

The Book of Numbers

Lesson 17

Chapters 27:12 – 28:31

Conversation Between Moses and the LORD

Ascend Mountain To Die

Num 27:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. 27:13 "When you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was; 27:14 for in the wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to treat Me as holy before their eyes at the water." (~~These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.~~)

The time had come. Moses' time had come. Within a short time, Moses would make the transition from being the leader of the Nation of Israel on earth to the place of peaceful rest in Paradise in the bosom of Abraham. In both cases, he was put there by the LORD, led by the LORD, and restricted by the LORD both in life and death. The LORD basically told Moses to go to the mount to see the goal set before the people he was selected to lead. But when he arrived there, he would see the land but he would also see the portal of death and go into eternity beyond death. Here we see that the LORD does not forget our rebellion. This seems harsh. Why did the LORD take this stance with Moses? Why did the LORD allow Moses to be His right-hand man in the formation of the Nation of Israel and then, as the goal came into view, he was denied entry? We must notice the strong nature of how the LORD does things with His creatures. For those people whom the LORD draws near to Him, as near as Moses was drawn to the LORD, He expects absolute loyalty and faithfulness. The closer one comes to the foot of the LORD, the greater expectation of performance He requires. Moses met the LORD at the burning bush 40 years before. A few months later, after coming back from Egypt with a multitude, he had the opportunity to sit under the direct instruction of the LORD, hear His voice, see into His heaven, record for His people His statutes and ordinances, see His Shekinah glory and direct His people in their day-to-day lives. For the last 38 years, Moses could meet with the LORD in the most Holy of Holies behind the Veil, at the Ark of the Covenant, in the presence of the Mercy Seat. No one else at that time had that privilege! Moses had a special relationship with the LORD and he was without excuse when he disobeyed the LORD. One act of disobedience does not end one's usefulness in the LORD's business. Moses' rebellious act was not a surprise to the LORD; He knew it would happen. Despite the timing of Moses' rebellion, the LORD allowed him to continue as leader for 38 more years until the wilderness journey was completed. But human leadership cannot continue forever because we are human. There comes a time for a change. At that point of change there comes a time of judgment for all things that have been done. For Moses, only one act stood in the way. It was not the death of the Egyptian that he buried in the sand 80-years before that caused him to run from Egypt as prince and arrive in the land of Midian to become a herder. It was not in taking a Midianite wife or submitting himself to the religious worship of his father-in-law which had entered into the *Baal* tradition. It was not the

excuses he made at the burning bush as to why he could not go to Egypt to speak to Pharaoh for the people of Israel. It was not because he broke the original tablet of stone or married the Cushite woman or neglected his first wife during his leadership of the Nation of Israel in the wilderness or his failure to lead the people into the Promised Land 38 years before. It was because he asked the LORD for water; the LORD gave him specific instruction; he failed to follow that instruction. The LORD still provided the water, but Moses had acted out of the LORD's will. At once he was out of the LORD's will but still the LORD blessed those who needed a provision. For the LORD will work all things for the good of those who belong to Him and He will provide for all the needs of His people. And, because we live in an ungodly world, many of the provisions provided by the LORD will come from an ungodly source from within the world. So, too, the LORD will use the ungodly for the good of those who belong to Him. Moses sinned, but even in his sin, the LORD still worked through the sin to provide for the need of the multitude. Those who needed to be blessed were not cursed because of the sin of their leader. But, in spite of that, the reckoning day for Moses' sin had come. His eternal salvation was not in jeopardy, but his earthy ministry was. But before Moses made his last climb up a mountain to see the goal of the exodus and then transition to the eternal life with the LORD where he would see Him face to face, some administration duties needed to be completed. The first was another leader needed to be chosen, a shepherd to take Moses' place.

