

NUMBERS 1-14 A REVIEW

Main theme for Chapter 1-10:

Main theme for Chapter 11-14:

NUMBERS 15: OVERALL THEME

Knowing what has come before chapter 15 (especially what happened in the preceding 4 chapters, discuss among your group the main reason for Moses to insert these materials here in chapter 15. What do you think he is trying to accomplish here?

NUMBERS 15: THE OFFERINGS (VERSE 1-29)

3 Kinds of offerings are given here in the following text. We can summarize them as follows:

1. Meat and Drink offerings (verses 3-16)
2. The Cake offering (verses 17-21)
3. Offering for unintentional sins (verses 22-29)

MEAT AND DRINK OFFERINGS (VERSES 3-16)

Looking at the descriptions in verses 3-16, we can identify these offerings as either:

1. Burnt offerings (see Leviticus 1), or
2. Peace offerings (see Leviticus 3, 7:11)

Take a look at both records of the offerings (Leviticus and Numbers 15), are you able to notice the differences?

Leviticus	Numbers 15
Occasions for the Sacrifices:	
Elements of the Sacrifices:	
Quantity of the Sacrifices:	
Additions to the Sacrifices:	
Quality of the Elements:	

The instructions given in Numbers 15 is given later in time than that in Leviticus. Can you suggest a reason for the change?

Count the number of times the phrase "sweet aroma" appears in Numbers 15. What do you think is "sweet" about the aroma in the Sacrifice? (c.f. Psalm 40:6-8; Micah 6:8-10; Ephesians 5:2)

In verse 13-16, a special discussion is given for 2 groups of people in Israel. The native-born (or the Jews) and the stranger (or aliens or those who are not of Jewish descent). What can you say about the direction given by Moses? How does that remind you of the gospel?

SUMMARY

The first set of offerings are for an expression of joy, thanksgiving and worship. There are no specified time for these expressions of worship. It can be voluntary and ad-hoc; or it can be part of the communal celebration as in the appointed feasts. Spontaneity is part of our response to the grace and mercies of God. Worship need to have an element of spontaneity but also do note:

1. The varied offerings, no matter how they are motivated, need to be _____.
2. The proportion of wine, grain and oil is _____. No reason for the ratio is given. It is simply there for _____.
3. The _____ are the same, no matter who the players are.

THE CAKE OFFERING (VERSES 17-21)

What is special about this offering? (Clue: v18-19)

In verse 20, the basic ingredient of the offering is “ground meal (NKJV)” To give you a better sense of what is referenced here, I provide a brief explanation from the Hebrew Lexicon:

Dough, i.e., a coarse-flour and water mix in the first phase of bread making (Nu 15:20, 21; Neh 10:38; Eze 44:30+), note: NIV translates as “ground meal” which would be flour not mixed with water; note: some translate “kneading trough” as an implement in household baking chores

Looking at the meaning of the ingredient as well as the overall passage (v17-21), why do you think it is this coarse-flour rather than the “fine-flour” mentioned in verse 4, 9?

THE SIN OFFERING (VERSES 22-29)

We note once again that these provisions are an act of grace from our God.

When God gave His law, compliance is expected, demanded even. Failure to comply may come in two ways:

1. The act of commission; that is, actually disobeying the commandments of God.
You may think of an example here:
2. The act of omission; which is we did not do what God has specifically required us to do.
You may think of an example here:

What is the significance of this section here?

Consider:

1. We need to understand that God's law is meant to be obeyed. Otherwise it is frivolous and in vain. (We will see more of this in the later section on the Sabbath). God is Holy and His laws are Holy, with an absolute standard set according to His character.
2. However, (see Psalms 103:13-17; 1 Corinthians 10:13) God is gracious and He knows that we, as sinful man are not able to comply fully. So the provision of this offering should be viewed in the light of God providing redress for our non-compliance. Ultimately, we see God providing the perfect provision for the forgiveness of our sin/sins in the cross of Calvary.

