

***But Jesus said, Suffer little children,
and forbid them not, to come unto Me:
for of such is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:14).***

This month, I feel like the Lord has laid it on my heart to talk about our children and the injustices that we, as Christians, are doing to them. Why are we keeping our children out of our churches? Upon arrival in many of today's churches, the first thing you encounter is a Kiosk where you are expected to surrender your children and receive your 'claim check' to pick them back up at the end of the service. The children are then whisked away to another location far from the sanctuary so they cannot be heard, where they do some activities and socialize with their friends. While you are worshipping and being fed by God's Word, where are your children? Why have we decided they are not worthy enough to participate in the worship service?

Don't get me wrong. I am in no way saying that children should not be regularly taught about Jesus on a level that they understand. But they also need to experience the full power and majesty of God. Attending church services gives them a sense of belonging. Children learn best by example. As they watch their parents sit and reflect on the Word of God, they develop the self-discipline to do the same. Worshipping in church as a family embeds essential habits in children that they will carry with them and, in turn, pass down to their own children.

It is not a disruption for an infant to cry or a child to be restless—they are children. Jesus taught that all children should be brought to Him, so why do we silence them and hide them away? Parents do not need to be made to feel embarrassed or ashamed if they are having problems with their child during the service. Instead of staring or suggesting they take them out, why not give a supportive smile or ask to help? Lead by example. Please, I implore you: bring the children back. Today's youth face more moral challenges in their daily lives than ever before; they need a safe place to learn God's Word and feel a sense of spiritual belonging.

And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God (Mark 10:13-14).

And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD (Lev. 1:3-4).

The Book of Leviticus was invaluable to the Priests and the Levites as they endeavored to lead the early Israelites in the proper rituals of service and worship to the Lord. God's Word was the guidebook that enabled them to meet the responsibilities of their calling. The chapters and verses of Leviticus provided them with the structure necessary to implement God's required sacrifices. Modern readers are often tempted to skim through these readings, viewing Leviticus as little more than a museum-quality record of historical law. They believe that since the sacrificial law has been fulfilled once and for all time by the death and resurrection of Christ (Heb. 10:10-14), there is no longer any need to spend time studying the rules and regulations governing animal sacrifice.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16). It is true that legalized worship has been superseded by grace, but to use that fact to dismiss as irrelevant even one single syllable contained in the Word of God is to show one's willful ignorance of that Word. ***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16).*** Had God intended for the instructions of Leviticus to apply only to the ancient Israelites, then they would not be included in God's Word today. That they are there is all the proof we need of their relevance to our lives. It is our responsibility, therefore, to read

and study this Book with the same open-hearted diligence as we apply to any of the others. As we allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit, we will find ourselves drawing nourishment and strength from the Word before us.

One of the most important lessons the Book of Leviticus contains is the recognition of God's absolute and unchangeable holiness. It shows us that He is always there and that our lives are illuminated by His presence. All we do, right or wrong, is visible to Him. Leviticus teaches us unequivocally that God judges sin. Because He is holy, nothing unclean (sinful) can exist in His presence. The Book of Leviticus teaches us that before we can have an ongoing relationship with the Lord, we must repent and be cleansed of our sins. There is no other way. It has been this way since the first moment sin entered into creation, and it will be this way until God's plan reaches fruition.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 22:3-5).

Thought for the Day: *Every chapter and verse in the Bible is delivered straight to our ears from the mouth of God. Knowing this, how could we ever think any of it is beneath our notice?*

Christ Revealed: Through the Meat (Meal, Grain) Offering which was made without leaven (symbolic of sin) (Lev. 2:11). Christ was without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Word Studies: 2:4 **oblation** = offering, sacrifice; 3:9 **hard by** = near.

Pray For Staff: Jennifer Palafox, Bible Pathway Ministries, President • **Government Official:** Rep. Sara Jacobs (CA) • **Country:** Qatar (2,123,160) Mid East • Major Languages: Arabic, English • Muslim conversion to Christ is forbidden • 77.5% Muslim; 8.5% Christian; 14% Other • **Prayer Suggestion:** Amidst uncertainty, seek the guidance of God (Is. 42:16).

Optional Reading: Mark 4

If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering (Lev. 6:2-5).

As we discussed yesterday, the Book of Leviticus is invaluable to modern Christians in that it provides us with a detailed look at the Lord's definitions of sin, guilt, and atonement. We already know that in God's eyes, even the 'least' sin is enough to permanently separate us from His presence unless it has been covered by the blood of Christ. ***For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*** (James 2:10). ***But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin*** (1 John 1:7). In Leviticus, we learn that while all sins are equal in regards to how they affect our relationship with Him, not all are the same. While some sins are personal, affecting only our lives and our relationship with God, others have an earthly victim as well. God's Word makes it clear that, in these cases, we have a responsibility to the victim in addition to our obligation to God.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Matt. 22:39). Is it possible to love our neighbor and still repeatedly wrong them without apology or recompense? Of course it isn't. Would we feel loved if we were on the receiving end of that type of behavior? When we commit an offense against another person, it is our responsibility

to apologize and make amends. The compensatory actions required of us will vary from situation to situation, but in all cases, we will need to sincerely repent of our actions, offer a heartfelt apology, and commit ourselves to the process of rebuilding broken trust.

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him (Luke 17:3-4). Christian love is well represented by the repentant sinner, but it also needs to be reflected in the attitude of the one who was wronged. When our neighbor approaches us with godly remorse, Jesus teaches that we have the responsibility to forgive them for the wrong done against us. In this way, God's love flows freely, and the body of Christ is strengthened.

And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold (Luke 19:8).

Thought for the Day: *To judge the repentant is to reject God's grace; we cannot follow the path if we are busy condemning those walking with us.*

Christ Revealed: Through the body of the young bull which was burned ***without the camp*** (Lev. 4:12). This pictures Jesus as He ***suffered without the gate*** (Heb. 13:11-12).

Word Studies: 4:20 **an atonement** = forgiven; 5:2 **unclean** = defiled as stated in the Law; 5:8 **asunder** = in two parts; 5:10 **manner** = law, ordinance.

Pray For Staff: Tiffany Parisi • **Government Official:** Rep. Jack Bergman (MI), Sen. John Cornyn (TX), Sen. Katie Britt (AL) • **Country:** Romania (21,729,871) Southeastern Europe • Major Language: Romanian • Restricted Religious Freedom • 81.9% Eastern Orthodox; 6.4% Protestant; 4.3% Roman Catholic; 0.9% Other (Includes Muslim); 0.2% None/Atheist; 6.3% Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Seek the Lord in prayer, turn from your sinful ways, and God will have mercy and pardon for you (Is. 55:6-7).

Optional Reading: Mark 5

And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: And Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram. And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot (Lev. 8:22-23).

As we read the regulations pertaining to the sacrifices at the Tabernacle and the consecration of the priests, we need to step backward a moment and remind ourselves of the reason for all of this activity. ***And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God*** (Ex. 29:43-46). Everything that was being required of the Israelites had a single purpose—to allow them to dwell in the presence of God.

The consecration of Aaron and his sons played a crucial role in the fulfillment of that purpose. They had been selected as God's representative to mankind. Once sanctified, they would become the mediators through which sinful man could approach the Lord. Without them, Almighty God would remain unreachable. Through the lessons that we have been given of the priesthood, we have been able to understand our need for an intercessor. We were shown our greatest need through Aaron, the first High Priest. Through Christ Jesus, our perfect High Priest (Heb. 4:14-15), we can rejoice in the meeting of that need.

In order to dwell in the presence of God, Aaron and his sons were called to surrender and dedicate themselves wholly to God. This same call is placed on each of us today as we surrender ourselves to our Savior and King. Blood from the ram of consecration was applied to each of the priests in turn, symbolically placed upon ***his right ear, and upon the thumb***

of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. In this way, their entire lives were consecrated. With their ears, they would hear the Word of the Lord; with their thumbs, they would act upon that Word in all the work they performed; and with their feet, they would walk in His ways.

Every true Christian in the world today lives with the same desire burning within our hearts—we want, more than anything else, to be able to dwell eternally in the presence of God. Only through the acceptance of Jesus as our Savior can that dream become a reality. ***Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*** (John 14:6). As we take our place in the body of Christ, we too must dedicate our ears, hands, and feet to His service. In this way, we enter into His presence and bring glory to His name (Col. 3:17).

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed (James 6:27).

Thought for the Day: *When one lives daily in the presence of God, loneliness can never take root.*

Christ Portrayed: By Moses as he consecrated the priests who were called for the ministry of the Tabernacle (Lev. 8:1-36). Christ is the One who sets the believer apart for service. ***Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained*** (appointed) ***you*** (John 15:16).

Word Studies: 7:4 **flanks** = sides; 7:18 **abomination** = offensive thing, unclean, detestable to God; 8:7 **curious girdle** = artistic band.

Pray For Government Officials: Rep. Rob Wittman (VA), Rep. Ayanna Pressley (MA) • **Country:** Russia (142,470,272) Northern Asia • Major Language: Russian • Restricted Religious Freedom • 74% Russian Orthodox; 7% Muslim; 19% Other/None (Buddhist, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jew, Mormon, Jehovah Witness, Hindu, Bahai, Hare Krishna, Pagan, Tengrist, Scientologist, Falun Gong) • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray and call upon the Lord with assurance that He will answer if you pray with a godly spirit free from sin (Is. 58:9-11).

Optional Reading: Mark 6

And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat offering mingled with oil: for to day the LORD will appear unto you (Lev. 9:2-4).

Up until this point, all that we have read of the sacrificial offerings of the Tabernacle are ‘textbook’ instructions to the priests—detailed explanations of what they were required to do and how they were required to do it. In chapter nine, we find that the time for theoretical lessons has passed. The Tabernacle is completely assembled, the consecration of the priests is completed, and it is time for Aaron and his sons to assume their priestly duties. Fittingly, the first acts required of Aaron as high priest is to make atonement for himself and the congregation, in that order, and then to offer peace offerings in celebratory thanksgiving of the fact that the Lord was in their midst.

The Hebrew word for peace is Shalom, a word that encompasses much more than a mere harmonious relationship. Shalom implies the conditions of happiness, contentment, and rest. For example, Jesus promised all of these things (and more!) to His disciples when He said, ***These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*** (John 16:33).

