

# ת במדבר NUMBERS

## INTRODUCTION

The *Book of Numbers* resumes the account of the desert journey. The English title, derived from the Greek (*Ἀριθμοί*) and Latin (*Numeri*) translations, is based primarily on the census of the people related in Chapters 1-4, & 26; in the Hebrew Bible, the book is appropriately called *In the Desert*, referring to the long period (40 years, 33:38, Am 5:25) spent in the desert. The book falls into two divisions: Chapters 1-25 relate how the entire first Exodus generation, which murmured against God in the desert and refused to take the land, died off, except for Moses and the two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb; the story of Balaam and Balak, with the talking donkey, (Chapters 22-24) adds colour to what many may consider an otherwise 'uninteresting' book. Chapters 26-36 deal with the new generation that God led toward the Promised Land under Moses' leadership. After leaving Mt Sinai, the people eventually reach Kadesh; after a long stay at Kadesh, the people resume their journey, until they reach the Plains of Moab, opposite Jericho. The Midianites are defeated and the tribes of Gad and Reuben settle in Transjordan. Chapter 33 lists the encampments on the way from Egypt to Moab. Among the narrative sections are groups of laws either supplementing the Sinaitic code or preparing for the colonisation of Canaan. The book demonstrates the power of faith, in the characters of Joshua and Caleb: because of their unwavering belief that God would give them victory over the Canaanites, they did not die in the desert with their contemporaries but survived to lead the following generation of Israelites into the Promised Land.

Numbers is one of the best-preserved parts of the Pentateuch and fragments of the Ketef Hinnom Scrolls containing verses (6:24-26) from the book have been dated to the early 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE (that is, **before** Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem).

The image to the right shows 'Amulet II' (also known as KH2), along with an enhanced version revealing more clearly the paleo-Hebrew characters, and a transcription of that text into classical Hebrew. From line 5 onwards, the text reads as follows:

*May YHWH bless you and keep you;  
[may] YH[W]H make his face shine [upon] you  
... and grant you p[ea]ce.*

The remainder of Nb 6:25-26 ("*and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> may YHWH show you his face*"), which occurs where the ellipsis is shown, may very well have been written on the part of the fragment that has disintegrated.

*By Tamar Hayardeni, Attribution,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=23802556>*



## במדבר פרק א

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי בְּאֵהֶל מוֹעֵד  
בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִית לְצֵאתָם מֵאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר: ב שָׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ כָּל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי־  
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם לְבֵית אָבִתָּם בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת  
כָּל־זָכָר לְגִלְגָּלָתָם: ג מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל־  
יָצֵא צֶבֶא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל תִּפְקְדוּ אֹתָם לְצִבְיָתָם אֹתָהּ  
וְאֶהְרֹן: ד וְאֹתָכֶם יִהְיוּ אִישׁ אִישׁ לְמִטָּה אִישׁ רֹאשׁ  
לְבֵית־אָבִתּוֹ הוּא:

ה וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמְדוּ אִתְּכֶם  
לְרֹאשׁוֹן אֱלִיזוּר בֶּן־שִׁדְיָאוּר: ו לְשֹׁמֵעוֹן שְׁלֹמִיאֵל  
בֶּן־צוּרִישַׁדָּי: ז לִיהוֹשֻׁהַ נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן־עַמִּינַדָּב:  
ח לִישָׁשׁכָר נֹתָנָאֵל בֶּן־צוּעָר: ט לְזִבְוִלֹן אֱלִיאָב בֶּן־

## NUMBERS 1

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses, in the desert 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. He said: <sup>2</sup> "Take a census of the whole community of Israelites, by clans and families, taking a count of the names of all the males, head by head. <sup>3</sup> Every man of Israel, twenty years of age and over, fit to bear arms, must be you and Aaron shall register and assign to his fighting station. <sup>4</sup> You are to take a man from each tribe, the head of his family, to help you in this.

<sup>5</sup> "These are the names of the men who are to be your helpers: For Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur. <sup>6</sup> For Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. <sup>7</sup> For Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab. <sup>8</sup> For Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar. <sup>9</sup> For Zebulun, Eliab the son of

### NUMBERS 1

<sup>1</sup> This verse sets the date at one month after the erection of the Dwelling (Ex 40:17).

<sup>2</sup> The literal translation of 'take a census' (שָׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ) is 'lift up the heads'; this idiom for taking a census occurs elsewhere (E 30:12, Lv 5:24, Nb 1:24, etc.); the idea is simply that of counting heads to arrive at the base for the standing army.

<sup>3</sup> The verb תִּפְקְדוּ ('register') is common in scripture; it has as its basic meaning the idea of determining the destiny of someone, by appointing, mustering, or visiting. When God visits, it is a divine intervention for either blessing or cursing; here, it is the taking of a census for war.

<sup>4</sup> The literal translation of 'a man from each tribe' is 'a man, a man for a tribe'.

<sup>5</sup> The twelve-fold pattern is maintained by counting the 'House of Joseph' as two tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh; on the mentioning of Ephraim before Manasseh, see Gn 48:13-14, and contrast 26:28 & 34:23-24.

<sup>6</sup> The name 'Zurishaddai' (צוּרִישַׁדָּי) means 'the Almighty is my Rock'.

<sup>7</sup> 'Nahshon' (נַחֲשׁוֹן) was an ancestor of Boaz and David, and therefore of Christ (Lk 3:32-33).

<sup>8</sup> For 'Zuar' (צוּעָר), the LXX has Σωγαρ.

<sup>9</sup> For 'Helon' (חֶלֶן), the LXX reads Χαίλων.

חֵלֶן: יִלְבְּנִי יוֹסֵף לְאַפְרַיִם אֲלִישַׁמָּע בֶּן־עַמִּיהוּד  
לְמִנְשֵׁה גַמְלִיאֵל בֶּן־פְּדָהצֹר: יֵאֵל לְבִנְיָמִן אֲבִידָן בֶּן־  
גִּדְעֹנִי: יֵב לְדָן אַחִיעֶזֶר בֶּן־עַמִּישַׁדַּי: יֵג לְאַשֵׁר  
פַּגְעִיאל בֶּן־עֲכָרָן: יֵד לְגָד אֱלִיסָף בֶּן־דְּעוּאֵל:  
יֵט לְנַפְתָּלִי אַחִירַע בֶּן־עֵינָן: יֵצ אֶלֶה קְרִיאִי קְרוּאִי  
הָעֵדָה נְשִׂאִי מִטּוֹת אֲבוֹתָם רָאשֵׁי אֲלָפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הֵם: יֵז וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה  
אֲשֶׁר נִקְבּוּ בְשֵׁמֹת: יֵח וְאֵת כָּל־הָעֵדָה הִקְהִילוּ  
בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי וַיְתִילְדוּ עַל־מִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית  
אֲבֹתָם בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעַל  
לְגַלְגָּלָתָם: יֵט כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפְקְדֵם  
בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי: {ס}

Helon. <sup>10</sup> Of the children of Joseph: for Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; for Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. <sup>11</sup> For Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni. <sup>12</sup> For Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. <sup>13</sup> For Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran. <sup>14</sup> For Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel. <sup>15</sup> For Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan.” <sup>16</sup> These were the chosen of the community; they were the leaders of their fathers’ tribes, the heads of Israel’s thousands. <sup>17</sup> And Moses and Aaron took the men who had been named, <sup>18</sup> and, on the first day of the second month, they mustered the whole community. The Israelites established their kinship by clans and families, and one by one, the names of all men twenty years and over were recorded. <sup>19</sup> As Yahweh had commanded, Moses registered them in the desert of Sinai.

<sup>10</sup> In place of ‘Ammihud’ (עַמִּיהוּד), the LXX has Εμμιουδ.

<sup>11</sup> For ‘Gideoni’ (גִּדְעֹנִי), the LXX reads Γαδεωνι (in the un-pointed Ketiv, these would look the same).

<sup>12</sup> The name ‘Ammishaddai’ (עַמִּישַׁדַּי) means ‘the Almighty is my Kinsman’.

<sup>13</sup> For ‘Ochran’ (עֲכָרָן), the LXX reads Εχραν (see #11).

<sup>14</sup> There is a textual difficulty with the name ‘Deuel’, here following the MT (Leningrad & Aleppo Codices: דְּעוּאֵל) and NRSV; the NJB, following the LXX (Παγουσηλ), and there is even some variation in the Hebrew traditions.

<sup>15</sup> For ‘Enan’ (עֵינָן), the LXX reads Αναν (see #11).

<sup>16</sup> The translation here follows the Qere (קְרוּאִי, ‘chosen of’) rather than the Ketiv (קְרִיאִי). ‘Thousands’ is from an ancient term equivalent to ‘clan’ (1S 10:19, 21), based on military musters employed by other ancient peoples. The WEBBE has ‘princes’ in place of ‘leaders’.

<sup>17</sup> The census total of 603,550 (compare the slightly lower figure in 26:51) is extremely high (see #16). With this interpretation (e.g. Reuben had forty-six tribal subsections with a total of five hundred men, v. 21), the total reduces to 5,500.

<sup>18</sup> The establishment of kinship was a necessity under the Old Covenant because membership depended on physical descent from Abraham; hence the genealogies of 1Ch. 1–9 (see also Ne 7:5, 61).

<sup>19</sup> In place of ‘registered’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘enrolled’ and NETB has ‘numbered’.

כ ויהיו בני־ראובן בכר ישראל תולדתם  
למשפחתם לבית אבתם במספר שמות  
לגלגלתם כל־זכר מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כל  
יצא צבא: כא פקדיהם למטה ראובן ששה  
וארבעים אלף וחמש מאות: {פ}

כב לבני שמעון תולדתם למשפחתם לבית אבתם  
פקדיו במספר שמות לגלגלתם כל־זכר מבן  
עשרים שנה ומעלה כל יצא צבא: כג פקדיהם  
למטה שמעון תשעה וחמשים אלף ושלוש מאות:  
{פ}

כד לבני גד תולדתם למשפחתם לבית אבתם  
במספר שמות מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כל יצא  
צבא: כה פקדיהם למטה גד חמשה וארבעים אלף  
ושש מאות וחמשים: {פ}

<sup>20</sup> When the kinship of the sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, had been established by clans and by their fathers' houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name.

<sup>21</sup> Those registered for the tribe of Reuben was forty-six thousand five hundred.

<sup>22</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Simeon had been established by their clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the numbered males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>23</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Simeon was fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

<sup>24</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Gad had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>25</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Gad was forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.

<sup>20</sup> NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "were listed by name individually."

<sup>21</sup> The form פקדיהם is a passive participle with a pronominal suffix; this indicates that the number came to 46,500, but it specifically refers to 'those registered'.

<sup>22</sup> The NRSV has 'descendants' in place of 'sons', here following the MT & NJB (as also in vv. 24, 26, 28 &c).

<sup>23</sup> There has been much discussion about the numbers in the Israelite desert experience: the immediate difficulty for even the casual reader is the enormous number of the population; if indeed there were 603,550 men twenty years of age and older who could fight, the total population of the exodus community counting women and children would have been well over a million, or even two million as calculated by some. (See also, #25 & #27.)

<sup>24</sup> In place of 'ancestral houses', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'families' (as also in vv. 22, 26, 28 &c).

<sup>25</sup> The problem of such a staggering number of Israelites (see #23) is not a question of whether or not God could provide for such a number; it is rather a problem of logistics for a population of that size in that period of time. (See also #27.)

כ<sup>ו</sup> לְבִנֵי יְהוּדָה תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם  
בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמֹת מִן עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֵצֵא  
צָבָא: כ<sup>ז</sup> פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה אַרְבַּעַה וְשִׁבְעִים  
אַלְף וְשָׁשׁ מֵאוֹת: {פ}

כח לְבִנֵי יִשָּׂשכָר תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית  
אֲבֹתָם בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמֹת מִן עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל  
יֵצֵא צָבָא: כט פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה יִשָּׂשכָר אַרְבַּעַה  
וְחֲמִשִּׁים אַלְף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: {פ}

ל לְבִנֵי זְבוּלֹן תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם  
בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמֹת מִן עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֵצֵא  
צָבָא: לא פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה זְבוּלֹן שִׁבְעָה וְחֲמִשִּׁים  
אַלְף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: {פ}

לב לְבִנֵי יוֹסֵף אֶפְרַיִם תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם  
לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמֹת מִן עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה  
וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֵצֵא צָבָא: לג פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה אֶפְרַיִם  
אַרְבָּעִים אַלְף וְחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת: {פ}

<sup>26</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Judah had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>27</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Judah was seventy-four thousand six hundred.

<sup>28</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Issachar had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>29</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Issachar was fifty-four thousand four hundred.

<sup>30</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Zebulun had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>31</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Zebulun was fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

<sup>32</sup> The sons of Joseph: when the lineage of the sons of Ephraim had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>33</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Ephraim was forty thousand five hundred.

<sup>26</sup> The NJB has 'kinship' in place of 'lineage', here following the NRSV (as also in vv. 22, 24, 28 &c).

<sup>27</sup> One explanation of the very large numbers in this section could be the interpretation of the word אַלְף, traditionally translated 'thousand'; some choose one of the other attested meanings, perhaps 'troop', 'family', or 'tent group', even though a word for 'family' has already been used.

<sup>28</sup> The NRSV has 'descendants' in place of 'sons', here following the MT & NJB (as also in vv. 30, 32, 34 &c).

<sup>29</sup> Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.

<sup>30</sup> In place of 'ancestral houses', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'families' (as also in vv. 28, 32, 34 &c).

<sup>31</sup> Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.

<sup>32</sup> The NJB has 'kinship' in place of 'lineage', here following the NRSV (as also in vv. 28, 30, 34 &c).

<sup>33</sup> Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.



לֹד לְבִנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם  
בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֶעָא  
צָבָא: <sup>לֹה</sup> פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה מְנַשֶּׁה שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים  
אֶלֶף וּמֵאֹתִים: {פ}

<sup>34</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Manasseh had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>35</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Manasseh was thirty-two thousand two hundred.

לֹד לְבִנֵי בְנִימִן תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם  
בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֶעָא  
צָבָא: <sup>לֹה</sup> פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה בְנִימִן חֲמִשָּׁה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים  
אֶלֶף וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: {פ}

<sup>36</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Benjamin had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>37</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Benjamin was thirty-five thousand four hundred.

לֹח לְבִנֵי דָן תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם  
בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֶעָא  
צָבָא: <sup>לֹט</sup> פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה דָן שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁשִׁים אֶלֶף  
וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת: {פ}

<sup>38</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Dan had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>39</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Dan was sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

מ לְבִנֵי אֲשֵׁר תּוֹלְדֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם  
בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֶעָא  
צָבָא: <sup>מא</sup> פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִטָּה אֲשֵׁר אֶחָד וָאַרְבָּעִים  
אֶלֶף וְחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת: {פ}

<sup>40</sup> When the lineage of the sons of Asher had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. <sup>41</sup> The total of these for the tribe of Asher was forty-one thousand five hundred.

<sup>34</sup> In place of 'by name', here following NETB, the NJB has 'one by one' and the NRSV has 'according to the number of names'.

<sup>35</sup> Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.

<sup>36</sup> The NRSV has 'descendants' in place of 'sons', here following the MT & NJB (as also in vv. 38, 40, 42 &c).

<sup>37</sup> Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.

<sup>38</sup> In place of 'ancestral houses', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'families' (as also in vv. 68, 40, 42 &c).

<sup>39</sup> Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.

<sup>40</sup> The NJB has 'kinship' in place of 'lineage', here following the NRSV (as also in vv. 36, 38, 42 &c).

<sup>41</sup> Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.

מב בני נפתלי תולדתם למשפחתם לבית אבתם  
במספר שמות מִבְּנֵי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל יֶצֶא  
צבא: מג פקדיהם למטה נפתלי שלשה וחמשים  
אלף וארבע מאות: {פ}

מד אלה הפקדים אשר פקד משה ואהרן ונשיאי  
ישראל שנים עשר איש איש-אחד לבית-אבתיו  
היו: מה ויהיו כל-פקודי בני-ישראל לבית אבתם  
מִבְּנֵי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּל־יֶצֶא צבא בִּישְׂרָאֵל:  
מו ויהיו כל-הפקדים שש-מאות אלף ושלשת  
אלפים וחמש מאות וחמשים: מז והלויים למטה  
אבתם לא התפקדו בתוכם: {פ}

מח וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: מט אך את-מטה  
לוי לא תפקד ואת-ראשם לא תשא בתוך בני

42 When the lineage of the sons of Naphtali had been established by clans and ancestral houses, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were recorded by name. 43 The total of these for the tribe of Naphtali was fifty-three thousand four hundred.

44 Such were the men registered, whom Moses and Aaron, and the leaders of Israel, numbered, of whom there were twelve, each representing his ancestral house. 45 And every man of Israel of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, was counted according to his ancestral house. 46 Altogether the full total was six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. 47 However, the Levites and their patriarchal tribe were not included in the count.

48 Yahweh had said to Moses: 49 "But do not take any census of the Levites, or register them among the Israelites. 50 You must appoint the

42 In place of 'by name', here following NETB, the NJB has 'one by one' and the NRSV has 'according to the number of names'.

43 Concerning the large number of men here listed, see #23, #25 & #27.

44 This verse uses both the participle הַפְּקָדִים ('registered' – literally, 'numbered') and the verb פָּקַד ('numbered').

45 In place of 'ancestral house', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'patriarchal House' (as also in v. 44).

46 There were 600,000 of them when they left Egypt. Both figures should be interpreted along the lines expressed in #Ex 12:37.

47 The *vav* on the 1<sup>st</sup> word of this verse indicates a disjunction with the previous sequence of reports; it may be taken as a contrastive clause, translated 'but' (as NETB) or 'however' (as NJB & NRSV).

48 Literally translated, this verse reads, "Yahweh had spoken to Moses, saying:" the infinitive construct, לֵאמֹר, sometimes rendered 'saying', does not need to be translated but can be taken simply as the indicator of direct discourse.

49 From the giving of the Law on the priesthood was the prerogative of the tribe of Levi; there were, however, members of other tribes who served as priests from time to time (see Jg 17:5).

50 The phrase 'Dwelling of the Testimony' translates מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת. See #Ex 16:34.

יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>נ</sup>וְאַתָּה הַפֶּקֶד אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם עַל־מִשְׁכַּן  
הָעֵדֻת וְעַל כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְעַל כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לֹו הִמָּה יִשְׁאוּ  
אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְהֵם יִשְׁרְתֻהוּ וְסָבִיב  
לְמִשְׁכַּן יַחֲנוּ: <sup>נא</sup>וּבְנִסַּע הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹרִידוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם  
וּבַחֲנֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִקִּימוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם וְהָזֵר הַקָּרֵב  
יוֹמֵת: <sup>נב</sup>וְחָנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ עַל־מַחֲנֵהוּ וְאִישׁ  
עַל־דֹּגְלוֹ לְצַבָּאתָם: <sup>נג</sup>וְהַלְוִיִּם יַחֲנוּ סָבִיב לְמִשְׁכַּן  
הָעֵדֻת וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה קֶצֶף עַל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשִׁמְרוּ  
הַלְוִיִּם אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת: <sup>נד</sup>וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בֶּן  
עָשׂוֹ: {פ}

Levites over the Dwelling of the Testimony, to look after its furnishings and belongings; they are to carry the Dwelling, and all its furnishings, and they are to take care of it and to pitch their camp around it. <sup>51</sup> When the Dwelling is to move, the Levites shall take it down; when the Dwelling is set up, they are to do this. Any layman coming near it shall be put to death. <sup>52</sup> The Israelites shall camp in formation each in their own encampment, by their companies. <sup>53</sup> But the Levites are to pitch their tents round the Dwelling where the Testimony is; in this way, the Wrath will not fall on the whole community of Israelites. The Levites are to be in charge of the Dwelling of the Testimony.” <sup>54</sup> The Israelites did exactly as Yahweh had ordered Moses. They did as he said.

<sup>51</sup> The word here translated as ‘layman’ is וְהָזֵר, normally translated ‘stranger’ or ‘outsider’; it is most often used for a foreigner, an outsider, who does not belong in Israel, or who, although allowed in the land, may be viewed with suspicion. However, here it seems to include even Israelites other than the tribe of Levi.

<sup>52</sup> The NJB has ‘are to pitch their tents’ in place of ‘shall camp’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>53</sup> The phrase, ‘the Wrath’, represents divine retribution (see Lv 10:1–3, Dt 29:23–27) associated with the presence of God, residing in the Tent, whom the people’s irreverence would offend. The NJB replaces the phrase with the proper noun, ‘Retribution’; the NRSV does not capitalise ‘wrath’.

<sup>54</sup> After ‘Moses’, the LXX adds ‘and Aaron’ (καὶ Ααρων).



## במדבר פרק ב

א וידבר יהוה אל-משה ואל-אהרן לאמר: ב איש על-דגליו באתת לבית אבתם יחנו בני ישראל מנגד סביב לאהל-מועד יחנו: ג והחנים קדמה מזרחה דגל מחנה יהודה לצבאתם ונשיא לבני יהודה נחשון בן-עמינדב: ד וצבאו ופקדיהם ארבעה ושבעים אלף ושש מאות: ה והחנים עליו מטה יששכר ונשיא לבני יששכר נתנאל בן-צוטר: ו וצבאו ופקדיו ארבעה וחמשים אלף וארבע מאות: ז מטה זבולן ונשיא לבני זבולן אליאב בן-חלון: ח וצבאו ופקדיו שבעה וחמשים אלף וארבע מאות: ט כל-הפקדים למחנה יהודה

## NUMBERS 2

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron: <sup>2</sup> "The Israelites are to pitch their tents, each by his own standard, under the banner of his ancestral house. They are to camp facing the Dwelling where the Testimony is, on every side. <sup>3</sup> Those who are to camp on the east side: towards the sunrise, the standard of the camp of Judah, in battle array. Leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon son of Amminadab. <sup>4</sup> His command: seventy-four thousand six hundred. <sup>5</sup> Encamped by him: The tribe of Issachar: leader of the sons of Issachar: Nethanel son of Zuar; <sup>6</sup> his command: fifty-four thousand four hundred. <sup>7</sup> The tribe of Zebulun: leader of the sons of Zebulun: Eliab son of Helon; <sup>8</sup> his command: fifty-seven thousand four hundred. <sup>9</sup> The assembled strength of the camp of Judah, by companies,

### NUMBERS 2

- <sup>1</sup> At the end of this verse, the MT adds 'saying', a redundant participle in modern English.
- <sup>2</sup> Perhaps with the Feast of Tabernacles in mind (Lv 23:33–36), the priestly writer conceives the congregation as arranged symmetrically around the Tent of Meeting. In the oldest tradition, the Tent was not in the centre but on the outside of the camp (Ex 33:7–11).
- <sup>3</sup> The Levites are to encamp immediately around the Tabernacle court (Ex 27:9–19), to protect and transport the sacred shrine (v. 17, 1:47–54). Farther out, the twelve tribes are to encamp, three on each side. The arrangement expresses the idea of the presence of Yahweh in the midst of his people (Ex 25:8). Judah is assigned the favoured position, on the east of the camp.
- <sup>4</sup> In place of 'his command' (as per NJB), the NRSV has 'with a company as enrolled' and NETB has 'those numbered in his division' (and see also #6).
- <sup>5</sup> The NJB & NRSV have 'next to him' in place of 'by him', here following the MT.
- <sup>6</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds 'men' (and see also #4).
- <sup>7</sup> NETB supplies, at the start of this verse, the phrase, 'next to him'.
- <sup>8</sup> On the translation of this verse, see #4 & #6.
- <sup>9</sup> The phrase 'by companies' (from the NRSV) is not present in the NJB. The same applies to vv. 16, 24 & 31. Each division marches in assigned order, with Judah in the lead.

מֵאֵת אֶלֶף וּשְׁמֹנִים אֶלֶף וְשֵׁשֶׁת־אֲלָפִים וָאַרְבַּע־  
מֵאוֹת לְצִבְאָתָם רִאשֹׁנָה יִסְעוּ: {ס}

יִדְגֹּל מִחֲנֶה רְאוּבֵן תִּימָנָה לְצִבְאָתָם וְנִשְׂיָא לְבִנֵּי  
רְאוּבֵן אֱלִיצוּר בֶּן־שִׁדְיָאוּר: י<sup>א</sup> וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדָּיו שֵׁשֶׁה  
וָאַרְבַּעִים אֶלֶף וְחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: יבִּ וְהַחֹזֶנֶם עָלָיו מִטָּה  
שִׁמְעוֹן וְנִשְׂיָא לְבִנֵּי שִׁמְעוֹן שְׁלֹמִיָּאל בֶּן־צוּרִישַׁדָּי:  
יגִ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם תִּשְׁעָה וְחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וּשְׁלֹשׁ  
מֵאוֹת: ידִ וּמִטָּה גָד וְנִשְׂיָא לְבִנֵּי גָד אֱלִיסָפִי בֶן־  
רְעוּאֵל: טוֹ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם חֲמִשָּׁה וָאַרְבַּעִים אֶלֶף  
וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֲמִשִּׁים: טזִ כָּל־הַפְּקָדִים לְמַחֲנֶה  
רְאוּבֵן מֵאֵת אֶלֶף וָאֶחָד וְחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וָאַרְבַּע־  
מֵאוֹת וְחֲמִשִּׁים לְצִבְאָתָם וּשְׁנִיִּים יִסְעוּ: {ס}

יזִ וְנִסְעָ אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד מִחֲנֶה הַלְוִיִּם בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶה  
כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲנוּ כֵּן יִסְעוּ אִישׁ עַל־יָדוֹ לְדִגְלֵיהֶם: {ס}

numbers in all a hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred. These will be the first to break camp.

<sup>10</sup> “On the south shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben, in battle array. The leader of the sons of Reuben: Elizur son of Shedeur. <sup>11</sup> And his command: forty-six thousand and five hundred. <sup>12</sup> Encamped by him: The tribe of Simeon. The leader of the sons of Simeon: Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. <sup>13</sup> And his command: fifty-nine thousand three hundred. <sup>14</sup> The tribe of Gad. The leader of the sons of Gad: Eliasaph son of Reuel. <sup>15</sup> And his command: forty-five thousand and six hundred and fifty. <sup>16</sup> The assembled strength of the camp of Reuben, by companies, numbers in all a hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty. They will be second to break camp.

<sup>17</sup> The Tent of Meeting will move with the camp of the Levites, in the middle of the camps. They shall set out as they camp, each in place by his standard.

<sup>10</sup> Here, and throughout this section, the literal translation is, ‘(under) the standard of the camp of Reuben ... according to their divisions’.

<sup>11</sup> On the translation of this verse, see #4 & #6.

<sup>12</sup> The NJB & NRSV have ‘next to him’ in place of ‘by him’, here following the MT.

<sup>13</sup> On the translation of this verse, see #4 & #6.

<sup>14</sup> NETB supplies, at the start of this verse, the phrase, ‘next to him’.

<sup>15</sup> On the translation of this verse, see #4 & #6.

<sup>16</sup> A more literal translation of the final sentence is ‘they will travel second’; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>17</sup> During the march, the Levites are to be flanked by two divisions on both the front and the rear. The literal translation of ‘in position’ (עַל־יָדוֹ) is ‘upon his hand’; this clearly refers to a specifically designated place for each man.

י<sup>יח</sup> דָּגַל מַחֲנֵה אֶפְרַיִם לְצַבָּאתָם יִמָּה וְנָשִׂיא לְבִנֵּי  
אֶפְרַיִם אֵלִישָׁמָע בֶּן־עַמִּיהוּד: י<sup>ט</sup> וְצָבָאוּ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם  
אַרְבָּעִים אֶלֶף וְחָמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: ב<sup>כ</sup> וְעָלְיוֹ מִטָּה מְנַשֶּׁה  
וְנָשִׂיא לְבִנֵּי מְנַשֶּׁה גַמְלִיאֵל בֶּן־פְּדָהצֹר: כ<sup>א</sup> וְצָבָאוּ  
וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף וּמֵאוֹת: כ<sup>ב</sup> וּמִטָּה  
בְּנִימֵן וְנָשִׂיא לְבִנֵּי בְנִימֵן אֲבִידֹן בֶּן־גִּדְעֹנִי:  
כ<sup>ג</sup> וְצָבָאוּ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם חֲמִשָּׁה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף וְאַרְבַּע  
מֵאוֹת: כ<sup>ד</sup> כָּל־הַפְּקָדִים לְמַחֲנֵה אֶפְרַיִם מֵאֵת אֶלֶף  
וּשְׁמֹנֶת־אֲלָפִים וּמֵאָה לְצַבָּאתָם וּשְׁלֹשִׁים  
{ס} יִסְעוּ:

כ<sup>ה</sup> דָּגַל מַחֲנֵה דָן צָפֹנָה לְצַבָּאתָם וְנָשִׂיא לְבִנֵּי דָן  
אֲחִיעֶזֶר בֶּן־עַמִּישַׁדַּי: כ<sup>ו</sup> וְצָבָאוּ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם  
וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף וְשֶׁבַע מֵאוֹת: כ<sup>ז</sup> וְהַחֲנִים עָלְיוֹ מִטָּה  
אֲשֶׁר וְנָשִׂיא לְבִנֵּי אֲשֶׁר פַּגִּיעַל בֶּן־עֶכְרָן:

<sup>18</sup> “On the west shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim, in battle array. Leader of the sons of Ephraim: Elishama son of Ammihud. <sup>19</sup> His command: forty thousand five hundred. <sup>20</sup> By him: The tribe of Manasseh. Leader of the tribe of Manasseh: Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. <sup>21</sup> His command: thirty-two thousand two hundred. <sup>22</sup> The tribe of Benjamin. Leader of the sons of Benjamin: Abidan son of Gideoni. <sup>23</sup> His command: thirty-five thousand four hundred. <sup>24</sup> The assembled strength of the camp of Ephraim, by companies, numbers in all a hundred and eight thousand one hundred. They will be third to break camp.

<sup>25</sup> “On the north, the standard of the camp of Dan, in battle array. Leader of the sons of Dan: Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. <sup>26</sup> His command: sixty-two thousand seven hundred. <sup>27</sup> Encamped by him: The tribe of Asher. Leader of the sons of Asher: Pagiel son of Ochran. <sup>28</sup> His command:

<sup>18</sup> On Ephraim’s position of leadership, see Gn 48:13.

<sup>19</sup> In place of ‘his command’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘with a company as enrolled’ and NETB has ‘those numbered in his division’.

<sup>20</sup> The NJB & NRSV have ‘next to him’ in place of ‘by him’, here following the MT.

<sup>21</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds ‘men’ (and see also #19).

<sup>22</sup> NETB supplies, at the start of this verse, the phrase, ‘next to him’.

<sup>23</sup> On the translation of this verse, see #19 & #21.

<sup>24</sup> A more literal translation of the final sentence is ‘they will travel third’; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>25</sup> After ‘north’, the NJB & NRSV add ‘side’; here, we follow the MT & NETB (as also in similar places in vv. 10 & 18).

<sup>26</sup> In place of ‘his command’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘with a company as enrolled’ and NETB has ‘those numbered in his division’.

<sup>27</sup> The NJB & NRSV have ‘next to him’ in place of ‘by him’, here following the MT.

<sup>28</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds ‘men’ (and see also #26).

כח וַצִּבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם אֶחָד וָאַרְבָּעִים אֶלֶף וַחֲמִשׁ  
מֵאוֹת: כט וּמִטָּה נִפְתָּלִי וְנִשְׂאִי לְבִנֵּי נִפְתָּלִי אַחִירַע  
בֶּן־עֵינָן: ל וַצִּבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף  
וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: לא כָּל־הַפְּקָדִים לְמַחֲנֶה דָן מֵאֵת  
אֶלֶף וְשִׁבְעָה וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת לְאַחֲרָנָה  
יִסְעוּ לְדֹגְלֵיהֶם: {פ}

לב אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם כָּל־פְּקוּדֵי  
הַמַּחֲנֶה לְצִבְאוֹתָם שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְשִׁלְשֹׁת  
אַלְפִים וַחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים: לג וְהַלְוִיִּם לֹא  
הִתְּפַקְדּוּ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־  
מֹשֶׁה: לד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה  
אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כְּנִחְנוֹ לְדֹגְלֵיהֶם וְכֵן נָסְעוּ אִישׁ  
לְמִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ עַל־בֵּית אֲבֹתָיו: {פ}

forty-one thousand five hundred.<sup>29</sup> The tribe of Naphtali. Leader of the sons of Naphtali: Ahira son of Enan.<sup>30</sup> His command: fifty-three thousand four hundred.<sup>31</sup> The assembled strength of the camp of Dan numbers in all a hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred. They will be the last to break camp, by companies.” (This concerns their stationing by standards.)

<sup>32</sup> Such was the tally of the Israelites by their ancestral houses. The full count of the entire camp, grouped under the various commands, is six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.<sup>33</sup> The Levites, as Yahweh had commanded Moses, were not enrolled among the Israelites.<sup>34</sup> The Israelites did just as Yahweh had ordered Moses. This was the way they camped, grouped by standards, and this was the way they travelled, each in his own clan, every man with his own family.

<sup>29</sup> NETB supplies, at the start of this verse, the phrase, ‘next to him’.

<sup>30</sup> On the translation of this verse, see #26 & #28.

<sup>31</sup> The parenthesised sentence, not present in the NRSV, is from the *Jerusalem Bible* (1<sup>st</sup> edition); the *NJB* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) omits the parentheses and reads, “All under their appropriate standards.”

<sup>32</sup> The literal translation of ‘ancestral houses’ (here following the NRSV – the *NJB* has ‘patriarchal Houses’) is ‘house of their fathers’.

<sup>33</sup> Before ‘Israelites’, the NRSV & NETB add ‘other’.

<sup>34</sup> The word here translated as ‘the way’ is כֵּן (literally, ‘thus, so’).

## NUMBERS 3

## במדבר פרק ג

א ואלה תולדות אהרן ומשה ביום דבר יהוה את-  
משה בחר סיני: ב ואלה שמות בני-אהרן הבכור  
נדב ואביהוא אלעזר ואיתמר: ג אלה שמות בני  
אהרן הפהגים המשחים אשר-מלא ידם לכהן:  
ד וימת נדב ואביהוא לפני יהוה בהקרבם אש זרה  
לפני יהוה במדבר סיני ובנים לא-היו להם ויכהן  
אלעזר ואיתמר על-פני אהרן אביהם: {פ}

ה וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: ו הקרב את-מטה  
לוי והעמידת אתו לפני אהרן הפהג ושרתו אתו:  
ז ושמרו את-משמרתו ואת-משמרת כל-העדה  
לפני אהל מועד לעבד את-עבדת המשכן:

<sup>1</sup> Now these are the records of Aaron and Moses, in the day that Yahweh spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai. <sup>2</sup> These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the eldest, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. <sup>3</sup> These are the names of Aaron's sons, anointed priests, whom he invested to minister as priests. <sup>4</sup> Nadab and Abihu died in the presence of Yahweh, in the desert of Sinai, when they offered unlawful fire before Yahweh. They had no children, so Eleazar and Ithamar ministered the priesthood under their father Aaron.

<sup>5</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses: <sup>6</sup> "Bring the tribe of Levi and set them before Aaron the priest; they are to assist him. <sup>7</sup> They shall perform duties for him and the entire community before the Tent of Meeting, in the service of the Dwelling. <sup>8</sup> The furnishings of the Tent of Meeting are

### NUMBERS 3

- <sup>1</sup> The construction, ואלה תולדות, is traditionally translated 'now these are the generations', much as throughout the book of Genesis but the noun can refer to records, stories, genealogies, names, and accounts of people.
- <sup>2</sup> Zadok and the priests of the Temple of Jerusalem were traced back to Eleazar (1Ch 5:30ff, 18:16 and see 2S 8:17). Abiathar, the other priest of David's time, was descended, through Ahimelech, from Ithamar (1Ch 24:3ff, and see 2S 20:25).
- <sup>3</sup> The idiomatic expression used here for 'who he invested' (אשר-מלא ידם) is from Lv 8; it literally reads 'who he filled their hand'.
- <sup>4</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> instance of the clause, 'before Yahweh', is omitted by one Hebrew MS, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Vg. The expression 'unlawful fire' (אש זרה) – literally, 'strange fire' seems imprecise and has been interpreted numerous ways.
- <sup>5</sup> Moses and Aaron both belong to the tribe of Levi.
- <sup>6</sup> The verb הקרב ('bring ... near') forms an interesting wordplay: the act of making an offering is described by this verb, as also the offering of unlawful fire; now, the ceremonial presentation of the priests is expressed by the same word – they are being offered to God.
- <sup>7</sup> This verse explains that the Levites will have duties to perform to meet the needs of Aaron and the congregation.
- <sup>8</sup> The Levites took care of the Tabernacle and its furnishings; but they were also gatekeepers (2K 22:4, 1Ch 9:19).



ח וְשָׂמְרוּ אֶת-כָּל-כְּלִי אֱהֹל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת-מִשְׁמֶרֶת  
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲבֹד אֶת-עֲבֹדַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן: ט וְנָתַתָּה  
אֶת-הַלְוִיִּם לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו נְתוּנִים נְתוּנִים הֵמָּה לוֹ  
מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: י וְאֶת-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת-בָּנָיו תִּפְקֹד  
וְשָׂמְרוּ אֶת-כִּהֲנֻתָם וְהָזֵר הַקָּרֵב יוּמָת: {פ}

יא וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: יב וְאַנִּי הִנֵּה  
לִקְחָתִי אֶת-הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּחַת כָּל-  
בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיוּ לִי הַלְוִיִּם: יג כִּי  
לִי כָל-בְּכוֹר בְּיוֹם הַפֶּתִי כָל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
הִקְדַּשְׁתִּי לִי כָל-בְּכוֹר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאָדָם עַד-בְּהֵמָה  
לִי יִהְיוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה: {פ}

יד וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר:  
טו פֶּקֶד אֶת-בְּנֵי לֵוִי לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם כָּל-

to be in their charge, and they shall perform duties for the Israelites in the service of the Dwelling. <sup>9</sup> You are to give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the Israelites. <sup>10</sup> You are to enrol Aaron and his sons, and they are to carry out their priestly duty; but any layman who comes near is to be put to death."

<sup>11</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses: <sup>12</sup> "Look, I have chosen the Levites from among the Israelites, in place of the firstborn, those who open the womb in Israel; these Levites shall be mine. <sup>13</sup> For, every firstborn belongs to me. On the day when I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn of Israel, of both man and beast. They are mine; I am Yahweh."

<sup>14</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai. He said: <sup>15</sup> "You are to take a census of the sons of Levi by families and clans; all the males of

<sup>9</sup> After 'his sons', the NJB adds 'as dedicated men' – described as lesser ministers of the Temple in Ezra 2:43. The LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch and some versions of the MT read, "they are (unreservedly) given to me." After 'Aaron', some MSS of the LXX add 'your brother' (αδελφω σου).

<sup>10</sup> The word here translated as 'layman' is זָר, usually rendered 'stranger', 'foreigner', or 'pagan'; but, in this context, it simply refers to anyone who is not a Levite or a priest, an unauthorised person or intruder in the Tabernacle; that person would be put to death.

