

# Touchstones of God's Economy

## Numbers (1)

The book of Numbers is the story of the children of Israel's journey in the wilderness from Mount Sinai to the border of the land of Canaan. The children of Israel are a great type of the church. Just as their deliverance from Egypt through the passover and the crossing of the Red Sea are a type of God's redemption and salvation, their journey through the wilderness to the land of Canaan is a type of the Christian journey following salvation (1 Cor. 5:7; 10:1-11; Col. 1:12; Heb. 3:7—4:13). This journey serves as an example for the New Testament believers and an admonition to run the race of the Christian life toward the goal for the prize (1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 4:7; Phil. 3:12-14).

Numbers records the history of Israel in three sections: encamping (1:1—9:14), journeying (9:15—20:29), and fighting (chs. 21—36).<sup>1</sup> First, the children of Israel were numbered for military service, and the camp of Israel was arranged with the twelve tribes camped around the tabernacle by their standards. Thus, the congregation of Israel became the army of God. The high point in this section is the threefold blessing of the people by the priests (6:23-26). The second section reveals how the children of Israel were led on their journey and how they departed themselves. It includes the serious failures of the children of Israel, which exposed their rebellious nature. These failures are so stark that it is possible to overlook the third section of the book, which is glorious. In fighting against their enemies, the children of Israel were completely victorious, defeating whoever came out to oppose the advance of God's people, the kingdom of God on earth.

Because the children of Israel typify the church, it is worthwhile to compare Numbers with Ephesians, the subject of which is the church as the Body of Christ (1:22-23). The three sections in Numbers correspond to the three sections of Ephesians. First, Ephesians reveals the position of the church in Christ in chapters 1 through 3. The believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinated unto sonship, and designated as God's inheritance (1:4-5, 11). We who were dead in our offenses and sins have been made alive together with Christ, raised

together with Him, seated together with Him in the heavenlies, and made the masterpiece of God (2:1, 5-6, 10). The church is God's household, dwelling place, kingdom, and the new man as Christ's bride and God's warrior (vv. 19, 21-22, 15; 5:25-27; 6:10-20). In this aspect of position, the church is typified by the encamping of Israel around the tabernacle and the Ark as seen in the first section of Numbers. Furthermore, accompanying the position of the church in Christ, there is the heavenly, threefold blessing of the Triune God, with which Paul as a New Testament priest blessed the church of God (Eph. 1:3-14). Second, in chapters 4 through 6, Ephesians

reveals the living needed for the church in the Holy Spirit. This section corresponds to the second section of Numbers, the section on journeying. Third, Ephesians reveals the responsibility of the church as the corporate warrior, fighting the spiritual warfare against the devil and the spiritual forces of evil

in the heavenlies (6:10-20). This corresponds to the third section in Numbers, the section on fighting.

These three sections in Numbers and Ephesians can be encapsulated with three short words: *sit*, *walk*, and *stand* (Eph. 2:6, KJV; 4:1; 6:11). The sequence of these words is important. Before we can walk or stand, we must first sit. The life of God's children begins with sitting, not with walking or standing. Unless we see that Christ has accomplished everything already and that we do not need to do anything but simply enjoy all that He has done, our walk and stand will be ineffectual.<sup>2</sup>

The camp of the children of Israel in Numbers 2 is a type of the New Jerusalem, indicating that in God's view everything was already accomplished before they even began their journey. In the Old Testament, God's people journeyed and then arrived at their goal, but in the New Testament the believers, having been baptized into Christ, are already in the goal (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:6). Our walk is to live Christ, who dwells in us and whom we restfully enjoy (Gal. 2:20). Nevertheless, there is still the need to "look...carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil"

*In the Old Testament,  
God's people journeyed  
and then arrived at their goal,  
but in the New Testament the believers,  
having been baptized into Christ,  
are already in the goal.*

---

(Eph. 5:15-16). Everything has been accomplished in Christ, and therefore, in eternity all of God's people will be fully perfected. Yet there is still the matter of timing. The believers who redeem the time by being filled in spirit during their lifetime will reach maturity and receive a reward at the Lord's coming; others, who are foolish, not understanding the will of the Lord, will be late and receive the Lord's discipline at His return (Matt. 25:1-13).

