

The Book of Numbers

Lesson 8

Chapters 15 - 16

Instruction for Sin Offering at Mount Sinai – Fire Offering

Num 15:1 Now **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, ^{15:2} "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where you are to live, which I am giving you, ^{15:3} then make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill a special vow, or as a freewill offering or in your appointed times, to make a soothing aroma to the LORD, from the herd or from the flock. ^{15:4} 'The one who presents his offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil, ^{15:5} and you shall prepare wine for the drink offering, one-fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice, for each lamb. ^{15:6} 'Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; ^{15:7} and for the drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a soothing aroma to the LORD. ^{15:8} 'When you prepare a bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a special vow, or for peace offerings to the LORD, ^{15:9} then you shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-half a hin of oil; ^{15:10} and you shall offer as the drink offering one-half a hin of wine as an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD. ^{15:11} 'Thus it shall be done for each ox, or for each ram, or for each of the male lambs, or of the goats. ^{15:12} 'According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do for everyone according to their number. ^{15:13} 'All who are native shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD. ^{15:14} 'If an alien sojourns with you, or one who may be among you throughout your generations, and he ~~wishes to~~ make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, just as you do so he shall do. ^{15:15} 'As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns *with you*, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. ^{15:16} 'There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.'"

The camp was headed back to Mount Sinai. When they arrived, they were now required to make an offering to the LORD. Once again, the detail in this passage is difficult to wade through in the text. A chart is helpful to clarify the instruction.

Instruction for Natives and Aliens – The Same Offerings for Both

Numbers 15:14 "just as you do so he shall do"

Natives in the Camp - Israelites			Aliens in the Camp – Non-Israelites		
Grain Offering by fire	Drink Offering by fire	Burnt Offering by fire	Grain Offering by fire	Drink Offering by fire	Burnt Offering by fire
1/10 th ephah fine flour with 1.4 hin oil	½ hin wine	Ox Ram Male lamb Goat According to the size of the family	1/10 th ephah fine flour with 1.4 hin oil	½ hin wine	Ox Ram Male lamb Goat According to the size of the family

Once back at Mount Sinai, one rule will govern the nation and all foreigners who choose to dwell with the Israelites. All are to abide by the statutes of the LORD. Furthermore, the same Law that the Israelites will live under in the wilderness will continue to be the Law when they finally enter the Promised Land and take it as their possession.

This command is important. Aliens who joined the Israelites were to live under the same commands given by the LORD. They were to worship the LORD in the same manner. If they did not, they were not allowed to live in the camp and were required leave immediately. The LORD was setting up a system of holiness to protect His people. Those who worshiped false gods were banned from the congregation at all times.

More Instruction for Sin Offering at Mount Sinai – Cake Offering

^{15:17} Then **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, ^{15:18} "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where I bring you, ^{15:19} then it shall be, that when you eat of the food of the land, you shall lift up an offering to the LORD. ^{15:20} 'Of the first of your dough you shall lift up a cake as an offering; as the offering of the threshing floor, so you shall lift it up. ^{15:21} 'From the first of your dough you shall give to the LORD an offering throughout your generations.

This offering was not the same as the regular first fruits offerings required for each season of harvest through the years as required by the Law. It was a special sin offering for when they arrived at Mount Sinai.

Sin Offering - Warning and Remedy to Those Who Unwittingly Break a Commandment

^{15:22} 'But when you unwittingly fail and do not observe all these commandments, which the LORD has spoken to Moses, ^{15:23} *even* all that the LORD has commanded you through Moses, from the day when the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations, ^{15:24} then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one bull for a burnt offering, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male goat for a sin offering.

The Hebrew for “unwittingly” is *shagah*. In the Tyndale English Translation of 1525, he used the word *ouer* which would be our word *err* today. It meant *to lose one's way or go astray*. Today, we would use the word *accidentally*. The LORD was being extremely understanding with this problem. If it was an *accident* that the commandments were not followed, the fault was then examined to see if it was intentionally or “unintentionally” committed. The Hebrew word for “unintentionally” is *shegagah* and it literally means a *sin of error*. What does that mean? Tyndale used the correct word in 1525 when he translated it and used the word *ignorantllye* or our word *ignorant*. It meant that the person did not fulfill the command because *he did not know about the command* or he was *unfamiliar with the command*. When a *sin of error* was committed by the whole congregation, it was required to make burnt, grain, drink and sin offerings to atone

for its failure to keep the commandment. It was an offering completed by the community but it was not the same as if an individual had committed the sin. That offering will be addressed starting in verse 27.