<sup>11</sup> Throughout this section, the MT adds 'saying' at the end of the verse, but this participle is redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>12</sup> The Levites belong to Yahweh, like the firstborn whose place they take (#Ex 13:11). As in Ex 13:14, the institution is linked to the tenth plague of Egypt (Ex 11:4ff, 12:29ff) and the choice of the Levites is understood as a substitution for the firstborn of Israel, who were spared (8:12). For 'Look', the WEBBE has 'Behold'; the word (הִנֵּה) is often used as an interjection.

<sup>13</sup> In the Exodus event of the Passover night, the principle of substitution was presented: the firstborn child was redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and so belonged to God; but then God chose the Levites to serve in the place of the firstborn. The ritual of consecrating the firstborn son to Yahweh was nevertheless carried out, even with Jesus, the firstborn son of Mary (Lk 2:22–23).

<sup>14</sup> In place of 'desert', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'wilderness' (as also throughout the Pentateuch).

<sup>15</sup> The Levitical census is not for military purposes (cf. 1:2–3) but relates to the firstborn, redeemable from the age of one month (vv. 40–51).

זָכַר מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעַלָּה תִּפְקְדֶם: <sup>טז</sup> וַיִּפְקֹד אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה עַל־פִּי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה: <sup>יז</sup> וַיהוֹי־אֱלֹה בְנֵי־לֵוִי בְשֵׁמֹתָם גִּרְשֹׁן וְקָהַת וּמֶרָרִי: <sup>יח</sup> וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמֹת בְּנֵי־גִרְשֹׁן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבִנֵי וְשִׁמְעִי: <sup>יט</sup> וּבְנֵי קָהַת לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם עַמְרָם וִיצְהָר חֶבְרֹן וְעִזִּיאֵל: <sup>כ</sup> וּבְנֵי מֶרָרִי לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם מַחְלִי וּמוּשִׁי אֵלֶּה הֵם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַלֵּוִי לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם:

<sup>כא</sup> לְגִרְשֹׁן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַלְּבִנִי וּמִשְׁפַּחַת הַשִּׁמְעִי אֵלֶּה הֵם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגִּרְשֹׁנִי: <sup>כב</sup> פְּקֻדֵיהֶם בְּמִסְפָּר כָּל־זָכָר מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעַלָּה פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שִׁבְעַת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: <sup>כג</sup> מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגִּרְשֹׁנִי אַחֲרֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן יַחְנוּ יָמָה: <sup>כד</sup> וְנִשְׂאֵא בֵית־אֵב לְגִרְשֹׁן אֱלִיסָף בֶּן־לֹאֵל: <sup>כה</sup> וּמִשְׁמֶרֶת בְּנֵי־גִרְשֹׁן בְּאֶהֱל

the age of one month or over must be counted.” <sup>16</sup> At Yahweh’s word, Moses took his census, as Yahweh had ordered. <sup>17</sup> These are the names of the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. <sup>18</sup> These are the names of Gershon’s sons by their clans: Libni and Shimei; <sup>19</sup> Kohath’s sons by their clans: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel; <sup>20</sup> Merari’s sons by their clans: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of Levi, grouped according to their patriarchal families.

<sup>21</sup> From Gershon are descended the clans of the Libnites and the Shimeites; these are the Gershonite clans. <sup>22</sup> Their full number, counting the males of one month and over, came to seven thousand five hundred. <sup>23</sup> The Gershonite clans pitched their camp behind the Dwelling, on the west side. <sup>24</sup> The leader of the House of Gershon was Eliasaph son of Lael. <sup>25</sup> In the Tent of Meeting the sons of Gershon had charge of the

<sup>16</sup> The literal translation of ‘at Yahweh’s word’ is ‘at the mouth of Yahweh’.

<sup>17</sup> For the clans of the Levites, see Ex 6:16–19. The phrase ‘sons of’ does at the outset refer to the sons of Levi; but, as the listing continues, the expression refers more to the family groups of the various descendants. For ‘Gershon’ (גִּרְשֹׁן), ‘Kohath’ (קָהַת) & ‘Merari’ (מֶרָרִי), the LXX reads, respectively, Γερσων, Κααθ & Μεραρι, respectively.

<sup>18</sup> For ‘Libni’ (לְבִנִי) and ‘Shimei’ (שִׁמְעִי), the LXX reads Λοβενοι & Σεμει, respectively.

<sup>19</sup> For ‘Amram’ (עַמְרָם), ‘Izhar’ (יִצְהָר), ‘Hebron’ (חֶבְרֹן) and ‘Uzziel’ (עִזִּיאֵל), the LXX reads, respectively, Αμραμ, Ισσααθ, Χεβρων & Οζιηλ.

<sup>20</sup> For ‘Mahli’ (מַחְלִי) and ‘Mushi’ (מוּשִׁי), the LXX reads Μοολι & Μουσι, respectively.

<sup>21</sup> The MT repeats ‘clan(s) of’ before ‘the Shimeites’.

<sup>22</sup> Literally translated, this verse reads, “Those numbered of them, by the number of every male from a month old and upward – those numbered of them were seven thousand five hundred.”

<sup>23</sup> The NRSV has ‘tabernacle’ in place of ‘Dwelling’ (here following the NJB), as also throughout the Pentateuch.

<sup>24</sup> The *vav* on the noun at the beginning of the verse signals a greater emphasis on the individual rather than items in the numbering of the clans.

<sup>25</sup> On the Gershonites’ charge, see Ex 26:7–14, 26:36, 27:9 & 27:16.

מוֹעֵד הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְהָאֹהֶל מִכֶּסֶהוּ וּמִסָּדָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל  
מוֹעֵד: <sup>כו</sup> וְקִלְעֵי הַחֹצֵר וְאֶת־מִסָּדָה פֶּתַח הַחֹצֵר  
אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְעַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב וְאֵת מִיתְרָיו  
לְכָל עֲבֹדָתוֹ: {ס}

<sup>כז</sup> וְלִקְהָת מִשְׁפַּחַת הָעֹמְרָמִי וּמִשְׁפַּחַת הַיִּזְחָרִי  
וּמִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶבְרֹנִי וּמִשְׁפַּחַת הָעֲזִיזִיאֵלִי אֵלֶּה הֵם  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַקְּהָתִי: <sup>כח</sup> בְּמִסְפָּר כָּל־זָכָר מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ  
וּמַעֲלָה שְׁמֹנֶת אֲלָפִים וּשְׁשׁ מֵאוֹת שְׁמָרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת  
הַקֹּדֶשׁ: <sup>כט</sup> מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־קְהָת יַחֲנוּ עַל יַרְדֵּן  
הַמִּשְׁכָּן תִּימָנָה: <sup>ל</sup> וְנִשְׂיָא בֵּית־אָב לְמִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַקְּהָתִי אֱלִיצָפָן בֶּן־עֲזִיזֵאל: <sup>לא</sup> וּמִשְׁמֶרֶתָם הָאֲרֹן  
וְהַשְּׁלֶחֶן וְהַמִּנְרָה וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְכָל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר  
יִשְׁרְתוּ בָּהֶם וְהַמִּסָּדָה וְכָל עֲבֹדָתוֹ: <sup>לב</sup> וְנִשְׂיָא נִשְׂיָאֵי  
הַלְוִי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן פִּקְדַּת שְׁמָרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת  
הַקֹּדֶשׁ:

Dwelling, the Tent and its covering, the screen for the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, <sup>26</sup> the hangings in the court, the screen for the entrance to the court surrounding the Dwelling and the altar, and the cords needed for all this work.

<sup>27</sup> From Kohath are descended the Amramite, the Izharite, the Hebronite and the Uzzielite clans; these are the Kohathite clans. <sup>28</sup> Their full number, counting the males of one month and over, came to eight thousand six hundred. They were in charge of the sanctuary. <sup>29</sup> The Kohathite clans pitched their camp on the south side of the Dwelling. <sup>30</sup> Now, the leader of the ancestral house of the Kohathite clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. <sup>31</sup> They were in charge of the Ark, the table, the lamp-stand, the altars, the sacred vessels used in the liturgy, and the screen with all its fittings. <sup>32</sup> The chief of the Levite leaders was Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest. He was the head of all those who were in charge of the sanctuary.

<sup>26</sup> The phrases in this verse seem to be direct objects without verbs; some suggest deleting the sign of the accusative.

<sup>27</sup> Both Moses and Aaron came from the Kohathite line (6:16–20). During the Hebrew monarchy, this branch of the line of Levi was exemplary in music (1Ch 6:33–48); they were also helpful to Hezekiah in his reforms (1Ch 29:12–14).

<sup>28</sup> The phrase here translated as ‘in charge of’ uses the participle in construct plural, שְׁמָרֵי (literally ‘keepers of’); the form specifies the duties of the 8,600 Kohathites. The genitive that follows this participle is the cognate מִשְׁמֶרֶת that has been used before.

<sup>29</sup> In place of ‘clans’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘families’ (and so throughout this section).

<sup>30</sup> The NJB lacks the word ‘ancestral’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>31</sup> The Kohathites have charge over the Most Holy objects (4:4–20), i.e. the Ark, the Table of the bread of the Presence, the lamp-stand (Ex 25), the bronze and gold altars (Ex 27:1–8, 30:1–10), the sacred vessels (Ex 30:17–21, 31:7–11) and the screen (Nb 4:5, Ex 26:31–35).

<sup>32</sup> The literal translation of ‘the chief of the ... leaders’ (וְנִשְׂיָא נִשְׂיָאֵי) is ‘the leader of the leaders of’.

לג למֶרָרִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמַּחֲלִי וּמִשְׁפַּחַת הַמוֹשִׁי אֵלֶּה  
הֵם מִשְׁפַּחַת מֶרָרִי: לד וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם בְּמִסְפַּר כָּל־זָכָר  
מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעֲלָה שֵׁשֶׁת אֲלָפִים וּמֵאתַיִם:  
לה וַנָּשִׂיא בֵּית־אָב לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מֶרָרִי צוּרִיָּאל בֶּן־  
אַבִּיחַיִל עַל יַרֵּד הַמִּשְׁכָּן יַחֲנוּ צָפֹנָה: לו וּפְקֻדַּת  
מִשְׁמֶרֶת בְּנֵי מֶרָרִי קָרְשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁכָּן וּבְרִיחָיו וְעַמֻּדָיו  
וְאֲדָנָיו וְכָל־כֵּלָיו וְכָל עֲבֻדָתוֹ: לז וְעַמֻּדֵי הַחֹצֵר  
סָבִיב וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם וַיִּתְּנֵם וּמִיתְרֵיהֶם: לח וְהַחֲנִים  
לפְנֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן קִדְמָה לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד | מִזְרָחָה  
מֹשֶׁה | וְאַהֲרֹן וּבְנָיו שֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ  
לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזֶּרֶק הַקָּרֵב יוֹמֵת: לט כָּל־  
פְּקוּדֵי הַלְוִיִּם אֲשֶׁר פָּקַד מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן עַל־פִּי יְהוָה  
לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם כָּל־זָכָר מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעֲלָה שָׁנִים  
וְעֹשִׂים אֱלֹף: {ס}

<sup>33</sup> From Merari are descended the Mahlite and the Mushite clans; these were the Merarite clans. <sup>34</sup> Their full number, counting the males of one month and over, came to six thousand two hundred. <sup>35</sup> The leader of the house of the Merarite clans was Zuriel, son of Abihail. They were to camp on the north side of the Dwelling. <sup>36</sup> The sons of Merari were in charge of the framework of the Dwelling, with its crossbars, posts, and sockets, all its accessories and fittings; <sup>37</sup> also, the posts round the court, with their sockets, pegs, and cords. <sup>38</sup> Finally, on the east side, facing the Dwelling and the Tent of Meeting, towards the sunrise, was the camp of Moses and Aaron and his sons, who had charge of the sanctuary on behalf of the Israelites. Any unauthorised person coming near was to be put to death. <sup>39</sup> Altogether, the total count of Levites of the age of one month and over whom Moses numbered by clans as Yahweh had ordered, came to twenty-two thousand.

<sup>33</sup> For the clause translated 'these were the Merarite clans', the MT has 'these they the clans of Merari'.

<sup>34</sup> A more literal reading of this verse is, "Those numbered of them, by the number of every male from a month old and upward, were six thousand two hundred." The sum of the Gershonites, Kohathites & Merarites given above is 22,300 but the MT has the number rounded to 2 significant digits.

<sup>35</sup> The NJB has 'pitched their camp' in place of 'they were to camp', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>36</sup> The phrase here translated 'all its accessories and fittings' (following the NJB) could be a hendiadys construction: 'all its fitted accessories'.

<sup>37</sup> The Merarites are responsible for the Tabernacle framework (Ex 26:15–30) and the supports for the court (Ex 27:9–19).

<sup>38</sup> Aaron and his sons encamp on the east, the favoured location (see #2:3), symbolising their priestly eminence. In some *Hebrew MSS* and the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, the words 'and Aaron' are not in this verse; the omission arose probably by scribal error with such repetitious material that could easily give rise to variant traditions.

<sup>39</sup> The numbers given in this chapter actually total 22,300; some modern scholars try to explain this by positing an error in v. 28, suggesting that 'six' (שֵׁשׁ) should be read as 'three' (שָׁלֹשׁ).

<sup>מ</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פֶּקֶד כָּל־בְּכֹר זָכָר לִבְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעְלָה וְשָׂא אֶת מִסְפָּר  
שְׁמֹתָם: <sup>מא</sup> וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם לִי אֲנִי יְהוָה תַּחַת  
כָּל־בְּכֹר בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת בְּהֵמַת הַלְוִיִּם תַּחַת  
כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּבֵהֶמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>מב</sup> וַיִּפְקֹד מֹשֶׁה  
כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ אֶת־כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
<sup>מג</sup> וַיְהִי כָל־בְּכוֹר זָכָר בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמֹת מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ  
וּמַעְלָה לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם שָׁנִים וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף שְׁלֹשָׁה  
וּשְׁבַעִים וּמֵאָתָיִם: {פ}

<sup>מד</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>מה</sup> קַח אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם  
תַּחַת כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בְּהֵמַת הַלְוִיִּם  
תַּחַת בְּהֵמַתָּם וְהָיוּ־לִי הַלְוִיִּם אֲנִי יְהוָה: <sup>מו</sup> וְאֵת  
פְּדוּיֵי הַשְּׁלֵשָׁה וְהַשְּׁבַעִים וְהַמֵּאָתָיִם הָעֹדְפִים עַל־  
הַלְוִיִּם מִבְּכוֹר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>מו</sup> וְלָקַחְתָּ חֲמִשָּׁת  
חֲמִשָּׁת שֶׁקֶלִים לַגִּלְגָּלַת בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ תִּקַּח

<sup>40</sup> And Yahweh said to Moses: "Take a census of all the firstborn of the Israelites, all the males from the age of one month old and over; take a census of them by name. <sup>41</sup> And then you will present the Levites to me, Yahweh, in place of all the firstborn of Israel; in the same way you will give me their cattle in place of all the firstborn cattle of the Israelites."

<sup>42</sup> So, Moses took a census of all the firstborn of the Israelites, as Yahweh ordered him. <sup>43</sup> The total count, by name, of all the firstborn from the age of one month and over came to twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.

<sup>44</sup> Then Yahweh said to Moses: <sup>45</sup> "Take the Levites in the place of all the firstborn of Israel's sons, and the cattle of the Levites in place of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine; I am Yahweh. <sup>46</sup> For the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the Israelites, over and above the number of Levites, <sup>47</sup> you are to take five shekels for each, reckoning by the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel.

<sup>40</sup> The verb 'take' has here the sense of 'collect' or 'register' the names.

<sup>41</sup> The substitution of Levites' cattle for the people's firstlings of cattle modifies the law of the firstborn even further.

<sup>42</sup> The NJB transposes the phrase 'as Yahweh ordered' to the beginning of this verse; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

<sup>43</sup> The figure represented the number of Levites (v. 39) plus a remainder (273 Israelite firstborn) who were to be redeemed by a cash payment (see Lv 27:3-7), which practice later became the general rule.

<sup>44</sup> Literally translated, this verse reads, "And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying," but the participle is redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>45</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "shall be my own, Yahweh's own."

<sup>46</sup> Note that the number of Levites was less than that of the firstborn Israelites.

<sup>47</sup> The 'sanctuary shekel' was first mentioned in Ex 30:13; the half-shekel of Ex 38:26 would then be 10 gerahs and, consequently, the calculations would indicate that five shekels was about 50g of silver for each person.



עֲשִׂימָה גְרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל: מִחַ וְנָתַתָּה הַכֶּסֶף לְאַהֲרֹן  
 וּלְבָנָיו פְּדוּיֵי הָעֲדָפִים בָּהֶם: מִטַּ וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת  
 כֶּסֶף הַפְּדִיּוֹם מֵאֵת הָעֲדָפִים עַל פְּדוּיֵי הַלְוִיִּם:  
 י מֵאֵת בְּכוֹר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָקַח אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף חֲמִשָּׁה  
 וְשִׁשִּׁים וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וְאַלֶּף בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ: נֹא וַיִּתֵּן  
 מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כֶּסֶף הַפְּדִיּוֹם לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו עַל־פִּי יְהוָה  
 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

<sup>48</sup> And you must then give this money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for this extra number.” <sup>49</sup> Moses received this money as the redemption price for this extra number not ransomed by the Levites. <sup>50</sup> He received the money for the firstborn of the Israelites, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels – sanctuary shekels. <sup>51</sup> Moses handed over this ransom money to Aaron and his sons, at the bidding of Yahweh, as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

<sup>48</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Give to Aaron and his sons the money by which the excess number of them is redeemed.”

<sup>49</sup> The word here translated ‘money’ is actually ‘silver’; coins were not in existence until after 700 BCE (starting with Lydia).

<sup>50</sup> The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, ‘reckoned by the shekel of the sanctuary’.

<sup>51</sup> A more literal translation of ‘at the bidding’ (as NJB) is ‘according to the word’ (as NRSV & NETB).

## NUMBERS 4

## במדבר פרק ד

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: ב נָשָׂא אֶת-רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי קֹהַת מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי לֵוִי לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם: ג מִבֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה וְעַד בֶּן חֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה כָּל-בָּא לַעֲבֹד מְלָאכָה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:

ד זֹאת עֲבֹדַת בְּנֵי-קֹהַת בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד קֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים: ה וְבָא אַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו בְּנִסְעַת הַמַּחֲנֶה וְהוֹרְדוּ אֶת פָּרֹכֶת הַמִּסָּךְ וְכִסּוּ-בָהּ אֶת אֲרֹן הָעֵדוּת: ו וְנָתְנוּ עָלָיו כִּסוּי עוֹר תַּחֲשׁ וּפָרָשׁוֹ בְּגַד-כָּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת מְלֻמָּעָה וְשָׂמוּ בְדָיו:

ז וְעַל שְׁלַחַן הַפָּנִים יִפְרֹשׁוּ בְּגַד תְּכֵלֶת וְנָתְנוּ עָלָיו אֶת-הַקְּעֻרֹת וְאֶת-הַכַּפֹּת וְאֶת-הַמִּנְקִיט וְאֶת קְשׁוֹת הַנֶּסֶךְ וְלֶחֶם הַתָּמִיד עָלָיו יִהְיֶה: ח וּפָרָשׁוֹ

<sup>1</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron. He said: <sup>2</sup> “Take a census of those among the Levites who are sons of Kohath, by their clans and their families: <sup>3</sup> count all the men between thirty years of age and fifty years of age, those fit to bear arms, who are liable for service in the Tent of Meeting.

<sup>4</sup> “This is the service of the Kohathites in the Tent of Meeting, concerning the most holy things. <sup>5</sup> When camp is broken, Aaron and his sons must come and take down the veil of the screen and cover the Ark of the Testimony with it. <sup>6</sup> On this they must put a covering of fine leather, and spread over that a cloth of blue, and fix the poles to the Ark.

<sup>7</sup> “Over the offertory table they are to spread a blue cloth, and put on it the dishes, cups, bowls, and libation jars; the bread of perpetual offering is also to be on it. <sup>8</sup> Over these, they must spread a cloth of scarlet a cover

## NUMBERS 4

<sup>1</sup> This chapter has four main parts to it: Kohathites (1-20), Gershonites (21-28), Merarites (29-33) and the census of the Levites (34-49).

<sup>2</sup> This census, in contrast with 3:15, is to determine the number of Levites of the age required for priestly duties (cf. 8:23–25) defined in vv. 4–33.

<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of ‘fit to bear arms’ is ‘who enter the army’.

<sup>4</sup> The Kohathites have a special distinction among the Levites, for they have charge of the *Most Holy* things and are therefore under the immediate supervision of Eleazar (v. 16).

<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew text opens this verse with an infinitive construct in an adverbial clause of time: literally, ‘in the journeying of the camp’; the genitive in such constructions is usually the subject. Here, people would be preparing to transport the camp and its equipment.

<sup>6</sup> The NJB has ‘violet’ in place of ‘blue’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>7</sup> The NJB, following the LXX (ὀλοπόρφυρον) has ‘violet’ in place of ‘blue’, here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

<sup>8</sup> The NRSV has ‘crimson’ in place of ‘scarlet’, here following the NJB & NETB.

עֲלֵיהֶם בִּגְד תוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְכִסּוּ אֹתוֹ בַּמִּכְסָּה עֹזֵר  
תַּחֲשׁ וְשָׂמוּ אֶת־בִּדְיוֹ:

ט וְלָקְחוּ בִּגְד תְּכֵלֶת וְכִסּוּ אֶת־מִנְרֶת הַמָּאֹר  
וְאֶת־נִרְתֵּיהָ וְאֶת־מִלְקָחֶיהָ וְאֶת־מַחְתֵּיתָהּ וְאֶת־  
כָּל־כְּלֵי שִׁמְנָה אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁרְתוּ־לָהּ בָּהֶם: י וְנָתְנוּ  
אֹתָהּ וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵיהָ אֶל־מִכְסָּה עֹזֵר תַּחֲשׁ וְנָתְנוּ  
עַל־הַמּוֹט:

יא וְעַל מִזְבֵּחַ הַזֶּהָב יִפְרֹשׁוּ בִּגְד תְּכֵלֶת וְכִסּוּ אֹתוֹ  
בַּמִּכְסָּה עֹזֵר תַּחֲשׁ וְשָׂמוּ אֶת־בִּדְיוֹ: יב וְלָקְחוּ אֶת־  
כָּל־כְּלֵי הַשֶּׁרֶת אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁרְתוּ־בָם בַּקֹּדֶשׁ וְנָתְנוּ אֶל־  
בִּגְד תְּכֵלֶת וְכִסּוּ אוֹתָם בַּמִּכְסָּה עֹזֵר תַּחֲשׁ וְנָתְנוּ  
עַל־הַמּוֹט:

יג וְדִשְׁנוּ אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּפְרֹשׁוּ עָלָיו בִּגְד אֲרָגְמָן:  
יד וְנָתְנוּ עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־כְּלָיו אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁרְתוּ עָלָיו בָּהֶם  
אֶת־הַמַּחְתֹּת אֶת־הַמְּזֻלָּגֹת וְאֶת־הַיָּעִים וְאֶת־  
הַמְּזֻרְקֹת כָּל כְּלֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּפְרֹשׁוּ עָלָיו כִּסּוֹ עֹזֵר  
תַּחֲשׁ וְשָׂמוּ בִדְיוֹ:

the whole with a covering of fine leather. Then they are to fix the poles to the table.

<sup>9</sup> “They are then to take a cloth of blue and cover the light-bearing lamp-stand, together with the lamps, snuffers, trays and all the vessels for oil with which it is supplied. <sup>10</sup> And they are to put it, with all its accessories, on a covering of fine leather and place it on the carrying frame.

<sup>11</sup> “Over the golden altar they must spread a blue cloth, and cover that with a covering of fine leather, and they are to fix poles to it. <sup>12</sup> They are also to take all the other objects used in the service of the sanctuary. They must put them all on a violet cloth, cover them with a covering of fine leather, and place them on the carrying frame.

<sup>13</sup> “And they shall remove the ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth over it, <sup>14</sup> and place on this all the objects used in the liturgical service, the fire pans, hooks, scoops, sprinkling basins and all the altar vessels. Over the whole, they must spread a covering of fine leather. Then they are to fix the poles to it.

<sup>9</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “oil jars that belong to it.”

<sup>10</sup> The ‘frame’ (מוֹט) is different from the poles used to carry the Ark; it was a flexible bar carried by two men with the vessels tied to the bar.

<sup>11</sup> The NJB has ‘violet’ in place of ‘blue’, here following the MT, LXX (ὑακίνθινον), NRSV & NETB (as also in v. 12).

<sup>12</sup> In place of ‘carrying frame’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘litter’.

<sup>13</sup> The LXX has ‘he must place the cover upon the altar’ (τὸν καλυπτῆρα ἐπιθήσει ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον) for ‘they shall remove the ashes from the altar’.

<sup>14</sup> At the end of this verse, the Samaritan Pentateuch & LXX add, “And they shall take a purple cloak and cover up the bathing tub and its base; and they shall put them in a covering made of a skin of blue. And they shall place it upon bearing poles.” (καὶ λήμψονται ἱμάτιον πορφυροῦν καὶ συγκαλύψουσιν τὸν λουτήρα καὶ τὴν βάσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐμβαλοῦσιν αὐτὰ εἰς κάλυμμα δερμάτινον ὑακίνθινον καὶ ἐπιθήσουσιν ἐπὶ ἀναφορεῖς.)

<sup>טו</sup> וְכִלָּה אֶהְרֹן וּבָנָיו לְכַסֹּת אֶת־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת־כָּל־  
כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּנֹסֶעַ הַמַּחֲנֶה וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי־  
קֹהַת לִשְׂאת וְלֹא־יִגְעוּ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמָתוּ אֵלֶּה  
מִשָּׂא בְנֵי־קֹהַת בְּאֵהֶל מוֹעֵד: <sup>טז</sup> וּפְקֻדַּת אֲלַעְזָר  
בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן שֶׁמֶן הַמָּאֹר וְקִטְרֶת הַסַּמִּים  
וּמִנְחַת הַתָּמִיד וְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה פְּקֻדַּת כָּל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן  
וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ בַּקֹּדֶשׁ וּבְכָלֵיו: {פ}

<sup>יז</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: <sup>יח</sup> אַל־  
תִּכְרְיֵתוּ אֶת־שִׁבְט מִשְׁפַּחַת הַקֹּהֲתִי מִתּוֹךְ הַלְוִיִּם:  
<sup>יט</sup> וְזֹאת | עֲשׂוּ לָהֶם וְחִיּוּ וְלֹא יָמָתוּ בְּגִשְׁתֶּם אֶת־  
קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדָשִׁים אֶהְרֹן וּבָנָיו יָבֹאוּ וְשָׂמוּ אוֹתָם אִישׁ  
אִישׁ עַל־עִבְדָּתוֹ וְאֶל־מִשְׁאֹו: <sup>כ</sup> וְלֹא־יָבֹאוּ לִרְאוֹת  
כְּבָלַע אֶת־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמָתוּ: {פ}

<sup>כא</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>כב</sup> נָשֵׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ  
בְּנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן גַּם־הֵם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם:  
<sup>כג</sup> מִבֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה עַד בֶּן־חֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה

<sup>15</sup> “When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all their accessories at the breaking of camp, the Kohathites are to come to bear them, but without touching the holy things, lest they die. This is the burden of the Kohathites in the Tent of Meeting. <sup>16</sup> Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, shall watch over the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the perpetual oblation and the chrism; he must watch over the whole Dwelling and all in it: holy objects and accessories.”

<sup>17</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron: <sup>18</sup> “Do not cut off the tribe of the clans of Kohath from among the Levites. <sup>19</sup> Deal with them in this way, so that they may live on and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons must go in and assign to each man his task and his burden. <sup>20</sup> In this way they can go in and yet cast not their eyes, even for a moment, on any of the holy things, lest they die.”

<sup>21</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses and said to him: <sup>22</sup> “Take a census also of the sons of Gershon, by their ancestral houses and by their clans: <sup>23</sup> count all the men between thirty years of age and fifty years of age,

<sup>15</sup> The precautions assume that the Kohathites must not see or touch the holy objects, lest divine holiness destroy them (1S 5–6, 2S 6:6–11).

<sup>16</sup> One would assume that Aaron would prepare and wrap these items, but that the Kohathites would carry them to the next place.

<sup>17</sup> At the end of this verse, the MT adds ‘saying’, but this participle is redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>18</sup> The WEBBE has ‘families’ in place of ‘clans’.

<sup>19</sup> The perfect tense with *vav* consecutive for ‘assign’ continues the instruction for Aaron. The literal translation of ‘each man’ is ‘a man, a man’.

<sup>20</sup> The NJB uses the pronoun, ‘they’, in place of ‘the Kohathites’.

<sup>21</sup> Although in many places we have reduced the redundancy in the text, here it is more explicitly stressed in the Hebrew text.

<sup>22</sup> The NJB & NETB have ‘families’ in place of ‘ancestral houses’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>23</sup> The literal translation of ‘fit to bear arms’ is ‘who enter the army’.

תִּפְקֹד אוֹתָם כָּל־הַבָּא לְצַבָּא צָבָא לַעֲבֹד עֲבָדָה  
בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:

כד זאת עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגֵּרְשֹׁנִי לַעֲבֹד וּלְמַשָּׂא:  
כה וְנָשְׂאוּ אֶת־יְרִיעֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד  
מִכֶּסֶהוּ וּמִכֶּסֶּה הַתֹּחַשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָלָיו מִלְמַעְלָה וְאֶת־  
מִסְךְ פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: כו וְאֵת קַלְעֵי הַחֹצֵר וְאֶת־  
מִסְךְ פֶּתַח שַׁעַר הַחֹצֵר אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְעַל־  
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב וְאֵת מִיתְרֵיהֶם וְאֶת־כָּל־כְּלֵי  
עֲבֹדָתָם וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם וְעֲבָדוֹ: כז עַל־  
פִּי אֶהְרֹן וּבָנָיו תִּהְיֶה כָל־עֲבֹדַת בְּנֵי הַגֵּרְשֹׁנִי לְכָל־  
מַשָּׂאָם וּלְכָל עֲבֹדָתָם וּפְקֻדָּתָם עָלֵהֶם בְּמִשְׁמֶרֶת  
אֵת כָּל־מַשָּׂאָם: כח זאת עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי  
הַגֵּרְשֹׁנִי בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּמִשְׁמֶרֶתָם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן־  
אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן: {ס}

כט בְּנֵי מֶרָרִי לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית־אֲבֹתָם תִּפְקֹד  
אֹתָם: ל מִבֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה וְעַד בֶּן־חֲמִשִּׁים

those fit to bear arms: all who are liable for service in the Tent of Meeting.

<sup>24</sup> “These are the duties of the Gershonite clans, in serving and bearing burdens. <sup>25</sup> They are to carry the curtains of the Dwelling, and the Tent of Meeting, its covering, the covering of fine leather that goes over it, the screen for the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, <sup>26</sup> the hangings of the court, the screen for the entrance to the court that surrounds the Dwelling and the altar, and their cords, all the accessories, and all the necessary equipment. They are to be responsible for these things. <sup>27</sup> All the duties of the sons of Gershon – their functions and their tasks – shall be under the command of Aaron and his sons: you must see that they fulfil their charge. <sup>28</sup> Such shall be the duties of the Gershonite clans in the Tent of Meeting. Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest, will supervise their work.

<sup>29</sup> “As for the Merarites, you are to count them by their clans and ancestral houses. <sup>30</sup> Count all the men between thirty years of age and

<sup>24</sup> The phrase ‘in serving and bearing burdens’ uses an infinitive and then a noun (‘to serve and for the burden’): the infinitive explains the verb.

<sup>25</sup> In place of ‘that goes over it’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘that is on top of it’ and NETB has ‘that is over it’.

<sup>26</sup> The LXX lacks the clause ‘the screen for the entrance to the court’.

<sup>27</sup> The literal translation of ‘under the command of’ is ‘at the mouth of’ (עַל־פִּי).

<sup>28</sup> The material here suggests that Eleazar had heavier responsibilities than Ithamar, Aaron’s fourth and youngest son; it is the first indication that the Zadokite Levites would take precedence over the Ithamar Levites (see 1Ch 24:3–6).

<sup>29</sup> For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “You are to count the sons of Merari, by their clans and their families.”

<sup>30</sup> The literal translation of ‘those fit to bear arms’ is ‘those who enter the army’.



שָׁנָה תִּפְקְדֻם כָּל־הַבָּא לַצָּבָא לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת  
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:

לא וְזֹאת מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִשְׁאָם לְכָל־עֲבֹדָתָם בְּאֹהֶל  
מוֹעֵד קִרְשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁכָּן וּבְרִיחָיו וְעַמּוּדָיו וְאֲדָנָיו:  
לב וְעַמּוּדֵי הַחֲצָר סָבִיב וְאֲדָנֵיהֶם וִיתְדֹתָם  
וּמִיתְרֵיהֶם לְכָל־כְּלֵיהֶם וּלְכָל עֲבֹדָתָם וּבִשְׂמַת  
תִּפְקְדוּ אֶת־כָּלִי מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִשְׁאָם:

לג וְזֹאת עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי מֶרָרִי לְכָל־עֲבֹדָתָם  
בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן־אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן:

לד וַיִּפְקֹד מֹשֶׁה וְאֶהֱרֹן וּנְשֵׂאֵי הָעֵדָה אֶת־בְּנֵי  
הַקֹּהֲתִי לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם וּלְבֵית אֲבֹתָם: לה מִבֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים  
שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה וְעַד בֶּן־חֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה כָּל־הַבָּא לַצָּבָא  
לַעֲבֹדָה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: לו וַיְהִיו פְּקֻדֵיהֶם לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם  
אַלְפִּים שֶׁבַע מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים: לז אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַקֹּהֲתִי כָל־הָעֹבֵד בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר  
פָּקַד מֹשֶׁה וְאֶהֱרֹן עַל־פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה: {ס}

fifty years of age, those fit to bear arms, who are liable for service in the Tent of Meeting.

<sup>31</sup> “The burden they are to carry and the duties that are to fall to them in the Tent of Meeting shall be as follows: the framework of the Dwelling, its crossbars, its posts and sockets, <sup>32</sup> the posts around the court with their sockets, pegs, cords and all their tackle. You are to assign by name the burden each man must carry.

<sup>33</sup> “This is the service of the Merarite clans; all their duties in the Tent of Meeting will be supervised by Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.”

<sup>34</sup> Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the community took a census of the sons of Kohath, by clans and ancestral houses: <sup>35</sup> of every man between thirty and fifty years of age, fit to bear arms and liable for service in the Tent of Meeting. <sup>36</sup> The total of their clans was two thousand seven hundred and fifty. <sup>37</sup> This was the number of the Kohathite clans, all of those who were liable for service in the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the bidding of Yahweh given through Moses.

<sup>31</sup> Recent studies have concluded that this ‘framework’ was made of two long uprights joined by crossbars (like a ladder): it was a frame rather than a board, meaning that the structure under the tent was not a solid building; it also meant that the frame would have been lighter to carry.

<sup>32</sup> Literally translated, the last sentence reads, “You shall assign by names the vessels of the responsibility of their burden.”

<sup>33</sup> The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with ‘these are the duties’.

<sup>34</sup> The NJB has ‘families’ in place of ‘ancestral houses’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>35</sup> The literal translation of ‘fit to bear arms’ is ‘who enters the army’.

<sup>36</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds ‘men’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>37</sup> In place of ‘given through’, here following the NJB, NETB has ‘by the authority of’ and the NRSV has simply ‘by’.

לח ופקודי בני גרשון למשפחותם ולבית אבתם:  
 לט מבן שלשים שנה ומעלה ועד בן־חמשים שנה  
 כלהבא לצבא לעבדה באהל מועד: מ ויהיו  
 פקדיהם למשפחתם לבית אבתם אלפים ושש  
 מאות ושלשים: מא אלה פקודי משפחת בני  
 גרשון כלהעבד באהל מועד אשר פקד משה  
 ואהרן על־פי יהוה:

מב ופקודי משפחת בני מררי למשפחתם לבית  
 אבתם: מג מבן שלשים שנה ומעלה ועד בן־  
 חמשים שנה כלהבא לצבא לעבדה באהל  
 מועד: מד ויהיו פקדיהם למשפחתם שלשת  
 אלפים ומאתים: מה אלה פקודי משפחת בני  
 מררי אשר פקד משה ואהרן על־פי יהוה ביד־  
 משה:

מו כלהפקדים אשר פקד משה ואהרן ונשיאי  
 ישראל את־הלויים למשפחתם ולבית אבתם:

<sup>38</sup> A census was taken of the sons of Gershon, by clans and ancestral houses: <sup>39</sup> of every man between thirty and fifty years of age, eligible for military service and for duties in the Tent of Meeting. <sup>40</sup> By clans and ancestral houses, the total was two thousand six hundred and thirty. <sup>41</sup> This was the number of the Gershonite clans, all of those who were liable for service in the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the bidding of Yahweh.

<sup>42</sup> And a census was taken of the clans of the sons of Merari, by their clans and their ancestral houses: <sup>43</sup> of every man between thirty years of age and fifty years of age, eligible for military service and for duties in the Tent of Meeting. <sup>44</sup> Those numbered of them by their clans was three thousand two hundred. <sup>45</sup> This was the number of the Merarite clans, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the bidding of Yahweh given through Moses.

<sup>46</sup> The total number of Levites counted, whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel counted according to their clans and their ancestral

<sup>38</sup> The MT lacks the words 'was taken', here following the NJB.

<sup>39</sup> The NRSV omits, '...for military service and ...' (as in vv. 43 and 47).

<sup>40</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds 'men'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>41</sup> In place of 'at the bidding of Yahweh', here following the NJB, the NRSV reads 'according to the commandment of the LORD'.

<sup>42</sup> The NJB & NETB have 'families' in place of 'ancestral houses', here following the NRSV.

<sup>43</sup> The NRSV ends this verse, here following the MT & NJB, with, "... everyone who qualified for work relating to the tent of meeting."

<sup>44</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds 'men'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>45</sup> In place of 'given through', here following the NJB, NETB has 'by the authority of' and the NRSV has simply 'by'.

<sup>46</sup> The NJB has 'families' in place of 'ancestral houses', here following the NRSV.

מִזֹּמֶן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וְמַעְלָה וְעַד בֶּן־חֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה  
כָּל־הַבָּא לַעֲבֹד עֲבֹדַת עֲבֹדָה וְעֲבֹדַת מִשָּׁא בְּאֹהֶל  
מוֹעֵד: מַח וַיְהִיו פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁמֹנֶת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמִשָּׁ  
מֵאוֹת וּשְׁמֹנִים: מַט עַל־פִּי יְהוָה פָּקַד אוֹתָם בְּיַד־  
מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ אִישׁ עַל־עֲבֹדָתוֹ וְעַל־מִשְׁאָו וּפְקֻדָּיו  
אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

houses by – <sup>47</sup> all the men between thirty years of age and fifty years of age, eligible for religious duties and for those of transporting the Tent of Meeting – <sup>48</sup> amounted to eight thousand five hundred and eighty men. <sup>49</sup> At the commandment of Yahweh, through the hand of Moses, the census was taken to assign to every man his duty and his task; they were numbered by him as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

<sup>47</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, “everyone who came to serve the service of serving, and the service of burden.”