Moses to Anoint Joshua as Leader

Num 27:15 Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, 27:16 "May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 27:17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD will not be like sheep which have no shepherd." 27:18 So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 27:19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. 27:20 "You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him. 27:21 "Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation." 27:22 Moses did just as the LORD commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 27:23 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

Moses understood a principle of the LORD's creation that is still misstated and misinterpreted today. It is evident in his plea to **"the God of the spirits of all flesh."** "All flesh" means exactly that, "all flesh." It does not matter if it is a man, a dog, a bear, a rabbit, a rattlesnake or a termite, all have some sort of flesh and all contain the spirit of God. For that matter, they all contain a body, soul and spirit exactly like the Scripture says. Many a Bible student has been confused about this. It is not the body that confuses them, it is the difference between the soul and spirit. Let us look at the soul first. Every living creature on earth that has breath has a soul. Merrill F. Unger, the revered Bible scholar of the past defines the soul as the entire inner nature. For man, it is the person that he is, the way he thinks. Unger goes on to indicate that it is not unique to

humans because as he calls them, the brute and the beast also contain a soul. We think, we want, we have desires, we see, we hear, we communicate, we move, we fix and by instinct we react to various things that occur during our lives. Tie all of that together with how we do what we do and think what we think, and it forms our unique personalities. Think about your dog. It thinks, wants, desires, sees, hears, communicates, moves and by instinct reacts to various things. Tie all of that together with how it does what it does and thinks what it thinks, and it forms its unique personality. The same is for all animals wild and domesticated. They all have unique personalities and those personalities represent the souls residing within their bodies. However, there is a difference between the soul of man and the soul of every other living creature. The soul of man can communicate with its maker; no other living creature can do that. Furthermore, the soul of man is eternal; no other living creature can say that. The soul of man is made in the “image” of God; no other living animal can experience that.

Now for the spirit. It is the breath of God that gives life to the body of flesh. Back in Genesis 7, during the onset of the flood, the Scripture says the following.

Genesis 7:21-22 And all flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.

Notice first that it was the “flesh” that perished – the body of dust. All flesh, whether that of man or beast was and is made from the dust of the earth. When that flesh dies, it returns to the dust of the earth. The Scripture poetically calls it “clay” at different times. Notice second that the flesh had been animated by “the breath of the spirit of life” through the “nostrils.” To understand this second point we need to return to Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Even though Genesis 2 speaks of the breath of life being given to his newly created man, Genesis 7 expands that to all creatures and it also explains that this “breath” through the nostrils is “the spirit of life.” The Hebrew word for *breath* in both verses is the same, *nesamah* and its meaning is *breath*, just as we use it in our language today. The Hebrew word for *spirit* is *ruach* and strangely enough, it is most often translated in the Old Testament as *breath*. Why did Moses write in the Hebrew “the breath of the spirit (breath) of life?” In Hebrew it reads, “the breath of the breath of life.” What does that mean? It means that there is the *breath* that we breathe and then there is the *breath* that gives the dust of our flesh life. The two are different. Our English translators made the distinction for us by changing the second *breath* to the word *spirit*. This *spirit* is the animating energy of life that causes the body to be alive, the cells are alive! Those cells are bound together and form a place to house the soul. As a side note, the body is a house that cannot sin, cannot act on its own, cannot kill others, cannot steal, cannot covet, cannot go anywhere without the desires of the soul, that being the personality of the person living in the house of clay. It is the spirit of God that gives life to the dust of the clay, formed into what we

call the body, a living vessel and a tool to be used by the soul. In all animals except man, the instinct of the soul controls the tool of the flesh for preservation and multiplication of generation after generation. All animals, except man cannot sin. They do what they do because they must do what they do to survive. Man has domesticated many animals to the point that they are unable to survive in the world outside the care of their human masters; nevertheless, they still cannot sin. On the other hand, man, the soul that dwells in the animated flesh of living dust can sin. It is not the flesh that sins; the flesh is just the tool used by the soul to commit a sin. It is not the flesh that sins, it is the soul. It is not the flesh that needs salvation, it is the soul. It is not the flesh that lives eternally, it is the soul. When the body dies, the soul goes to its eternal home, the body of clay returns to the ground, dead, never to live again, and the spirit returns to the LORD Who is its giver of earthly human life, the Animator of the body of dust useful as the earthly home of the soul of each human made in the image of God (See Ecclesiastes 12:5-8)? The three parts are different; yet, while on earth, the three parts work together. It is the same for the beast and man with two exceptions. First, beasts cannot sin and man can. Second, beasts cannot communicate with the LORD intelligently and man can.