The failures of the children of Israel on their journey serve as a warning to us, "lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11). Sitting is also the prerequisite for fighting. We cannot engage in spiritual warfare unless we are positioned in the heavens in Christ's ascension. The warfare of the church in Christ is not to dislodge the devil from his position but to stand against his assaults on our position. The victory was won by Christ on the cross, and the territory is already ours; we need only to hold on to it (John 12:31-32; Col. 2:14-15). Our armor is almost entirely defensive, and our enemy has been disarmed (Eph. 6:14-17; 1 John 3:8). Our responsibility is to stand in Christ's victory, to maintain and keep what we have received in Christ (Eph. 6:11, 14). The reason for the children of Israel's triumphs over their foes was that "their [the foes'] protection has been removed from them, and Jehovah is with us [the children of Israel]" (Num. 14:9). All that Israel needed to do was to stand by faith in this fact.

### Encamping

The first section of Numbers concerns the encamping of the children of Israel.

### Numbering

Numbers 1:1-2 says, "Jehovah spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take the sum of all the assembly of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head." The children of Israel were numbered to be formed into an army. Those twenty years old and upward, "all who are able to go forth for military service," were numbered (v. 3). They were numbered by their families and by their leaders, that is, by the source of life and the fellowship of life under the authority of life (vv. 2, 4-16; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 John 1:3; Heb. 13:17). The age requirement for military service was twenty, indicating the maturity of life (1 John 2:13), but there was no upper limit; even at the age of eighty-five Caleb was still a warrior, able to fight for the nation of Israel (Josh. 14:6-13).

The numbering of Israel was recognized by three authorities: first, Moses, who signifies Christ as the Head of the Body (Num. 1:17; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18); second, Aaron,

who signifies Christ as the High Priest (Num. 1:17; Heb. 2:17); and third, the leaders of the twelve tribes, who signify the elders of the local churches in their taking the lead among God's people under the headship of Christ (Num. 1:4-16; Acts 14:23). These three authorities were to recognize that the things that were done were according to God's regulations.

The tribe of Levi was not included in the numbering of the army (Num. 1:47). Instead, the Levites were appointed to minister to the Tabernacle of the Testimony and to encamp around it in order to keep it from being touched by the children of Israel (vv. 50-53). The fighting Israelites were the outward protection for the serving Levites, who were for the testimony of God. In the New Testament the believers are both the fighters and the serving ones, both the corporate warrior fighting for God and the Levites, even the priests, for serving (Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

### Encamping in Array

The most striking image in the book of Numbers is that of the twelve tribes encamping in array with the Levites and the priests around the Tabernacle of the Testimony (2:1-34). The twelve tribes were arrayed, that is, placed in their proper rank and position, so that there were three tribes under one standard on each of the four sides of the tabernacle. This was according to God's ordination and arrangement, not according to their choice or preference (1 Cor. 12:18, 28).

The twelve camps faced toward the tabernacle (Num. 2:2). Within the tabernacle was the Ark, and within the Ark was the law as God's testimony (Exo. 25:16), indicating that the testimony of God was the unique center and goal of the children of Israel. This signifies that Christ, the embodiment of God, is the center and goal of God's people, who are journeying and fighting for God's testimony. Moreover, the children of Israel's encamping in military array around the tabernacle indicates that they were to fight for the protection of God's testimony. In the same way the church today is fighting for the protection of God's testimony, which is Christ, the incarnated and embodied God, and His Body, the church. God in Himself needs no protection, but God in His embodiment needs to be protected through the fighting of the church as a formed, coordinated Body (Matt. 16:18; John 1:14; Eph. 6:10-20).

The twelve tribes of the children of Israel encamping in array typifies God's redeemed people being consummated in the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem will be a city of twelve gates, three on each of its four sides, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on them (Rev. 21:12-13). That the four camps were each of three armies (each tribe being

---

an army) yields the number twelve. This number, composed of three multiplied by four, signifies the Triune God (three) mingled with His creature (four), forming a unit of eternal and perfect government (Matt. 28:19; Rev. 4:6; 21:12-13). Furthermore, the move of the Ark with the tabernacle in Numbers is a picture of the Triune God and His chosen people mingled together as one entity moving on the earth and conquering His enemy in order to regain the earth for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. It portrays the move of the church in Acts, the corporate testimony of the resurrected Christ, from Jerusalem “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (1:8).