<sup>48</sup> Compare the number of male Levites in 3:39.

<sup>49</sup> Because of the cryptic nature of the phrase ‘those numbered by him’, some suggest reading a preterite, ‘and they were numbered’; this is supported by the LXX (καὶ ἐπεσκέπησαν), Peshitta, Tg, and Vg (*unumquemque*).

## במדבר פרק ה

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב צוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁלְחוּ מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה כָּל־צָרוּעַ וְכָל־זָב וְכָל־  
טָמֵא לְנֶפֶשׁ: ג מִזֵּכֶר עַד־נִקְבָּה תִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶל־מַחֲוֶן  
לַמַּחֲנֶה תִּשְׁלְחוּם וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ אֶת־מַחֲנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר  
אֲנִי שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹכָם: ד וַיַּעֲשׂוּ־כֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ  
אוֹתָם אֶל־מַחֲוֶן לַמַּחֲנֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־  
מֹשֶׁה בֶּן עָשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

ה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ו דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אִזְּאֵשׁה כִּי יַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל־חֲטָאֹת  
הָאָדָם לְמַעַל מַעַל בַּיהוָה וְאָשְׁמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא:

## NUMBERS 5

<sup>1</sup> Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: <sup>2</sup> "Order the Israelites to put out of the camp all those suffering from leprosy or from a discharge, or who have become unclean by touching a corpse. <sup>3</sup> Man or woman, you must put them out and forbid them the camp. The Israelites must not defile in this way the camp where I dwell among them." <sup>4</sup> The Israelites did so: they put them out of the camp. The Israelites did just as Yahweh had spoken to Moses.

<sup>5</sup> Then Yahweh spoke to Moses: <sup>6</sup> "Tell the Israelites: "If a man or woman wrongs another, breaking faith with Yahweh, that person incurs guilt.

<sup>7</sup> He must confess the sin he has committed and make full reparation,

### NUMBERS 5

- <sup>1</sup> The laws of Chs 5–6 are additional ordinances in the spirit of the Rules concerning the Clean and Unclean in Lv 11–16. They resemble the supplementary material in the Law of Holiness, as in Lv 20:22–25. The sanctity of the Tabernacle is the reason for excluding unclean people, such as lepers (Lv 13:46), those having a bodily discharge (Lv 15) or those defiled by contact with the dead (Lv 21:1–12).
- <sup>2</sup> The word צָרוּעַ, although translated 'leprosy' does not primarily refer to leprosy proper (i.e., Hansen's disease); the NRSV and the NASB continued the KJV tradition of using 'leper' and 'leprosy'. More recent studies have concluded that the Hebrew word is a generic term covering all infectious skin diseases (including leprosy when that actually showed up), and the NJB has 'contagious skin disease'. True leprosy was known and feared certainly by the time of Amos (circa 760 BCE), and there is evidence that the disease was known in Egypt by 1500 BCE. However, in view of the diagnosis and healing described in Lv 13 & 14, the term must be broader.
- <sup>3</sup> This verse has the Tent in the middle of the camp (2:17), whereas Ex 33:7 sites it outside.
- <sup>4</sup> The perfect tense is here given a past perfect nuance 'had spoken' to stress that the word of Yahweh preceded the obedience.
- <sup>5</sup> Here, the participle 'saying' has been dropped from the end of the verse to reflect contemporary English style.
- <sup>6</sup> The verb translated 'breaking faith with' is מָעַל, which means to 'defraud', 'violate', 'trespass against', or 'to deal treacherously', 'do an act of treachery'; in doing any sin that people, the guilty have been unfaithful to Yahweh and therefore must bring him a sacrifice.
- <sup>7</sup> The word אָשָׁם is used thrice in this paragraph: the 1<sup>st</sup> refers to 'guilt' (v. 6), the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 'reparation' and the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 'wronged'.

וְהִתְּנוּ אֶת־חֲטָאתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וְהָשִׁיב אֶת־  
 אֲשָׁמוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְחִמִּישְׁתּוֹ יִסֹּף עָלָיו וְנָתַן לַאֲשֶׁר  
 אָשָׁם לוֹ: <sup>ח</sup> וְאִם־אֵין לְאִישׁ גֹּאֵל לְהָשִׁיב הָאָשָׁם  
 אֵלָיו הָאָשָׁם הַמוּשָׁב לַיהוָה לִפְהֶן מִלֶּבֶד אֵיל  
 הַכִּפָּרִים אֲשֶׁר יִכְפֹּר־בּוֹ עָלָיו: <sup>ט</sup> וְכָל־תְּרוּמָה לְכָל־  
 קֹדֶשִׁי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרִיבוּ לִפְהֶן לוֹ יִהְיֶה:  
 'וְאִישׁ אֶת־קֹדֶשׁוֹ לוֹ יִהְיֶה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִתֵּן לִפְהֶן לוֹ  
 יִהְיֶה: {פ}

<sup>יא</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>יב</sup> דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי־תִשְׁטֶה  
 אִשְׁתּוֹ וּמַעַלָּה בּוֹ מַעַל: <sup>יג</sup> וְשָׁכַב אִישׁ אֶת־הָ  
 שִׁכְבַּת־זָרָע וְנִעְלָם מֵעֵינֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְנִסְתָּרָה וְהָיָה  
 נִטְמָאָה וְעַד אֵין בָּהּ וְהוּא לֹא נִתְפָּשָׂה: <sup>יד</sup> וְעָבַר  
 עָלָיו רוּחַ־קִנְאָה וְקִנְאָה אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְהוּא נִטְמָאָה  
 אוֹ־עָבַר עָלָיו רוּחַ־קִנְאָה וְקִנְאָה אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיָה

with one-fifth added, paying it to the person whom he has wronged.

<sup>8</sup> But if the latter has no kinsman to whom this restitution can be made, the restitution due to Yahweh reverts to the priest, over and above the ram of atonement with which the priest makes atonement for the guilty man. <sup>9</sup> For of all the sacred donations of the Israelites, every gift they bring to the priest, he has a right to the portion set aside. <sup>10</sup> The sacred donations of all are their own; whatever anyone gives to the priest shall be his."

<sup>11</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses: <sup>12</sup> "Say this to the Israelites: "If any man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him, <sup>13</sup> if some other man lies with the woman without the husband's knowledge, if she disgraces herself secretly, without any witness against her, and without being caught in the act <sup>14</sup> and a spirit of jealousy comes over the husband and makes him jealous for the wife who has disgraced herself, or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and makes him jealous for his wife even

<sup>8</sup> The LXX, Peshitta & Vg lack the phrase 'due to Yahweh' but read instead a form of the verb 'to be'; however, the text makes more sense as it stands: the payment is to be made to Yahweh for the benefit of the priests.

<sup>9</sup> תְּרוּמָה ('sacred donations') seems to be a general word for any offering that goes to the priests.

<sup>10</sup> The 'sacred donations' are here described with the root of קדש to convey that they were separate; such things had been taken out of the ordinary and normal activities of life.

<sup>11</sup> Here, the participle 'saying' has been dropped from the end of the verse to reflect contemporary English style.

<sup>12</sup> NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB & NRSV, with, "behaves unfaithfully towards him."

<sup>13</sup> This old law deals with a case not covered elsewhere (e.g. Lv 20:10): no witness can testify since she was not caught in the act.

<sup>14</sup> The word 'spirit' here has the sense of attitude, mood, or feelings; the word קנאה is the genitive of attribute, modifying what kind of feelings they are: the word means either 'zeal' or 'jealousy', depending on the context.



לֹא נִטְמָאָה: טו וְהֵבִיא הָאִישׁ אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן  
וְהֵבִיא אֶת־קֶרֶבְנָהּ עָלֶיהָ עֲשִׂירֵת הָאֵיפָה קֶמַח  
שְׁעָרִים לֹא־יִצֹק עָלָיו שֶׁמֶן וְלֹא־יִתֵּן עָלָיו לִבְנֵה כִּי־  
מִנְחַת קִנְאָת הוּא מִנְחַת זִכְרוֹן מִזִּכְרָת עֹן:

טז וְהִקְרִיב אֹתָהּ הַכֹּהֵן וְהִעֲמִדָהּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:  
יז וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִיָּם קִדְשִׁים בְּכִל־חֶרֶשׁ וּמִן־הָעֶפֶר  
אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בְּקֶרֶקַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן יָקַח הַכֹּהֵן וְנָתַן אֶל־  
הַמִּים: יח וְהִעֲמִיד הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה  
וּפָרַע אֶת־רֹאשׁ הָאִשָּׁה וְנָתַן עַל־כַּפֶּיהָ אֶת מִנְחַת  
הַזִּכְרוֹן מִנְחַת קִנְאָת הוּא וּבִיד הַכֹּהֵן יִהְיוּ מִי  
הַמָּרִים הַמְאָרְרִים:

יט וְהִשְׁבִּיעַ אֹתָהּ הַכֹּהֵן וַאֲמַר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אִם־לֹא  
שָׁכַב אִישׁ אִתְּךָ וְאִם־לֹא שָׁטִית טְמֵאָה תַּחַת  
אִישְׁךָ הַנָּקִי מִמִּי הַמָּרִים הַמְאָרְרִים הָאֵלֶּה: כ וְאָתַּ

when she is innocent; <sup>15</sup> the man must bring his wife before the priest. On her behalf, he shall bring an offering of one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal. He is not to pour oil on it or put incense on it, because this is an oblation for jealousy, a memorial offering to record a fault.

<sup>16</sup> “The priest is then to bring the woman forward and stand her before Yahweh. <sup>17</sup> Then he shall take living water in an earthen jar, and on the water throw dust that he has taken from the floor of the Dwelling. <sup>18</sup> After he has placed the woman before Yahweh, he shall unbind her hair and put in her hands the commemorative oblation (that is, the oblation for jealousy). In his own hands, the priest will hold the water of bitterness and of cursing.

<sup>19</sup> “He is then to put the woman on oath, saying: “If no man has lain with you, and you have gone astray and defiles yourself while under your husband’s authority, then may the water of bitterness and cursing do

<sup>15</sup> The grain offering (Lv 2) of jealousy is intended to bring the case directly to God. 1 ‘ephah’ is about 22 litres or about 2/3 of a bushel

<sup>16</sup> Ordeal by water, in which the accused woman was thrown into the river, was known throughout the ancient Middle East but ordeal by the ‘water of bitterness’ has no known parallel.

<sup>17</sup> This ‘living water’ (following the NJB – the NRSV & NETB have ‘holy water’) is probably water taken from the laver in the courtyard; it is water set apart for sacred service. The ‘clean water’ of the NEB does not capture the sense very well, but it does have the support of the LXX, which has ‘pure running water’ (ὑδωρ καθαρόν ζῶν); that pure water would no doubt be from the laver anyway.

<sup>18</sup> The expression, ‘water of bitterness and of cursing’, has been challenged: the 1<sup>st</sup> part, ‘bitter water’, has been thought to mean ‘water of contention’ (as NEB) but this is not convincing; it has some support in the versions which read ‘contention’ and ‘testing’, no doubt trying to fit the passage better. The water was ‘bitter’ in view of the consequences it held for her if she was proven to be guilty; that is then enforced by the wordplay with the last word, the Piel participle הַמְאָרְרִים.

<sup>19</sup> Although there would be stress involved, a woman who was innocent would have nothing to hide and would be confident. The wording of the priest’s oath is actually designed to enable the potion to keep her from harm and not produce the physical effects it was designed to do.

כִּי שָׁטִיתַּ תַּחַת אִישׁךָ וְכִי נִטְמַאת וַיִּתֶּן אִישׁ בְּךָ  
 אֶת־שִׁכְבְּתוֹ מִבְּלַעְדֵּי אִישׁךָ: <sup>כא</sup> וְהִשְׁבִּיעַ הַכֹּהֵן  
 אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה בְּשִׁבְעַת הָאֱלֹהִים וְאָמַר הַכֹּהֵן לְאִשָּׁה  
 יִתֵּן יְהוָה אוֹתָךְ לְאֱלֹהִים וְלִשְׁבַּעַה בְּתוֹךְ עַמְּךָ בְּתַת  
 יְהוָה אֶת־יֶרֶכְךָ נִפְלֹת וְאֶת־בִּטְנְךָ צָבָה: <sup>כב</sup> וּבָאוּ  
 הַמַּיִם הַמְּאָרְרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּמַעֲיֶיךָ לְצַבּוֹת בֶּטֶן וְלִנְפֹל  
 יֶרֶךְ וְאָמְרָה הָאִשָּׁה אָמֵן | אָמֵן:

<sup>כג</sup> וְכָתַב אֶת־הָאֱלֹת הָאֵלֶּה הַכֹּהֵן בַּסֶּפֶר וּמָחָה  
 אֶל־מֵי הַמָּרִים: <sup>כד</sup> וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה אֶת־מֵי  
 הַמָּרִים הַמְּאָרְרִים וּבָאוּ בָּהּ הַמַּיִם הַמְּאָרְרִים  
 לְמָרִים:

<sup>כה</sup> וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִיַּד הָאִשָּׁה אֶת מִנְחַת הַקִּנְאָה  
 וְהִגִּיף אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיב אֹתָהּ אֶל־  
 הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: <sup>כו</sup> וְקָמַץ הַכֹּהֵן מִן־הַמִּנְחָה אֶת־אֲזִכָּרְתָּהּ

you no harm. <sup>20</sup> But if you have gone astray, while under your husband's authority, and you have defiled yourself by lying with a man other than your husband ...” <sup>21</sup> then the priest shall impose an oath of the curse on the woman, saying to her, “Let Yahweh make of you an attested curse among your people, making your thigh shrivel and your belly swell! <sup>22</sup> May this water of cursing enter you bowels to swell your belly and shrivel your thigh!” The woman must say: “Amen! Amen!”

<sup>23</sup> “Then the priest shall commit these curses to writing and wash them off in the water of bitterness. <sup>24</sup> He must make the woman drink this water of bitterness and of cursing, and this water of cursing shall enter her to produce bitterness.

<sup>25</sup> “The priest shall take the grain offering for jealousy from the woman's hands and hold it up before Yahweh with a gesture of offering, and bring it to the altar. <sup>26</sup> He shall take a handful as its memorial portion,

<sup>20</sup> The end of this verse is an example of the rhetorical device known as aposiopesis, or ‘sudden silence’; the sentence is broken off due to the intensity or emphasis of the moment and the reader is left to conclude what the sentence would have said.

<sup>21</sup> This interpretation ‘attested curse’ (following *NETB*) takes two nouns as a hendiadys; the literal wording is ‘a curse and an oath’. The point of the whole passage is that the priest is making her take an oath to see if she has been sinful and will be cursed.

<sup>22</sup> Most commentators take the expressions here and in v. 21 to be euphemisms of miscarriage or stillbirth, meaning that there would be no fruit from an illegitimate union. The idea of the belly swelling has been reinterpreted by the *NEB* to mean ‘fall away’; if this interpretation stands, then the idea is that the woman has become pregnant, and that has aroused the suspicion of the husband for some reason.

<sup>23</sup> The oath of execration (vv. 19–22) was followed by the drinking of the water that brings the curse (v. 18). It was believed that if a person were guilty, this potion would have effects that would signify Yahweh's verdict of judgement (Ex 32:20, 35).

<sup>24</sup> In place of ‘to produce bitterness’, here following *NETB*, the *NJB* has ‘and be bitter inside her’.

<sup>25</sup> *NETB* has ‘suspicion’ in place of ‘jealousy’, here following the *NJB* & *NRSV*.

<sup>26</sup> The *NJB* lacks the word ‘portion’, here following the *NRSV* & *NETB*.

וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאַחֲרַיִם יִשְׁקָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה אֶת־  
הַמַּיִם: כִּי וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־הַמַּיִם וְהִיְתָה אִם־נִטְמָאָה  
וְתִמְעַל מִעַל בְּאִשָּׁה וּבָאוּ בָּהּ הַמַּיִם הַמְאָרְרִים  
לְמַרִים וְצִבְתָּה בִטְנָה וְנִפְלָה יָרֵכָה וְהִיְתָה הָאִשָּׁה  
לְאֵלָה בִּקְרֹב עַמָּה: כִּי וְאִם־לֹא נִטְמָאָה הָאִשָּׁה  
וְטַהֲרָה הִוא וְנִקְתָּה וְנִזְרְעָה זֶרַע:

כֹּסֶט זֹאת תֹּרַת הַקְּנָאִת אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁטֶה אִשָּׁה תַּחַת  
אִשָּׁה וְנִטְמָאָה: לֹא אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹר עָלָיו רוּחַ  
קְנָאָה וְקָנָא אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְהִעֲמִיד אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה לִפְנֵי  
יְהוָה וַעֲשֶׂה לָּהּ הַכֹּהֵן אֶת כָּל־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת:  
לֹא וְנִקָּה הָאִישׁ מִעֹן וְהָאִשָּׁה הִוא תִּשָּׂא אֶת־  
עוֹנָהּ: {פ}

burn it on the altar, and he must make the woman drink the water.

<sup>27</sup> After he has made her drink it, if she has defiled herself, deceiving her husband, then the water of cursing that goes into her shall indeed be bitter: her belly will swell and her thigh shrivel, and she will be a curse among her people. <sup>28</sup> But if the woman has not made herself unclean, but is clean, then she will be immune and will bear children.

<sup>29</sup> “This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a woman, while under her husband’s authority, goes astray and defiles herself <sup>30</sup> or when a spirit of jealousy comes on a man and he is jealous for his wife. When a husband brings such a woman before Yahweh, the priest must apply this entire law to her. <sup>31</sup> The husband shall be guiltless, but the woman must bear the consequences for her iniquity.”

<sup>27</sup> In place of ‘curse’, here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have ‘execration’. The literal translation of ‘children’ is ‘seed’ (the WEBBE has ‘offspring’).

<sup>28</sup> In place of ‘be immune’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘go unscathed’ and NETB has ‘be free’.

<sup>29</sup> The literal translation of ‘law in cases of jealousy’ is ‘law of jealousies’.

<sup>30</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “this ritual to her in full.”

<sup>31</sup> The text does not say what these ‘consequences’ are; presumably, the punishment would come from God and not from those administering the test.

## במדבר פרק ו

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אֲזֵאֶשָׁה כִּי יִפְלֹא  
לְגַדֵּל גִּדֵּר גְּזִיר לְהַזִּיר לַיהוָה: ג מִיַּיִן וְשִׁכָּר יִזִּיר  
חֲמֶץ יַיִן וְחֲמֶץ שִׁכָּר לֹא יִשְׁתֶּה וְכָל־מִשְׁרַת עֲנָבִים  
לֹא יִשְׁתֶּה וְעֲנָבִים לֶחִים וִיבֹשִׁים לֹא יֹאכַל: ד כָּל  
יְמֵי נְזָרוֹ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה מִגֶּפֶן הַיַּיִן מִחֲרָצִים  
וְעִדְזֹג לֹא יֹאכַל: ה כָּל־יְמֵי גִדְּרָתוֹ תֵּזֶר לֹא־  
יַעֲבֹר עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ עַד־מְלֵאת הַיָּמִם אֲשֶׁר־יִזִּיר  
לַיהוָה קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה גִדְּלָהּ פָּרַע שְׁעָרָה רֹאשׁוֹ: ו כָּל־יְמֵי  
הַזִּירוֹ לַיהוָה עַל־נֶפֶשׁ מֵת לֹא יָבֵא: ז לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ

## NUMBERS 6

<sup>1</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses: <sup>2</sup> "Say this to the Israelites: "If a man or woman wishes to make a vow, the nazirite vow, to pledge himself to Yahweh, <sup>3</sup> he shall abstain from wine and strong drink, and not drink grape juice, nor drink wine or other vinegar, nor eat grapes, fresh or dried. <sup>4</sup> For the duration of his vow, he shall eat nothing that comes from the vine, not even seeds or skins. <sup>5</sup> While he is bound by his vow, no razor shall touch his head; until the time of his consecration to Yahweh is completed, he is holy and shall let his hair grow free. <sup>6</sup> For the entire period of his consecration to Yahweh he must not go near a corpse, <sup>7</sup> he must not make himself unclean for father or mother, for brother or

### NUMBERS 6

- <sup>1</sup> For the period of his vow, the nazirite (i.e. 'vowed to God') undertook to leave his hair uncut, to take no strong drink and to avoid contact with corpses. The hair was a sign of strength, and the 1<sup>st</sup> abstention signified that the nazirite allowed the divine power to act in him, thus symbolising his dedication to God (in Gn 49:26 and Dt 33:16, Joseph is called a nazirite); the 2<sup>nd</sup> abstention showed that the nazirite refused a life of ease (see the Rechabites, Jr 35:5–8); and the 3<sup>rd</sup> showed that he belonged to God in a special way (see the priests in Lv 21:1–2, 10–11; and also Am 2:11–12 and the examples of this temporary vow in Ac 18:18, 21:23–26). A child could thus be dedicated by his mother (without time limit): Samson (Jg 13:5–7, 15, 16:17), Samuel (1S 1:11, 'no strong drink' clause), John the Baptist (Lk 1:15).
- <sup>2</sup> Note that the vow is open to both men and women.
- <sup>3</sup> The NJB lacks the clause 'nor drink wine or other vinegar'.
- <sup>4</sup> After 'vine', the NJB adds 'even juice of unripe grapes'.
- <sup>5</sup> There is an interesting parallel between this prohibition and the planting of trees: they could not be pruned or trimmed for 3 years but allowed to grow free (Lv 20:23); only then could the tree be cut and the fruit eaten.
- <sup>6</sup> For 'corpse', the MT has נֶפֶשׁ מֵת (literally a 'dead person'); but, since the word can also be used for animals, the restriction would be for any kind of corpse.
- <sup>7</sup> The Nazirite would defile himself (i.e. ruin his vow) by contacting their corpses; Jesus' hard saying in Mt 8:22, 'let the dead bury their own dead', makes sense in the light of this passage – Jesus was calling for commitment to himself.

לְאַחֵיו וּלְאַחֹתוֹ לֹא־יִטְמָא לָהֶם בְּמָתָם כִּי נָזִיר  
 אֱלֹהֵיו עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ: <sup>ח</sup> כָּל יְמֵי נָזְרוֹ קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לַיהוָה:  
<sup>ט</sup> וְכִי־יָמוּת מֵת עָלָיו בִּפְתָע פְּתָאֻם וְטִמָּא רֹאשׁ  
 נָזְרוֹ וְגִלַּח רֹאשׁוֹ בַּיּוֹם טְהַרְתּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
 יְגַלְחֵנּוּ: <sup>י</sup> וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יָבֹא שְׁתֵּי תְרִים אֹז שְׁנֵי  
 בְּנֵי יוֹנָה אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: <sup>יא</sup> וַעֲשֵׂה  
 הַכֹּהֵן אֶחָד לְחֻטָּאת וְאֶחָד לְעֹלָה וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו  
 מֵאֲשֶׁר חָטָא עַל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְקִדֵּשׁ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ בַּיּוֹם  
 הַהוּא: <sup>יב</sup> וְהִזִּיר לַיהוָה אֶת־יְמֵי נָזְרוֹ וְהֵבִיא כֶּבֶשׂ  
 בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לְאַשֶׁם וְהִימִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים יִפְּלוּ כִּי טָמֵא  
 נָזִיר:

<sup>יג</sup> וְזֹאת תֹּזְרֶת הַנָּזִיר בַּיּוֹם מְלֹאת יְמֵי נָזְרוֹ יָבִיא  
 אֹתוֹ אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: <sup>יד</sup> וְהִקְרִיב אֶת־קֶרְבָּנוֹ  
 לַיהוָה כֶּבֶשׂ בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ תָּמִים אֶחָד לְעֹלָה וְכִבְשֵׁה

sister, if they die; on his head he carries his consecration to his God.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout the whole of his vow, he is holy to Yahweh.

<sup>9</sup> “If a man dies suddenly beside him, defiling his consecrated hair, he must shave his head on the day of his cleansing and shave it on the seventh day. <sup>10</sup> On the eighth day, he is to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, at the door of the Tent of Meeting. <sup>11</sup> The priest must offer one as sin offering and the other as a high-offering, and atone for him, for his sin due to the dead; he must consecrate his head the same day <sup>12</sup> and consecrate himself to Yahweh for his nazirate days, and he must bring a male yearling lamb as a guilt offering. The former time shall be void, since his consecration was defiled.

<sup>13</sup> “This is the law for the nazirite when his days of dedication are fulfilled. He must be led to the door of the Tent of Meeting, <sup>14</sup> and must offer his gift to Yahweh: for high-offering, an unblemished male year-

<sup>8</sup> In place of ‘holy’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘consecrated to’.

<sup>9</sup> Contact with a corpse defiles the consecrated head, i.e. the locks that evidence one’s holy separation (v. 7), so that the vow must be re-initiated.

<sup>10</sup> The imperfect tense in this verse (‘he is to bring’) is instructional rather than a simple future; the point that it is *directive* should be noted.

<sup>11</sup> The word ‘sin’ has a wide range of meanings, beginning with the idea of ‘missing the way or the goal’; in view of the nature of this case – the prescribed ritual without confession – the idea is that he failed to keep the vow’s stipulations in this circumstance of unintentional sin.

<sup>12</sup> In place of ‘consecration’, here following the MT, the NJB has ‘consecrated hair’, following the LXX (κεφαλή εὐχῆς αὐτοῦ) and v. 9.

<sup>13</sup> For ‘he must be led’, the MT has ‘he/one shall bring him’; since there is no expressed subject, this verb should be taken in the passive sense; and, since the context suggests an obligatory nuance, the translation ‘he must be led’ has been used.

<sup>14</sup> The ‘communion sacrifice’ (שְׁלָמִים) is instructed in Lv 3 & 7; the form is always in the plural. It was a sacrifice that celebrated the fact that the worshiper was at peace with God and was not offered in order to make peace with God; the offering was essentially a communal meal in the presence of God. Some have tried to equate this offering with similar sounding names in Accadian and Ugaritic, but the unique features of the Israelite sacrifice make this connexion untenable.



אֶחָד בַּת־שְׁנָתָה תְּמִימָה לַחֲטָאת וְאֵיל־אֶחָד  
 תָּמִים לְשִׁלְמִים: <sup>טו</sup> וְסֵל מִצֹּת סֵלַת חֹלֶת בְּלוּלַת  
 בִּשְׁמֵן וִרְקִיקֵי מִצֹּת מְשָׁחִים בִּשְׁמֵן וּמִנְחָתָם  
 וְנִסְכֵיהֶם: <sup>טז</sup> וְהִקְרִיב הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־  
 חֲטָאתוֹ וְאֶת־עֹלָתוֹ: <sup>יז</sup> וְאֶת־הָאֵיל יַעֲשֶׂה זֶבַח  
 שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה עַל סֵל הַמִּצֹּת וַעֲשֵׂה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־  
 מִנְחָתוֹ וְאֶת־נִסְכּוֹ: <sup>יח</sup> וְגִלַּח הַנָּזִיר פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד  
 אֶת־רֹאשׁ נִזְרוֹ וּלְקַח אֶת־שֹׁעַר רֹאשׁ נִזְרוֹ וְנָתַן  
 עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר־תַּחַת זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים: <sup>יט</sup> וּלְקַח  
 הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַזֶּרַע בְּשֵׁלֶּה מִן־הָאֵיל וְחֹלֶת מִצָּה אֶחָד  
 מִן־הַסֵּל וִרְקִיק מִצָּה אֶחָד וְנָתַן עַל־כַּפֵּי הַנָּזִיר  
 אַחֵר הַתְּגַלְּחוֹ אֶת־נִזְרוֹ: <sup>כ</sup> וְהִנִּיף אוֹתָם הַכֹּהֵן  
 תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה קָדֹשׁ הוּא לַכֹּהֵן עַל חֲזֵה  
 הַתְּנוּפָה וְעַל שׁוֹק הַתְּרוּמָה וְאַחֵר יִשְׁתֶּה הַנָּזִיר  
 יַיִן:

ling lamb; for sin offering, an unblemished yearling ewe lamb; for peace offering, an unblemished ram, <sup>15</sup> and a basket of unleavened loaves of fine flour mixed with oil, and of unleavened wafers spread with oil, with their oblations and libations. <sup>16</sup> The priest shall present them before Yahweh and offer their sin offering and high-offering. <sup>17</sup> He must offer the ram of peace offering and the unleavened bread in the basket, and the priest shall make the oblation and libation. <sup>18</sup> Then the nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the Tent of Meeting and put his consecrated hair in the fire of the peace offering. <sup>19</sup> The priest is to take the shoulder of the ram, when it is cooked, with an unleavened cake from the basket, and an unleavened wafer and put them in the hands of the nazirite when he has shaved his consecrated head. <sup>20</sup> He must make wave them before Yahweh; it is holy for the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered. After this, the nazirite may drink wine.

<sup>15</sup> The offerings for the termination of the Nazirite vow would not have been inexpensive; this indicates that the short-term Nazir may have had income, if not come from a wealthier section of society. Short term vows had to be considered carefully as this ruling required a good amount of food to be brought.

<sup>16</sup> For this verse, the NJB reads, "When he has brought all this before Yahweh, the priest must offer his sin offering and his holocaust."

<sup>17</sup> The 'communion sacrifice' literally translates as 'a sacrifice of peace' (זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים); the word 'sacrifice' is related to the word 'to slaughter', and so indicates that this is a bloody offering in celebration of peace with God.

<sup>18</sup> Hair offerings were not uncommon in ancient religion.

<sup>19</sup> This verse does not include the word 'head'; it literally ends 'after the consecrating of himself his consecration'.

<sup>20</sup> The ritual of lifting the hands filled with the offering and waving them in the presence of Yahweh was designed to symbolise the transfer of the offering to God in the sight of all; this concludes the worshiper's part: the offering now becomes the property of the priest.

כא זאת תורת הנזיר אשר ידר קרבנו ליהוה על-  
 נזרו מלבד אשר תשיג ידו כפי נדרו אשר ידר בן  
 יעשה על תורת נזרו: {פ}

כב וידבר יהוה אל־משה לאמר: כג דבר אל־אֶהרֹן  
 ואל־בָנָיו לאמר כה תברכו את־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמֹר  
 לָהֶם: {ס}

כד יברכה יהוה וישמרך: {ס} כה יאר יהוה | פָּנָיו  
 אליך ויחנך: {ס} כו ישא יהוה | פָּנָיו אליך וישם  
 לך שָׁלוֹם: {ס} כז וישמו את־שְׁמִי על־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 ואני אברכם: {ס}

21 “This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to Yahweh his offering of  
 consecration, as well as whatever else he can provide; thus, he must  
 fulfil the vow that he made, according to the law of his consecration.”

22 And Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 23 “Speak to Aaron and his  
 sons, saying: “This is how you are to bless the Israelites. You shall say  
 to them:

24 “May Yahweh bless you and keep you; 25 may Yahweh let his face  
 shine on you and be gracious to you; 26 may Yahweh show you his  
 face and bring you peace. 27 Thus shall they call my name on the  
 Israelites, and I will bless them.”

21 For this verse, here following NETB, the NJB reads, “Such is the ritual for the nazirite. If, besides the hair, he has also vowed a personal offering to Yahweh, he must (apart from anything else that his means allow) fulfil the vow that he has made, in addition to what the ritual prescribes for his hair.”

22 The Aaronic benediction (vv. 22–27) was used in the Jerusalem Temple, usually at the conclusion of a service of worship (Lv 9:22).

23 ‘You shall say’ translates the only use of the verb אָמַר as an infinitive absolute; it functions as a verb form, an imperative or an imperfect of instruction. Several commentators have attempted to emend the text to get around the difficulty, but such emendations are unnecessary.

24 The blessing uses the jussive throughout, here the Piel jussive with a pronominal suffix. While the jussive has quite a range of nuances, including wish, desire, prayer, or greeting, the jussives here are stronger: the formal subject of the verb is Yahweh, and the speaker pronouncing the blessing is the priest, notably after emerging from the holy of holies where atonement has been made.

25 The shining face (or presence) signifies that the holy God graciously turns toward the people in concern and favour (Ps 4:6, 31:16, 80:3).

26 Whereas the 1<sup>st</sup> line of the blessing has 3 Hebrew words, the 2<sup>nd</sup> has 5, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> has 7.

27 This is the Semitic way of expressing divine favour. The thrice-invoked divine name (vv. 24–26) assures Israel of God’s protective presence.

## NUMBERS 7

## במדבר פרק ז

<sup>א</sup> וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם כָּלוּת מֹשֶׁה לְהִקִּים אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּמְשַׁח אֹתוֹ וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וַיִּמְשַׁח וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתָם: <sup>ב</sup> וַיִּקְרִיבוּ נְשֵׂאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רָאשֵׁי בֵּית אֲבֹתָם הֵם נְשֵׂאֵי הַמִּטֹּת הֵם הָעֹמְדִים עַל־הַפְּקָדִים: <sup>ג</sup> וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־קִרְבָּנָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה שֵׁשׁ־עֶגְלוֹת צֹב וּשְׁנֵי עֹשֶׂר בָּקָר עֶגְלָה עַל־שְׁנֵי הַנְּשָׂאִים וְשׁוֹר לְאֶחָד וַיִּקְרִיבוּ אוֹתָם לִפְנֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן: <sup>ד</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>ה</sup> קַח מֵאֹתָם וְהִיוּ לְעֹבֵד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְנִתְּתָה אוֹתָם אֶל־הַלְוִיִּם אִישׁ כְּפִי עֲבֹדָתוֹ: <sup>ו</sup> וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעֶגְלוֹת וְאֶת־הַבָּקָר וַיִּתֵּן אוֹתָם אֶל־הַלְוִיִּם: <sup>ז</sup> אֶת | שְׁתֵּי הָעֶגְלוֹת וְאֶת אַרְבַּעַת הַבָּקָר נָתַן לְבְנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן כְּפִי עֲבֹדָתָם: <sup>ח</sup> וְאֶת | אַרְבַּעַת

<sup>1</sup> On the day that Moses finished setting up the Dwelling, he anointed and consecrated it with all its furniture, and the altar and all its accessories. When he had anointed and consecrated it all, <sup>2</sup> the leaders of Israel made an offering; these were the heads of the patriarchal Houses, who were leaders of tribes and had supervised the census. <sup>3</sup> They brought their offering before Yahweh: six covered wagons and twelve oxen, one wagon for every two leaders and for each one an ox. They brought them before the Dwelling. <sup>4</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, <sup>5</sup> "Accept these from them, and let them be set apart for the service of the Tent of Meeting; you are to give them to the Levites, to each according to his service." <sup>6</sup> So, Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. <sup>7</sup> To the sons of Gershon he gave two wagons and four oxen according to their service. <sup>8</sup> To the sons of

## NUMBERS 7

- <sup>1</sup> This chapter belongs chronologically after Lv 8:11: Aaron and his sons were not yet made the officials of the new shrine (completed in Exodus).
- <sup>2</sup> The verb translated 'supervised' (הָעֹמְדִים) is the Qal active participle of the verb 'to stand'; the form describes these leaders as 'the ones standing over (the ones numbered)'; the expression, along with the clear indication of the 1<sup>st</sup> census in Ch. 1, shows that this was a supervisory capacity.
- <sup>3</sup> In place of 'brought them before', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'presented them in front of'.
- <sup>4</sup> The NRSV & NETB, along with many other translations, omit the words 'and said', dismissing it as redundant in contemporary English.
- <sup>5</sup> The literal translation of 'according to his service' (כְּפִי) is 'according to the mouth of'; here, it would say 'according to the mouth of his service', which would mean 'what his service calls for'.
- <sup>6</sup> In place of 'took', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'accepted'.
- <sup>7</sup> On the phrase 'according to their service', see #5.
- <sup>8</sup> The literal translation of 'direction' (NETB has 'authority') is 'hand'.

הַעֲגִלְתָּ וְאֵת שְׁמֹנֶת הַבָּקָר נָתַן לְבָנֵי מֵרָרִי כְּפִי  
 עֲבַדְתָּם בֵּיד אִיתָמָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן: <sup>ט</sup> וּלְבָנֵי קֹהַת  
 לֹא נָתַן כִּי־עֲבַדְתָּ הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲלֵהֶם בַּכֶּתֶף יִשְׂאוּ:  
 וַיִּקְרִיבוּ הַנָּשִׂאִים אֶת חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בַּיּוֹם הַמָּשׁח  
 אֹתוֹ וַיִּקְרִיבוּ הַנָּשִׂאִים אֶת־קָרְבָּנָם לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:  
 יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נָשִׂיא אֶחָד לַיּוֹם נָשִׂיא  
 אֶחָד לַיּוֹם יִקְרִיבוּ אֶת־קָרְבָּנָם לַחֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:  
 {ס}

יב וַיְהִי הַמִּקְרִיב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ נַחֲשׁוֹן  
 בֶּן־עֲמִינדָב לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה: יג וְקָרְבָּנוֹ קֶעֶרֶת־כֶּסֶף  
 אַחַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָה מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזְרָק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף  
 שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם מְלֵאִים סֶלֶת  
 בָּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן לְמִנְחָה: יד כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב  
 מְלֵאָה קְטֹרֶת: טו פֶּרֶא אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד

Merari he gave four wagons and eight oxen according to their service,  
 under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest. <sup>9</sup> However, to  
 Kohathites he gave none at all, because the sacred charge entrusted to  
 them had to be carried on their shoulders. <sup>10</sup> The leaders then made an  
 offering for the dedication of the altar, on the day when it was anointed.  
 And the leaders brought their offering before the altar, <sup>11</sup> and Yahweh  
 said to Moses, “Let the leaders each bring an offering on successive days  
 for the dedication of the altar.”

<sup>12</sup> And the one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon  
 the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah. <sup>13</sup> His offering consisted of:  
 one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver  
 sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of  
 them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>14</sup> one golden  
 bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>15</sup> one young bullock, one

<sup>9</sup> The leaders present wagons for transporting the Tabernacle equipment, though the Kohathites, for the sake of precaution, had to carry the holy things on their shoulders.

<sup>10</sup> The adverbial clause at the end of this verse (*‘when it was anointed’*) uses the Niphal infinitive construct as the main verb; the word is the well-known מָשַׁח (*‘to anoint’, ‘to smear’*).

<sup>11</sup> The distributive sense (*‘leaders ... on successive days’*) is achieved by repetition: *‘one leader for the day, one leader for the day’*.

<sup>12</sup> The tribal names in vv. 12–83 are taken from the old list found in 1:5–15 (compare 10:14–27); the tribe of Judah is listed first – it seems that it had already achieved a place of prominence based on the patriarchal promise of the Messiahship in Judah (Gn 49:10). The dedication offering presented on successive days was the same.

<sup>13</sup> The LXX opens this verse with *‘and he brought his gift’* (καὶ προσήνεγκεν τὸ δῶρον αὐτοῦ).

<sup>14</sup> In place of *‘bowl’*, here following the NJB, the NRSV has *‘dish’* and NETB has *‘pan’*.