Sin Offering - Atonement for the Congregation

^{15:25} 'Then the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and they will be forgiven; for it was an error, and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their error.

^{15:26} 'So all the congregation of the sons of Israel will be forgiven, with the alien who sojourns among them, for *it happened* to all the people through error.

Once back at Mount Sinai, the people made the prescribed offering found above in Numbers 15:1-16 and the priest processed the offering in the standard way for the forgiveness of sin. The *sin or error* that the people had committed caused them to return to Mount Sinai. That error still needed forgiveness even though it had been acknowledged by the LORD and judgment had been rendered. The offering was required. The requirement was the same for native Israelites and aliens who had joined the camp. This offering was for the entire congregation all at one time because the whole community was guilty of the decision not to go into the Promised Land.

Sin Offering - Atonement for One Person - Unintentional

^{15:27} 'Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering. ^{15:28} 'The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven. ^{15:29} 'You shall have one law for him who does *anything* unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them.

The sin offering for forgiveness of an individual was different from that of the entire congregation. For an unintentional sin by an individual the offering was simply a “one year old female goat.” The unintentional sin was recognized, admitted and forgiven. The priest handled the offering of the goat in the usual way.

Penalty for Intentional Sin without Repentance

^{15:30} 'But the person who does *anything* defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.

^{15:31} 'Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *will be* on him."

The cycle of sin, acknowledgement and forgiveness was to be the common practice in the nation of Israel. But with human nature, there always seem to be people who will sin against God and see nothing wrong with it. America in the 21st Century is filled with sins against God and it thinks nothing of it. We have become so used to sin that it does not bother us anymore. We almost accept without question same sex sexual relationships, clearly in defiance of the LORD's instructions (Lev. 20:13). We record to watch after going to church the “Wives of this town or

that” who are chasing men by the dozens who are not their husbands (Lev. 20:10). We are intrigued by the prophets of the supernatural and fortune tellers and seek their counsel (Lev. 20:27). We endure the lies of the talking heads, repeated every fifteen minutes twenty-four hours a day and we never say “ENOUGH!” (Lev. 5:4) And the list could go on and on! All sins! We are interested in what we want and not what God wants. We sign contracts with credit cards and buy things we don’t need and will not have thirty days later and pay on them for thirty years and die with a balance still due! Or, we will file bankruptcy to wipe away the money we owe while we keep the stuff we did not need and cannot find in a section of the house, garage or one of the five storage units we’ve not been to in ten years that we rented on the credit card that we cannot pay off and feel good about it! Intentional sin! All of it! We know better! We want and we want it now! We do not want to wait on God to provide; we want to give the glory of the feel-good to the local bank, mister-card, versa-card, American mix-card, supper-card, pay friend or some sort of fruit pay.¹² We have more than we can pay for and when we have finally bowed to the gods of the world so much and we have purchased enough, God says, “Enough! You need to learn a lesson.” Who is your God? Who have you been serving while here on earth? Time to lose your job! Bam! It’s over. Now, do you want to go back to Egypt? Now, do you want return to your old life? What happened to you? You have to reach out for help! You are in trouble. Why are you down at the church begging for help? Why are you asking for prayer over your financial problems now? Where was the church in your life when you were getting all those things you were lusting for in an instant, in a twinkling of an eye! So, your house is going to be foreclosed on. Who really owns that house – you or the bank! So, they repossessed your car last night! How many payments were you behind? Five. When did you buy the car? Six months ago. You bought a car and never made a payment? Yes! Why did you do that? Oh, you lost your job and you wanted to reward yourself and get the car of your dreams before your credit score was ruined! Did you not realize you made your bad credit score worse by your actions? Oh, and when you were making that car loan you were talking about how good Jesus was to you and how blessed you had been all the while knowing you lost your job the day before. Intentional lies! What kind of witness do you have for God – then and now? This is the list of the topics I heard about in my office last week!