The peace offering was always the last to be given unto God. It was not a required offering of atonement but rather was willingly given to God in gratitude for all He had done. Although the offering was always voluntary, there were times when it was considered customary to make the offering, such as in response to an answered prayer or in connection with the fulfillment of a vow (Lev. 7:12-16). As Aaron stood before the people on this monumental day, he sacrificed ***a bullock and a ram for peace offerings***, followed by ***a meat offering mingled with***

oil (9:4). And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people (9:22-23).

What came next for the congregation would have been a joyous feast of fellowship and celebration, in keeping with the laws of the peace offering (7:15,16). All who participated would have left feeling refreshed and renewed through their fellowship with one another and their communion with God.

The peace and fellowship promoted by this offering are still very much relevant to Christians today. When we submit our will to the will of God, we are blessed with a peace so profound and all-encompassing that we are immediately overwhelmed by the need to share it with our family, friends, and neighbors so that they, too, might come to know the wondrous love of the God we serve.

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27).

Thought for the Day: *God does not grant peace as a reward for tithes and offerings, but it readily falls on those who serve with humility and a thankful heart.*

Christ Revealed: Through the sacrifice of a lamb without defect (Lev. 9:3). ***Behold the Lamb of God, which (who) taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).***

Word Studies: 9:21 **wave offering** = special lifted high above the priest's head before the Lord; 10:3 **sanctified** = treated as holy; **will be glorified** = must be given honor; 10:6 **rend** = tear; **bewail** = express sorrow.

Pray For Staff: Ryan McCrary • **Government Official:** Rep. Sanford Bishop (GA), Rep. Michael Guest (MS), Rep. Claudia Tenney (NY) • **Country:** Rwanda (12,337,138) Central Africa • Major Languages: Kinyarwanda, French, English • Religious Freedom • 49.5% Roman Catholic; 39.4% Protestant; 4.5% Other Christian; 1.8% Muslim; 0.1% Animist; 0.6% Other; 3.6% None; 0.5% Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Confess and forsake all sin (Is. 59:12-13).

Optional Reading: Mark 7

And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you (Lev. 11:7-8).

There has been much speculation amongst biblical scholars as to why the Lord implemented dietary restrictions for His people. Some believe that God was looking out for their health by forbidding them to eat animals that were carnivorous, scavengers, or filter feeders because they could potentially be carriers of parasites or diseases. Others believe that the Lord put the restrictions in place to set His children apart from those around them and give them a spiritual focus in all aspects of their lives. Yet a third group believes it was most likely a combination of the two. Whatever His underlying reason, all scholars agree that these restrictions were designed to draw the people's attention to God, the Creator of all things. As Creator, it was His prerogative to determine the usage for all His creation. When He stated that an animal was ***unclean to you***, that was as far as He intended the conversation to go, and it rendered any further explanation unnecessary. God was not making a definitive statement on the nature of the beast; instead, He was outlining His expectations for His people.

For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy (Lev. 11:45). How did God intend for His people to obtain holiness? Simple. He expected them to keep their attention on Him, heed His Word, and obey His commandments. Yet even as God gave the Law, He knew that His people would not be able to keep it. ***And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*** (Deut. 6:5). If they had taken this commandment to heart, then the nation of Israel would have prospered. In loving the Lord with all of their being, they would have instinctively obeyed Him. However, as the centuries passed, it became evident that the Israelites had (intentionally or not) misunderstood what was being asked of them. Instead of viewing God as the source of holiness, they believed that righteousness was imparted

through the rituals they undertook and that spiritual cleanliness was linked solely to what they touched, ate, or drank.

And He saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats (Mark 7:18-19)? The Law was given to show us our need for a Savior. As Jesus came in fulfillment of that Law, He deepened our understanding of it. We now know that our spiritual cleanliness depends not on outside influences, but on the state of our heart. ***For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man*** (7:21-23). If we solely rely on our ability to act righteously, then we are lost. Only with the precious blood of Jesus can we be cleansed; only with the arrival of the Holy Spirit will we be made whole.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

Thought for the Day: *A person's actions will forever be empty and misguided if they do not let God direct them.*

Christ Revealed: Through the clean food of the believer (Lev. 11:1-47). Our Lord is the ***Bread of Life*** (John 6:35), supplies ***living water*** (4:10,14), and His Father's will was His ***meat*** (food, nourishment) (4:34).

Word Studies: 11:3 **clovenfooted** = split hooved, two distinct hoofs; 11:35 **ranges** = cooking furnaces; 11:44 **sanctify** = dedicate to serve the Lord; 13:4 **shut up** = isolate, set apart; 13:5 **be at a stay** = has not changed; 13:10 **quick** = inflamed, ulcer forming; 13:43 **rising** = swelling.

Pray For Staff: Kevin Jennings • **Country:** St. Barthelemy (7,267) Caribbean • Major Languages: French, English • Religious Freedom • Roman Catholic; Protestant; Jehovah Witness • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray and rejoice in the Lord for all His spiritual blessings (Is. 61:10).

Optional Reading: Mark 8

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean. And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be stopped from his issue, it is his uncleanness. Every bed, whereon he lieth that hath the issue, is unclean: and every thing, whereon he sitteth, shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And he that sitteth on any thing whereon he sat that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean; then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And what saddle soever he rideth upon that hath the issue shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth any thing that was under him shall be unclean until the even: and he that beareth any of those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue, and hath not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even (Lev. 15:2-11).

As we read through the first half of chapter 15 of the Book of Leviticus, we find God's protective nature once again on full display. Verses 2 – 15 address the law of clean vs unclean in relation to abnormal bodily discharges in men (discharges of pus, blood, or other fluids not related to normal semen emission or regular bodily function). After reading through these verses, take a moment to compare them to verses 16 – 18, which cover the law in relation to normal emissions. In both instances, the man was considered to be ritually unclean—his attention had been drawn from God and focused instead on his own carnal nature—but the laws concerning the unnatural discharge were designed in such a way that they isolated and protected both

the sufferer and the community at large.

As long as the discharge was evident, the man was to avoid physical contact with others. This included incidental contact, like spittle, or contact through a secondary source, such as contaminated bedding or seating. If contact were to occur, then the other person had to immediately bathe, change, wash their clothing, and hold themselves apart from others for a day. Anything the sufferer used or touched in any way was considered unclean and had to be washed or destroyed. Finally, the sufferer had to be free of his affliction for seven days before He could seek spiritual purification from the priests.

The more we delve into His Word, the more we will find that God's care for us is not and never has been limited solely to our spiritual well-being. He is involved in every aspect of our lives. No matter what the situation, we will always be able to find guidance and support within the pages of His Word.

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh (Prov. 4:20-22).

Thought for the Day: *God cares for us in all ways—spiritually, mentally, and physically. Never hesitate to lay your problems at His feet.*

Christ Portrayed: By the priest who made atonement for a cleansed leper (Lev. 14:20). ***Our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement*** (reconciliation) (Rom. 5:11).

Word Studies: 14:8 **tarry abroad** = delay outside, stay outside his tent; 14:23 **unto** = in front; 14:32 **whose hand is not able** = who cannot afford; 14:38 **shut up** = quarantine; 14:41 **within round about** = all around inside; 15:19 **put apart** = keep separate, in a state of impurity.

Pray For Government Official: Rep. Brendan Boyle (PA), Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ) • **Country:** St. Helena, Ascension, & Tristan da Cunha (7,776) South Atlantic Ocean • Major Language: English • Religious Freedom • Protestant; Roman Catholic • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray persistently (Is. 62:6).

Optional Reading: Mark 9

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off (Lev. 17:11-14).

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:25). God is the creator and ultimate controller of all life. The mysteries of life and death are known by Him and Him alone, and He is sovereign over all. ***See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand*** (Deut. 32:39). ***The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up*** (I Sam. 2:6). The laws of blood sacrifice covered in Chapter 17 of the Book of Leviticus were designed in part to underscore this fundamental truth.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls. Blood is the essence of life. God created the physical form (human and animal) in such a manner that blood is the key element that ties it all together. The circulation of blood through the body (flesh) provides life-sustaining oxygen and nutrients and removes toxins and wastes. Remove the blood, and the flesh can no longer support life. Extensive research has been done in an attempt to synthesize this life-bearing fluid to no avail — nothing created

by mankind has been able to duplicate its properties.

Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

Life is solely the possession of God. Blood is the spiritual representation of life; therefore, blood itself belongs to God. By maintaining control of how, when, and where blood was shed and disposed of, God reaffirmed His right of sovereignty over life and death.

Blood was also the means through which God provided atonement. Under the law of substitutionary sacrifice, the blood of the innocent (animal) covered the sins of the guilty. Life was given to and received by God as payment for life otherwise forfeited to sin. It was vital, then, that the sanctity of the blood (representing the sanctity of life) be respected.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:28-29)?

Thought for the Day: *Our relationship with God is built on faith alone, but how He expects us to demonstrate that faith will take many forms.*

Christ Revealed: Through two goats used on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:8). The slaying of the first goat typifies that our peace with God was restored by the blood of Christ (Rev. 5:9).

Word Studies: 16:12 **censer** = incense holder; 16:19 **hallow it** = dedicate it only for God; 16:29 **stranger** = alien; **sojourneth** = stays, lives temporarily; **afflict you souls** = humble yourselves; 17:4 **cut off** = excommunicated; 18:18 **vex** = irritate, to be a rival to; 18:20 **carnally** = adultery; 18:21 **seed** = descendants.

Pray for Staff: Gilbert Palafox • **Government Official:** Sen. John Hick-enlooper (CO) • **Country:** St. Kitts and Nevis (51,538) Caribbean • **Major Language:** English • **Religious Freedom:** Anglican; Other Protestant; Roman Catholic • **Prayer Suggestion:** Remember that God hears and answers our prayers (Is. 65:24).

Optional Reading: Mark 10

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy (Lev. 19:1-2). Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep My statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you (Lev. 20:7-8).

For 16 chapters, we have read primarily of God's expectations for His people regarding their interactions with Him. In today's reading, the focus changes. Instead of detailing the intricacies of worship, God begins to lay out His expectations for His people's interactions with each other and the world. God had chosen the nation of Israel to live in the world as His representatives; therefore, how they lived their lives had to reflect the holiness of their Creator.

