then Aaron presented them like a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to purify them. 8:22 After this, the Levites went in to do their work in the tent of meeting before Aaron and before his sons. As the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did.

---

\(^1\) sn The first sacrifice was for the purification of the Levites. The second animal, which Moses was to take, would be used for the purification of the tabernacle from all pollution.

\(^2\) sn The consecration ceremony was to be done in full view of the assembled people. In all probability the laying on of the hands was done through representatives of the tribes, and not all the people. This ritual of the imposition of hands showed that the people were taking part in the consecration, and that the Levites represented them in the service of the Lord.

\(^3\) tn The Hebrew text actually has “wave the Levites as a wave offering.” The wave offering was part of the ritual of the peace offering and indicated the priest’s portion being presented to God in a lifted, waving motion for all to see. The Levites were going to be in the sanctuary to serve the Lord and assist the priests. It is unclear how Moses would have presented them as wave offerings, but the intent is that they would be living sacrifices, as Paul would later say in Rom 12:1 for all Christians.

\(^4\) tn The construction emphasizes the spiritual service of the Levites, using the infinitive construct of נָכָה (nakhah) followed by its cognate accusative.

\(^5\) tn The clause begins with a vav (ו) on the noun “the Levites,” indicating a disjunctive clause. Here it is clearly a subordinate clause prior to the instruction for Moses, and so translated as a circumstantial clause of time.

\(^6\) tn The imperative is from the verb “to do; to make,” but in the sentence it clearly means to sacrifice the animals.

\(^7\) sn The “purification offering” cleansed the tabernacle from impurity, and the burnt offering attested to nullifying and removing the effects of sin in the Levites.

\(^8\) tc The Greek text adds the LORD here: “before the LORD, before Aaron.”

\(^9\) tn The vav (ו) consecutive on the perfect tense not only carries the nuance of instruction forward to this clause, but also marks this clause out as a summary of what has taken place, i.e., by doing all this ritual Moses will have separated the Levites from the people for God’s own possession.

\(^10\) tn The imperfect tense could also be given the nuance of the imperfect of permission: “the Levites may go in.”

\(^11\) tn Hebrew “to serve.”

\(^12\) tn The two verbs in the rest of this verse are perfect tenses with vav (ו) consecutive constructions, making them equal to the imperfect. Some commentators try to get around the difficulty of repetition by making these future perfects, “and you will have cleansed,” as opposed to a summary statement, “for thus you will cleanse...”

\(^13\) tc The Greek text adds “before the LORD.”

\(^14\) tn As before, the emphasis is obtained by repeating the passive participle: “given, given to me.”

\(^15\) tn Or “as substitutes” for all the firstborn of the Israelites.

\(^16\) tn The idiomatic “on the day of” precedes the infinitive construct of נָכָה (nakhah) to form the temporal clause: “in the day of my striking...” becomes “when I struck.”

\(^17\) sn The firstborn were those that were essentially redeemed from death in Egypt when the blood was put on the doors. So in the very real sense they belonged to God (Exod 13:2-12). The firstborn was one who stood in special relationship to the father, being the successive offspring. Here, the Levites would stand in for the firstborn in that special role and special relationship. God also made it clear that the nation of Israel was his firstborn son (Exod 4:22-23), and so they stood in that relationship before all the nations. The tribe of Reuben was to have been the firstborn tribe, but in view of the presumptuous attempt to take over the leadership through pagan methods (Gen 35:22; 49:3-4), was passed over. The tribes of Levi and Simeon were also put down for their ancestors’ activities, but sanctuary service was still given to Levi.

\(^18\) tn The verb is the Hitpael of קָחָה (khatta’). In this stern the meaning of the root “to sin” is likely to be connected to the noun “sin/purification” offering in a denominative sense, although some would take it as a privative usage, “to remove sin.” The idea is clear enough: They performed all the ritual in order to purify themselves ceremonially.
The Work of the Levites

8:23 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 8:24 “This is what pertains to the Levites: At the age of twenty-five years and upward one may begin to join the company in the work of the tent of meeting. 8:25 and at the age of fifty years they must retire from performing the work and may no longer work. 8:26 They may assist their colleagues in the tent of meeting, to attend to needs, but they must do no work. This is the way you must establish the Levites regarding their duties.”

Passover Regulations

9:1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt:

9:2 “The Israelites are to observe the Passover10 at its appointed time. 9:3 In the four
teenth day of this month, at twilight,22 you are to observe it at its appointed time; you must keep3 it in accordance with all its statutes and all its customs.”24 9:4 So Moses instructed the Israelites to observe the Passover. 9:5 And they observed the Passover4 on the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight in the wilderness of Sinai; in accordance with all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the Israelites did.

9:6 It happened that some men26 who were ceremonially defiled20 by the dead body of a man20 could not keep the Passover on that day, so they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day.

9:7 And those men said to him, “We are ceremonially defiled by the dead body of a man; why are we kept back from offering the Lord’s offering at its appointed time among the Israelites?” 9:8 So Moses said to them, “Remain here and I will hear what the Lord will command you concerning you.”

9:9 The Lord spoke to Moses: 9:10 “Tell the Israelites, ‘If any of you or of your posterity become ceremonially defiled by touching a dead body, or are on a journey far away, then he...”

---

1 In the Hebrew text has “this [is that] which [pertains] to the Levites.” “This is what concerns the Levites, meaning, the following rulings are for them.

2 In the age of twenty-five indicated in v. 24 should be compared with the age of thirty indicated in Num 4:3,23,30. In order to harmonize the numbers given in chapter 4 with the number given in Num 8:24 the LXX (and perhaps its Hebrew Vorlage) has thirty in all of these references. See further G. J. Wenham, Numbers (TOTC 4), 97-98.

3 In the infinitive is סֶלֶךְ (šelāq), related to the word for “host, army, company,” and so “to serve as a company.” The meaning is strengthened by the cognate accusative following it.

4 The verb is the Piel perfect of פֶּסַח (pesakh, “to serve, minister”). Here the form has the נָפַל (naḇal) consecutive, and so is equal to the imperfect tense stressing permission. After the Levites reached the age of retirement, they were permitted to assist the others, but were not permitted to do the work themselves.

5 In Heb “brothers,” but the meaning in this context is “fellows, Levites.”

6 In Heb “you shall do, make.”

7 sn The chapter has just the two sections, the observance of the Passover (vv. 1-14) and the cloud that led the Israelites in the wilderness (vv. 15-23). It must be remembered that the material in vv. 7-9 is chronologically earlier than vv. 1-6, as the notices in the text will make clear. The two main discussions here are the last major issues to be reiterated before the notices in the text will make clear. The two main discussions here are the last major issues to be reiterated before the commencement of the journey.

8 In the temporal clause is formed with the infinitive construct of סֶלֶךְ (šelāq, “to go out; to leave”). This verse indicates that a full year had passed since the exodus and the original Passover; now a second ruling on the Passover is included at the beginning of the second year. This would have occurred immediately after the consecration of the tabernacle, in the month before the census at Sinai.

9 In the verb is simply “to do; to make” (יָצָא, yatsā) in the jussive. It must have the idea here of “to perform; to keep; to observe” the ritual of the Passover.

10 sn For a detailed study note on the Passover, see the discussion with the original institution in Exod 12. The word פֶּסַח (pesakh) – here in pause and with the article – has become the technical name for the spring festival of Israel. In Exod 12 the name is explained by the use of the verb “to pass over” (יָצָא, yatsā, ‘avar), indicating that the angel of death would pass over the house with the blood applied. Many scholarly attempts have been made to supply the etymology of the word, but none has been compelling enough to be accepted by a large number of biblical scholars. For general literature on the Passover, see J. B. Segal, The Hebrew Passover, as well as the Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias.

11 tc The Greek text uses a plural here but the singular in vv. 7 and 13; the Smr uses the plural in all three places.
may observe the Passover to the Lord. 9:11 They may observe it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight; they are to eat it with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs. 9:12 They must not leave any of it until morning, nor break any of its bones; they must observe it in accordance with every statute of the Passover.

9:13 But the man who is ceremonially clean, and was not on a journey, and fails to keep the Passover, that person must be cut off from his people. Because he did not bring the Lord's offering at its appointed time, that man must bear his sin. 9:14 If a resident foreigner lives among you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, he must do so according to the statute of the Passover, and according to its custom. You must have the same statute for the resident foreigner and for the one who was born in the land."

The Leading of the Lord

9:15 On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle—the tent of the testimony—and from evening until morning there was a fiery appearance over the tabernacle. 9:16 This is the way it used to be continually: the cloud would cover it by day, and there was a fiery appearance by night. 9:17 Whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the Israelites would begin their journey; and in whatever place the cloud settled, there the Israelites would make camp. 9:18 At the commandment of the Lord the Israelites would begin their journey, and at the commandment of the Lord they would make camp; as long as the cloud remained settled over the tabernacle they would camp. 9:19 When the cloud remained over the tabernacle many days, then the Israelites obeyed the instructions of the Lord and did not journey.

---

1 tn The perfect tense with waw (ו) consecutive functions as the equivalent of an imperfect tense. In the apodosis of this conditional sentence, the permission nuance fits well.
2 sn The delay of four weeks for such people would have permitted enough time for them to return from their journey, or to recover from any short termed defilement such as is mentioned here. Apart from this provision, the Passover was to be kept precisely at the proper time.
3 tn The disjunctive waw (ו) signals a contrastive clause here: “but the man” on the other hand....
4 tn The verb נָרַק (khadal) means “to cease; to leave off; to fail.” The implication here is that it is a person who simply neglects to do it. It does not indicate that he forgot, but more likely that he made the decision to leave it undone.
5 sn The pronouncement of such a person’s penalty is that his life will be cut off from his people. There are at least three possible interpretations for this; physical death at the hand of the community (G. B. Gray, Numbers [ICC], 84-85), physical and/or spiritual death at the hand of God (J. Milgrom, “A Prolegomenon to Lev 17:11,” JBL 90 [1971]: 154-55), or excommunication or separation from the community (R. A. Cole, Exodus [TOTC], 109). The direct intervention of God seems to be the most likely in view of the lack of directions for the community to follow. Excommunication from the camp in the wilderness would have been tantamount to a death sentence by the community, and so there really are just two views.
6 tn The word for “sin” here should be interpreted to mean the consequences of his sin (so a metonymy of effect). Whoever willingly violates the Law will have to pay the consequences for it.
7 tn The words translated “resident foreigner” and “live” are from the same Hebrew root, רָשִׁית (rashit), traditionally translated “to sojourn.” The “sojourner” who “sojourns” is a foreigner, a resident alien, who lives in the land as a temporary resident with rights of land ownership.
8 tn The verb is the simple perfect tense with waw (ו) consecutive. It is therefore the equivalent to the imperfect that comes before it. The desiderative imperfect fits this usage well, since the alien is not required to keep the feast, but may indeed desire to do so.
9 tn The Hebrew text has “there will be to you,” which is the way of expressing possession in Hebrew. Since this is legal instruction, the imperfect tense must be instruction or legislation.
10 sn Or “you must have one statute.”
11 tn The conjunction is used here to specify the application of the law: “and for the resident foreigner, and for the one...” indicates “both for the resident foreigner and the one who...”
9:20 When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a number of days, they remained camped according to the Lord’s commandment, and according to the Lord’s commandment they would journey. 9:21 And when the cloud remained only from evening until morning, when the cloud was taken up the following morning, then they traveled on. Whether by day or by night, when the cloud was taken up they traveled. 9:22 Whether it was for two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud prolonged its stay over the tabernacle, the Israelites remained camped without traveling, but when it was taken up, they traveled on. 9:23 At the commandment of the Lord they camped, and at the commandment of the Lord they traveled; they kept the instructions of the Lord according to the commandment of the Lord, by the authority of Moses.

The Blowing of Trumpets

10:1 The Lord spoke to Moses:

10:2 “Make two trumpets of silver; you are to make them from a single hammered piece.

10:3 When you blow the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the assembly as, and they will be to you for an eternal testimony. You will use them for assembling the community and for directing the traveling of the camps. 10:4 “But if they blow with one trumpet, then the leaders, the heads of the thousands of Israel, must come to you. 10:5 When you blow an alarm, then the camps that are located on the east side must begin to travel. 10:6 And when you blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that are located on the south side must begin to travel. 10:7 But when you assemble the community, you must blow the trumpets; and they will be to you for an eternal ordinance throughout your generations. 10:9 If you go to war in your land against an adversary who opposes you, then you must sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the enemy; but later were used more widely. The sound would be sharp and piercing, but limited in scope to a few notes. See further C. Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments. 10:10 The perfect tense with vav (v) consecutive is here subordinated as a temporal clause to the following similar verbal construction.

10:11 The verb שׁקָע (shak) means “to strike, drive, blow a trumpet.”

10:12 The MT does not mention the departures of the north and westerly tribes. The Greek text completes the description by adding them, making a full schedule of the departure of the groups of tribes. The Greek is not likely to be original, however, since it carries all the signs of addition to complete the text, making a smooth, full reading. The MT is to be preferred; it apparently used two of the groups to give the idea. 10:13 The MT does not mention the departures of the north and westerly tribes. The Greek text completes the description by adding them, making a full schedule of the departure of the groups of tribes. The Greek is not likely to be original, however, since it carries all the signs of addition to complete the text, making a smooth, full reading. The MT is to be preferred; it apparently used two of the groups to give the idea.
the LORD your God, and you will be saved² from your enemies.

10:10 Also in the time when you rejoice, such as³ on your appointed festivals or⁴ at the beginnings of your months, you must blow with your trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, so that they may⁵ become⁶ a memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God.”

The Journey From Sinai to Kadesh

10:11⁶ On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle of the testimony.⁷ 10:12 So the Israelites set out⁸ on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud settled in the wilderness of Paran.

Judah Begins the Journey

10:13 This was the first time they set out on their journey according to the commandment⁹ of the LORD, by the authority¹⁰ of Moses.

10:14 The standard¹² of the camp of the Judahites set out first according to their companies, and over his company was Nahshon son of Amminadab.

10:15 Over the company of the tribe of Issacharites was Nathanel son of Zuar, 10:16 and over the company of the tribe of the Zebulunites was Eliashib son of Helon. 10:17 Then the tabernacle was dismantled, and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

Journey Arrangements for the Tribes

10:18 The standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their companies; over his company was Elizur son of Shedeur. 10:19 Over the company of the tribe of the Simeonites was Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, 10:20 and over the company of the tribe of the Gadites was Eliasaph son of Deuel. 10:21 And the Kohathites set out, carrying the articles for the sanctuary,¹² the tabernacle was to be set up¹³ before they arrived.¹⁴ 10:22 And the standard of the camp of the Ephraimites set out according to their companies; over his company was Elishama son of Ammihud. 10:23 Over the company of the tribe of the Manassehites was Gedeon son of Pedahzur, 10:24 and over the company of the tribe of Benjaminites was Abidan son of Gideoni.

10:25 The standard of the camp of the Danites set out, which was the rear guard¹⁵ of all the camps by their companies; over his company was Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. 10:26 Over the company of the tribe of the Asherites was Pagiel son of Ocran, 10:27 and over the company of the tribe of the Naphtalites was Ahira son of Enan. 10:28 These were the traveling arrangements⁶ of the Israelites according to their companies when they traveled.¹⁷

The Appeal to Hobab

10:29¹⁸ Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel, the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law,²⁹ “We are
journeying to the place about which the Lord said, "I will give it to you." Come with us and we will treat you well, for the Lord has promised good things for Israel." 10:30 But Hobab said to him, "I will not go, but I will go instead to my own land and to my kindred." 10:31 Moses said, "Do not leave us, because you know places for us to camp in the wilderness, and you could be our guide." 10:32 And if you come with us, it is certain that whatever good things the Lord will favor us with, we will share with you as well."

10:33 So they traveled from the mountain of the Lord three days' journey, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord was traveling before them during the three days' journey, to find a resting place for them. 10:34 And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day, when they traveled from the camp. 10:35 And when the ark traveled, Moses would say, "Rise up, O Lord! May your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate you flee before you!" 10:36 And when it came to rest he would say, "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel."!11

The Israelites Complain

11:12 When the people complained, it displeased the Lord. When the Lord heard it, his anger burned, and so the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outer parts of the camp. 11:2 When the people cried to Moses, he prayed to the Lord, and the fire died out. 10:3 So he called the name of that place Taberah, because there the fire of the Lord burned among them.

---

4 tn The verb is the Hiphil of the root מָשָׁא (mas'ah, "to be good") (Gen 2:10), and the Hiphil of the root יָטַב (yattav) it may be translated "be treated well, deal favorably, generously with." Here it is a perfect tense with vav (v) following the imperative, showing a sequence in the verbal ideas.

5 tn Heb "he"; the referent (Hobab) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

6 tn The form with מַל (mal) is a jussive; negated it stresses a more immediate request, as if Hobab is starting to leave, or at least determined to leave.

7 tn In the Hebrew text the expression is more graphic: "you will be for us for eyes." Hobab was familiar with the entire Sinai region, and he could certainly direct the people where they were to go. The text does not record Hobab's response. But the fact that Kenites were in Canaan as allies of Judah (Judg 1:16) would indicate that he gave in and came with Moses. The first refusal may simply be the polite Semitic practice of declining first so that the appeal might be made more urgently.

8 tn Heb "and it shall be."

9 tn The phrase "a journey of three days" is made up of the adverbial accusative qualified with the genitives.

10 tn The scribes sensed that there was a dislocation with vv. 34-36, and so they used the inverted letters מָן (man) as brack-ets to indicate this.

11 sp These two formulaic prayers were offered by Moses at the beginning and at the end of the journeys. They prayed for the Lord to fight ahead of the nation when it was on the move, and to protect them when they camped. The theme of the first is found in Ps 68:3. The prayers reflect the true mentality of holy war, that it was the Lord who fought for Israel and defended her. The prayers have been included in the prayer book for synagogue services.

---

sn The chapter includes the initial general complaints (vv. 1-3), the complaints about food (vv. 4-9), Moses' own complaint to the Lord (vv. 10-15), God's response to Moses (vv. 16-25), Eldad and Medad (vv. 26-29), and the quail (vv. 30-35). The first part records the burning of the camp, named Taberah. Here is one of the several naming narratives in the wilderness experience. The occasion for divine judgment is the complaining of the people. The passages serve to warn believers of all ages not to murmur as the Israelites did, for such complaining reveals a lack of faith in the power and goodness of God. For additional literature, see W. Brueggemann, "From Hurt to Joy, from Death to Life," Int 28 (1974): 3-19; B. S. Childs, "The Etiological Tale Re-examined," VT 24 (1974): 387-97; G. W. Coats, Rebellion in the Wilderness; and A. C. Turryogi, "The Rebellions of Israel," JBL 81 (1962): 385-90.

sn In the temporal clause uses the Hitpoel infinitive construct from מַל (mal). It is a rare word, occurring in Lam 3:39. With this blunt introduction the constant emphasis of obedience to the word of the Lord found throughout the first ten chapters suddenly comes to an end. It is probable that the people were tired of moving for several days, the excitement of the new beginning died out quickly in the "great and terrible wilderness." Restentment, frustration, discomfort – whatever it all involved – led to complaining and not gratitude.

sn In Heb "it was evil in the ears of the Lord," the word "evil" (ra') is a much stronger word than "displeased" would suggest. The bold anthropomorphism shows what the Lord heard was painful to him.

sn The preterite with vav (v) consecutive is here subordinated to the next verb as a temporal clause.

sn The common Hebrew expression uses the verb סָנָה (sanah, "to be hot, to burn, to be kindled"). The subject is זָעַה (za'ah), "his anger" or more literally, his nose, in which this anthropomorphic expression flares in rage. The emphasis is superlative – "his anger raged.

sn The vav (v) consecutive does not simply show sequence in the verbs, but here expresses the result of the anger of the Lord for their complaining. With such a response to the complaining, one must conclude that it was unreasonable. There had been no long deprivation or endured suffering; the complaining was early and showed a rebellious spirit.

sn The "fire of the Lord" is supernatural, for it is said to come from the Lord and not from a natural source. God gave them something to complain about – something to fear. The other significant place where this "fire of the Lord" destroyed was in the case of Nadab and Abihu who brought strange fire to the altar (Lev 10:2).

sn Heb "Moses."

sn Here is the pattern that will become in the wilderness experience a common – the complaining turns to a cry to Moses, which is then interpreted as a prayer to the Lord, and there is healing. The sequence presents a symbolic lesson, an illustration of the intercession of the Holy Spirit. The NT will say that in times of suffering Christians do not know how to pray, but the Spirit intercedes for them, changing their cries into the proper prayers (Rom 8).

sn The name סָנָה (sanah) is given to the spot as a commemorative of the wilderness experience. It is explained by the formula using the same verbal root, "to burn." Such naming narratives are found dozens of times in the OT, and
Complaints about Food

11:4 Now the mixed multitude2 almost 356,000+ who were among them craved more desirable foods;3 and so the Israelites wept again4 and said, “If only we had meat to eat!”5 11:5 We remember6 the fish we used to eat7 freely8 in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. 11:6 But now we9 are dried up, and there is nothing at all before us10 except this manna!”11:7 (Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium.) 11:8 And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it with mills or pounded it in mortars; they baked it in pans and made cakes of it. It tasted like fresh olive oil.12 11:9 And when the dew came down13 on the camp in the night, the manna fell14 with it.)

Moses’ Complaint to the Lord

11:10 Moses heard the people weeping16 throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and when the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly, Moses was also displeased.17 11:11 And Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you afflicted18 your servant? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that19 you lay the bur-
den of this entire people on me? 11:12 Did I conceive this entire people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your arms, as a foster father bears a nursing child,’ to the land which you swore to their fathers? 11:13 From where shall I get meat to give to this entire people, for they cry to me, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat!’ 11:14 I am not able to bear this entire people alone, because it is too heavy for me! 11:15 But if you are going to deal with me like this, then kill me immediately. If I have found favor in your sight then do not let me see my trouble.

The Response of God

11:16 The Lord said to Moses, “Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know are elders of the people and officials over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting; let them take their position there with you. 11:17 Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take part of the spirit that is on you, and will put it on them, and they will bear some of the burden of the people with you, so that you do not bear it all by yourself.

11:18 “And say to the people, ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, and you will eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the Lord, saying, “Who will give us meat to eat, for life was good for us in Egypt?” Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat. 11:19 You will eat, not just one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 11:20 but a whole month, until it comes out your nostrils and makes you sick, because you have despised the Lord who is among you and have

---

1 sn The questions Moses asks are rhetorical. He is actually affirming that they are not his people, that he did not produce them, but now is to support them. His point is that God produced this nation, but has put the burden of caring for their needs on him.

2 tn The verb means “to beget, give birth to.” The figurative image from procreation completes the parallel question, first the conceiving and second the giving birth to the nation.

3 tn The word קֻלַּא (‘omen) is often translated “nurse,” but the form is a masculine form and would better be rendered as a “foster parent.” This does not work as well, though, with the יְאוֹנָק (youaq), the “suckling child.” The two metaphors are simply designed to portray the duty of a parent to a child as a picture of Moses’ duty for the nation. The idea that it portrays God as a mother pushes it too far (see M. Noth, Numbers [OTL], 86-87).

4 tn The Hebrew text simply has “from where to me flesh?” which means “from where will I have meat?”

5 tn The cohortative coming after the imperative stresses purpose (it is an indirect volitive).

6 tn The word order shows the emphasis: “I am not able, I by myself, to bear all this people.” The infinitive הבָּשֵׂאת (lase’et) serves as the direct object of the verb. The expression is figurative, for bearing or carrying the people means being responsible for all their needs and cares.

7 tn The imperfect tense here is to be classified as a final imperfect, showing the result of this action by God. Moses was relieved of some of the responsibility when these others were given the grace to understand and to resolve cases.

8 tn The imperfect tense here is to be classified as a final imperfect, showing the result of this action by God. Moses would be relieved of some of the responsibility when these others were given the grace to understand and to resolve cases.