### The Holy Service

Numbers 3:5-8 says, “Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him. And they shall keep his charge and the charge of the whole assembly before the Tent of Meeting to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the furnishings of the Tent of Meeting and the charge of the children of Israel to do the service of the tabernacle.”

Chapters 3 and 4 describe the divine ordination for the holy service. The basic principle of the holy service is that it is without confusion.

The families of the three sons of Levi each received their own charge to handle the different parts of the tabernacle. The service of the Levites was therefore according to their birth, which indicates that it was according to life. It was not a human organization, and its ministers were not hired. Because the holy service is based on life, it is organic, with an organic function requiring living coordination. This is the principle of service in the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).

The Levites' service portrayed in the book of Numbers was to take care of the tabernacle and its contents when the camp of Israel moved. Since the tabernacle with all its furnishings and the altar are types of Christ in His unsearchable riches, the handling and transport of all these items portray the New Testament believers' ministering of the riches of Christ to others (Eph. 3:8; 2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Tim. 4:6). For example, the charge of the Kohathites was to take care of the Ark, the table of the bread of the Presence, the lampstand, the incense altar, the burnt-offering altar, the utensils, and the veil (Num. 3:31). Spiritually speaking, this signifies taking care of Christ and ministering Him to others by presenting to them all the aspects of the rich Christ typified by these items. The

altar signifies the cross, referring to Christ's redemption, and the tabernacle refers to Christ as the embodiment of God, through whom God dwells among men and through whom men can enter into God. To minister is to serve, and to serve is to supply people by ministering to them the cross of Christ for redemption and the riches of Christ for the life supply (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; Col. 1:27-28).<sup>3</sup>

The Levites were assigned to their service by Aaron, the high priest, and his sons (Num. 4:19). In the Old Testament there was a distinction between the priests and the Levites, but in the New Testament there is only one status, that of the priests (1 Pet. 2:5). When the New Testament priests do an outward “Levitical” work, they must do it under the supervision of the inward, spiritual view of the New Testament priesthood. This service should never be separated from the priestly view.

Concerning the ordination of the Levites' service, Numbers 4:3 says, “From thirty years old and upward even

to fifty years old, all who enter into the service to perform the skilled work in the Tent of Meeting.” The word *service* in this verse means “to war,” or “to the army.” The holy service of the priests and the Levites was considered a warfare. Likewise, the service of the New Testament priests of the gospel of God for the

---

*The move of the Ark  
with the tabernacle in Numbers  
is a picture of the Triune God  
and His chosen people mingled together  
as one entity moving on the earth  
and conquering His enemy.*

---

building up of the Body of Christ is a warfare (Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 1 Tim. 1:18). When the service of the priesthood became rotten in the time of Eli the priest, the people of God lost their fighting power and were defeated by their enemies (1 Sam. 4). This should serve as a warning to us as God's New Testament priests.

### Dealing with Defilement

In Numbers 5 the Lord charged the children of Israel to deal with leprosy, discharges, and the contamination of death within the congregation (vv. 1-4). These defilements typify the uncleanness that needs to be dealt with in the church. God is righteous, holy, and living, and such defilements cannot be allowed to remain in His dwelling place, army, and priesthood. Leprosy signifies the evil issues of the natural man, especially rebellion (Lev. 13:2). Discharges are the excessive, abnormal, and unrestrained issues of the natural man, signifying being without control, unbridled, in relation to one's self, temper, preferences, likes, and dislikes (15:2, 4). Uncleanness through contact with the dead signifies the defilement of spiritual deadness that issues from contacting those who are spiritually dead (11:31).

---

Numbers 5:5-10 concerns an individual dealing with the guilt of sinning against God and man, including the proper way to make restitution. This requires thorough confession of our sins to God, going to the one whom we have wronged to make restitution, and offering Christ to God as the propitiation for our sins (1 John 1:9; 2:2; Luke 19:8).