Chapter 19 of the Book of Leviticus offers us great insight into the love God has, not just for those that already belong to Him, but for all of creation. ***And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God (Lev. 19:34-35).*** With these statutes and commandments, the Lord endeavored to teach all those who lived by His name the true nature of that love as it applied to them and everyone they came into contact with.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also (I John 4:20-21). There are many people in the world today who stand up and proudly proclaim their hate in the name of God. They confidently divide the world into two groups: those they deem to be 'proper' members of God's family and those they don't. For those in the first category, they offer love and compassion, but for those that do not meet the criteria they have established, they have nothing but contempt. They are incapable of viewing the sin-

ner as separate from the sin. Thus, their hatred is directed at the person. Their self-righteous prejudices fill their hearts, leaving no room for Godly love to dwell.

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31-32). It is love of the sinner that brought Jesus to earth. It is His love for the lost that keeps us here now. ***And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come*** (Matt. 24:14). If we truly belong to Him, then our hearts will be so full of His love that hatred and prejudice will not have space inside to take root.

If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you (John 15:10-12).

hought for the Day: As fallen creatures, we can feel hatred as acutely and all-consumingly as we feel love; there is no place for it in a heart that loves God.

Christ Revealed: As the source of true guidance, in contrast to evil guidance (Lev. 20:6-8). Jesus, who is ***The Truth*** (John 14:6) also sent us ***the Spirit of Truth*** who guides us ***into all truth*** (16:13).

Word Studies: 19:3 **fear** = reverential, heartfelt submission; 19:4 **molten gods** = metal images; 19:10 **glean** = gather leftovers after harvesters.

Pray for Staff: Jennifer Palafox • **Government Official:** Gov. Maura Healey (MA) Rep. Gus Bilirakas (FL), Rep John Joyce (PA) • **Country:** St. Lucia (163,362) Caribbean • Major Languages: English, French Patois • Religious Freedom • 61.5% Roman Catholic; 25.5% Protestant; 3.4% Other Christian; 1.9% Rastafarian; 0.4% Other; 5.9% None; 1.4% Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Humble yourself and revere the Word of God; He will look upon you with affection (Is. 66:2).

Optional Reading: Mark 11

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt offering; Ye shall offer at your own will a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats. But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you (Lev. 22:17-20).

God expects us to present to Him our best. It's really that simple. Nothing less than our all is acceptable in His eyes. He is not asking for perfection; He knows that for mortal man, perfection is impossible. ***As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one*** (Rom. 3:10). He does, however, expect us to give Him our best effort and to prioritize Him above all else. God does not want to be an afterthought, and he refuses to accept our leftovers. ***Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and My name is dreadful among the heathen*** (Mal. 1:13-14).

God endeavored to drive this point home to the Israelites while laying out the specifics of what constituted an acceptable sacrifice. At the same time, He laid the groundwork for their eventual understanding and acceptance of the final, perfect sacrifice upon which the entirety of the sacrificial law was based. Every animal brought to sacrifice, from the mightiest bull to the smallest pigeon, typified the body of Christ. Every sacrifice made was merely a placeholder, a foreshadowing of what was to come. God understood this, even though His people as of yet did not. Jesus went to the cross as the perfect, sinless Son of God. At the moment of His death, God gave us His all. In

order to prepare His children to receive His best, He first had to teach them to recognize and appreciate the concept.

Today, we in the body of Christ are privileged to live under grace. With the utterance of the words, ***it is finished*** (John 19:30), the bonds of sin were broken, and the sacrificial law was fulfilled. Our debt has been paid in full, but that does not mean our responsibilities to God have ended. When we accepted His gift of grace and entered into the body of Christ, we offered ourselves to Him as living sacrifices. Our lives now belong to him, and our best is still required. To offer Him anything less dishonors the sacrifice He made in our stead.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Thought for the Day: *God expects us to offer Him our best—measured by His standards, not the world's.*

Christ Revealed: In the seven great holy days of the Lord: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Firstfruits, Feast of Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) -- all of which typified Jesus Christ (Lev. 23). ***Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*** (I Cor. 5:7); ***Bread of Life*** (John 6:35); ***Christ risen from the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept*** (died) (I Cor. 15:20).

Word Studies: 22:9 **ordinance** = biblical law; 22:10 **sojourner** = guest; 22:14 **unwittingly** = unknowingly; 22:15 **profane** = desecrate; 22:16 **suffer** = permit; 22:23 **vow** = required offering; 23:2 **convocations** = sacred assemblies.

Pray For Staff: Judy McCrary • **Government Officials:** Gov. Jay Inslee(WA) • **Country:** St. Martin (31,530) Caribbean • Major Language: French • Religious Freedom • Roman Catholic; Protestant; Jehovah Witness, Hindu • **Prayer Suggestion:** Seek God in prayer with your whole heart and He will hear you (Jer. 29:12-13).

Optional Reading: Mark 12

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard (Lev. 25:2-4).

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations (Gen. 17:8-9). Over 500 years previously, God had bestowed this promise upon Abraham. At the time, Abraham was expected to **keep** God's **covenant** by being attentive to God in all things and obeying His directives as he received them. Now, as He prepared to lead Abraham's descendants into the Land of Promise, God painstakingly expanded on those directives so that His people would have no doubt what He expected from them in each and every aspect of their lives.

Amongst the things God wanted His people to understand was His total and complete sovereignty over all things. ***The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me*** (Lev. 25:23). He needed them to realize that everything they had ultimately belonged to Him and understand that they possessed it at His pleasure. This was a hard lesson for His people to grasp, and God knew that they would begin to view His blessings and shared gifts as earned possessions over time. To guard against this, He included instructions on the upkeep and usage of the land that He would provide them as part of His Covenant directives.

Just as every seventh day was set aside as a day of rest and total focus on God, so too was every seventh year. ***In the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.*** For 365 days, the people were to take a break from

sowing, gathering domestic crops, and tending the fields, and they were to focus instead on God's promise to provide (25:6-7). By following this cycle, the people would be perpetually reminded of the true source of their bountiful provisions.

God established the Year of Jubilee at the end of seven sets of seven years (every 50th year). ***And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family*** (25:10). For 49 years God's people were able to freely buy, sell, and trade their lands amongst themselves according to the standards set by God, but during the 50th year, God's gifts reset themselves to the original owners. In addition, any Israelites that had fallen on such hard times that they had had to indenture themselves in the service of their fellow countrymen had their debts forgiven and their freedom restored. The year of Jubilee was intended to remind God's people of His absolute sovereignty. It was a forceful reminder that their blessings came not from their own efforts but from God.

And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace (John 1:16).

Thought for the Day: *Denying God's sovereignty over all things is tantamount to denying God.*

Christ Portrayed: By the kinsman-redeemer (Lev. 25:47-55). Christ is our Savior and Redeemer who made us His kinsmen: ***In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*** (Eph. 1:7).

Word Studies: 24:3 **Testimony** = Ark of the Covenant; 24:6 **pure table** = table of pure gold; 24:8 **covenant** = commitment of Israel to be loyal to the Lord; 24:11 **blasphemed** = cursed; 24:15 **bear his sin** = be held responsible; 25:10 **hallow** = set apart, sanctify; 25:14 **oppress** = cheat, take advantage; 25:35 **be waxen poor** = cannot support himself; 25:36 **usury** = interest on loans; 25:37 **victuals** = food, supplies; 25:43 **rigour** = ruthless severity, oppression; 25:45 **begat** = fathered.

Pray For One Another • Government Official: Rep. Dan Meuser (PA), Rep. Lisa Blount Rochester (DE) • **Country:** St. Pierre & Miquelon (5,716) North Atlantic Ocean • **Major Language:** French • **Religious Freedom** • 99% Roman Catholic; 1% Other • **Prayer Suggestion:** Know that the Lord is loving and merciful to His children (Jer. 31:9).

Optional Reading: Mark 13

I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that ye will not do all My commandments, but that ye break My covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it (Lev. 26:13-16).

For centuries, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been molding His chosen people into His chosen nation. When the time was ripe, He had ***brought them forth out of the land of Egypt and broken the bands of their yoke*** of servitude and led them triumphantly, as free men, to the land of which he had promised their ancestors. The Israelites had served the Egyptians as indentured servants and unwilling slaves, but this was not the relationship that the Lord sought with them. It was never God's intention to oversee a nation of mindless automatons; He desired, above all else, to be joined with His children through the bonds of love and fellowship. ***And I will set My tabernacle among you: and My soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people*** (Lev. 26:11-12).

However, for that bond to be real and true, it had to be freely chosen. To that end, God set out to ensure that His people had all the information necessary to make an informed choice. First, He established His right, as their Creator, to be sovereign over them. ***I am the LORD your God.*** He then gave to them, in great detail, the laws and statutes that they would be required to follow to be in obedience to Him. Following up on this, He explained to them the blessings that He would bestow on them as a consequence of their obedience (26:3-4).

If obedience were a choice, then disobedience had to be one, as well. With as much care as He had taken to outline the bless-

ings of living as His children, God explained the consequences of turning away from Him. ***And if ye walk contrary unto Me, and will not hearken unto Me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins*** (26:21). God's detailed explanations left nothing to the imagination. After hearing His words, the Israelites knew, beyond any shadow of any doubt, that obedience would bring with it peace and prosperity and disobedience would lead to suffering and death.

There are those today who would argue that God was not really offering a 'choice' at all. They would say that by demanding obedience with the threat of severe punishment as the only alternative, He was unfairly coercing their cooperation. They would be wrong. As Lord of all the earth, God could easily have forced them to obey Him; He didn't need promises or threats. Yet just as He has done since the very beginning, God offered them the chance to come to Him of their own free will, the same offer He still extends to each of us today.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

Thought for to Day: *If we don't have the strength to openly choose God, how will we have the strength to follow Him?*

Christ Revealed: As the One who will dwell among us (Lev. 26:11). ***The Word was made flesh, and dwelt*** (tabernacled) ***among us*** (John 1:14).

Word Studies: 26:13 **bondmen** = slaves; 26:16 consumption may mean tuberculosis; **burning ague** = fever; 26:25 **avenge the quarrel** = execute punishment; 26:30 **images** = altars for heathen worship.