9 tn The Hitpael is used to stress that they are to prepare Spirit-empowered assistance for Moses. Here is another variation on the theme of Moses’ faith. Just as he refused to lead alone and was given Aaron to share the work, so here he protests the burden and will share it with seventy elders. If God’s servant will not trust wholeheartedly, that individual will not be used by God as he or she might have been. Others will share in the power and the work. Probably one could say that it was God’s will for others to share this leadership – but not to receive it through these circumstances.

10 sn The Lord provides Spirit-empowered assistance for Moses. Here is another variation on the theme of Moses’ faith. Just as he refused to lead alone and was given Aaron to share the work, so here he protests the burden and will share it with seventy elders. If God’s servant will not trust wholeheartedly, that individual will not be used by God as he or she might have been. Others will share in the power and the work. Probably one could say that it was God’s will for others to share this leadership – but not to receive it through these circumstances.

11 sn The Lord provides Spirit-empowered assistance for Moses. Here is another variation on the theme of Moses’ faith. Just as he refused to lead alone and was given Aaron to share the work, so here he protests the burden and will share it with seventy elders. If God’s servant will not trust wholeheartedly, that individual will not be used by God as he or she might have been. Others will share in the power and the work. Probably one could say that it was God’s will for others to share this leadership – but not to receive it through these circumstances.

12 sn The “officials” (יחֲרָצִים, shoftim) were a group of the elders who seem to have had some administrative capacities. The LXX used the word “scribes.” For further discussion, see R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, 69-70.

13 tn The imperfect tense here is to be classified as a final imperfect, showing the result of this action by God. Moses would be relieved of some of the responsibility when these others were given the grace to understand and to resolve cases.

14 tn The Hitpael is used to stress that they are to prepare for a holy appearance. The day was going to be special and so required their being set apart for it. But it is a holy day in the sense of the judgment that was to follow.

15 tn Heb “in the ears.”

16 tn Possibly this could be given an optative translation, to reflect the earlier one: “That someone would give...” But the verb is not the same; here it is the Hiphil of the verb “to eat” – “who will make us eat” (i.e., provide meat for us to eat).

17 tn The word “life” is not in the text. The expression is simply “it was for us,” or “we had good,” meaning “we had it good,” or “life was good.”

18 tn Heb “a month of days.” So also in v. 21.

19 tn The expression בְּּוָרָה (’zarah) has been translated “ill” or “loathsome.” It occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible. The Greek text interprets it as “sickness.” It could be nausea or vomiting (so G. B. Gray, Numbers [ICC], 112) from overeating.

20 sn The explanation is the interpretation of their behavior – it is in reality what they have done, even though they would not say they despised the Lord. They had complained and shown a lack of faith and a contempt for the program, which was in essence despising the Lord.
wept before him, saying, “Why did we ever come out of Egypt?”

11:21 Moses said, “The people around me are 600,000 on foot, but you say, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month.’ Would they have enough if the flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? If all the fish of the sea were caught for them, would they have enough?”

11:22 And the Lord said to Moses, “Is the Lord’s hand shortened? Now you will see whether my word to you will come true or not!”

11:24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. He then gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and had them stand around the tabernacle. 11:25 And the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to them, and he took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but did not do so again.

Eldad and Medad

11:26 But two men remained in the camp; one’s name was Eldad, and the other’s name was Medad. And the spirit rested on them. (Now they were among those in the registration, but had not gone to the tabernacle.) So they prophesied in the camp. 11:27 And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!” 11:28 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his choice young men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” 11:29 Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for me? I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!” 11:30 Then Moses returned to the camp along with the elders of Israel.

Provision of Quail

11:31 Now a wind went out from the Lord and brought quail from the sea, and let it be sufficient for the people, according to the number of them who were in Israel.

1 tn The use of the demonstrative pronoun here (“why is this we went out...”) is enclitic, providing emphasis to the sentence: “Why in the world did we ever leave Egypt?”

2 tn The Hebrew sentence stresses the number. The sentence begins “600,000....”

3 tn The verb means “burst forth” or “sprang up.” See the notes on Gen 33:12, Judg 16:3, 14; Isa 33:20.

4 sn This anthropomorphic expression concerns the power of God. The “hand of the Lord” is idiomatic for his power, what he is able to do. The question is rhetorical; it is affirming that his hand is not shortened, i.e., that his power is not limited. Moses should have known this, and so this is a rebuke for him at this point. God had provided the manna, among all the other powerful acts they had witnessed. Meat would be no problem. But the lack of faith by the people was infectious.

5 tn Or “will happen” (TEV); KJV “shall come to pass unto thee.”

6 tn Heb “on him”; the referent (Moses) has been specified with the locative preposition “on” (v’lî yasuḥu). It was a one-time spiritual experience associated with their installation.

7 tn The form of the word is the passive participle כָּבָה (kîḇāh, “written”). It is normally taken to mean “among those registered,” but it is not clear if that means they were to be among the seventy or not. That seems unlikely since there is no mention of the seventy being registered, and vv. 24-25 says all seventy went out and prophesied. The registration may be to eldership, or the role of the offices.

8 sn This anthropomorphic expression concerns the power of God. The “hand of the Lord” is idiomatic for his power, what he is able to do. The question is rhetorical; it is affirming that his hand is not shortened, i.e., that his power is not limited. Moses should have known this, and so this is a rebuke for him at this point. God had provided the manna, among all the other powerful acts they had witnessed. Meat would be no problem. But the lack of faith by the people was infectious.

9 tn The Piel participle כָּבָה (kîḇāh, “written”) serves as a verb here in this interrogative sentence. The word means “to be jealous, to be envious.” That can be in a good sense, such as “to care for,” but in a negative sense it can be in a negative sense as here. Joshua’s apparent “zeal” is questioned by Moses—was he jealous/envious for Moses sake, or for some other reason?

10 tn The optative is expressed by the interrogative clause in Hebrew, “who will give...” Moses expresses here the wish that the whole nation would have that portion of the Spirit. The new covenant, of course, would turn Moses’ wish into a certainty.

11 sn The irony in this chapter is expressed in part by the use of the word כָּבָה (kîḇāh). In the last episode it clearly meant the Spirit of the Lord that empowered the men for their spiritual service. But here the word is “wind.” Both the spiritual service and the judgment come from God. The people needed to know that the things God had commanded him to do, was now given to them. It would have included wisdom and power with what they were saying and doing— in a way that was visible and demonstrable to the people! The people needed to know that the things God had commanded him to do, was now given to them. It would have included wisdom and power with what they were saying and doing— in a way that was visible and demonstrable to the people! The people needed to know that the things God had commanded him to do, was now given to them. It would have included wisdom and power with what they were saying and doing— in a way that was visible and demonstrable to the people! The people needed to know that the things God had commanded him to do, was now given to them. It would have included wisdom and power with what they were saying and doing— in a way that was visible and demonstrable to the people! The people needed to know that the things God had commanded him to do, was now given to them. It would have included wisdom and power with what they were saying and doing— in a way that was visible and demonstrable to the people!
themselves being given a portion of the Spirit to share in the leadership role, she may have seen this as her chance finally to become just as important in the nation as her younger brother. After all, she safeguarded his birth and early years (Exod 2). But there are two issues here – the reason she gives (“does the Lord only speak through Moses?”), and the reason the text gives (the Cushite woman). The text does not say when Moses married this woman, or what Miriam’s problem with her was. It is clear that it was a racial issue, by virtue of the use of “Cushite.” Whether she was of darker skin than the Hebrews would be hard to say, since the Bible gives no further detail. Neither does it say if this is a second wife, or a woman Moses married since Zipporah went home (Exod 18:2). These do not seem to be the issues the text wishes to elaborate on; it is simply stating that this woman was the occasion for a deeper challenge.

The indication is that Miriam criticized the marriage, and then the two of them raised questions about his sole leadership of the nation.

The use of both בָּנֹית (ba’nit) and בָּנַה (banah) underscore the point that the issue is Moses’ uniqueness.

There is irony in the construction in the text. The expression “speak through us” also uses סֵפֶך (sfech) and דִּבֵּר (dibber + b’). They ask if God has not also spoken through them, after they have spoken against Moses. Shortly God will speak against them – their words are prophetic, but not as they imagined.

The questions are rhetorical. They are affirming that God does not only speak through Moses, but also speaks through them. They see themselves as equal with Moses. The question that was asked of the earlier presumptuous Moses – “Who made you a ruler over us?” – could also be asked of them. God had not placed them in a position to compete or challenge the leader in this way. There is a touch of divine irony here, for Miriam is turned white with leprosy. The chapter fails easily into the sections of the story: a touch of divine irony here, for Miriam is turned white with leprosy. The chapter falls easily into the sections of the story: the naming marks another station in the wilderness where the people failed to accept God’s good gifts with grace and to pray for their other needs to be met.

The words “different food” are implied, and supplied in the translation for clarity.

In this short chapter we find a prime example of jealousy. It may be that Miriam was envious of the Cushite woman Moses married. And, in view of the previous chapter’s content about others being given a portion of the Spirit to share in the leadership role, she may have seen this as her chance finally to become just as important in the nation as her younger brother. After all, she safeguarded his birth and early years (Exod 2). But there are two issues here – the reason she gives (“does the Lord only speak through Moses?”), and the reason the text gives (the Cushite woman).
The Response of the Lord

12:4 The LORD spoke immediately to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam: “The three of you come to the tent of meeting.” So the three of them went. 12:5 And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent; he then called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.

12:6 The LORD said, “Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream. 12:7 My servant Moses is not like this; he is faithful in all my house. 12:8 With him I will speak face to face, openly, and not in riddles; and he will see the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” 12:9 The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he departed. 12:10 When the cloud departed from above the tent, Miriam became leprous as snow. Then Aaron looked at Miriam, and she was leprous!

The Intercession of Moses

12:11 So Aaron said to Moses, “O my lord, please do not hold this sin against us, in which we have acted foolishly and have sinned! 12:12 Do not let her be like a baby born dead, whose flesh is half-consumed when it comes out of its mother’s womb!”

12:13 Then Moses cried to the LORD, “Heal her now, O God.” 12:14 The LORD said to Moses, “If her father had only spited her in her face, would she not have been disgraced for seven days? Shut her out from the camp seven days, and afterward she can be brought back in again.”

12:15 So Miriam was shut outside of the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey on until Miriam was brought back in. 12:16 After that the people moved from Hazereth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Spies Sent Out

13:1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

---

9 tn The disjunctive vav (ְ) is here introducing a circumstantial clause of time.
10 tn There is no verb “became” in this line. The second half of the line is introduced with the particle ה (hinneh, “look, behold”) in its archaic sense. This dative use is intended to make the reader focus on Miriam as well.
11 sn The word “leprous” covers a wide variety of skin diseases, and need not be limited to the actual disease of leprosy known today as Hansen’s disease. The description of it here has to do with snow, either the whiteness or the wetness. If that is the case then there would be open wounds and sores – like Job’s illness (see M. Noth, Numbers [OLT], 95-96).
12 tn Heb “turned to.”
13 tn The expression ב ר א י מ (bi’adoni, “O my lord”) shows a good deal of respect for Moses by Aaron. The expression is often used in addressing God.
14 tc The words “its mother” and “its flesh” are among the so-called tiqune sopherim, or “emendations of the scribes.” According to this tradition the text originally had here “our mother” and “our flesh,” but the ancient scribes changed these pronouns from the first person to the third person. Apparently they were concerned that the image of Moses’ mother giving birth to a baby with physical defects of the sort described here was somehow inappropriate, given the stature and importance of Moses.
15 tc Some scholars emend ה (el, “God”) to ה (al, “no”). The effect of this change may be seen in the NAB: “Please, not this! Pray, heal her!”
16 tn The form is intensified by the infinitive absolute, but here the infinitive strengthens not simply the verbal idea but the conditional cause construction as well.
17 tn The clause has the Niphal infinitive construct after a temporal preposition.
18 sn Chapter 13 provides the names of the spies sent into the land (vv. 1-16), their instructions (vv. 17-20), their activities (vv. 21-25), and their reports (vv. 26-33). It is a chapter that serves as a good lesson on faith, for some of the spies walked by faith, and some by sight.
19 tn The verse starts with the vav (ְ) consecutive on the verb: “and...”
13:2 “Send out men to investigate the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. You are to send one man from each ancestral tribe, each one a leader among them.” 13:3 So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the Lord. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.

13:4 Now these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zaccur; 13:5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori; 13:6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh; 13:7 from the tribe of Issassachar, Igal son of Joseph; 13:8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun; 13:9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu; 13:10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi; 13:11 from the tribe of Joseph, namely, the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi son of Susi; 13:12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemall; 13:13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael; 13:14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vopshi; 13:15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Maki. 13:16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to investigate the land. And Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.

The Spies’ Instructions

13:17 When Moses sent them to investigate the land of Canaan, he told them, “Go up through the Negev, and then go up into the hill country 13:18 and see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, few or many, 13:19 and whether the land they live in is good or bad, and whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or fortified cities, 13:20 and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether or not there are forests in it. And be brave, and bring back some of the fruit of the land.” Now it was the time of year for the first ripe grapes.

The Spies’ Activities

13:21 So they went up and investigated the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, at Lebo Hamath. 13:22 When they went up through the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, descendants of Anak, were living. (Now Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 13:23 When they came to the valley of Eshcol, they cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a staff between two men, as well as some of the pomegranates and the figs. 13:24 That place was called the Eshcol Valley, because of the cluster of grapes that the Israelites cut from there. 13:25 They returned from investigating the land after forty days.

---

1 tn The imperfect tense with the conjunction is here subordinated to the preceding imperative to form the purpose clause. It can thus be translated “send...to investigate.”
2 tn The participle here should be given a future interpretation, meaning “which I am about to give” or “which I am going to give.”
3 tn Heb “one man one man of the tribe of his fathers.”
4 tn Heb “mouth.”
5 tn Heb “heads.”
7 sn The difference in the names is slight, a change from “he saves” to “the Lord saves.” The Greek text of the OT used lesoun for Hebrew Yeshua.
8 sn The preterite with ναν (ναν) consecutive is here subordinated to the next verb of the same formation to express a temporal clause.
9 tn The instructions had them first go up into the southern desert of the land, and after passing through that, into the hill country of the Canaanites. The text could be rendered “into the Negev” as well as “through the Negev.”
10 tn The form is the perfect tense with ναν (ναν) consecutive; the word therefore carries the volitional mood of the preceding imperatives. It may be either another imperative, or it may be subordinated as a purpose clause.
11 tn Heb “see the land, what it is.”
12 tn The verb is the Hitpael perfect with ναν (ναν) consecutive from the root כּוּזֵע (kuzuz, “to be strong”). Here it could mean “strengthen yourselves” or “be courageous” or “determined.” See further uses in 2 Sam 10:12; 1 Kgs 20:22; 1 Chr 19:13.
The Spies’ Reports

13:26 They came back² to Moses and Aaron and to the whole community of the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh.² They reported³ to the whole community and showed the fruit of the land. 13:27 They told Moses,⁴ “We went to the land where you sent us.⁵ It is indeed flowing with milk and honey,⁶ and this is its fruit. 13:28 But⁷ the inhabitants⁸ are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. Moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. 13:29 The Amalekites live in the land of the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the banks⁹ of the Jordan.”

13:30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses, saying, “Let us go up¹¹ and occupy it, for we are well able to conquer it.”¹³ 13:31 But the men¹² who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against these people, because they are stronger than we are!”

13:32 Then they presented the Israelites with a discouraging¹⁵ report of the land they had investigated, saying, “The land that we passed through to investigate is a land that devours²² its inhabitants.¹⁸ All the people we saw there are of great stature. 13:33 We even saw the Nephilim²⁰ there (the descendants of Anak came from the Nephilim), and we seemed liked grasshoppers both to ourselves²¹ and to them.”²²

The Israelites Respond in Unbelief

14:1 Then the whole community raised a loud cry,²⁴ and the people wept²⁵ that night. 14:2 And all the Israelites murmured²⁶ against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died²⁷ in this wilderness! 14:3 Why has the Lord brought us into this land only to be killed by the sword, that our wives and our children should become plunder? Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?²⁸

1 sn The construction literally has “and they went and they entered,” which may be smoothed out as a verbal hendiadys, the one verb modifying the other.
2 sn Kadesh is Ain Qadeis, about 50 miles (83 km) south of Beer Sheba. It is called Kadesh-barna in Num 32:8.
3 tn Heb “They brought back word”; the verb is the Hiphil preterite of שׁוּב (shuv).
4 tn Heb “told him and said.” The referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
5 tn The relative clause modifies “the land.” It is constructed with the relative and the verb: “where you sent us.”
6 sn This is the common expression for the material abundance of the land (see further, F. C. Fensham, “An Ancient Tra
dance of the Fertility of Palestine,” 314).
7 tn The word (םַע, ‘as’) forms a very strong adversative. The perfect tense with disjunctive on the noun at the beginning of the clause forms a strong adversative clause here.
8 tn Heb “the people who are living in the land.”
9 tn Heb “by the side [hand] of.”
10 sn For more discussion on these people groups, see D. J. Wiseman, ed., Peoples of Old Testament Times.
11 tn The construction is emphatic, using the cohortative with the infinitive absolute to strengthen it: רָאָה נִעוּל (‘alah n‘u‘al), “let us go up”) with the sense of certainty and immediacy.
12 tn The perfect tense with וָאוּר (‘ow) consecutive brings the cohortative idea forward: “and let us possess it”; it may also be subordinated to form a purpose or result idea.
13 tn Here again the confidence of Caleb is expressed with the infinitive absolute and the imperfect tense: נָטְעַנָמִי (nakhol nakhal), “we are fully able” to do this. The verb יִכְּלָא (yakhal) followed by the preposition lamed means “to prevail over, to conquer.”
14 tn The word (いました) disjunctive on the noun at the beginning of the clause forms a strong adversative clause here.
15 tn Or “an evil report,” i.e., one that was a defamation of the grace of God.
16 tn Heb “which we passed over in it”; the pronoun on the preposition serves as a resumptive pronoun for the relative, and need not be translated literally.
17 tn The verb is the feminine singular participle from יָכַלו (yakhel); it modifies the land as a “devouring land,” a bold fig-
ure for the difficulty of living in the place.
18 sn The expression has been interpreted in a number of ways by commentators, such as that the land was infertile, that the Canaanites were cannibals, that it was a land filled with warlike dissensions, or that it denotes a land geared for battle. It may be that they intended the land to seem infertile and insecure.
19 tn Heb “in its midst.”
20 tc The Greek version uses γιγαντες (“giants”) to translate the “Nephilim,” but it does not retain the clause “the sons of Anak are from the Nephilim.”
21 sn The Nephilim are the legendary giants of antiquity. They are first discussed in Gen 6:4. This forms part of the pessi-
mism of the spies’ report.
22 tn Heb “in our eyes.”
23 tn Heb “in their eyes.”
25 tn The two verbs “lifted up their voice and cried” form a hendiadys; the idiom of raising the voice means that they cried aloud.
26 tn There are a number of things that the verb “to weep” or “wail” can connote. It could reflect joy, grief, lamentation, or repentance, but here it reflects fear, hopelessness, or vexa-
tion at the thought of coming all this way and being defeated by the Canaanites. See Judg 20:23, 26.
27 tn The Hebrew verb “to murmur” is הל (lan). It is a strong word, signifying far more than complaining or grumbling, as some of the modern translations have it. The word is most often connected to the wilderness experience. It is paralleled in the literature with the word “to rebel.” The murmuring is like a parliamentary vote of no confidence, for they no longer trusted their leaders and wished to choose a new leader and return. This “return to Egypt” becomes a symbol of their lack of faith in the Lord.
28 tn The optative is expressed by הל (lan) and then the verb, here the perfect tense וָגָת (matam) – “0 that we had died.” Had they wanted to die in Egypt they should not have cried out to the Lord to deliver them from bondage. Here the people, became consumed with the fear and worry of what lay ahead, and in their panic they revealed a lack of trust in God.
better for us to return to Egypt?” 14:4 So they said to one another,2 “Let’s appoint a leader3 and return4 to Egypt.”

14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell down with their faces to the ground5 before the whole assembled community6 of the Israelites. 14:6 And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, two of those who had investigated the land, tore their garments. 14:7 They said to the whole community of the Israelites, “The land we passed through to investigate is an exceedingly good land. 14:8 If the LORD delights in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it to us – a land that is flowing with milk and honey.9 14:9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, and do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us.8 Their protection10 has turned aside from them, but the LORD is with us. Do not fear them!”

14:10 However, the whole community threatened to stone them.11 But12 the glory13 of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent14 of meeting.

---

1 tn Heb “a man to his brother.”
2 tn The verb is יָתַן (nattan, “to give”), but this verb has quite a wide range of meanings in the Bible. Here it must mean “to make,” “to choose,” “to designate” or the like.
3 sn The word “head” (םִנְדָּה, nindah) probably refers to a tribal chief who was capable to judge and to lead to war (see J. R. Bartlett, “The Use of the Word בְּנֵר as a Title in the Old Testament,” VT 19 [1969]: 1-10).
4 tn The form is a cohortative with a vav (ו) prefixed. After the preceding cohortative this could also be interpreted as a purpose or result clause – in order that we may return.
5 sn This action of Moses and Aaron is typical of them in the wilderness with the Israelites. The act shows self-abasement and deference before the sovereign LORD. They are not bowing before the people here, but in front of the people they bow before God. According to Num 16:41-50 this prostration is for the purpose of intercessory prayer. Here it prevents immediate wrath from God.
6 tn Heb “before all the assembly of the congregation.”
7 tn The repetition of the adverb מָצַר (matsar) is used to express this: “very, very [good].”
8 tn The subjective genitives “milk and honey” are symbols of the wealth of the land, second only to bread. Milk was a substance of the wealth of the land, second only to bread. Milk was a sign of such abundance (Gen 49:12; Isa 7:21,22). Because of the climate the milk would thicken quickly and become curds, eaten with bread or turned into butter. The honey mentioned here is the wild honey (see Deut 32:13; Judg 14:8-9). It symbolized sweetness, or the finer things of life (Ezek 3:3).
9 sn The expression must indicate that they could destroy the enemies as easily as they could eat bread.
10 tn Heb “their shade.” The figure compares the shade from the sun with the protection from the enemy. It is also possible that the text is alluding to their deities here.
11 tn Heb “said to stone them with stones.” The verb and the object are not from the same root, but the combination nonetheless forms an emphasis equal to the cognate accusative.
12 tn The vav (ו) on the noun “glory” indicates a strong contrast, one that interrupts their threatened attack.
13 sn The glory of the LORD refers to the reality of the LORD’s presence in a manifestation of his power and splendor. It showed to all that God was a living God. The appearance of the glory indicated blessing for the obedient, but disaster for the disobedient.
14 tc The Greek, Syriac, and Tg. Ps.-J. have “in the cloud over the tent.”

---

14:11 The LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise15 me, and how long will they not believe16 in me, in spite of the signs that I have done among them? 14:12 I will strike them with the pestilence,17 and I will disinherit them; I will make you into a nation that is greater and mightier than they!”

14:13 Moses said to the LORD, “When the Egyptians hear18 it – for you brought up this people by your power from among them – 14:14 then they will tell it to the inhabitants19 of this land. They have heard that you, LORD, are among this people, that you, LORD, are seen face to face,20 that your cloud stands over them, and that you go before them by day in a pillar of cloud and in a pillar of fire by night. 14:15 If you kill21 this entire people at once,22 then the nations that have heard of your fame will say, 14:16 ‘Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to them, he killed them in the wilderness.’ 14:17 So now, let the power of my LORD23 be great, just as you have said, 14:18: The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in loyal love,24 forgiving iniquity and transgression,25 but by no means clearing26 the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the

---

18 tn The verb מָתַן (matan, “to condemn, spurn” (BDB 610 s.v.)). Coats suggests that in some contexts the word means actual rejection or renunciation (Rebellion in the Wilderness, 146, 7). This would include the idea of distaste.
19 tn The verb “to believe” (root בָּאתָ, b’yanah) has the basic idea of support, dependability for the root. The Hiphil has a declarative sense, namely, to consider something reliable or dependable and to act on it. The people did not trust what the LORD said.
20 tc The Greek version has “death.”
21 tn The construction is unusual in that we have here a perfect tense with a vav (ו) consecutive with no verb before it to establish the time sequence. The context requires that this be taken as a vav (ו) consecutive. It actually forms the protasis for the next verse, and would best be rendered “when…then they will say.”
22 tn The singular participle is to be taken here as a collective, representing all the inhabitants of the land.
23 tn “Face to face” is literally “eye to eye.” It only occurs elsewhere in Isa 52:8. This expresses the closest communication possible.
24 sn The verb is the Hiphil perfect of נָתַן (natan, נָתַן, natan, “to give”), the same root as עָנַה (‘ananah). The vav (ו) consecutive makes this also a future time sequence verb, but again in a conditional clause.
25 tc The form in the text is יָנָה (yanah), the word that is usually used in place of the tetragrammaton. It is the plural form with the nominative suffix, and so must refer to God.
26 sn The expression יָדַע (yadah) means “much of loyal love,” or “faithful love.” Some have it “ totalmente faithful,” but that omits the aspect of his love.
27 sn Or “rebellion.”
28 tc The infinitive absolute emphasizes the verbal activity of the imperfect tense, which here serves as a habitual imperfect. Negated it states what God does not do; and the infinitive makes that certain.
children until the third and fourth generations.  