Numbers 5:11-31 concerns the test of jealousy for a wife suspected by her husband of being unchaste. This dealing typifies Christ's jealousy over His believers and His church (2 Cor. 11:2-3). In order to be part of Christ's fighting army, we must be chaste toward Him. Our seeking and pursuing anything other than Christ is spiritual adultery in the eyes of God. It will bring us under God's judgment and curse, and we will not be able to fight for God and serve Him (1 Cor. 16:22).

### *The Vow of a Nazarite*

Numbers 6 describes the vow of a Nazarite, a special vow of sanctification and separation to God. Verses 2 and 3 say, "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite, to separate himself to Jehovah, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, nor shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh or dried grapes."

God's ordination of the family of Aaron to be priests excluded the rest of the people from the priesthood, but the vow of the Nazarite opened the gate, affording all the people of God an equal opportunity to be absolutely for God as a warrior or a priest (Judg. 13:5; 1 Sam. 1:11; 2:11). Whoever was willing could take this opportunity on his own initiative. This was a provision to complement the ordination of the priesthood. For the accomplishing of God's purpose, man's cooperation is needed to complement God's ordination. This is seen with Samuel, a Nazarite who fulfilled the duty of a priest, complementing the deficient Eli, the priest ordained by God.

The Hebrew word for *separate* in Numbers 6:2, *nazar*, is the root of the noun *Nazarite*. To be a Nazarite is to be sanctified, separated, absolutely and ultimately to God, that is, to be for nothing other than God. By taking this vow, the Nazarite separated himself from wine and strong drink (vv. 3-4). This signifies abstaining from all kinds of earthly enjoyment and pleasure and from anything that issues in earthly enjoyment and pleasure. No razor was to pass over his head, but he was to allow his hair to grow long (v. 5). This signifies not rejecting but absolutely subjecting oneself to the headship of the Lord as well as to all deputy authorities appointed by God (1 Cor. 11:3, 6, 10, 15; Rom. 13:1-2; Eph. 5:21, 23; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5). A Nazarite was not to approach any dead person, even close relatives who had died (Num. 6:6-7). The most hateful thing in the

eyes of God is death. A Nazarite could not touch anything dead so that he might not be defiled. Not being defiled by the deadness of our close relatives signifies that we should not be defiled by the deadness that comes through natural affection (Matt. 12:46-50).

According to typology, among the human race the unique Nazarite is the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the Nazarite is a type of Christ in His living absolutely for God in His humanity (John 5:30; Phil. 2:8).

### *Being Blessed*

The numbering, the encamping in array, the holy service, the dealing with defilement, the test for chastity, and the Nazarite vow brought in a marvelous situation that drew forth God's blessing. Numbers 6:22-26 says, "Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the children of Israel; you shall say to them, Jehovah bless you and keep you; Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; Jehovah lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace."

This blessing, with its three invocations of the name of Jehovah, is a blessing of God's people with the Divine Trinity that matches the blessings in 2 Corinthians 13:14 and Ephesians 1:3-14 and the blessing of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21—22. The unique blessing in the universe is God Himself, the Triune God, without whom the entire creation and humankind is vanity (Eccl. 1:2). This blessing, like those in 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Revelation, is not outward and material but is the eternal blessing of the Triune God dispensing Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen people for their enjoyment. Second Corinthians 13 ends with a threefold blessing of the Triune God: the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (v. 14). Ephesians 1 is a record of how the Triune God blesses His chosen, redeemed, and transformed people in His Divine Trinity, issuing in the church as the Body of Christ, the fullness of the One who fills all in all (vv. 22-23). At the end of the Bible, there is the blessing of the New Jerusalem, a sign of the ultimate and consummate mingling of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—with His chosen, redeemed, transformed, and glorified people as their eternal blessing (Rev. 21—22). Such a blessing is the ultimate fulfillment of God's blessing to Israel in Numbers 6.