Pray For Staff: Tiffany Parisi • **Government Officials:** Sen. Tammy Baldwin (WI) Gov. Josh Green (HI) • **Country:** St. Vincent & The Grenadines (102,918) Caribbean • **Major Languages:** English, French Patois • **Religious Freedom** • 75% Protestant; 13% Roman Catholic; 12% Other • **Prayer Suggestion:** Express your gratitude for the loving-kindness of God (Jer. 32:17-18).

Optional Reading: Mark 14

Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies (Num. 1:2-3).

At the time of the census taken in the Book of Numbers, the Israelites had been out of Egypt for a little over a year. We know from our previous study of the Book of Genesis that Egypt and Canaan were not that far apart geographically. Joseph's brothers had made the trip back and forth with relative ease while seeking food during the famine. If God had intended to lead them into the land of Canaan with all due haste, then they would have been there months before. God's plan was based on permanency, not speed. Over the year since leaving Egypt, he had endeavored to turn the rag-tag band of refugees into a united nation of God-fearing people. After fulfilling their spiritual needs by providing laws and guidance, He then began organizing them for the journey ahead.

To prepare them for the conquest of Canaan, God ordered the taking of a military census. Moses, along with his brother Aaron, was instructed to number ***every male by their polls; From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel.*** Soon after leaving Egypt, God promised His people that He would give them possession of the land of Canaan. ***For Mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off*** (Ex. 23:23). He promised to lead them, and He promised them victory, but He never stated that these things would happen without any effort or involvement on their part. The Lord had taken the year to prepare His people spiritually and emotionally. Now, by raising a standing army, He was physically prepping them to carry the glory of God out into the world (Ps. 24:7-8).

As we read of the birth of the nation of Israel, it is evident that the Israelites greatly desired the blessings of God. They wanted a secure and prosperous homeland (Lev. 26:3-13), and

they wanted to be heirs to the promise of Abraham (Gen. 12:3). What is also apparent, however, is the fact that they expected God to do all the work. At the first sign of suffering or hardship on their part, they balked and complained (Ex. 16:3; 17:3; Num. 11:4-5). When faced with armed enemies, they whined and trembled in fear (Ex. 14:10-12; Num. 14:3; 16:3). They wanted God to work for them, but they were unwilling to work for God.

Many Christians today operate under the same misguided opinion. They have rationally and logically accepted Christ as their Savior, but they have not yet made an “entire life” commitment. They want the blessings of God, but they are unwilling to risk their worldly comforts by publicly standing for Him in all things. According to the teachings of Jesus, these unfortunate fence-riders will face unbearable disappointment when at last they come face to face with Him. ***Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven*** (Matt. 7:21). How horrible it would be to hear Him say:

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:23).

Thought for the Day: *When God requires us to take action in His name, it is not for His benefit but our own.*

Christ Portrayed: By Moses, as he led the people (Num. 1:54). Jesus said: ***I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*** (John 10:14,27).

Word Studies: 1:2 **take ye the sum** = take the census; **by their polls** = number each one individually; 1:16 **renowned** = chosen national representative; 1:17 **expressed** = designated; 1:18 **pedigrees** = ancestry; 1:44 **princes** = leaders.

Pray For Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh • Country: Samoa (196,628) South Pacific Ocean • Major Languages: Samoan, English • Religious Freedom • 57.4% Protestant; 19.4% Roman Catholic; 15.2% Mormon; 1.7% Worship Centre; 5.5% Other Christian; 0.7% Other; 0.1% None/Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Call unto the Lord and He will give you strength to overcome (Jer. 33:3).

Optional Reading: Mark 15

And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. And 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: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father (Num. 3:2-4).

The Lord had called Aaron and all his descendants into priestly service. ***And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons*** (Ex. 28:1). Although the entire Levitical line had been set apart for God (Deut. 10:8), Aaron and his descendants had been separated from the rest and ordained as priests, temporary intercessors between holy God and sinful man (Heb. 5:1-4). This calling, though, did not automatically impart holiness upon the called. Through the Law that God had imparted to Moses, they knew what the Lord expected of them, but each man still had a choice; they could accept the call to service and obedience, or they could reject it in favor of the world in which they lived.

And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai. Here, we learn of the choice of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's first and second-born sons. For these two men, life was bright with promise. Through their calling, they were given national recognition as God-ordained spiritual leaders. They, along with their father, uncle, and seventy elders of Israel, had been blessed beyond measure when they were allowed to see ***the God of Israel*** with their own eyes. ***Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness.*** (Ex. 24:9:10). They knew the mighty power of the God they were called to serve, yet they

still refused to yield to His will. Inexplicably, they chose death over life in the presence of God.

There are many today who, like Nadab and Abihu, have experienced the call of God and yet have refused to fully answer that call. They have felt God; they have seen Him at work. They have been exposed to His Word, and they know what is being asked of them. Yet, despite all of that experience and knowledge, they still cling fiercely to their own human will. They want to serve Him, but on their terms, not His. They bring their own **strange fire** into His presence, believing that the Lord rejoices in their independent worship tailored to their personal happiness. They have allowed themselves to be deceived by the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), and in the throes of that deception, they are choosing death over eternal life in the presence of God.

And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say (Luke 6:46)? But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great. (Luke 6:49).

Thought for the Day: *Those who conceitedly focus on self when supposedly worshipping God need a refresher course on the whole concept.*

Christ Portrayed: By Aaron, the high priest, who was served by the Levites (Num. 3:6). As a **holy and royal priesthood** (John 12:26; I Pet. 2:5,9), we serve Christ, our **great High Priest** (Heb. 4:14).

Word Studies: 3:3 **consecrated** = installed; 3:4 **strange** = improper; 3:8 **instruments** = furnishings; 3:12 **matrix** = womb; 3:13 **hallowed** = made holy, set apart; 3:41 **firstlings** = firstborn; 3:48 **odd number** = remainder.

Pray For Staff: Judy McCrary • **Government Officials:** Sen. Richard Blumenthal (CT), Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (TX) • **Country:** San Marino (32,742) North Central Italy • Major Language: Italian • Religious Freedom • Roman Catholic • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pour out your heart in prayer to the Lord for your children (Lam. 2:19).

Optional Reading: Mark 16

Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty; Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him (Num. 5:6-8).

Those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior and are reborn into the family of God live in a state of grace. ***Here is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*** (Rom. 8:1-2). This assurance provides indescribable comfort for the true Christian trying to navigate God's path in the complex and confusing climate of today's world. With Christ as our Savior, we don't have to live in fear of inadvertently slipping into sin and separating ourselves from God. ***For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*** (Rom. 8:38-39).

We must understand, however, that God does not equate freedom ***from the law of sin and death*** to freedom from personal responsibility. ***What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein*** (Rom. 6:1-2)? As members of the body of Christ, we have been gifted with the indwelling Holy Spirit. From the moment we receive it, this most precious gift works ceaselessly to reinforce in us the commandments of Jesus and guide us in His will. ***But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will***

send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26). It is the presence of the Spirit that convicts us of our sins and leads us into true repentance (16:8-14).

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8). As Christians, we are still works in progress, but through God's grace, sin is no longer our master. When a child of God stumbles, the Holy Spirit works within them to lead them to acknowledge the wrong they've done, seek to make restitution for any hurt caused by their actions, confess it to God, and take steps to guard against making the same mistake again. By openly accepting responsibility for our actions, we become a conduit through which God's grace and mercy flow, thus allowing the entire world to witness the incredible power of God.

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Matt. 5:23-24).

Thought for the Day: *In yielding to the rule of God, we have been freed from the chaos of sin.*

Christ Revealed: Nazarite is a Hebrew term meaning "dedication by separation" (Num. 6:1-8). Jesus dedicated Himself to do only the will of His Father, even unto death: ***Thy will be done*** (Matt. 26:39,42).

Word Studies: 5:2 **an issue** = a discharge; 5:3 **defile** = contaminate; 5:7 **recompense** = repay; 5:8 **kinsman** = relative; **atonement** = sacrifice; 5:12 **a trespass** = adultery; 5:13 **close** = undetected; **taken with the manner** = caught in the act; 5:22 **into thy bowels** = the body; 5:27 **a curse** = an outcast.

Pray For Staff: Tiffany Parisi • **Government Official:** Rep. Richard Neal (MA), Rep. Angie Craig (MN), Rep. Val Hoyle (MA) • **Country:** Sao Tome and Principe (190,428) Central Africa • **Major Language:** Portuguese • **Religious Freedom** • 55.7% Roman Catholic; 4.1% Adventist; 3.4% Assembly of God; 2.9% New Apostolic; 2.3% Mana; 2% Universal Kingdom of God; 1.2% Jehovah Witness; 6.2% Other; 21.2% None; 1% Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Praise the Lord for His faithfulness and mercy (Lam. 3:22-23).

Optional Reading: Luke 1

That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: (Num. 7:2).

Reading through Chapter 7 of the Book of Numbers can sometimes seem monotonous. The bulk of the chapter—12 paragraphs—all contain the exact same information. The only differences in the paragraphs are the first and last lines. The former states the day and the tribal leader presenting the offering; the latter restates the name of the giver. We have likely all been guilty of reading through this chapter and shaking our heads at its unconventional arrangement. At some point, we've all mused to ourselves that it would have made much more sense to say, "Princes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L each brought 1,2,3." Yet, we must remember that nothing in the Word of God was written casually. No chapters or verses can be chalked up to a tired writer or an unobservant editor. God had a reason He wanted everything written out this way, and it is now up to us to prayerfully read and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, discern the lesson He has given us.

Before delving into the text, picture in your mind the procession of tribal leaders arriving in heavily laden wagons surrounded by a vast array of beasts of burden and sacrificial animals. Get a feel for how massive a display this was. This was the sight that greeted Moses at the end of the day on which the Tabernacle was consecrated to God. ***The princes of Israel***, who were the leaders from each tribe except the tribe of Levi, had come with spontaneous offerings to God for the support of the Tabernacle, the priests, and the Levites (Num. 7:1-3). How proud he must have felt to have been a member of that nation at that moment! Instead of exhibiting jealousy because they and their people hadn't been chosen to serve the Lord directly, they dug deep into their resources and willingly provided support for those who had been.

After consulting with the Lord (7:4-6), Moses accepted their gifts in His name and distributed them amongst the Levites according to need based on their assigned service to God. Following the distribution of the gifts for service, each prince

revealed that he had brought with him an offering for the dedication of the altar. The Lord's response to this offering gives us the key to unlock one of the most significant lessons in this chapter. ***And the Lord said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar*** (7:11).