14:19 Please forgive the iniquity of this people according to your great loyal love, just as you have forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.”

14:20 Then the Lord said, “I have forgiven them as you asked.” 14:21 But truly, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. 14:22 For all the people have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have tempted me now these ten times, and have not obeyed me. 14:23 They will by no means see the land that I swore to their fathers, nor will any of them who despised me see it. 14:24 Only my servant Caleb, because he had a different spirit and has followed me fully – I will bring him into the land where he had gone, and his descendants will possess it. 14:25 (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites were living in the valleys.) Tomorrow, turn and journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.”

14:26 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron: 14:27 “How long must I bear this evil congregation that murmurs against me? I have heard the complaints of the Israelites that they murmured against me. 14:28 Say to them, ‘As I live, 14:29 Your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness – all those of you who were numbered, according to your full number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me. 14:30 You will by no means enter into the land where I swore I would bring you. The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. 14:31 But I will bring in your little ones, whom you said would become victims of war; and they will enjoy the land that you have despised. 14:32 But as for you, your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness, 14:33 and your children will wander in the wilderness forty years and suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your dead bodies lie finished in the wilderness. 14:34 According to the number of the days you have investigated this land, forty days – one day for a year – you will suffer for your iniquities, forty years, and you will know what it means.

---

1 sn The Decalogue adds “to those who hate me.” The point of the line is that the effects of sin, if not the sinful traits themselves, are passed on to the next generation.

2 tn The verb נא דה (selakah-na‘), the imperative form, means “forgive” (see Ps 130:4), “pardon,” “excuse.” The imperative is of course a prayer, a desire, and not a command.

3 sn This is the oath formula, but in the Pentateuch it occurs here and in v. 28.

4 tn The verb נא דה (nasah) means “to test, to tempt, to prove.” It can be used to indicate things are tried or proven, or for testing in a good sense, or tempting in the bad sense, i.e., putting God to the test. In all uses there is uncertainty or doubt about the outcome. Some uses of the verb are positive: If God tests Abraham in Genesis 22:1, it is because there is uncertainty whether he fears the Lord or not; if people like Gideon put out the fleece and test the Lord, it is done by faith but in order to be certain of the Lord’s presence. But here, when these people put God to the test ten times, it was because they doubted the goodness and ability of God, and this was a major weakness. They had proof to the contrary, but chose to challenge God.

7 tn “Ten” is here a round figure, emphasizing the complete testing, But see F. V. Winnett, The Mosaic Tradition, 121-54.

8 tn Heb “listened to my voice.”

9 tn The word בָא (’im) indicates a negative oath formula: “if” means “they will not. It is elliptical. In a human oath one would be saying: “The Lord do to me if they see...” meaning “they will by no means see.” Here God is swearing that they will not see the land.

10 tn Heb “seed.”

14 sn The judgment on Israel is that they turn back to the desert and not attack the tribes in the land. So a parenthetical clause is inserted to state who was living there. They would surely block the entrance to the land from the south – unless God removed them. And he is not going to do that for Israel.

12 tn The figure is apophasis, or sudden silence. The main verb is deleted from the line, “how long...this evil community.” The intensity of the emotion is the reason for the ellipsis.

13 sn It is worth mentioning in passing that this is one of the Rabbinic proof texts for having at least ten men to form a congregation and have prayer. If God called ten men (the bad spies) a “congregation,” then a congregation must have ten men. But here the word “community/congregation” refers in this context to the people of Israel as a whole, not just to the ten spies.

14 sn Here again is the oath that God swore in his wrath, an oath he swore by himself, that they would not enter the land. “As the Lord lives,” or “by the life of the Lord,” are ways to render it.

15 tn The word בָא (’im) is an “oracle.” It is followed by the subjective genitive: “the oracle of the Lord” is equal to saying “the Lord says.”

16 tn Heb “in my ears.”

18 tn The relative pronoun “which” is joined with the resumptive pronoun “in it” to form a smoother reading “where.”

19 tn The Hebrew text uses the anthropomorphic expression “I raised my hand” in taking an oath.

20 tn Heb “to cause you to dwell; to cause you to settle.”

21 tn Or “plunder.”

22 tn Heb “know.”

23 tn The word is “shepherds.” It means that the people would be wilderness nomads, grazing their flock on available land.

24 tn Heb “you shall bear your whoredoms.” The imagery of prostitution is used throughout the Bible to reflect spiritual unfaithfulness, leaving the covenant relationship and following after false gods. Here it is used generally for their rebellion in the wilderness, but not for following other gods.

25 tn The infinitive is from בָא (’im), which means “to be complete.” The word is often used to express completeness in a good sense – whole, blameless, or the like. Here and in v. 35 it seems to mean “until your deaths have been completed.” See also Gen 47:15; Deut 2:15.

26 tn Heb “you shall bear.”
to thwart me.\(^2\) 14:35 I, the LORD, have said, “I will surely do so to all this evil congregation that has gathered together against me. In this wilderness they will be finished, and there they will die!”’’

14:36 The men whom Moses sent to investigate the land, who returned and made the whole community murmur against him by producing\(^2\) an evil report about the land, 14:37 those men who produced the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. 14:38 But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among\(^3\) the men who went to investigate the land, lived. 14:39 When Moses told\(^4\) these things to all the Israelites, the people mourned greatly.

14:40 And early\(^5\) in the morning they went up to the crest of the hill country,\(^7\) saying, “Here we are, and we will go up to the place that the LORD commanded,\(^8\) for we have sinned.”\(^9\) 14:41 But Moses said, “Why\(^10\) are you now transgressing the commandment of the LORD? It will not succeed!

14:42 Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, and you will be defeated before your enemies.

14:43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you will fall by the sword. Because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you.”

\(^2\) tn The phrase refers to the consequences of open hostil-
ity to God, or perhaps abandonment of God. The noun תַּמְנָע (\(\text{'tn}\)) occurs in Job 33:10 (perhaps). The related verb oc-
curs in Num 30:6 HT (30:5 ET) and 32:7 with the sense of “disallow, discourage.” The sense of the expression adopted in this translation comes from the meticulous study of R. Loewe, “Divine Frustration Exegetically Frustrated,” Words and Meanings, 137-58.

\(^3\) tn The verb is the Hiphil infinitive construct with a lamed (\(\text{ //'}\)) preposition from the root נָס (\(\text{'ns}\)); ‘to bring out’). The use of the infinitive here is epexegetical, that is, explaining how they caused the people to murmur.

\(^4\) tn The Hebrew text says literally “the top of the hill,” but the wilderness wandering officially having begun, the wilderness officially having begun, these rules were then given for the people to be used when they finally entered the land. That they would be provided here would be of some encouragement to the nation after their great failure. God still spoke of a land that was to be their land, even though they had sinned greatly. This chapter col-
lектs a number of religious rules. The first 16 verses deal with rulings for sacrifices. Then, vv. 17-36 concerns sins of omis-
sion. Finally, rules concerning tassels are provided (vv. 37-41).

\(^5\) sn The wilderness wandering officially having begun,\(^2\) these rules were then given for the people to be used when they finally entered the land. That they would be provided here would be of some encouragement to the nation after their great failure. God still spoke of a land that was to be their land, even though they had sinned greatly. This chapter col-
lects a number of religious rules. The first 16 verses deal with rulings for sacrifices. Then, vv. 17-36 concerns sins of omis-
sion. Finally, rules concerning tassels are provided (vv. 37-41).

\(^7\) sn The wilderness wandering officially having begun,\(^2\) these rules were then given for the people to be used when they finally entered the land. That they would be provided here would be of some encouragement to the nation after their great failure. God still spoke of a land that was to be their land, even though they had sinned greatly. This chapter col-
lects a number of religious rules. The first 16 verses deal with rulings for sacrifices. Then, vv. 17-36 concerns sins of omis-
sion. Finally, rules concerning tassels are provided (vv. 37-41).

\(^9\) sn The wilderness wandering officially having begun, these rules were then given for the people to be used when they finally entered the land. That they would be provided here would be of some encouragement to the nation after their great failure. God still spoke of a land that was to be their land, even though they had sinned greatly. This chapter col-
lects a number of religious rules. The first 16 verses deal with rulings for sacrifices. Then, vv. 17-36 concerns sins of omis-
sion. Finally, rules concerning tassels are provided (vv. 37-41).

\(^10\) sn The wilderness wandering officially having begun, these rules were then given for the people to be used when they finally entered the land. That they would be provided here would be of some encouragement to the nation after their great failure. God still spoke of a land that was to be their land, even though they had sinned greatly. This chapter col-
lects a number of religious rules. The first 16 verses deal with rulings for sacrifices. Then, vv. 17-36 concerns sins of omis-
sion. Finally, rules concerning tassels are provided (vv. 37-41).
hin of wine for a drink offering with the burnt offering or the sacrifice for each lamb. 5 Or for a ram, you must prepare as a grain offering two-tenths of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with one-third of a hin of olive oil, 6 and for a drink offering you must offer one-third of a hin of wine as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. 8 And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice for discharging a vow or as a peace offering to the Lord, 9 then a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with half a hin of olive oil must be presented with the young bull, 10 and you must present as the drink offering half a hin of wine with the fire offering as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. 11 This is what is to be done for each ox, or each ram, or each of the male lambs or the goats. 12 You must do so for each one according to the number that you prepare.

13 “Every native-born person must do these things in this way to present an offering made by fire as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. 14 If a resident foreigner is living with you – or whoever is among you in future generations – and prepares an offering made by fire as a pleasing aroma to the Lord, he must do it the same way you are to do it. 15 One statute must apply to you who belong to the congregation and to the resident foreigner who is living among you, as a permanent statute for your future generations. You and the resident foreigner will be alike before the Lord. 16 One law and one custom must apply to you and to the resident foreigner who lives alongside you.”

Rules for First Fruits

15:17 The Lord spoke to Moses: 15:18 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘When you enter the land to which I am bringing you and you eat some of the food of the land, you must offer up a raised offering to the Lord. 15:20 You must offer up a cake of the first of your finely ground flour as a raised offering; as you offer the raised offering of the threshing floor, so you must offer it up. 15:21 You must give to the Lord some of the first of your finely ground flour as a raised offering in your future generations.

Rules for Unintentional Offenses

15:22 If you sin unintentionally and do not observe all these commandments that the Lord has spoken to Moses – 15:23 all that the Lord has commanded you by the authority of Moses, from the day that the Lord commanded Moses and continuing through your future generations – 15:24 then if anything is done unintentionally without the knowledge of the community, the whole community must prepare one young bull for a burnt offering – for a pleasing aroma to the Lord – along with its grain offering and its customary drink offering, and one male goat for a purification offering. 15:25 And the priest is to make atonement for the whole community, the whole community must prepare one young bull for a burnt offering – for a pleasing aroma to the Lord – along with its grain offering and its customary drink offering, and one male goat for a purification offering. 15:25 And the priest is to make atonement for the whole community, the whole community must prepare one young bull for a burnt offering – for a pleasing aroma to the Lord – along with its grain offering and its customary drink offering, and one male goat for a purification offering.

---

1 sn The drink-offering was an ancient custom, mentioned in the Ugaritic tablets of Ras Shamra (14th century B.C.). The drink offering was poured out at the base of the altar (see Sir 50:15 and Josephus, Ant. 3.9.4 [3.234]).
2 tn Heb “for the one lamb,” but it clearly means “for each lamb.”
3 tn The text changes from direct address here to the third person form of the verb. If the MT is correct, then to make a smooth translation it would need to be made a passive (in view of the fact that no subject is expressed).
4 tn Heb “according to this shall it be done.”
5 tn The word root לוּג (gur) was traditionally translated “to journey,” i.e., to live temporarily in a land. Here the two words are from the root: “a sojourner sojourns.”
6 tn Heb “in your midst.”
7 tn The Hebrew text just has “to your generations,” but it means in the future.
8 tn The imperfect tenses must reflect the responsibility to comply with the law, and so the classifications of instruction or obligation may be applied.
9 tn The word “apply” is supplied in the translation.
10 tn Or “a statute forever.”
11 tn Heb “as you, as [so] the alien.”
12 tn The relative clause is literally, “which I am causing you to enter there.” The final adverb is resumptive, and must be joined with the relative pronoun.
13 tn The verse has a temporal clause that actually continues or supplements the temporal clause of the preceding verse. It is made up of the temporal indicator, the infinitive construct with the preposition, and the suffixed subjective genitive: “and it shall be when you eat.” Here it is translated simply “and eat” since the temporal element was introduced in the last verse.
14 tn This is the הַנַּעַמָל (hanamal), the “raised offering” or “heave offering” (cf. KJV, ASV). It may simply be called a “contribution” (so NAB). The verb of the sentence is from the same root: “you shall lift up/raise up.” It was to be an offering separated from the rest and raised up to the Lord in the sight of all. It was designed to remind the Israelites that the produce and the land belonged to God.
15 tn Or “the first of your dough.” The phrase is not very clear. N. H. Snaith thinks it means a batch of loaves from the kneading trough – the first batch of the baking (Leviticus and Numbers [NGB], 251).
16 tn These regulations supplement what was already ruled on in the Levitical code for the purification and separation of offerings. See those rulings in Lev 4-7 for all the details. Some biblical scholars view the rules in Leviticus as more elaborate and therefore later. However, this probably represents a misunderstanding of the purpose of each collection.
17 tn The verb is the plural imperfect; the sin discussed here is a sin committed by the community, or the larger part of the community.
18 tn Heb “hand.”
19 tn The idea of לִשְׁגָגָה (lishgagah) seems to be that of “inadvertence” or “without intent.” The text gives no indication of how this offense might be committed, or what it might include. It probably describes any transgressions done in ignorance of the Law that involved a violation of tabernacle procedure or priestly protocol or social misdemeanor. Even though it was done unintentionally, it was still a violation and called for ritual purification.
20 tn Heb “away” from the eyes of the community.
21 tn The verb is the Piel perfect with הָוָּנָה (hawanah, v’klipper) to continue the instruction of the passage: “the priest shall make atonement,” meaning the priest is to make atonement for the sin (thus the present translation).
community of the Israelites, and they will be forgiven,\(^1\) because it was unintentional and they have brought their offering, an offering made by fire to the Lord, and their purification offering before the Lord, for their unintentional offense. **15:26** And the whole community\(^2\) of the Israelites and the resident foreigner who lives among them will be forgiven, since all the people were involved in the unintentional offense.

**15:27** “If any person\(^3\) sins unintentionally, then he must bring a yearling female goat for a purification offering. **15:28** And the priest must make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally – when he sins unintentionally before the Lord – to make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven. **15:29** You must have one law for the person who sins unintentionally, both for the native-born among the Israelites and for the resident foreigner who lives among them.

### Deliberate Sin

**15:30** “But the person\(^4\) who acts defiantly,\(^5\) whether native-born or a resident foreigner, insults\(^6\) the Lord.\(^7\) That person\(^8\) must be cut off\(^9\) from among his people. **15:31** Because he has despised\(^10\) the word of the Lord and has broken\(^11\) his commandment, that person\(^12\) must be completely cut off.\(^13\) His iniquity will be on him.”\(^14\)

**15:32** When the Israelites were\(^15\) in the wilderness they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day.\(^16\) **15:33** Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to the whole community. **15:34** They put him in custody, because there was no clear instruction about what should be done to him. **15:35** Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must surely be put to death; the whole community must stone\(^17\) him with stones outside the camp.” **15:36** So the whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him to death,\(^18\) just as the Lord commanded Moses.
Rules for Tassels

15:37 The LORD spoke to Moses: 15:38 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them to make tassels on themselves on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and put a blue thread on the tassel of the corners. 15:39 You must have this tassel so that you may look at it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and obey them and so that you do not follow after your own heart and your own eyes that lead you to unfaithfulness. 15:40 Thus will you remember and obey all my commandments and be holy to your God. 15:41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.”

The Rebellion of Korah

16:1 Now Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth, who were Reubenites, took men and rebelled against Moses, along with some of the Israelites, 250 leaders of the community, chosen from the assembly, famous men. And they assembled against Moses and Aaron, saying to them, “You take too much upon yourselves, seeing that the whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the community of the LORD?”

16:4 When Moses heard it he fell down with his face to the ground. Then he said to Korah and to all his company, “In the morning the LORD will make known who are his, and who is holy. He will cause that person to approach him; the person he has chosen will cause to approach him. Do this, Korah, you and all your company: Take censers, put fire in them, and set incense on them before the LORD tomorrow, and the man whom the LORD chooses will be holy. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!”

16:8 Moses said to Korah, “Listen now, you sons of Levi! Does it seem too small a thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the community of Israel to bring you near to himself, to perform the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the community to minister to them? He has brought you near and all your brothers, the sons of Levi, with you. Do you now seek the priesthood also?

---

1 sn This is a reference to the ציצית (tsitsit), the fringes on the borders of the robes. They were meant to hang from the corners of the upper garment (Deut 22:12), which was worn on top of the clothing. The tassel was probably made by twisting the overhanging threads of the garment into a knot that would hang down. This was a reminder of the covenant. The tassels were retained down through history, and today more elaborate prayer shawls with tassels are worn during prayer.

2 sn The blue color may represent the heavenly origin of the Law, or perhaps, since it is a royal color, the majesty of the LORD.

3 Heb “seek out, look into.”

4 sn This last clause is a relative clause explaining the influence of the human heart and physical sight. It literally says, “which you go whoring after them.” The verb for “whoring” may be interpreted to mean “act unfaithfully.” So, the idea is these influences lead to unfaithful activity: “after which you act unfaithfully.”

5 sn This clause also serves as a purpose/result clause of the preceding – “in order that you may remember...” But because the line is so long, it is simpler to make this a separate sentence in the translation.

6 sn There are three main movements in the story of ch. 16. The first is the rebellion itself (vv. 1-19). The second is the judgment (vv. 20-35). Third is the atonement for the rebels (vv. 36-50). The whole chapter is a marvelous account of a massive rebellion against the leaders that concludes with reconciliation. For further study see G. Hort, "The Book of Numbers of Qorah," ABR 7 (1959): 2-26; and J. Liver, "Korah, Dathan and Abiram," Studies in the Bible (Schrier 8), 189-217.

7 tc The MT reading is plural (“the sons of Reuben”); the Smr and LXX have the singular (“the son of Reuben”).

8 tn In the Hebrew text there is no object for the verb “took.” The translation presented above supplies the word “men.” However, it is possible that the MT has suffered damage here. The LXX has “and he spoke.” The Syriac and Targum have “and he was divided.” The editor of BHS suggests that perhaps the MT should be emended to “and he arose.”

9 sn Moses discerned correctly the real motivation for the rebellion. Korah wanted to be the high priest because he saw how much power there was in the spiritual leadership in Israel. He wanted something like a general election with him as the candidate and his supporters promoting him. The great privilege of being a Levite and serving in the sanctuary was not enough for him – the status did not satisfy him. Korah gave no rebuke. The test would be one of ministering with incense. This would bring them into direct proximity with the Lovo. If God honored Korah as a ministering priest, then it would be settled. But Moses accuses them of rebellion against the LORD, because the LORD had chosen Aaron to be the priest.
16:11 Therefore you and all your company have assembled together against the LORD! And Aaron — what is he that you murmur against him? 16:12 Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, “We will not come up. 16:13 Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of the land that flows with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness? Now do you want to make yourself a prince over us? 16:14 Moreover, you have not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey, nor given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Do you think you can blind these men? We will not come up.”

16:15 Moses was very angry, and he said to the LORD, “Have no respect for their offering! I have not taken so much as one donkey from them, nor have I harmed any one of them!”

16:16 Then Moses said to Korah, “You and all your company present yourselves before the LORD — you and they, and Aaron — tomorrow.

The Judgment on the Rebels

16:20 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 16:21 “Separate yourselves from among this community, that I may consume them in an instant.” 16:22 Then they threw themselves down with their faces to the ground and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all people, will you be angry with the whole community when only one man sins?”

16:23 So the LORD spoke to Moses: 16:24 “Tell the community: ‘Get away from among the homes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’

16:25 Then Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel went after him. 16:26 And he said to the community, “Move away from the tents of these wicked.”

1 The question indicates that they had been murmuring against Aaron, that is, expressing disloyalty and challenging his leadership. But it is actually against the LORD that they had been murmuring because the LORD had put Aaron in that position.

2 The verb sent to summon. The verb qara’ (qara’) followed by the d˚ud (˚) preposition does not mean “call to” but “summon.” This is a command performance; for them to appear would be to submit to Moses’ authority. This they will not do.

3 The imperfect tense ḫeš(haš) expresses their unwillingness to report: “we are not willing,” or “we will not.” The verb means “to go up.” It is used in the sense of appearing before an authority or a superior (see, e.g., Gen 46:31; Deut 25:7; Judg 4:5).

4 The question is rhetorical. It was not a small thing to them — it was a big thing.

5 The modern scholar who merely sees these words as belonging to an earlier tradition about going up to the land of Canaan that flows with milk and honey misses the irony here. What is happening is that the text is showing how twisted the thinking of the rebels is. They have turned things completely around. Egypt was the land flowing with milk and honey, not Canaan where they will die. The words of rebellion are seldom original, and always twisted.

6 The verb ḥist arte (histarar) is the Hiphil infinitive absolute that emphasizes the preceding ḫištar (histar), the Hiphil imperfect tense (both forms having metathesis). The verb means “to rule; to act like a prince; to make oneself a prince.” This is the only occurrence of the reflexive for this verb. The exact nuance is difficult to translate into English. But they are accusing Moses of seizing princely power for himself, perhaps making a sarcastic reference to his former status in Egypt. The rebels here are telling Moses that they had discerned his scheme, and so he could not “hoodwink” them (cf. NEB).

7 In Hebrew (‘ag) has the sense of “in addition.” It is not a common use.

8 Heb “will you bore out the eyes of these men?” The question is “Will you continue to mislead them?” (or “hoodwink” them). In Deut 16:19 it is used for taking a bribe; something like that kind of deception is intended here. They are simply stating that Moses is a deceiver who is misleading the people with false promises.

9 The verb means “to turn toward”; it is a figurative expression that means “to pay attention to” or “to have regard for.” So this is a prayer against Dathan and Abiram.

10 Heb “and take, a man, his censer.”

11 This verb and the following one are both perfect tense verbs with vav (˚) consecutive. Following the imperative they carry the same force, but in sequence.

12 This clause is clearly foundational for the clause that follows, the appearance of the LORD; therefore it should be subordinated to the next as a temporal clause (one preterite followed by another preterite may be so subordinated).

13 The verb is bibhu (bibhu), the Hebrew imperative of bahu (badal). This is the same word that was just used when Moses reminded the Levites that they had been separated from the community to serve the LORD.

14 The group of people siding with Korah is meant, and not the entire community of the people of Israel. They are an assembly of rebels, their “community” consisting in their common plot.