Can you see the “blasphemy of the LORD” in what has been said? Can you see how the people have “despised the word of the LORD?” Can you see how the people have broken the “commandments” of God? What are we to do? When people are repentant, should we help them? When they ask for forgiveness, should we help them? First, you cannot help people if the LORD has not provided you with the means to help them! In other words, “If you do not have it, you cannot give it!” But suppose you do have it! Are you supposed to give it? Are you supposed to lend it? Have they humbled themselves before the LORD? Are they willing to put everything on the line, sell what they have, pay what they can? Garage sale, pawn sell - are they willing? If they are not willing, you cannot not help them! Do not help them keep their gods! This passage is about Israel’s relationship with God and their willingness to allow Him to provide for their needs and not their wants. Are the people spoken to this week defiant? If they were in the nation

¹² MasterCard, Visa Card, American Express, Dinner’s Card, Pay Pal, Apple Pay

of Israel, they would be “completely cut off; his guilt *will be* on him!” What does that mean? The LORD will give an example next.

Gathering Wood on the Sabbath

^{15:32} Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the sabbath day. ^{15:33} Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation; ^{15:34} and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. ^{15:35} Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." ^{15:36} So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The whole congregation had made it back to Mount Sinai. The Scripture says, “Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness,” meaning that we have lost any possibility of knowing when this man was defiant to the command of the LORD. Simply, it happened some time after the nation returned to the mount for its extended stay.

In this event concerning the man, even though back at Kadesh Barnea Moses and Aaron had heard the penalty that was to be imposed, they were unclear as to what to do with the man. Therefore, they locked him up until they heard from the LORD. According to what they understood, he was to be “completely cut off; his guilt *will be* on him!” But how? What did that mean? He was caught gathering wood on the Sabbath; how bad was that? Well, in the LORD’s eyes, because he was defiant, because he was not repentant, because he would not complete the process for forgiveness, he was to be taken outside the camp and stoned to death by all. Harsh? Yes. Just? Yes. The LORD God is a jealous God Who demands obedience to His commands.

Tassels on the Corners

^{15:37} The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, ^{15:38} "Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. ^{15:39} "It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, ^{15:40} so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God. ^{15:41} "I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God."

Humans need reminders! The 170-foot cross that stands on the campus of Sagemont Church is nothing more than a reminder. It is not a graven image as some Jehovah’s Witnesses have protested to this congregation. It does not have a carving of the LORD attached to it as the Catholics present it on most of their campuses. Neither is it a holy relic to be worshiped and adored. It is a reminder to all of what the LORD Jesus did for us on the Cross when He died as the final sacrifice for the remission and atonement for our sins. Why did Sagemont Church build it? Because in this godless world humans need a reminder of Him. Millions of people drive by the cross every day. Some are drawn to it, not because it has special powers, but because they are at the end of their ropes in terrible situations, hopeless at every corner and turn, yet, they

have heard the old, old story of Jesus and his love and what He did for them on the cross and they want to get near Him. Is He at the cross? Yes! Is He on the Cross? No. When they draw near to Him, He is there. When they run from Him, He is there. No one can escape the presence of the LORD at any time in any way. But He will not lord over anyone at any time! The symbol of the cross is the reminder. When people see it, they think of Him. When people see it, they want what He has to offer. When people step under the cross, alone and small in comparison, it is a tremendous example of how big He is and what He is capable of doing for anyone who will trust in Him, lay their burdens at His feet and follow Him.

The people of Israel needed a reminder too. The crucifixion had not happened yet, in fact, no one had ever died on a cross at that time in history. The commandment had been given but the people were reckless and were living their lives as if they had never heard His words. They needed a reminder. All the men wore a piece of cloth around their shoulders; they never were without it. When the wind was blowing and the sand was stirring, they covered their faces with the cloth. When the heat was bearing down on their heads, they used the cloth to shield them. Because they were never without it, the LORD commanded them to add blue fringe or tassels to each end. It was a command for every future generation of Israelites to wear a piece of cloth like this with the tassels. The tassels were like the cross. They were a symbol of all the commandment that the LORD had given them. Not for one moment of their waking day could they be too far away from the reminder that they had commandments that they were required to follow. Sadly, sometimes humans can have something right in front of their eyes and they cannot see it. And so shall it be with this sinful nation of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai for thirty-eight more years.

Two Hundred and Fifty Leaders Rebel

Num 16:1 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *action*, ^{16:2} and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown. ^{16:3} They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

After a while, a conspiracy broke out among the nation of Israel concerning the office of the priesthood. Here is the background. At least since the time of the flood, the patriarch of each family was considered the priest of God for that family! For two examples, Job was listed as the priest for his family in the book of Job. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had the priestly name *Ruel* and he was the patriarch priest of the Midianites. With the restructure of the nation of Israel, only Aaron and his two sons were the priests of the whole congregation. This was a great departure from the custom of the people. Even in slavery in Egypt, the Israelite patriarchs were priests of their own family clans.