Instead of having their gifts brought up en masse and offering a general "thank you" to the group, God chose to acknowledge each individual separately. To God, the twelfth man to offer ***One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense*** (7:80) was every bit as deserving of His attention as the first man who offered ***One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense*** (7:14).

Every offering that we bring to God, when given freely from a generous heart, is considered by Him to be infinitely precious. While our individual offerings may seem small and insignificant when measured next to, for instance, a corporate charity donation, God does not see it that way. When we, at long last, are allowed the privilege to draw near to His throne, we will discover that all gifts given for His glory have received equal recognition in His eyes.

And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Rev. 22:12).

Thought for the Day: *Always be sure, when giving to God, that you have given "everything" you can, not "only" what you can.*

Christ Revealed: Through the voluntary offerings of the leaders which were sufficient to meet the needs (Num. 7). Jesus gave His life to meet our every need. ***My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*** (Phil. 4:19).

Word Studies: 7:13 **charger** = large dish; **meat** = grain, meal, cereal.

Pray For Bible Pathway Printer: Pollock Printing, Nashville TN • **Government Official:** Gov. Brad Little (ID) • **Country:** Saudi Arabia (27,345,986) Mid East • **Major Language:** Arabic • Christian worship services for foreign personnel are tolerated, but those who seek to convert Muslims to Christianity face persecution • 100% Muslim • **Prayer Suggestion:** Lift up your heart to God in prayer (Lam. 3:41).

Optional Reading: Luke 2

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it (Num. 9:10-12).

A year earlier, while still slaves in the land of Egypt, the children of Israel had observed the very first Passover as prescribed by God. Sheltered in houses that bore the blood of the Passover lamb upon their lintels, they had been delivered from the plague of death that swept across all of Egypt, leaving the firstborn of every living thing dead in its wake. In the chaotic aftermath that followed, God had triumphantly led His people to freedom (Ex. 12). On that night, the Lord had also given Moses instructions as to how He wanted the night to be commemorated in the future. ***It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations (12:42).***

Now, having survived that first difficult year outside the confines of Egypt, they prepared to observe the anniversary of their deliverance in accordance with the commands of God. ***In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover (Num. 9:3-4).*** For most of the Israelites, this was a joyous time of worship and somber reflection, but for some, the fast-approaching Passover brought with it worry and concern. ***And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a***

man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in His appointed season among the children of Israel (9:6-7)?

These men earnestly desired to keep Passover as the Lord had instructed, but due to circumstances beyond their control (most likely the death of a family member or friend), they were not ceremonially clean. In distress, they brought their dilemma to Moses so that he might discern God's will. God's answer was quick and full of grace. He acknowledged the extenuating circumstances, and He provided a path by which these men would still be able to participate.

Our God is a just God, and He knows the inner workings of our hearts. He has never (and will never) penalized us for circumstances beyond our control. If we desire to worship and serve Him, He will provide us with a path to do so, regardless of the obstacles that might look to be in our way.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened (Matt. 7:7-8).

Thought for the Day: *If God intends for you to go down a certain path, the world will not be able to stand in your way.*

Christ Revealed: The Passover (Num. 9:2) serves as a beautiful illustration of the redemption Christ accomplished at Calvary as ***the Lamb of God*** (John 1:29; I Cor. 5:7).

Word Studies: 8:2 **over against** = in front of; 8:4 **beaten** = hammered; 8:14 **Mine** = for God's special purpose; 8:18 **for** = instead of; 9:7 **kept back** = prohibited from; 9:8 **Stand still** = Wait; 9:10 **posterity** = descendants; 9:11 **unleavened bread** = bread without yeast, a symbol of Christ as the sinless offering; 9:12 **ordinances** = biblical laws; 9:13 **forbareth** = neglects, fails; **cut off** = excommunicated; **season** = time; 9:14 **sojourn** = live temporarily; 9:15 **reared** = erected.

Pray For Staff: Ryan McCrary • **Government Official:** Sen. John Ossoff (GA) Rep. Neal Dunn (FL), Rep. David Rouzer (NC), Rep. Ken Buck (CO), Rep. Kat Cammack (FL) • **Country:** Senegal (13,635,927) Western Africa • Major Language: French • Religious Freedom • 94% Muslim; 5% Christian (Mostly Roman Catholic); 1% Indigenous Beliefs • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray for godly discernment to know His will (Ezek. 44:23).

Optional Reading: Luke 3

But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put His spirit upon them (Num. 11:26-29)!

I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me (Num. 11:14). Moses' frustrated plea to God did not go unanswered. ***And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee (11:16).*** Sixty-eight of the chosen elders gathered at the Tabernacle as instructed by Moses, but two, for reasons we are not told, remained within the camp. ***And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him (Moses), and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease (11:25).***

Whatever the reason for Eldad and Medad's continued presence in the camp, it did not exclude them from receiving a portion of the spirit of the Lord. ***And the spirit rested upon them...and they prophesied in the camp.*** When word reached Joshua that these elders were prophesying outside of the boundaries established by Moses, He was troubled and immediately sought to shut them down. To Joshua, the fact they were prophesying without the direct authorization of Moses meant they were a threat to his leadership and to the stability of the Israelites' established way of life.

Moses viewed the situation much differently. Instead of ir-

ritation or concern over the perceived lack of respect for his authority, he was thrilled to recognize the Spirit of the Lord in action. Moses knew that it was God's authority, not his, that mattered and that God had chosen to impart His Spirit on the two men in the camp. He longed for the day when all of God's people would be able to feel the presence of the Spirit in their lives. ***And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit*** (Joel 2:27-29).

And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part (Mark 9:38-40).

Thought for the Day: *The earthly authority God grants to others can sometimes be hard to understand or accept, but we can take peace in the knowledge that God's authority reigns supreme over all.*

Christ Revealed: The two trumpets were made of silver (Num. 10:2). Silver in the Bible stands for truth. Christ is ***The Way, The Truth, and The Life*** (John 14:6).

Word Studies: 10:10 **solemn days** = appointed festivals; 10:14 **standard** = banner; 10:21 **against they came** = in anticipation of their arrival; 10:25 **rereward** = rear guard; 11:4 **fell a lusting** = had greedy desires; 11:6 **is dried away** = is dissatisfied

Pray For Government Officials: Rep. Jim Jordan (OH), Rep. Jake La Turner (KA), Rep. Suzan DelBene (WA) • **Country:** Serbia (7,209,764) Southeastern Europe • Major Language: Serbian • Restricted Religious Freedom • 84.6% Serbian Orthodox; 5% Catholic; 3% Muslim; 1% Protestant; 1.1% Atheist; 0.8% Other; 4.5% Undeclared/Unknown • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray daily to your Father in heaven (Dan. 6:10).

Optional Reading: Luke 4

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth (Num. 12:1-3)).

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (James 4:2-3). Jealousy is an ugly emotion, but it has been around since the earliest days of creation. Jealousy of man's relationship with God moved the serpent to tempt Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-5). It was jealousy over God's approval of his brother's sacrificial offering that motivated Cain to murder his brother Abel (Gen. 4:1-16.) And it was jealousy that caused Joseph's brothers to turn against him and eventually sell him into slavery (Gen. 37). In today's reading, it is jealousy that motivates Miriam and Aaron to speak out against their brother, Moses. ***And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?***

We have no way of knowing why the siblings were angered by Moses' marriage to the Ethiopian woman, but it quickly becomes evident that their stated reason doesn't matter. The root cause of their complaint goes much deeper than whatever immediate irritation they were experiencing. Aaron was God's appointed High Priest (Ex. 28:1), and Miriam was a prophetess to the people in her own right (Ex. 15:20), but even as they served the Lord, they had both allowed seeds of jealousy over the success of their younger brother Moses to grow and fester. Their disapproval of Moses' new wife caused it to burst to the surface and overflow into bitter, complaining words.

The type of jealousy evidenced by Aaron and Miriam is, unfortunately, widespread among Christians today. Ideally, each member of the body of Christ will eagerly embrace the role He has given them, measuring his or her personal performance

only on the basis of its acceptability to God. What often happens, however, falls far short of that ideal. Instead of focusing on his own task in relation to God, the person looks instead to the works and status of his neighbor and measures his worth based off of what he sees. When he feels that his neighbor comes out ahead in that assessment, the seeds of jealousy and discontent are planted.

God's reaction to the grumblings of Miriam and Aaron made His position clear. There is no room for selfish competition or jealousy in the body of Christ. God, and God alone, is the one who determines our rightful 'place' in His service, and God alone has the right to judge if our service is acceptable to Him. Our responsibility is to remain focused on Him and to give him our best effort.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another (Rom. 12:3-5).

Thought for the Day: *Jealousy over God's love for another is the same mistake that drove the devil into hell.*

Christ Portrayed: By Moses, who ***was very meek*** (humble), ***above all the men which were upon the face of the earth*** (Num.12:3). ***Jesus said: I am meek*** (gentle, mild) ***and lowly in heart*** (Matt. 11:29).

Word Studies: 12:3 **meek** = humble, gentle; 12:8 **apparently** = clearly; **in dark speeches** = difficult to understand; **similitude** = likeness; 12:13 **beseech** = beg.

Pray for Government Officials: Rep. Steve Womack (AR), Rep. Jared Huffman (CA), Rep. Brett Guthrie (KY) • **Country:** Seychelles (91,650) Indian Ocean • Major Languages: Seychellois Creole, English, French • Religious Freedom • 76.2% Roman Catholic; 10.6% Protestant; 2.4% Other Christian; 2.4% Hindu; 1.6% Muslim; 1.1% Other Non-Christian; 4.8% Unspecified; 0.9% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Confess your sins to the Lord; He is merciful and forgiving (Dan. 9:4-9).

Optional Reading: Luke 5

All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; as ye do, so he shall do. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you (Num. 15:13-16).