<sup>15</sup> The literal translation of *‘yearling lamb’* is *‘lamb in its first year’*.

כִּבְשֹׁאֶחָד בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לָעֹלָה: <sup>טז</sup> שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד  
לְחֹטְאֹת: <sup>יז</sup> וּלְזִבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים בֶּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם  
חֲמִשָּׁה עֲתוּדִים חֲמִשָּׁה כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה  
זֶה קָרְבַּן נַחֲשֹׁן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב: {פ}

<sup>יח</sup> בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי הִקְרִיב נֹתָנָאֵל בֶּן־צוּעַר נָשִׂיא  
יִשָּׁשְׁכָר: <sup>יט</sup> הִקְרִיב אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ קֶעֱרֶת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת  
שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָה מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזָּרֶק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף שִׁבְעִים  
שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִלֵּאִים סֹלֶת בִּלְוִלָה  
בְּשֶׁמֶן לַמִּנְחָה: <sup>כ</sup> כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִלֵּאָה  
קִטְרֶת: <sup>כא</sup> פֶּרֶא אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשֹׁאֶחָד  
בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לָעֹלָה: <sup>כב</sup> שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לְחֹטְאֹת:  
<sup>כג</sup> וּלְזִבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים בֶּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה  
עֲתוּדִים חֲמִשָּׁה כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קָרְבַּן  
נֹתָנָאֵל בֶּן־צוּעַר: {פ}

ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>16</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>17</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Nahshon son of Amminadab.

<sup>18</sup> On the second day, Nethanel the son of Zuar, leader of Issachar presented an offering. <sup>19</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver bowl, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>20</sup> one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>21</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>22</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>23</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

<sup>16</sup> The NJB, following the LXX, lacks the word 'male', here following the MT, NRSV & NETB.

<sup>17</sup> In place of 'male goats', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'kids'.

<sup>18</sup> The NRSV places the definite article ('the') before 'leader' and NETB omits it altogether; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>19</sup> The NRSV opens this verse, here following the NJB, with 'he presented for his offering'.

<sup>20</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>21</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>22</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>23</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.



כד בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי נָשִׂיא לִבְנֵי זְבוּלֹן אֱלִיאָב בֶּן־חֶלֶן:  
כה קָרְבָּנוֹ קֶעֱרֶת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָה  
מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזֶּרֶק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל בִּשְׁקָל  
הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִלֵּאִים סֶלֶת בָּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן  
לְמִנְחָה: כו כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִלֵּאָה קִטְרֶת:  
כז פֶּר אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשׂ־אֶחָד בֶּן־שְׁנָתוֹ  
לְעֹלָה: כח שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת: כט וּלְזֶבַח  
הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה עֶתְדִים חֲמִשָּׁה  
כֶּבֶשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קָרְבַּן אֱלִיאָב בֶּן־  
חֶלֶן: {פ}

ל בַּיּוֹם הָרְבִיעִי נָשִׂיא לִבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן אֱלִיצוּר בֶּן־  
שְׂדִיאוֹר: לא קָרְבָּנוֹ קֶעֱרֶת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת שְׁלֹשִׁים  
וּמֵאָה מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזֶּרֶק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל  
בִּשְׁקָל הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִלֵּאִים סֶלֶת בָּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן  
לְמִנְחָה: לב כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִלֵּאָה קִטְרֶת:

<sup>24</sup> On the third day, Eliab the son of Helon, leader of the sons of Zebulun [presented an offering]. <sup>25</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>26</sup> one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>27</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>28</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>29</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

<sup>30</sup> On the fourth day, Elizur the son of Shedeur, leader of the sons of Reuben [presented an offering]. <sup>31</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>32</sup> one golden

<sup>24</sup> The phrase 'presented an offering' (following NETB and cf. v. 18) is not in the MT; the same phrase is absent from the MT in the following verses, which tell who makes the offerings: 30, 36, 42, 48, 54, 60, 66, 72 & 78.

<sup>25</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>26</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>27</sup> The NRSV has 'burnt offering' in place of 'high-offering' and the NJB has 'holocaust'.

<sup>28</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>29</sup> In place of 'oxen', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'bulls'.

<sup>30</sup> On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>31</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>32</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

לג פֶּרֶא אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשׂ־אֶחָד בֶּן־שָׁנָה לְעֹלָה: לד שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת: לה וּלְזֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה עֲתָדִים חֲמִשָּׁה כֶּבֶשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קֶרְבֵּן אֱלִיזוּר בֶּן־שִׁדְיָאוּר: {פ}

לו בַּיּוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי נָשִׂיא לְבָנִי שְׁמַעוֹן שְׁלֹמִיאֵל בֶּן־צוּרִישַׁדַּי: לז קֶרְבָּנוֹ קֶעֱרֶת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָה מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזֶּרֶק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִלֵּאִים סֹלֶת בִּלְוִלָה בַּשֶּׁמֶן לְמִנְחָה: לח כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִלֵּאָה קִטְרֶת: לט פֶּרֶא אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשׂ־אֶחָד בֶּן־שָׁנָה לְעֹלָה: מ שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת: מא וּלְזֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה עֲתָדִים חֲמִשָּׁה כֶּבֶשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קֶרְבֵּן שְׁלֹמִיאֵל בֶּן־צוּרִישַׁדַּי: {פ}

bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>33</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>34</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>35</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

<sup>36</sup> On the fifth day, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, leader of the sons of Simeon [presented an offering]. <sup>37</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>38</sup> one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>39</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>40</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>41</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

<sup>33</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB. On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>34</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>35</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

<sup>36</sup> See #24 with regard to the seemingly clumsy end to this verse.

<sup>37</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>38</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>39</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>40</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>41</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

מב ביום הששי נשיא לבני גד אליסף בן־דעואל:  
מג קרבנו קערת־כסף אחת שלשים ומאה  
משקלה מזרק אחד כסף שבעים שקל בשקל  
הקדש שניהם מלאים סלת בלולה בשמן  
למנחה: מד כף אחת עשרה זהב מלאה קטרת:  
מה פך אחד בן־בקר איל אחד כבש־אחד בן־  
שנתו לעלה: מו שעיר־עזים אחד לחטאת:  
מז ולזבח השלמים בקר שנים אילים חמשה  
עתדים חמשה כבשים בני־שנה חמשה זה קרבן  
אליסף בן־דעואל: {פ}

מח ביום השביעי נשיא לבני אפרים אלישמע בן־  
מט קרבנו קערת־כסף אחת שלשים  
ומאה משקלה מזרק אחד כסף שבעים שקל  
בשקל הקדש שניהם מלאים סלת בלולה בשמן  
למנחה: נ כף אחת עשרה זהב מלאה קטרת:

<sup>42</sup> On the sixth day, Eliasaph the son of Deuel, leader of the sons of Gad [presented an offering]. <sup>43</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>44</sup> one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>45</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>46</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>47</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

<sup>48</sup> On the seventh day, Elishama the son of Ammihud, leader of the sons of Ephraim [presented an offering]. <sup>49</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>50</sup> one

<sup>42</sup> In place of 'Deuel', here following the MT (דעואל), the NJB has 'Reuel', as also in v. 47 (possibly, the adjustment is based on the LXX, which has Παγουηλ). On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>43</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>44</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>45</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>46</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>47</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

<sup>48</sup> On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>49</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>50</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

נא פֶּרֶא אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשׂ־אֶחָד בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ  
 לַעֲלֹה: נב שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת: נג וּלְזֶבַח  
 הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה עֲתֻדִּים חֲמִשָּׁה  
 כֶּבֶשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קֶרְבֵּן אֱלִישָׁמָע בֶּן־  
 עֲמִיהוּד: {פ}

נד בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי נָשִׂיא לְבָנִי מִנִּשָּׁה גַּמְלִיאֵל בֶּן־  
 פְּדָהצֹר: נה קֶרְבָּנוֹ קַעֲרֶת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת שְׁלֹשִׁים  
 וּמֵאָה מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזְרָק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל  
 בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִלֵּאִים סֹלֶת בִּלְוִלָה בַּשֶּׁמֶן  
 לְמִנְחָה: נו כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִלֵּאָה קִטְרֶת:  
 נז פֶּרֶא אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשׂ־אֶחָד בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ  
 לַעֲלֹה: נח שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת: נט וּלְזֶבַח  
 הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה עֲתֻדִּים חֲמִשָּׁה  
 כֶּבֶשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קֶרְבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל בֶּן־  
 פְּדָהצֹר: {פ}

golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense,<sup>51</sup> one young bull,  
 one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering,<sup>52</sup> one male  
 goat for the sin offering,<sup>53</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen,  
 five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering  
 of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

<sup>54</sup> On the eighth day, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, leader of the sons of  
 Manasseh [presented an offering].<sup>55</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver  
 plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver  
 sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of  
 them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil,<sup>56</sup> one golden  
 bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense,<sup>57</sup> one young bull, one  
 ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering,<sup>58</sup> one male goat  
 for the sin offering,<sup>59</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five  
 rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of  
 Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

<sup>51</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>52</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>53</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

<sup>54</sup> On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>55</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>56</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>57</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>58</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>59</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

ס ביום התשיעי נשיא לבני בנימן אבידן בן גדעני: סא קרבנו קערת-כסף אחת שלשים ומאה משקלה מזרק אחד פסף שבעים שקל בשקל הקדש שניהם מלאים סלת בלולה בשמן למנחה: סב כף אחת עשרה זהב מלאה קטרת: סג פר אחד בן-בקר איל אחד בבש-אחד בן-שנתו לעלה: סד שעיר-עזים אחד לחטאת: סה ולזבח השלמים בקר שנים אילים חמשה עתדים חמשה כבשים בני-שנה חמשה זה קרבן אבידן בן גדעני: {פ}

סו ביום העשירי נשיא לבני דן אחיעזר בן עמישדי: סז קרבנו קערת-כסף אחת שלשים ומאה משקלה מזרק אחד פסף שבעים שקל בשקל הקדש שניהם מלאים סלת בלולה בשמן למנחה: סח כף אחת עשרה זהב מלאה קטרת:

<sup>60</sup> On the ninth day, Abidan the son of Gideoni, leader of the sons of Benjamin [presented an offering]. <sup>61</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>62</sup> one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>63</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>64</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>65</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

<sup>66</sup> On the tenth day, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, leader of the sons of Dan [presented an offering]. <sup>67</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>68</sup> one golden

<sup>60</sup> On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>61</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>62</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>63</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>64</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>65</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

<sup>66</sup> On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>67</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>68</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.



ס"ט פֶּר אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד בְּבֶשֶׁת־אֶחָד בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לַעֲלֹה: ע' שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת: ע"א וּלְזִבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה עֹתָדִים חֲמִשָּׁה כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קֶרְבֵּן אַחִיעֶזֶר בֶּן־עַמִּישַׁדַּי: {פ}

עב בַּיּוֹם עָשִׂיתִי עֹשֶׁר יוֹם נָשִׂיא לְבָנִי אֲשֶׁר פָּגַעִיאל בֶּן־עֶכְרָן: עג קֶרְבָּנוֹ קְעֶרֶת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָה מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזֶּרֶק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִלֵּאִים סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן לְמִנְחָה: עד כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מִלֵּאָה קְטֹרֶת: עה פֶּר אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד בְּבֶשֶׁת־אֶחָד בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לַעֲלֹה: עו שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת: עז וּלְזִבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה עֹתָדִים חֲמִשָּׁה כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קֶרְבֵּן פָּגַעִיאל בֶּן־עֶכְרָן: {פ}

bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>69</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>70</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>71</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

<sup>72</sup> On the eleventh day, Pagiel the son of Ochran, leader of the sons of Asher [presented an offering]. <sup>73</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>74</sup> one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>75</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>76</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>77</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ochran.

<sup>69</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>70</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>71</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

<sup>72</sup> On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>73</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>74</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>75</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>76</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>77</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

עח בַּיּוֹם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר יוֹם נָשִׂיא לְבָנֵי נַפְתָּלִי אַחִירָע  
בֶּן־עֵינָן: עט קָרְבָּנוֹ קַעֲרַת־כֶּסֶף אַחַת שְׁלֹשִׁים  
וּמֵאָה מִשְׁקָלָהּ מִזֶּרֶק אֶחָד כֶּסֶף שִׁבְעִים שֶׁקֶל  
בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁנֵיהֶם | מְלֵאִים סֵלֶת בְּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן  
לְמִנְחָה: פ כֶּף אַחַת עֲשָׂרָה זָהָב מְלֵאָה קִטְרֶת:  
פא פֶּרֶ אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשׂ־אֶחָד בֶּן־  
שָׁנָתוֹ לְעֹלָה: פב שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת:  
פג וּלְזִבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים בָּקָר שְׁנַיִם אֵילִם חֲמִשָּׁה  
עֲתֻדִּים חֲמִשָּׁה כֶּבֶשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה חֲמִשָּׁה זֶה קָרְבַּן  
אַחִירָע בֶּן־עֵינָן: {פ}

פד זֹאת | חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בַּיּוֹם הַמִּשָּׁח אֹתוֹ מֵאֵת  
נְשֵׂאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל קַעֲרַת כֶּסֶף שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה מִזֶּרְקִי־  
כֶּסֶף שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר כַּפּוֹת זָהָב שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה:  
פה שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָה הַקַּעֲרָה הָאֶחָת כֶּסֶף וּשְׁבַע־  
הַמִּזְרֶק הָאֶחָד כָּל כֶּסֶף הַכֵּלִים אֲלֵפִים וָאַרְבַּע־  
מֵאוֹת בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ: פו כַּפּוֹת זָהָב שְׁתֵּים־עָשָׂרָה

<sup>78</sup> On the twelfth day, Ahira the son of Enan, leader of the sons of Naphtali [presented an offering]. <sup>79</sup> His offering consisted of: one silver plate, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil, <sup>80</sup> one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, <sup>81</sup> one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the high-offering, <sup>82</sup> one male goat for the sin offering, <sup>83</sup> and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

<sup>84</sup> This was the dedication offering for the altar on the day it was anointed, from the leaders of Israel: twelve silver plates, twelve silver sprinkling bowls, and twelve golden bowls. <sup>85</sup> Each silver plate weighed a hundred and thirty shekels, and each sprinkling bowl seventy, the silver of these objects weighing in all two thousand four hundred shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. <sup>86</sup> The twelve golden

<sup>78</sup> On the phrase, 'presented an offering', see #24.

<sup>79</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>80</sup> In place of 'bowl', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dish' and NETB has 'pan'.

<sup>81</sup> The NJB has 'bullock' in place of 'bull', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>82</sup> The NJB lacks 'male', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>83</sup> In place of 'communion sacrifice', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifice of well-being' and NETB has 'sacrifice of peace offerings'.

<sup>84</sup> The NJB has 'bowls' in place of 'plates', here following the NRSV.

<sup>85</sup> The NJB has 'bowl' in place of 'plate', here following the NRSV.

<sup>86</sup> In place of 'bowls', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'dishes' and NETB has 'pans'.

מִלֹּאֲת קִטְרֶת עֲשָׂה עֲשָׂה הַכֹּף בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ  
כָּל-זֶהָב הַכַּפֹּת עֲשָׂרִים וּמֵאָה: <sup>פז</sup> כָּל-הַבָּקָר לָעֹלָה  
שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרֵי פָרִים אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם-עֶשְׂרֵי כִבְשִׁים בְּנֵי-  
שָׁנָה שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרֵי וּמִנְחָתָם וּשְׁעִירֵי עֲזִים שְׁנַיִם  
עֶשְׂרֵי לַחֻטָּאת: <sup>פח</sup> וְכָל בָּקָר זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים עֲשָׂרִים  
וְאַרְבָּעָה פָרִים אֵילִם שְׁשִׁים עֲתֻדִים שְׁשִׁים  
כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי-שָׁנָה שְׁשִׁים זֹאת חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אַחֲרֵי  
הַמָּשַׁח אֹתוֹ: <sup>פט</sup> וּבָבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-אַהֲל מוֹעֵד לְדַבֵּר  
אִתּוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶת-הַקּוֹל מִדְּבַר אֱלֹהֵי מַעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת  
אֲשֶׁר עַל-אֲרֹן הָעֵדֻת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִּים וַיְדַבֵּר  
אֵלָיו: {פ}

bowls filled with incense weighed ten shekels each (sanctuary shekels),  
the gold of these bowls weighing in all a hundred and twenty shekels.  
<sup>87</sup> All the livestock for the high-offering: twelve bulls, twelve rams,  
twelve male yearling lambs, with their oblations; for the sin offering,  
twelve male goats. <sup>88</sup> All the livestock for the communion sacrifice:  
twenty-four bulls, sixty rams, sixty male goats and sixty male yearling  
lambs; these were the offerings for the dedication of the altar, after it  
had been anointed. <sup>89</sup> When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to  
speak with Yahweh, he heard the voice that spoke to him from above  
mercy-seat, which was on the Ark of the Testimony, from between the  
two cherubim. He then spoke with him.

<sup>87</sup> The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with, 'the sum total of animals'.

<sup>88</sup> In place of 'male goats', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'kids'.

<sup>89</sup> The NJB uses the pronoun 'him' in place of 'Yahweh'.

## NUMBERS 8

## במדבר פרק ח

- א וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן  
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּהִעָלְתָּךְ אֶת־הַנֵּרוֹת אֶל־מֹול פְּנֵי  
הַמִּנְוָה יֵאִירוּ שִׁבְעַת הַנֵּרוֹת: ג וַיַּעַשׂ כֵּן אַהֲרֹן  
אֶל־מֹול פְּנֵי הַמִּנְוָה הָעֵלָה גִּרְתִּיהָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה  
יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: ד וְזֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמִּנְוָה מִקִּשָּׁה זָהָב  
עַד־יִרְכָּה עַד־פְּרָחָהּ מִקִּשָּׁה הוּא כַּמֶּרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר  
הִרְאָה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשָׂה אֶת־הַמִּנְוָה: {פ}  
ה וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ו קַח אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם  
מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְטַהַרְתָּ אֹתָם: ז וְכַהֲתַעֲשֶׂה  
לָהֶם לְטַהָרֵם הַזֶּה עֲלֵיהֶם מִי חֲטָאת וְהִעֲבִירוּ תַּעַר  
עַל־כָּל־בְּשָׂרָם וְכִבְּסוּ בַגְדֵיהֶם וְהִטְהָרוּ: ח וְלָקְחוּ  
פֶּרֶךְ־בָּקָר וּמִנְחָתוֹ סֵלֶת בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן וּפְרִשְׁנֵי
- 1 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 2 "Speak to Aaron and tell him: "When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps must throw their light towards the front of the lamp-stand."" 3 Aaron saw to this. He set up the lamps to the front of the map-stand, as Yahweh had ordered Moses. 4 This lamp-stand was worked in beaten gold, including its stem and its petals, which were also of beaten gold. According to the pattern Yahweh had shown to Moses, so he made the lamp-stand. 5 And Yahweh spoke to Moses: 6 "Take the Levites from the Israelites and purify them. 7 Thus shall you purify them: you must sprinkle them with purifying water, and they must shave their bodies all over and wash their clothes; they will then be clean. 8 They must next take a young bull, with an oblation of fine flour mixed with oil, and you must

## NUMBERS 8

- 1 This chapter has 3 main sections: lighting of the lamps (vv. 1–4); separation of the Levites (vv. 5–22); and the work of the Levites (vv. 23–26).  
2 The idea of arranging the lamps on the lamp-stand involved raising the lamps and placing them on the tops of each shaft and branch; some have taken 'set up' to mean to cause the flame to go up, or light the lamps.  
3 The lighting of the lamps was the prerogative of the Aaronic priests.  
4 The idea is that it was all hammered from a single plate of gold.  
5 The participle at the end of this verse (literally, 'saying') has not here been translated, due to its redundancy in contemporary English.  
6 The verb טַהַרְתָּ ('purify') means that Moses should make the Levites ritually clean, so that they could enter the Sanctuary and do the work prescribed for them; whatever is unclean is not permitted in the Sanctuary at all.  
7 Literally translated, the phrase 'purifying water' would be 'sin water'. (See #19:1). The priests were given new clothes (Lv 8:13) but the Levites simply washed their own.  
8 The 1<sup>st</sup> sacrifice was for the purification of the Levites; the 2<sup>nd</sup> animal, which Moses was to take, would be used for the purification of the Tabernacle from all pollution.

בְּזָבֶקֶר תִּקַּח לַחֲטָאתָ: <sup>ט</sup> וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם  
לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהִקְהַלְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>י</sup> וְהִקְרַבְתָּ אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְסִמְכוּ  
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־הַלְוִיִּם: <sup>יא</sup> וְהִנִּיף אֹהֶרֶן  
אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְהָיוּ לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת יְהוָה:

<sup>יב</sup> וְהַלְוִיִּם יְסִמְכוּ אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל רֹאשׁ הַפָּרִים  
וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־הָאֶחָד חֲטָאת וְאֶת־הָאֶחָד עֹלָה לַיהוָה  
לְכַפֵּר עַל־הַלְוִיִּם: <sup>יג</sup> וְהִעֲמַדְתָּ אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם לִפְנֵי  
אֹהֶרֶן וּלְפָנָי בְּנָיו וְהִנַּפְתָּ אֹתָם תְּנוּפָה לַיהוָה:  
<sup>יד</sup> וְהִבְדַּלְתָּ אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיוּ לִי  
הַלְוִיִּם: <sup>טו</sup> וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָבֹאוּ הַלְוִיִּם לַעֲבֹד אֶת־אֹהֶל  
מוֹעֵד וְטַהַרְתָּ אֹתָם וְהִנַּפְתָּ אֹתָם תְּנוּפָה: <sup>טז</sup> כִּי

take a second young bull for a sin offering. <sup>9</sup> Bring the Levites before the Tent of Meeting, and call together the whole community of Israelites. <sup>10</sup> When you bring the Levites before Yahweh, the Israelites must lay their hands on the Levites. <sup>11</sup> Aaron shall then offer the Levites, making the gesture of offering before Yahweh on behalf of the Israelites. From that time, they will be dedicated to the service of Yahweh.

<sup>12</sup> “The Levites must lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, one of which you are to offer as a sin offering, and the other as a high-offering to Yahweh, to make atonement for the Levites. <sup>13</sup> Having brought the Levites before Aaron and his sons, you will present them to Yahweh with the gesture of offering. <sup>14</sup> And so you shall set the Levites apart from the Israelites, so that they may be mine. <sup>15</sup> The Levites will then begin their ministry in the Tent of Meeting; you must purify them and

<sup>9</sup> In place of ‘community’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has ‘congregation’.

<sup>10</sup> By the laying on of hands (Lv 1:4), the people identified with the Levites who are ‘sacrificed’ instead of their firstborn (vv. 16–17, 3:13).

<sup>11</sup> The literal translation of ‘offer the Levites’ is ‘wave the Levites as a wave offering’; the wave offering was part of the ritual of the peace offering and indicated the priest’s portion being presented to God in a lifted, waving motion for all to see. The Levites were going to be in the sanctuary to serve Yahweh and assist the priests; it is unclear how Moses would have presented them as wave offerings, but the intent is that they would be living sacrifices, as Paul would later say in Rm 12:1 for all Christians.

<sup>12</sup> Regarded in terms of a sacrificial offering (see v. 10 and Lv 1:4), the Levites had to be cleansed of all worldly contamination. They were substitutes for the firstborn of Israel (3:12–13) and now, the sacrificial animals are substitutes for the Levites.

<sup>13</sup> In place of ‘before Aaron’, here following the MT, the LXX has ‘before the LORD and before Aaron’ (ἐναντι κυρίου καὶ ἐναντι Ααρων).

<sup>14</sup> The *vav* consecutive on the perfect tense at the beginning of this verse (‘and so’) not only carries the nuance of instruction forward to this clause, but also marks this clause out as a summary of what has taken place, i.e., by doing all this ritual Moses will have separated the Levites from the people for God’s own possession.

<sup>15</sup> At the end of this verse, the LXX adds ‘before the LORD’ (ἐναντι κυρίου).



נִתְּנִים נִתְּנִים הֵמָּה לִי מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּחַת  
פְּטַרְתָּ כָּל־רָחֶם בְּכוֹר כָּל מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִקְחָתִי  
אַתָּם לִי:

יִכִּי לִי כָל־בְּכוֹר בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאָדָם וּבְבִהֵמָה  
בַּיּוֹם הַכֵּתִי כָל־בְּכוֹר בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם הַקִּדְשָׁתִי  
אַתָּם לִי: יִי וְאַקַּח אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם תַּחַת כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּבִנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל: יִי וְאַתְּנָה אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם נִתְּנִים לְאַהֲרֹן  
וּלְבָנָיו מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת בְּנֵי־  
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲל מוֹעֵד וּלְכַפֵּר עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא  
יְהִי בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶף בְּגִשֶׁת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־  
הַקֹּדֶשׁ:

כַּ וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וְכָל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לַלְוִיִּם  
כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צֻוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה לַלְוִיִּם כִּן־עָשׂוּ  
לָהֶם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כֹּא וַיַּחֲטִטֻּם הַלְוִיִּם וַיְכַבְּסוּ

offer them as a wave offering,<sup>16</sup> for they are entirely given to me from among the Israelites; I have taken them for my own, instead of those who open the womb, all the firstborn, of all the Israelites.

<sup>17</sup> “All the firstborn among the Israelites, man and beast, are indeed mine: when I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated them to myself,<sup>18</sup> and now, in place of all the firstborn among the Israelites, I have taken the Levites.<sup>19</sup> From among the Israelites, I give them to Aaron and his sons, as dedicated men; on behalf of the Israelites, they will minister in the Tent of Meeting and make atonement for them, so that none of the Israelites may be struck down for approaching the sanctuary.”

<sup>20</sup> Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of the Israelites did with the Levites accordingly; the Israelites did with the Levites just as Yahweh had commanded Moses concerning them.<sup>21</sup> The Levites purified

<sup>16</sup> As frequently in Hebrew, the emphasis in ‘entirely given’ is obtained by repeating the passive participle (נִתְּנִים נִתְּנִים): ‘given, given to me’.

<sup>17</sup> The literal translation of ‘when I struck’ is ‘on the day of my striking’.

<sup>18</sup> The firstborn were those that were essentially redeemed from death in Egypt when the blood was put on the doors; so, in a very real sense, they belonged to God (Ex 13:2, 12). The firstborn was one who stood in special relationship to the father, being the successive offspring; here, the Levites would stand in for the firstborn in that special role and special relationship. God also made it clear that the nation of Israel was his firstborn son (Ex 4:22–23), and so they stood in that relationship before all the nations.

<sup>19</sup> The Levites, by their position in the camp (1:52–53, 3:38), shielded the people from the dreadful effects of holiness, which could cause a plague or other calamity (1S 5–6).

<sup>20</sup> For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads (rather clumsily): “Moses, Aaron and the whole community of Israelites dealt with the Levites exactly as Yahweh had directed Moses concerning them, as did the Israelites with them.”

<sup>21</sup> In place of ‘Aaron made atonement’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘he made atonement’.

בַּגְדֵיהֶם וַיִּגַּף אֶהָרֶן אֶתֶם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּכַּפֵּר  
עֲלֵיהֶם אֶהָרֶן לְטַהֲרֵם: כב וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן בָּאוּ הַלְוִיִּם  
לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדָתְךָ בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי אֶהָרֶן וּלִפְנֵי  
בָנָיו כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה עַל־הַלְוִיִּם כִּן עָשׂוּ  
לָהֶם: {ס}

כג וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כד זֹאת אֲשֶׁר  
לְלוֹיִם מִבֶּן חָמֵשׁ וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה יִבֹּא לַעֲבֹד  
צָבָא בְּעֲבֹדָת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: כה וּמִבֶּן חֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה  
יָשׁוּב מִצָּבָא הָעֲבֹדָה וְלֹא יַעֲבֹד עוֹד: כו וְיִשְׁרֹת אֶת־  
אָחִיו בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמֶרֶת וְעֲבָדָה לֹא  
יַעֲבֹד כִּכָּה תַעֲשֶׂה לְלוֹיִם בְּמִשְׁמֶרֶתָם: {פ}

themselves and washed their clothes, and Aaron presented them with a wave offering before Yahweh; and Aaron made atonement for them to purify them. <sup>22</sup> Thereafter, the Levites went in to do their work in the Tent of Meeting before Aaron and his sons. As Yahweh had directed Moses concerning the Levites, so they did with them.

<sup>23</sup> Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: <sup>24</sup> "This concerns the Levites. From the age of twenty-five onwards, the Levite must begin to minister his duty in the Tent of Meeting; <sup>25</sup> and from the age of fifty years he shall retire from the duty of the service and serve no more; <sup>26</sup> but he may help his brothers to serve in the Tent of Meeting, though he will no longer have any ministry. This is the rule for the ministry of the Levites."

<sup>22</sup> The NJB has 'perform their ministry' in place of 'do their work', here following NETB.

<sup>23</sup> The literal translation of the opening 'then' is 'and'.

<sup>24</sup> The age of 25 indicated here should be compared with the age of 30 indicated in Nb 4:3, 23, 30.

<sup>25</sup> For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "From the age of fifty, he is no longer bound to the ministry and will have no further duties."

<sup>26</sup> In place of 'brothers', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'colleagues'; the meaning is 'fellow Levites'.

## NUMBERS 9

## במדבר פרק ט

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בַּמִּדְבָּר־סִינַי בַּשָּׁנָה  
הַשְּׁנִיָּה לְצֵאתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן  
לֵאמֹר: ב וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּמוֹעֲדוֹ:  
ג בָּאַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר־יוֹם בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים  
תַּעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ בְּמוֹעֲדוֹ כְּכָל־חֻקְתָּיו וְכָכָל־מִשְׁפָּטָיו  
תַּעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ:

ד וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הַפֶּסַח:  
ה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּרִאשׁוֹן בָּאַרְבַּעַה עָשָׂר יוֹם  
לַחֹדֶשׁ בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה  
יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כִּן עָשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ו וַיְהִי אֲנָשִׁים  
אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ טְמֵאִים לְנַפֶּשׁ אָדָם וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת־

<sup>1</sup> Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, in the desert of Sinai, in the second year after the exodus from the land of Egypt, in the first month. He said:  
<sup>2</sup> "Let the Israelites keep the Passover at its appointed time. <sup>3</sup> The fourteenth day of this month, between the two evenings, is the appointed time for you to keep it. You must keep it with all the laws and customs proper to it."

<sup>4</sup> And Moses gave orders for the Israelites to keep the Passover. <sup>5</sup> They kept the Passover, in the desert of Sinai, in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, between the two evenings. The Israelites did exactly as Yahweh had ordered Moses. <sup>6</sup> But it happened that certain men had become unclean by touching the dead body of a man, so that

## NUMBERS 9

- <sup>1</sup> Vv. 1-14 do not fit into the chronological scheme of Ch. 1, whose starting-point is the second month, v. 1:1. The section supplements the great rulings on the Passover (Ex 12) with a clause of considerable interest to the Jews of the Dispersion, who were obliged to come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover (Dt 16:2) but were rendered ritually unclean by the exigencies of the journey and consequently risked missing the Passover owing to the time required for purification.
- <sup>2</sup> In place of 'time', here following the MT, the LXX has 'times' (*ῥῆμα*), but a singular form in vv. 7 & 13; the Samaritan Pentateuch uses plurals in all three places.
- <sup>3</sup> Two words in the last sentence are standard Torah words: חֻקְתָּיו ('laws') refers to binding statutes: something engraved and monumental; מִשְׁפָּטָיו ('customs') means 'judgments' or 'decisions', but with a more general idea of 'customs' at its core. The verse is making it very clear that the Passover had to follow the custom and form that was legislated in Egypt.
- <sup>4</sup> In the phrase 'to keep', the infinitive construct functions as the direct object of the preceding verb (a Hebrew complementary usage), answering the question of what he said.
- <sup>5</sup> The LXX lacks 'they kept the Passover' and 'between the two evenings'.
- <sup>6</sup> On uncleanness through touching a corpse, see Lv 21:1-12.

הַפֶּסַח בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּקְרְבוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וּלְפָנָי אֶהְרֹן  
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: <sup>ז</sup>וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהֵמָּה אֵלָיו אֲנַחְנוּ  
 טְמֵאִים לַנֶּפֶשׁ אָדָם לָמָּה נִגְרַע לְבַלְתִּי הַקְרִיב  
 אֶת־קִרְבָּן יְהוָה בְּמַעַדוֹ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
<sup>ח</sup>וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מֹשֶׁה עֲמְדוּ וְאַשְׁמְעָה מִה־יְצִוָּה  
 יְהוָה לָכֶם: {פ}

<sup>ט</sup>וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: יִדְבֹר אֶל־בְּנֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי־יִהְיֶה־טָמֵא | לַנֶּפֶשׁ אוֹ  
 בַּדֶּרֶךְ רַחֲקָה לָכֶם אוֹ לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם וַעֲשֵׂה פֶסַח  
 לַיהוָה: <sup>יא</sup>בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם בֵּין  
 הָעֶרְבִים יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ עַל־מִצּוֹת וּמִרְרִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ:  
<sup>יב</sup>לֹא־יִשְׁאַירוּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר וַעֲצֵם לֹא יִשְׂבְּרוּ־בּוֹ  
 כְּכָל־חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ: <sup>יג</sup>וְהָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־הוּא  
 טָהוֹר וּבַדֶּרֶךְ לֹא־יִהְיֶה וְחָדַל לַעֲשׂוֹת הַפֶּסַח

they could not keep the Passover that day; and they came the same day before Moses and Aaron, <sup>7</sup> and said to them: “We have become unclean by touching the dead body of a man. Why should we be forbidden to bring an offering to Yahweh at the proper time with the rest of the Israelites?” <sup>8</sup> Moses answered them, “Wait there until I learn what orders Yahweh gives about you.”

<sup>9</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses: <sup>10</sup> “Say this to the Israelites: “If anyone of you or your descendants becomes unclean by touching a corpse or is away on a journey, he can still keep a Passover for Yahweh. <sup>11</sup> He shall keep it in the second month, on the fourteenth day, between the two evenings; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; <sup>12</sup> He shall leave none of it until morning, nor shall they break any of its bones: they must keep this Passover exactly according to the ritual. <sup>13</sup> But if he who is clean, or who is not on a journey, fails to keep the Passover, he shall be

<sup>7</sup> Being ritually unclean, the men could not enter the Sanctuary.

<sup>8</sup> This verse shows that Israel’s law was not fixed and unchangeable but developed as the people faced new situations (15:23).

<sup>9</sup> The particle at the end of this verse (‘saying’) has not been translated, as it is clumsy in modern English.

<sup>10</sup> The case of one who is ‘away on a journey’ presupposes settlement in Canaan and goes beyond the case at hand (v. 7).

<sup>11</sup> The delay of 4 weeks for such people would have permitted enough time for them to return from their journey, or to recover from any short-term defilement such as is mentioned here; apart from this provision, the Passover was to be kept precisely at the proper time.

<sup>12</sup> The NRSV & NETB have ‘they’ in place of ‘he’, as also in v. 11.

<sup>13</sup> There are at least 3 possible interpretations for being ‘cut off from his people’: physical death at the hand of the community; physical and/or spiritual death at the hand of God; or excommunication or separation from the community. The direct intervention of God seems to be the most likely in view of the lack of directions for the community to follow; excommunication from the camp in the desert would have been tantamount to a death sentence by the community, and so there really are just 2 views.

וּנְכַרְתָּהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מֵעַמִּיהָ כִּי קָרַבַּן יְהוָה לֹא  
הַקָּרִיב בְּמַעַדוֹ חֲטָאוֹ יִשָּׂא הָאִישׁ הַהוּא: יד וְכִי-  
יֵגוּר אֶתְכֶם זָר וְעָשָׂה פֶסַח לַיהוָה כְּחֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח  
וּכְמִשְׁפָּטוֹ כֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה חֻקָּה אַחַת יְהִיֶּה לָכֶם וְלִזְרָא  
וְלִאֲזָרָח הָאָרֶץ: {ס}

טו וּבַיּוֹם הַקִּים אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן כִּסָּה הָעֲנַן אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן  
לְאַהֲלֵי הָעֵדֻת וּבִעֶרְבֹה יְהִי עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן כְּמֵרְאָה-  
אֵשׁ עַד-בֹּקֶר: טז כֵּן יְהִי תָמִיד הָעֲנַן יִכְסֶּנּוּ  
וּמֵרְאָה-אֵשׁ לַיְלָה: יז וּלְפִי הָעֲלֹת הָעֲנַן מֵעַל  
הָאֹהֶל וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יִסְעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר  
יִשְׁכֹּן-שָׁם הָעֲנַן שָׁם יַחֲנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: יח עַל-פִּי  
יְהוָה יִסְעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל-פִּי יְהוָה יַחֲנוּ כָּל-יְמֵי  
אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכֹּן הָעֲנַן עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן יַחֲנוּ:

יט וּבִהָאָרֶץ הָעֲנַן עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן יָמִים רַבִּים וְשָׁמְרוּ  
בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-מִשְׁמַרְתּוֹ יְהוָה וְלֹא יִסְעוּ: כ וַיֵּשׁ  
אֲשֶׁר יְהִי הָעֲנַן יָמִים מְסֻפָּר עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּן עַל-פִּי

cut off from his people; he has not brought the offering to Yahweh at its appointed time, and he must bear the burden of his sin.<sup>14</sup> If a stranger is living among and keeps a Passover for Yahweh, he must keep it in accordance with its laws and customs. You must have only one law among you, for settler and native alike.”

<sup>15</sup> On the day the Dwelling was set up, the Cloud covered the Dwelling, the Tent of the Testimony; from nightfall until morning, it stayed over the Dwelling, with the appearance of fire.<sup>16</sup> The Cloud covered it continually by day, at night taking the appearance of fire.<sup>17</sup> Whenever the Cloud lifted above the Tent, the Israelites broke camp; wherever the Cloud halted, the Israelites pitched camp.<sup>18</sup> The Israelites set out at the command of Yahweh, and at his command, they pitched camp. The people remained in camp as long as the Cloud rested on the Dwelling.

<sup>19</sup> If the Cloud stayed many days on the Dwelling, the Israelites kept Yahweh’s command and did not break camp.<sup>20</sup> If the Cloud was a few days on the Dwelling, they pitched camp at Yahweh’s command and

<sup>14</sup> The literal translation of ‘you must have’ is ‘there will be to you’, which is the way of expressing possession in Hebrew; since this is legal instruction, the imperfect tense must be instruction or legislation.

<sup>15</sup> Vv. 15–23 (compare 14:14) presuppose Israel’s march, rather than the sojourn at Sinai, and thus anticipate 10:11–13. The Cloud was apparently centred over the tent, over the spot of the Ark of the Covenant in the most holy place; it thereafter spread over the whole Tabernacle.

<sup>16</sup> The NJB lacks ‘by day’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>17</sup> The literal translation of ‘wherever the Cloud halted’ is ‘in the place where the Cloud settled there’.