Moses understood the difference between the spirit of life of man and the soul of man. He knew that the soul of man had an eternal home past the present realms of earth. He also knew that when he was no longer a sojourner on earth, all the souls of the Nation of Israel that would remain after his departure, all those bodies of living dust animated by the “spirit of life,” would need a leader. Who would the leader be? The LORD gave the answer. He had selected Joshua.

According to the book of Joshua 24:29, Joshua was 110 years old when he died. That we know for sure. We can assume that Joshua was just under 20 years of age when he traveled as a spy with the twelve. For sure he was not yet 20 because he was not cursed to die in the wilderness for two reasons. First, he voted to go into the Promised Land with Caleb. Second, he was not twenty years of age. If that is the case, he was approximately 58 years old when he became the leader in Moses’ place. Caleb, his faithful comrade in the spying event of the Promised Land, was 78 years old when Joshua replaced Moses. Seven years later, after the Promised Land was captured for Israel, Caleb was 85 years old as recorded in Joshua 14. After the conquest of the Promised Land, Joshua was still the leader until his death at the age of 110. That meant that Joshua led the nation at least 47 years.

According to the LORD’s instruction, Joshua was “commissioned” by the high priest to take Moses’ place. Here is an interesting twist. Here we see the Hebrew word *tsavah* and it means to *lay charge upon, give charge to, or command or order*. For everyone else in the order of the Nation of Israel, the leader was ordained, but Joshua was “commissioned.” It occurred in the sight of all the people. As the Scripture states, Joshua did not have all the power invested in Moses but he was vested with the ultimate role of leader. For instance, Joshua did not have the authority to go into the Holy of Holies and speak to the LORD as Moses did, but he was still under the Divine direction of the LORD.

After the commissioning service of Joshua, the LORD directed Moses to give a series of warnings to the nation as it would go into the Promised Land without him. He presented these warnings by their timing – daily, weekly, monthly, annually and at will.

Warnings for Appointed Times of Burnt Offering - Daily

Num 28:1 Then **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, 28:2 "Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be careful to present My offering, My food for My offerings by fire, of a soothing aroma to Me, at their appointed time.' 28:3 "You shall say to them, 'This is the offering by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs one year old without defect *as a continual burnt offering every day.* 28:4 'You shall offer the one lamb in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; 28:5 also a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil. 28:6 'It is a continual burnt offering which was ordained in Mount Sinai as a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. 28:7 'Then the drink offering with it *shall be* a fourth of a hin for each lamb, in the holy place you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the LORD. 28:8 'The other lamb you shall offer at twilight; as the grain offering of the morning and as its drink offering, you shall offer it, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

The LORD required a burnt, drink and grain offering every morning and evening. The following chart shows the menu. This requirement occurred every day even when another offering was required.

Morning Offering (at Sunrise)	Evening Offering (at Noon)
One unblemished lamb 1/10 ephah of fine flour ¼ hin of beaten oil ¼ hin strong drink	One unblemished lamb 1/10 ephah of fine flour ¼ hin of beaten oil ¼ hin strong drink

I hope you will notice that the two are the same. What about the “strong drink?” It was not to be consumed by the priest who were strictly forbidden from ever putting wine to their lips; it was to be poured out on the burnt offering.

Warnings for Appointed Times of Sabbath Offering - Weekly

Num 28:9 'Then on the sabbath day two male lambs one year old without defect, and two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and its drink offering: 28:10 *This is* the burnt offering of every sabbath in addition to the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.

On the Sabbath, an additional offering was presented to the LORD. Here is that menu.

