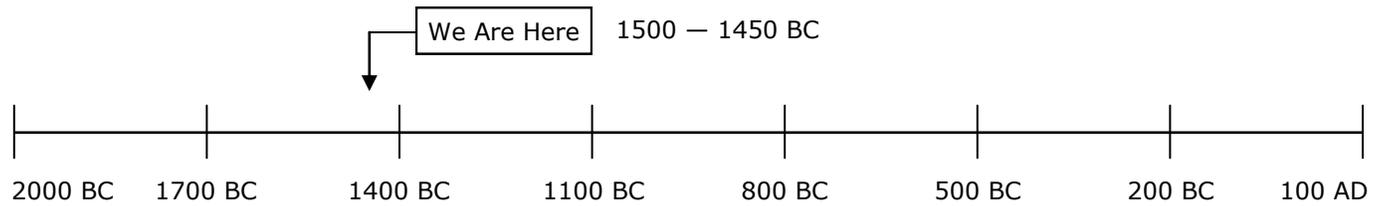


Blind to the Blessings

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Week 9: February 26 — March 4 — *Lev. 27; Numbers 1-18*

17.3% Complete — 302 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Map of the Exodus (p.101), The Camp of Israel (p.65), Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

It has been two years since Israel left Egypt; it was time to leave Mt. Sinai. God had given His people His moral laws (Ten Commandments), His laws for living peacefully and efficiently as a nation (Civil Law), and His laws for worship in the Tabernacle (Ceremonial Law). The Levites and priests had been ordained and dedicated, fixed festivals were in place, and the sacrificial system had begun. All that was left to do was to organize the tribes for their journey.

- Getting Organized

Count the People (*Num. 1:1-46*): First, God wanted a census taken of the tribes (thus, the name of the book of *Numbers*). Every male 20 years and older was counted (able to fight), and the total number of men was 603, 550 (not counting Levites, women, or children). No doubt, a conservative guess of the total would be close to two million Israelites.

Arrange the Camp (*Num. 2:1-24; 3*): Second, God gave specific instructions for the placement of each tribe in the camp, in relation to the Tabernacle. Each group camped around its tribal banner in the place where God prescribed. See the chart entitled, "Camp of Israel."

Assign the Duties (*Num. 3, 4*): Next, God assigned each Levite family a duty pertaining to the care and transportation of the Tabernacle and its furnishings.

Gershonites — They were to take care of the Tabernacle tent, its coverings, entry curtains, the courtyard curtains (including its entry curtain), the cords, and all the related equipment. The Gershonites were stationed to the west of the Tabernacle.

Kohathites — They were to take care of the sanctuary, the Ark, the table, the lamp stand, the altars, the laver, the inner curtain, and the various related tools. The Kohathites were stationed on the south of the Tabernacle.

Merarites — They were to take care of the supporting frames, the crossbars, pillars, bases, and all the related equipment. They were also responsible for the posts of the courtyard, their bases, pegs, and cords. The Merarites were stationed to the north of the Tabernacle.

Moses and Aaron (and his sons Eliezar, Ithamar) — They were stationed on the east side facing the entrance of the Tabernacle, and they had the final responsibility for the courtyard, the sanctuary, and all their furnishings.

Give Marching Orders (*Num. 4, 10*): Finally, once everyone was organized in the camp, it was time to arrange the marching procession, so that Israel could travel through the desert with safety and efficiency. See the chart, "Camp of Israel" for details.

- Moving Out

Now that everything was in order, God instructed Moses to make two silver trumpets to be used for moving the Israelites from place to place (*Num. 10*). The people then marched from Sinai to Canaan, complaining all the way, until they reached the borders. Moses sent twelve spies into the land, ten of which brought back a discouraging report, causing the Israelites to grumble even more.

- Pictures of Christ

1. **The Camp Arrangement**: See the chart entitled, "Camp of Israel" for details.
2. **Banners of Israel** (*Ezek. 1:10; Rev. 4:7*): See the chart, "Camp of Israel" for details.
3. **Elders and the Spirit of God** (*Num. 11:24-29*): Foreshadowed here is the day when Christ shall indwell believers through the Holy Spirit (*Joel 2:28*); Moses is pointing to the New Testament Church.
4. **Budding Staff** (*Num. 17:1-13*): Symbol of resurrection, something dead coming to life.

- Personal Application

1. **Nazarite Vow** (*Num. 6:1-22*): The word "Nazarite" means "dedicated to separation" and signified a serious devotion to God; those who took the vow could not touch dead things, drink wine, or cut their hair. As Christians, we surrender our lives to Christ and vow to be set apart. In that, we reject that which is "dead," we avoid that which will cause us to stumble, and we try to live our godly lives visibly before others (*Matt. 5:16*).
2. **Tassels** (*Num. 15:37-41*): Israelites were told to make tassels for the hems of their clothing, to remind them of God's commandments and their covenant to live a holy life. We should have "tassels" everywhere to remind us of our devotion to God's ways.
3. **Blind to the Blessings** (*Num. 14:20-23*): By the end of the Exodus journey, the Israelites can drive a person crazy; God did so many miracles, but they doubted and complained constantly. It's no wonder He was angry. Despite seeing all His wondrous works, Israel was blind to the blessings. Thus, he removed that generation and raised up their kids to enter Canaan. Before we judge the Israelites, we must consider our own lives. How many times has God demonstrated His provision, protection, or power to us and, yet, when another ordeal arises, we have doubted or complained? How quickly we forget what God has done. Why not be like Caleb, who had a different spirit about him and who saw the blessings of God no matter the circumstances?

The Bottom Line

Rather than *complain*, we should be *content* with God's blessings, *grateful* for His *faithfulness*.

Questions to Consider

1. How are you doing at keeping your vow to be different, set apart for the Lord?
2. What "tassels" do you have in place to remind you of God's expectations?
3. Why do we forget so easily what God has done for us? How can we remember?