15 It is Moses and Aaron who prostrate themselves; they have the good of the people at heart.

16 The expression “the God of the spirits of all humanity” is somewhat difficult. The Hebrew text says אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחֹת לְכָל־בָּשָׂר (elohey harukhot lÿkhol-basar). This expression occurs in Num 27:16 again. It also occurs in some postbiblical texts, a fact which has prompted some scholars to conclude that it is a late addition. The words clearly show that Moses is interceding for the congregation. The appeal in the verse is that it is better for one man to die for the whole nation than the whole nation for one man (see also John 11:50).

17 The verb is the Qal imperfect אַכְתָּא (yekhe’ta); it refers to the sinful rebellion of Korah, but Moses is stating something of a principle: “One man sins, and will you be angry....” A past tense form of this implication would assume that there is a periteret use of the imperfect (without vav [˚] consecutive).

18 The motif of “going up” is still present; here the Hebrew text says “go up” (the Qal imperative — “go up yourselves”) from their tents, meaning, move away from them.

19 Heb “rose up.”

20 The word rusha (rasha) has the sense of a guilty criminal. The word “wicked” sometimes gives the wrong connotation. These men were opposing the LORD, and so were condemned as criminals — they were guilty. The idea of “wickedness” therefore applies in that sense.
men, and do not touch anything they have, lest you be destroyed because of all their sins.

16:27 So they got away from the homes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side, and Dathan and Abiram came out and stationed themselves in the encampments of their tents with their wives, their children, and their toddlers. 16:28 Then Moses said, “This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. 16:29 If these men die a natural death, or if they share the fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. 16:30 But if the LORD does something entirely new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up along with all that they have, and they go down alive to the grave, then you will know that these men have despised the LORD!”

The Hebrew text just has “fire,” but it would be hard to conceive of this action apart from the idea of coals of fire.

16:31 When he had finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, along with their households, and all Korah’s men, and all their goods. 16:33 They and all that they had went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed over them. So they perished from among the community. 16:34 All the Israelites, who were around them fled at their cry, for they were holy, and then scatter the coals of fire at a distance.

16:35 Then a fire went out from the LORD and devoured the 250 men who offered incense.

The Atonement for the Rebellion

16:36 (17:1) The LORD spoke to Moses: 16:37 “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to pick up the censers out of the flame, for they are holy, and then scatter the coals of fire at a distance. 16:38 As for the censers of these men who sinned at the cost of their lives, they must be made into hammered sheets for covering the altar, because they presented them before the LORD and sanctified them. They will become a sign to the Israelites.”

16:39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers presented by those who had been burned up, and they were hammered out as a covering for the altar. 16:40 It was a memorial for the Israelites, that no outsider who is not a descendant of Aaron should approach to burn incense before the LORD, that he might not become like Korah and his company – just

---

1 tn The preposition הֵ֔ת (ḥ) in this line is causal – “on account of their sins.”
2 sn The impression is that the people did not hear what the Lord said to Moses, but only what Moses said to the people as a result. They saw the brilliant cloud, and perhaps heard the sound of his voice, but the relaying of the instructions indicates they did not hear the actual instruction from the Lord himself.
3 tn The verb בָּרָא (bārā‘) suggests a defiant stance, for the word is often used in the sense of taking a stand for or against something. It can also be somewhat neutral, having the sense of “conceive of” this action apart from the idea of coals of fire.
4 tn Heb “in this.”
5 tn The Hebrew text simply has חַלִּיקְיָם (ḥalikīyām), “for not from my heart.” The heart is the center of the will, the place decisions are made (see H. W. Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament). Moses is saying that the things he has done have not come “from the will of man” so to speak – and certainly not from some secret desire on his part to seize power.
6 tn Heb “if like the death of every man they die.”
7 tn The noun is מְשֻׁכָּת (mēshūkhāt), “appointment, visitation.” The expression refers to a natural death, parallel to the first expression.
8 tn The verb אָסָר (’asar) is normally translated “create” in the Bible. More specifically it means to fashion or make or do something new and fresh. Here the verb is joined with its cognate accusative to underscore that this will be so different everyone will know it is of God.
9 tn The figures are personifications. But they vividly describe the catastrophes that follow – which was very much like a mouth swallowing them.
10 tn The word is “life” or “lifetime”; it certainly means their lives – they themselves. But the presence of this word suggests more. It is an accusative specifying the state of the subject – they will go down alive to Sheol.
11 tn The word “Sheol” in the Bible can be used four different ways: the grave, the realm of the departed [wicked] spirits or Hell, death in general, or a place of extreme danger (one that will lead to the grave if God does not intervene). The usage here is certainly the first, and very likely the second as well. A translation of “pit” would not be inappropriate. Since they will go down there alive, it is likely that they will sense the deprivation and the separation from the land above. See H. W. Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament; N. J. Tromp, Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Netherworld in the Old Testament (BibOr 21), 21-23; and A. Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic, especially ch. 3.
12 tn The initial temporal clause is standard: It begins with the temporal indicator “and it was,” followed here by the Piel infinitive construct with the preposition and the subjective genitive suffix. “And it happened when he finished.”
13 tn The infinitive construct with the preposition lamed functions here as the direct object of the preceding infinitive. It tells what he finished.
14 tn Heb “all Israel.”
15 tn Heb “voice.”
16 tn Heb “lest.”
The Budding of Aaron’s Staff

17:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 17:2 “Speak to the Israelites, and receive from them a staff from each tribe, one from every tribal leader, twelve staffs; you must write each man’s name on his staff. 17:3 You must write Aaron’s name on the staff of Levi; for one staff is for the head of every tribe. 17:4 You must place them in the tent of meeting before the ark of the covenant where I meet with you. 17:5 And the staff of the man whom I choose will blossom; so I will rid myself of the complaints of the Israelites, which they murmur against you.”

17:6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a staff, one for each leader, according to their tribes—twelve staffs; the staff of Aaron was among their staffs. 17:7 Then Moses placed the staffs before the Lord in the tent of the testimony.

17:8 On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony—and the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted, and brought forth buds, and produced blossoms, and yielded almonds! 17:9 So Moses brought out all the staffs from before the Lord to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his staff.

The Memorial

17:10 The Lord said to Moses, “Bring Aaron’s staff back before the testimony to be preserved for a sign to the rebels, so that you may bring their murmurings to an end before me, that they will not die.” 17:11 So Moses did as the Lord commanded him—this is what he did.

17:12 The Israelites said to Moses, “We are bound to die! We perish, we all perish! 17:13 (17:28) Anyone who even comes close to the tabernacle of the Lord will die! Are we all to die?”

3 tn The Hebrew text simply reads “the covenant” or “the testimony.”
4 tn Heb “a rod for one leader, a rod for one leader.”
5 tn Heb “the house of their fathers.”
6 tn The name of the tent now attests to the centrality of the ark of the covenant. Instead of the “tent of meeting” (ha’ed, mo’ed) we now find the “the tent of the testimony” (ha’edut, ha’emod).
7 tn The words “at them” are not in the Hebrew text, but have been added in the translation for clarity.
8 tn Num 17:1 in the English Bible is 17:16 in the Hebrew text (BHS). See also the note on 16:36.
9 tn Heb “receive from them a rod, a rod from the house of a father.”
10 tn Heb “from every leader of them according to their fathers’ house.”
11 tn Heb “one rod for the head of their fathers’ house.”
12 tn The verb is the Hiphil perfect of נָחַח (naḥḥ, “to rest”) and so “to set at rest, lay, place, put.” The form with the ה אש (h) consecutive continues the instruction of the previous verse.
Responsibilities of the Priests

18:1 The Lord said to Aaron, “You and your sons and your tribe with you must bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you must bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

18:2 “Bring with you your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, so that they may join with you and minister to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony. They must be responsible to care for you and to care for the entire tabernacle. However, they must not come near the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die. They must join with you, and they will be responsible for the care of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent, but no unauthorized person may approach you. You will be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the care of the altar, so that there will be no more wrath on the Israelites. I myself have chosen your brothers the Levites from among the Israelites. They are given to you as a gift from the Lord, to perform the duties of the tent of meeting. But you and your sons with you are responsible for your priestly duties, for everything at the altar and within the curtain. And you must serve. I give you the priesthood as a gift for service, but the unauthorized person who approaches must be put to death.”

The Portion of the Priests

18:8 The Lord spoke to Aaron, “See, I have given you the responsibility for my raised offerings; I have given all the holy things of the Israelites to you as your priestly portion and to your sons as a perpetual ordinance. Of all the most holy offerings reserved from the fire this will be yours: Every offering of theirs, whether from every grain offering or from every purification offering or from every reparation offering which they bring to me, will be most holy for you and for your sons. You are to eat it as a most holy offering; every male may eat it. It will be holy to you. “And this is yours: the raised offering of their gift, along with all the wave offerings of the Israelites. I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual ordinance. Everyone who is ceremonially clean in your household may eat of it.

18:12 “All the best of the olive oil and all the best of the wine and of the wheat, the first fruits of these things that they give to the Lord, I have given to you. And whatever first ripe fruit in their land they bring to the Lord will be yours; everyone who is ceremonially clean in your household may eat of it.

18:14 “Everything devoted in Israel will be yours. The firstborn of every womb which they present to the Lord, whether human or animal, will be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn sons you must redeem, and the firstborn males of unclean animals you must redeem. And those that must be redeemed you are to redeem when they are a month old, according to your estimation, for five shekels of silver according to the sanctuary shekel (which is twenty gerahs). But you must not redeem the firstborn of a cow or a sheep or a goat; they are holy. You must splash their blood on the altar and burn their fat for an offering made by fire for a pleasing aroma to the Lord. And their meat will be yours, just as the breast and the right hip
of the raised offering is yours. 18:19 All the raised offerings of the holy things that the Israelites offer to the Lord, I have given to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual ordinance. It is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord for you and for your descendants with you.”

**Duties of the Levites**

18:20 The Lord spoke to Aaron, “You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any portion of property among them—1 I am your portion and your inheritance among the Israelites. 18:21 See, I have given the Levites all the tithes in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they perform—the service of the tent of meeting. 18:22 No longer may the Israelites approach the tent of meeting, or else they will bear their sin and die. 18:23 But the Levites must perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they must bear their iniquity. It will be a perpetual ordinance throughout your generations that among the Israelites the Levites have no inheritance. 18:24 But I have given to the Levites for an inheritance the tithes of the Israelites that are offered to the Lord as a raised offering. That is why I said to them that among the Israelites they are to have no inheritance.”

**Instructions for the Levites**

18:25 The Lord spoke to Moses: 18:26 “You are to speak to the Levites, and you must tell them, ‘When you receive from the Israelites the tithe that I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you are to offer up from it as a raised offering to the Lord a tenth of the tithe. 18:27 And your raised offering will be credited to you as though it were grain from the threshing floor or as new wine from the winepress. 18:28 Thus you are to offer up a raised offering to the Lord of all your tithes which you receive from the Israelites; and you must give the Lord’s raised offering from it to Aaron the priest. 18:29 From all your gifts you must offer up every raised offering due the Lord, from all the best of it, and the holiest part of it. 18:30 Therefore you will say to them, ‘When you offer up the best of it, then it will be credited to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor and as the product of the winepress. 18:31 And you may eat it in any place, you and your household, because it is your wages for your service in the tent of meeting. 18:32 And you will bear no sin concerning it when you offer up the best of it. And you must not profane the holy things of the Israelites, or else you will die.’”

The Red Heifer Ritual

19:1-20 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron: 19:2 “This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord has commanded: ‘Instruct the Israelites...”

---

1 sn Salt was used in all the offerings; its importance as a preservative made it a natural symbol for the covenant which was established by sacrifice. Even general agreements were attested by sacrifice, and the phrase “covenant of salt” speaks of such agreements as binding and irrevocable. Note the expression in Ezra 4:14, “we have been salted with the salt of the palace.” See further J. F. Ross, *IDB* 4:167.

2 tn The phrase “of property” is supplied as a clarification.

3 tn The Hebrew text uses the infinitive construct of the verb “to bear” with the lamed (ב) preposition to express the result of such an action. “To bear their sin” would mean that they would have to suffer the consequences of their sin.

4 tn The verse begins with the perfect tense of נָשָׁב (nashab) with vav (ו) consecutive, making the form equal to the instructions preceding it. As its object the verb has the cognate accusative “service.”

5 sn The Levites have the care of the tent of meeting, and so they are responsible for any transgressions against it.

6 tn Heb “they”; the referent (the Levites) has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

7 tn The Hebrew text uses both the verb and the object from the same root to stress the point: They will not inherit an inheritance. The inheritance refers to land.

8 tn The classification of the perfect tense here too could be the perfect of resolve, since this law is declaring what will be their portion—“I have decided to give.”

9 tn In the Hebrew text the verb has no expressed subject (although the “Israelites” is certainly intended), and so it can be rendered as a passive.
to bring a you a red heifer without blemish, which has no defect and has never carried a yoke. The line literally reads, “speak to the Israelites that [and] they bring [will bring].” The imperfect [or jussive] is subordinated to the imperative either as a purpose clause, or as the object of the instruction – speak to them that they bring, or tell them to bring.

2 The color is designated as red, although the actual color could be a tanned red-brown color for the animal (see the usage in Isa 1:18 and Song 5:10). The reddish color suggests that in accordance with Babylonian sacrifices they may have symbolized resistance to future corruption and defilement.

3 The sequence continues with the perfect tense and vav (ו) consecutive.

4 This is the imperfect of permission.

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

6 The verb is the Hitpael of חָטָא (khata), a verb that normally means “to sin.” But the Piel idea in many places is “to defile” because it refers to the purification offering, and so a sense of purifying is what is wanted here.

7 The expression is full: מַאֲסִי נְדִדָה (Masei niddah) – of any life of a man, i.e., of any person.


9 The sequence continues with the perfect tense and vav (ו) consecutive.

10 This is the imperfect of permission.
19:14 “This is the law: When a man dies in a tent, anyone who comes into the tent and all who are in the tent will be ceremonially unclean seven days. 19:15 And every open container that has no covering fastened on it is unclean. 19:16 And whoever touches the body of someone killed with a sword in the open fields, or the body of someone who died of natural causes, or a human bone, or a grave, will be unclean seven days. 19:17 “For a ceremonially unclean person you must take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin and pour fresh running water over them in a vessel. 19:18 Then a ceremonially clean person must take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, on all its furnishings, and on the people who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, or one killed, or one who died, or a grave. 19:19 And the clean person must sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he must purify him, and then he must wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and he will be clean in the evening. 19:20 But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person must be cut off from among the community, because he has polluted the sanctuary of the Lord; the water of purification was not sprinkled on him, so he is unclean. 19:21 “So this will be a perpetual ordinance for them: The one who sprinkles purification must wash his clothes, and the one who touches the water of purification will be unclean until evening. 19:22 And whatever the unclean person touches will be unclean, and the person who touches it will be unclean until evening.”

The Israelites Complain Again

20:1 Then the entire community of Israel entered the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there. 20:2 And there was no water for the community, and so they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. 20:3 The people complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, “If only we had died when our brothers died in the Lord! 20:4 Why have you brought up the Lord’s community into this wilderness? So that we will all die?”

---

11 sn This gives the indication of the weight of the matter, for “until the evening” is the shortest period of ritual uncleanness in the Law. The problem of contamination had to be taken seriously, but this was a relatively simple matter to deal with – if one were willing to obey the Law. 12 sn This chapter is the account of how Moses struck the rock in disobedience to the Lord, and thereby was prohibited from entering the land. For additional literature on this part, see E. Arden, “How Moses Failed God,” JBL 76 (1957): 50-52; J. Gray, “The Desert Sojourn of the Hebrews and the Sinai Horeb Tradition,” VT 4 (1954): 148-64; T. W. Mann, “Theological Reflections on the Denial of Moses,” JSBL 98 (1979): 481-94; and J. R. Porter, “The Role of Kadesh-Barnea in the Narrative of the Exodus,” JTS 44 (1943): 130-43.

---

10 sn The Israelites stayed in Kadesh for some time during the wandering; here the stop at Kadesh Barnea may have lasted several months. See the commentaries for the general itinerary.
and our cattle should die here? 20:5 Why have you brought us up from Egypt only to bring us to this dreadful place? It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink!”

Moses Responds

20:6 So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting. They then threw themselves down with their faces to the ground, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. 20:7 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 20:8 “Take the staff and assemble the community, you and Aaron your brother, and then speak to the rock before their eyes. It will pour forth its water, and you will bring water out of the rock for them, and so you will give the community and their beasts water to drink.”

20:9 So Moses took the staff from before the Lord, just as he commanded him. 20:10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the community together in front of the rock, and he said to them, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring water out of this rock for you?” 20:11 Then Moses raised his hand, and struck the rock twice with his staff. And water came out abundantly. So the community drank, and their beasts drank too.

The Lord’s Judgment

20:12 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust me enough to show me as holy before the Israelites, therefore you will not bring this community into the land I have given them.”

20:13 These are the waters of Meribah, because the Israelites contended with the Lord, and his holiness was maintained among them.

Rejection by the Edomites

20:14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom: “Thus says your brother Israel: ‘You know all the hardships we have experienced, 20:15 how our ancestors went down into Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our ancestors badly.' 20:16 So when we cried to the Lord, he heard our voice and sent a messenger, and has brought us up out of Egypt. Now we are here in Kadesh, a town on the edge of your country. 20:17 Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through the

---

1 tn Heb “and why.”
2 tn Here also the infinitive construct (Hiphil) forms the sub-ordinate clause of the preceding interrogative clause.
3 tn The verb is the Piel perfect with הַנָּצַךְ (natzak), consecutively, following the two imperatives in the verse. Here is the focus of the instruction for Moses.
4 tn Heb “give.” The verb is the perfect tense with הָנִיחַ (nihach) consecutive, as are the next two in the verse. These are not equal to the imperatives, but imperfects, showing the results of speaking to the rock: “speak...and it will...and so you will....”
5 sn The word is הרָעֲרִים (hammorim, “the rebels”), but here as a vocative: “you rebels.” It was a harsh address, although well-earned.
6 sn The first word is הָנְדָש (naddash, “to sanctify”), but here as a vocative: “you sanctify me.”
7 sn The verb describes the faith in the Word of the Lord that leads to an appropriate action. Here God says that Moses did not believe him, meaning that what he did showed more of Moses than of what God said. Moses had taken a hostile stance toward the people, and then hit the rock twice. This showed that Moses was not satisfied with what God said, but made it more forceful and terrifying, thus giving the wrong picture of God to the people. By doing this the full power and might of the Lord was not displayed to the people. It was a momentary lack of faith, but it had to be dealt with.
8 sn Using the basic meaning of the word קָדַשׁ (qadash, “to separate, distinct, set apart”), we can understand better what Moses failed to do. He was supposed to have acted in a way that would have shown God to be distinct, different, holy. Instead, he gave the impression that God was capricious and hostile — very human. The leader has to be aware of what image he is conveying to the people.
9 tn Heb “in the eyes of.”
10 tn There is debate as to exactly what the sin of Moses was. Some interpreters think that the real sin might have been that he refused to do this at first, but that fact has been suppressed from the text. Some think the text was deliberately vague to explain why they could not enter the land without demeaning them. Others simply, and more likely, note that in Moses there was unbelief, pride, anger, impatience — disobedience.
11 tn The form is unusual — it is the Niphal periphrastic, not the normal use of the Piel/Pual stem for “sanctify/sanctified.” The basic idea of “he was holy” has to be the main idea, but in this context it refers to the fact that through judging Moses God was making sure people ensured his holiness among them. The word also forms a wordplay on the name Kadesh.
13 sn Heb “And Moses sent.”
14 sn Some modern biblical scholars are convinced, largely through arguments from silence, that there were no unified kingdoms in Edom until the 9th century, and no settlements there before the 12th century, and so the story must be late, although there are arguments for an earlier setting. Some evidence for the Early Bronze Age suggested by the word used for “king” suggests an earlier dating. There is debate as to whether Edom was a kingdom or a league of cities. Kingship is often used throughout the OT to denote a local political entity, and these were divided into tribes like other parts of the world. Some have seen Edom as a “tribal” kingdom. Some have seen Edom as a “tribal” kingdom. Some have seen the “kingdom of Edom” as a “brotherhood.”
15 tn Heb “and the king of Edom.”
16 sn Modern biblical scholars are convinced, largely through arguments from silence, that there were no unified kingdoms in Edom until the 9th century, and no settlements there before the 12th century, and so the story must be late, although there are arguments for an earlier setting. Some evidence for the Early Bronze Age suggested by the word used for “king” suggests an earlier dating. There is debate as to whether Edom was a kingdom or a league of cities. Kingship is often used throughout the OT to denote a local political entity, and these were divided into tribes like other parts of the world. Some have seen Edom as a “tribal” kingdom. Some have seen Edom as a “tribal” kingdom. Some have seen the “kingdom of Edom” as a “brotherhood.”
17 sn This report seems to be part of a larger section in which the Israelites asked for water and were told to speak to the rock, and the Lord spoke to Moses, “This is how you will show these people that I am the Lord.”
18 sn The verb הָנְדָש (naddash, “to sanctify”) is also used in the context of the king of Edom. The verb קָדַשׁ (qadash, “to separate, distinct, set apart”) is also used in the context of the king of Edom. The verb קָדַשׁ (qadash, “to separate, distinct, set apart”) is also used in the context of the king of Edom.
19 sn The Hebrew text uses הָנְדָש (naddash, “to sanctify”) in the context of the king of Edom. The verb קָדַשׁ (qadash, “to separate, distinct, set apart”) is also used in the context of the king of Edom. The verb קָדַשׁ (qadash, “to separate, distinct, set apart”) is also used in the context of the king of Edom.
fields or through the vineyards, nor will we drink water from any well. We will go by the King’s Highway; we will not turn to the right or the left until we have passed through your region.”

20:18 But Edom said to him, “You will not pass through me, or I will come out against you with the sword.” 20:19 Then the Israelites said to him, “We will go along the highway, and if we or our cattle drink any of your water, we will pay for it. We will only pass through on our feet, without doing anything else.”

20:20 But he said, “You may not pass through.” Then Edom came out against them with a large and powerful force. 20:21 So Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border; therefore Israel turned away from him.

Aaron’s Death

20:22 So the entire company of Israelites traveled from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. 20:23 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the border of the land of Edom. He said: 20:24 “Aaron will be gathered to his ancestors, for he will not enter into the land I have given to the Israelites because both of you rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah. 20:25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up on Mount Hor. 20:26 Remove Aaron’s priestly garments and put them on his son Eleazar, and Aaron will be gathered to his ancestors and will die there.” 20:27 So Moses did as the Lord commanded; and they went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. 20:28 And Moses removed Aaron’s garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. And Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 20:29 When all the community saw that Aaron was dead, the whole house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

Victory at Hormah

21:1-16 When the Canaanite king of Arad 17 who lived in the Negev 18 heard that Israel was approaching along the road to Atharim, he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoner. 21:2 So Israel made a vow 19 to the Lord and said, “If you will indeed deliver this people into our hand, then we will utterly destroy their cities.” 21:3 The Lord listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites 23 and

---

1 sn This a main highway running from Damascus in the north to the Gulf of Aqaba, along the ridge of the land. Some scholars suggest that the name may have been given by the later Assyrians (see B. Oded, “Observations on Methods of Assyrian Rule in Transjordan after the Palestinian Campaign of Tiglathpileser III,” JNES 29 [1970]: 177-86). Bronze Age fortresses have been discovered along this highway, attesting to its existence in the time of Moses. The original name came from the king who developed the highway, probably as a trading road (see S. Cohen, IDB 3:35-36).

2 tn Heb “borders.”

3 tn The imperfect tense here has the nuance of prohibition.

4 tn Heb “meet.”

5 tn The Hebrew text uses singular pronouns, “I” and “my,” but it is the people of Israel that are intended, and so it may be rendered in the plural. Similarly, Edom speaks in the first person, probably from the king. But it too could be rendered “we.”

6 tn Heb “to meet him.”

7 tn Heb “with many heavy people and with a strong hand.” The translation presented above is interpretive, but that is what the line means. It was a show of force, numbers and weapons, to intimidate the Israelites.

8 tn Again the passage uses apposition: “the Israelites, the whole community.”