Sabbath Offering
In addition to the daily burnt offering

Two unblemished lambs 2/10 ephah of fine flour 1/2 hin of beaten oil 1/4 hin strong drink for each lamb

Warnings for Appointed Times of Month Offering - Monthly

Num 28:11 'Then at the beginning of each of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls and one ram, seven male lambs one year old without defect; **28:12** and three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, for each bull; and two-tenths of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, for the one ram; **28:13** and a tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering for each lamb, for a burnt offering of a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. **28:14** 'Their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bull and a third of a hin for the ram and a fourth of a hin for a lamb; this is the burnt offering of each month throughout the months of the year. **28:15** 'And one male goat for a sin offering to the LORD; it shall be offered with its drink offering in addition to the continual burnt offering.

The first day of the month required a special offering. It is often called the “New Moon Offering.” Here is its menu.

Monthly Offering *In addition to the daily burnt offering*

Two bulls

3/10 ephah of fine flour with ¼ hin of beaten oil for each bull
1/2 hin wine for each bulls

One ram

2/10 ephah of fine flour and ¼ hin of beaten oil for the ram
1/3 hin wine for the ram

Seven unblemished lambs

1/10 ephah of fine flour and 1 ¾ hin of beaten oil for each lamb
1/4 hin wine for each lambs

One male goat as a sin offering with ¼ hin wine

Warnings for Appointed Times of Passover and Unleavened Bread Offering - Annually

Num 28:16 'Then on the fourteenth day of the first month shall be the LORD'S Passover. **28:17** 'On the fifteenth day of this month *shall be* a feast, unleavened bread *shall be* eaten for seven days. **28:18** 'On the first day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. **28:19** 'You shall present an offering by fire, a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls and one ram and seven male lambs one year old, having them without defect. **28:20** 'For their grain offering, you shall offer fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for a bull and two-tenths for the ram. **28:21** 'A tenth *of an ephah* you shall offer for each of the seven lambs; **28:22** and one male goat for a sin offering to make atonement for you. **28:23** 'You shall present these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. **28:24** 'After this manner you shall present daily, for seven days, the food of the offering by fire, of a soothing aroma to the LORD; it shall be presented with its drink offering in addition to the continual burnt offering. **28:25** 'On the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work.

Moving to address the annual appointed times, we that the Passover and Unleavened Bread offering is presented first. The Passover meal will all be eaten in the evening of Nisan 14th every year. (Note: the evening of every day corresponds to our afternoons. Evening on the Hebrew calendar began as the sun started to descend after it had reached its peak which we would call high noon.)

Following the Passover meal on Nisan 14th (prescribed by the LORD in Egypt for the first Passover), a seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread was to begin starting on Nisan 15th. The seven-day feast was a reminder of the bread that was eaten by the Israelites for the first seven days after departing from Egypt. The menu required unleavened bread for the entire week.

Seven Day Feast of Unleavened Bread
In addition to the daily burnt offering

Nisan 15th – A Holy Service to be held and no work on that day.

Unleavened bread

Two bulls

3/10 ephah of fine flour with ¼ hin of beaten oil for each bull
1/2 hin wine for each bull

One ram

2/10 ephah of fine flour and ¼ hin of beaten oil for the ram
1/3 hin wine for the ram

Seven unblemished lambs

1/10 ephah of fine flour and 1 ¾ hin of beaten oil for each lamb
1/4 hin wine for each lamb

One male goat as a sin offering with ¼ hin wine

Nisan 21st – A Holy Service to be held and no work on that day.

After seeing the chart of the menu for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we notice that the daily offerings are exactly the same as the monthly offering. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is always celebrated from Nisan 15th through 21st and never falls on Nisan 1st; therefore, the two offerings never collided. However, the daily offerings do occur at the same time as this Feast and in certain years two Sabbath offerings can be required in addition to the daily and feast offerings.