<sup>18</sup> The literal translation of ‘at the command’ is ‘at the mouth’.

<sup>19</sup> An alternative translation for ‘kept Yahweh’s command’ (as WEBBE) is ‘performed their duty to Yahweh’ (as NJB).

<sup>20</sup> In place of ‘few’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘number of’, suggesting that the stay was prolonged.



יְהוָה יַחֲנוּ וְעַל־פִּי יְהוָה יִסְעוּ: כֹּא וַיֵּשׁ אֲשֶׁר־יְהִי  
 הָעֲנָן מֵעֶרֶב עַד־בֹּקֶר וְנִעְלָה הָעֲנָן בִּבְקָר וְנִסְעוּ אִוֹ  
 יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה וְנִעְלָה הָעֲנָן וְנִסְעוּ: כִּב אִו־יָמִים אִו־  
 חֹדֶשׁ אִו־יָמִים בְּהֶאֱרִיךְ הָעֲנָן עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּן לִשְׁכֹּן  
 עֲלָיו יַחֲנוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא יִסְעוּ וּבִהֲעֹלְתוֹ יִסְעוּ:  
 כִּג עַל־פִּי יְהוָה יַחֲנוּ וְעַל־פִּי יְהוָה יִסְעוּ אֶת־  
 מִשְׁמַרְתּוֹ יְהוָה שָׁמְרוּ עַל־פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה:  
 {פ}

broke camp at Yahweh's command.<sup>21</sup> If the Cloud stayed from evening to morning, they set out when it lifted in the morning; if it stayed for a day and a night, they set out when it lifted.<sup>22</sup> Whether it was two days, a month, or a year that the Cloud was above the Dwelling, the Israelites remained in camp and, when it lifted, they set out.<sup>23</sup> At Yahweh's command, they pitched camp, and at Yahweh's command, they broke camp. They worshipped Yahweh, according to the Yahweh's orders through Moses.

<sup>21</sup> Before 'evening', the NJB & NETB add 'only', to emphasise the contrast with the preceding verses.

<sup>22</sup> The phrase 'or a year' (as NJB & NETB – the NRSV has 'or a longer time') is a speculative translation for אִו־יָמִים, in view of the sequence of words leading up to it, as well as in comparison with passages like Jg 17:10 and 1S 1:3 & 27:7 and its use in Gn 40:4 and 1K 17:15. Others suggest that it means 4 months.

<sup>23</sup> The literal translation of 'through' is 'by the hand of'.

## במדבר פרק י

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב עֲשֵׂה לָךְ שְׁתֵּי חֲצוֹצְרוֹת כֶּסֶף מְקֻשָּׁה תַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם וְהָיוּ לָךְ לְמִקְרָא הַעֲדָה וּלְמַסַּע אֶת־הַמַּחֲנֹת: ג וְתִקְעוּ בָהֶן וְנוֹעְדוּ אֵלֶיךָ כָּל־הָעֵדָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ד וְאִם־בְּאַחַת יִתְקַעוּ וְנוֹעְדוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַנְּשִׂאִים רָאשֵׁי אֲלֵפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

ה וְתִקְעֹתֶם תְּרוּעָה וְנִסְעוּ הַמַּחֲנֹת הַחֲנִים קִדְמָה: ו וְתִקְעֹתֶם תְּרוּעָה שֵׁנִית וְנִסְעוּ הַמַּחֲנֹת הַחֲנִים תִּמְנָה תְּרוּעָה יִתְקַעוּ לְמַסְעֵיהֶם: ז וּבִהְקֵיל אֶת־

## NUMBERS 10

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: <sup>2</sup> "Make two trumpets; make them of beaten silver; and use them for summoning the community, and for sounding the order to break camp. <sup>3</sup> Whenever they are blown, the whole community is to gather round you, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. <sup>4</sup> However, if only one trumpet is blown, then only the leaders, the chiefs of Israel's battalions, are to gather round you.

<sup>5</sup> "When the alarm sounds, the camps pitched to the east shall set out.

<sup>6</sup> At the second alarm, the camps pitched to the south shall set out. To break camp, they must sound the alarm, <sup>7</sup> but to assemble the

## NUMBERS 10

<sup>1</sup> Here, we have a short section (10:1–10) dealing with the regulations for blowing trumpets in times of war or in times of peace.

<sup>2</sup> The instructions, 'beaten silver', are not clearly explained here but the 'trumpets' were to be made of silver ingots beaten out into a sheet of silver and then bent to form a trumpet. There is archaeological evidence of silver smelting as early as 3000 BCE.

<sup>3</sup> Literally translated, the phrase 'the whole community is to gather' is 'the assembly shall assemble themselves'.

<sup>4</sup> A more literal translation of 'are to gather' is 'shall assemble themselves' (cf. #3).

<sup>5</sup> In place of 'alarm sounds', here following the MT and NRSV, the NJB has 'trumpet blast is accompanied by a battle cry'. The word for an alarm is תְּרוּעָה and its root verb means 'to give a blast on the trumpet'. It may also on occasion mean 'give a shout' in battle (Jos 6:10); in this passage, it must refer to the sound of the trumpet. The Hebrew word for 'battle cry' primarily means a sacred war cry (v. 9, 31:6, and see Jos 6:5, 20, Am 1:14, 2:2, Zp 1:16, etc.), part of the Ark ceremonial (1S 4:5 and see 2S 6:15), each stage of the journey being regarded as a march to battle; acclamations were also in use on royal occasions (23:21, and see 1K 1:34, 40) and at religious festivals (29:1, Lv 25:9, and see #Ps 33:3).

<sup>6</sup> After 'south shall set out', the LXX adds, "καὶ σαλπιδίτε σημασίαν τρίτην, καὶ ἐξαροῦσιν αἱ παρεμβολαὶ αἱ παρεμβάλλουσαι παρὰ θάλασσαν· καὶ σαλπιδίτε σημασίαν τετάρτην, καὶ ἐξαροῦσιν αἱ παρεμβολαὶ αἱ παρεμβάλλουσαι πρὸς βορρᾶν," ("at the third alarm, the camps on the west side shall set out; at the fourth alarm, the camps on the north side shall set out." The Greek is not likely to be original, however, since it carries all the signs of addition to complete the text, making a smooth, full reading; the MT is to be preferred: it apparently used two of the groups to give the idea.

<sup>7</sup> There is no expressed subject in the initial temporal clause but, since the next verb is 2P, that may be taken as the intended subject here.

הַקֹּהֵל תִּתְקַעוּ וְלֹא תִרְעוּ: <sup>ח</sup> וּבְנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים יִתְקַעוּ בַּחֲצָצְרוֹת וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לַחֲקַת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: <sup>ט</sup> וְכִי־תֵבֹאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאֶרֶצְכֶם עַל־הָעָר הַצָּר הַצָּר אֶתְכֶם וְהִרְעַתְם בַּחֲצָצְרֹת וְנִזְכַּרְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְנוֹשַׁעְתֶּם מֵאִיְבֵיכֶם: <sup>י</sup> וּבְיוֹם שְׂמֹחַתְכֶם וּבְמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם וּבִרְאשֵׁי חֳדָשֵׁיכֶם וּתְקַעְתֶּם בַּחֲצָצְרֹת עַל עֹלֹתֵיכֶם וְעַל זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְזִכָּרוֹן לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: {פ}

<sup>יא</sup> וַיְהִי בַשָּׁנָה הַשֵּׁנִית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי בְּעֶשְׂרִים בַּחֹדֶשׁ נָעָלָה הָעֶנָן מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדֻת: <sup>יב</sup> וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַסְעֵיהֶם מִמִּדְבַּר סִינַי וַיֵּשְׁכּוּ הָעֶנָן בְּמִדְבַּר פָּאֲרָן: <sup>יג</sup> וַיִּסְעוּ בְּרֹאשׁוֹנָה עַל־פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה: <sup>יד</sup> וַיֵּסַע דָּגֹל מַחֲנֶה בְנֵי־יְהוּדָה בְּרֹאשׁוֹנָה

community, you shall blow the trumpet but not sound an alarm. <sup>8</sup> The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to sound the trumpets; this is a perpetual law throughout your generations. <sup>9</sup> In your own land, when you go to war against an enemy who oppresses you, you must sound the alarm with the trumpets: Yahweh your God will remember you, and you will be saved from your enemies. <sup>10</sup> At your festivals, solemnities or new-moon feasts, you will sound the trumpet with your high-offerings and your communion sacrifices, and they will call you to the remembrance of your God. I am Yahweh your God."

<sup>11</sup> In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the Cloud lifted over the Dwelling of the Testimony. <sup>12</sup> The Israelites set out in stages, from the desert of Sinai; and the Cloud settled in the desert of Paran. <sup>13</sup> They first set out at the order of Yahweh given by Moses: <sup>14</sup> the standard of the camp of the Judahites was in front, in

<sup>8</sup> In place of 'perpetual law', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'perpetual instruction' and NETB has 'eternal ordinance'.

<sup>9</sup> The Niphal perfect here ('saved') has a passive nuance and is not reflexive: the Israelites would be spared because God remembered them.

<sup>10</sup> After this verse, the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Syro-Haxaplar OT add the following verse, which the NJB includes among the footnotes:

Yahweh said to Moses, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Go, leave here and go to the hill country of the Amorites, to all those who dwell in the Plain, the uplands, the lowlands, the Negeb and the sea coast, of Canaan and the Lebanon as far as the great River, the River Euphrates. Look, I have put the country in front of you; go and take possession of the country that I swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that I would give to their descendants after them."

<sup>11</sup> The people departed from Sinai with signs of Yahweh's accompanying presence (v. 12); the date was 11 months after the arrival at Sinai (Ex 19:1) or 19 days after the census (Nb 1:1).

<sup>12</sup> In the phrase, 'set out in stages', the verb is the same as the noun ('they journeyed on their journeyings'), underscoring the point of their travelling.

<sup>13</sup> The literal translation of 'given by' is 'by the hand of'.

<sup>14</sup> The 'standard' (דָּגֹל) was apparently some kind of a symbol put up on a pole to signify the tribal hosts.

לְצַבְּאֹתָם וְעַל־צִבְּאֹ נַחֲשֹׁן בֶּן־עַמִּינָדָב: <sup>טו</sup> וְעַל־  
צִבְּאֹ מִטָּה בְּנֵי יִשָּׁשְׁכָר נִתְנָאֵל בֶּן־צֹעֵר: <sup>טז</sup> וְעַל־  
צִבְּאֹ מִטָּה בְּנֵי זְבוּלֹן אֱלִיאָב בֶּן־חֶלֶן:  
<sup>יז</sup> וְהוֹרֵד הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְנִסְעוּ בְּנֵי־גֵרְשֹׁן וּבְנֵי מֶרָרִי נְשֵׂאֵי  
הַמִּשְׁכָּן: <sup>יח</sup> וְנִסְעַתְּ דָּגֹל מַחֲנֵה רְאוּבֵן לְצַבְּאֹתָם וְעַל־  
צִבְּאֹ אֱלִיזֹר בֶּן־שִׁדְיָאוֹר: <sup>יט</sup> וְעַל־צִבְּאֹ מִטָּה בְּנֵי  
שִׁמְעוֹן שְׁלִמְיָאֵל בֶּן־צֹרִישַׁדַּי: <sup>כ</sup> וְעַל־צִבְּאֹ מִטָּה  
בְּנֵי־גָד אֱלִיסָפִי בֶן־דְּעוּאֵל:  
<sup>כא</sup> וְנִסְעוּ הַקְּהָתִים נְשֵׂאֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְהַקִּימוּ אֶת־  
הַמִּשְׁכָּן עַד־בָּאָם: <sup>כב</sup> וְנִסְעַתְּ דָּגֹל מַחֲנֵה בְּנֵי־אֶפְרַיִם  
לְצַבְּאֹתָם וְעַל־צִבְּאֹ אֱלִישָׁמָע בֶּן־עַמִּיהוּד: <sup>כג</sup> וְעַל־  
צִבְּאֹ מִטָּה בְּנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה גַּמְלִיאֵל בֶּן־פְּדָהצֹר:  
<sup>כד</sup> וְעַל־צִבְּאֹ מִטָּה בְּנֵי בְּנִמִּן אֲבִידָן בֶּן־גְּדֵעֹנִי:  
<sup>כה</sup> וְנִסְעַתְּ דָּגֹל מַחֲנֵה בְּנֵי־דָן מֵאֶסֶף לְכָל־הַמַּחֲנֵה  
לְצַבְּאֹתָם וְעַל־צִבְּאֹ אַחִיעֶזֶר בֶּן־עַמִּישַׁדַּי: <sup>כו</sup> וְעַל־

battle array; over his army was Nahshon son of Amminadab; <sup>15</sup> over the Issacharites, in battle array, was Nethanel son of Zuar; <sup>16</sup> over the Zebulunites, in battle array, was Eliab son of Helon.

<sup>17</sup> The Dwelling was dismantled and the Gershonites and the Merarites set out, bearing the Dwelling. <sup>18</sup> Then came the standard of the camp of the Reubenites, in battle array; over his army was Elizur son of Shedeur; <sup>19</sup> over the Simeonites, in battle array, was Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai; <sup>20</sup> over the Gadites, in battle array, was Eliasaph son of Deuel.

<sup>21</sup> Then came Kohathites, carrying the sanctuary (the Dwelling was set up before they arrived). <sup>22</sup> Then came the standard of the camp of the Ephraimites, in battle array; over his army was Elishama son of Ammihud; <sup>23</sup> over the Manassites, in battle array, was Gamaliel son of Pedahzur; <sup>24</sup> over the Benjaminites was Abidan son of Gideoni.

<sup>25</sup> As rearguard of all the camps came the standard of the camp of the Danites, in battle array; over his army was Ahiezer son of Ammi-

<sup>15</sup> In place of 'over', the NJB has 'in command of'.

<sup>16</sup> In place of 'Eliab', here following the MT (אֱלִיאָב), LXX (Ελιαβ), NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'Elion'.

<sup>17</sup> NETB lacks 'set out', here following the NJB & NRSV.

<sup>18</sup> For 'Elizur son of Shedeur', here following the MT (אֱלִיזֹר בֶּן־שִׁדְיָאוֹר), the LXX has Ελισουρ υἱὸς Σεδιουρ.

<sup>19</sup> In place of 'Zurishaddai', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'Zurishadday'.

<sup>20</sup> In place of 'Deuel', here following the MT (דְּעוּאֵל), the NJB has 'Reuel' (orthographic confusion between ד & ר: the LXX has Παγουηλ, or).

<sup>21</sup> The verb here translated as 'to be set up' is in the 3PL form; without an expressed subject, it is treated as a passive.

<sup>22</sup> For 'Ammihud' (עַמִּיהוּד), here following the MT, the LXX has Εμιουδ.

<sup>23</sup> For 'Pedahzur' (פְּדָהצֹר), here following the MT, the LXX has Φαδασσουρ.

<sup>24</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Gideoni' (גְּדֵעֹנִי) is Γαδεωνι.

<sup>25</sup> For 'rearguard', the MT uses a word that actually means 'assembler'; so, these 3 tribes made up a strong rear force acting as the assembler.

צָבָא מִטָּה בְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר פָּגְעִיאל בֶּן־עֶכְרָן: כִּי וְעַל־  
צָבָא מִטָּה בְּנֵי נַפְתָּלִי אַחִירַע בֶּן־עֵינָן: כֹּחַ אֵלֶּה  
מִסַּעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְצָבָאתָם וַיִּסְעוּ: {ס}

כֹּחַ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹבָב בֶּן־רְעוּאֵל הַמִּדְיָנִי חָתָן  
מֹשֶׁה נְסַעִים | אֲנַחְנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה  
אֵתָּו אֲתָּן לָכֶם לָכֶה אֲתָּנוּ וְהִטַּבְנוּ לָךְ כִּי־יְהוָה  
דִּבֶּר־טוֹב עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל: לֹא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לֹא אֵלָיִךְ כִּי  
אִם־אֶל־אַרְצִי וְאֶל־מוֹלֶדְתִּי אֵלָיִךְ: לֹא וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָא  
תַּעֲזֹב אֲתָּנוּ כִּי | עַל־כֵּן יָדַעְתָּ חֲנֻתָּנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהִיִּיתָ  
לָנוּ לְעֵינָיִם: לֵב וְהָיָה כִּי־תֵלֵךְ עִמָּנוּ וְהָיָה | הַטּוֹב  
הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִיטִיב יְהוָה עִמָּנוּ וְהִטַּבְנוּ לָךְ:

לֵב וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהָר יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים וְאֲרוֹן בְּרִית־  
יְהוָה נָסַע לִפְנֵיהֶם דֶּרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לְתוֹר לָהֶם

shaddai; <sup>26</sup> over the Asherites, in battle array, was Pagiel son of Ochran;  
<sup>27</sup> over the Naphtalites, in battle array, was Ahira son of Enan. <sup>28</sup> Such  
was the march of the Israelites, in battle array, and so they set out.

<sup>29</sup> Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, his father-in-law,  
“We are setting out for the land of which Yahweh has said: I will give it  
to you. Come with us, and we will treat you well, for Yahweh has  
promised happiness to Israel.” <sup>30</sup> “I will not go,” he answered, “I will go  
back to my own land and my own kindred.” <sup>31</sup> “Do not leave us,” Moses  
replied, “for you know where we can camp in the desert, and so you  
will be our eyes. <sup>32</sup> If you come with us, you will share in the blessing of  
the happiness with which Yahweh blesses us.”

<sup>33</sup> They set out from the mountain of Yahweh three days’ journey. The  
Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh went at their head for this three days’

<sup>26</sup> The LXX rendering of ‘Ochran’ (עֶכְרָן) is *Εχραν*.

<sup>27</sup> For ‘Ahira’ (אַחִירַע) and ‘Enan’ (עֵינָן), the LXX has, respectively, *Αχιρε* & *Αναν*.

<sup>28</sup> The verb here translated ‘set out’ is the preterite with *vav* consecutive; but, in this sentence it should be subordinated as a temporal clause to the preceding statement, even though it follows it.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Hobab’ (חֹבָב, otherwise known as Jethro, see #Ex 2:18) was a Kenite (see #24:21), of a tribe we subsequently find in league with Judah and dominating the region of Hebron (Jos 14:14, and see #Jg 1:16).

<sup>30</sup> In place of ‘I will not go’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘I will not come with you’.

<sup>31</sup> The Bedouin still call a guide ‘the eye of the caravan’. Hobab was familiar with the entire Sinai region, and he could certainly direct the people where they were to go. The text does not record Hobab’s response, but the fact that Kenites were in Canaan as allies of Judah (Jg 1:16) would indicate that he gave in and came with Moses.

<sup>32</sup> For this verse, the NRSV reads, “Moreover, if you go with us, whatever good the LORD does for us, the same we will do for you.”

<sup>33</sup> The phrase ‘three days’ journey’ is made up of the adverbial accusative qualified with the genitives.



מְנוּחָה: לֹא וַעֲנֵן יְהוָה עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹמָם בְּנִסְעֵם מִן־ journey, to seek out a camping place for them. <sup>34</sup> In the day, the Cloud  
הַמַּחֲנֶה: {ס} of Yahweh was over them, once they had broken camp.  
ז {ס} לֵיה וַיְהִי בְנִסְעַת הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה <sup>35</sup> Whenever the Ark set out, Moses would say:  
קוּמָה! יְהוָה וַיִּפְצֹל אֹיְבָיֶיךָ “Arise, Yahweh, may your enemies be scattered  
וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנֹאֵיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ: and those who hate you run for their lives before you!”  
לֹא וּבִנְחָה יֹאמֶר <sup>36</sup> And, when it halted, he would say,  
שׁוּבָה יְהוָה “Come back, Yahweh,  
רַבְבוֹת אֱלֹפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס} to the thronging hosts of Israel.”  
ז {פ}

<sup>34</sup> In the LXX, this verse follows v. 36.

<sup>35</sup> The ‘Song to the Ark’ (vv. 35–36), a very ancient piece of poetry, reflects the view that the Ark was a throne upon which Yahweh, the Divine Warrior, was seated invisibly while waging holy war (Jos 3–4, 1S 4:3–22, compare Ps 24:7–10).

The 2 ל characters (‘inverted nun’ or *nun hafucha*) enclosing vv. 35–36 are marks indicating that a scribe thought the passage is misplaced and should be elsewhere.

<sup>36</sup> The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain; the NRSV reads:

“Return, O LORD

of the ten thousand thousands of Israel.”

These two formulaic prayers were offered by Moses at the beginning and at the end of the journeys. They prayed for God to fight ahead of the nation when it was on the move, and to protect them when they camped. The theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> is found in Ps 68:1. The prayers reflect the true mentality of holy war, that it was God who fought for Israel and defended her. The prayers have been included in the prayer book for synagogue services.

## NUMBERS 11

## במדבר פרק יא

- <sup>א</sup> וַיְהִי הָעַם כְּמִתְאַנְנִים רַע בְּאָזְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה וַיַּחַר אַפּוֹ וַתִּבְעַר-בָּם אֵשׁ יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל בְּקֶצֶה הַמַּחֲנֶה: <sup>ב</sup> וַיִּצְעַק הָעַם אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה וַתִּשְׁקַע הָאֵשׁ: <sup>ג</sup> וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא תִּבְעָרָה כִּי-בָעָרָה בָּם אֵשׁ יְהוָה:
- <sup>ד</sup> וְהָאֶסְפָּסָף אֲשֶׁר בִּקְרָבוֹ הִתְאַוּוּ תֵּאוֹה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיִּבְכוּ גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִי יַאֲכִלֵנוּ בָשָׂר: <sup>ה</sup> זָכַרְנוּ אֶת-הַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר-נֹאכַל בְּמִצְרַיִם חֲנָם אֶת-הַקִּשְׁאִים וְאֶת הָאֲבִטָּחִים וְאֶת-הַחֲצִיר וְאֶת-הַבָּצְלִים וְאֶת-הַשּׁוּמִיִּם: <sup>ו</sup> וְעַתָּה נַפְשֵׁנוּ יִבֶּשֶׁה אֵין כָּל בְּלֹתִי אֶל-הַמָּן עֵינֵינוּ:
- <sup>1</sup> Now the people were complaining in Yahweh's ears; when Yahweh heard, his anger blazed, and the fire of Yahweh broke out among them: it destroyed one end of the camp. <sup>2</sup> The people appealed to Moses, and he prayed to Yahweh and the fire abated. <sup>3</sup> So, the place was called Taberah, because the fire of Yahweh burnt among them.
- <sup>4</sup> The mixed rabble who had joined the people were feeling the pangs of hunger, and the Israelites themselves began to weep again, "Who will give us meat to eat?" they said. <sup>5</sup> Think of the fish we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic! <sup>6</sup> Here we are wasting away, stripped of everything; there is nothing but manna for us to look at!"

## NUMBERS 11

- <sup>1</sup> The expression, 'his anger blazed' uses the verb חָר ('burned'); the subject is אַפּוֹ ('his anger' – literally, 'his nose'), which flares in rage. The 'fire of Yahweh' is supernatural: it comes from God and not from a natural source; God gave them something to complain about – something to fear.
- <sup>2</sup> Here is the pattern that will become, in the desert experience, so common – the complaining turns to a cry to Moses, which is then interpreted as a prayer to Yahweh, and there is healing. The sequence presents a symbolic lesson, an illustration of the intercession of the Holy Spirit.
- <sup>3</sup> The name 'Taberah' (תִּבְעָרָה) is given to the spot as a commemoration of the desert experience; it is explained by the formula using the verbal root, 'to burn'. Such naming narratives are found dozens of times in the OT, and most frequently in the Pentateuch.
- <sup>4</sup> The narrative of vv. 4–34 combines two traditions, one about the manna and quails (vv. 4–13, 18–24a, 31–34) and the other about the gift of the Spirit to the elders (vv. 14–17, 24b–30). The text of Exodus sites the incident of the manna and quails between the departure from Egypt and the arrival at Sinai (see #Ex 16:1); here, it is put on the road to Kadesh (see 13:26).
- <sup>5</sup> As with all who complain in such situations, the Israelites' memory was selective: it was their bitter cries to Yahweh from the suffering in bondage that God heard and answered. And now, shortly after being set free, their memory of Egypt is for things they do not now have; (it is also somewhat unlikely that they as slaves had such abundant foods in Egypt).
- <sup>6</sup> The Israelites were complaining both about the bland taste of the manna and dehydration: they were parched in the desert.

וְהָמָן כַּזְרַע־גֶּד הוּא וְעֵינָיו כַּעֵין הַבְּדֹלֶחַ: <sup>ח</sup> שָׁטוּ  
הָעָם וּלְקָטוּ וּטְחֲנוּ בִרְחִים אֹז דָּכוּ בַמִּדְכָּה וּבְשָׁלוּ  
בַּפָּרוֹר וַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ עֲגֹזֹת וְהָיָה טַעְמוֹ כְּטַעַם לֶשֶׁד  
הַשָּׁמֶן: <sup>ט</sup> וּבִרְדַּת הַטֵּל עַל־הַמַּחֲנֶה לַיְלָה יָרַד הַמָּן  
עִלָּיו:

וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם בֹּכֶה לְמִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ אִישׁ  
לְפִתַּח אֹהֶלוֹ וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף יְהוָה מְאֹד וּבְעֵינָי מֹשֶׁה רָע:  
<sup>יא</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה לָמָּה הִרְעַלְתָּ לְעַבְדְּךָ  
וּלְמָה לֹא־מָצִיתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ לָשׂוּם אֶת־מִשְׁאֵל כָּל־  
הָעָם הַזֶּה עָלַי: <sup>יב</sup> הֲאֵנֹכִי הָרִיתִי אֶת כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה  
אִם־אֵנֹכִי יִלְדֵתִיהוּ כִּי־תֹאמַר אֵלַי שְׂאֵהוּ בְּחִיקְךָ  
כְּאִשֶּׁר יִשָּׂא הָאִמָּן אֶת־הַיֶּלֶק עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר  
נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לַאֲבוֹתָיו: <sup>יג</sup> מֵאֵין לִי בָשָׂר לָתֵת לְכָל־הָעָם  
הַזֶּה כִּי־יִבְכּוּ עָלַי לֵאמֹר תִּנֶּה־לָנוּ בָשָׂר וְנֹאכְלָה:  
<sup>יד</sup> לֹא־אוּכַל אֲנֹכִי לִבְדִּי לְשַׂאת אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה

<sup>7</sup> The manna was like coriander seed and had the colour of bdellium.

<sup>8</sup> The people went round gathering it and ground it in a mill or crushed it with a pestle; they cooked it in a pot and ground into pancakes. It tasted like cake made with olive oil. <sup>9</sup> When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna fell with it.

<sup>10</sup> And Moses heard the people wailing, every family at the door of its tent. The anger of Yahweh flared out, and Moses greatly worried over this <sup>11</sup> and he spoke to Yahweh: “Why do you treat your servant so badly? Why have I not found favour with you, so that you burden me with the weight of this entire nation? <sup>12</sup> Was it I who conceived all these people, was it I who gave them birth, that you should say to me, “Carry them in your bosom, like a nurse with a baby at the breast, to the land that I swore to give to their fathers”? <sup>13</sup> Where am I to find meat to give to all these people, when they come worrying me so tearfully and say, “Give us meat that we may eat”? <sup>14</sup> I am not able to carry this nation by

<sup>7</sup> The NRSV has ‘gum resin’ in place of ‘bdellium’, here following the NJB & NETB. Bdellium is a resin extracted from certain African trees.

<sup>8</sup> Literally translated, the last sentence is, “And its taste was like the taste of fresh olive oil.”

<sup>9</sup> The literal translation of ‘fell’ is ‘came down’ (twice in this verse).

<sup>10</sup> Moses’ worry shows how contagious their complaining has been. It is one thing to cry out to God about the load of ministry but it is quite another to do it in such a way as to reflect a lack of faith in God’s provision. God has to remind the Moses that he, Yahweh, can do anything.

<sup>11</sup> On Moses’ impatience, see Ex 17:2–4.

<sup>12</sup> The questions Moses asks are rhetorical; he is actually affirming that they are not his people, that he did not produce them, but now is to support them. His point is that God produced this nation but has put the burden of caring for their needs on him.

<sup>13</sup> In the clause, ‘give us meat that we may eat’, the cohortative coming after the imperative stresses purpose (it is an indirect volitive).

<sup>14</sup> The subject of the clause ‘it is too heavy’ is unstated; in the context, it probably refers to the people, or the burden of caring for the people.

כִּי כָבֵד מִמֶּנִּי: <sup>טו</sup> וְאִם-כָּכָה | אֶת-עֲשֵׂה לִי הֲרֹגִי נָא  
הֲרֹג אִם-מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְאֶל-אַרְאֶה בְּרַעְתִּי:  
{פ}

<sup>טז</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אֲסַפֶּה-לִּי שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ  
מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָדַעְתָּ כִּי-הֵם זִקְנֵי הָעָם  
וְשִׁטְרֵיו וְלִקְחָתָם אִתָּם אֶל-אַהֲל מוֹעֵד וְהִתִּיצְבוּ שָׁם  
עִמָּךְ: <sup>יז</sup> וְיָרַדְתִּי וְדִבַּרְתִּי עִמָּךְ שָׁם וְאֶצְלָתִי מִן-  
הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ וְשָׁמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם וְנִשְׁאוּ אִתָּךְ  
בְּמִשָּׁא הָעָם וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא אֹתָהּ לְבַדָּךְ:

<sup>יח</sup> וְאֶל-הָעָם תֹּאמַר הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ לְמָחָר וְאָכַלְתֶּם  
בָּשָׂר כִּי בָכִיתֶם בְּאָזְנִי יְהוָה לֵאמֹר מִי יֹאכְלֵנוּ  
בָּשָׂר כִּי-טוֹב לָנוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְנָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם בָּשָׂר  
וְאָכַלְתֶּם: <sup>יט</sup> לֹא יוֹם אֶחָד תֹּאכְלוּן וְלֹא יוֹמִים וְלֹא  
חֲמִשָּׁה יָמִים וְלֹא עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים וְלֹא עֶשְׂרִים יוֹם:  
<sup>כ</sup> עַד | חֹדֶשׁ יָמִים עַד אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא מֵאִפְכֶם וְהָיָה לָכֶם

myself; it is too heavy for me. <sup>15</sup> If this is how you want to deal with me, I would rather you killed me! If only I had found favour in your eyes, and not lived to see such misery as this!"

<sup>16</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, "Gather seventy of the elders of Israel, men you know to be the people's elders and officials. Bring them to the Tent of Meeting and let them stand beside you there. <sup>17</sup> I will come down to speak with you; and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them. Therefore, they will share with you the burden of this nation, and you will no longer have to carry it by yourself.

<sup>18</sup> "And to the people, say this, "Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow and you will have meat to eat, now that you have wailed in the hearing of Yahweh and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? How much better off we were in Egypt!" Therefore, Yahweh will give you meat to eat!

<sup>19</sup> You shall eat not for one day only, or two days, or five days, or ten days or twenty days, <sup>20</sup> but for a full month, until it has made you ill,

<sup>15</sup> Moses would rather be killed than be given a totally impossible duty over a people that were not his.

<sup>16</sup> In place of 'officials' (שִׁטְרִיּוֹ), here following NETB, the NJB, following the LXX (γραμματεῖς), has 'scribes'.

<sup>17</sup> Moses is regarded as a charismatic leader, endowed with the divine spirit (compare 24:2, Jg 11:29). The transfer of a portion of the spirit to the elders (2K 2:9-10) indicates that the latter are subordinate to Moses, who stands in a close relation to God (Ex 33:11).

<sup>18</sup> The question, "Who will give us meat to eat?" could possibly be given an optative translation, to reflect the earlier one: "O that someone would give," but the verb is not the same; here, it is the Hiphil of the verb 'to eat' – literally, 'who will make us eat'.

<sup>19</sup> The NJB omits the word 'days' after 'two', 'five', 'ten' and 'twenty'; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>20</sup> The expression לִזְרָא has been translated 'ill' (following NETB); it occurs only here in the MT. The LXX interprets it as 'sickness' (χολέραν), the NJB has 'until you are sick of it' and the NRSV has 'until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you'. It could be nausea or vomiting from overeating.

לִזְרָא יַעַן כִּי־מָאַסְתֶּם אֶת־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּכֶם  
וּתְבַכּוּ לִפְנֵי לַאֲמֹר לָמָּה זֶה יַצְאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם:

and you cannot bear the smell of it, because you have rejected Yahweh who is with you, and have wailed before him saying: Why did we ever leave Egypt?"

כֹּא וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף רַגְלֵי הָעָם אֲשֶׁר  
אֲנִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ בָשָׂר אֶתֶּן לָהֶם וְאָכְלוּ  
חֹדֶשׁ יָמִים: כִּב הֲצֹאן וּבָקָר יִשְׁחַט לָהֶם וּמִצָּא לָהֶם  
אִם אֶת־כָּל־דֹּגֵי הַיָּם יֵאָסֶף לָהֶם וּמִצָּא לָהֶם: {פ}

<sup>21</sup> Moses said, "The people round me number six hundred thousand men on foot and you say, "I shall give them meat to eat for a whole month!" <sup>22</sup> If all the flocks and herds were killed, would that suffice for them? If all the fish in the sea were gathered, would that suffice for them?"

כִּב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הֲיָד יְהוָה תִּקְצָר עֲתָה  
תִּרְאֶה הִיקָרְךָ דְּבָרֵי אִם־לֹא: כִּד וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר  
אֶל־הָעָם אֵת דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה וַיֹּאסֹף שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ  
מִזִּקְנֵי הָעָם וַיַּעֲמֵד אֹתָם סְבִיבַת הָאֹהֶל: כִּה וַיֵּרֶד  
יְהוָה | בָּעָנָן וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו וַיֹּאצֵּל מִן־הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו  
וַיִּתֵּן עַל־שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ הַזִּקְנִים וַיְהִי כְנֹחַ עֲלֵיהֶם  
הָרוּחַ וַיִּתְּנָבְאוּ וְלֹא יָסֻפוּ:

<sup>23</sup> Yahweh answered Moses, "Is the arm of Yahweh so short? You shall see whether the promise I have made to you comes true or not." <sup>24</sup> Moses went out and told the people what Yahweh had said. Then he gathered seventy elders of the people and brought them round the Tent. <sup>25</sup> Yahweh descended in the Cloud. He spoke to him and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the spirit came on them, they prophesied – but only once.

<sup>21</sup> The Hebrew sentence forming this verse stresses the number: it begins "600,000 ..."

<sup>22</sup> The story stresses Yahweh's miraculous power to support an extremely large population in the desert.

<sup>23</sup> The anthropomorphic expression, "Is the arm of Yahweh so short?" concerns the power of God (the NRSV reads, "Is the LORD'S power limited?"). The 'hand of Yahweh' is idiomatic for his power, what he is able to do. The question is rhetorical: it is affirming that his hand is not shortened, i.e., that his power is not limited. Moses should have known this, and so this is a rebuke for him at this point; God had provided the manna, among all the other powerful acts they had witnessed: meat would be no problem. But the lack of faith by the people was infectious.

<sup>24</sup> The phrase, 'they prophesied', may mean that these men gave ecstatic utterances, much like Saul did when the Spirit came upon him and he made the same prophetic utterances (1S 10:10-13); however, there is no strong evidence for this.

<sup>25</sup> The prophetic gift was only temporary (a one-time experience associated with their installation). However, an alternative translation for 'but only once' is 'and could not stop'.



כו וַיֵּשְׂאָרוּ שְׁנֵי־אֲנָשִׁים | בַּמַּחֲנֶה שֵׁם הָאֶחָד | אֶלְדָּד  
 וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי מֵדָד וַתָּנַח עֲלֵהֶם הָרוּחַ וְהִמָּה  
 בְּכַתְּבִים וְלֹא יָצְאוּ הָאֵהָלָה וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ בַּמַּחֲנֶה:  
 כז וַיָּרֶץ הַנָּעַר וַיֵּגֵד לְמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְדָּד וּמֵדָד  
 מִתְנַבְּאִים בַּמַּחֲנֶה: כח וַיַּעַן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון מִשְׁרַת  
 מֹשֶׁה מִבְּחָרָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי מֹשֶׁה כָּלָאִם: כט וַיֹּאמֶר  
 לוֹ מֹשֶׁה הַמִּקְנָא אֶתָּה לִי וּמִי יִתֵּן כָּל־עַם יִהְיֶה  
 נְבִיאִים כִּי־יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם: ל וַיֹּאסֹף  
 מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה הוּא וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

לא וְרוּחַ נֹסַע | מֵאֵת יְהוָה וַיִּגְזַּ שְׁלֹוִים מִן־הַיָּם וַיִּטֹּשׁ  
 עַל־הַמַּחֲנֶה כְּדָרְדָּר יוֹם כֹּה וּכְדָרְדָּר יוֹם כֹּה סְבִיבוֹת  
 הַמַּחֲנֶה וּכְאֻמָּתִים עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ: לב וַיִּקַּם הָעָם  
 כָּל־הַיּוֹם הַהוּא וּכְל־הַלַּיְלָה וְכָל־יּוֹם הַמַּחֲרֹת  
 וַיֹּאסְפוּ אֶת־הַשְּׁלֹוֹ הַמִּמַּעֲטִי אֶסְף עֲשָׂרָה חֲמֹרִים

<sup>26</sup> Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad and the other named Medad. The spirit rested on them; they had not gone to the tent but were among those registered, so they prophesied in the camp. <sup>27</sup> A young man ran to tell Moses, and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” <sup>28</sup> Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his choice young men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” <sup>29</sup> Moses answered him, “Are you jealous for my sake? If only the whole people of Yahweh were prophets, and Yahweh gave his Spirit to them all!” <sup>30</sup> And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

<sup>31</sup> A wind came from Yahweh and it drove quails in from the sea and brought them down on the camp. They lay for a distance of a day’s march either side of the camp, two cubits thick on the ground. <sup>32</sup> The people were up all that day and night and all the next day collecting quails: the least gathered by anyone was ten homers; then they spread

<sup>26</sup> Here, it is assumed that the Tent of Meeting was outside the camp (Ex 33:7, see Nb 2:2).

<sup>27</sup> The opening article indicates that the ‘young man’ was definite in the mind of the writer, but indefinite in English.

<sup>28</sup> For ‘the servant of Moses, one of his choice young men’, here following NETB, the NRSV reads, ‘the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men’, and the NJB has ‘who had served Moses from his youth’. The effort of Joshua is to protect Moses’ prerogative as leader by stopping these men in the camp from prophesying; Joshua did not understand the significance in Yahweh’s plan to let others share the burden of leadership.

<sup>29</sup> The optatives, ‘if only’, is expressed by the interrogative clause in Hebrew, ‘who will give’; Moses expresses here the wish that the whole nation would have that portion of the Spirit; the New Covenant, of course, would turn Moses’ wish into a certainty.

<sup>30</sup> For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Then Moses went back to the camp, the elders of Israel with him.”

<sup>31</sup> Like the manna, the quails (Ex 16:13) are a natural phenomenon of the desert. They migrate over the region in great numbers and, when exhausted, are easily caught. A wind, sent by God (compare Ex 14:21), brought the quails from the sea, the Gulf of Aqaba.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Ten homers’ is about 2,000 litres!