9 sn The traditional location for this is near Petra (Josephus, Ant. 4.4.7). There is serious doubt about this location since it is well inside Edomite territory, and since it is very inaccessible for the transfer of the office. Another view places it not too far from Kadesh Barnea, about 15 miles (25 km) northeast at Jebel Madurah, on the northwest edge of Edom and so a suitable point of departure for approaching Canaan from the south (see J. L. Miehlec, IDB 2:644; and J. de Vaulx, Les Nombreres [SB], 231). Others suggest it was at the foot of Mount Hor and not actually up in the mountains (see Deut 10:6).

10 sn This is the standard poetic expression for death. The bones would be buried, often with the bones of relatives in the same tomb, giving rise to the expression.

11 sn The verb is in the second person plural form, and so it is Moses and Aaron who rebelled, and so now because of that Aaron first and then Moses would die without going into the land.

12 sn In Heb “mouth.”

13 sn The word “priestly” is supplied in the translation for clarity.

14 sn In Heb “will be gathered”; this is a truncated form of the usual expression “gathered to his ancestors,” found in v. 24. The phrase “to his ancestors” is supplied in the translation here.

15 sn In Heb “eyes.”

16 sn This chapter has several events in it: the victory over Arad (vv. 1-3), the plague of serpents (vv. 4-9), the approach to Moab (vv. 10-20), and the victory over Sihon and Og (vv. 21-35). For information, see D. M. Gunn, “The ‘Battle Report’: Oral or Scribal Convention.” JBL 93 [1974]: 513-18; and of the extensive literature on the archaeological site, see EAEHL 1:74-89.

17 sn The name Arad probably refers to a place a number of miles away from Tel Arad in southern Israel. The name could also refer to the whole region (like Edom).

18 sn Or “the south;” “Negev” has become a technical name for the southern desert region and is still in use in modern times.

19 sn The Hebrew text uses a cognate accusative with the verb: They vowed a vow. The Israelites were therefore determined with God’s help to defeat Arad.

20 sn The Hebrew text has the infinitive absolute and the imperfect tense of the verb (naut) to stress the point – if you will surely/indeed give.”

21 sn In Heb “my.”

22 sn On the surface this does not sound like much of a vow. But the key is in the use of the verb for “utterly destroy” – הָרָע (haru’). Whatever was put to this “ban” or “devotion” belonged to God, either for his use, or for destruction. The oath was in fact saying that they would take nothing from this for themselves. It would simply be the removal of what was alien to the faith, or to God’s program.

23 sn Smr, Greek, and Syriac add “into his hand.”
they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of the place was called
de Hornah.

Fiery Serpents

21:4 Then they traveled from Mount Hor by the road to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became impatient along the way. 21:5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no bread or water, and we\textsuperscript{8} detest this worthless\textsuperscript{8} food.”

21:6 So the Lord sent poisonous\textsuperscript{6} snakes\textsuperscript{7} among the people, and they bit the people; many people of Israel died. 21:7 Then the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord that he would take away\textsuperscript{6} the snakes from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

21:8 The Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous snake and set it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks\textsuperscript{6} at it, he will live.” 21:9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole, so that if a snake had bitten someone, when he looked at the bronze snake he lived.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{5} In the Hebrew text the verb has no expressed subject, and so here too is made passive. The name “Hornah” is etymologically connected to the verb “utterly destroy,” forming the popular etymology (or paronomasia, a phonetic wordplay capturing the significance of the event).

\textsuperscript{6} The “Red Sea” is the general designation for the bodies of water on either side of the Sinai peninsula, even though they are technically gulfs from the Red Sea.

\textsuperscript{7} Heb “the soul of the people,” expressing the innermost being of the people as they became frustrated.

\textsuperscript{8} Heb “our souls.”

\textsuperscript{9} The Israelites’ opinion about the manna was clear enough – “worthless.” The word used is סָרִים (ydpqel, “good for nothing, worthless, miserable”).

\textsuperscript{10} “fiery.”

The designation of the serpents/ snakes is נְחֹשֶׁת (qyllkashim), which is similar to the word for “bronce” (ykkash, n\textsuperscript{4}khoesh). This has led some scholars to describe the serpents as bronze in color. The description of them as fiery indicates they were poisonous. Perhaps the snake in question is a species of adder.

The verb is the Hiphil jussive with a waw (\textsuperscript{1}) consecutive from the verb הָקַש (\textsuperscript{1}qash); after the imperative this form may be subordinated to become a purpose clause.

The word order is slightly different in Hebrew: “and it shall be anyone who is bitten when he looks at it he shall live.”

The image of the snake was to be a symbol of the curse that the Israelites were experiencing; by lifting the snake up on a pole Moses was indicating that the curse would be drawn away from the people – if they looked to it, which was a sign of faith. This symbol was later stored in the temple, until it became an object of worship and had to be removed (2 Kgs 18:14). Jesus, of course, alluded to it and used it as an illustration of his own mission. He would become the curse, and be lifted up, so that people who looked by faith to him would live (John 3:14). For further material, see D. L. Christensen, “Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,” CBQ 36 (1974): 359-60; G. W. Coats, “The Wilderness Itinerary,” CBQ 34 (1972): 135-52; G. I. Davies, “The Wilderness Itinerary,” TB 25 (1974): 46-81; idem, The Way of the Wilderness; G. E. Mendenhall, “The Hebrew Quest of Palestine,” BA 25 (1962): 66-87.

The KJV, following the Vulgate, made the first word a verb and read the second as “Red Sea” – “what he did in the Red Sea.” But the subject of the passage is the terrain. D. L. Christensen proposed emending the first part from אַת וָהֵב (et vahev) to יִהְיֶה (yvh), “is,” and the second as “the people,” expressing the innermost being of the people as they became frustrated.

The place is unknown; it is apparently an important city in the region.

The words “they traveled” are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied here because of English style. The same phrase is supplied at the end of v. 18.

The Approach to Moab

21:10\textsuperscript{11} The Israelites traveled on and camped in Oboth. 21:11 Then they traveled on from Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim, in the wilderness that is before Moab, on the eastern side.\textsuperscript{12} From there they moved on and camped in the valley of Zered. 21:13 From there they moved on and camped on the other side of the Arnon, in the wilderness that extends from the regions of the Amorites, for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 21:14 This is why it is said in the Book of the Wars of the Lord, “Waheb in Suphah\textsuperscript{15} and the wadis, the Arnon 21:15 and the slope of the valleys\textsuperscript{16} that extends to the dwelling of Ar,\textsuperscript{17} and falls off at the border of Moab.”

21:16 And from there they traveled\textsuperscript{18} to Beer,\textsuperscript{19} that is the well where the Lord spoke to Moses, “Gather the people and I will give them water.” 21:17 Then Israel sang\textsuperscript{20} this song:

“Spring up, O well, sing to it!


\textsuperscript{12} These places are uncertain. Oboth may be some 15 miles (25 km) from the south end of the Dead Sea at a place called ‘Ain el-Weiba. But the subject of the passage is the terrain. D. L. Christensen proposed emending the first part from אַת וָהֵב (et vahev) to יִהְיֶה (yvh), “is,” and the second as “the people,” expressing the innermost being of the people as they became frustrated.

\textsuperscript{13} Heb “the rising of the sun.”

\textsuperscript{14} Or “border.”

\textsuperscript{15} The ancient versions show a wide variation here: Smr has “Waheb on the Sea of Reeds,” the Greek version has “he has set Zoob on fire and the torrents of Arnon.” Several modern versions treat the first line literally, taking the two main words as place names: Waheb and Suphah. This seems most likely, but then there would then be no subject or verb. One would need something like “the Israelites marched through.” The KJV, following the Vulgate, made the first word a verb and read the second as “Red Sea” – “what he did in the Red Sea.” But the subject of the passage is the terrain. D. L. Christensen proposed emending the first part from אַת וָהֵב (et vahev) to יִהְיֶה (yvh), “is,” and the second as “the people,” expressing the innermost being of the people as they became frustrated.

\textsuperscript{16} There are many variations in this text, but the MT reading of something like “the descent of the torrents/valleys” is preferable, since it is describing the topography.

\textsuperscript{17} The place is unknown; it is apparently an important city in the region.

\textsuperscript{18} The words “they traveled” are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied here because of English style. The same phrase is supplied at the end of v. 18.

\textsuperscript{19} Isa 15:8 mentions a Moabite Beerelim, which Simons suggests is Wadi Ettemed.

\textsuperscript{20} After the adverb “then” the prefixed conjugation has the preterite force. For the archaic constructions, see D. N. Freedman, “Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry,” ZAW 72 (1960): 101-7. The poem shows all the marks of being ancient.
21:18 The well which the princes dug, which the leaders of the people opened with their sCEPTers and their staffs."

And from the wilderness they traveled to Mount Nebo; 21:19 and from Mount Nebo to Pildes; 21:20 and from Pildes to Ammon, and in all its villages. Now he had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all of his land from his control, 21:23 as far as the Arnon as far as the Arnon. 21:24 And he had captured all of the land of the Amorites who were there. And he had taken all of his land from his control, 21:26 as far as Arnon as far as Arnon, He has devoted all of it to the LORD as a perpetual possession. 21:27 That is why those who speak in proverbs say:

“Come to Heshbon, let it be built. Let the city of Sihon be established! For fire went out from Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon. It has consumed Ar of Moab and the lords of the high places of Arnon. 21:30 We have overpowered them. Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon. We have scattered them as far as Nophah, which reaches to Medeba.”

21:31 So the Israelites lived in the land of the Amorites. 21:32 Moses sent spies to reconnoiter and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there. 21:33 Then they turned and went up by the road to Bashan. And King Og of Bashan and all his forces marched out against them to do battle at Edrei. And the Lord said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand. You will do to him what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon. 21:35 So they defeated Og his sons, and all his people, until war to Israel. Israel wanted to pass through, not fight. But now they would either fight or be pushed into the gorge. So God used Israel to defeat Sihon, who had no claim to the land, as part of divine judgment.

The Victory over Sihon and Og

21:21 Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, saying:

21:22 “Let us pass through your land; we will not turn aside into the fields or into the vineyards, nor will we drink water from any well, but we will go along the King’s Highway until we pass your borders.” 21:23 But Sihon did not permit Israel to pass through his border; he gathered all his forces together and went out against Israel into the wilderness. When he came to Jahaz, he fought against Israel. 21:24 But the Israelites defeated him in battle and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabok, as far as the Ammonites, for the border of the Ammonites was strongly defended. 21:25 So Israel took all these cities; and Israel settled in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its villages. 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of King Sihon of the Amorites. Now he had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all of his land from his control, as far as the Arnon as far as the Arnon. 21:27 That is why those who speak in proverbs say:

“Come to Heshbon, let it be built. Let the city of Sihon be established! For fire went out from Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon. It has consumed Ar of Moab and the lords of the high places of Arnon. 21:30 We have overpowered them. Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon. We have scattered them as far as Nophah, which reaches to Medeba.”

21:31 So the Israelites lived in the land of the Amorites. 21:32 Moses sent spies to reconnoiter and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there. 21:33 Then they turned and went up by the road to Bashan. And King Og of Bashan and all his forces marched out against them to do battle at Edrei. And the Lord said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand. You will do to him what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon. 21:35 So they defeated Og his sons, and all his people, until war to Israel. Israel wanted to pass through, not fight. But now they would either fight or be pushed into the gorge. So God used Israel to defeat Sihon, who had no claim to the land, as part of divine judgment.
there were no survivors,⁵ and they possessed his land.

_Balaam Refuses to Curse Israel_

22:1² The Israelites traveled on⁸ and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan River⁹ across from Jericho. ² Balaam son of Zipper saw all that the Israelites had done to the Amorites. ³ And the Moabites were greatly afraid of the people, because they were so numerous. The Moabites were sick with fear because of the Israelites.

22:4 So the Moabites said to the elders of Midian, “Now this mass of people⁶ will lick up everything around us, as the bull devours the grass of the field. Now Balak son of Zipper was king of the Moabites at this time. ⁵ And he sent messengers to Balaam⁷ son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the Euphrates River⁸ in the land of Amaw,⁹ to summon him, saying, “Look, a nation has come out of Egypt. They cover the face⁰ of the earth, and they are settling next to me. ¹¹ So now, please come and curse this nation¹² for me, for they are too powerful for me. Perhaps I will prevail so that we may conquer them¹³ and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed,¹⁴ and whoever you curse is cursed.”

22:7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fee for divination in their hand. They came to Balaam and reported¹⁵ to him the words of Balak. ²² He replied to them, “Stay¹⁶ here tonight, and I will bring back to you whatever word the L ORD may speak to me.” So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. ²⁸ And God came to Balaam and said, “Who are these men with you?” ²¹ Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zipper, king of Moab, has sent a message to me, saying, ²² “Look, a nation has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Come now and put a curse on them for me; perhaps I will be able to defeat them¹⁸ and drive them out.””¹⁹

22:12 But God said to Balaam, “You must not go with them; you must not curse the people,²⁰ for they are blessed.”²¹

22:13 So Balaam got up in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, “Go to your land,"²² for the L ORD has refused to permit me to go³ with you.” ²²:¹⁴ So the princes of Moab de-

---
¹ tn Heb “no remnant.”
² sn The fifth section of the book (22:1-33:56) traces the Israelite activities in Transjordan. It is hard to determine how long they were in Transjordan, but a good amount of time must have elapsed for the number of moves they made and the wars they fought. There is a considerable amount of information available on this section of the book. Some of the most helpful works include: H. C. Brichto, _The Problem of “Curse” in the Hebrew Bible_ (JBLMS); E. Burrows, _The Oracles of Jacob and Balaam_; G. W. Coats, “Balaam, Sinner or Saint?” _BR_ 18 (1973): 21-29; P. C. Craigie, _The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry_, _TynBul_ 20 (1969): 76-94; I. Parker, “The Way of God and the Way of Balaam,” _ExpTim_ 17 (1905): 45; and J. A. Wharton, “The Command to Bless: An Exposition of Numbers 22:41-23:25,” _Int_ 13 (1959): 37-48. This first part introduces the characters and sets the stage for the oracles. It can be divided into four sections: the invitation declined (vv. 1-14), the second invitation extended (vv. 15-21), God opposes Balaam (vv. 22-35), and Balaam meets Balak (vv. 36-41).
³ tn The verb is the Piel imperfect of _šâr_ (shar, “to grant me to go.”)
⁴ tn The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.
⁵ map For the location of Jericho see Map5-B2; Map6-E1; Map7-E1; Map8-E3; Map10-A2; Map11-A1.
⁶ tn The word is simply “company,” but in the context he must mean a vast company – a horde of people.
⁷ sn There is much literature on pagan diviners and especially prophecy in places in the east like Mari (see, for example, H. B. Huffman, “Prophecy in the Mari Letters,” _BA_ 31 [1968]: 101-24). Balaam appears to be a pagan diviner who was of some reputation; he was called to curse the Israelites, but God intervened and gave him blessings only. The passage forms a nice complement to texts that deal with blessings and curses. It shows that no one can curse someone whom God has blessed.
⁸ tn Heb “by the river”; in most contexts this expression refers to the Euphrates River (cf. NAB, NCV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NLT).
⁹ tn Heb “in the land of Amaw” (cf. NAB, NRSV, TEV); traditionally “in the land of the sons of his people.” The LXX has “by the river of the land.”
¹⁰ tn Heb “eye.” So also in v. 11.
¹¹ tn The two lines before this verse begin with the particle _vâ_ (vav), and so they lay the foundation for these imperatives. In view of those circumstances, this is what should happen.
¹² tn Heb “people.” So also in vv. 10, 17, 41.
¹³ tn The construction uses the imperfect tense _yâhâk_ (yakh, “I will be able”) followed by the imperfect tense _nâk_ (nakak, “we will smite/attack/defeat”). The second verb is clearly the purpose or the result of the first, even though there is no conjunction or particle.
¹⁴ tn The verb is the Piel imperfect of _bâr_ (barakh), with the nuance of possibility: “whomever you may bless.” The Pual participle _mîvârakh_ (miy’varakh) serves as the predicate.
¹⁵ tn Heb “spoke.”
¹⁶ tn The verb _mâ_ (lim) means “to lodge, spend the night.” The related noun is “a lodge” – a hotel of sorts. Balaam needed to consider the offer. And after darkness was considered the best time for diviners to consult with their deities. Balaam apparently knew of the LORD; he testifies to this effect in 22:18. The verb begins with the vav (vav) consecutive.
¹⁷ tn In this passage the text differs slightly; here it is “the nation that comes out,” using the article on the noun, and the active participle in the attributive adjective usage.
¹⁸ tn Here the infinitive construct is used to express the object or complement of the verb “to be able” (it answers the question of what he will be able to do).
¹⁹ tn The verb is the Piel perfect with _nîr_ (nir) consecutive. It either carries the force of an imperfect tense, or it may be subordinated to the preceding verbs.
²⁰ tn The two verbs are negated imperfects; they have the nuance of prohibition: You must not go and you must not curse.
²¹ tn The word _bâr_ (barakh) is the Qal passive participle, serving here as the predicate adjective after the supplied verb “to be.” The verb means “enrich,” in any way, materially, spiritually, physically. But the indication here is that the blessing includes the promised blessing of the patriarchs, a blessing that gave Israel the land. See further, C. Westermann, _Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church_ (OBT).
²² tc The LXX adds “to your lord.”
²³ tn The main verb is the Piel perfect, “he has refused.” This is followed by two infinitives. The first ( _’îhrî_ , Fittii) serves as a complement or direct object of the verb, answering the question of what he refused to do – “to give me.” The second infinitive ( _lîhalalokh_ , lahalalokh) provides the object for the preceding infinitive: “to grant me to go.”
parted" and went back to Balak and said, “Balaam refused to come with us.”

Balaam Accompanies the Moabite Princes

22:15 Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more distinguished than the first. And they came to Balaam and said to him, ‘Thus says Balak son of Zippor: “Please do not let anything hinder you from coming” to me. For I will honor you greatly, and whatever you tell me I will do. So come, put a curse on this nation for me.”’

22:18 Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, “Even if Balak would give me his palace full of silver and gold, I could not transgress the commandment of the Lord my God to do less or more. Now therefore, please stay the night here also, that I may know what more the Lord might say to me.”

22:20 God came to Balaam that night, and said to him, “If the men have come to call you, get up and go with them, but the word that I will say to you, that you must do.”

22:21 So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

God Opposes Balaam

22:22 Then God’s anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him. 22:23 And the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn in his hand, so the donkey turned aside from the road and went into the field. But Balaam beat the donkey, to make her turn back to the road.

22:24 Then the angel of the Lord stood in a path among the vineyards, where there was a wall on either side. And when the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed herself into the wall, and crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall. So he beat her again.

22:26 Then the angel of the Lord went farther, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. 22:27 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she crouched down under Balaam. Then Balaam was angry, and he beat his donkey with a staff.

22:28 Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?”

22:29 And Balaam said to the donkey, “You have made me look stupid; I wish there were a sword in my hand, for I would kill you right now.”

22:30 The donkey said to Balaam, “Am not I your donkey that you have ridden ever since I was yours until this day? Have I ever attempted to treat you this way?” And he said, “No.”

22:31 Then the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand, so he bowed his head and threw himself down with his face to the ground.

22:32 The angel of the Lord said to him, “Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look, I came out to oppose you because what you are doing is perverse before me.

22:33 The donkey saw me and turned from me these three times. If she had not turned from me, I would have killed you but saved her alive.”

22:34 Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, “I
have sinned, for I did not know that you stood against me in the road. 13 So now, if it is evil in your sight, I will go back home.” 14 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but you may only speak the word that I will speak to you.” 15 So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

Balaam Meets Balak

22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at a city of Moab which was on the border of the Arnon at the boundary of his territory. 22:37 Balak said to Balaam, “Did I not send again and again to you to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?” 22:38 Balak said to Balaam, “Look, I have come to you. Now, am I able to speak just anything? I must speak only the word that God puts in my mouth.” 22:39 So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiria-th-huzoth.

22:40 And Balak sacrificed bulls and sheep, and sent some to Balaam, and to the princes who were with him. 22:41 Then on the next morning Balak took Balaam, and brought him up to Bamoth Baal. 22 From there he saw the extent of the nation.

Balaam Blesses Israel

23:1 Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars here, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams.” 23:2 So Balak did just as Balaam had said. Balak and Balaam then offered on each altar a bull and a ram. 23:3 Balaam said to Balak, “Station yourself by your burnt offering, and I will go off; perhaps the LORD will come to meet me, and whatever he reveals to me I will tell you.” 23:4 Then he went to a deserted height. 23:5 Then the LORD put a message in Balaam’s mouth and said, “Return to Balak, and speak what I tell you.” 23:6 So he returned to him, and he was still standing by his burnt offering, and he and all the princes of Moab. 23:7 Then Balaam uttered his oracle, saying, “Balak, the king of Moab, brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, ‘Come, pronounce a curse on Jacob for me; come, denounce Israel.’”

13 sn The first part of Balaam’s activity ends in disaster for Balak – he blesses Israel. The chapter falls into four units: the first prophecy (vv. 1-10), the relocation (vv. 11-17), the second prophecy (vv. 18-24), and a further location (vv. 25-30).
14 tn The Hebrew text has “on the altar,” but since there were seven of each animal and seven altars, the implication is that this means on each altar.
15 tn The verb גָּרָה (garāḥ), means “to take a stand, station oneself.” It is more intentional than simply standing by something. He was to position himself by the sacrifice as Balaam withdrew to seek the oracle.
16 tn Heb “and the word of what he shows me.” The noun is in construct, and so the clause that follows functions as a noun clause in the construct state. The point is that the word will consist of divine revelation.
17 tn The verb is the perfect tense with וַיָּכוֹל (yīḇaḵol) consecutive. This clause is dependent on the clause that precedes it.
18 sn He went up to a bald spot, to a barren height. The statement underscores the general belief that such tops were the closest things to the gods. On such heights people built their shrines and temples.
19 tn The relative pronoun is added here in place of the conjunction to clarify that Balaam is speaking to God and not vice versa.
20 tn Heb “word.”
21 tn Heb “and thus you shall speak.”
22 tn The Hebrew text draws the vividness of the scene with the deictic particle בְּ (bē) – Balaam returned, and there he was, standing there.
23 tn Heb “he”; the referent (Balaam) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
24 tn Heb “took up.”
25 tn The passage calls for a past tense translation; since the verb form is a prefixed conjugation, this tense should be classified as a preterite without the vav (י). Such forms do occur, especially in the ancient poetic passages.
26 sn The opening lines seem to be a formula for the seer to identify himself and the occasion for the oracle. The tension is laid out early; Balaam knows that God has intended to bless Israel, but he has been paid to curse them.
23:8 How can I curse one whom God has not cursed, or how can I denounce one whom the Lord has not denounced?

23:9 For from the top of the rocks I see them; from the hills I watch them. Indeed, a nation that lives alone, and it will not be reckoned among the nations.

23:10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, and let the end of my life be like theirs.

Balaam Relocates

23:11 Then Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but on the contrary you have only blessed them!”

23:12 Balaam replied, “Must I not be careful to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth?”

23:13 Balak said to him, “Please come with me to another place from which you can observe them. You will see only a part of them, but you will not see all of them. Curse them for me from there.”

23:14 So Balak brought Balaam to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, where he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

23:15 And Balaam said to Balak, “Station yourself here by your burnt offering, while I meet the Lord there.

23:16 Then the Lord met Balaam and put a message in his mouth and said, “Return to Balak, and speak what I tell you.”

23:17 When Balaam came to him, he was still standing by his burnt offering, along with the princes of Moab. And Balak said to him, “What has the Lord spoken?”

Balaam Prophesies Again

23:18 Balaam uttered his oracle, and said, “Rise up, Balak, and hear; Listen to me, son of Zipper.

23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a human being that he should change his mind.

Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not make it happen?

343 NUMBERS 23:19

1 tn The figure is erotesis, a rhetorical question. He is actually saying he cannot curse them because God has not cursed them.

2 tn The imperfect tense should here be classified as a potential imperfect.

3 sn Balaam reports his observation of the nation of Israel spread out below him in the valley. Based on that vision, and the Lord’s word, he announces the uniqueness of Israel – they are not just like one of the other nations. He was correct, of course; they were the only people linked with the living God by covenant.

