Numbers 7 **Sacrificial Repetition** 6th April 2023

This chapter is one of the longest in the Bible. It contains the theme of the dedication of the altar and includes a deliberate repetition of the full details of each offering made on twelve successive days by the named princes of each of the twelve tribes of Israel in turn.

Before that the distribution of the covered wagons was made. Each prince had to provide an ox and then work in unison with another prince so that between two a wagon was also provided. There was a necessity then for the tribes to work together not just alone. This bonded the tribes together in a pragmatic way. These wagons were given to the tribe of Levi to assist them in their labour of carrying the various articles of the tabernacle. Kohath were not given any wagons as they had to bear the furniture on their shoulders. Gershon were given two wagons as they had a lesser quantity of furniture to carry, the outer curtains and the other various hangings and all that pertained to them. Cloth is heavy especially in the quantities that were used to shield and enclose the courts and cover the wooden frame of the tabernacle itself as well as act as doors. Everything had been thought through and was pre-planned. To Merari were given four wagons with their oxen to carry the heaviest material, the wooden boards themselves and the pillars for the outer court. These would have needed the extra carrying capacity of these wagons. There were sixty outer pillars, nine inner pillars and forty eight boards of shittim wood encased in gold.

Names (with meaning) of the Princes who offered:

1 Judah offered first through Nahshon son of Amminadab. Oracle or Enchanter.

2 Then Issachar through Nethaneel son of Zuar. Given of God.

3 Zebulun through Eliab son of Helon. God is my father.

4 Reuben through Elizur son of Shedeur. My God a rock.

5 Simeon through Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. Friend of God.

6 Gad through Eliasaph son of Deuel. Whom God added.

7 Ephraim through Elishamma son of Ammihud. My God will hear.

8 Manasseh through Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. God recompenses.

9 Benjamin through Abidan son of Gideoni. Father of judgment.

10 Dan through Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. Helping Brother.

11 Asher through Pagiel son of Ocran. Prayer of God.

12 Naphtali through Ahira son of Enan. Brother of evil.

The order of the tribes is the same as another list. It is not based on the mothers as Asher is 11th whilst his full brother Gad is 6th. The first five are all sons of Leah but the order is not the birth order. It is however the order of the march with Judah on the east with his two additional tribes, then Reuben on the south, Ephraim on the west and then Dan on the north. This list was given in the second chapter of the book of Numbers. The march order details the multitudinous host of Israel, YAHWEH tsvaoth!

After detailing the offering of every individual prince, a total summation of the constituent parts of each offering is aggregated. This restating of the accumulation of each part gives a crescendo of labour effort and value in the dedication of the altar. Deuteronomy 20v5 implies that other things were also dedicated. So perhaps we should consider if we should formally dedicate to the Almighty what we put our hands to and create through His blessings.

It should be noted that a lot of silver, which speaks of redemption, was used in these offerings. Gold also was used, which speaks of the tried faith of the nation of Israel as was then evidenced in the Wilderness. The golden spoons contain incense, This represents the prayers of the saints, and prayer can only be acceptably offered if it is initiated by the prior establishment of faith, hence the golden

spoons. There was twenty times more silver than gold. Bullinger suggests that 20 is related to expectation or waiting. Is this is so, then it would imply that there was an expectancy of redemption over tried faith. There will certainly be no redemption without the exhibiting of tried faith!

The animals sacrificed were in three categories,

Burnt offerings: 36 animals, speaking of total dedication with nothing held back.

Sin offerings: 12 animals, sin was ever present in both forms, transgressions & nature.

Peace offerings: 204 animals, this was for the strong bonds of fellowship which arose.

That sin offerings were made to dedicate an inanimate object, an altar, demonstrates that sin is not restricted to morally defiling transgressions but that sin is also part of the fabricate of creation in its present fallen state, whereby everything is naturally defiled and comes under the condemnation.

It should be noted that the altar was dedicated and therefore sin offerings were made for twelve days after the altar was anointed, or "Christed". Being associated with Christ does not alter the need for sacrifice to continue, nor that sin is thereby eradicated. Its corrupting, defiling elements sadly continue and remain in the human condition. It is not until Jesus finally banishes sin at the conclusion of the Millennium that mankind will be finally freed from this curse.

Each tribe, regardless of its size, made the same offering through their leadership. The bigger, more numerous tribes, did not offer more, nor did the smaller, less numerous tribes, offer less. There was an equivalence before God, each tribe was the same and were required to bring forth the same labour in dedication to the Eternal.

So, it should be in our Ecclesias. Each is A Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12v27 check the Greek) in their own right and stands before him as a lampstand which needs to bring forth light. We cannot do this alone but in a special way, "*for where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them*" Matthew 18v20.

A Voice from the Altar Russel Noonan