Compare this section to Leviticus 4:2. Can you spot the difference in focus between Leviticus 4:2 and Numbers 15:22-29?

Also note that this offering for sin can and should be made for:

1. (verses 22-26)
2. (verses 27-29)

Can you discuss how we can know that we have committed these trespasses and what should be my response to it? (See the example from 2 Kings 22:1-13)

NUMBERS 15: TREATMENT FOR PRESUMPTUOUS SINS (VERSES 30-31)

There is a distinction made in verses 22-29 and verses 30-31.

Verses 22-29: "if you sin unintentionally ..."

Verses 30-31: "But the person who does anything presumptuously,"

Discuss what you would consider as "unintentional sin" versus "presumptuous sins:

Looking at a different translation in ESV, it reads "*But the person who does anything with a high hand...*" or the NASB, translating the word as "*But the person who does anything defiantly...*"

Does that change your answer?

NUMBERS 15:32-36 TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT FOR SABBATH BREAKING

How many of you wishes that this 4 verses are not in your Bible?

What specific commandments has this man gone against?

Exodus 31:14, 15

Exodus 35:2, 3

Consider what this man was going to do. Do you think it's sinning in secret or in public?

If the crime was obvious, why do you think there was a delay in its execution?

HOW SHALL WE LOOK AT THIS INCIDENT? CONSIDER FIRST:

THE NATURE OF LAWS

We first look at how law and justice is depicted in general world view in those days:



Figure 1: One symbol of Law and Justice



Figure 3: Sculpture outside court in Japan

Figure 1: Sculpture outside court in Frankfurt

Can you provide a few distinguishing features of the representation of law (Justitia or Lady Justice)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Key point:

WHAT IS SO SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THE 4TH COMMANDMENT?

What is the Sabbath?

Genesis 2:1-3

1. We can look at it from the 'rest' perspective:

Leviticus 23:3

Leviticus 25:8

2. But we can also try and understand it theologically base on fuller revelation of God's word: Take the following verses and discuss what you understand from them.

Matthew 11:28, 29

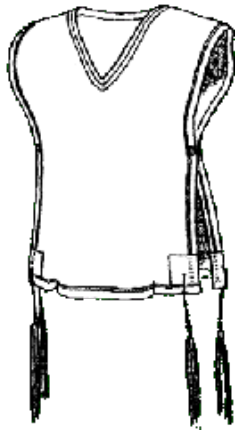
Hebrews 4:9-11

John 6:27-28

Colossians 2:16-17

Summary:

NUMBERS 15:37-41 A CONSTANT REMINDER



What is a tassel? (See the pictures above)

What's the significance of the blue thread? (Clue: take a look at Exodus 26:4; 36:11; 28:28, 31; Numbers 4:6-12)

What is the purpose of having this tassels? (Verse 39)

Note: follow (v39) can also be expressed as to "spy out or explore".

What can you say as the lesson for us in verses 37-39?

NUMBERS 15:41 CONCLUDING REMARK

I want to quote the author Allen in Expositor's Bible Commentary :

The pericope—and the chapter—ends on a high note of the self-revelation of the Lord and his declaration of purpose for his people. The words "I am the Lord your God" (repeated) have about them the sound of a litany, a recitation of faith. The demands that God made on his people came from his right of redemption. By his act of deliverance, Yahweh speaks with the demands of his character. Further, the chapter begins and concludes with the continuing promise of God to bring his people into the land. He is still at work in the process of completing their redemption from Egypt. The command to turn back to the desert (14:25) is for a lengthy detour, not an abandonment of the journey itself.

This verse is nearly poetry. It can be displayed in this manner:

*I am Yahweh your God,
Who is bringing you from the land of Egypt -
To be your God;
I am Yahweh your God!¹*

Give your own summary for what you have learnt in Numbers 15:

¹ Allen, R. B. (1990). Numbers. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* (Vol. 2, p. 832). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.