4 tn The verb could also be taken as a reflexive – Israel does not consider itself as among the nations, meaning, they consider themselves to be unique.

5 tn The question is again rhetorical; it means no one can count them – they are innumerable.

6 tn The perfect tense can also be classified as a potential nuance. It does not occur very often, but does occur several times.

7 sn The reference in the oracle is back to Gen 13:16, which would not be clear to Balaam. But God had described their growth like the dust of the earth. Here it is part of the description of the vast numbers.

8 sn Heb “him,” but here it refers to the Israelites (Israel).

9 sn Balaam reports his observation of the nation of Israel spread out below him in the valley. Based on that vision, and the Lord’s word, he announces the uniqueness of Israel – they are not just like one of the other nations. He was correct, of course; they were the only people linked with the living God by covenant.

10 tn The reference in the oracle is back to Gen 13:16, which would not be clear to Balaam. But God had described their growth like the dust of the earth. Here it is part of the description of the vast numbers.

11 sn Here the seer’s words link with the promise of Gen 12:3, that whoever blesses Israel will be blessed. Since the blessing belongs to them, the upright (and not Balak), Balaam would like his lot to be with them.

12 tn Heb “my latter end.”

13 tn Heb “his.”

14 tn The Hebrew text uses מִי (miyneh) here to stress the contrast.

15 tn The construction is emphatic, using the perfect tense and the infinitive absolute to give it the emphasis. It would have the force of “you have done nothing but bless,” or “you have indeed blessed.” The construction is reminiscent of the call of Abram and the promise of the blessing in such elaborate terms.

16 tn Heb “he answered and said.” The referent (Balaam) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

17 tn The verb תָּמַר (temar) means “to guard, watch, observe” and so here with a sense of “be careful” or even “take heed” (so KJV, ASV). The nuance of the imperfect tense would be obligatory: “I must be careful” – to do what? to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth. The infinitive construct “to speak” is therefore serving as the direct object of תָּמַר.

18 tn The clause is a noun clause serving as the direct object of “to speak.” It begins with the sign of the accusative, and then the relative pronoun that indicates the whole clause is the accusative.

19 tn Heb “he brought him”; the referents (Balak and Balaam) have been specified in the translation for clarity.

20 tn Some scholars do not translate this word as “Pisgah,” but rather as a “lookout post” or an “elevated place.”

21 tn “and he built.”

22 tn Heb “he”; the referent (Balaam) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

23 tn The verse uses כֹּה (koh) twice: “Station yourself here... I will meet [the Lord] there.”

24 tn Heb “and he built.”

25 tn Heb “he”; the referent (Balaam) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

26 tn Heb “he.” The antecedent has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

27 tn Heb “took up.”

28 tn The verb probably means “pay attention” in this verse.

29 tn Heb “son of man.”

30 tn The verb is the Hiphil of מָרַע (mara, “to cause to rise; to make stand”). The meaning here is more of the sense of fulfilling the promises made.
Balaam Relocates Yet Again

23:25 Balak said to Balaam, “Neither curse them at all\(^1\) nor bless them at all!\(^2\)” 23:26 But Balaam replied\(^3\) to Balak, “Did I not tell you, ‘All that the LORD speaks,\(^4\) I must do’?”

23:27 Balak said to Balaam, “Come, please; I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God\(^5\) to let you curse them for me from there.”\(^6\)

23:28 So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, that looks toward the wilderness.\(^7\) 23:29 Then Balaam said to Balak, “Build seven altars here for me, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams.”\(^8\) 23:30 So Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

Balaam Prophecies Yet Again

24:1\(^9\) When Balaam saw that pleasured Balak, \(24:2\) he did not go as at the other times\(^10\) to seek for omens,\(^11\) but he set his face\(^12\) toward the wilderness. 24:2 When Balaam lifted up his eyes, he saw Israel camped tribe by

---

1 tn The Hebrew text simply has “I have received [to] bless.”
2 sn The reference is probably to the first speech, where the Lord blessed Israel. Balaam knows that there is nothing he can do to reverse what God has said.
3 tn The word is the Hiphil participle from נקחש (n̂̃khash) meaning “to cause to return.” He cannot return God’s word to him, for it has been given, and it will be fulfilled.
4 tn These could be understood as impersonal and so rendered “no one has discovered.”
5 sn The line could mean that God has regarded Israel as the ideal congregation without any blemish or flaw. But it could also mean that God has not looked on their iniquity, meaning, held it against them.
6 tn The word means “wrong, misery, trouble.” It can mean the idea of “disaster” as well, for that too is trouble. Here it is parallel to “iniquity” and so has the connotation of something that would give God reason to curse them.
7 tn The people are blessed because God is their king. In fact, the shout of acclamation is among them – they are proclaiming the Lord as their king. The word is used normally for the sound of the trumpet, but also of battle shouts, and then here acclamation. This will represent their conviction that Yahweh is king. On the usage of this Hebrew word see further BDB 929-30 s.v. נקחש; HALOT 1790-91 s.v.
8 tn The form is the Hiphil participle from נקシー (n̂̃kshā') with the object suffix. He is the one who brought them out.
9 sn The expression is “the horns of the wild ox” (KJV “unicorn”). The point of the image is strength or power. Horns are also used in the Bible to represent kingship (see Pss 89:13 and 132).
10 tn Or “in Jacob.” But given the context the meaning “against” is preferable. The words describe two techniques of consulting God; the first has to do with observing omens in general (“enchantments”), and the second with casting lots or arrows for answers. The like (“divinations”) [Ezek 21:21-26]. See N. H. Snaith, Leviticus and Numbers (NCB), 295-96.
11 tn The form is the preposition “like, as” and the word for “time” – according to the time, about this time, now.
12 tn The Niphil imperfect here carries the nuance of obligation – one has to say in amazement that God has done something marvelous or “it must be said.”
13 tn The words “look at” are not in the Hebrew text but have been added in the translation for clarity.
14 tn The pronoun “their” has been supplied for clarity; it is not present in the Hebrew text.
15 sn The oracle compares Israel first to a lion, or better, lioiness, because she does the tracking and hunting of food while the lion moves up and down roaring and distracting the prey. But the lion is also the traditional emblem of Judah, Dan and Gad, as well as the symbol of royalty. So this also supports the motif of royalty as well for Israel.
16 tn The verb is preceded by the infinitive absolute: “you shall by no means curse” or “do not curse them at all.” He brought him to curse, and when he tried to curse there was a blessing. Balak can only say it would be better not to bother.
17 tn The same construction now works with “nor bless them at all.” The two together form a merism – “don’t say anything.” He does not want them blessed, so Balaam is not to do that, but the curse isn’t working either.
18 tn Heb “answered and said.”
19 tn This first clause, “all that the LORD speaks” – is a noun clause functioning as the object of the verb that comes at the end of the verse. It is something of an independent accusative case, since it is picked up with the sign of the accusative: “all that the LORD speaks, it must do.”
20 tn Heb “be pleasing in the eyes of God.”
21 sn Balak is stubborn, as indeed Balaam is persistent. But Balak still thinks that if another location were used it just might work. Balaam had actually told Balak in the prophecy that other attempts would fail. But Balak refuses to give up so easily. So he insists they perform the ritual and try again. This time, however, Balaam will change his approach, and this will result in a dramatic outpouring of power on him.
22 tn Or perhaps as a place name, “Jeshimon” (cf. 21:20).
23 sn For a thorough study of the arrangement of this passage, see E. B. Smick, “A Study of the Structure of the Third Balaam Oracle,” The Law and the Prophets, 242-52. He sees the oracle as having an introductory strophe (vv. 3, 4), followed by two stanzas (vv. 5, 6) that introduce the body (vv. 7b-9b) before the final benediction (v. 9b).
24 tn Heb “it was good in the eyes of the Lord.”
25 tn Heb “as time after time.”
26 tn The word כריב (k̄̃rīḇ) meaning “omens,” or possibly “auguries.” Balaam is not even making a pretense now of looking for such things, because they are not going to work. God has overruled them.
27 tn The idea is that he had a determination and resolution to look out over where the Israelites were, so that he could appreciate more their presence and use that as the basis for his expressing of the oracle.
tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. 24:3 Then he uttered this oracle:

“The oracle of Balaam son of Beor;
the oracle of the man whose eyes are open; 4
the oracle of the one who hears the
words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty,
although falling flat on the ground with
eyes open: 5
How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob,
and your dwelling places, O Israel! 6
They are like valleys stretched forth,
like gardens by the river’s side,
like aloes that the Lord has planted,
and like cedar trees beside the waters. 7
He will pour the water out of his
crocks, and his descendants will be like abun-
dant water; 8
their king will be greater than Agag; 9
and their kingdom will be exalted. 10
God brought them out of Egypt. 11
They have, as it were, the strength of a
young bull; they will devour hostile people 12
and will break their bones and will pierce them through with arrows. 13
They crouch and lie down like a lion,
and as a lioness, who can stir him?
Blessed is the one who blesses you,
and cursed is the one who curses you!” 14

24:10 Then Balak became very angry at Balaam, and he struck his hands together. 15 Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have done nothing but bless them these three times! 24:11 So now, go back where you came from!” 16 I said that I would greatly honor you, but now the Lord has stood in the way of your honor.” 24:12 Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me, 24:13 ‘If Balak would give me his palace full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord to do either good or evil of my own will, but whatever the Lord tells me I must speak?’ 24:14 And now, I am about to go back to my own people. Come now, and I will advise you as to what this people will do to your people in the future.”

Balaam Prophesies a Fourth Time 24:15 Then he uttered this oracle: “The oracle of Balaam son of Beor; the oracle of the man whose eyes are open;
the oracle of the one who hears the words of God, and who knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, although falling flat on the ground with eyes open: 24:17 ‘I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not close at hand. 26 A star will march forth out of Jacob,”

---

1 tn Heb “living according to their tribes.” 2 tn Heb “and he took up his oracle and said.” 3 tn The word נְאֻם (n’m) is an “oracle.” It is usually followed by a subjective genitive, indicating the doer of the action. The word could be rendered “says,” but this translation is more specific. 4 tn The Greek version reads “the one who sees truly.” The word has been interpreted in both ways, “shut” or “open.” 5 tn The phrase “flat on the ground” is supplied in the translation for clarity. The Greek version interprets the line to mean “falling asleep.” It may mean falling into a trance. 6 tn The last colon simply has “falling, but opened eyes.” The falling may simply refer to lying prone; and the opened eyes may refer to his receiving a vision. See H. E. Freeman, An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets, 37-41. 7 tn Here נַע (nuh) has an exclamatory sense: “How!” (see Gen 28:17). 8 tn Heb “as valleys they spread forth.” 9 sn In “rows of palms.” 10 sn The language seems to be more poetic than precise. N. H. Snaith notes that cedars do not grow beside water; he also connects “aloes” to the eaglewood that is more exotic, and capable of giving off an aroma (Lectivus and Numbers [NCB], 298). 11 tc For this colon the LXX has “a man shall come out of his seed.” Cf. the Syriac Peschitta and Targum. 12 tn Heb “many.” 13 sn These two lines are difficult, but the general sense is that of irrigation buckets and a well-watered land. The point is that Israel will be prosperous and fruitful. 14 sn Many commentators see this as a reference to Agag of 1 Sam 15:32-33, the Amalekite king slain by Samuel, for that is the one we know. But that is by no means clear, for this text does not identify this Agag. If it is that king, then this poem, or this line in this poem, would have to be later, unless one were to try to argue for a specific prophecy. Whoever this Agag is, he is a symbol of power. 15 tn Heb “they will devour nations,” their adversaries. 16 sn On the usage of this word see HALOT s.v. נַע. 17 sn This is apparently a sign of contempt or derision (see Job 27:23; and Lam 2:15). 18 sn The construction is emphatic, using the infinitive absolute with the perfect tense for “bless.” 19 tn Heb “flee to your place.” 20 tn Heb “I am not able to go beyond.” 21 tn Heb “mouth.” 22 tn Heb “from my heart.” 23 sn The construction is the particle הניה (hinneh) suffixed followed by the active participle. This is the futuro instans use of the participle, to express something that is about to happen: “I am about to go.” 24 tn Heb “in the latter days.” For more on this expression, see E. Lipiński, בַלָּאָם dans les textes préexiliques, VT 20 (1970): 445-50. 25 sn Heb “and he took up his oracle and said.” 26 tn Heb “near.” 27 sn This is a figure for a king (see also Isa 14:12) not only in the Bible, but in the ancient Near Eastern literature as a whole. The immediate reference of the prophecy seems to be to David, but the eschatological theme goes beyond him. There is to be a connection made between this passage and the sighting of a star in its ascendancy by the magi, who then traveled to Bethlehem to see the one born King of the Jews (Matt 2:2). The expression “son of a star” (Aram Bar Kochba) became a title for a later claimant to kingship, but he was doomed by the Romans in a.d. 135. 28 sn The verb is the perfect tense with וַיְבָא (vay’w) consecutive; it is equal to the imperfect expressing the future. The verb
and a scepter\(^4\) will rise out of Israel. He will crush the skulls\(^8\) of Moab, and the heads\(^9\) of all the sons of Sheth.\(^4\)

24:18 Edom will be a possession, Seir,\(^5\) his enemies, will also be a possession; but Israel will act valiantly.

24:19 A ruler will be established from Jacob; he will destroy the remains of the city."\(^6\)

Balaam's Final Prophecies

24:20 Then Balaam\(^7\) looked on Amalek and delivered this oracle:\(^8\)

"Amalek was the first\(^9\) of the nations, but his end will be that he will perish."

24:21 Then he looked on the Kenites and uttered this oracle:

"Your dwelling place seems strong, and your nest\(^10\) is set on a rocky cliff.

24:22 Nevertheless the Kenite will be consumed.\(^11\) How long will Asshur take you away captive?"

24:23 Then he uttered this oracle:

"O, who will survive when God does this!\(^12\)

24:24 Ships will come from the coast of Kittim,\(^13\) and will afflict Asshur,\(^14\) and will afflict Eber, and he will also perish forever.\(^15\)"

24:25 Balaam got up and departed and returned to his home,\(^16\) and Balak also went his way.

Israel's Sin with the Moabite Women

25:1\(^7\) When Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to commit sexual immorality,\(^18\) with the daughters of Moab. 25:2 These women invited\(^20\) the people to the sacrifices of their gods; then the people ate and bowed down to their gods,\(^21\)

25:3 When Israel joined themselves to Baal-peor,\(^22\) the anger of the LORD flared up against Israel.

\(^{13}\) tc The MT is difficult. The Kittim refers normally to Cyprus, or any maritime people of the west. W. F. Albright proposed emending the line to "islands will gather in the north, ships from the distant sea" ("The Oracles of Balaam," JBL 63 [1944]: 222-23). Some commentators accept that reading as the original state of the text, since the present MT makes little sense.

\(^{14}\) tn Or perhaps "Assyria" (so NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

\(^{15}\) tn Or "it will end in utter destruction."

\(^{16}\) tn Heb "place."

\(^{17}\) sn Chapter 25 tells of Israel's sins on the steppes of Moab, and God's punishment. In the overall plan of the book, here we have another possible threat to God's program, although here it comes from within the camp (Balaam was the threat from without). If the Moabites could not defeat them one way, they would try another. The chapter has three parts: fornication (vv. 1-3), God's punishment (vv. 4-9), and after-math (vv. 10-18). See further G. E. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation, 105-21; and S. C. Reif, "What Enraged Phinehas? A Study of Numbers 25:8," JBL 90 (1971): 200-206.

\(^{18}\) tn This first preterite is subordinated to the next as a temporal clause; it is not giving a parallel action, but the setting for the event.

\(^{19}\) sn The account apparently means that the men were having sex with the Moabite women. Why the men submitted to such a temptation at this point is hard to say. It may be that as military heroes the men took liberties with the women of occupied territories.

\(^{20}\) tn The verb simply says "they called," but it is a feminine plural. And so the women who engaged in immoral acts with Hebrew men invited them to their temple ritual.

\(^{21}\) sn What Israel experienced here was some of the de-based ritual practices of the Canaanite people. The act of prostrating themselves before the pagan deities was probably participation in a fertility ritual, nothing short of cultic prostitution. This was a blatant disregard of the covenant and the Law. If something were not done, the nation would have destroyed itself.

\(^{22}\) tn The verb is "yoked" to Baal-peor. The word is unusual, and may suggest the physical, ritual participation described below. It certainly shows that they acknowledge the reality of the local god.
25:4 The Lord said to Moses, “Arrest all the leaders⁴ of the people, and hang them up² before the Lord in broad daylight,³ so that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel.” 25:5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you must execute those of his men⁶ who were joined to Baal-peon.”

25:6 Just then⁹ one of the Israelites came and brought to his brothers⁶ a Midianite woman in the plain view of Moses and of⁰ the whole community of the Israelites, while they⁸ were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 25:7 When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it,⁹ he got up from among the assembly, took a javelin in his hand, 25:8 and went after the Israelite man into the tent¹⁰ and thrust through the Israelite man and into the woman’s abdomen.¹¹ So the plague was stopped from the Israelites. 25:9 Those that died in the plague were 24,000.

25:10 The Lord spoke to Moses: 25:11 “Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites, when he manifested such zeal¹³ for my sake among them, so that I did not consume the Israelites in my zeal. 25:12 Therefore, announce:¹⁴ “I am going to give¹⁶ to him my covenant of peace.²⁷ 25:13 So it will be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of a permanent priesthood, because he has been zealous for his God,¹⁘ and has made atonement¹⁹ for the Israelites.”³³ 25:14 Now the name of the Israelite who was stabbed – the one who was stabbed with the Midianite woman – was Zimri son of Salu, a leader of a clan²⁰ of the Simeonites. 25:15 The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur. He was a leader²² over the people of a clan of Midian.²² 25:16 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 25:17 “Bring trouble²⁵ to the Midianites, and destroy

---

² sn The meaning must be the leaders behind the apostasy, for they would now be arrested. They were responsible for the tribes’ conformity to the Law, but here they had not only failed in their duty, but had participated. The leaders were executed; the rest of the guilty died by the plague.
³ tn The verb is repeated as the active participle in the line, and so in his zeal he dramatically put an end to this incident, that served to stop the rest and end the plague.
⁴ sn The Lord “he was zealous with my zeal.” The repetition of forms for “zeal” in the line stresses the passion of Phinehas. The word “zeal” means a passionate intensity to protect or preserve divine or social institutions.
⁵ tn The word “zeal” now occurs a third time. While some English versions translate this word here as “jealousy” (KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV), it carries the force of God’s passionate determination to defend his rights and what is right about the covenant and the community and parallels the “zeal” that Phinehas had just demonstrated.
⁶ tn Heb “slay – a man his men.” The imperative is plural, and so “man” is to be taken collectively as “each of you men.”
⁷ tn The verse begins with the deictic particle הִנֵּה (hinnéh), pointing out the action that was taking place. It stresses the immediacy of the action to the reader.
⁸ tn Or “to his family”; or “to his clan.”
⁹ tn Heb “before the eyes of Moses and before the eyes of…”
¹⁰ tn The vav (ו) at the beginning of the clause is a disjointive because it is prefixed to the nonverbal form. In this context it is best interpreted as a circumstantial clause, stressing that this happened “while” people were weeping over the sin.
¹¹ tn The first clause is subordinated to the second because both begin with the preterite verbal form, and there is clearly a logical and/or chronological sequence involved.
¹² tn The word והִנֵּה (hinnéh) seems to refer to the innermost part of the family tent. Some suggest it was in the tabernacle area, but that is unlikely. S. C. Reif argues for a private tent shrine (“What Enraged Phinehas? A Study of Numbers 25:8,” JBL 90 [1971]: 200-206).
¹³ tn Heb “a father’s house.” So also in v. 15.
¹⁴ tn Heb “head.”
¹⁵ tn The passage makes it clear that this individual was a leader, one who was supposed to be preventing this thing from happening. The judgment was swift and severe, because the crime was so great, and the danger of it spreading was certain. Paul refers to this horrible incident when he reminds Christians not to do similar things (1 Cor 10:6-8).
¹⁶ sn The form is the infinitive absolute used in place of a verb here; it clearly is meant to be an instruction for Israel. The idea is that of causing trouble, harassing, vexing Midian. The verb is repeated as the active participle in the line, and so the punishment is talionic.
¹⁷ sn This passage is an example of the literary form of the absolute imperative. The unpredictable nature of punishment is emphasized as “turning away” and the corporate response of the Israelites is noted. Because God was free to end the plague and pardon the people, God’s holiness and righteousness have always been every bit as important as God’s mercy and compassion, for without righteousness and holiness mercy and compassion mean nothing.
¹⁸ sn The atonement that he made in this passage refers to the killing of the two obviously blatant sinners. By doing this he dispensed with any animal sacrifice, for the sinners themselves died. In Leviticus it was the life of the substitutionary animal that was taken in place of the sinners that made atonement. The point is that sin was punished by death, and so God was free to end the plague and pardon the people.
them, that they bring trouble to you by their treachery with which they have deceived you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, who was killed on the day of the plague that happened as a result of Peor."

_A Second Census Required_

26:1 After the plague the Lord said to Moses and to Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, "Take a census of the whole community of Israelite men, from twenty years old and upward, by their clans, everyone who can serve in the army of Israel." 26:2 So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab, by the Jordan River across from Jericho. They said, "Number the people from twenty years old and upward, just as the Lord commanded Moses and the Israelites who went out from the land of Egypt."

_Reuben_

26:5 Reuben was the firstborn of Israel. The Reubenites: from Hanoch, the family of the Hanochites; from Pallu, the family of the Palluites; from Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; from Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 26:6 These were the families of the Reubenites; and those numbered of them were 43,730. 26:7 These were the families of the Reubenites; and those numbered of them were 43,730. 26:8 Pallu's descendant was Eliab. 26:9 Eliab's descendants were Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. It was Dathan and Abiram who as leaders of the community rebelled against Moses and Aaron with the followers of Korah when they rebelled against the Lord. 26:10 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and Korah at the time that company eventually succumbed to Israel (Num 31:8). When the text changed as a result of Peor.

_Simeon_

26:12 The Simeonites by their families: from Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; from Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; from Jakin, the family of the Jakinites; 26:13 from Zerah, the family of the Zerahites; and from Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 26:14 These were the families of the Simeonites, 22,200.

_Gad_

26:15 The Gadites by their families: from Zepho, the family of the Zephonites; from Haggi, the family of the Haggites; from Shuni, the family of the Shunites; 26:16 from Ozni, the family of the Ozonites; from Eri, the family of the Ehrites; 26:17 from Arod, the family of the Arodites, and from Arli, the family of the Arelites. 26:18 These were the families of the Gadites according to those numbered of them, 40,500.

_Judah_

26:19 The descendants of Judah were Er and Onan, but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 26:20 And the Judahites by their families were: from Shelah, the family of the Shelahites; from Perez, the family of the Perezites; and from Zerah, the family of the Zerahites. 26:21 And the Perezites were: from Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; from Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. 26:22 These were the families of Judah according to those numbered of them, 76,500.

_Issachar_

26:23 The Issacharites by their families: from Tola, the family of the Toldaites; from Pua, the family of the Puites; 26:24 from Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; and from Shimron, the family of the Shimmronites. 26:25 These were the families of Issachar, according to those numbered of them, 64,300.

_Zebulun_

26:26 The Zebulunites by their families: from Sered, the family of the Seredites; from Elon, the family of the Elionites; from Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 26:27 These were the
families of the Zebulunites, according to those numbered of them, 60,500.\(^1\)

**Manasseh**

26:28 The descendants of Joseph by their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. **26:29** The Manassehites: from Machir, the family of the Machirites (now Machir became the father of Gilead); from Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. **26:30** These were the Gileadites: from Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; from Helek, the family of the Helekites; **26:31** from Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; from Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; **26:32** from Shamir, the family of the Shamirites; from Heper, the family of the Hepherites. **26:33** Now Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons, but only daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. **26:34** These were the families of Manasseh; those numbered of them were 52,700.\(^2\)

**Ephraim**

26:35 These are the Ephraimites by their families: from Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthelahites; from Beker, the family of the Bekerites; from Tahan, the family of the Tahaniites. **26:36** Now these were the Shuthelahites: from Eran, the family of the Eranites. **26:37** These were the families of the Ephraimites, according to those numbered of them, 32,500.\(^3\) These were the descendants of Joseph by their families.