Warnings for Appointed Times of First Fruits Offering - Annually

Num 28:26 'Also on the day of the first fruits, when you present a new grain offering to the LORD in your *Feast of Weeks*, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. **28:27** 'You shall offer a burnt offering for a soothing aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs one year old; **28:28** and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, **28:29** a tenth for each of the seven lambs; **28:30** *also* one male goat to make atonement for you. **28:31** 'Besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, you shall present *them* with their drink offerings. They shall be without defect.

Notice that the Scripture does not specify a day as with the other annual feasts. The text calls it “first fruits” of the *wheat harvest*. But later, with the influence of Greek on the nation of Israel, it will become known by the name *Pentecost*. The original instruction for this feast is found in Leviticus 23.

Leviticus 23:15 ' You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths. ¹⁶ 'You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the LORD.

Therefore, the day of *First Fruits* was to be celebrated exactly 50 days after the harvest with the 50-day countdown starting on the day after the Sabbath after the harvest when the priest made the wave offering. The menu for the Pentecost meal is as follows.

First Fruits Offering (Pentecost) in Numbers
In addition to the daily burnt offering

A Holy Service to be held with no work on the 50th day after the wave offering

Two bulls

3/10 ephah of fine flour with ¼ hin of beaten oil for each bull
1/2 hin wine for each bull

One ram

2/10 ephah of fine flour and ¼ hin of beaten oil for the ram
1/3 hin wine for the ram

Seven unblemished lambs

1/10 ephah of fine flour and 1 ¾ hin of beaten oil for each lamb
1/4 hin wine for each lamb

One male goat as a sin offering with ¼ hin wine

Note also that the menu for First Fruits/Pentecost is the same as that of the Monthly and Feast of Unleavened Bread offerings. However, this menu does not match the original instruction. Leviticus 23 states that the offering was to be as follows.

Leviticus 23:17 'You shall bring in from your dwelling places two *loaves* of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths of an *ephah*; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to the LORD. ¹⁸ 'Along with the bread, you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd, and two rams; they are to be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their libations, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. ¹⁹ 'You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

Below you will see the two offerings compared.

Original First Fruits Offering (Pentecost)
in Leviticus
The Wave Offering
In addition to the daily burnt offering

First Fruits Offering (Pentecost)
in Numbers
The Pentecost Offering
In addition to the daily burnt offering

<p>A Holy Service to be held</p> <p>Two loaves of bread with leaven</p> <p>One bull 3/10 ephah of fine flour with ¼ hin of beaten oil for each bull 1/2 hin wine for each bull</p> <p>Two rams 2/10 ephah of fine flour and ¼ hin of beaten oil for the ram 1/3 hin wine for the ram</p> <p>One unblemished lamb 1/10 ephah of fine flour and 1 ¾ hin of beaten oil for each lamb 1/4 hin wine for each lamb</p> <p>One male goat as a sin offering with ¼ hin wine</p>	<p>A Holy Service to be held with no work on the 50th day after the wave offering</p> <p>Two bulls 3/10 ephah of fine flour with ¼ hin of beaten oil for each bull 1/2 hin wine for each bull</p> <p>One ram 2/10 ephah of fine flour and ¼ hin of beaten oil for the ram 1/3 hin wine for the ram</p> <p>Seven unblemished lambs 1/10 ephah of fine flour and 1 ¾ hin of beaten oil for each lamb 1/4 hin wine for each lamb</p> <p>One male goat as a sin offering with ¼ hin wine</p>
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Which is correct? How do we reconcile the difference between the Leviticus instruction and that in Numbers? It is actually not a conflict. The Leviticus offering was to be made by the priest when he presented the “wave” before the LORD on the day after the Sabbath – one bull, two rams, one lamb, one goat with grains and wine. Then fifty days were counted and the offering for the First Fruit/Pentecost followed the prescription found in Numbers – two bulls, one ram, seven lambs, one goat with all the grains and wine. The two offerings were 50 days apart.

The LORD has more warnings and instructions for His people. Next, we will pick up with the all-important Day of Atonement.