



SERIES:	04 Numbers - 2013
MESSAGE:	Numbers 15
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	Numbers 15

MESSAGE SUMMARY

After learning about some of Israel's failures in Numbers 13-14, we now consider Numbers 15, where God gives His people a fresh start. He makes a new promise to a new generation and gives a new set of laws. As we examine these laws, we learn how they can be applied to our lives. We also remember the good and perfect work of the cross as we partake in Communion.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Numbers 13 and 14 are chapters of failure on the part of the Israelites
 1. The Israelites refused to enter the land of Canaan
 2. Plot twist: the Israelites are attacked, the ten doubting spies are killed by a plague, and God promises the next generation of Israelites the inheritance of the land
 - B. Numbers 15 is a set of ceremonial and sacrificial laws to practice in the new land, even though the current generation of Israelites won't enter it
 1. Principle: the Israelites messed up, but God is bent on fulfilling His promise to the next generation
 2. "Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13)
 3. "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20)
 - C. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you"" (Numbers 15:1-2)
 1. "For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14)
 2. The Lord takes the ashes and the dust of their failure and makes His promise clear through it all
- II. First Law: Burnt and Peace Offerings
 - A. The new generation will be so blessed that they will be able to make abundant sacrifices back to the Lord—voluntary offerings, not sin offerings
 - B. "And you make an offering by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering" (Numbers 15:3)
 1. *Burnt offering* = Hebrew word *olah*, what goes up
 2. The whole offering went up in smoke
 - C. "Or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your appointed feasts, to make a sweet aroma to the Lord, from the herd or the flock, then he who presents his offering to the Lord shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil; and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb. 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; and as a drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a sweet aroma to the Lord. And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or as a peace offering to the Lord" (vv. 3-8)

1. *Peace offering* = Hebrew word *zevach shelamim*, slaughter that brings well-being
2. A testament of peace with God

D. "Then shall be offered with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. Thus it shall be done for each young bull, for each ram, or for each lamb or young goat. According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do with everyone according to their number. All who are native-born shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord" (vv. 9-13)

1. Other offerings will be made with the freewill offerings: a grain offering and drink offering
2. Drink offering—poured out on the sacrifice or on the ground; signified complete devotion; Paul said it of his own life when he was about to die (see 2 Timothy 4:6-8)

E. "And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever is among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord, just as you do, so shall he do. One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you" (vv. 14-16)

1. *Stranger* = a foreigner, a non-Jew; in order to become Jewish, must go through a process called *proselytization*, or conversion
2. Foreshadowing of the gospel: Jew and Gentile standing before God as one people; Galatians 3:28

III. Second Law: Cake of First Fruits

A. "Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "When you come into the land to which I bring you, then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land, that you shall offer up a heave offering to the Lord. You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal as a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the Lord a heave offering throughout your generations"' (vv. 17-21)

B. Tithes—to express gratitude for the grain of the new land

C. Wave offering presented with horizontal motion; heave offering presented with vertical motion

1. Picture of our relationship with Jesus, the Bread of Life
2. Vertical motion represents His coming and going and coming again to the earth

IV. Third Law: Sins of Omission

A. "If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the Lord has spoken to Moses—all that the Lord has commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day the Lord gave commandment and onward throughout your generations—then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering,

as a sweet aroma to the Lord, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one kid of the goats as a sin offering" (vv. 22-24)

- B. Sin is a very biblical word
 - 1. Hebrew *shagah*, normal Greek *armatia*, meaning to miss the mark or wander from the path
 - 2. Sin can be unintentional but must be atoned for; ignorance of the law is no excuse
- C. The world has a *mechanistic* worldview—we are merely animals and victims of outside influences; as Christians, we have a *spiritualistic* worldview—our guilt must be dealt with at the cross of Jesus Christ
- D. What do you do with sin and guilt?
 - 1. Deny it—but "he who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13)
 - 2. Admit it and try to change yourself—but you don't have the power alone
 - 3. The best thing is to admit it, confess it, and ask God to change you

V. Fourth Law: Sins of Commission

- A. "But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord, and he shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him" (vv. 30-31)
- B. Hebrew: whoever sins "with a high hand"—a hand raised in defiance toward God; unintentional sin is missing the mark, but intentional sin is transgression
- C. Biblical example of this sin: "Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.' So, as the Lord commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died" (vv. 32-36)
- D. Modern-day example: in an ultra-orthodox Jerusalem neighborhood, residents attack anyone they believe is breaking the Sabbath
- E. Under the law, to violate the Sabbath was to repudiate God's authority
- F. Old Testament equivalent of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 12:31-32); implies an overt rejection of God's solution

VI. "Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God'" (vv. 37-40)

- A. Tassels worn on the hem of the outer garment made social statements
- B. David cut the hem of Saul's robe to show how close he'd gotten to killing him (see I Samuel 24)
- C. These tassels (Hebrew: *tsit tsit*) were a tangible reminder to the Jewish people of the covenant (and 613 commandments, some positive, mostly negative) they had with God

- D. The woman with the issue of blood (see Luke 8:43-48)
- E. When you advertise that you're a Christian (like how Jews advertise they're Jewish by their tassels), it holds you publicly accountable

VII. Closing

- A. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God" (v. 41)
- B. Chapter 15 is very different from the narrative that came before and the one that will come afterwards
- C. It's a message of hope: God will bring the next generation into the land
- D. Also shows the severity of the law--committing one sin makes you a sinner and brings death (see Romans 6:23)
- E. The law vs. grace
 - 1. Six hundred and thirteen commandments vs. two commandments (see Mark 12:29-31)
 - 2. John 1:17, 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - 3. Under the law, God demands righteousness *from* you; in grace, God gives righteousness *to* you
 - 4. Under the law, your righteousness was based on your good works; under grace, your righteousness is based on His good and finished work

Cross references: 1 Samuel 24, Psalm 103:14, Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 8:43-48, John 1:17, Romans 5:20, Romans 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:28, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, James 2:13

Greek/Hebrew words: *olah, zevach shelamim, shagah, armatia, tsit tsit*

Topic: The Law

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