From all the men in creation, God chose Abram (Abraham) to be the father of many nations (Gen. 17:1-4). From Abraham, through Isaac, and on to Jacob (Israel), God established His covenant, and from the descendants of Jacob, He formed the nation of Israel. This nation He set apart from the rest as His special people (Deut. 7:6), His peculiar treasure (Ps. 135:4), setting them up for all the world to see as a beacon of His holiness so that all the world might be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

Through Israel, God established the path to redemption for all mankind. With the introduction of the law, He exposed the broken, sinful nature of mankind (Rom. 3:19-20) and its incompatibility with true righteousness (Rom. 3:10-12). Although the law was given to Israel, it was never restricted to Israel. ***One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you (Ex. 12:49). For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified (Rom. 2:11-13).*** It applied equally to all; through it, all who sought God would be shown the path.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Today, that path is still open to all who choose to walk it; no one will

ever be excluded or turned away. ***There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*** (Gal. 3:28-29). The laws of substitutional sacrifice have been fulfilled, and the burden of (impossible) legalistic righteousness has been lifted. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: ***for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*** (3:13-14). It is through Jesus, now, that the path lies. We either believe in Him, are cleansed in His blood, and are reborn in His image, or we are lost in our sin. This applies equally to everyone, everywhere. There is no other way—no room for compromise or debate—but no one who comes to Him will ever be turned away.

Jesus saith unto Him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me (John 14:6).

Thought for the Day: *God asks the same of us now as He always has—to believe in something greater than ourselves.*

Christ Revealed: As God's glory (Num. 14:22). Jesus Christ is ***the brightness of His*** (God's) ***glory, and the express image of His person*** (Heb. 1:3).

Word Studies: 14:3 **fall by the sword** = die in war; 14:10 **bade** = said; 14:11 **provoke** = spurn, insult, treat with contempt, disrespect; 14:30 **sware** = promised; 14:31 **know** = appreciate; **despised** = spurned; 14:33 **wander** = be shepherds.

Pray For Government Officials: Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ) • **Country:** Sierra Leone (5,743,725) Western Africa • **Major Languages:** English, Mende, Temne, Krio • **Religious Freedom** • 50% belief in river spirits, medicine men, and witchcraft; 60% Muslim; 10% Christian; 30% Indigenous Beliefs • **Prayer Suggestion:** Commit your fears to the Lord; He will give you peace and strength (Dan. 10:19).

Optional Reading: Luke 6

And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD (Num. 16:2-3)?

Much had changed for the Israelites in a very short period. No longer were they pilgrims with a purpose, heirs to the Covenant of Abraham. In a blink, all of that had been stripped away. They were now homeless nomads subject to wander in the wilderness until claimed by death, mere placeholders for the inheritance of their children. Yet, although they may have felt like it at times, they were not alone. God was with them in their exile (Deut. 29:5-6). As God's chosen representative, Moses continued to lead his people to the best of his abilities, his unwavering faith allowing him to press onward with equanimity and humble acceptance in the face of bitter disappointment. His path may have changed, but his responsibilities to God had not.

Not all of his followers could understand the quiet authority of Moses, and there were those who felt his leadership was an affront to the community as a whole. Three men in particular, Korah (Moses' cousin) and Dathan and Abiram (of the tribe of Ruben) looked upon Moses with jealousy and contempt. After surrounding themselves with like-minded men, they contemptuously confronted their leader. ***Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD.***

If we could travel back in time and ask Korah if he had a problem with God's leadership, we would most likely receive a resounding "No, of course not" in response. Korah and his followers firmly believed that all they were doing was opposing the authority of Moses and Aaron; they never once stopped to think that they might also be in rebellion against God. Yet by rejecting their God-appointed leader, they were also rejecting God.

As Korah and his followers stood before Moses and made their foolish demands, they revealed to all within hearing their total lack of understanding of God. They were not answering His call; instead, they were demanding that He grant them power as they felt befitted their station in life. Addressing Moses, they challenged God to give them exactly what they deserved, and He certainly did (Num. 16:27-32)!

How many of us today have been guilty of this same sin? How often have we believed ourselves to be under-appreciated or under-valued? We believe we deserve more – more respect, more recognition, more power, more prestige. We resent those whom God has placed in authority over us, choosing to believe that we could do a much better job if only we were given the chance. The more we focus on ourselves, the more our discontent grows until, at last, we stand in open rebellion, too frustrated and angry to realize that it is God whom we are rebelling against.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (Rom. 13:1-2).

Thought for the Day: *Often, our efforts will not be appreciated or recognized by those around us, but nothing escapes God's notice.*

Christ Portrayed: By Aaron and his sons who were responsible for making proper atonement for all of the sins of Israel (Num. 18:1). Jesus ***gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity*** (lawlessness) (Titus 2:14).

Word Studies: 16:6 **censers** = incense burners; 16:7 **holy** = set apart, dedicated to God; 16:29 **visited** = natural deaths; 16:31 **clave asunder** = split apart; 16:46 **plague** = fatal sickness; 16:48 **stayed** = stopped; 17:10 **testimony** = Ark of the Covenant; **take away** = put an end to; 18:1 **bear the iniquity of** = answerable for the sins against.

Pray For Staff: Ryan McCrary • **Government Official:** Sen. Mitch McConnell, Jr. (KY) • **Country:** Singapore (5,567,301) Southeast Asia • Major Languages: Chinese, English, Malay • **Restricted Religious Freedom** • 33.9% Buddhism; 14.3% Muslim; 11.3% Taoism, 7.1% Catholic; 5.2% Hindu; 11% Other Christian; 0.8% Other; 16.4% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Seek the Lord's forgiveness with a repentant heart, knowing that God will graciously receive you (Hos. 14:1-2).

Optional Reading: Luke 7

And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet. And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him (Num. 20:18-21).

Today's reading covers a lot of material. First, we are given information on the sacrifice of the red heifer, which is symbolic of the final, perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. Next, we read of the deaths of Miriam (Num. 20:1) and Aaron (20:25-29), and we suffer along with Moses as we read of God's devastating pronouncement of judgment that barred him from entering into the Promised Land (20:23-24). In between these events, God saw fit to record the Israelites' dealings with the small but strong nation of Edom.

Even in the wilderness, the reputation of the Israelites preceded them (Josh. 2:10). The power of their God was not easily understood and was, therefore, frightening to outsiders. Many of those they encountered during their journey were hesitant to allow them access to their lands. When they arrived at the border of Edom, though, they had high hopes of a better welcome.

After the death of his father Isaac, Esau had left his father's lands and settled in Edom, a rocky country near Mount Seir, known today as Petra. As descendants of Esau, the Edomites were blood-brothers to the Israelites, who were descendants of Jacob, his twin. The Israelites approached the border of Edom as kinsmen, seeking understanding and safe passage. Despite the familial ties, the king immediately denied them entrance. ***And he said, Thou shalt not go through.*** No matter what promises Moses made ensuring that they would pass through the land without molesting it, the king refused to be swayed. He even went so far as to mobilize his people for war to encourage the Israelites to move off.

Ultimately, Moses led his people another way, and the encounter ended without bloodshed on either side. Nevertheless, the nation of Edom had been mortally wounded, although they did not realize it at that time. In turning away God's chosen people, they had turned away God and reaffirmed Esau's thoughtless dismissal of his birthright. ***And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob*** (Gen. 25:32-33). By rejecting brotherhood in favor of enmity, they turned away their best chance of ever reconciling with the God of their forefathers. Centuries later, the Lord pronounced their final doom.

Therefore thus saith the LORD God; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay My vengeance upon Edom by the hand of My people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to My fury; and they shall know My vengeance, saith the LORD God (Ezek. 25:13-14).

Thought for the Day: *One cannot maintain a relationship with God while ignoring, denying, or distancing themselves from the rest of His children.*

Christ Revealed: Through ***the rock*** that Moses struck (Num. 20:8-11; also Ex. 17:6). Christ, our Rock, who was struck once through His death on the cross, does not need to be struck again. ***That spiritual Rock that followed*** (accompanied) ***them and that Rock was Christ*** (1 Cor. 10:4).

Word Studies: 19:2 **spot** = defect; 19:6 **hyssop** = husky plant designated for purging and cleansing; 19:10 **stranger** = foreigner; 20:3 **chole** = expressed anger; 20:10 **fetch** = bring; 20:11 **smote** = struck; 20:12 **sanctify Me** = hold Me in reverential honor; 20:13 **stroke** = contended.

Pray For Staff: Gilbert Palafox • **Government Officials:** Sen. Mark Kelly (AZ), Rep. Scott DesJarlais (TN) • **Country:** Sint Maarten (39,689) Caribbean • Major Languages: English, Spanish • Religious Freedom • 39% Catholic; 44.8% Protestant; 6.7% None; 5.4% Other; 3.4% Jewish; 0.7% Not Reported • **Prayer Suggestion:** Fast, sanctify yourself, and unite in prayer with others as you cry unto the Lord (Joel 1:14).

Optional Reading: Luke 8

And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king's high way, until we be past thy borders. And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel (Num. 21:21-23).

Scripture has recorded very little of the children of Israel's dealings with the outside world since their triumphant exodus from Egypt. Most of our readings have focused on the budding relationship between God and His fledgling nation. Today's reading temporarily turns that focus outward, allowing us to bear witness to the Israelites' initial interactions with the nations that bordered the Promised Land to which they were once again traveling after over 37 years spent in the wilderness. While many of the nations allowed them safe passage, there were several that instead met them with deep distrust and hostility.

Ironically, the first nation to forbid them passage was Edom, a nation with whom they had blood ties through the lineage of Jacob's (Israel's) brother, Esau (Gen. 36:1). This bad blood between the nations had been prophesied by God centuries before when He had spoken to a heavily pregnant Rebekah. ***And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger (Gen. 25:23).*** After taking the long way around Edom, the wanderers arrived at the land of the Amorites, where they were again denied passage. This time, they were met with a show of outright aggression. ***Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. Unified under the banner of God, Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong***

(Num. 21:24). Following this undisputed victory, Israel moved on to face a similar engagement with Og, the king of Bashan. Once again, the Israelites were attacked, and once again, the army of God prevailed.

The nation of Israel belonged to God; it was set apart and holy (Deut. 7:6). The Amorites, Edomites, and Bashanites each represented the people of the world. The conflicts that Israel had with these nations symbolized the inherent conflict that exists between the people of God and all those devoted to the world (James 4:4). As we stand firm upon the principles of the Lord, we must never forget that the battle is His, and victory is already assured (I Sam. 17:47; II Chr. 20:15). All that is left for us to do is to stand as one with Him, never faltering in our resolve to give our all for His righteous cause.

Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before!
Sabine Baring-Gould, 1865

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts. 14:22).