וַיִּשְׁטְחוּ לָהֶם שְׂטוֹחַ סְבִיבוֹת הַמַּחֲנֶה: <sup>33</sup> לֵי הַבֶּשֶׂר  
 עוֹדְנוּ בֵּין שְׁנֵיהֶם טָרֵם יִפְרֹת וְאָף יִהְיֶה חָרָה בָּעָם  
 וַיִּדּוּ יִהְיֶה בָּעָם מַכָּה רַבָּה מְאֹד:  
 לֵד וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא קִבְרוֹת הַתְּאֹוָה <sup>34</sup>  
 כִּי־שָׁם קָבְרוּ אֶת־הָעָם הַמִּתְאָוִים: <sup>35</sup> לֵי מִקְבְּרוֹת  
 הַתְּאֹוָה נִסְעוּ הָעָם חֲצֵרוֹת וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵרוֹת: {פ}

them out round the camp. <sup>33</sup> The meat was still between their teeth, not even chewed, when the anger of Yahweh blazed out against the people. Yahweh struck them with a very great plague.

<sup>34</sup> The name given to this place was Kibroth-Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who lusted. <sup>35</sup> From Kibroth-Hattaavah, the people set out for Hazeroth and, at Hazeroth, they pitched camp.

<sup>33</sup> A sickness that resulted from eating the quails is interpreted as divine judgement upon the people's faithlessness.

<sup>34</sup> 'Kibroth-Hattaavah' (קִבְרוֹת הַתְּאֹוָה, 'Kibroth-ha-Taavah' in the NJB) may have been a real place name, meaning 'the graves of the Taavah' (perhaps the name of a tribe), though it has not been identified. What is clear is that tradition took it to mean 'the graves of greed' or 'the graves of craving', as the content of the story would have it.

<sup>35</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Hazeroth' (חֲצֵרוֹת) is Ασηρωθ.

## NUMBERS 12

## במדבר פרק יב

א וַתְּדַבֵּר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמִשְׁה עַל-אִשְׁתּוֹ הַכְּשִׁית אֲשֶׁר לָקַח כִּי-אִשָּׁה כְּשִׁית לָקַח: ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲרֹק אַדְּבַמֶּשֶׁה דְּבַר יְהוָה הֲלֹא גַם-בָּנוּ דִּבֶּר וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה: ג וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עֲנֹן מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה: {ס}

ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה פֶּתְאֹם אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-מִרְיָם צֵאוּ שְׁלֹשְׁתֵּכֶם אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּצְאוּ שְׁלֹשָׁתָם: ה וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן וַיַּעֲמֵד פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וַיִּקְרָא אֶהֱרֹן וּמִרְיָם וַיֵּצְאוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם: ו וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַעוּ-נָא דְבָרִי

אִם-יְהִיָּה נְבִיאֲכֶם  
יְהוָה בְּמִרְאָה אֵלָיו אֶתְוַדַּע  
בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדַבֵּר-בּוֹ:  
לֹא-כֵן עֲבָדִי מֹשֶׁה ז  
בְּכָל-בֵּיתִי נֶאֱמָן הוּא:

<sup>1</sup> Miriam and Aaron criticised Moses over the Cushite woman he had married (for he had indeed married a Cushite woman). <sup>2</sup> They said, “Is Moses the only one through whom Yahweh has spoken? Has he not spoken through us too?” Yahweh heard this. <sup>3</sup> Now Moses was extremely humble, the humblest man on earth.

<sup>4</sup> Suddenly, Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron and Miriam, “Come, all three of you, to the Tent of Meeting.” They went, all three of them, <sup>5</sup> and Yahweh came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tent. He called Aaron and Miriam and they both came forward. <sup>6</sup> And he said, “Listen now to my words:

“If there is a prophet among you,  
I, Yahweh, reveal myself to him in a vision;  
I speak to him in a dream.

<sup>7</sup> Not so with my servant Moses:  
to him my whole household is entrusted.

## NUMBERS 12

- <sup>1</sup> At the start of this verse, the NRSV adds the clause, ‘While they were at Hazeroth’, though there is no MSS support for it.  
<sup>2</sup> The questions are rhetorical: they are affirming that God does not only speak through Moses but also speaks through them.  
<sup>3</sup> An alternative translation of ‘humble’ could be ‘devout’.  
<sup>4</sup> In place of ‘suddenly’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘immediately’.  
<sup>5</sup> The LXX includes the last part of v.5 in this verse and adds ‘into the Tent’ (εἰς τὴν σκηνήν) after ‘all three of them’.  
<sup>6</sup> The syntax is difficult here; the Divine Name, ‘Yahweh’, is separated from the verb by two intervening prepositional phrases. Some conclude that this word belongs with the verb at the beginning of the verse (‘and Yahweh said’).  
<sup>7</sup> This is an answer to the complaint of v. 2.

ח פֹּה אֶל־פָּה אֲדַבֵּר־בּוֹ  
וּמֵרָאָה וְלֹא בַחֲדִידָת  
וּתְמַנֵּת יְהוָה יִבִּיט  
וּמִדּוּעַ לֹא יֵרָאֶתָם  
לְדַבֵּר בְּעַבְדִּי בַמֶּשֶׁה:

<sup>8</sup> I speak to him face to face,  
plainly and not in riddles,  
and he sees Yahweh's form.  
How, then, could you dare  
to criticise my servant Moses?"

ט וַיִּחַר־אַף יְהוָה בָּם וַיִּלְךְ: 'וְהֵעֵנָן סָר מֵעַל הָאֹהֶל  
וְהָנָה מֵרִים מִצֶּרַעַת כְּשֶׁלֶג וַיִּפֹּן אֹהֶרֶן אֶל־מֵרִים  
וְהָנָה מִצֶּרַעַת: י" וַיֹּאמֶר אֹהֶרֶן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בִּי אֲדֹנָי  
אֶל־נָא תִשֶׁת עָלֵינוּ חֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר נִוְאלָנוּ וְאֲשֶׁר  
חָטֵאנוּ: י"ב אֶל־נָא תְהִי כַּמֶּת אֲשֶׁר בָּצַאתוּ מִרְחֹם  
אֲמֹ וַיֹּאכַל חֲצִי בְשָׂרוֹ: י" וַיִּצְעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה  
לֵאמֹר אֵל נָא רַפָּא נָא לָהּ: {פ}

<sup>9</sup> The anger of Yahweh blazed out against them. He departed <sup>10</sup> and, when the cloud withdrew from the Tent, Miriam was covered with leprosy, white as snow! Aaron looked at her and saw that she was leprous. <sup>11</sup> Aaron said to Moses: "O, my lord, do not punish us for a sin that we have so foolishly committed. <sup>12</sup> Do not let her be one stillborn, coming from its mother's womb with its flesh half eaten." <sup>13</sup> Moses cried to Yahweh, saying, "O God, I beseech you, heal her!"

יד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַבְיָה יָרֵק יָרֵק בְּפָנֶיהָ  
הֲלֹא תְכַלֵּם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תִּסְגֹּר שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מִחוּץ  
לַמַּחֲנֶה וְאַחֵר תֵּאָסֶף: טו וַתִּסְגֹּר מֵרִים מִחוּץ

<sup>14</sup> Then Yahweh said to Moses, "If her father had done no more than spit in her face, would she not be a thing of shame for seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp for seven days, and then let her be brought in

<sup>8</sup> The word 'form' follows the MT; the LXX (δόξα) and Peshitta read, 'glory'.

<sup>9</sup> On the phrase, 'the anger of Yahweh blazed out', see #11:1.

<sup>10</sup> Miriam was the only one to be punished, although Aaron admitted himself to be as guilty as she was (v. 11).

<sup>11</sup> The expression בִּי אֲדֹנָי ('O, my lord') shows a good deal of respect for Moses by Aaron; the expression is often used in addressing God.

<sup>12</sup> The words 'its mother' and 'its flesh' are among the so-called *tiqqune sopherim*, or 'emendations of the scribes'; according to this tradition, the text originally had here 'our mother' and 'our flesh' but the ancient scribes changed these pronouns from 1PL to 3PS: they were concerned that the image of Moses' mother giving birth to a baby with physical defects of the sort described here was somehow inappropriate.

<sup>13</sup> Some scholars emend 'God' to 'no' (vowel change from EL to AL); the effect may be seen in the NAB: "Please, not this! Pray, heal her!"

<sup>14</sup> The punishment is severe: the defilement of being spat on by her father, the sign of a curse (Dt 25:9). Since Miriam was known to be a prophet (Ex 15:20), the story may reflect fear of a challenge to Moses' prophetic leadership (see 11:16-29).

לַמַּחֲנֶה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְהָעָם לֹא נָסַע עַד־הָאָסָף  
 מִרְיָם: טז וְאַחֵר נָסְעוּ הָעָם מִחֲצֹרֹת וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּמִדְבַּר  
 פָּאֲרָן: {פ} again.” <sup>15</sup> Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days. The people  
 did not set out until she was brought back in. <sup>16</sup> Then the people left  
 Hazeroth and camped in the desert of Paran.

---

<sup>15</sup> The clause, ‘until she was brought back in’, has the Niphal infinitive construct after a temporal preposition.

<sup>16</sup> The early traditions in 10:29–12:15 assume that Israel had not yet reached Paran (10:12).



## NUMBERS 13

## במדבר פרק יג

א וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב שְׁלַח־לָךְ אַנְשִׁים וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ אֶחָד אִישׁ אֶחָד לְמִטָּה אֲבֹתָיו תִּשְׁלָחוּ כָּל נָשִׂיא בָהֶם: ג וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה מִמִּדְבַּר פָּאֶרָן עַל־פִּי יְהוָה כָּל־אֲנָשִׁים רָאשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הָמָּה:

ד וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹתָם

לְמִטָּה רְאוּבֵן שָׁמוּעַ בֶּן־זָכּוֹר:

ה לְמִטָּה שִׁמְעוֹן שָׁפַט בֶּן־חֹרִי:

ו לְמִטָּה יְהוּדָה כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה:

ז לְמִטָּה יִשָּׂשכָר יִגָּאֵל בֶּן־יוֹסֵף:

ח לְמִטָּה אֶפְרַיִם הוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־נּוֹן:

ט לְמִטָּה בִּנְיָמִן פִּלְטִי בֶן־רָפוּא:

<sup>1</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: <sup>2</sup> "Send men that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them." <sup>3</sup> According to Yahweh's command, Moses sent them from the desert of Paran. All of them were men who were leaders of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> These were their names:

For the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zaccur.

<sup>5</sup> For the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori.

<sup>6</sup> For the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh.

<sup>7</sup> For the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph.

<sup>8</sup> For the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun.

<sup>9</sup> For the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu.

## NUMBERS 13

<sup>1</sup> In place of 'that they may spy', here following the WEBBE, the NJB has 'to spy'.

<sup>2</sup> For this verse, here loosely following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Send out men, one from every tribe, so that they may reconnoitre the land of Canaan, which I am giving the Israelites. Send a man, the leader, from every and each tribe."

<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of 'command' is 'mouth' and that of 'leading men' is 'heads'.

<sup>4</sup> This list should be compared with that of Ch. 1, which also begins with Reuben, but the names are different – several of them being found among the contemporaries of David. For 'Shammua' (שָׁמוּעַ) and 'Zaccur' (זָכּוֹר), the LXX reads, respectively, Σαλαμειλ and Ζακχουρ.

<sup>5</sup> For 'Shaphat' (שָׁפַט) and 'Hori' (חֹרִי), the LXX reads, respectively, Σαφατ and Σουρι.

<sup>6</sup> For 'Caleb' (כָּלֵב) and 'Jephunneh' (יִפְנֶה), the LXX reads, respectively, Χαλεβ and Ιεφοννη.

<sup>7</sup> For 'Igal' (יִגָּאֵל) and 'Joseph' (יוֹסֵף), the LXX reads, respectively, Ιγααλ and Ιωσηφ.

<sup>8</sup> For 'Hoshea' (הוֹשֵׁעַ) and 'Nun' (נּוֹן), the LXX reads, respectively, Αυσση and Ναυη.

<sup>9</sup> For 'Palti' (פִּלְטִי) and 'Raphu' (רָפוּא), the LXX reads, respectively, Φαλτι and Ραφου.

י לְמִטָּה זְבוּלֹן גַּדִּיאל בֶּן־סוּדִי :  
 יא לְמִטָּה יוֹסֵף לְמִטָּה מְנַשֶּׁה  
 גַּדִּי בֶן־סוּסִי:  
 יב לְמִטָּה דָן עַמִּיאל בֶּן־גִּמְלִי:  
 יג לְמִטָּה אֲשֶׁר סֶתוּר בֶּן־מִיכָאֵל:  
 יד לְמִטָּה נַפְתָּלִי נַחְבִּי בֶן־וּפְסִי:  
 טו לְמִטָּה גָד גֵּאוּאֵל בֶּן־מָכִי:

- <sup>10</sup> For the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi.  
<sup>11</sup> For the tribe of Joseph, for the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi son of Susi.  
<sup>12</sup> For the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli.  
<sup>13</sup> For the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael.  
<sup>14</sup> For the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vophsi.  
<sup>15</sup> For the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Machi.

טז אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר  
 אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־נּוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ:  
 יז וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיֹּאמֶר  
 אֱלֹהִים עָלוּ זֶה בַּנֶּגֶב וְעָלִיתֶם אֶת־הָהָר: יח וְרִאִיתֶם  
 אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מֵהָהוּא וְאֶת־הָעָם הַיֹּשֵׁב עָלֶיהָ הַחֹזֶק  
 הוּא הֲרַפָּה הַמְעַט הוּא אִם־רַב: יט וּמָה הָאָרֶץ  
 אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ הֲטוֹבָה הוּא אִם־רָעָה וּמָה

- <sup>16</sup> Such were the names of the men whom Moses sent to reconnoitre the country. Then Moses gave to Hoshea son of Nun the name of Joshua.  
<sup>17</sup> And Moses sent them to reconnoitre the land of Canaan, saying to them “Go up into the Negeb; then go up into the highlands, <sup>18</sup> and see what sort of country it is, and what sort of people the inhabitants are, whether they are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, <sup>19</sup> and what sort of country they live in, whether it is good or poor; and what

<sup>10</sup> For ‘Gaddiel’ (גַּדִּיאל) and ‘Sodi’ (סוּדִי), the LXX reads, respectively, Γουδιηλ and Σουδι.

<sup>11</sup> For ‘Gaddi’ (גַּדִּי) and ‘Susi’ (סוּסִי), the LXX reads, respectively, Γαδδι and Σουσι.

<sup>12</sup> For ‘Ammiel’ (עַמִּיאל) and ‘Gemalli’ (גִּמְלִי), the LXX reads, respectively, Αμμηλ and Γαμαλι.

<sup>13</sup> For ‘Sethur’ (סֶתוּר) and ‘Michael’ (מִיכָאֵל), the LXX reads, respectively, Σαθουρ and Μιχαηλ.

<sup>14</sup> For ‘Nahbi’ (נַחְבִּי) and ‘Vophsi’ (וּפְסִי), the LXX reads, respectively, Ναβι and Ιαβι.

<sup>15</sup> For ‘Geuel’ (גֵּאוּאֵל) and ‘Machi’ (מָכִי), the LXX reads, respectively, Γουδιηλ and Μακχι.

<sup>16</sup> The name ‘Joshua’ (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) means, ‘Yahweh saves’ – a slight change of name from ‘he saves’ (הוֹשֵׁעַ).

<sup>17</sup> Compare the exploratory expeditions sent out by Joshua (Jos 2:1) and by the Danites (Jg 18). See also 21:32, Jos 7:2 and Jg 1:23.

<sup>18</sup> The form of the verb translated ‘see’ is the perfect tense with *vav* consecutive; the word therefore carries the volitional mood of the preceding imperatives. It may be either another imperative, or it may be subordinated as a purpose clause.

<sup>19</sup> For ‘towns’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘cities’.

הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יוֹשֵׁב בָּהֶנָּה הַבְּמַחְנִים אִם  
בַּמְבְּצָרִים: כ וְמָה הָאָרֶץ הַשְּׂמֵנָה הִוא אִם־רֹזָה  
הִישִׁיבָהה עַל אִם־אֵין וְהַתְּחִזְקָתָם וְלִקְחָתָם מִפְּרֵי  
הָאָרֶץ וְהַיָּמִים יָמֵי בְּפוּרֵי עֲנָבִים:

כא וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מִמִּדְבַּר־צֵן עַד־רֶחֶב  
לְבָא חַמַּת: כב וַיַּעֲלוּ בְּנֶגֶב וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־חֶבְרוֹן וְשָׁם  
אַחִימָן שָׁשִׁי וְתַלְמִי יְלִידֵי הָעֵנֶק וְחֶבְרוֹן שְׁבַע שָׁנִים  
נִבְנְתָה לְפָנֵי צֶעַן מִצְרַיִם: כג וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־נַחַל אֶשְׁכּוֹל  
וַיִּכְרְתוּ מִשָּׁם זִמּוּרָה וְאַשְׁכּוֹל עֲנָבִים אֶחָד וַיִּשְׂאֶהוּ  
בְּמוֹט בְּשָׁנִים וּמִן־הָרִמּוֹנִים וּמִן־הַתְּאֵנִים:  
כד לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא קָרָא נַחַל אֶשְׁכּוֹל עַל אֲדוּת  
הָאֶשְׁכּוֹל אֲשֶׁר־כָּרְתוּ מִשָּׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

כה וַיָּשֻׁבוּ מִתּוֹר הָאָרֶץ מִקֵּץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם: כו וַיֵּלְכוּ  
וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי־

sort of towns they have, whether they are open or fortified;<sup>20</sup> and what  
sort of land it is, fertile or barren, whether it is wooded or open. Be bold  
and bring back some of the produce of the country.” Now, it was the  
season for early grapes.

<sup>21</sup> They went up to reconnoitre the land, from the desert of Zin to Rehob,  
the pass of Hamath. <sup>22</sup> They went up by way of the Negeb as far as  
Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the Anakim lived.  
(Hebron was founded seven years before Tanis in Egypt.) <sup>23</sup> They came  
to the Vale of Eshcol; there they lopped off a vine branch with a cluster  
of grapes, which two of them carried away on a pole, as well as  
pomegranates and figs. <sup>24</sup> This place was called the Vale of Eshcol after  
the cluster, which the Israelites had cut there.

<sup>25</sup> They returned from investigating the land after forty days. <sup>26</sup> They  
sought out Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel, in the

<sup>20</sup> The reference to the ‘early grapes’ would put the time somewhere at the end of July.

<sup>21</sup> The ‘Pass of Hamath’ is the extreme north of the Promised Land (see #34:1 & #Jg 20:1). In fact, the expedition got no further than the Hebron district (v. 22).

<sup>22</sup> The mixed population of Canaan included the tribes descended from Anak, regarded as an unusually tall people (vv. 32–33). The parenthesised comment dates the history of Hebron in relation to the founding of Zoan or Tanis, rebuilt as the Hyksos capital about 1700 BCE (see #Ex 1:11).

<sup>23</sup> ‘Eshcol’ (אֶשְׁכּוֹל), which means ‘cluster’ (see v. 24), is a valley near Hebron, a famous grape-producing area.

<sup>24</sup> In place of ‘The Vale of Eschol’ (here following the NJB), the NRSV has ‘Wadi Eshcol’; the translation ‘brook’ is too generous.

<sup>25</sup> For this verse, here following NETB, the NJB reads, “At the end of forty days, they returned from reconnoitring the land.”

<sup>26</sup> ‘Kadesh’ (קָדֵשׁ) does not refer to a town or precise point, but a region: the principal oasis to the north of Sinai, 90 Km southwest of Beersheba, where Israel spent most of the 40-year sojourn in the desert. The name is preserved by the spring of Ain Qadeis. For time out of mind, this oasis had been a staging post for caravans.

יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־מִדְבַּר פָּאֲרָן קִדְשָׁה וַיֵּשִׁיבוּ אֹתָם דְּבַר  
וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה וַיֵּרְאוּם אֶת־פְּרֵי הָאָרֶץ:

כז וַיֹּסְפֻרוּ־לּוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ בָּאֲנֹו אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר  
שָׁלַחְתָּנוּ וְגַם זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ הוּא וְזֶה־פְרִיָּהּ:  
כח אִפֹּס כִּי־עַז הָעָם הַיֹּשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ וְהָעָרִים בְּצֻרוֹת  
גְּדֹלַת מְאֹד וְגַם־יְלָדֵי הָעֵנָק רָאִינוּ שָׁם: כט עַמְּלֶק  
יוֹשֵׁב בָּאָרֶץ הַנֶּגֶב וְהַחִתִּי וְהַיְבוֹסִי וְהָאֱמֹרִי יוֹשֵׁב  
בְּהָר וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב עַל־הַיָּם וְעַל יַד הַיַּרְדֵּן:

ל וַיְהִי כִלְבָּב אֶת־הָעָם אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר עָלָה נַעֲלֶה  
וַיִּרְשְׁנוּ אֹתָהּ כִּי־יָכוֹל נוֹכַח לָהּ: לא וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־  
עָלוּ עִמּוֹ אָמְרוּ לֹא נוֹכַח לַעֲלֹת אֶל־הָעָם כִּי־חָזַק  
הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ: לב וַיֵּצִיאוּ דִבַּת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תָּרוּ אֹתָהּ  
אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבְרָנוּ בָּהּ  
לְתוֹר אֹתָהּ אָרֶץ אֲכָלֹת יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ הוּא וְכָל־הָעָם  
אֲשֶׁר־רָאִינוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ אָנָשִׁי מְדֹת: לג וְשָׁם רָאִינוּ  
אֶת־הַנְּפִילִים בְּנֵי עָנָק מְן־הַנְּפִילִים וְנָהִי בְּעֵינֵינוּ  
כַּחַגְגָּבִים וְכֵן הָיִינוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם:

desert of Paran at Kadesh. They made their report to them, and to the whole community, and showed them the produce of the country.

<sup>27</sup> They told him, "We went into the land to which you sent us. It does indeed flow with milk and honey; this is its produce. <sup>28</sup> At the same time, its inhabitants are a powerful people; the towns are fortified and very big; yes, and we saw the Anakim there. <sup>29</sup> The Amalekites occupy the Negeb area, the Hittites, Amorites and Jebusites the highlands, and the Canaanite the sea coast and the banks of the Jordan."

<sup>30</sup> Caleb harangued the people gathered about Moses: "We must march in," he said, "and conquer this land: we are well able to do it."

<sup>31</sup> However, the men who had gone up with him answered, "We are not able to march against this people; they are stronger than we are." <sup>32</sup> They began to disparage the country they had reconnoitred to the Israelites, "The country we went to reconnoitre is a country that devours its inhabitants. Every man we saw there was of enormous size. <sup>33</sup> Yes, and we saw giants there (the Anakim, descended from the Nephilim). We felt like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

<sup>27</sup> The phrase 'flow with milk and honey' is the common expression for the material abundance of the land

<sup>28</sup> The word אִפֹּס ('at the same time') forms a very strong adversative.

<sup>29</sup> For the pre-Israelite inhabitants, see Ex 3:8.

<sup>30</sup> Here again the confidence of Caleb is expressed with the infinitive absolute and the imperfect tense יָכוֹל נוֹכַח ('we are well able') to do this.

<sup>31</sup> The *vav* disjunctive on the noun at the beginning of the verse forms a strong adversative clause here.

<sup>32</sup> The expression, 'devours its inhabitants', may mean that they intended the land to seem infertile and insecure.

<sup>33</sup> The 'Nephilim' (נְפִילִים) are the legendary giants of antiquity (see #Gn 6:4); this forms part of the pessimism of the spies' report.

## במדבר פרק יד

א וַתִּשָּׂא כָל־הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכוּ הָעָם בְּלֵילָה הַהוּא: ב וַיִּלְנוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם כָּל־הָעֵדָה לֹא־מָתְנוּ בָאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֹי בַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לֹא־מָתְנוּ: ג וְלָמָּה יְהוָה מֵבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְנָפֹל בַּחֶרֶב נַשְׁיָנוּ וְטַפְּנוּ יֶהֱיוּ לִבִּז הָלֹא טוֹב לָנוּ שׁוּב מִצְרַיִם: ד וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו נָתַנָּה רֹאשׁ וְנָשׁוּבָה מִצְרַיִם:

ה וַיִּפֹּל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם לִפְנֵי כָל־קְהֵל עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ו וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון וְכָלֵב בֶּן־יִפְתָּה מִן־הַתַּיִרִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ קָרְעוּ בְּגֵדֵיהֶם: ז וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־כָּל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר עָבְרָנוּ

## NUMBERS 14

<sup>1</sup> At this, the whole community raised their voices and cried aloud, and the people wailed all that night. <sup>2</sup> Then all the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron, and the whole community said, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt, or at least that we had died in this desert!" <sup>3</sup> Why does Yahweh bring us to this land, only to have us fall by the sword, and our wives and young children seized as booty? Should we not do better to return to Egypt?" <sup>4</sup> They said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

<sup>5</sup> Before the whole assembled community of Israelites, Moses and Aaron fell down, face to the ground. <sup>6</sup> Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, two of those who had reconnoitred the country, tore their garments; <sup>7</sup> and they said to the entire community of Israelites, "The

### NUMBERS 14

- <sup>1</sup> This chapter forms part of the story already begun; there are three major sections here: dissatisfaction with the reports (vv. 1–10), the threat of divine punishment (vv. 11–38), and the defeat of the Israelites (vv. 39–45).
- <sup>2</sup> The verb translated 'murmured' (יִלְנוּ) is a strong word, signifying far more than complaining or grumbling, as some of the modern translations have it. The word is most often connected to the desert experience and is paralleled in the literature with the word 'to rebel'. The murmuring is like a parliamentary vote of no confidence: they no longer trusted their leaders and wished to choose a new leader and return.
- <sup>3</sup> This 'return to Egypt' becomes a symbol of their lack of faith in Yahweh.
- <sup>4</sup> The form of the verb 'return' is a cohortative with a *vav* prefixed; after the preceding cohortative, this could also be interpreted as a purpose or result clause – 'in order that we may return'.
- <sup>5</sup> This action of Moses and Aaron is typical of them in the desert with the Israelites; the act shows self-abasement and deference before the sovereign Lord: they are not bowing before the people here, but in front of the people they bow before God.
- <sup>6</sup> According to tradition, Joshua sided with Caleb in appraising the situation (cf. 13:30).
- <sup>7</sup> The repetition of the adverb מְאֹד ('very') represents 'exceedingly (good)'.



בַּהּ לְתוֹר אֲתָה טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד: <sup>ח</sup> אִם־  
חֶפֶץ בָּנוּ יְהוָה וְהֵבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת  
וְנִתְּנָה לָנוּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־הִוא זֹבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ: <sup>ט</sup> אַךְ  
בִּיהוָה אֲל־תִּמְרְדוּ וְאַתֶּם אֲל־תִּירְאוּ אֶת־עַם  
הָאָרֶץ כִּי לַחֲמֹנֵנוּ הֵם סָר צֶלֶם מַעֲלִיהֶם וַיהוָה אֲתָנוּ  
אֲל־תִּירָאֵם: <sup>י</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הָעֵדָה לְרָגוֹם אֹתָם  
בְּאֲבָנִים וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה נִרְאָה בְּאַהֲל מוֹעֵד אֶל־כָּל־  
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

<sup>יא</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עַד־אַנָּה יִנְאַצְנִי הָעָם  
הַזֶּה וְעַד־אַנָּה לֹא־יֵאֱמִינוּ בִּי בְּכָל־הָאֲתוֹת אֲשֶׁר  
עָשִׂיתִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ: <sup>יב</sup> אֲכַנּוּ בַדָּבָר וְאוֹרְשָׁנוּ וְאַעֲשֶׂה  
אֹתָךְ לְגוֹי־גָדוֹל וְעָצוֹם מִמֶּנּוּ:

<sup>יג</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה וּשְׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־הֵעֲלִיתִי  
בְּכַחֲךָ אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה מִקִּרְבּוֹ: <sup>יד</sup> וַאֲמָרוּ אֶל־יֹשֵׁב־

land we went to reconnoitre is an exceedingly good land, an excellent land. <sup>8</sup> If Yahweh is pleased with us, he will lead us into this land and give it to us. It is a land where milk and honey flow. <sup>9</sup> Do not rebel against Yahweh; and do not be afraid of the people of this land, we shall gobble them up. Their tutelary shadow has gone from them so long as Yahweh is with us. Do not be afraid of them.” <sup>10</sup> The entire community was talking of stoning them, when the glory of Yahweh appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites.

<sup>11</sup> Yahweh said to Moses: “How long will this people insult me? How long will they refuse to believe in me despite the signs I have worked among them? <sup>12</sup> I will strike them with pestilence and disown them. And of you I shall make a nation greater and mightier than they are.”

<sup>13</sup> Moses answered Yahweh: “When the Egyptians hear it – for, by your own power, you brought this people out from their midst – <sup>14</sup> they will

<sup>8</sup> The subjective genitives ‘milk’ and ‘honey’ are symbols of the wealth of the land, second only to bread. Milk was a sign of such abundance (Gn 49:12, Is 7:21–22); because of the climate, the milk would thicken quickly and become curds, eaten with bread or turned into butter. The honey mentioned here is wild honey (see Dt 32:13, Jg 14:8–9); it signified sweetness, or the finer things of life (Ezk 3:3).

<sup>9</sup> The ‘tutelary shadow’ was a designation for the Canaanite gods, combating the formidable heat of the sun; the LXX has ‘(favourable) time’ (καιρός).

<sup>10</sup> The ‘glory of Yahweh’ refers to the reality of Yahweh’s presence in a manifestation of his power and splendour; it showed to all that God was a living God. The appearance of the glory indicated blessing for obedient folk, but disaster for the disobedient. In place of ‘at the Tent’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, the LXX (ἐν νεφέλῃ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς), Peshitta and Tg have ‘in the Cloud over the Tent’.

<sup>11</sup> The ‘signs’ were ambiguous evidence, not proofs of God’s presence.

<sup>12</sup> In place of ‘pestilence’, here following the MT, the LXX has ‘death’ (θανάτω).

<sup>13</sup> The construction rendered ‘when ... hear it’ is unusual in that we have here a perfect tense with a *vav* consecutive with no verb before it to establish the time sequence; the context requires that this be taken as a *vav* consecutive but it actually forms the protasis for the next verse.

<sup>14</sup> The literal translation of ‘face to face’ is ‘eye to eye’; it only occurs elsewhere in Is 52:8. This expresses the closest communication possible.

הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת שָׁמְעוּ כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה בְּקֶרֶב הָעָם  
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר־עֵין בְּעֵין נִרְאָה | אַתָּה יְהוָה וְעַנְנְךָ עֹמֵד  
עֲלֵהֶם וּבַעֲמֹד עֲנֹן אַתָּה הַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם יוֹמָם  
וּבַעֲמֹד אֵשׁ לַיְלָה: <sup>טו</sup> וְהִמַּתָּה אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה  
כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד וְאָמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־שְׁמֹעְךָ  
לֵאמֹר: <sup>טז</sup> מִבִּלְתִּי יִכְלֹת יְהוָה לְהַבִּיאַ אֶת־הָעָם  
הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע לָהֶם וַיִּשְׁחָטֵם  
בַּמִּדְבָּר: <sup>יז</sup> וְעַתָּה יִגְדֹּל־נָא כָח אֲדֹנָי פֶּאֶשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ  
לֵאמֹר: <sup>יח</sup> יְהוָה אֲרֹךְ אַפִּים וְרַב־חֶסֶד נִשְׂא עֹן  
וּפֶשַׁע וְנִקְהָ לֹא יִנָּקֶה פֶקֶד עֹן אֲבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים עַל־  
שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים: <sup>יט</sup> סֶלַח־נָא לַעֲוֹן הָעָם הַזֶּה  
כְּגֹדֶל חֶסֶדְךָ וּכְאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתָּה לָעָם הַזֶּה מִמִּצְרַיִם  
וְעַד־הַנֶּה:

כ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה סֶלַחְתִּי כְדַבַּרְךָ: <sup>כא</sup> וְאוֹלָם חֲיֵי־אֲנִי  
וַיִּמְלֵא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ: <sup>כב</sup> כִּי כָל־  
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָרְאִים אֶת־כְּבֹדִי וְאֶת־אֹתוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר־

tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, Yahweh, are in the midst of this people, for you show yourself to them face to face; and it is you, Yahweh, whose cloud stands over them, that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. <sup>15</sup> If you destroy this people now as one man, then the nations who have heard of you will say, <sup>16</sup> “Yahweh could not bring this people into the land he swore to give them, so he has killed them in the desert.” <sup>17</sup> No, my Lord: now is the time to assert your power, as you promised when you said, <sup>18</sup> “Yahweh is slow to anger and rich in faithful love, forgiving faults and transgressions, yet letting nothing go unchecked, punishing the parents’ guilt in the children to the third and fourth generation.” <sup>19</sup> Forgive the sin of this people, in the abundance of your graciousness, as you have done from Egypt until now.”

<sup>20</sup> Yahweh said, “I forgive them as you ask. <sup>21</sup> But – as I live, and as the glory of Yahweh fills the whole world – <sup>22</sup> of all the men who have seen my glory and the signs that I worked in Egypt and in the desert, who

<sup>15</sup> In place of ‘as one man’, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV has ‘at one time’ and NETB has ‘at once’.

<sup>16</sup> Other nations will conclude that Yahweh does not have the power of deity (Dt 32:26–27), i.e. the power to deliver the people (1K 18:20–40).

<sup>17</sup> Note that the initial *yod* on יִגְדֹּל־נָא is here presented as an enlarged letter, as it appears in almost all *Hebrew MSS*. Here, ‘Lord’ translates אֲדֹנָי (‘Adonai’).

<sup>18</sup> This verse is a quotation from an old liturgical summary (see Ex 34:5–8).

<sup>19</sup> The verb translated ‘forgive’ (סֶלַח־נָא) is in the imperative form.

<sup>20</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, “forgiven according to your word;” the direct object, ‘them’, is implied.

<sup>21</sup> The phrase, ‘as I live’ is the oath formula; but in the Pentateuch it occurs here and in v. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Since divine mercy does not preclude divine judgement (v. 18<sup>b</sup>), the verdict is that none of the present rebellious generation will enter Canaan.

עָשִׂיתִי בַּמִּצְרִים וּבַמִּדְבָּר וַיִּנְסוּ אֹתִי זֶה עֹשֶׁר  
פְּעָמִים וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹלִי: <sup>כג</sup> אִם-יֵרְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ  
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְתָּם וְכָל-מִנְאֲצֵי לֹא יֵרְאוּהָ:  
<sup>כד</sup> וְעַבְדִּי כָלָב עָקַב הִיָּתָה רוּחַ אַחֲרֵת עִמּוֹ וַיִּמְלֹא  
אֲחֵרֵי וַהֲבִיאתִיו אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בָּא שָׁמָּה וְזָרְעוּ  
יִזְרְשֶׁנָּה: <sup>כה</sup> וְהָעַמְלָקִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּעֵמֶק מֶחָר  
פָּנּוּ וְסָעוּ לָכֶם הַמִּדְבָּר דֶּרֶךְ יַם-סוּף: {פ}

<sup>כו</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: <sup>כז</sup> עַד-  
מָתִי לַעֲדָה הָרְעָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר הִמָּה מְלִינִים עָלַי  
אֶת-תְּלֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הִמָּה מְלִינִים עָלַי  
שָׁמַעְתִּי: <sup>כח</sup> אֲמַר אֱלֹהִים חַי-אֲנִי נֹאם-יְהוָה אִם-לֹא  
כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתֶּם בְּאָזְנִי כֵן אֶעֱשֶׂה לָכֶם: <sup>כט</sup> בַּמִּדְבָּר  
הַזֶּה יִפְּלוּ פְּגִרְיֶכֶם וְכָל-פְּקֻדֵיכֶם לְכָל-מִסְפָּרְכֶם  
מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה אֲשֶׁר הִלִּינְתֶּם עָלַי:

have put me to the test ten times already and not obeyed my voice, <sup>23</sup> not one shall see the land I swore to give their fathers. Not one of those who slight me shall see it but <sup>24</sup> my servant Caleb is of another spirit. Because he has obeyed me perfectly, I will bring him into the land he has entered, and his race shall possess it. (The Amalekites and Canaanites dwell in the plain.) <sup>25</sup> Tomorrow you will turn about and go back into the desert, in the direction of the Sea of Suph."

<sup>26</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said: <sup>27</sup> "How much longer am I to endure this perverse congregation muttering against me? I have heard the complaints that the Israelites keep murmuring against me. <sup>28</sup> Say to them, "As I live – it is Yahweh who speaks – I will deal with you according to the very words you have used in my hearing. <sup>29</sup> In this desert, your dead bodies will fall, all you men of the census, all you who were numbered from the age of twenty years and over, you who

<sup>23</sup> The word אִם indicates a negative oath formula: here, God is swearing that they will not see the land.

<sup>24</sup> Caleb is expected in view of 13:30; Joshua is not mentioned because the account of his siding with Caleb (vv. 5–6, 26–38) comes from another tradition.

<sup>25</sup> In place of 'Sea of Suph', here following the MT (literally, דֶּרֶךְ יַם-סוּף) and NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'Red Sea'.

<sup>26</sup> Vv. 26–38 are parallel with vv. 11–25, but the outlook of the Priestly tradition (compare its interest in the census) has influenced their editing. Herein, the 40 years in the desert is interpreted as a time of divine judgement.

<sup>27</sup> It is worth mentioning in passing that this is one of the Rabbinic proof texts for having at least ten men to form a congregation and have prayer. If God called ten men (the bad spies) a 'congregation', then a congregation must have ten men. But here the word refers to the people as a whole (the NJB has 'community'), not just to the ten spies.

<sup>28</sup> Here again is the oath (see #21) that God swore in his wrath, an oath he swore by himself, that they would not enter the land.

<sup>29</sup> 'Twenty years' was the age for beginning military service (1:3).

