

## Lesson 11 – Numbers 1-12

Text: Numbers 1-12

Main Characters: God, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Aaron's sons (Eleazar and Ithamar), Levites, Israelites

Key Passages:

- Numbers 1:54 – The Israelites did all that God had commanded them (repeated several times).
- Numbers 11:4 – The Israelites were influenced to complain by others' complaints.

Main Storyline:

Once the tabernacle was fully constructed and assembled, God gave additional commandments to Moses and the rest of the Israelites. God appointed the Levites to maintain and transport the tabernacle. They were not to take on the priestly duties (sacrifices, etc.), however. God further divided their responsibilities by family. The Kohathites were responsible for the furnishings of the tabernacle and their transportation (given no oxen/carts to assist). The Gershonites were in charge of the curtain and other various parts of the tabernacle (given 2 carts and 4 oxen). The Merarites were in charge of the heavy supporting materials (given 4 carts and 8 oxen). All of the Levites were consecrated similarly to the way Aaron and his sons were consecrated.

God told Moses that He would take the Levites in exchange for the firstborn that should have been killed in Egypt. Moses took account of the number of firstborn in Israel (22,273) and the number of Levite males (22,000). Since there were not enough Levites to redeem every firstborn, God told Moses to have the Levites offer sacrifices for the remaining 273 firstborn who were not redeemed by a Levite. In the future, Israel was to offer sacrifices on behalf of all firstborn children (Numbers 18:15ff).

God also gave several other commandments. He explained the law of lepers, additional details regarding restitution for sins, the Nazarite vow (a short period of dedication to God), and gave instructions for the dedication of the altar of burnt offering. He also gave a detailed procedure for the Israelites to follow if a husband suspects his wife of adultery but has no proof for it. God also reminded the people that they needed to observe the Passover (as a year had passed since they had left Egypt). In the event that someone was unclean or far away, he could observe the Passover one month later.

In the second month of the second year after Israel had left Egypt, God told Moses to prepare to leave Mount Sinai. Moses was commanded to take a census of all of the men in all the tribes, 20 years old and above. The Levites were excluded because they had the responsibility for the tabernacle. Moses was also told to arrange the people by tribe in a certain way around the tabernacle when they camped. Also, he was told to use trumpets to signal the people to assemble or to move out. On the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the second month, the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, and the people left Sinai.

The cloud led them towards the wilderness of Paran. Some people complained, and God was angry and burned them with fire. Later, some others complained about not having meat (or enough meat), which incited others to complain. God gave them what they wanted, however. A wind blew in so much quail that they were 3 feet deep all around the camp. The people lustily ate and gathered all day and night. Later, those that had lusted for meat were killed by a plague that God sent on them.

Miriam and Aaron later complained about Moses' wife. God rebuked them, and afflicted Miriam with leprosy. Moses and Aaron pleaded for her. God said that she would need to remain outside the camp for seven days. After the seven days, she returned and was healed.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) We must always obey the Lord just as He commands us – nothing added or removed.
- 2.) We cannot allow complaints made by others to cause us to complain against God.