Thought for the Day: *Being one of God's soldiers does not mean seeking out conflict to obtain victory in His name. It means standing with Him when conflicts arise, knowing He is already victorious.*

Christ Portrayed: By Moses, who prayed for God to save the people (Num. 21:7). ***Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house*** (family, i.e. the Isra- elites) (Heb. 3:1-2).

Word Studies: 21:2 **utterly** = completely; 21:4 **compass** = go around; 21:5 **soul loatheth** = people detest, intense dislike; 21:11 **the sunrising** = by the eastern border; 21:18 **staves** = staffs; 21:23 **suffer** = permit, allow.

Pray For Staff: Judy McCrary • **Government Officials:** Rep. Hillary Scholten (MI), Rep. Shri Thanedar (MI), Rep. Anthony D'Esposito (NY) • **Country:** Slovakia (5,443,583) Central Europe • Major Language: Slovak • Restricted Religious Freedom • 62% Roman Catholic; 8.2% Protestant; 3.8% Greek Catholic; 12.6% Other/Unspecified; 13.4% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** The promises of God should be an encouragement to you to seek God in prayer (Amos 5:4,6).

Optional Reading: Luke 9

And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him (Num. 24:1-2).

Balaam was a crafty, devious, and ambitious man. He was also a prophet of God. ***And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak*** (Num. 23:5). To many of us, those two sentences seem contradictory, but to God, they make perfect sense. Regardless of the state of his heart, Balaam was God's creation; therefore, he was God's to use in any manner He saw fit. ***But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence*** (1 Cor. 1:27-29). Yet, while God did indeed make use of Balaam, Balaam did not serve God.

Balaam was driven by greed and ambition. He had seen the Lord's power displayed among His people and coveted it for himself. His fear kept him from crossing God or God's people directly, but he was always on the lookout for the angle that would allow him to capitalize on his worldly reward. Foolishly, Balaam believed that he had discovered a way to 'have the best of both worlds.' ***Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his*** (Num. 23:10)! He felt that God would count him as righteous as long as he truthfully shared the words God put in his mouth and that he was free to look out for his own interests the rest of the time.

There are many highly successful people today who share Balaam's outlook. They know the right doctrine, sing the right songs, and can even quote the perfect Scripture to fit any situation. They work hard to attain leadership positions and influ-

ence over other believers. Once they have achieved their goal, they immediately set to work controlling the narrative to their own advantage. They regularly brag about their relationship with the Lord and profess the belief that their eternity lies with Him, but they do not allow that to hold them back from seeking out the best the world has to offer in the meantime. They see no harm in doing whatever it takes, short of out-and-out public blasphemy against God, to achieve their worldly goals.

Just as He did with Balaam, God will, at times, use these people to forward His plan or share His blessings with others. Being used by God, however, is not the same thing as willingly and humbly serving Him. It is impossible for a person whose heart still firmly belongs to the world to enter into His service.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24).

Thought for the Day: *Fear of God does not equal faith in Him or even true belief in His existence.*

Christ Revealed: As the prophesied **Star** and **Sceptre** (Num. 24:17). Christ is coming to reign in great glory (Rev. 19:15-16). ***Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom*** (Heb. 1:8).

Word Studies: 23:3 **peradventure** = perhaps; 23:10 **dust** = descendants; 24:14 **advertise** = let you know; 24:18 **do valiantly** = be triumphant; 25:1 **commit whoredom** = have intercourse; 25:3 **kindled against** = became angry against; 25:7 **javelin** = spear; 25:13 **seed** = descendants, **offspring**; **atonement** = effected reconciliation; 25:17 **vex** = besiege; 25:18 **wiles** = treacherous deceit; **beguiled** = deceived.

Pray For Staff: Jennifer Palafox • **Government Official:** Rep. John Rose (TN), Rep. Jeff Van Drew (NJ), Rep. Mike Flood (NE) • **Country:** Slovenia (1,988,292) Central Europe • Major Language: Slovenian • Religious Freedom • 57.8% Roman Catholic; 2.4% Muslim; 2.3% Orthodox; 0.9% Other Christian; 3.5% Unaffiliated; 23% Other/ Unspecified; 10.1% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Pray when distressed and afflicted (Jon. 2:2).

Optional Reading: Luke 10

Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father (Num. 27:1-4).

The five daughters of Zelophehad came before Moses with an unprecedented request. Their father had died in the wilderness, as appointed by God. **Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me** (Num. 14:29). At the time of his death, Zelophehad was still a legitimate heir to the promise, but he died without a male heir or any prospect of a male heir. In accordance with tradition and tribal inheritance laws, this meant that his line was ended, and his portion of inheritance under the promise was forfeit. His five unmarried daughters were left with nothing. While tradition dictated they be charitably provided for by tribal relatives, they had no inheritance or personal standing amongst the children of Israel. Now, as the people were being numbered in preparation for entering the land of Canaan, the sisters challenged their status under the law. **Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.**

Coming together as one, they stood before Moses, claiming their right to inheritance under the promise of God. They were not challenging tribal law (although their claim ran contrary to it);

instead, they were stating that their existence as descendants of Abraham and children of God under the promise was not erased by the death of their father or the absence of a male heir to continue the line. Full of faith and confident in the grace of God, they made their petition. ***And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him*** (1 John 5:14-15).

Had the sisters meekly turned away, bowed to the traditions of their people, and never stated a claim, their inheritance would never have been realized. Had they quietly grumbled amongst themselves or complained to friends instead of bringing the matter to God, they would have been left bitter and unsatisfied. ***Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not*** (James 4:2). Yet by faithfully presenting their need to God and trusting in Him to fill it, they were greatly blessed.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened (Matt. 7:7-8).

Thought for the Day: *Take care not to mistake earthly tradition for Biblical truth.*

Christ Portrayed: By the man (Joshua) who would lead the people like a shepherd (Num. 27:17). Jesus said: ***I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*** (John 10:11,27).

Word Studies: 26:2 **the sum** = a census; 26:9 **strove against** = rebelled against; 26:61 **strange** = unauthorized; 27:13 **shall be gathered to** = brought to former loved ones; 27:14 **sanctify Me** = loving obedience and submission; 27:18 **lay thine hand** = transfer authority; 27:19 **give him a charge** = commission him as your successor.

Pray for Country: Solomon Islands (609,883) South Pacific Ocean • Major Languages: Melanesian Pidgin, 120 Indigenous Languages • Religious Freedom • 73.4% Protestant; 19.6% Roman Catholic; 2.9% Other Christian; 4% Other; 0.1% None/Unspecified • **Prayer Suggestion:** Seek the Lord when in despair; He is your deliverer (Jon. 2:5-6).

Optional Reading: Luke 11

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish (Num. 29:1-2).

The calendar under which the Israelites lived in Biblical times can be difficult for modern-day Christian readers to decipher. That is because their lives were actually governed by two separate calendars. From the time of the Exodus, the sacred (spiritual) year began in Nisan (Ex. 12:1-2), the month of the Passover, which is observed in remembrance of God's deliverance of His people. However, the month that marked the official changing of the year (year date) was Tishri (Ezek. 40:1). Thus, the seventh month of the spiritual year was the first month of the civil year. The Feast of Trumpets marked the beginning of a new year in a civil legal sense, and it also served the purpose of calling the Israelites' attention back to the Lord after a prolonged period of intense physical labor. The four months between the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and the Feast of Trumpets were spent working in the fields and preparing for harvest. The ***day of blowing the trumpets*** served to remind them of the God to whom they owed their bounty.

This day of worship and rest was followed ten days later by the Day of Atonement. This was a day of fasting, prayer, and soul searching. It was the day in which the high priest entered into the most holy place to make intercession with God for the sins of the nation, and the scapegoat was released into the wilderness (Lev. 16:2-34). This most solemn of holy days preceded the joyous Feast of Tabernacles by only five days.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the last feast of the religious year. For seven days, all the residents of Israel dwelt in temporary booths (shelters) as an annual reminder of the time when they dwelt in tents during their 40 years in the wilderness, wholly dependent on God for protection and provision. This celebration has also been referred to as the Feast of Ingathering. It marked the end of the harvest and called for the people to give thanks

unto God, worshiping Him in joyous celebration. There were far more sacrifices offered during this Feast than during any other. Each one offered in acknowledgment of the provision, protection, and mercy of God.

Today, we look upon the Feast Days of the Lord, and we see in them the foreshadowing of the Messiah. For instance, Passover represents His atoning work upon the Cross, and The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) marks His bodily ascension to the throne room of God. It is both awe-inspiring and humbling for us to be able to look back and realize that Jesus was a source of hope and inspiration for His people long before they even knew Him. Where most of the Feast Days now commemorate events that have already taken place, there is one that still urges us to look to the future. The joy of the Feast of Tabernacles is representative of the joy that will fill our hearts on the long-awaited day on which our blessed Savior will return to collect His harvest.

And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven (Mark 13:26-27).

Thought for the Day: *The timetable of the world and the timetable of God are two separate and wholly unequal things. The world's may keep us on schedule, but God's is the one that matters in the end.*

Christ Revealed: By the tabernacles (booths, temporary dwellings) (Num. 29:12-39; Lev. 23:34,42-43). **The Word** (logos, i.e. the sayings of God) **was made** (became) **flesh, and dwelt among us** (John 1:14). The Greek word translated dwelt means to “tabernacle or live in a tent temporarily.”

Word Studies: 28:2 **sweet savour** = pleasing fragrance; 28:3 **spot** = defect; 28:6 **ordained** = instituted by God; 28:13 **several** = separate.

Pray For Staff: Judy McCrary • **Government Officials:** Rep. Darren Soto (FL) • **Country:** Somalia (10,428,043) East Africa • **Major Languages:** Somali, Arabic • **Islam** is the State Religion; **Persecution & Execution** by Al-Shabaab (both Muslim and Christian) • **Muslim;** Small low-profile Christian community, Small numbers of members of other religious groups • **Prayer Suggestion:** Trust in the Lord and wait upon Him in your prayers, for He will hear you (Mic. 7:7).

Optional Reading: Luke 12

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian (Num. 31:1-3).