Jehovah as the Father blesses us in every way and in every aspect in His love and keeps us in every way and in every aspect in His power (2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:3-4; John 17:11, 15; 1 Pet. 1:5). Jehovah as the Son shines on us. Through His incarnation He became the shining sun as the visible presence of the invisible God. He is also gracious to us as

---

the incarnated One, who came full of grace, even grace upon grace (Luke 1:78; John 1:14, 16-17). This grace is the grace of Christ, which is actually Christ Himself, and He is continually grace to us. Jehovah as the Holy Spirit lifts up His countenance upon us to confirm, assure, promise, and give everything to us (14:16, 26; 16:13-15). Jesus, the Son, comes as the face of God, and the Holy Spirit comes as the countenance of God (Eph. 4:30). When the Triune God is dispensed into us, we have His face and His countenance. Thus, we are kept in the Triune God, the Triune God becomes grace to us, and we have peace.

### *Offerings by the Twelve Tribes*

In Numbers 7 the twelve tribes of Israel gave offerings for the move of the tabernacle. These offerings signify our cooperation with God. According to His New Testament economy, God will not move, act, or do anything by Himself. He needs man's cooperation and coordination. Because the offerers were sinful, they offered animals for the sacrifices of the burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offering. All the offerings were for the worship of God, signifying that in order to worship God, we must offer ourselves to Him, and then we must offer Christ as our sin offering, burnt offering, and peace offering so that we and God may enjoy Christ in mutuality and be satisfied.

This chapter concludes with Moses entering into the tabernacle to speak with Jehovah: "When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the expiation cover that was upon the Ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; and he spoke to Him" (v. 89). This scene portrays Christ, signified by the Ark, as the meaning of life, the testimony, and the center of God's people. Without the Ark within the tabernacle, the life of the children of Israel would have had no meaning, no testimony, and no center (Col. 2:9; Rev. 3:14; Phil. 1:20-21).

### *Lighting the Lamps*

In Numbers 8:1-4 Aaron lit the seven lamps of the lampstand to give light in front of the lampstand within the Tent of Meeting. The seven lamps, which signify the seven Spirits of God in Revelation 4:5, shone toward the middle of the tabernacle, the right direction for serving and moving. This provided the light needed for God's people to begin their service toward Him.

### *Presenting the Levites*

In Numbers 8:5-26 the Levites, as the serving ones of the priesthood, were presented before Jehovah. After the Levites were cleansed, the children of Israel laid their hands upon them. The service of the tabernacle should have been taken care of by the sons of Israel, yet God chose the Levites to replace them (vv. 16-18). The laying on of hands signifies that the sons of Israel identified themselves with the Levites, meaning that in the presenting of the Levites, all the sons of Israel were presented to God.

Verse 24 says that the age at which the Levites began to serve was twenty-five years old, whereas in 4:3 it was thirty years old. This indicates that a Levite's service must have begun with a five-year apprenticeship, in which he was trained to minister in the tabernacle. The service in the tabernacle had to be exact; no mistakes were tolerated. God is serious about the laws governing the tabernacle, the offerings, and the Levitical work. Therefore,

training was required for five years, after which a Levite was qualified to serve in the tabernacle. Similarly, Numbers 8:25-26 reveals that even though the Levites retired from the service at the age of fifty years, they still needed to minister to their brothers in the Tent of Meeting. What the retired Levites gained in their

experience over twenty-five years was still needed for instructing God's people, especially the young ones, so that they would not become careless and unconsciously offend God in their service. The same need exists regarding the service in the church.

### *Keeping the Passover*

At this juncture Moses records God's charge concerning the keeping of the passover (9:1-14). After fulfilling the divine requirements and partaking of the divine provisions in the first eight chapters of this book, God's people were to have a corporate feast to enjoy Christ before God and with God as their mutual satisfaction. This shows how important keeping the passover was in relation to the move of God's people with God. Similarly, because the Lord's table has much to do with God's move on earth, the New Testament believers must keep the Lord's table (1 Cor. 11:23-26). The Lord's table, like the passover in the Old Testament, reminds us that we were destined to die under God's righteous judgment, but God prepared Christ to be our replacement to die for us, thus saving us from the death-judgment of God's righteousness. Furthermore, as in the passover, the Lord's table reminds us that we do not

---

*When the Triune God  
is dispensed into us,  
we have His face and His countenance.  
Thus, we are kept in the Triune God,  
the Triune God becomes grace to us,  
and we have peace.*

---

belong to ourselves but to the One who replaced us and who is now our life and life supply, the One by whom we should now live (5:7; John 6:57).