לֹא־אֶתֶם תִּבְאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת־יָדִי  
 לְשֹׁכֵן אֲתֶכֶם בָּהּ כִּי אִם־כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה וַיהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־  
 נֹון: <sup>לֹא</sup> וְטַפְכֶּם אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם לְבֹז יִהְיֶה וְהִבִּיאתִי  
 אֹתָם וַיִּדְעוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר מֵאִסְתֶּם בָּהּ:  
 לִבְּפִגְרֵיכֶם אֲתֶם יִפְּלוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה: <sup>לֵב</sup> וּבְנֵיכֶם  
 יִהְיוּ רֹעִים בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה וְנִשְׂאוּ אֶת־  
 זִנּוּתֵיכֶם עַד־תָּם פִּגְרֵיכֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר: <sup>לֵב</sup> בַּמִּסְפָּר  
 הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר־תָּרַתֶּם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם יוֹם  
 לְשָׁנָה יוֹם לְשָׁנָה תִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־עֹנֹתֵיכֶם אַרְבָּעִים  
 שָׁנָה וַיִּדְעֻתֶם אֶת־תְּנוּאַתִּי: <sup>לֵב</sup> אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי  
 אִם־לֹא | זֹאת אֶעֱשֶׂה לְכָל־הָעֵדָה הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת  
 הַנוֹעֲדִים עָלַי בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה יָתֶמוּ וְשָׁם יָמָתוּ:  
 לוֹ וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לַתּוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ  
 וַיָּשְׁבוּ וַיְלוּנוּ וַיִּלְּנוּ עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה לְהוֹצִיא  
 דָּבָה עַל־הָאָרֶץ: לוֹ וַיָּמָתוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים מוֹצְאֵי דְבַת־  
 הָאָרֶץ רָעָה בַּמִּגָּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: <sup>לֵב</sup> וַיהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון

have complained against me. <sup>30</sup> I swear that you shall not enter the land  
 where I swore most solemnly, to settle you. It is Caleb son of Jephunneh  
 and Joshua son of Nun, <sup>31</sup> and your young children that you said would  
 become booty, I will bring in to know the land you have disdained. <sup>32</sup> As  
 for you, your dead bodies will fall in this desert, <sup>33</sup> and your sons will  
 be nomads in the desert for forty years, bearing the weight of your  
 faithlessness, until the last of you lies dead in the desert. <sup>34</sup> For forty  
 days, you reconnoitred the land. Each day shall count for a year: for  
 forty years you shall bear the burden of your sins, and you shall learn  
 what it means to reject me.” <sup>35</sup> I, Yahweh, have spoken: thus, surely, will  
 I deal with this perverse community that has conspired against me. Here  
 in this desert, to the last man, they shall die.”

<sup>36</sup> The men whom Moses had sent to reconnoitre the land, who on their  
 return had incited the whole community of Israel to grumble against  
 Yahweh by disparaging it, <sup>37</sup> these men who had disparaged the land  
 died by a plague before Yahweh. <sup>38</sup> Of the men who had gone to

<sup>30</sup> For the phrase, ‘I swore most solemnly’, the MT uses the anthropomorphic expression ‘I raised my hand’ (in taking an oath).

<sup>31</sup> In place of ‘booty’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘victims of war’.

<sup>32</sup> Throughout this section of the Pentateuch, the NRSV & NETB have ‘wilderness’ in place of ‘desert’, here following the NJB.

<sup>33</sup> The literal translation of ‘nomads’ is ‘shepherds’; it means that the people would be desert nomads, grazing their flock on available land.

<sup>34</sup> An alternative translation for, “know what it means to reject me,” used in the NRSV, is, “know my displeasure.”

<sup>35</sup> In place of ‘to the last man’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘they shall come to a full end’ and NETB has ‘they will be finished’.

<sup>36</sup> The Kethib/Qere difference here (possible vav/yod confusion) warrants an explanation.

<sup>37</sup> In place of ‘died by a plague’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘were all struck dead’.

<sup>38</sup> NETB lacks the word, ‘only’.

וְכָלֹב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה חִי וְיֹשָׁפָט בֶּן־נֹון וְכָלֹב בֶּן־נֹון וְיֹשָׁפָט בֶּן־נֹון  
לְתוֹר אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:

לֹא וַיִּדְבֹּר מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְּאֲבָלוּ הָעָם מְאֹד: מַיִם וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַּבֹּקֶר  
וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶל־רֹאשׁ־הָהָר לֵאמֹר הֲנִנוּ וְעָלִינוּ אֶל־  
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר יְהוָה כִּי חָטֵאנוּ: מֵא וַיֹּאמֶר  
מֹשֶׁה לָּמָּה זֶה אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה וְהוּא לֹא  
תַּצְלַח: מֵב אֶל־תַּעֲלוּ כִּי אֵין יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְלֹא  
תִּגָּפוּ לִפְנֵי אִיְבֵיכֶם: מֵג כִּי הָעַמְלָקִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי שָׁם  
לִפְנֵיכֶם וְנִפְלֹתֶם בְּחָרֶב כִּי־עַל־כֵּן שִׁבַּתֶּם מֵאֲחֵרֵי  
יְהוָה וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם: מֵד וַיַּעֲפְלוּ לַעְלוֹת  
אֶל־רֹאשׁ הָהָר וְאֶרֶז בְּרִית־יְהוָה וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא־מָשָׁה

reconnoitre the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of  
Jephunneh remained alive.

<sup>39</sup> Moses told these words to all the Israelites and the people mourned  
greatly. <sup>40</sup> They rose early and set out for the heights of the highlands  
saying, “See, we are setting out for the place Yahweh has promised, for  
we have sinned.” <sup>41</sup> Moses replied, “Why disobey the command of  
Yahweh? It will not succeed. <sup>42</sup> Do not go up, for Yahweh is not with  
you, and you will be beaten by your enemies. <sup>43</sup> For, the Amalekites and  
Canaanites face you, and you will fall by the sword because you have  
turned away from Yahweh, and Yahweh is not with you.” <sup>44</sup> Yet, they  
set out presumptuously towards the heights of the highlands. Neither  
the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh nor Moses left the camp. <sup>45</sup> The

<sup>39</sup> Vv. 39–45 give a theological conclusion to this lengthy narrative: on the threshold of the Promised Land, Israel lacks faith and wants to return to Egypt; then, contrary to God’s wishes, attacks, unaccompanied by the Ark of Yahweh. This is an inversion of the themes of exodus and holy war: Israel was defeated and rejected in the desert, which explains why the long detour through Transjordan became necessary.

<sup>40</sup> Their sin was unbelief: they could have gone and conquered the area if they had trusted Yahweh for their victory; but they did not, and so they were condemned to perish in the desert. Now, thinking that by going they can undo all that, they plan to go; but this is also disobedience, for Yahweh said they would not now take the land, and yet they think they can. Here is their second sin – presumption.

<sup>41</sup> Moses’ reply opens literally, “Why is this (that) you disobey...” The pronoun brings the force of “why in the world are you doing this now?”

<sup>42</sup> The failure is interpreted by the words, ‘Yahweh is not among you’: i.e. the Ark did not go with them into battle (v. 44). The verb ‘will be beaten’ could also be translated as subordinate to that preceding: ‘lest you be beaten’.

<sup>43</sup> The NJB opens this verse with, “Yes, there facing you are the Amalekites and Canaanites.”

<sup>44</sup> Compare the Arabic *afala* (‘to swell’) and *gafala*, (‘reckless’, ‘headstrong’); the word עָפַל means a ‘rounded hill’ or a ‘tumour’: the idea behind the verb may be that of swelling and so acting ‘presumptuously’.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Hormah’ (חֲרָמָה) was probably ‘Tell El-Meshash’, east of Beersheba, 75 km north of Kadesh, on the edge of the mountainous country. As the Israelites had reached ‘the heights of the hill country’ (v. 44), they had gone beyond Hormah, on which they were now thrown back. They had,



מִקֵּרֶב הַמִּחְנֶה: <sup>מה</sup> וַיֵּרֶד הָעַמְלִקִּי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי הַיֹּשֵׁב Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came  
בָּהָר הַהוּא וַיִּכּוּם וַיִּכְתּוּם עַד־הַחֲרָמָה: {פ} down and defeated them, and harried them all the way to Hormah.

---

therefore, already conquered this town (see #21:1). The bitterness of this and other battles is the basis of the ancient vow against the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-16).

## במדבר פרק טו

א וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל־אֶרֶץ  
מוֹשְׁבֵיתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם: ג וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אִשָּׁה  
לַיהוָה עֹלָה אוֹזֶבֶחַ לִפְלֹא־גֹדֶל אוֹ בְּנִדְבָה אוֹ  
בְּמַעֲדֵיכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה מִן־הַבֶּקֶר אוֹ  
מִן־הָעֶזָּאן: ד וְהִקְרִיב הַמִּקְרִיב קֶרְבָּנוֹ לַיהוָה מִנְחָה  
סֹלֶת עֲשָׂרוֹן בָּלוּל בְּרִבְעֵית הַהֵין שֶׁמֶן: ה וַיֵּין לַגֶּסֶךְ  
רְבִיעִית הַהֵין תַּעֲשֶׂה עַל־הָעֹלָה אוֹ לִזְבַּח לִכְבֹּשׁ  
הָאֶחָד: ו אוֹ לֶאֱיִל תַּעֲשֶׂה מִנְחָה סֹלֶת שְׁנֵי  
עֲשָׂרִים בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלִשִׁית הַהֵין: ז וַיֵּין לַגֶּסֶךְ  
שְׁלִשִׁית הַהֵין תִּקְרִיב רִיח־נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: ח וְכִי־  
תַעֲשֶׂה בֶן־בֶּקֶר עֹלָה אוֹזֶבֶחַ לִפְלֹא־גֹדֶל אוֹ

## NUMBERS 15

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, <sup>2</sup> “Tell this to the Israelites: “When you have come to the land you are to inhabit, which I give to you, <sup>3</sup> and you make an offering to Yahweh, from your herds or flocks (either a high-offering or a sacrifice, to fulfil a vow, as a voluntary gift, or on one of your solemn feasts), to make pleasing aroma for Yahweh <sup>4</sup> he who offers must bring, as his personal gift to Yahweh, an oblation of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one quarter on a hin of oil. <sup>5</sup> You must also make a libation of wine, one quarter of a hin to each lamb, with the high-offering or sacrifice. <sup>6</sup> For a ram, the oblation should be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil, <sup>7</sup> and a libation of one-third of a hin of wine, offering it as a pleasing aroma for Yahweh. <sup>8</sup> If you offer a bull as a high-offering or sacrifice, to

### NUMBERS 15

- <sup>1</sup> The essential part of Chs 15–19 describes the revolt(s) of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, emphasising the divine origin of authority in the community and the primacy of Aaron.
- <sup>2</sup> The participle translated ‘I give’ has its *futur instans* use: it is not imminent, but it is certain that God would give the land to Israel.
- <sup>3</sup> The NJB places the clause, ‘from your herds or flocks’ after ‘sacrifice’; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.
- <sup>4</sup> Obviously, as the wording of the text affirms, this kind of offering would be made after they were in the land and able to produce the grain and oil for the sacrifices; the instructions anticipated their ability to do this, and this would give hope to them. The amounts are difficult to determine, but it may be that they were to bring 4.5 litres of flour and 1.8 L each of oil and wine.
- <sup>5</sup> The drink-offering was an ancient custom, mentioned in the Ugaritic tablets of Ras Shamra (14<sup>th</sup> Century BCE); it was poured out at the base of the altar (see Si 50:15 and Josephus, *Ant.* 3.9.4).
- <sup>6</sup> In place of ‘the oblation should be’, the NJB has ‘you must make an oblation of’.
- <sup>7</sup> The NJB has ‘appeasing fragrance’ in place of ‘pleasing aroma’ (here following NETB), and the NRSV has ‘pleasing odour’.
- <sup>8</sup> In place of ‘communion sacrifice’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘offering of well-being’ and NETB has ‘peace offering’.

שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה: ט וְהִקְרִיב עַל-בֶּן-הַבֶּקָר מִנְחָה  
סֹלֶת שְׁלֹשָׁה עֲשָׂרִים בָּלוּל בַּשֶּׁמֶן חֲצִי הֵהִין: ו' וְיִזֵּן  
תִּקְרִיב לַנֶּסֶךְ חֲצִי הֵהִין אִשָּׁה רִיח־נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה:  
י"א כִּכָּה יַעֲשֶׂה לְשׂוֹר הָאֶחָד אוֹ לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד אוֹ-  
לְשֶׁה בִּכְבָּשִׁים אוֹ בְּעִזִּים: י"ב כַּמֶּסֶפֶר אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂוּ  
כִּכָּה תַעֲשֶׂוּ לְאֶחָד כַּמֶּסֶפֶרם:

י"ג כָּל-הָאֲזִרְחָה יַעֲשֶׂה-כִּכָּה אֶת-אֵלֶּה לְהִקְרִיב אִשָּׁה  
רִיח־נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: י"ד וְכִי-יִגְוֹר אֶתְכֶם גֵּר אוֹ אֲשֶׁר-  
בְּתוֹכְכֶם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם וַעֲשֶׂה אִשָּׁה רִיח־נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה  
כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂוּ בֵּן יַעֲשֶׂה: ט"ו הִקְהֵל חֻקָּה אַחַת לָכֶם  
וּלְגֵר הַגֵּר חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּכֶּם כִּגֵּר יִהְיֶה  
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ט"ז תֹּוֹרָה אַחַת וּמִשְׁפָּט אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לָכֶם  
וּלְגֵר הַגֵּר אֶתְכֶם: {פ}

י"ח וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: י"ח דִּבַּר אֶל-בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם בְּבֹאֲכֶם אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר

fulfil a vow or as a communion sacrifice for Yahweh; <sup>9</sup> with the bull, an oblation of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil must be presented, <sup>10</sup> and you must offer a libation of half a hin of wine, as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma for Yahweh. <sup>11</sup> This shall be done for each bull or ram, each lamb or kid. <sup>12</sup> Whatever the number of victims you prepare, you must do the same for each and every one.

<sup>13</sup> "All who are native-born will do this when making a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma for Yahweh; <sup>14</sup> and, if an alien residing with you or with your descendants makes a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma for Yahweh, he will do as you do. <sup>15</sup> There shall be only one law for you, members of the community, and the resident alien alike, a law binding your descendants forever: before Yahweh, you and the alien are no different. <sup>16</sup> One law, one statute will apply for you and the alien."

<sup>17</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>18</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: "When you have entered the land to which I am bringing you,

<sup>9</sup> The text changes from direct address here to the 3P verb; if the MT is correct, then to make a smooth translation it would need to be a passive.

<sup>10</sup> The text here changes back to direct address (see #9).

<sup>11</sup> The NRSV & NETB, following the MT, add 'male' before 'lamb'; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>12</sup> The NJB lacks 'and every', here following the NRSV, and adds, at the end of the verse, 'however many there are'.

<sup>13</sup> In place of 'all who are native-born, here following the WEBBE, the NJB has 'all citizens of the country' and the NRSV has 'every native Israelite'.

<sup>14</sup> The literal translation of 'or with your descendants' is 'to your generations', but it means in the future.

<sup>15</sup> The clause 'there shall be' is not present in the MT and is here added, following the NJB, for clarity.

<sup>16</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "You and the alien who resides with you shall have the same law and the same ordinance."

<sup>17</sup> NETB omits the participle, 'saying', considering it redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>18</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, "which I am causing you to enter there;" the final adverb is resumptive and attaches to the relative pronoun.

אֲנִי מְבִיא אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה: יט וְהָיָה בְּאֲכֹלְכֶם מִלֶּחֶם  
הָאָרֶץ תְּרִימוּ תְרוּמָה לַיהוָה: כ רֹאשִׁית עֲרֹסְתְּכֶם  
חֲלָה תְרִימוּ תְרוּמָה כְּתְרוּמַת גֶּרֶן כֵּן תְרִימוּ אֹתָהּ:  
כא מִרֹאשִׁית עֲרֹסְתִיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ לַיהוָה תְרוּמָה  
לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: {ס}

כב וְכִי תִשְׁגּוּ וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת כָּל־הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֵלֶּה  
אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה: כג אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה  
יְהוָה אֲלֵיכֶם בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה מִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה  
וְהָלָאָה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: כד וְהָיָה אִם מַעֲיָנִי הָעֵדָה  
נַעֲשֶׂתָה לְשִׁגְגָה וְעָשׂוּ כָל־הָעֵדָה פֶּר בֶּן־בִּקְרָא אֶחָד  
לְעֹלָה לְרִיחַ נִיחָח לַיהוָה וּמִנְחָתוֹ וְנִסְכּוֹ כַּמִּשְׁפָּט  
וְשַׁעֲר־עֲזִים אֶחָד לַחֹטֵת: כה וְכִפֹּר הַכֹּהֵן עַל־כָּל־

<sup>19</sup> you must set aside a portion for Yahweh when you eat the bread of this country. <sup>20</sup> You must set aside one loaf from the first of your dough; you must set this offering aside like the one set aside from your threshing. <sup>21</sup> You are to set aside for Yahweh a portion of the first of your dough. This applies to your descendants.

<sup>22</sup> "If you err and fail in any of these commands that Yahweh has spoken to Moses, <sup>23</sup> all that Yahweh has laid on you through Moses, from the day Yahweh commanded Moses throughout your generations: <sup>24</sup> If it is unintentional, unknown to the community, the whole community must make a high-offering of a young bull, a pleasing aroma for Yahweh, with its oblation and libation, and one he-goat as a sin offering. <sup>25</sup> The priest must atone for all the community of Israelites and they shall be

<sup>19</sup> 'Portion' translates תְרוּמָה – it was to be an offering separated from the rest and raised up to Yahweh in the sight of all.

<sup>20</sup> The phrase, 'the first of your dough', is not very clear; it probably means a batch of loaves from the kneading trough – the first of the baking.

<sup>21</sup> In place of 'first of your dough' (see #21), the NJB has 'best of your meal'.

<sup>22</sup> These regulations supplement what was already ruled on in the Levitical Code for the purification and reparation offerings (see Lv 4-7 for details). Some biblical scholars view the rules in Leviticus as more elaborate and therefore later; however, this probably represents a misunderstanding of the purpose of each collection.

<sup>23</sup> Mosaic Law includes the original commandments and supplementary laws, thus indicating the development of law as new situations were faced. At the end of this verse, the NJB adds 'this is what must be done' and parenthesises the remainder.

<sup>24</sup> The idea of לְשִׁגְגָה ('unintentional') seems to be that of inadvertence or without intent; the text gives no indication of how this offense might be committed, or what it might include. It probably describes any transgressions done in ignorance of the Law that involved a violation of Tabernacle procedure or Priestly protocol or social misdemeanour; even though it was done unintentionally, it was still a violation and called for ritual purification.

<sup>25</sup> This verb here translated as 'atone' (וְכִפֹּר) describes the ritual events by which someone who was separated from the holy LORD God could find acceptance into his presence through the sacrificial blood of the substitutionary animal (see Lv 1 & Nb 17:6-15).

עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִסְלַח לָהֶם כִּי־שָׁגְגָה הוּא וְהֵם  
הֵבִיאוּ אֶת־קֹרְבָנָם אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה וְחַטָּאתָם לִפְנֵי  
יְהוָה עַל־שִׁגְגָתָם: כו וְנִסְלַח לְכָל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְלִגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכָם כִּי לְכָל־הָעָם בְּשִׁגְגָה: {ס}

כז וְאִם־נִפֶּשׁ אַחַת תַּחֲטָא בְשִׁגְגָה וְהִקְרִיבָה עֹזֶר  
בֶּת־שָׁנָתָה לַחֲטָאת: כח וְכֹפֵר הַכֹּהֵן עַל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ  
הַשִּׁגְגָּה בַּחֲטָאָה בְשִׁגְגָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו  
וְנִסְלַח לוֹ: כט הָאֲזָרָח בִּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִגֵּר הַגֵּר  
בְּתוֹכָם תוֹרָה אַחַת יִהְיֶה לָכֶם לַעֲשֹׂה בְשִׁגְגָה:  
ל וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־תַּעֲשֶׂה | בְּיַד רָמָה מִן־הָאֲזָרָח וּמִן־  
הַגֵּר אֶת־יְהוָה הוּא מְגִדֵּף וְנִכְרַתָּה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא  
מִקֶּרֶב עַמָּה: לא כִּי דִבַּר־יְהוָה בָּזָה וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתוֹ  
הִפָּךְ הִכְרִית | תִּפְרֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא עֹנֶה בָּה: {פ}

לב וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ מִקִּשׁ  
עֲצִים בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: לג וַיִּקְרִיבוּ אֹתוֹ הַמַּצָּאִים אֹתוֹ

forgiven; for, it was an error and they have brought their offering as a burnt offering to Yahweh, and their sin offering before Yahweh, for their error. <sup>26</sup> All the community of Israelites will be forgiven, as also the alien who lives among them; for, all the people have sinned in error.

<sup>27</sup> “An individual who has sinned in error must offer a yearling kid as a sin offering. <sup>28</sup> The priest must atone before Yahweh for the one who errs by this sin of error, to atone for him, and he shall be forgiven. <sup>29</sup> You shall have one law for the man who sins in error, whether he is a native Israelite or a stranger living among them. <sup>30</sup> But the individual who acts deliberately, be he citizen or alien, commits an outrage against Yahweh, and such a man shall be outlawed from his people. <sup>31</sup> Since he has despised the word of Yahweh and has disobeyed his order, such a man shall be outlawed absolutely, and will bear his guilt.”

<sup>32</sup> While the Israelites were in the desert, they caught a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. <sup>33</sup> Those who caught him gathering wood

<sup>26</sup> The literal translation of ‘will be forgiven’ is ‘and it shall be forgiven to them’.

<sup>27</sup> The phrase ‘an individual’ translates אִם־נִפֶּשׁ אַחַת, sometimes translated ‘and if any soul’; however, the word describes the whole person, the soul in the body: it refers here to the individual who sins.

<sup>28</sup> In place of ‘to make atonement for him’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘atonement having been made for him’.

<sup>29</sup> The NJB places the second clause (‘whether he is native...’) at the beginning of the verse; here, we follow NETB.

<sup>30</sup> The enactment of this and the following verse is of great importance, which appears to make forgiveness impossible when the fault is ‘deliberate’ (literally, ‘with a high hand’). At this period, however, we must not look for an exact definition of ‘deliberation’.

<sup>31</sup> The verb בָּזָה (‘despised’) means to treat something as worthless, to treat it with contempt, to look down the nose at something as it were.

<sup>32</sup> Gathering of wood, although seemingly harmless, is done with intent to kindle fire, and so reveals a culpable intent.

<sup>33</sup> In place of ‘to Moses’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘before Moses’.



מִקֵּשׁ עֲצִים אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל כָּל-  
הָעֵדָה: <sup>לד</sup> וַיִּנְיָחוּ אֹתוֹ בַּמִּשְׁמֶר כִּי לֹא פֹרַשׁ מִה-  
יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ: {ס}

<sup>לה</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה מוֹת יוּמַת הָאִישׁ רְגוֹם  
אֹתוֹ בְּאֲבָנִים כָּל-הָעֵדָה מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה: <sup>לו</sup> וַיֵּצִיאוּ  
אֹתוֹ כָּל-הָעֵדָה אֶל-מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּרְגְּמוּ אֹתוֹ  
בְּאֲבָנִים וַיָּמָת כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

<sup>לז</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>לח</sup> דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל-כְּנָפֵי  
בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל-צִיצִית הַכְּנָף פִּתְּלִיל  
תְּכֵלֶת: <sup>לט</sup> וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם  
אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא-תִתּוּרוּ  
אֲחֵרִי לְבַבְכֶּם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם זֹנִים

brought him to Moses, Aaron and to the entire community. <sup>34</sup> They put him in custody, because the penalty he should undergo had not yet been fixed.

<sup>35</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, "This man must be put to death. The whole community must stone him outside the camp." <sup>36</sup> The whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him until he was dead, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

<sup>37</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, <sup>38</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and tell them to put tassels on the hems of their garments, and to work a violet thread into the tassel at the hem. <sup>39</sup> You must have a tassel, then, and the sight of it will remind you of all the commands of Yahweh. You are to put them into practice then, and no longer follow the desires of your heart and your eyes, which have led you to make wantons of yourselves.

<sup>34</sup> The death penalty had already been prescribed for violating the Sabbath (Ex 31:14–15, 35:2). The man was put into custody until, by divine oracle, it was determined whether his action actually came under the law (see Lv 24:12).

<sup>35</sup> The sentence begins with the emphatic use of the infinitive absolute with the verb in the Hophal imperfect: 'he shall surely be put to death;' then, a second infinitive absolute רְגוֹם provides the explanatory activity – all the community is to stone him with stones. The punishment is consistent with other decrees from God (see Ex 31:14–15, 35:2); Moses had either forgotten such, or they had simply neglected to (or were hesitant to) enact them.

<sup>36</sup> The literal translation of 'stoned him until he was dead' is 'stoned him with stones and he died'.

<sup>37</sup> Vv. 37–41 form the last part of the prayer known as the 'Shema' (see #Dt 6:4).

<sup>38</sup> The 'tassel' (צִיצִית – the WEBBE has 'fringe') with a violet thread, playing an important part in religious costume, was to be a reminder of the sacred character of the community. Ancient reproductions of Palestinian costume show tassel hanging all round the hem (so also Dt 22:12), but in the Jewish period the tassels were almost always confined to its four corners.

<sup>39</sup> The last clause is relative, explaining the influence of the human heart and physical sight; it literally says, 'which you go whoring after them'.

אַחֲרֵיהֶם: <sup>מ</sup> לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי  
 וְהִיִּיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: <sup>מא</sup> אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם  
 אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵהְיוֹת לָכֶם  
 לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: {פ}

<sup>40</sup> This will remind you of all my commandments; put them into practice, and you will be consecrated to your God. <sup>41</sup> It is I, Yahweh your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt so that I may be your God, I Yahweh your God."

---

<sup>40</sup> This clause also serves as a purpose/result clause of the preceding – ‘in order that you may remember’; but, since the line is so long, it is simpler to make this a separate sentence in the translation.

<sup>41</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “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.”

## NUMBERS 16

## במדבר פרק טז

א וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְחָר בֶּן־קֹהַת לֵוִי וְדָתָן  
וְאַבִּירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פִּלֶּת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן:  
ב וַיִּקְמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַנְשֵׁים מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמִשִּׁים  
וּמֵאַתָּים נְשִׂאֵי עֵדָה קִרְאֵי מוֹעֵד אַנְשֵׁי־שֵׁם:  
ג וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב־  
לָכֶם כִּי כָל־הָעֵדָה כָּלָם קֳדָשִׁים וּבְתוֹכָם יְהוָה  
וּמִדּוֹעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קֹהֶל יְהוָה:

ד וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו: ה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־קֹרַח  
וְאֶל־כָּל־עֵדָתוֹ לֵאמֹר בֹּקֶר וַיָּדַע יְהוָה אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־  
לֹא וְאֶת־הַקְּדוֹשׁ וְהַקָּרִיב אֵלָיו וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר־בּוֹ  
יִקְרִיב אֵלָיו: ו זֹאת עֲשׂוּ קְחוּ־לָכֶם מַחְתֹּת קֹרַח  
וְכָל־עֵדָתוֹ: ז וְתָנוּ בָהֶן | אֵשׁ וְשִׂימוּ עֲלֵיהֶן | קִטְרֶת  
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מִחֹר וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה הוּא  
הַקְּדוֹשׁ רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי:

<sup>1</sup> Korah son of Izhar, son of Kohath the Levite, and the Reubenites Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth took <sup>2</sup> two hundred and fifty Israelites, leaders of the community, chosen from the assembly, men of repute, and confronted Moses. <sup>3</sup> They assembled against Moses and Aaron said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and Yahweh is among them. Why put yourselves above the community of Yahweh?"

<sup>4</sup> When Moses heard it, he fell on his face. <sup>5</sup> Then he said to Kohath and all his followers, "In the morning Yahweh will reveal who is his, who is the holy man that he will allow to come near him; he will allow the one he has chosen to come near. <sup>6</sup> Do this: take the censers of Korah and all his followers, <sup>7</sup> fill them with fire and, tomorrow, put incense in them before Yahweh. Yahweh will choose the one who is the holy man. Sons of Levi, you take too much on yourselves!"

## NUMBERS 16

<sup>1</sup> Some argue that two parallel narratives are fused together in this chapter. The Old Epic ("JE", vv. 1b-2a, 12-15, 25-34) is concerned with the political revolt of the Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram; and the Priestly ("P", vv. 1a, 2b-11, 16-24, 35) with the religious pretensions of the Kohathites at the Aaronites' expense.

<sup>2</sup> These men must have been counsellors or judges of some kind.

<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of רַב־לָכֶם ('you have gone too far') is 'much to you', meaning something like 'you have assumed far too much authority'.

<sup>4</sup> In place of 'fell on his face', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'threw himself face down on the ground'.

<sup>5</sup> A divine sign will determine who will be allowed to approach Yahweh, i.e. the altar.

<sup>6</sup> The NRSV reads: "... take censers, Korah and all your company..."

<sup>7</sup> For the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the holy one."

ח וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־קֹרַח שְׁמֹעוּנָא בְנֵי לְוִי:  
ט הַמַּעֲט מִכֶּם כִּי־הִבְדִּיל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְכֶם  
מֵעֵדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהִקְרִיב אֶתְכֶם אֵלָיו לַעֲבֹד אֶת־  
עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדָה לְשִׁרְתָּם:  
י וַיִּקְרַב אֹתָךְ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲחִיךָ בְנֵי־לְוִי אֹתָךְ  
וּבִקְשִׁיתֶם גַּם־כֹּהֲנָה: יא לָכֵן אֹתָהּ וְכָל־עֲדַתְךָ  
הַנִּעֲדִים עַל־יְהוָה וְאַהֲרֹן מֵהָיָא כִּי תִלּוּנוּ תִלְוֶנוּ  
עָלָיו:

יב וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלָאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נֵעֲלֶה: יג הַמַּעֲט כִּי הָעֲלִיתָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ  
זֶבֶת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ לְהַמִּיתָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי־תִשְׁתָּרֵר  
עָלֵינוּ גַם־הִשְׁתָּרֵר: יד אָף לֹא אֶל־אֶרֶץ זֶבֶת חֶלֶב

<sup>8</sup> Moses said to Korah, “Hear now, you sons of Levi! <sup>9</sup> Is it too little for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the community of Israel, and called you close to himself for service in the Dwelling of Yahweh, to stand before this community to minister to them? <sup>10</sup> He has called you to be near him, and all your brother Levites with you, yet you seek the priesthood as well! <sup>11</sup> Against Yahweh himself you have joined forces, you and your followers: for, what is Aaron that you murmur against him?”

<sup>12</sup> Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. They replied, “We will not come. <sup>13</sup> Is it too little for you to have brought us away from a country flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the desert, that you must lord it over us now? <sup>14</sup> You have not brought us to

<sup>8</sup> For ‘sons of Levi’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has the more common ‘Levites’.

<sup>9</sup> In place of ‘to minister to them’, here following NETB, the NRSV has ‘and serve them’ and the NJB has ‘and perform the sacred rites on their behalf’.

<sup>10</sup> Moses discerned correctly the real motivation for the rebellion: Korah wanted to be the high priest because he saw how much power there was in the spiritual leadership in Israel; he wanted something like a general election with himself as the candidate and his supporters promoting him. The great privilege of being a Levite and serving in the sanctuary was not enough for him – the status did not satisfy him. Korah gave no rebuttal: the test would be one of ministering with incense, which would bring them into direct proximity with Yahweh; if God honoured Korah as a ministering priest, then it would be settled. But Moses accuses them of rebellion against Yahweh, because Yahweh had chosen Aaron to be the priest.

<sup>11</sup> The question indicates that they had been murmuring against Aaron, that is, expressing disloyalty and challenging his leadership; but it is actually against Yahweh that they had been murmuring because Yahweh had put Aaron in that position. The *Kethib/Qere* difference here (possible *vav/yod* confusion) warrants an explanation.

<sup>12</sup> According to an older literary tradition, a revolt was led by the tribe of Reuben, who were dissatisfied with Moses’ leadership (vv. 1b–2).

<sup>13</sup> Here, the expression normally used of the Promised Land is uniquely applied to Egypt.

<sup>14</sup> The literal translation of the last sentence is, “Will you bore out the eyes of these men?”

וּדְבַשׁ הִבִּיאֲתָנוּ וְתִתֵּן-לָנוּ נַחֲלַת שָׂדֶה וְכָרֶם הָעֵינִי  
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם תִּנְקֹר לֹא נַעֲלֶה: <sup>טו</sup> וַיַּחַר לְמֹשֶׁה  
מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-יְהוָה אֶל-תִּפְּן אֶל-מִנְחָתָם לֹא  
חֲמֹר אֶחָד מֵהֶם נִשְׁאַתִּי וְלֹא הִרְעֵתִי אֶת-אֶחָד  
מֵהֶם:

<sup>טז</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-קֹרַח אַתָּה וְכָל-עֲדֹתְךָ הֵיוּ  
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אַתָּה וְהֵם וְאַהֲרֹן מִחֵר: <sup>יז</sup> וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ  
מִחֲתָתוֹ וַנִּתְּתָם עָלֵיהֶם קֹטֶרֶת וְהַקְרִבְתָּם לִפְנֵי  
יְהוָה אִישׁ מִחֲתָתוֹ חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאתִים מִחֲתָת וְאַתָּה  
וְאַהֲרֹן אִישׁ מִחֲתָתוֹ: <sup>יח</sup> וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִחֲתָתוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ  
עָלֵיהֶם אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂמוּ עָלֵיהֶם קֹטֶרֶת וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ פֶתַח  
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן: <sup>יט</sup> וַיִּקְהַל עָלֵיהֶם קֹרַח  
אֶת-כָּל-הָעֵדָה אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד-  
יְהוָה אֶל-כָּל-הָעֵדָה: {ס}

<sup>כ</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאַל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר:  
<sup>כא</sup> הַבְדִּילוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶכְלֶה אֹתָם כְּרָגַע:

a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us fields and vineyards for our inheritance. Do you expect this people to be blind? We will not come.” <sup>15</sup> Moses flew into a rage and said to Yahweh, “Pay no heed to their offering; I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I harmed any of them.”

<sup>16</sup> Moses said to Korah, “You and all your followers, be present tomorrow before Yahweh, you and they, and Aaron. <sup>17</sup> Let every man bring his censer, put incense in it, and carry his censer before Yahweh – two hundred and fifty censers; you and Aaron also, each of you with his censer.” <sup>18</sup> So, every man took his censer, filled it with fire, and put incense in it; and they stood at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, with Moses and Aaron. <sup>19</sup> Then, when Korah had assembled the whole community to confront these two at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the glory of Yahweh appeared to the whole community.

<sup>20</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, <sup>21</sup> “Stand apart from this assembly, so that I may consume them in a moment.” <sup>22</sup> They threw

<sup>15</sup> The verb translated ‘pay ... heed’ means ‘turn toward’; it is a figurative expression that means ‘to pay attention to’ or to ‘have regard for’.

<sup>16</sup> In place of ‘be present tomorrow before Yahweh’, here following the NRSV, the NJB as ‘come tomorrow into the presence of Yahweh’.

<sup>17</sup> The verbs ‘put’ and ‘carry’ are both perfect tenses with *vav* consecutives; following the imperative, they carry the same force, but in sequence.

<sup>18</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “and Moses and Aaron with them.”

<sup>19</sup> Apparently, the Levites’ revolt had popular support.

<sup>20</sup> NETB omits the participle, ‘saying’, considering it redundant in contemporary English; here, we follow the NJB & NRSV.

<sup>21</sup> In place of ‘so that I may consume them in a moment’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘I am going to destroy them here and now’.

<sup>22</sup> The expression אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחֹת לְכָל-בָּשָׂר (‘the God of the spirits of all flesh’) is difficult; it occurs again in 27:16 and also in some post-biblical texts.



כב וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַת לְכָל-  
בָּשָׂר הָאִישׁ אֶחָד יַחֲטֵא וְעַל כָּל-הָעֵדָה  
תִּקְצֹף: {ס}

כג וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כִּי דִבֶּר אֶל-הָעֵדָה  
לֵאמֹר הֵעָלוּ מִסְבֵּיב לְמִשְׁכַּן-קֹרַח דָּתָן וַאֲבִירָם:

כה וַיָּקָם מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-דָּתָן וַאֲבִירָם וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרָיו  
זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כו וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל-הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר סוּרוּ נָא  
מֵעַל אֶהְיִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָרָשָׁעִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאַל-תִּגְעוּ  
בְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם פֶּן-תִּסָּפּוּ בְּכָל-חַטָּאתָם: כז וַיַּעֲלוּ  
מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן-קֹרַח דָּתָן וַאֲבִירָם מִסְבֵּיב וּדְתָן  
וַאֲבִירָם יֵצְאוּ נֹצְבִים פֶּתַח אֹהֶל־יֵהֶם וּנְשֵׁיהֶם  
וּבְנֵיהֶם וְטַפָּם:

כח וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּזֹאת תֵּדָעוּן כִּי-יְהוָה שְׁלַחְנִי  
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל-הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי-לֹא מִלְּבִי:

themselves face down on the ground and cried, “O God, God of the spirits of all flesh, will you be angry with the whole community for one man’s sin?”

<sup>23</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup> “Say to the community: Get away from of the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.”

<sup>25</sup> Moses stood up and went to Dathan and Abiram; the elders of Israel followed him. <sup>26</sup> He said to the community, “Stand away, I beg you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, for fear that with all their sins you too will be swept away.” <sup>27</sup> So, they moved away from the dwelling of Korah. Dathan and Abiram had come out and stood at their tent doors, with their wives and their sons and their young children.

<sup>28</sup> Then Moses said, “By this you will know that Yahweh himself has sent me to perform all these tasks and that I have not done them of my

<sup>23</sup> The NJB has ‘answered’ in place of ‘spoke’, here following the MT & NRSV.

<sup>24</sup> The NJB, which here follows the LXX, omits, ‘Dathan and Abiram’; the NRSV, following the MT, includes them.

<sup>25</sup> The literal translation of ‘stood up’ (following the NJB – the NRSV & NETB have ‘got up’) is ‘rose’.

<sup>26</sup> The word רָשָׁע (‘wicked’ – following the NRSV & NETB; the NJB has ‘perverse’) has the sense of a guilty criminal; these men were opposing Yahweh and so were condemned as criminals – they were guilty.

<sup>27</sup> The verb נֹצְבִים (‘stood’) suggests a defiant stance, for the word is often used in the sense of taking a stand for or against something; it can also be somewhat neutral, having the sense of positioning oneself for a purpose.

<sup>28</sup> In place of ‘and that I have not done them of my own will’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘and that this is not my doing’ and the NRSV has ‘it has not been of my own accord’; the MT simply has ‘for not from my heart’ (כִּי-לֹא מִלְּבִי): the heart is the centre of the will, the place decisions are made. Moses is saying that the things he has done have not come ‘from the will of man’, so to speak – and certainly not from some secret desire on his part to seize power.

בט אִם-כְּמוֹת כָּל-הָאָדָם יִמְתּוֹן אֱלֹה וּפְקֻדַּת כָּל-  
הָאָדָם יִפְקֹד עֲלֵיהֶם לֹא יִהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי: לְוָאִם-  
בְּרִיאָה יִבְרָא יִהְיֶה וּפְצָתָהּ הָאֲדָמָה אֶת-פִּיהָ  
וּבִלְעָה אֹתָם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם וַיֵּרְדּוּ חַיִּים  
שָׁאֵלָה וַיֵּדְעוּתָם כִּי נֶאֱצָו הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת-  
יְהוָה:

לֹא וַיְהִי כִכְלָתוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה  
וַתִּבְקַע הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֵּיהֶם: לִב וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ  
אֶת-פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת-בְּתֵיהֶם וְאֶת כָּל-  
הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לָקָרַח וְאֶת כָּל-הָרֶכֶשׁ: לִג וַיֵּרְדּוּ הֵם  
וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שָׁאֵלָה וַתִּבֶּס עֲלֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ  
וַיֵּאבְדּוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקֹּהֶל: לד וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר  
סָבִיבֵתֵיהֶם נָסּוּ לְקָלָם כִּי אָמְרוּ פֶן-תִּבְלַעֵנוּ  
הָאָרֶץ: לה וְאֵשׁ יֵצְאָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אֶת  
הַחֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֲתַיִם אִישׁ מִקְרִיבֵי הַקֹּטֶרֶת: {ס}

own will. <sup>29</sup> If these people die a natural death, or if a common fate comes upon them, then Yahweh has not sent me. <sup>30</sup> But if Yahweh does something utterly new, if the earth should open its mouth and swallow them, themselves and all that belongs to them, so that they go down alive to Sheol, then you will know that these men have rejected Yahweh."