**Benjamin**

26:38 The Benjaminites by their families: from Bela, the family of the Belaites; from Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; from Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; **26:39** from Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites; from Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. **26:40** The descendants of Bela were Ard\(^6\) and Naaman. From Ard, the family of the Ardites; from Naaman, the family of the Naamanites. **26:41** These are the Benjaminites, according to their families, and according to those numbered of them, 45,600.\(^7\)

---

\(^1\) sn The Zebulunites showed an increase from 57,400 to 60,500.

\(^2\) sn The Manasssehites increased from 32,200 to 52,700.

\(^3\) sn This is a significant reduction from the first count of 40,500.

\(^4\) tc With the exception of a few manuscripts the MT has Shephupham. The spelling in the translation above is supported by Smr and the ancient versions.

\(^5\) tc The LXX has Adar. Cf. 1 Chr 8:3.

\(^6\) tc “From Ard” is not in the Hebrew text.

\(^7\) sn The Benjaminites increased from 35,400 to 45,600. The Greek version has here 35,500.

**Dan**

26:42 These are the Danites by their families: from Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These were the families of Dan, according to their families. **26:43** All the families of the Shuhahites according to those numbered of them were 64,400.\(^8\)

**Asher**

26:44 The Asherites by their families: from Imnah, the family of the Imnahites; from Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites; from Beriah, the family of the Beriahites. **26:45** From the Beriahites: from Heber, the family of the Heberites; from Malkiel, the family of the Malkielites. **26:46** Now the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah.\(^9\) **26:47** These are the families of the Asherites, according to those numbered of them, 53,400.\(^10\)

**Naphtali**

26:48 The Naphtalites by their families: from Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; from Guni, the family of the Guniites; **26:49** from Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; from Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. **26:50** These were the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those numbered of them were 45,400.\(^11\)

**Total Number and Division of the Land**

26:51 These were those numbered of the Israelites, 601,730.\(^12\)

26:52 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: **26:53** “To these the land must be divided as an inheritance according to the number of the names. **26:54** To a larger group you will give a larger inheritance,\(^13\) and to a smaller group you will give a smaller inheritance.\(^14\) To each one its inheritance must be given according to the number of people in it.\(^15\) **26:55** The land must be divided by lot; and they will inherit in accordance with the names of their ancestral tribes. **26:56** Their inheritance must be apportioned\(^16\) by lot among the larger and smaller groups.

26:57 And these are the Levites who were numbered according to their families: from Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; from Merari, the family of the Merarites. **26:58** These are the
families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlotites, the family of the Mushiites, the family of the Korahites. Kohath became the father of Amram. 26:59 Now the name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. And to Amram she bore Aaron, Moses, and Miriam their sister. 26:60 And to Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Itamar. 26:61 But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the LORD. 26:62 Those of them who were numbered were 23,000, all males from a month old and upward, for they were not numbered among the Israelites; no inheritance was given to them among the Israelites.

26:63 These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the Israelites in the plains of Moab along the Jordan River opposite Jericho. 26:64 But there was not a man among these who had been among those numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai. 26:65 For the LORD had said of them, “They will surely die in the wilderness.” And there was not left a single man of them, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Special Inheritance Laws

27:1 Then the daughters of Zelophehad son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh of the families of Manasseh, the son Joseph came forward. Now these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 27:2 And they stood before Moses and Eleazar the priest and the leaders of the whole assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting and said, 27:3 “Our father died in the wilderness, although he was not part of the company of those that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah, but he died for his own sin; and he had no sons. 27:4 Why should the name of our father be lost from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among the relatives of our father.”

27:5 So Moses brought their case before the LORD. 27:6 The LORD said to Moses: 27:7 “The daughters of Zelophehad have a valid claim. 27:8 You must indeed give them possession of an inheritance among their father’s relatives, and you must transfer the inheritance of their father to them. 27:9 And you must tell the Israelites, ‘If a man dies and has no son, then you must transfer his inheritance to his brothers; 27:10 and if he has no brothers, then you are to give his inheritance to his father’s brothers; 27:11 and if his father has no brothers, then you are to give his inheritance to his relative nearest to him from his family, and he will possess it. This will be for the Israelites a legal requirement, as the LORD commanded Moses.’”

Leadership Change

27:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go up this mountain of the Abarim range, and...”

---

7 tn This clause begins with a vav (ו) on a pronoun, marking it out as a disjunctive vav. In this context it fits best to take it as a circumstantial clause introducing concession.
8 tn Heb “in the midst of.”
9 tn The word order is emphatic: “but in/on account of his own sins he died.”
10 tn That is, the possession of land, or property, among the other families of their tribe.
11 tn The word is “brothers,” but this can be interpreted more loosely to relatives. So also in v. 7.
12 tn Heb “[the daughters of Zelophehad] speak right” (using the participle יָשָׁר [yishar] with כָּךְ [kach]).
13 tn The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute with the imperfect tense. The imperfect is functioning as the imperfect of instruction, and so the infinitive strengthens the force of the instruction.
14 tn The verb is the Hiphil perfect with a vav (ו) consecutive, from the root נָשָׁה (nasah, “to pass over”). Here it functions as the equivalent of the imperfect of instruction: “and you shall cause to pass,” meaning, “transfer.”
15 tn Heb “a man, if he dies.”
16 tn The expression is זָקַנָה מִשְׁפָּט (zakan mishpat, “a statute of judgment”), which means it is a fixed enactment that determines justice. It is one which is established by God.
18 tc The Greek version adds “which is Mount Nebo.” This is a typical scribal change to harmonize two passages.
19 sn The area is in the mountains of Moab; Deut 34:1 more precisely identifies it as Mount Nebo.
see² the land I have given² to the Israelites. 27:13 When you have seen it, you will be gathered³ to your ancestors,⁴ as Aaron your brother was gathered to his ancestors.⁵ 27:14 For⁶ in the wilderness of Zin when the community rebelled against me, you¹ rebelled against my command⁷ to show me as holy⁸ before their eyes over the water – the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.”

27:15 Then Moses spoke to the Lord: 27:16 “Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all humankind,⁹ appoint¹⁰ a man over the community, 27:17 who will go out before them, and who will come in before them,¹¹ and who will lead them out, and who will bring them in, so that¹² the community of the Lord may not be like sheep that have no shepherd.”

27:18 The Lord replied¹⁴ to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is such a spirit,¹⁵ and lay your hand on him.”¹⁶ 27:19 set him¹⁷ before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community, and commission¹⁸ him publicly.¹⁹ 27:20 Then you must delegate²⁰ some of your authority²¹ to him, so that the whole community of the Israelites will be obedient.²² 27:21 And he will stand before Eleazar the priest, who²³ will seek counsel²⁴ for him before the Lord by the decision of the Urim.²⁵ At his command²⁶ they will go out, and at his command they will come in, he and all the Israelites with him, the whole community.”

27:22 So Moses did as the Lord commanded him; he took Joshua and set²⁷ him before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community. 27:23 He laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the Lord commanded,²⁸ by the authority²⁹ of Moses.

Daily Offerings

28:1⁰ The Lord spoke to Moses: 28:2 “Command the Israelites:³¹ ‘With regard to my offering,²⁶ be sure to offer³³ my food for my...
offering made by fire, as a pleasing aroma to me at its appointed time.\textsuperscript{1} 28:3 You will say to them, ‘This is the offering made by fire which you must offer to the LORD: two unblemished lambs one year old each day for a continual\textsuperscript{2} burnt offering. 28:4 The first lamb you must offer in the morning, and the second lamb you must offer in the late afternoon.\textsuperscript{3} 28:5 with one-tenth of an ephah\textsuperscript{4} of finely ground flour as a grain offering mixed with one quarter of a hin\textsuperscript{5} of pressed olive oil. 28:6 It is a continual burnt offering that was instituted on Mount Sinai as a pleasing aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

28:7 “And its drink offering must be one quarter of a hin for each lamb.\textsuperscript{6} You must pour out the strong drink\textsuperscript{7} as a drink offering to the LORD in the holy place. 28:8 And the second lamb you must offer in the late afternoon; just as you offered the grain offering and drink offering in the morning,\textsuperscript{8} you must offer it as an offering made by fire, as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Weekly Offerings

28:9 “On the Sabbath day, you must offer\textsuperscript{9} two unblemished lambs a year old, and two-tenths of an ephah\textsuperscript{10} of finely ground flour as a grain offering, mixed with olive oil, along with its drink offering. 28:10 This is the burnt offering for every Sabbath,\textsuperscript{11} besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.

Monthly Offerings

28:11 “On the first day of each month\textsuperscript{12} you must offer as a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven unblemished lambs a year old. 28:12 with three-tenths of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering for each bull, and two-tenths of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering for the ram. 28:13 and one-tenth of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering for a pleasing aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28:14 For their drink offerings, include\textsuperscript{13} half a hin of wine with each bull, one-third of a hin for the ram, and one-fourth of a hin for each lamb. This is the burnt offering for each month\textsuperscript{14} throughout the months of the year. 28:15 And one male goat\textsuperscript{15} must be offered to the LORD as a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.

Passover and Unleavened Bread

28:16 “On the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD’s Passover. 28:17 And on the fifteenth day of this month is the festival. For seven days bread made without yeast must be eaten. 28:18 And on the first day there is to be a holy assembly; you must do no ordinary work\textsuperscript{16} on it.

28:19 “But you must offer to the LORD an offering made by fire, a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs one year old; they must all be unblemished.\textsuperscript{17} 28:20 And their grain offering is to be of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil. For each bull you must offer three-tenths of an ephah, and two-tenths for the ram. 28:21 For each of the seven lambs you are to offer one-tenth of an ephah,\textsuperscript{18} as well as one goat for a purification offering, to make atonement for you. 28:22 You must offer these in addition to the burnt offering in the morning which is for a continual burnt offering. 28:23 In this manner you must offer daily throughout the seven days the food of the sacrifice made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD. It is to be offered in addition to the continual burnt offering and its drink offering. 28:25 On the seventh day you are to have a holy assembly, you must do no regular work.

---


\textsuperscript{2} sn The sacrifice was to be kept burning, but each morning the priests would have to clean the grill and put a new offering on the altar. So the idea of a continual burnt offering is more that of a regular offering.

\textsuperscript{3} tn Heb “between the evenings” meaning between dusk and dark.

\textsuperscript{4} sn That is about two quarts.

\textsuperscript{5} sn That is about one quart.

\textsuperscript{6} tn Heb “the one lamb,” but it is meant to indicate “each lamb.”

\textsuperscript{7} tn The word שֵׁכָר (shekhar) is often translated “strong drink.” It can mean “barley beer” in the Akkadian cognate, and also the Hebrew Bible when joined with the word for wine. English versions here read “wine” (NAB, TEV, CEV); “strong wine” (KJV); “fermented drink” (NIV, NLT); “strong drink” (ASV, NASB, NRSV).

\textsuperscript{8} tn Heb “as the grain offering of the morning and as its drink offering.”

\textsuperscript{9} tn The words “you must offer” are not in the Hebrew text, but are implied. They have been supplied in the translation to make a complete English sentence.

\textsuperscript{10} sn That is, about 4 quarts.

\textsuperscript{11} tn Heb “the burnt offering of the Sabbath by its Sabbath.”

\textsuperscript{12} tn Heb “of your months.”

\textsuperscript{13} tn The word “include” is not in the Hebrew text but is implied. It is supplied in the translation to make a complete English sentence.

\textsuperscript{14} tn Heb “a month in its month.”

\textsuperscript{15} tn Heb “one kid of the goats.”

\textsuperscript{16} tn Heb “any work [of] service”; this means any occupational work, that is, the ordinary service.

\textsuperscript{17} tn Heb “unblemished they will be to you.” So also in v. 31.
28:26 “Also, on the day of the first fruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD during your Feast of Weeks, you are to have a holy assembly. You must do no ordinary work.

28:27 But you must offer as the burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the LORD, two young bulls, one ram, seven lambs one year old, 28:28 with their grain offering of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, 28:29 with one-tenth for each of the seven lambs, 28:30 as well as one male goat to make an atonement for you.

28:31 You are to offer them with their drink offerings in addition to the continual burnt offering and its grain offering – they must be unblemished.

Blowing Trumpets

29:1 “On the first day of the seventh month, you are to hold a holy assembly. You must not do your ordinary work, for it is a day of blowing trumpets for you.

29:2 You must offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs one year old without blemish.

29:3 “Their grain offering is to be of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil, three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths of an ephah for the ram, 29:4 and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs, 29:5 with one male goat for a purification offering to make an atonement for you; 29:6 this is in addition to the monthly burnt offering and its grain offering, and the daily burnt offering with its grain offering and their drink offerings as prescribed, as a sweet aroma, a sacrifice made by fire to the LORD.

The Day of Atonement

29:7 “On the tenth day of this seventh month you are to have a holy assembly. You must humble yourselves; 2 you must not do any work on it.

29:8 But you must offer a burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs one year old, all of them without blemish. 29:9 Their grain offering must be of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil, three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, 29:10 and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs, 29:11 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the purification offering for atonement and the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and their drink offerings.

The Feast of Temporary Shelters

29:12 “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you are to have a holy assembly; you must do no ordinary work, and you must keep a festival to the LORD for seven days. 29:13 You must offer a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a pleasing aroma to the LORD: thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs each one year old, all of them without blemish. 29:14 Their grain offering must be of finely ground flour mixed with olive oil, three-tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths of an ephah for each of the two rams, 29:15 and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs, 29:16 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and its drink offering.

29:17 “On the second day you must offer twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs one year old, all without blemish, 29:18 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number as prescribed, 29:19 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and their drink offerings.

29:20 “On the third day you must offer eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs one year old, all without blemish, 29:21 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number as prescribed, 29:22 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and its drink offering.

29:23 “On the fourth day you must offer ten bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs one year old, all without blemish, 29:24 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number as prescribed, 29:25 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and its drink offering.

29:26 “On the fifth day you must offer nine bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs one year old, all without blemish, 29:27 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number as prescribed, 29:28 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and its drink offering.

29:29 “On the sixth day you must offer eight bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs one year old, all without blemish, 29:30 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number as prescribed, 29:31 along with one

---

1 tn Heb “afflict yourselves”; NAB “mortify yourselves”; NIV, NRSV “deny yourselves.”

sn The verb seems to mean “humble yourself.” There is no explanation given for it. In the days of the prophets fasting seems to be associated with it (see Isa 58:3-5), and possibly the symbolic wearing of ashes.

2 tn Heb “they shall be to you without blemish.”

3 tn The words “you must offer” are implied.
male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and its drink offering.

29:32 “On the seventh day you must offer seven bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs one year old, all without blemish, 29:33 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number as prescribed, 29:34 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and its drink offering.

29:35 “On the eighth day you are to have a holy assembly; you must do no ordinary work on it. 29:36 But you must offer a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, as a pleasing aroma to the Lord, one bull, one ram, seven lambs one year old, all of them without blemish, 29:37 and with their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, according to their number as prescribed, 29:38 along with one male goat for a purification offering, in addition to the continual burnt offering with its grain offering and its drink offering.

29:39 “These things you must present to the Lord at your appointed times, in addition to your vows and your freewill offerings, as your burnt offerings, your grain offerings, your drink offerings, and your peace offerings.” 29:40 (30:1) 2 So Moses told the Israelites everything, just as the Lord had commanded him.

Vows Made by Men

30:1 Moses told the leaders of the tribes concerning the Israelites, “This is what the Lord has commanded: 30:2 If a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath of binding obligation on himself, 9 he must not break his word, but must do whatever he has promised. 10

Vows Made by Single Women

30:3 “If a young woman who is still living in her father’s house makes a vow to the Lord or places herself under an obligation, 30:4 and her father hears of her vow or the obligation to which she has pledged herself, and her father remains silent about her, 13 then all her vows will stand, 14 and every obligation to which she has pledged herself will stand. 30:5 But if her father overrules her when he hears about it, then none of her vows or her obligations which she has pledged for herself will stand. And the Lord will release her from it, because her father overruled her.

Vows Made by Married Women

30:6 “And if she marries a husband while under a vow, 16 or she uttered anything impulsively by which she has pledged herself, 30:7 and her husband hears about it, but remains silent about her when he hears about it, then her vows will stand and her obligations which she has pledged for herself will stand. 30:8 But if when her husband hears it he overrules her, then

---

9 tn The Hebrew text has קָוָם אֶלָּסֹר אִסָּר (le’sor issar), meaning “to take a binding obligation.” This is usually interpreted to mean a negative vow, i.e., the person attempts to abstain from something that is otherwise permissible. It might involve fasting, or abstaining from marital sex, but it might also involve some goal to be achieved, and the abstaining from distractions until the vow is fulfilled (see Ps 132). The נֶדֶר (neder) may have been more for religious matters, and the נָכָר (nakar) more for social concerns, but this cannot be documented with certainty.

10 tn Heb “according to all that goes out of his mouth.”

11 tn The qualification comes at the end of the verse, and simply says “in her youth.”

12 tn The Hebrew text just has “in her father’s house” and not “who is still living,” but that is the meaning of the line.

13 tn The intent of this expression is that he does not object to the vow.

14 tn The verb נָכָר (nakar) is best translated “stand” here, but the idea with it is that what she vows is established as a genuine oath with the father’s approval (or acquiescence).

15 tn The idiom is “in the day of,” but it is used in place of a preposition before the infinitive construct with its suffixed subjective genitive. The clause is temporal.

16 tn The Hebrew “all will not stand” is best rendered “none will stand.”

17 tn The verb has often been translated “forfeited” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, NRSV, NLT), but that would suggest a sin that needed forgiving. The idea of “release from obligation” is better; the idea is like that of having a debt “forgiven” or “retired.” In other words, she is free from the vow she had made. The LXX will not hold the woman responsible to do what she vowed.

18 tn Heb “and her vows are upon her.” It may be that the woman gets married while her vows are still unfulfilled.

19 tn The Hebrew text indicates that this would be some impetuous vow that she uttered with her lips, a vow that her husband, whether new or existing, would not approve of. Several translate it “a binding obligation rashly uttered.”
he will nullify the vow she has taken, and whatever she uttered impulsively which she has pledged for herself. And the Lord will release her from it.

Vows Made by Widows

30:9 “But every vow of a widow or of a divorced woman which she has pledged for herself will remain intact. 30:10 If she made the vow in her husband’s house or put herself under obligation with an oath, 30:11 and her husband heard about it, but remained silent about her, and did not overrule her, then all her vows will stand, and every obligation which she pledged for herself will stand. 30:12 But if her husband clearly nullifies them when he hears them, then whatever she says by way of vows or obligations will not stand. Her husband has made them void, and the Lord will release her from them.

30:13 “Any vow or sworn obligation that would bring affliction to her, her husband can confirm or nullify. 30:14 But if her husband remains completely silent about her from day to day, he thus confirms all her vows or all her obligations which she is under; he confirms them because he remained silent about when he heard them. 30:15 But if he should nullify them after he has heard them, then he will bear her iniquity.

30:16 These are the statutes that the Lord commanded Moses, relating to a man and his wife, and a father and his young daughter who is still living in her father’s house.

The Midianite War

31:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 31:2 “Exact vengeance for the Israelites on the Midianites — after that you will be gathered to your people.”

31:3 So Moses spoke to the people: “Arm men from among you for the war, to attack the Midianites and to execute the Lord’s vengeance on Midian. 31:4 You must send to the battle a thousand men from every tribe throughout all the tribes of Israel.”

31:5 So a thousand from every tribe, twelve thousand armed for battle in all, were provided out of the thousands of Israel.

Campaign Against the Midianites

31:6 So Moses sent them to the war, one thousand from every tribe, with Phinehas son of Elazar the priest, who was in charge of the sanctuary, and was to be their commander over the army of the Lord.

11 sn This lengthy chapter records the mobilization of the troops (vv. 1-5), the war itself (vv. 6-13), the death of the captive women (vv. 14-18), the purification of the nations (vv. 19-24), and the distribution of the spoils (vv. 25-54). For more detail, see G. W. Coats, “Moses in Midian,” JBL 92 (1973): 3-10; and W. J. Dumbrell, “Midian — a Land or a League?” VT 25 (1975): 323-37.

12 sn The imperative is followed by its cognate accusative to stress this vengeance. The Midianites had attempted to destroy Israel with their corrupt pagan practices, and now will be judged. The accounts indicate that the effort by Midian was calculated and evil.

13 sn The war was commanded by the Lord and was to be divine vengeance on the Midianites. So it was holy war. No Israelites then could take spoils in this — it was not a time for plunder and aggression. It was part of the judgment of God upon those who would destroy or pervert his plan and his people.

14 sn This would be the last major enterprise that Moses would have to undertake. He would soon die and “be gathered to his people” as Aaron was.

15 sn The imperative is followed by its cognate accusative to stress this vengeance. The Midianites had attempted to destroy Israel with their corrupt pagan practices, and now will be judged. The accounts indicate that the effort by Midian was calculated and evil.

16 sn The war was commanded by the Lord and was to be divine vengeance on the Midianites. So it was holy war. No Israelites then could take spoils in this — it was not a time for plunder and aggression. It was part of the judgment of God upon those who would destroy or pervert his plan and his people.

17 sn Some commentators argue that given the size of the nation (which they reject) the small number for the army is a sign of the unrealistic character of the story. The number is a round number, but it is also a holy war, and God would give them the victory. They are beginning to learn here, and at Jericho, and later against these Midianites under Gideon, that God does not want or need a large army in order to obtain victory.

18 sn The Hebrew text uses the idiom that these “were in his hand,” meaning that he had the responsibility over them.

19 sn It is not clear what articles from the sanctuary were included. Tg. Ps.-J. adds (interpretively) “the Urim and Thummim.”

20 sn Many modern biblical scholars assume that this passage is fictitious. The text says that they killed every male, but Judges accounts for the Midianites. The texts can be harmonized rather simply — they killed every Midianite who was in the battle. Midianite tribes and cities dotted the whole region, but that does not mean Israel went and killed every single one of them. There apparently was a core of Midianites whom Balaam had influenced to pervert Israel.
31:8 They killed the kings of Midian in addition to those slain – Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba – five Midianite kings. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword. 31:9 The Israelites took the women of Midian captives along with their little ones, and took all their herds, all their flocks, and all their goods as plunder. 31:10 They burned all their towns where they lived and all their encampments. 31:11 They took all the plunder and all the spoils, both people and animals. 31:12 They brought the captives and the spoils and the plunder to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the Israelite community, to the camp on the plains of Moab, across from Jericho. 31:13 Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the community went out to meet them outside the camp.

The Death of the Midianite Women

31:14 But Moses was furious with the officers of the army, the commanders over thousands and commanders over hundreds, who had come from service in the war. 31:15 Moses said to them, “Have you allowed all the women to live? 31:16 Look, these people through the counsel of Balaam caused the Israelites to act treacherously against the Lord in the matter of Peor – which resulted in the plague among the community of the Lord! 31:17 Now therefore kill every boy, and kill every woman who has had sexual intercourse with a man. 31:18 But all the young women who have not had sexual intercourse with a man will be yours.

Purification After Battle

31:19 “Any of you who has killed anyone or touched any of the dead, remain outside the camp for seven days; purify yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day. 31:20 You must purify each garment and everything that is made of skin, everything made of goat’s hair, and everything made of wool.”

31:21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone into the battle, “This is the ordinance of the law that the Lord commanded Moses: 31:22 ‘Only the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead, 31:23 everything that may stand the fire, you are to pass through the fire, and it will be ceremonially clean, but it must still be purified with the water of purification. Anything that cannot withstand the fire you must pass through the water. 31:24 You must wash your clothes on the seventh day, and you will be ceremonially clean, and afterward you may enter the camp.’”

The Distribution of Spoils

31:25 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 31:26 “You and Eleazar the priest, and all the family leaders of the community, take the sum of the plunder that was captured, both people and animals. 31:27 Divide the plunder into two parts, one for those who took part in the war – who went out to battle – and the other for all the community.

