Numbers 5-10: Preparation for Leaving Sinai

Numbers 5

Introduction

Consecration and purification came at three levels:

- The camp as a whole (1-4)
- The personal level (5-10)
- The family level (11-29)

Ceremonially Unclean Persons Isolated (1-4)

- God's concern is for the totality of the group
- Why does God command the ceremonially unclean to dwell outside the camp?
  - He was using issues of little importance to give instruction in the truly significant. If touching a dead body put you outside of a camp, how much worse would murder be? If an involuntary discharge made you unclean, how much worse is sexual immorality? If a leper is unclean, how much more is he who commits sins?

Confession and Restitution (5-10)

- God is also concerned about each individual - He teaches them here to confess their sins and to compensate (restitution) for their wrongdoings, and to offer a sacrifice for atonement

Unfaithful Wives (11-31)

- Every home is a small church
  - It has leaders (parents) and students (children)
  - It has prayer and Bible readings
  - The family must remain sacred in order for all the souls in the family to be saved
  - Adultery destroys the home and breaks the unity of the marriage

- 18: "After the priest has had the woman stand before the Lord, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hands the reminder-offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse."
  - It was a Jewish tradition for a married woman to cover her hair. And if a married woman committed adultery, then her veil would be removed to reveal her hair as a shaming. This is why in the story of Susanna when the two elders accuse her, and they want her face to be uncovered so they can gaze upon her beauty - her face is uncovered. But in our iconography, when we write an icon of Susanna, we always have her hair covered because she was innocent and found innocent by the wisdom of God through Daniel

Numbers 6

Laws of the Nazirite (1-21)

- Nazirite Vow was a vow of commitment and dedication and consecration to God
  - Original source of asceticism and monasticism
- Some were consecrated from birth, and some for a specific time
  - Samson was consecrated from birth and is called a Nazirite
  - St. John the Baptist is never called a Nazirite but we know that he did not drink wine or strong drink (based on what the Angel said to Zacharias) and that he consecrated his life
  - St. Paul probably took a Naziritic vow for a small time in his life "He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow." (Acts 18:18)
- Nazirite spends his time:
  - Studying the laws
  - Worshipping
  - Serving others
- Nazirite renounces the pleasures of life:
  - strong drink
  - does not cut his hair, contrary to nature (1 Cor 11)
  - mourning the dead
- Specific purification for if he touches the dead
  - It is defilement
  - He must shave his head, wait 7 days, then offer a sacrifice
  - It's like he starts over with his vow - God's hatred of defilement even if it's on accident
- Completion of the vow
  - The burnt and peace offerings portray various aspects of the Cross
    - Our consecration will never be complete without the Cross
  - He also gives "whatever else his hand is able to provide"
    - We must not put limitations to our love to God or our giving
  - His hair is shaven and thrown into the fire

    - He drinks wine

Priestly Blessing (22-27)

- Three blessings (the gift of the Trinity)
    - Reminds us of every blessing that we receive in the Liturgy (in the name of the Trinity)
- All of them start with "The Lord" signifying that the blessing originates from God, not the priest
    - When I see that Abouna is blessing me, I am receiving a blessing from God

Numbers 7

Offerings of the Leaders

- Offerings are presented as a whole (1-9) and then on the level of each tribe (10-14)
- General Offering
    - Six covered carts with a pair of bulls pulling them
    - Six represents our struggle in working so that we can rest on the Sabbath
- Tribal Offerings
    - All the tribes present equal gifts
    - Silver plate: Word of God

Numbers 8

Numbers 9

Numbers 10

Two Silver Trumpets

See Theodoret Question XV on Numbers

Departure from Sinai

Order of the March

- Judah led the way followed by Issachar and Zebulun
- Sons of Gershon and Merari carrying the tabernacle went next
- Reuben, Simeon and Gad followed
- Moses and Aaron and the priests
  - Notice that Moses, the leader, is in the middle not at the front - because he is not the one leading them. God is.
- Kohathites carrying the holy things went next (so that by the time they arrived, the tabernacle would be ready for them to put the holy things)
  - The Ark of Covenant is in the midst of the congregation between six tribes and six tribes
- Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin followed
- Dan, Asher and Naphtali followed

Moses and his Brother in Law

- Hobab is Moses' brother in law
  - The names Reuel or Raguel (LXX) and Jethro are given for his father in law
  - Theodoret of Cyrus: He has two names like Simon Peter, Jacob Israel, etc.
- Paterius: Moses dealt wisely with a proud man
  - Hobab wanted to go back to his own people, the Gentiles. Moses would rather him stay with them. Why should he go back to the Gentiles instead of staying with the people of God?
  - Moses tells him "stay it will do you good"
  - Hobab says "No, I will go"
  - Moses, in humility, says: "But we need you to be our eyes" - he tells him that he needs him
  - This method works on Hobab and teaches us a lesson for how to deal with some personalities

Departure from Sinai

- "Rise up, O Lord! Let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You."
  - Moses says this whenever the ark sets out
  - Abouna prays this in the Litany of the Assemblies
- "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel"
  - "But let your people be in blessing, thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand doing Your will"

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