

May 24

Scriptures: Read Numbers 7

Key Verse: “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Accept these from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tabernacle of meeting’.”(Numbers 7:4-5)

Overview

This chapter is the second longest in the whole Bible (Ps.119 is the longest). It gives a detailed description of the many expensive free-will gifts and offerings, which the leaders of the twelve tribes brought to the Lord. They all recognized the importance of worship to God. These were the same men whose leadership was reaffirmed by God in the first chapter of Numbers.

The gifts the leaders gave first were very necessary and practical: six carts and twelve oxen (7:3) for the purpose of transporting the Tabernacle. Moses gave these to the Gershonites and Merarites for moving their part of the Tabernacle. The Kohathites, however, were not given carts, for the Most Holy things were only to be carried on poles over their shoulders (7:7-9); the later disregard of this by King David and the Levites of his day resulted in a man’s death (2 Sam.6:3, 6-7).

On twelve successive days, each leader from the twelve tribes came to the Tabernacle on his assigned day and brought many identical gifts and offerings on the occasion of the dedication of the altar (7:11). The order in which the leaders were to come and present their gifts was the same as in the march (Num.2). We may wonder why there is so much repetition and be tempted to quickly skim over all these descriptions, but God did not. He saw to it, by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that all the names of the different leaders from each tribe and their separate and sacrificial gifts, however identical, were still individually mentioned in this record of history that we have preserved for our reading today. This expresses the special care and concern that God had for each of His tribes. Because they honored Him with these generous gifts, He would do this honor for them (1 Sam.2:30). Each time one of the Lord’s people brings honor to Him, or gives sacrificially to His work, it is recorded in heaven, and that one will be honored by the Lord.

The repetition also served to emphasize that since all the tribes donated equally to the service of the Tabernacle, they all had equal right to worship there. The equal gifts would also prevent any rivalry or pride of one tribe that may have been wealthier and able to give more. It also created a sense of unity in their purpose, which would glorify God all the more. The spirit of generous giving the tribes displayed would serve as an example to their people, teaching them to do the same. It is interesting that this passage, listing all the gifts given to God, immediately follows the beautiful blessing of Numbers 6:24-26. Our response to the blessings of God should be to give Him gifts in love and thankfulness, as did the Israelites.

When all the offerings for the dedication of the altar had been received, Moses went into the house of God to converse with Him. Now the Lord spoke to Moses in an audible voice from above the mercy seat within His newly consecrated dwelling, not from the fiery mountaintop. In Moses, the people had an advocate with God, but we have an even better advocate, our Lord Jesus, through whom all who believe in Him can go before God and commune with Him.

Prayer

Lord God, grant to us too the spirit of generosity in giving to You through giving to Your servants and Your work. Thank You that our giving is recorded in Heaven.