



SERIES:	04 Numbers - 2013
MESSAGE:	Numbers 17:1-18:24
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	Numbers 17:1-18:24

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Before diving into this text, we learn why it's important to study the book of Numbers. Then looking closely at Numbers 17-18, we continue to see God reveal Himself to the children of Israel in response to their complaints and disobedience. His mercy becomes apparent as we discover that our service to Him is actually His gift to us.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. *The Scofield Reference Study Bible* says the book of Numbers dates to 1450 B.C.
 - B. Why study a 3000-year-old book?
 1. To develop a working knowledge of the biblical period
 2. To understand worship: God controls and directs it
 3. To understand the work of Old Testament priests
 - a. Jesus is our High Priest
 - b. Hebrews 5:4
 4. To appreciate grace—John 1:17
 - C. Moses has been criticized three times so far in Numbers (chapter 12, 16)
 1. God has dealt with the complainers
 2. For now, the complaining has stopped
 - D. Criticism is the lot of anybody who steps into public ministry
 1. D.L. Moody
 2. Jesus (see John 8:48; Mark 3:20-22)
 3. Paul (see Acts 26:24-25; Galatians 1:10)
 - E. If you believe in the sovereignty of God, you need to listen to criticism, whether it's true or not, and allow God to use it in your life
- II. Numbers 17
 - A. God confirms the high priesthood of Aaron by resurrection
 - B. The rods
 1. Dead sticks picked up in the desert, whittled and possibly decorated
 2. Aaron's rod is as dead as all the others
 - C. Buds, blossoms, and berries—life out of death
 1. The almond tree is the first to blossom in the spring in the Middle East
 2. Symbolic of and refers to Jesus
 3. I Corinthians 15:20; Hebrews 8:4; 7:25; 4:15-16
 - D. Hebrews 9:4—three things inside the ark of the covenant
 1. Tablets of the Law

2. Golden pot with manna
 3. Aaron's rod
 4. These three things testify against and represent the failures of Israel
 5. On top of the ark, however, was the mercy seat, above which the presence of God dwelt and over which blood was shed to cover their failures
- E. The children of Israel are paranoid and afraid (vv.12-13)
1. Before, they were not afraid to complain
 2. Now, fear and respect of God has returned
 3. Hebrews 10:31, 12:29
- III. Numbers 18:1-7
- A. The Lord sets apart the Levites to serve Him in the tabernacle
1. To maintain the sanctity of the sanctuary
 2. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread" —Alexander Pope
- B. All roads lead to God, but not all roads lead to God safely
1. Only one safe way to God: through the shedding of blood by a mediator/High Priest
 2. Jesus does this for us
 3. 1 Timothy 2:5
- C. Church leaders in the New Testament were called upon to preserve the sanctity of the church
1. 1 Corinthians 5:1-7
 2. Matthew 18:15-17
 3. This action of harsh isolation by bold and loving believers brings sinning people to their senses
- D. God gifts Aaron:
1. With a team to help with the work in the tabernacle
 2. With his priesthood
- IV. Numbers 18:8-24
- A. Instruction of remuneration for the Levites' ministry
1. Priests had no land allotment
 2. Priests were supported by the nation
- B. The children of Israel always gave ten percent—*atithe*—of whatever they had to God
1. How one handles money is a barometer of spiritual maturity
 2. "There are three conversions that are necessary for somebody to undergo: the conversion of the heart, the conversion of mind, and the conversion of the wallet. I have found that the first two are much simpler than the third" — paraphrased from Martin Luther
 3. 2 Corinthians 9:6
 4. "Money is like manure. Store it up and it stinks; spread it around and it helps things grow"
 5. 2 Corinthians 9:7—*cheerful* literally means hilarious
 6. Giving money back to the Lord shows that you trust Him
- C. Covenant of salt
1. In the ancient world, salt symbolized an indestructible, pure, and permanent agreement
 2. Salt cannot be destroyed
- D. Genesis 34, 49:5-7

1. Jacob curses Simeon and Levi on his deathbed
2. Why, then, do the Levites get the gift of the priesthood?

Figures Referenced: D.L. Moody, Alexander Pope, Martin Luther

Cross references: Genesis 34; 49:5-7, Numbers 12; 16; 17:1-18:24, Matthew 18:15-17, Mark 3:20-22, John 1:17; 8:48, Acts 26:24-25, 1 Corinthians 5:1-7; 15:20, 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7, Galatians 1:10, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 4:15-16; 5:4; 7:25; 8:4; 9:4; 10:31; 12:29

Topic: Leadership

Keywords: criticism, leadership, priests, priesthood, Old Testament, the Law, resurrection, life, ark of the covenant, mercy, sin, complain, complaining, Levites, mediation, mediator, sacrifice, tabernacle, sanctity, the church, tithe, tithing, money, giving