---

1 sn Here again we see that there was no unified empire, but Midianite tribal groups.
2 sn And what was Balaam doing among the Midianites? The implication is strong. This pagan diviner had to submit to the revealed will of God in the oracles, but he nonetheless could be hired. He had been a part of the attempt to destroy Israel that failed; he then apparently became part of the plan, if not the adviser, to destroy them with sexual immorality and pagan ritual.
3 tn Heb “burned with fire.”
4 tn The ban applied to the encampments and forts of this group of Midianite tribes living in the region of Moab.
5 tn Or “steppes.”
6 tn The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.
7 tn Again this expression, “the Jordan of Jericho,” is used. It describes the intended location along the Jordan River, the Jordan next to or across from Jericho.
8 map For the location of Jericho see Map5-B2; Map6-E1; Map7-E1; Map8-E3; Map10-A2; Map11-A1.
9 tn The verb is the Piel perfect of the word קֶבֶע (qave, “to live”). In the Piel stem it must here mean “preserve alive,” or “allow to live,” rather than make alive.
10 sn The command in holy war to kill women and children seems in modern times a terrible thing to do (and it was), and something they ought not to have done. But this criticism fails to understand the situation in the ancient world. The entire life of the ancient world was tribal warfare. God’s judgment is poured out on whole groups of people who act with moral abandonment and in sinful pursuits. See E. J. Young, My Servants, the Prophets, 24; and J. W. Wenham, The Enigma of Evil.
11 sn Many contemporary scholars see this story as fictitious, composed by the Jews during the captivity. According to this interpretation, the spoils of war here indicate the wealth of the Jews in captivity, which was to be given to the Levites and priests for the restoration of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. The conclusion drawn from this interpretation is that returning Jews had the same problem as the earlier ones: to gain a foothold in the land. Against this interpretation of the account is a lack of hard evidence, a lack which makes this interpretation appear contrived and subjective. If this was the intent of a later writer, he surely could have stated this more clearly than by making up such a story.
12 sn These verses are a reminder that taking a life, even if justified through holy war, still separates one from the holiness of God. It is part of the violation of the fallen world, and only through the ritual of purification can one be once again made fit for the presence of the Lord.
13 sn Purification by fire is unique to this event. Making these metallic objects “pass through the fire” was not only a way of purifying (burning off impurities), but it seems to be a dedicatory rite as well to the Lord and his people. The aspect of passing through the fire is one used by these pagans for child sacrifice.
31:28 “You must exact a tribute for the LORD from the fighting men who went out to battle: one life out of five hundred, from the people, the cattle, and from the donkeys and the sheep. 31:29 You are to take it from their half-share and give it to Eleazar the priest for a raised offering to the LORD. 31:30 From the Israelites’ half-share you are to take one portion out of fifty of the people, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep – from every kind of animal – and you are to give them to the Levites, who are responsible for the care of the LORD’s tabernacle.”

31:31 So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses. 31:32 The spoil that remained of the plunder which the fighting men had gathered was 675,000 sheep, 31:33 72,000 cattle, 31:34 61,000 donkeys, 31:35 and 32,000 young women who had never had sexual intercourse with a man. 31:36 The half-portion of those who went to war numbered 337,500 sheep; 31:37 the LORD’s tribute from the sheep was 675. 31:38 The cattle numbered 36,000; the LORD’s tribute was 72. 31:39 The donkeys were 30,500, of which the LORD’s tribute was 61. 31:40 The people were 16,000, of which the LORD’s tribute was 32 people. 31:41 So Moses gave the tribute, which was the LORD’s raised offering, to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

31:42 From the Israelites’ half-share that Moses had separated from the fighting men, 31:43 there were 337,500 sheep from the portion belonging to the community, 31:44 36,000 cattle, 31:45 30,500 donkeys, 31:46 and 16,000 people. 31:47 From the Israelites’ share Moses took one of every fifty people and animals and gave them to the Levites who were responsible for the care of the LORD’s tabernacle, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

31:48 Then the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the commanders over thousands and the commanders over hundreds, approached Moses 31:49 and said to him, “Your servants have taken a count of the men who were in the battle, who were under our authority, and not one is missing. 31:50 So we have brought as an offering for the LORD what each man found: gold ornaments, armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD.” 31:51 Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all of it in the form of ornaments. 31:52 All the gold of the offering they offered up to the LORD from the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds weighed 16,750 shekels. 31:53 Each soldier had taken plunder for himself. 31:54 So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds and brought it into the tent of meeting as a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD.

The Petition of the Reubenites and Gadites

32:1 Now the Reubenites and the Gadites possessed a very large number of cattle. When they saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were ideal for cattle, 32:2 the Gadites and the Reubenites came and addressed Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the community. They said, 32:3 “Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon.” 32:4 The land that the LORD subdued before the community of Israel, is ideal for cattle, and your servants have cattle.” 32:5 So they said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be...”
given to your servants for our inheritance. Do not have us cross\(^1\) the Jordan River.\(^2\)

Moses’ Response

32:6 Moses said to the Gadites and the Reubenites, “Must your brothers go to war while you\(^3\) remain here? 32:7 Why do you frustrate the intent\(^4\) of the Israelites to cross over into the land which the LORD has given them? 32:8 Your fathers did the same thing when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. 32:9 When\(^5\) they went up to the Eshcol Valley and saw the land, they frustrated the intent of the Israelites so that they did not enter\(^6\) the land that the LORD had given\(^7\) them. 32:10 So the anger of the LORD was kindled that day, and he swore, 32:11 ‘Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly,\(^8\) not one of the men twenty years old and upward\(^9\) who came from Egypt will see the land that I swore to give\(^10\) to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, 32:12 except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly.’ 32:13 So the LORD’s anger was kindled against the Israelites, and he made them wander in the wilderness for forty years, until all that generation that had done wickedly before\(^12\) the LORD was finished.\(^13\) 32:14 Now look, you are standing in your fathers’ place, a brood of sinners, to increase still further the fierce wrath of the LORD against the Israelites. 32:15 For if you turn away from following him, he will once again abandon\(^14\) them in the wilderness, and you will be the reason for their destruction.”\(^15\)

The Offer of the Reubenites and Gadites

32:16 Then they came very close to him and said, “We will build sheep folds here for our flocks and cities for our families,\(^16\) 32:17 but we will maintain ourselves in armed readiness\(^17\) and go before the Israelites until whenever we have brought them to their place. Our descendants will be living in fortified towns as a protection against\(^18\) the inhabitants of the land. 32:18 We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has his inheritance. 32:19 For we will not accept any inheritance on the other side of the Jordan River\(^19\) and beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on this eastern side of the Jordan.”

32:20 Then Moses replied,\(^20\) “If you will do this thing, and if you will arm yourselves for battle before the LORD, 32:21 and if all your armed men cross the Jordan before the LORD until he drives out his enemies from his presence 32:22 and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be free of your obligation to the LORD and to Israel. This land will then be your possession in the LORD’s sight.

32:23 “But if you do not do this, then look, you will have sinned\(^22\) against the LORD. And know that your sin will find you out. 32:24 So build cities for your descendants and pens for your sheep, but do what you have said\(^23\) you would do.”

32:25 So the Gadites and the Reubenites replied to Moses, “Your servants will do as my lord commands. 32:26 Our children, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead, 32:27 but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, to do battle in the LORD’s presence, just as my lord says.”

32:28 So Moses gave orders about them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua son of Nun, and to the heads of the families of the Israelite tribes. 32:29 Moses said to them: “If the Gadites and the Reubenites cross the Jordan with you, each one

---

\(^1\) The verb is the Hiphil jussive from חנט (avar, “to cross over”). The idea of “cause to cross” or “make us cross” might be too harsh, but “take across” with the rest of the nation is what they are trying to avoid.

\(^2\) The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

\(^3\) The vav (ו) is a vav disjunctive prefixed to the pronoun; it fits best here as a circumstantial clause, “while you stay.”

\(^4\) The preterite with הָגוּנֵנִים (hamushim); the verbal root is חֲמֻשִּים (khushim); the verbal root is חֲמֻשִּים (khush, “to make haste” or “hurry”). But in light of the Greek and Latin Vulgate the Hebrew should probably be emended to חֲמֻשִּים (hamushim), a qal passive participle meaning “in battle array.” See further BDB 301 s.v. I חן, BDB 332 s.v. חון; HALOT 300 s.v. חון, HALOT 331 s.v. חון.

\(^5\) The MT has חֲמֻשִּים (khushim); the verbal root is חֲמֻשִּים (khush, “to make haste” or “hurry”). But in light of the Greek and Latin Vulgate the Hebrew should probably be emended to חֲמֻשִּים (hamushim), a qal passive participle meaning “in battle array.” See further BDB 301 s.v. I חון, BDB 332 s.v. חון; HALOT 300 s.v. חון, HALOT 331 s.v. חון.

\(^6\) The construction uses a verbal hendiadys with the verb “to add” serving to modify the main verb.

\(^7\) The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

\(^8\) The sentence begins with “if they see….” This is the normal way for Hebrew to express a negative oath – “they will by no means see…..” The sentence is elliptical; it is saying something like “[May God do so to me] if they see,” meaning they won’t see. Of course here God is taking the oath, which is an anthropomorphic act. He does not need to take an oath, and certainly could not swear by anyone greater, but it communicates to people his resolve.

\(^9\) The LXX adds “those knowing bad and good.”

\(^10\) The words “to give” are not in the Hebrew text but have been supplied in the translation for clarity.

\(^11\) The infinitive construct here with לָמֵד (lamed) is functioning as a result clause.

\(^12\) The clause is difficult; it means essentially that “they have not made full [their coming] after the LORD.”

\(^13\) The sentence begins with “if they see….” This is the normal way for Hebrew to express a negative oath – “they will by no means see…..” The sentence is elliptical; it is saying something like “[May God do so to me] if they see,” meaning they won’t see. Of course here God is taking the oath, which is an anthropomorphic act. He does not need to take an oath, and certainly could not swear by anyone greater, but it communicates to people his resolve.

\(^14\) The LXX adds “those knowing bad and good.”

\(^15\) The verb is difficult to translate, since it has the idea of “complete, finish” (םג, tamam). It could be translated “consumed” in this passage (so KJV, ASV); NASB “was destroyed.”

\(^16\) The MT has חֲמֻשִּים (khushim); the verbal root is خُش (khush, “to make haste” or “hurry”). But in light of the Greek and Latin Vulgate the Hebrew should probably be emended to خُש (hamushim), a qal passive participle meaning “in battle array.” See further BDB 301 s.v. I חון, BDB 332 s.v. חון; HALOT 300 s.v. חון, HALOT 331 s.v. חון.

\(^17\) The construction uses a verbal hendiadys with the verb “add” serving to modify the main verb.

\(^18\) The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

\(^19\) The infinitive construct here with לָמֵד (lamed) is functioning as a result clause.

\(^20\) The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

\(^21\) The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

\(^22\) The infinitive construct here with לָמֵד (lamed) is functioning as a result clause.

\(^23\) The construction uses a verbal hendiadys with the verb “add” serving to modify the main verb.
equipped for battle in the LORD’s presence, and you conquer the land, then you must allot them the territory of Gilead as their possession. 32:30 But if they do not cross over with you armed, they must receive possessions among you in Canaan.” 32:31 Then the Gadites and the Reubenites answered, “Your servants will do what the LORD has spoken. 32:32 We will cross armed in the LORD’s presence into the land of Canaan, and then the possession of our inheritance that we inherit will be ours on this side of the Jordan River.”

**Land Assignment**

32:33 So Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the realm of King Sihon of the Amorites, and the realm of King Og of Bashan, the entire land with its cities and the territory surrounding them. 32:34 The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, Arroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, Beth Nimrah, Beth Haran as fortified cities, and constructed pens for their flocks. 32:37 The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, Nebo, Baal Meon (with a change of name), and Sibmah. They renamed the cities they built. 32:39 The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it. 32:40 So Moses gave Gilead to Machir, son of Manasseh, and he lived there. 32:41 Now Jair son of Manasseh went and captured their small towns and named them Havvoth Jair.

**Wanderings from Egypt to Sinai**

33:1 These are the journeys of the Israelites, who went out of the land of Egypt by their divisions under the authority of Moses and Aaron. 33:2 Moses recorded their departures according to their journeys, by the commandment of the LORD; now these are their journeys according to their departures. 33:3 They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the Israelites went out defiantly in plain sight of all the Egyptians. 33:4 Now the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had killed among them; the LORD also executed judgments on their gods.

33:5 The Israelites traveled from Rameses and camped in Succoth. 33:6 They traveled from Succoth, and camped in Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. 33:7 They traveled from Etham, and turned again to Pi-hahiroth, which is before Baal-Zephon; and they camped before Migdol. 33:8 They traveled from Pi-hahiroth, and passed through the middle of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days’ journey in the wilderness of Etham, and camped in Marah. 33:9 They traveled from Marah and came to Elim; in Elim there are twelve fountains of water and seventy palm trees, so they camped there.

33:10 They traveled from Elim, and camped by the Red Sea. 33:11 They traveled from the Red Sea and camped in the wilderness of Zin. 33:12 They traveled from the wilderness of Zin and camped in Dophkah. 33:13 And they traveled from Dophkah, and camped in Alush.

33:14 They traveled from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. 33:15 They traveled from Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

**Wanderings in the Wilderness**

33:16 They traveled from the desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah. 33:17 They traveled from Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth. 33:18 They traveled from Hazeroth and camped in Rithmah. 33:19 They traveled from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-peraz. 33:20 They traveled from Rimmon-peraz and camped in Libnah. 33:21 They traveled from Libnah and camped at Rissah. 33:22 They traveled from Rissah and camped in Keelah. 33:23 They traveled from Keelah and camped at Mount Shepher. 33:24 They traveled from Mount Shepher and camped in Haradah. 33:25 They traveled from Haradah and camped in Makkeloth. 33:26 They traveled from Makkeloth and camped at Tahath. 33:27 They traveled from Tahath and camped at Terah. 33:28 They traveled from Terah and camped in Mithcah. 33:29 They traveled from Mithcah and camped in Hashmonah.

---

1. **tn** Heb “and the land is subdued before you.”
2. **tn** Heb “that which the Lord has spoken to your servants, thus we will do.”
3. **tn** The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.
4. **tn** Heb “the land with its cities in the borders of the cities of the land all around.”
5. **tn** Heb “called names.”
6. **tn** Heb “in it.”
7. **tn** Havvoth Jair. The Hebrew name means “villages of Jair.”
8. **sn** This material can be arranged into four sections: from Egypt to Sinai (vv. 1-15), the wilderness wanderings (vv. 16-36), from Kadesh to Moab (vv. 37-49), and final orders for Canaan (vv. 50-56).
9. **tn** Heb “hand.”
10. **tn** Heb “their goings out.”
11. **tn** Heb “mouth.”
12. **tn** Heb “morrow.”
13. **tn** Heb “with a high hand”; the expression means “defiantly; boldly” or “with confidence.” The phrase is usually used for arrogant sin and pride, the defiant fist, as it were. The image of the high hand can also mean the hand raised to deliver the blow (Job 38:15).
14. **tn** Heb “in the eyes.”
15. **to** So many medieval Hebrew manuscripts, Smr, Syriac, and Latin Vulgate. Other witnesses have “from before Hahiroth.”
The Southern Border of the Land

34:17 Then the Lord spoke to Moses:
34:18 "Give these instructions to the Israelites, and tell them: 'When you enter Canaan, the land that has been assigned to you as an inheritance, the land of Canaan with its borders, 34:19 your southern border will extend from the wilderness of Zin along the Edomite border, and your southern border will run eastward to the extremity of the Salt Sea, 34:20 and then the border will turn from the south to the Scorpion Ascent, which will continue to Zin, and then its direction will be to Kadesh Barnea. Then it will go to Hazar Addar and pass over to Azmon. 34:21 There the border will turn from Azmon to the Stream of Egypt, and then its direction is to the sea."

The Western Border of the Land

34:22 "And for a western border you will have the Great Sea. This will be your western border.

The Northern Border of the Land

34:23 "And this will be your northern border: From the Great Sea you will draw a line to Mount Hor; 34:24 from Mount Hor you will draw a line to Lebo Hamath; and the direction of the border will be to Zedad. 34:25 The border will continue to Ziphron, and its direction will be to Hazar Enan. This will be your northern border.

6 tn Heb "of your fathers.
7 sn This chapter falls into several sections: the south (vv. 1-5), the west (v. 6), the north (vv. 7-9), the east (vv. 10-15), and then a list of appointed officials (vv. 16-29).
8 tn Or "command.
9 tn Heb "this is the land that will fall to you as an inheritance.
10 tn The expression refers to the corner or extremity of the Negev, the South.
11 Or "the Ascent of Scorpions"  which means "scorpions" in Hebrew).
12 tn Heb "its going forth," or the way it runs.
13 sn That is, the Mediterranean.
14 tn The word for west is simply "sea," because the sea is west of Israel.
15 sn That is, the Mediterranean Sea (also in the following verse).
16 sn Or "to the entrance to Hamath."
The Eastern Border of the Land

34:10 “For your eastern border you will draw a line from Hazar Enan to Shepham. 34:11 The border will run down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain, and the border will descend and reach the eastern side of the Sea of Kinnereth. 34:12 Then the border will continue down the Jordan River and its direction will be to the Salt Sea. This will be your land by its borders that surround it.”

34:13 Then Moses commanded the Israelites: “This is the land which you will inherit by lot, which the Lord has commanded to be given to the nine and a half tribes, 34:14 because the tribe of the Reubenites by their families, 34:15 the tribe of the Gadites by their families, and half of the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. 34:16 The two and a half tribes have received their inheritance on this side of the Jordan, east of Jericho, toward the sunrise.”

Appointed Officials

34:17 The Lord said to Moses: 34:18 “These are the names of the men who are to allocate the land to you as an inheritance: 34:19 Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun. 34:20 You must take one leader from every tribe to assist in allocating the land as an inheritance. 34:21 These are the names of the men: from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh; 34:22 from the tribe of the Simeonites, Shemuel son of Ammiuhud; 34:23 from the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad son of Kislon; 34:24 from the tribe of the Danites, a leader, Bukki son of Jogli; 34:25 from the tribe of Ephod, a leader from the tribe of Manasseh; 34:26 from the tribe of the Ephraimites, a leader, Kemuel son of Shiphtan; 34:27 from the tribe of the Zebulunites, a leader, Elizaphan son of Parnach; 34:28 and from the tribe of the Issacharites, a leader, Paltiel son of Azzan; 34:29 from the tribe of the Asherites, a leader, Ahihuud son of Shelomih; 34:30 from the tribe of the Naphtalites, a leader, Pedahel son of Ammiuhud. 34:31 These are the ones whom the Lord commanded to divide up the inheritance among the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

The Levitical Cities

35:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the Moabite plains by the Jordan near Jericho. He said: 35:2 “Instruct the Israelites to give the Levites towns to live in from the inheritance the Israelites will possess. You must also give the Levites grazing land around the towns. 35:3 Thus they will have towns in which to live, and their grazing lands will be for their cattle, for their possessions, and for all their animals. 35:4 The grazing lands around the towns that you will give to the Levites must extend to a distance of 500 yards from the town wall.

35:5 “You must measure from outside the wall of the town on the east 1,000 yards, and on the south side 1,000 yards, and on the west side 1,000 yards, and on the north side 1,000 yards, with the town in the middle. This territory must belong to them as grazing land for the towns. 35:6 Now from these towns that you will give to the Levites you must select six towns of refuge to which a person who has killed someone may flee. And you must give them forty-two other towns.

The Lord commanded to divide up the inheritance among the Israelites in the land of Canaan.
35:7 “So the total of the towns you will give to the Levites is forty-eight. You must give these together with their grazing lands. 35:8 The towns you will give must be from the possession of the Israelites. From the larger tribes you must give more; and from the smaller tribes fewer. Each must contribute some of its own towns to the Levites in proportion to the inheritance allocated to each.

**The Cities of Refuge**

35:9 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 35:10 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘When you cross over the Jordan River into the land of Canaan, 35:11 you must then designate some towns as towns of refuge for you, to which a person who has killed someone unintentionally may flee. 35:12 And they must stand as your towns of refuge from the avenger in order that the killer may not die until he has stood trial before the community. 35:13 These towns that you must give shall be your six towns for refuge.

35:14 “You must give three towns on this side of the Jordan, and you must give three towns in the land of Canaan; they must be towns of refuge. 35:15 These six towns will be places of refuge for the Israelites, and for the foreigner, and for the settler among them, so that anyone who kills any person accidentally may flee there.

35:16 “But if he hits someone with an iron tool so that he dies, he is a murderer. The murderer must surely be put to death. 35:17 If he strikes him by throwing a stone large enough that he could die, and he dies, he is a murderer. The murderer must surely be put to death. 35:18 Or if he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon so that he could die, and he dies, he is a murderer. The murderer must surely be put to death. 35:19 The avenger of blood himself must kill the murderer; when he meets him, he must kill him.

35:20 “But if he strikes him out of hatred or throws something at him intentionally so that he dies, or with enmity he strikes him with his hand and he dies, the one who struck him must surely be put to death, for he is a murderer. The avenger of blood must kill the murderer when he meets him.

35:22 “But if he strikes him suddenly, without enmity, or throws anything at him unintentionally, or with any stone large enough that a man could die, without seeing him, and throws it at him, and he dies, even though he was not his enemy nor sought his harm, 35:24 then the community must judge between the slayer and the avenger of blood according to these decisions. 35:25 The community must deliver the slayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the community must restore him to the town of refuge to which he fled, and he must live there until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the consecrated oil. 35:26 But if the slayer at any time goes outside the boundary of the town to which he had fled, 35:27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the borders of the town of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the slayer, he will not be guilty of blood, 35:28 because the slayer should have stayed in his town of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest, the slayer may return to the land of his possessions. 35:29 So these things must be a statutory ordinance for you throughout your generations, in all the places where you live.

35:30 “Whoever kills any person, the murderer must be put to death by the testimony of witnesses, but one witness cannot testify against anyone to cause him to be put to death. 35:31 Moreover, you must not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death; he must surely be put to death. 35:32 And you must not accept a ransom for anyone who has fled to a town of refuge, to allow him to return home and live on his own land before the death of the high priest.

35:33 “You must not pollute the land where you live, for blood defiles the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed there, except by the blood of the person who shed it. 35:34 Therefore do not defile the land that you will inhabit, in which I live, for I the Lord live among the Israelites.”

**Women and Land Inheritance**

36:1 Then the heads of the family groups of the Gileadites, the descendant of Machir, the descendant of Manasseh, who were from the Josephite families, approached and spoke before Moses and the leaders who were the heads of the...
Israelite families. 36:2 They said, “The LORD commanded my lord to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the Israelites; and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. 36:3 Now if they should be married to one of the men from another Israelite tribe, their inheritance would be taken from the inheritance of our fathers and added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry. 4 As a result, it will be taken from the lot of our inheritance. 36:4 And when the Jubilee of the Israelites is to take place, their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry. So their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of our ancestral tribe.”

Moses’ Decision

36:5 Then Moses gave a ruling to the Israelites by the word of the LORD: “What the tribe of the Josephites is saying is right. 36:6 This is what the LORD has commanded for Zelophehad’s daughters: ‘Let them marry whomever they think best, only they must marry within the family of their father’s tribe. 36:7 In this way the inheritance of the Israelites will not be transferred from tribe to tribe. But every one of the Israelites must retain the ancestral heritage. 36:8 And every daughter who possesses an inheritance from any of the tribes of the Israelites must become the wife of a man from any family in her father’s tribe, so that every Israelite may retain the inheritance of his fathers. 36:9 No inheritance may pass from tribe to tribe. But every one of the tribes of the Israelites must retain its inheritance.”

36:10 As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the daughters of Zelophehad did. 36:11 For the daughters of Zelophehad – Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah – were married to the sons of their uncles. 36:12 They were married into the families of the Manassehites, the descendants of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father’s family. 36:13 These are the commandments and the decisions that the LORD commanded the Israelites through the authority of Moses, on the plains of Moab by the Jordan River opposite Jericho.