Korah was a Levite but not a son of Aaron; therefore, he was not entitled to be a priest, and neither were any of his descendants. Dathan, Abiram and On were all Reubenites who most

likely would have been considered priests had the process not been changed. As the passage shows, when the count was made, 250 leaders of the congregation, most of whom might have been family priests as some point, joined the group in the conspiracy.

What was the problem? They were accusing Moses of setting up the priestly system that robbed them of their customary right to be the family priests. They accused Moses of elevating his own family above all the others. The reality is that they were attributing the LORD's instructions to Moses instead of recognizing the true Author of the new system.

Moses Replies and Warns

^{16:4} When Moses heard *this*, he fell on his face; ^{16:5} and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring *him* near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself. ^{16:6} "Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company, ^{16:7} and put fire in them, and lay incense upon them in the presence of the LORD tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD chooses *shall be* the one who is holy. You have gone far enough, you sons of Levi!" ^{16:8} Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi, ^{16:9} is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the *rest of* the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; ^{16:10} and that He has brought you near, *Korah*, and all your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking for the priesthood also? ^{16:11} "Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD; but as for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him?" ^{16:12} Then Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; but they said, "We will not come up. ^{16:13} "Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, but you would also lord it over us? ^{16:14} "Indeed, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!" ^{16:15} Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not regard their offering! I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them." ^{16:16} Moses said to Korah, "You and all your company be present before the LORD tomorrow, both you and they along with Aaron. ^{16:17} "Each of you take his firepan and put incense on it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty firepans; also you and Aaron *shall each bring* his firepan." ^{16:18} So they each took his *own* censer and put fire on it, and laid incense on it; and they stood at the doorway of the tent of meeting, with Moses and Aaron. ^{16:19} Thus Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the doorway of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

As before, Moses showed his leadership by falling on his face before Korah and humbling himself before the LORD. Moses knew that he had no way to change their minds about how the system was established except for the LORD to meet with them personally. Moses called a meeting for the next morning with all 250 men. They were to bring their own firepans with them. That was an interesting thing for Moses to ask for. Priests used the firepans in the process

of worship. The Levites could use the Tabernacle firepans to help the priests, but not those owned by their families. The Reubenites were not allowed to act as priests. What is happening here? Moses was asking all the 250 men to bring their family patriarch firepans that they would have used in worship had the new system not been set up by the LORD.

Moses then had a *talkin' to* with all the Levites. Read between the lines. Moses was flabbergasted that the Levites did not consider it an honor to be separated from the rest of the tribes and hold a position as the servants of the priests. It was a place of honor that Korah and his followers had rejected.

Moses called for Dathan and Abiram but they would not leave their to meet with him. These two were still upset with Moses for returning them to Mount Sinai instead of leading them into the land they had been promised. When they left Egypt, they were expecting to return to Canaan Land where their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had lived. It did not matter to them that the congregation had rebelled against the LORD and that was the reason they did not go into the Promised Land. These two issues with the priestly status and the failure to enter the Promised Land show just how much these men rejected the LORD and those He had designated to lead the nation.

On the next morning, the 250 men were gathered at the door to the tent of meeting with their personal firepans filled and ready to use. Aaron and his sons had theirs too. What was the difference? Those of Aaron and his sons had been dedicated to the LORD, the firepans of the 250 had not! In addition, Korah had gathered more sympathizers than the 250 to join them in the meeting.

LORD Warns Moses

^{16:20} Then **the LORD spoke to Moses** and Aaron, saying, ^{16:21} "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly." ^{16:22} But they fell on their faces and said, "O God, God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, will You be angry with the entire congregation?"

The LORD warned Moses and Aaron to move away from the crowd because the LORD was going to "consume them instantly." Notice the love of Moses for the people under his leadership, even the rebellious ones. What did Moses do? He pointed his finger at the instigator of the whole mess and begged the LORD not to destroy the whole group because of the sin of one ringleader.