### Journeying

The second section of Numbers concerns the journeying of the children of Israel.

### The Guidance

The guidance of the children of Israel for their journey came from the heavens in the form of a cloud and from the priests on earth in the form of the sound of the two trumpets (9:15—10:10). This reveals that their moving was not up to them but altogether according to God's guidance. The guidance in the form of the cloud signifies God in the sense of His presence, for the cloud typifies God Himself as the consummated Spirit (1 Cor. 10:1-2). This indicates that the New Testament believers should always follow the indwelling Spirit. The two trumpets were blown as an alarm for the setting out of the camps of Israel (Num. 10:5). It was called an alarm because, in God's thought, the children of Israel were continually at war. When they moved, they moved in a fighting way. This signifies that the Christian walk, the Christian move, is a fighting move (1 Cor. 14:8).

### Setting Out

When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the children of Israel set out on their journey (Num. 10:11-13). The Ark of the Covenant went before them "to seek out a resting place for them" (v. 33). The Ark is a type of the crucified and resurrected Christ in His resurrection. He is the unique Leader of God's people, not any man, and He leads us to the proper place of rest on the long and rugged journey of the Christian life (vv. 29-32; Matt. 23:10; Heb. 4:8-9).

When the Ark set out, Moses said, "Rise up, O Jehovah, and

let Your enemies be scattered; / And let those who hate You flee before You" (Num. 10:35). This refers to Christ's rising up to the heavens in His ascension (Psa. 68:1, 18; Eph. 4:8-10). When the Ark came to rest, Moses said, "Return, O Jehovah, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel" (Num. 10:36). Since verse 35 refers to Christ's ascension, the word *return* in verse 36 must refer to the second coming of Christ. Therefore, Moses' word in these two verses portrays a full view of God's economy from Christ's incarnation to be the Ark, the embodiment of the Triune God in the flesh, through His ascension to His second coming.

### Conclusion

The book of Numbers begins with the numbering of the children of Israel for their formation into an army that encamped in battle array around the tabernacle with the Ark. Then the children of Israel set out on their journey toward the good land under the guidance of the cloud and the silver trumpets, led by the Ark of the Testimony. The next issue of Touchstones will continue the section of journeying and cover the final section on the fighting of God's people for God's kingdom.

by Jim Batten

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This article draws extensively on Witness Lee's outline and notes to Numbers in the *Recovery Version of the Bible*, Living Stream Ministry, 2003.

<sup>2</sup>For a further expounding of these three words in Ephesians, see Watchman Nee's *Sit, Walk, Stand* in *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 39, Living Stream Ministry, 1993.

<sup>3</sup>For the significance of all the items of the tabernacle in the experience of Christ, see Lee's notes on Exodus 25—30 in the *Recovery Version of the Bible*.

### A Corporate Entity in Numbers

In Exodus the children of Israel were a corporate entity, but they had not yet been formed into an army. However, in Numbers, particularly in the first four chapters, the Israelites were formed into an army according to God's arrangement. There were camps, companies, and armies with a clear arrangement around the tabernacle. The arrangement of the encampment and the services among the Israelites were quite orderly. In Exodus and Leviticus the children of Israel were corporate, but they had not been formed sufficiently into an army. It was not until Numbers that the children of Israel were fully formed into an orderly corporate entity without confusion. Numbers 1:1 says, "Jehovah spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting." This verse says that God spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting, not in the tabernacle. The tabernacle emphasizes the fellowship between man and God, whereas the Tent of Meeting emphasizes the assembly of those who had fellowship with God. An assembly, camp, and army are all corporate. The teachings in Numbers were mostly for a corporate entity; even God's speaking to an individual in this book was for the whole assembly.

From *The Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1960, vol. 1, "Synopsis of Numbers" by Witness Lee, p. 67