The right of vengeance belongs to God and God alone. ***Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*** (Rom. 12:19). This concept is almost universally taught from pulpits today as a call to self-control and is often paired with Jesus' admonition from the Sermon on the Mount to turn the other cheek. ***But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*** (Matt. 5:39). This is a valuable lesson, and one that we all should heed, but we must be careful not to read more into it than God intended. Just because He has not granted us the right to seek it ourselves does not mean that God has taken vengeance off the table. And just because we, with our limited understanding of our fellow man, have been instructed to turn the other cheek does not mean that we have the right to expect God to do likewise.

The details of God's vengeance upon the Midianites are chilling. First, every adult male fell in battle (Num. 31:7), then, God ordered the slaughter of the majority of the captured women and children, leaving as the only survivors, girls too young to have had carnal relations with men. ***Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him*** (31:17). There are no standards available to us by which we can judge this acceptable. If this were to be carried out by a human regime today, we would rightly view these actions as war crimes of the highest order, murderous and indefensible. But this was not carried out by imperfect men following their own agenda; this was put into motion by our perfect, all-knowing God. And we are not being asked to judge, but rather to accept. But how?

The first thing we must do is quit trying to rationalize or defend

God's actions, either to ourselves or others. He is God, Creator of all, and He needs no defense. All life is His to do with as He will (Job 1:21), and all His actions are just and right. ***He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He*** (Deut. 32:4). Just because we don't—and might not ever—understand why He has done something doesn't mean we have the right to question the integrity of what He has done. When we attempt to justify the actions of God and search for ways to prove that He is worthy of our love and respect, we deny our faith. We follow Him because He is the Lord. No other explanation is needed.

I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things (Is. 45:5-7).

Thought for the Day: *As with His mercy and love, God's vengeance cannot be compared to its worldly counterpart.*

Christ Portrayed: By Moses, who judged Israel's actions and passed sentence (Num. 31:1-17). ***In righteousness He doth judge*** (Rev. 19:11; II Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 1:14-15).

Word Studies: 30:2 **bind his soul** = to abstain from something; 30:3 **bond** = promises; 30:4 **hold his peace at** = say nothing to; 30:5 **disallow** = forbid; 30:7 **hold his peace at** = said nothing; 30:9 **their souls** = themselves; 30:13 **void** = invalid.

Pray For Staff: Jennifer Palafox • **Government Official:** Rep. Dan Goldman (NY), Sen. Tim Kaine (VA) • **Country:** South Africa (48,375,645) • **Major Languages:** Isizulu, Isixhosa, Afrikaans, English • **Religious Freedom** • 36.6% Protestant; 7.1% Catholic; 1.5% Muslim; 36% Other Christian; 2.3% Other; 1.4% Unspecified; 15.1% None • **Prayer Suggestion:** Rejoice over and pray for those who share the Good News (Nah. 1:15).

Optional Reading: Luke 13

Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them (Num. 33:52-56).

As God prepared His people to enter the land He was giving them for their inheritance, He bluntly stated his expectations, leaving no room for confusion or misinterpretation. **Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places.** This was to be their fresh start—a clean slate upon which they could build their lives in fellowship with Him. Nothing of the outside world could be permitted to remain lest it contaminate the purity of the fellowship.

Their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had all dwelt amongst the inhabitants of the land as strangers in a strange land (Gen. 23:3-4; Heb. 11:8-10). God had turned their hearts and eyes toward the future, working within them in preparation for the day when they (through their descendants) would be strangers no longer, but instead full possessors of the promise. Now that time had come, and God was calling on His people to trust in His promise, **Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the**

Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite (Ex. 34:11), step forward, and follow Him in faith and total obedience, just as Abraham had done.

God's directive to those of us who have entered into the body of Christ is equally clear. ***That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*** (Eph. 4:22-24). We too have been given a fresh start at life—the opportunity to live wholly in Christ without excuse or compromise. But in order to fully take advantage of this opportunity, we have to ***drive out*** and ***destroy*** all remnants of our former worldly selves. Only then will we be able to appreciate the peace that comes from perfect fellowship with Him. ***Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*** (Rom. 15:13).

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (II Cor. 6:17-18).

Thought for the Day: *Finding peace in the body of Christ is only possible if we relinquish the vices that strive to pull us away.*

Christ Revealed: Through the promised land -- filled with abundance, as well as protection, for those who live in harmony with His Word (Num. 33:50- 54). ***I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*** (John 10:10).

Word Studies: 32:4 **smote** = conquered; 32:11 **followed** = obeyed; 32:14 **an increase** = a brood; **augment** = increase, add to; 32:17 **fenced** = fortified, walled; 32:19 **forward** = beyond; 32:22 **guiltless** = free of obligation

Pray For Staff: Kevin Jennings • **Government Officials:** Sen, Maggie Hassan (NH), Rep. Nick Langworthy (NY), Glenn Ivey (MD) • **Country:** South Sudan (11,562,695) East Central Africa • **Major Languages:** English, Arabic • **Religious Freedom** • Christian (Majority), Animist, Muslim • **Prayer Suggestion:** Praise God for godly men of old who were faithful to record His Word of Truth (Hab. 2:1-2).

Optional Reading: Luke 14

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:) (Num. 34:1-2).

And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him (Gen. 12:7). And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the **Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites (Ex.3:8).** **For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off (23:23).** **By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land (23:30).** Chapter 34 of the Book of Numbers opens by defining the borders of the land God promised to His children as their inheritance. North, south, east, and west—the lines of demarcation were clearly drawn. This was the land from which God had promised to expel all worldly influences, the land by which He would protect and provide for His people, meeting their every need with bountiful grace and unwavering love. **Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee: and upon earth He shewed thee His great fire; and thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire. And because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in His sight with His mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day (Deut. 4:36-38).**

To the Israelites, these boundaries represented home. For the first time since Abram (Abraham) gathered his household and left his father's house in response to God's command (Gen.

12:1-4), His descendants would have a home of their own. They would have provisions, safety, security, and permanency. For as long as they lived in obedience to the Lord, they would also live in fellowship with Him, and the outside world would not be permitted to breach the perimeter that God established.

For those of us who have joined with the body of Christ, the concept of home has taken on a deeper meaning. ***For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*** (Rom. 8:14). The Holy Spirit has taken up permanent residence within us, and the impermeable boundaries God has set round about our hearts enable us to live in safe and protected fellowship with Him at all times and in all places, regardless of worldly circumstances. This home is permanent; it transcends life and death.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked (II Cor. 5:1-3).

Thought for the Day: *As long as we have God, we are never truly lost; His path is always before us. Ask, and He will light the way.*

Christ Revealed: By the cities of refuge (Num. 35:6). Christ is our Refuge from the judgment of God and the curse of the Law. ***Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus*** (Heb. 6:18-20).

Word Studies: 34:3 **Salt Sea** = Dead Sea; 34:5 **fetch a compass** = take a turn toward; 34:5 **goings out** = end; 34:6 **Great Sea** = Mediterranean Sea; 34:8 **goings forth** = boundary; 34:11 **Chin'nereth** = Galilee; 35:2 **suburbs** = open land.

Pray For Staff: Gilbert Palafox • **Government Officials;** Rep. Ben Cline (VA) • **Country:** Spain (47,737,941) Southwestern Europe • Major Languages: Castilian Spanish, Catalan • Limited Religious Freedom • 94% Roman Catholicism; 6% Other • **Prayer Suggestion:** Examine yourself. Has prosperity dulled your willingness to sacrifice (Hag. 1:4)?

Optional Reading: Luke 15

This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers (Num. 36:6-7).

The Book of Numbers closes on a somewhat anticlimactic note. Instead of continuing on with large-scale preparations for the Israelites' entrance into the land of Canaan, we find ourselves witnessing a private meeting between Moses and representatives of the tribe of Manasseh (of the lineage of Joseph) concerning a clarification of inheritance law. Through this exchange, we are reminded of all the ways in which Moses, the servant of God, served the Lord's chosen people. ***When they have a matter, they come unto me (Moses); and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and His laws (Ex. 18:16).***

The matter upon which the representatives sought clarification was initially addressed in chapter 27. ***And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter (Num. 27:6-8).*** At that time, the Lord had explained in detail the law of inheritance in the event that a man died and left behind no living sons. After pondering the law, the tribal leaders once again presented themselves to Moses with concerns that their tribal inheritance could be lost through the marriage of a daughter who had inherited and then married into another tribe.

Laws of tribal inheritance mean little to us today, but the Lord's answer to this further inquiry is still quite relevant to our lives. He makes it clear that when our personal rights infringe upon our responsibility to the family of Christ as a whole or in

part, then our rights are what need to be adjusted. Although there was nothing sinful or forbidden about intermarriage between the tribes of Israel, had the daughters that had received their father's inheritance done so, their entire extended family would have been adversely affected. God ruled, therefore, that their right to choose a husband was restricted to within their own tribe.

Modern life is filled with situations that oftentimes leave genuine Christians floundering in a 'grey area.' We are frequently faced with personal choices that, while not expressly sinful, might offend others or diminish our effectiveness as witnesses for Christ. What is 'right' in one situation might well be 'wrong' in another, simply because of the nature of the people involved in each. Instead of heatedly defending our rights, God asks that we renew our commitment to Him by focusing instead on the needs of those who might be affected by our actions.

But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died (I Cor. 8:9-11)?

Thought for the Day: *Every person's relationship with God is unique; we all walk the same path, but we must take care not to disrupt the footsteps of another.*

Christ Revealed: As *the inheritance of the children of Israel* (Num. 36:7). While they were given an inheritance of the land that will pass away, we have been given a greater inheritance, one that will not pass away. ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (I Pet. 1:3-4).***

Pray for the United States of America.

Become part of the vision

Jesus fed the 5000 with just five loaves and two fishes. There are multitudes of people in this world still hungering for His Word. Thousands of souls die each day with no knowledge of the saving grace of our Father in Heaven.

As Christians, God has commissioned us to tell of Him and witness to the unbelievers that they may know Him. God is leading Bible Pathway Ministries to send out an additional 5000 Bibles and devotionals monthly, starting in January 2024. For this project to become a reality, I must ask in Jesus' precious name for your financial support in this endeavor. The estimated cost for this mission is \$250,000.00.

We are stepping out in faith and preparing the first shipment, trusting that God will make it possible. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him (1 John 5:14-15).

Notes

This image shows a full page of handwriting practice paper. It features multiple sets of horizontal dashed lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is white, and there are no other markings or text present.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dashed lines.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dashed lines.

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