Moses Warns Korah – Two Hundred and Fifty Die

^{16:23} Then **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, ^{16:24} "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.'" ^{16:25} Then Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram, with the elders of Israel following him, ^{16:26} and he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, or you will be swept away in all their sin." ^{16:27} So they got back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; and

Dathan and Abiram came out *and* stood at the doorway of their tents, along with their wives and their sons and their little ones. ^{16:28} Moses said, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing. ^{16:29} "If these men die the death of all men or if they suffer the fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. ^{16:30} "But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD." ^{16:31} As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; ^{16:32} and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with *their* possessions. ^{16:33} So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. ^{16:34} All Israel who *were* around them fled at their outcry, for they said, "The earth may swallow us up!" ^{16:35} Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.

Evidently, because Dathan and Abiram did not join the group at the tent of meeting, Moses led the crowd to their tents to speak to them. The 250 men with their firepans remained at the tent of meeting. But evidently, Korah, with his crowd, followed Moses. Once the majority of the rebels were together in one spot, Moses warned the congregation to step back and watch the rebels and their families die! As he was bringing his speech to a close, the ground began to open up and the men began to fall in and then the ground closed up! The crowd of onlookers began to run. Then, amazingly, the fire of the LORD flared as it did against Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, when they offered fire from the wrong source before the LORD, and He burnt them to a crisp. So, too, the fire flamed out from the presence of the LORD and killed all 250 men offering false worship with pans not properly dedicated to Him.

Gold Censers of Korah Hammered into a Plate

^{16:36} Then **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, ^{16:37} "Say to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he shall take up the censers out of the midst of the blaze, for they are holy; and you scatter the burning coals abroad. ^{16:38} "As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered sheets for a plating of the altar, since they did present them before the LORD and they are holy; and they shall be for a sign to the sons of Israel." ^{16:39} So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which the men who were burned had offered, and they hammered them out as a plating for the altar, ^{16:40} as a reminder to the sons of Israel that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron should come near to burn incense before the LORD; so that he will not become like Korah and his company—just as the LORD had spoken to him through Moses.

Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar must have dropped their censers in the flash. Somehow, they ended up in the fire. Their censers were holy; they belonged to the LORD. But the family censers of the 250 men were not holy, but because they had been used in His presence, He was going to use them for His purpose. Those censers were to be hammered into plates to be used at the altar as a reminder that the LORD had chosen the priests; they were to be of the lineage of Aaron and his sons and no others. If others attempted to take their place, they would end up like "Korah and his company."

Grumble Against Moses

^{16:41} But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You are the ones who have caused the death of the LORD'S people." ^{16:42} It came about, however, when the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tent of meeting, and behold, the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared.

On the following day, people in the congregation had found something else to grumble about! Once again they did not direct their complaint to the LORD, they directed it to Moses and Aaron. They blamed the deaths of the previous day on Moses and his brother. Shame on them. The LORD heard their complaints and then they saw the cloud above that they had followed in the desert. It began to glow with the "glory of the LORD." The grumblers were numerous and had angered Him.

Grumblers Die of Plague – 14,700

^{16:43} Then Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, ^{16:44} and **the LORD spoke to Moses**, saying, ^{16:45} "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly." Then they fell on their faces. ^{16:46} Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense *on it*; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone forth from the LORD, the plague has begun!" ^{16:47} Then Aaron took *it* as Moses had spoken, and ran into the midst of the assembly, for behold, the plague had begun among the people. So he put *on* the incense and made atonement for the people. ^{16:48} He took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked. ^{16:49} But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah. ^{16:50} Then Aaron returned to Moses at the doorway of the tent of meeting, for the plague had been checked.

Here we have an amazing story. The LORD was going to consume the grumblers with an instant plague and he warned Moses and Aaron to get out of the way. The two fell on their faces before the LORD. Here is the amazing part. While down on their faces, Moses turned to his brother and basically told him to *be the priest that the LORD had given you the authority to be!* Imagine it! *Brother, get your censer and get to work making atonement before the LORD for the forgiveness of the sins of these people before the LORD consumes them all!* While Moses was still on his face doing all that he could do, Aaron ran to do what he was ordained to do. Yes, people were dying. Yes, Aaron lit his censor and ran into the midst of the dying people. Yes, the LORD saw Aaron doing what Aaron was authorized to do and He stopped dispensing the plague. Yes, 14,700 died that day not including those who had died the day before. The nation had seen the fury of the LORD, but they needed one more lesson! They needed to know who was appointed by the LORD and who was not!