<sup>31</sup> The moment he finished saying all these words, the ground split open under their feet, <sup>32</sup> and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, and their families too, and all Korah's people and all their belongings. <sup>33</sup> Thus, they went down alive to Sheol, they and all their possessions; and the earth closed over them and they disappeared from the midst of the assembly. <sup>34</sup> At their cries, all the Israelites that were around them ran away. For they said, "The earth must not swallow us!" <sup>35</sup> A fire came down from Yahweh and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that were carrying incense.

<sup>29</sup> The literal translation of 'common fate' (פְּקֻדַּת) is 'appointment' or 'visitation'; the expression refers to a natural death, parallel to the first expression.

<sup>30</sup> 'Sheol' (שָׁאֵל) is a word of unknown origin meaning the underworld (Dt 32:22, Is 14:9, etc.), to which the dead 'go down' (Gn 37:35, 1S 2:6, etc.), and where the virtuous and wicked alike (#1S 28:19 & Ps 89:48, Ezk 32:17-32) lead a colourless existence (Qo 9:10). God is not praised there (Ps 6:5, 88:4-5, 11-12, 115:7, Is 38:18) but the power of the Living God (#Dt 5:26) reaches even this desolate abode (1S 2:6, Ws 16:13, Am 9:2).

<sup>31</sup> Vv. 31-33 express the ancient conception of corporate guilt, which involves a person's entire family (Jos 7:22-26).

<sup>32</sup> The story of the revolt of Dathan and Abiram takes no account of individual responsibilities.

<sup>33</sup> In place of 'Sheol', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'the pit'.

<sup>34</sup> The literal translation of 'all the Israelites' is 'all Israel'.

<sup>35</sup> The 250 men were Levites, sons of Korah (vv. 2b, 17).

## NUMBERS 17

## במדבר פרק יז

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב אֱמַר אֶל־אֱלֶעָזָר  
בֶּן־אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וְיִרֵם אֶת־הַמַּחֲתֹת מִבֵּין הַשְּׂרָפָה  
וְאֶת־הָאֵשׁ זָרַה־הָלָאָה כִּי קִדְּשׁוּ: ג אֵת מַחֲתֹת  
הַחֹטָאִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנַפְשָׁתָם וַעֲשׂוּ אֹתָם רִקְעֵי פָחִים  
צָפוּי לַמִּזְבֵּחַ כִּי־הִקְרִיבֻם לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיְהִי  
לְאוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ד וַיִּקַּח אֱלֶעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת  
מַחֲתֹת הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיבו הַשְּׂרָפִים וַיִּרְקְעוּם  
צָפוּי לַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ה זָכָרוֹן לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־  
יִקְרַב אִישׁ זֶר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזֶּרַע אֶהֱרֹן הוּא לְהִקְטִיר  
קֹטֶרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כִּקְרַח וּכְעֹדֶתוֹ בְּאֲשֶׁר  
דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה לֹא: {פ}

ו וַיִּלְנֻ כָּל־עַדֹּת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמַּחֲרֹת עַל־מֹשֶׁה  
וְעַל־אֶהֱרֹן לֵאמֹר אַתֶּם הַמֵּתִים אֶת־עַם יְהוָה: ז וַיְהִי  
בְּהִקְהֹל הָעֵדָה עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּפְּנוּ אֶל־אַהֲלֵם

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh then spoke to Moses: <sup>2</sup> "Tell Eleazar, son of Aaron, the priest, to pick the censers out of the embers and scatter the fire far and wide, <sup>3</sup> for these sinful censers have become sanctified, at the cost of their lives. Since they brought them before Yahweh and consecrated them, make the metal into hammered sheets to cover the altar. They will be a sign to the Israelites." <sup>4</sup> So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers that had been carried by the burnt men; they were hammered into sheets to cover the altar. <sup>5</sup> They are a reminder to the Israelites that no layman, no one outside Aaron's line, may come near Yahweh with incense to burn, under pain of suffering the lot of Korah and his followers, according to the order given by Yahweh through Moses.

<sup>6</sup> The next day, all the community of Israelites grumbled at Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of Yahweh." <sup>7</sup> As the community assembled against Moses and Aaron, they turned towards the

## NUMBERS 17

- <sup>1</sup> Vv. 1-15 of this chapter (here following the MT & NJB) are included in Ch. 16 (vv. 36-50) in the NRSV, NETB and many other English translations. Vv. 16-26 are therein numbered 1-11.
- <sup>2</sup> The verb translated 'pick' is the jussive with a *vav* coming after the imperative; it may be subordinated to form a purpose clause ('that he may pick up') or the object of the imperative.
- <sup>3</sup> The consecrated fire is scattered to avoid being put to profane use and the censers it had touched have become consecrated by contact with it.
- <sup>4</sup> The NJB lacks the opening 'so', here following the NRSV & NETB.
- <sup>5</sup> This verse states the purpose of the Korah story: to uphold the prerogatives of the Aaronic priesthood.
- <sup>6</sup> Vv. 6-15 form a supplementary passage, illustrating the efficacy of Aaron's ritual atonement (see Lv 16).
- <sup>7</sup> For 'there', the MT uses וְהִנֵּה ('behold'); this is the deictic particle, used to call attention to things as if the reader were there.

מוֹעֵד וְהָנָה כְּסָהּוּ הָעֲנָן וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד יְהוָה: <sup>ח</sup> וַיָּבֹא  
מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל-פְּנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: {ס}

<sup>ט</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 'הֲרֹמוּ מִתּוֹךְ  
הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאָכְלָה אֹתָם כְּרָגַע וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-  
פְּנֵיהֶם: ' <sup>י</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח אֶת-  
הַמִּחָתָה וְתֵן-עָלֶיהָ אֵשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשִׂים קֶטֶרֶת  
וְהוֹלֵךְ מִהֲרָה אֶל-הָעֵדָה וְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי-יֵצֵא  
הַקֶּצֶף מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה הַחֵל הַנֶּגֶף: ' <sup>יב</sup> וַיִּקַּח אַהֲרֹן  
כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּרָץ אֶל-תּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל וְהָנָה הַחֵל  
הַנֶּגֶף בָּעָם וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַקֶּטֶרֶת וַיְכַפֵּר עַל-הָעָם:  
<sup>יג</sup> וַיַּעֲמֵד בֵּין-הַמֵּתִים וּבֵין הַחַיִּים וַתַּעֲצֹר הַמִּגֵּפָה:  
<sup>יד</sup> וַיְהִיו הַמֵּתִים בַּמִּגֵּפָה אַרְבַּעַת עָשָׂר אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע  
מֵאוֹת מִלִּבְד הַמֵּתִים עַל-דִּבְרֵי-קֹרַח: <sup>טו</sup> וַיָּשָׁב  
אַהֲרֹן אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהַמִּגֵּפָה  
נִעְצְרָה: {פ}

Tent of Meeting; there, the Cloud covered it and the glory of Yahweh appeared <sup>8</sup> and Moses and Aaron stood before the Tent of Meeting.

<sup>9</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, <sup>10</sup> "Stand clear of this community; I am going to destroy them here and now." They threw themselves face down on the ground. <sup>11</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take the censer, fill it with fire from the altar, put incense in it and hurry to the community to make atonement for them. The wrath has come down from Yahweh and the plague has begun." <sup>12</sup> Aaron did as Moses said and ran among the assembly, but the plague was already at work among them. He put in the incense and performed the rite of atonement over the people. <sup>13</sup> Then he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped. <sup>14</sup> Those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, not counting those who died in the affair of Korah. <sup>15</sup> Then Aaron came back to Moses at the Tent of Meeting; the plague had been halted.

<sup>8</sup> In place of 'stood before', here following NETB, the NRSV has 'came to the front of' and the NJB has 'went to the front of'.

<sup>9</sup> After 'Moses', the NJB, following the LXX and Peshitta, adds 'and Aaron'; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

<sup>10</sup> The literal translation of 'they threw themselves face down on the ground' (following the NJB) is 'they fell on their faces'.

<sup>11</sup> In place of 'come down' here following the NJB, the NRSV and NETB have 'gone out'.

<sup>12</sup> The literal translation of 'did' is 'took'.

<sup>13</sup> The NJB inverts the order of the words 'dead' and 'living'; here, we follow the MT, NRSV & NETB.

<sup>14</sup> In place of 'in the affair of', here following the NRSV, the NJB has simply 'because of'.

<sup>15</sup> The NRSV reverses the clauses of this verse: "When the plague was stopped, Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting." Here, we follow the NJB & NETB.

טז וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: י<sup>ז</sup> דַּבֵּר | אֶל־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְקַח מֵאֲתָם מִטָּה מִטָּה לְבֵית אָב מֵאֵת  
כָּל־נְשֵׂי־אֲהֵלם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִטּוֹת אִישׁ  
אֶת־שְׁמוֹ תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטָּהוּ: י<sup>ח</sup> וְאֵת שֵׁם אֶהֱרֹן  
תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטָּה לְוִי כִּי מִטָּה אֶחָד לְרֹאשׁ בֵּית  
אֲבוֹתָם: י<sup>ט</sup> וְהִנַּחְתָּם בְּאֵהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדוּת  
אֲשֶׁר אוֹעֵד לָכֶם שָׁמָּה: כ<sup>ו</sup> וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר  
אֲבַחֲרֶבּוּ מִטָּהוּ יִפְרָח וְהִשְׁכַּתִּי מֵעָלַי אֶת־תִּלְנוֹת  
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵם מְלִינִים עָלֵיכֶם:

כא וַיִּדְבֹּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְּנוּ אֵלָיו | כָּל־  
נְשֵׂי־אֲהֵלָם מִטָּה לְנָשִׂיא אֶחָד מִטָּה לְנָשִׂיא אֶחָד  
לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִטּוֹת וּמִטָּה אֶהֱרֹן בְּתוֹךְ  
מִטּוֹתָם: כב וַיִּנַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמִּטּוֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה  
בְּאֵהֶל הָעֵדוּת: כג וַיְהִי מִמַּחֲרֹת וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־  
אֵהֶל הָעֵדוּת וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מִטָּה־אֶהֱרֹן לְוִי  
וַיֵּצֵא פָּרַח וַיֵּצֵץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמַל שְׁקָדִים: כד וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה

16 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, 17 “Tell the Israelites to give you a branch, one for each patriarchal family; let their leaders together give you twelve branches for their patriarchal families. Write the name of each on his branch; and 18 on the branch of Levi write the name of Aaron, because the leaders of the family of Levi must have a branch too. 19 Then put them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony, the place where I meet you. 20 The man whose branch sprouts will be the one I have chosen; this is how I shall put an end to the complaints, which the Israelites murmur against you.”

21 Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him one branch, twelve branches in all for their patriarchal families; Aaron’s branch was among them. 22 Moses placed them before Yahweh in the Tent of the Testimony. 23 On the following day, Moses came to the Tent of the Testimony and there, already sprouting, was Aaron’s branch, standing for the House of Levi. Buds had opened, flowers had blossomed, and almonds had already ripened. 24 Moses took all the

16 This verse is numbered 17:1 in the NRSV & NETB (see #1); here, we follow the numbering scheme of the MT & NJB.

17 The word מִטָּה means both ‘rod’ and ‘tribe’; the word, ‘branch’, expresses the same symbolism: the branch of a family (see the ‘shoot’ of Is 11:1).

18 On Aaron’s Levitical descent, see Ex 6:14–25.

19 Before ‘Testimony’ (here following the NJB – the NRSV has ‘covenant’), NETB inserts the words ‘Ark of’.

20 Another reading for ‘sprouts’ (here following the NJB & NRSV) is ‘blossoms’ (as NETB).

21 The literal translation of ‘each of their leaders gave him one branch’ is ‘a branch for one leader, a branch for one leader’.

22 The name of the Tent now attests to the centrality of the Ark of the Covenant: for ‘Tent of meeting’, we now have ‘Tent of the Testimony’.

23 The sign signifies Yahweh’s choice of Aaron (v. 20) as leader of the entire priestly tribe of Levi.

24 The words, ‘at them’, are not in the MT, but they have been added in the translation for clarity.



אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּטָּה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וַיֵּרְאוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִטָּהוּ: {פ}

branches away from before Yahweh and brought them back to all the Israelites; they looked at them and each one took back his own branch.

כֹּה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הָשֵׁב אֶת־מִטָּה אַהֲרֹן  
לִפְנֵי הָעֵדוּת לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְאוֹת לְבְנֵי־מִרְי וְתִכַּל  
תְּלוֹנְתָם מֵעַלִי וְלֹא יָמָתוּ: כִּי וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר  
צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ בֶּן עֲשָׂה: {פ}

<sup>25</sup> Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Put back Aaron’s branch before the testimony, where it will have its prescribed place, a sign to these rebels. It will stop them complaining to me any more, and they will not die.”

<sup>26</sup> Moses did as Yahweh had ordered. This is what he did.

כִּי וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר הֵן גָּזַעְנוּ  
אֲבָדְנוּ כָּלָנוּ אֲבָדְנוּ: כֹּה כָּל הַקָּרֵב | הַקָּרֵב אֶל־  
מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה יָמוּת הָאִם תִּמְנוּ לַגֹּעַ: {ס}

<sup>27</sup> The Israelites said to Moses, “We are lost! We are dead men! We are all dead men! <sup>28</sup> Anyone who approaches Yahweh’s Dwelling with an offering will die. Are we to be doomed to the last man?”

---

<sup>25</sup> The verb here translated ‘stop’ (as *NJB*) means ‘finish’, ‘complete’ and, here, ‘bring to an end’; it is the imperfect following the imperative, and so introduces a purpose clause (as a final imperfect).

<sup>26</sup> For this verse, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* reads, “Moses did so; just as the LORD commanded him, so he did.”

<sup>27</sup> The use of הֵן and the perfect tense in the nuance of a prophetic perfect expresses their conviction that they were bound to die: it was certain.

<sup>28</sup> This verse is the sequel to 16:34 and links it to what comes next. The distinction being made here is not between Aaron and the Levites but between Levites and laymen.

## NUMBERS 18

## במדבר פרק יח

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וּבֵית־אָבִיךָ  
אִתָּךְ תִּשָּׂאוּ אֶת־עֹן הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְאֶתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ אִתָּךְ  
תִּשָּׂאוּ אֶת־עֹן כְּהֻנָּתְכֶם: ב וְגַם אֶת־אֲחִיךָ מִטָּה  
לִי שִׁבֵּט אֲבִיךָ הַקָּרֵב אִתָּךְ וַיָּלוּ עֲלֶיךָ וּיִשְׁרְתוּךָ  
וְאֶתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ אִתָּךְ לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל הָעֵדֻת: ג וְשָׁמְרוּ  
מִשְׁמֶרֶתְךָ וּמִשְׁמֶרֶת כָּל־הָאֹהֶל אִתָּךְ אֶל־כָּל־י  
הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא יִקְרְבוּ וְלֹא־יִמָּתוּ גַם־הֵם  
גַּם־אַתֶּם: ד וַנִּלְווּ עֲלֶיךָ וְשָׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת אֹהֶל  
מוֹעֵד לְכָל עֲבֹדַת הָאֹהֶל וְזָר לֹא־יִקְרַב אֲלֵיכֶם:  
ה וּשְׁמֶרְתֶּם אֵת מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֵת מִשְׁמֶרֶת  
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד קֶצֶף עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ו וְאֲנִי  
הִנֵּה לִקְחָתִי אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

<sup>1</sup> And Yahweh said to Aaron: "You, your sons and your ancestor's line with you shall be answerable for sins against the sanctuary. You and your sons with you shall be answerable for the sins of your priesthood.  
<sup>2</sup> Let your brothers of the branch of Levi, your father's tribe, come with you too; they are to join you and serve you, yourselves and your sons, before the Tent of the Testimony.  
<sup>3</sup> They perform duties for you and for the whole Tent. But they must not approach either the utensils of the sanctuary or the altar, or both they and you will die.  
<sup>4</sup> They are to join you; they are to take charge of the Tent of Meeting for the entire ministry of the Tent; no layman shall come near you.  
<sup>5</sup> You must take charge of the sanctuary and charge of the altar, and there will be no more wrath on the Israelites.  
<sup>6</sup> It is I who chose your brother Levites from among the

### NUMBERS 18

- <sup>1</sup> The 'ancestor' is Levi. The responsibility for the sanctuary included obligations relating to any violation of the sanctuary; this was stated to forestall any further violations of the sanctuary. The priests were to pay for any ritual errors, primarily if any came too near; since the priests and Levites come near all the time, they risk violating ritual laws more than any.
- <sup>2</sup> The verb translated 'join' (וַיָּלוּ) forms a wordplay on the name, 'Levi' (לֵוִי), and makes an allusion to the naming of the tribe Levi by Leah in the book of Genesis: there, Leah hoped that with the birth of Levi her husband would be attached to her; here, with the selection of the tribe to serve in the sanctuary, there is the wordplay again showing that the Levites will be attached to Aaron and the priests. The verb is the imperfect with a *vav*, which shows volitive sequence after the imperative, here indicating a purpose clause.
- <sup>3</sup> For the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, here following the NRSV (and NETB broadly accords), the NJB reads, "Provided they do not come near the sacred vessels or the altar, they will be in no more danger of death than you are."
- <sup>4</sup> For 'join', this verse uses the Niphal perfect (עָלִיךָ) with a *vav* consecutive from the same root as that of v. 2.
- <sup>5</sup> The last clause is a purpose clause and the imperfect tense is a final imperfect.
- <sup>6</sup> The literal translation of 'chose' is 'took'.

לָכֶם מִתְּנָה נְתָנִים לַיהוָה לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת אֱהֹל מוֹעֵד: <sup>ז</sup> וְאַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ אֶתְּךָ תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־כֹּהֲנֹתְכֶם לְכָל־דָּבָר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלַמִּבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת וְעֲבַדְתֶּם עֲבֹדַת מִתְּנָה אֶתֶּן אֶת־כֹּהֲנֹתְכֶם וְהַזֵּר הַקָּרֵב יוּמָת: {פ}

<sup>ח</sup> וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וַאֲנִי הִנֵּה נֹתַתִּי לָךְ אֶת־מִשְׁמַרְתָּ תְּרוּמָתִי לְכָל־קֹדֶשִׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ נֹתָתִים לַמִּשְׁחָה וּלְבִנֶיךָ לְחֹק־עוֹלָם: <sup>ט</sup> זֶה־יְהִי־לָךְ מִקֹּדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים מִן־הָאֵשׁ כָּל־קָרְבָּנִם לְכָל־מִנְחָתָם וּלְכָל־חֲטָאתָם וּלְכָל־אֲשָׁמָם אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁיבוּ לִי קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשִׁים לָךְ הוּא וּלְבִנֶיךָ: <sup>י</sup> בְּקֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים תֹּאכְלֵנּוּ כָּל־זָכָר יֹאכַל אֹתוֹ קֹדֶשׁ יְהִי־לָךְ:

<sup>יא</sup> וְזֶה־לָּךְ תְּרוּמַת מִתְּנֶם לְכָל־תְּנוּפֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ נֹתָתִים וּלְבִנֶיךָ וּלְבָנֹתֶיךָ אֶתְּךָ לְחֹק־עוֹלָם כָּל־טָהוֹר בְּבֵיתְךָ יֹאכַל אֹתוֹ: <sup>יב</sup> כָּל חֶלֶב יִצְהָר וְכָל־חֶלֶב תִּירוֹשׁ וְדֹגָן רֵאשִׁיתָם אֲשֶׁר־יִתְּנוּ לַיהוָה לָךְ

Israelites as a gift to you; they will belong to Yahweh, to serve at the Tent of Meeting. <sup>7</sup> You and your sons will undertake the priestly duties in all that concerns the altar and all that lies behind the veil. You will perform the liturgy, the duties of which I entrust to your priesthood. But the layman who approaches shall die.”

<sup>8</sup> Yahweh said to Aaron: “I have given you charge of all that is set aside for me; everything that the Israelites consecrate I give to you as your portion, as well as to your sons, in perpetuity. <sup>9</sup> This shall be yours of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every offering the Israelites give back to me, whether oblation, sin offering or guilt offering, as a thing most holy, shall belong to you and your sons. <sup>10</sup> You may eat these most holy things; every male may eat them; you are to count them sacred.

<sup>11</sup> “This is yours, too: the offering of their gift, all the wave offerings of the Israelites; I give this to you, and to your sons and daughters, forever. Anyone clean in your house may eat it. <sup>12</sup> All the best of the oil, all the best of the wine and wheat, the first fruits given by them to Yahweh, I

<sup>7</sup> ‘All that lies behind the veil’ comprises the altar where the sacrifices were offered and the Holy of Holies, which only the High Priest entered.

<sup>8</sup> Since the tribe of Levi has no land inheritance, the Aaronic priests are to be supported from the offerings (v. 20, see Lv 2:2–3).

<sup>9</sup> The offerings were taken from what God had given in the first place (1Ch 29:14) or were intended to atone for a wrong done to him (Lv 5:15ff).

<sup>10</sup> In this verse, the NRSV & NETB, following the MT, have singular references to the ‘most holy thing’; here, we follow the NJB in using the plural.

<sup>11</sup> The NJB has ‘undefiled’ in place of ‘clean’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>12</sup> The form of the verb ‘give’ may be classified as a perfect of resolve – he has decided to give them to them, even though this is a listing of what they will receive.

נִתְּתִים: י<sup>ג</sup> בְּכוֹרֵי כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יִבְיאוּ לַיהוָה לֶךְ יִהְיֶה כָּל־טָהוֹר בְּבֵיתְךָ יֹאכְלֵנּוּ: י<sup>ד</sup> כָּל־חֵרֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לֶךְ יִהְיֶה: טו<sup>ו</sup> כָּל־פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם לְכָל־בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרִיבוּ לַיהוָה בָּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה יִהְיֶה־לֶךְ אֵדָּא פָּדָה תִּפְדֶּה אֶת בְּכוֹר הָאָדָם וְאֶת בְּכוֹר־הַבְּהֵמָה הַטְּמֵאָה תִּפְדֶּה: טז<sup>ז</sup> וּפְדוּיוֹ מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ תִּפְדֶּה בְּעֶרְכּוֹ בְּסֹף חֲמִשָּׁת שְׁקָלִים בְּשֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲשִׂים גֵּרָה הוּא: יז<sup>ח</sup> אֵדָּא בְּכוֹר־שׁוֹר אוֹ־בְכוֹר כֶּשֶׁב אוֹ־בְכוֹר עֶז לֹא תִפְדֶּה קֹדֶשׁ הֵם אֶת־דָּמָם תִּזְרֹק עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת־חֲלָבָם תִּקְטִיר אֵשָׁה לַרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: יח<sup>ט</sup> וּבָשָׂרָם יִהְיֶה־לֶךְ כַּחֲזֶה הַתְּנוּפָה וּכְשׁוֹק הַיָּמִין לֶךְ יִהְיֶה: יט<sup>י</sup> כָּל־תְּרוּמַת הַקֹּדָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר יָרִימוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לַיהוָה נִתְּתִי לֶךְ וּלְבִנֶיךָ וּלְבִנְתֶיךָ אֶתְּךָ לְחֻק־עוֹלָם בְּרִית מֶלֶח עוֹלָם הוּא לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לֶךְ וּלְזֶרְעֶךָ אֶתְּךָ: כ<sup>י</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־

give to you. <sup>13</sup> All the first fruit of their land, which they bring to Yahweh, shall be yours. Anyone clean in your house may eat them. <sup>14</sup> All under the ban in Israel shall be yours. <sup>15</sup> Every firstborn brought to Yahweh shall be yours, of all living creatures, whether man or beast; nevertheless, you must redeem the firstborn of man and the firstborn of an unclean beast. <sup>16</sup> You must redeem it the month it is born at the price of five shekels, each of sanctuary weight – which is twenty gerahs. <sup>17</sup> The firstborn of cow, sheep and goat, these alone you shall not redeem; they are holy: you must sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn the fat as a burnt offering, a pleasing odour for Yahweh; <sup>18</sup> the meat shall be yours, just as the breast that has been presented with the gesture of offering, and the right thigh. <sup>19</sup> All that the Israelites set aside for Yahweh from the holy things, this I give to you, and to your sons and daughters, a due forever. This is a covenant of salt forever before Yahweh, for you and your descendants after you.” <sup>20</sup> Yahweh said to Aaron: “You shall have

<sup>13</sup> Before ‘fruit’, NETB inserts the word ‘ripe’; here, we follow the NRSV.

<sup>14</sup> The ‘ban’ (חֵרֶם) describes that which is exclusively Yahweh’s, either for his sanctuary use, or for his destruction; it here refers to an individual’s devoting something freely to God.

<sup>15</sup> Before ‘the firstborn of an unclean beast’, the MT repeats ‘you must redeem’.

<sup>16</sup> More literally translated, the MT reads ‘in the month in which it is born’; the simplification here suits contemporary English style.

<sup>17</sup> The NJB has ‘appeasing fragrance’ in place of ‘pleasing odour’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>18</sup> NETB has ‘hip’ in place of ‘thigh’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Salt’ was used in all the offerings; its importance as a preservative made it a natural symbol for the covenant which was established by sacrifice; even general agreements were attested by sacrifice, and the phrase ‘covenant of salt’ speaks of such agreements as binding and irrevocable.

<sup>20</sup> The legislation of vv. 20–32 marks an intermediate stage between Dt 14:28–29/26:12 and Nb 35:1–8.

אֶהְיֶה לָּם בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא תִנְחֹל וְחֵלֶק לֹא־יְהִי לָךְ  
בְּתוֹכָם אֲנִי חֵלֶקְךָ וְנַחֲלֶתְךָ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}  
כא וְלִבְנֵי לֵוִי הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל  
לְנַחֲלָה חֲלָף עֲבֹדָתָם אֲשֶׁר־הֵם עֹבְדִים אֶת־עֲבֹדַת  
אֱהֵל מוֹעֵד: כב וְלֹא־יִקְרְבוּ עוֹד בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־  
אֱהֵל מוֹעֵד לַעֲשׂאת חֹטֵא לָמוֹת: כג וְעֹבֵד הַלֵּוִי הוּא  
אֶת־עֲבֹדַת אֱהֵל מוֹעֵד וְהֵם יִשְׂאוּ עוֹנָם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם  
לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם וּבְתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִנְחֹלוּ נַחֲלָה:  
כד כִּי אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָרִימוּ לַיהוָה  
תְּרוּמָה נָתַתִּי לְלוֹיִם לְנַחֲלָה עַל־כֵּן אֲמַרְתִּי לָהֶם  
בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִנְחֹלוּ נַחֲלָה: {פ}

כה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כו וְאֶל־הַלֹּוִיִּם  
תְּדַבֵּר וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי־תִקְחוּ מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֵׂר אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָכֶם מֵאֵתָם בְּנַחֲלַתְכֶם  
וְהִרְמַתֶּם מִמֶּנּוּ תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה מֵעֵשֶׂר מִן־הַמַּעֲשֵׂר:  
כז וְנִחְשַׁב לָכֶם תְּרוּמַתְכֶם כַּדָּגָן מִן־הַגֶּרֶן וְכַמְלֵאָה

no heritage in their country, nor shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your heritage among the Israelites.

<sup>21</sup> “See, I give the Levites as their heritage all the tithes in Israel, in return for their services, the service of the Tent of Meeting. <sup>22</sup> The Israelites must no longer go near the Tent of Meeting; they would be burdened with sin and die. <sup>23</sup> To Levi belongs the ministry of the Tent of Meeting, and the Levites will bear the burden of their sin. This is a perpetual law for all your descendants: the Levites are to have no heritage among the Israelites. <sup>24</sup> The tithe that the Israelites set aside for Yahweh, I have given the Levites for their heritage. For this reason, I have told them that they are to have no heritage among the Israelites.”

<sup>25</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>26</sup> “You are to say to the Levites: “When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I have given you from them as your portion, out of this you are to set aside a portion for Yahweh, a tithe of the tithe. <sup>27</sup> It will take the place of the portion set aside that is due from you, like the corn from the threshing-floor and

<sup>21</sup> In place of ‘the service of’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB reads, ‘for the ministry they render in’.

<sup>22</sup> The Hebrew text uses the infinitive construct of the verb ‘to bear’ with the *lamed* preposition to express the result of such an action; ‘to bear their sin’ means that they would have to suffer the consequences of their sin.

<sup>23</sup> The Levites have the care of the tent of meeting, and so they are responsible for any transgressions against it.

<sup>24</sup> In the Hebrew text the verb ‘given’ has no expressed subject (although the ‘Levites’ is certainly intended), and so it can be rendered as a passive.

<sup>25</sup> NETB omits the participle, ‘saying’ (here following the NRSV) and the NJB has ‘and said’.

<sup>26</sup> As the laity lived on the produce of the soil, so the Levites lived on the tithe.

<sup>27</sup> The verb in the clause ‘you are to set aside’ is the Hiphil perfect with a *vav* consecutive; it has the same force as an imperfect of instruction



מִן־הַיֵּקֶב: כֹּחַ בֶּן תָּרִימוּ גַם־אֶתֶם תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה  
מִכָּל־מַעֲשֵׂרְתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְנָתַתֶּם מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן:  
כֹּס מִכָּל־מִתְּנֵיכֶם תָּרִימוּ אֶת כָּל־תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה  
מִכָּל־חֶלְבֹוֹ אֶת־מִקְדָּשׁוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ:

לֵאמֹרֶת אֱלֹהִים בִּהְרִימְכֶם אֶת־חֶלְבֹוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ  
וְנִחַשְׁבַּ לְלוֹיִם כְּתִבּוּאָת גֶּרֶן וְכְתִבּוּאָת יֵקֶב:  
לֹא־וְאֲכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּכָל־מְקוֹם אֲתֶם וּבֵיתְכֶם כִּי־  
שֹׂכֵר הוּא לָכֶם חֶלֶף עֲבַדְתֶּם בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:  
לֵב וְלֹא־תִשְׂאוּ עָלָיו חֲטָא בִּהְרִימְכֶם אֶת־חֶלְבֹוֹ  
מִמֶּנּוּ וְאֶת־קִדְשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא תַחֲלִלּוּ וְלֹא  
תָמוּתוּ: {פ}

new wine from the press.<sup>28</sup> Thus, you too will set aside a portion for Yahweh, of all the tithes you receive from the Israelites. You will give what you have set aside for Yahweh to Aaron the priest.<sup>29</sup> Out of all the gifts you receive, you will set aside a portion for Yahweh. From the best of all these things, you will set aside the sacred portion.

<sup>30</sup> “You are to say to them: When you set aside the best, all these gifts shall, for the Levites, take the place of the produce of the threshing-floor and of the wine press.<sup>31</sup> You may consume them anywhere, you and your people: this is your reward for serving in the Tent of Meeting.

<sup>32</sup> You will not incur the burden of any sin on this account, once you have set aside the best; you will not be profaning the things consecrated by the Israelites, so that you do not die.”

<sup>28</sup> In place of, ‘what you have set aside for Yahweh’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘the LORD’s offering’.

<sup>29</sup> For ‘the sacred portion’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘the part to be consecrated’ and NETB reads ‘the holiest part of it’.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Them’ most probably refers to the Levites who, in v. 31, are addressed directly, but it could be interpreted to refer to the priests.

<sup>31</sup> The verb ‘consume’ is in the perfect tense with *vav* consecutive; it functions as the equivalent of the imperfect of permission.

<sup>32</sup> The final clause could also be rendered ‘lest you die’; the larger section can also be interpreted differently; rather than take it as an assurance, it could be taken as a warning.

## במדבר פרק יט

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: ב זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר דְּבַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וִיקַחוּ אֵלֵיךְ פָּרָה אֲדָמָה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין־בָּהּ מוֹם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָלָה עָלֶיהָ עֹל: ג וְנָתַתָּם אֹתָהּ אֶל־אַלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְהוֹצִיא אֹתָהּ אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וְשָׁחַט אֹתָהּ לִפְנֵינוּ: ד וְלָקַח אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּמָהּ בָּאֶצְבָּעוֹ וְהִזָּה אֶל־נֹכַח פְּנֵי אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד מִדָּמָהּ שִׁבְעַת פַּעַמִּים: ה וְשָׂרַף אֶת־הַפָּרָה לְעֵינָיו אֶת־עֹרָהּ וְאֶת־בָּשָׂרָהּ וְאֶת־דָּמָהּ עַל־פְּרֹשֶׁה

## NUMBERS 19

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said: <sup>2</sup> “This is a statute of the Law that Yahweh has prescribed. Say this to the Israelites: “They are to bring you a red heifer without fault or blemish that has never borne the yolk. <sup>3</sup> You shall give it to Eleazar the priest; it shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. <sup>4</sup> Then Eleazar the priest is to take some of the victim’s blood on his finger and sprinkle the blood seven times towards the door of the Tent of Meeting. <sup>5</sup> The heifer shall then be burnt in his sight: its hide, flesh, blood, and offal shall be burnt. <sup>6</sup> Then the priest is to take cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool, and throw

### NUMBERS 19

- <sup>1</sup> This chapter forms a unit: the water for purification (vv. 17–22) prepared with the ashes of a red heifer slaughtered and burnt outside the camp (vv. 1–10), was used to remove the defilement incurred through contact with the dead (vv. 11–16). The rite is alluded to only once elsewhere (31:23 and see Heb. 9:13); it gave a legal status to an ancient, half-magical, custom by giving it the character of a sacrifice of atonement for sin (v. 17 and compare vv. 4–5 with Lv 16:27, v. 8 with Lv 16:28). Certain other practices of this kind were taken over by the Mosaic Law (5:17–28, Lv 14:2–7, 16:5–10, Dt 21:1–9).
- <sup>2</sup> Some modern translations prefer ‘cow’ to ‘heifer’, thinking that the latter came from the influence of the Greek, but young animals were usually prescribed for the ritual, especially here, so ‘heifer’ is the better translation; a bull could not be given for this purification ritual because that is what was given for the High Priests or the community according to Ch. 4. The colour is designated as red, although it was actually a tanned red-brown colour for the animal (see the usage in Is 1:18 and Sg 5:10); the colour suggests the blood of ritual purification.
- <sup>3</sup> The literal translation of ‘in his presence’ (as NJB & NRSV) is ‘before him’ (as NETB); the clause is a little ambiguous, sounding as if someone else will kill the heifer in the priest’s presence but, since no one is named as the subject, it may be translated as a passive. Some commentators simply interpret that Eleazar was to kill the animal personally but that is a little forced for ‘before him’; the LXX gives a 3PL sense to the verb (σφάξουσιν) and the Vg (*immolabit*) follows that reading.
- <sup>4</sup> The sacred number, the sacred blood and the sacred Tent of Meeting combine to make the rite efficacious.
- <sup>5</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> occurrence of the verb ‘burnt’ has no subject and the 2<sup>nd</sup> is 3MS, so both are made passive.
- <sup>6</sup> In place of ‘scarlet wool’, here following NETB, the NRSV has ‘crimson material’ and the NJB has ‘cochineal red’.

יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>ו</sup> וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן עֵץ אֲרָז וְאֶזְבִּיב וְשָׁנִי תוֹלַעַת  
וְהִשְׁלִיךְ אֶל־תּוֹךְ שְׂרֶפֶת הַפָּרָה: <sup>ז</sup> וְכִבֹּס בַּגָּדָיו  
הַכֹּהֵן וְרַחֵץ בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם וְאַחֲרָיָהּ אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה  
וְטָמֵא הַכֹּהֵן עַד־הָעֶרֶב: <sup>ח</sup> וְהִשְׂרָף אֹתָהּ יְכֹבֵס  
בַּגָּדָיו בַּמַּיִם וְרַחֵץ בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב:  
<sup>ט</sup> וְאִסָּף אִישׁ טָהוֹר אֶת אֲפֵר הַפָּרָה וְהִנִּיחַ מִחוּץ  
לַמַּחֲנֶה בְּמָקוֹם טָהוֹר וְהִיָּתָה לְעֹדֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְמִי נֹדֶה חֲטָאתָ הוּא: <sup>י</sup> וְכִבֹּס הָאִסָּף  
אֶת־אֲפֵר הַפָּרָה אֶת־בַּגָּדָיו וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעֶרֶב  
וְהִיָּתָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְגֵר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכָם לְחֻקַּת  
עוֹלָם:

<sup>יא</sup> הַנֶּגַע בְּמַת לְכָל־נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם וְטָמֵא שְׁבַעַת יָמִים:  
<sup>יב</sup> הוּא יִתְחַטֵּא־בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
יִטָּהֵר וְאִם־לֹא יִתְחַטֵּא בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי לֹא יִטָּהֵר: <sup>יג</sup> כָּל־הַנֶּגַע בְּמַת בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם

them on the fire where the heifer is burning. <sup>7</sup> Then he must wash his clothing and bathe his body in water; then he may go back to the camp, though he will remain unclean until evening. <sup>8</sup> He who has burnt the heifer must wash his clothing and bathe his body in water and will remain unclean until evening. <sup>9</sup> The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must be ritually clean; he will deposit them outside the camp, in a clean place. They shall be kept for the ritual use of the community of Israelites for making water of purification; it is sin offering. <sup>10</sup> He who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must wash his clothing and will remain unclean until evening. For the Israelites, as for the alien living among them, this will be a perpetual law.

<sup>11</sup> “He who touches anyone’s corpse shall be unclean for seven days.

<sup>12</sup> He shall purify himself with water on the third and seventh day and so be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third and seventh day, he will not be clean. <sup>13</sup> Whoever touches the corpse of a man that

<sup>7</sup> The clause, ‘he may go back’, translates the imperfect of permission.

<sup>8</sup> Here, the text makes it clear that the priest had at least one assistant.

<sup>9</sup> In the expression לְמִי נֹדֶה (‘water of purification’), the genitive must designate the purpose of the water: it is for cases of impurity, and so serves for cleansing or purifying.

<sup>10</sup> The NJB has ‘stranger’ in place of ‘alien’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>11</sup> The purity regulations of Chs 11–16 do not mention contact with the dead.

<sup>12</sup> The verb translated ‘purify’ is the Hitpael of a verb that normally means ‘to sin’, but the Piel idea in many places is ‘to cleanse’. This may be explained as a privative use (‘to un-sin’ someone, meaning cleanse) or denominative (‘make a sin offering for someone’). It is surely connected to the purification offering, and so a sense of purify is what is wanted here.

<sup>13</sup> The defilement was not only dangerous to the individual but to the community, owing to the holiness of the Tabernacle.

אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת וְלֹא יִתְחַטֵּא אֶת־מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה טָמֵא  
וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מִי נָדָה לֹא־זֶרֶק  
עָלָיו טָמֵא יִהְיֶה עוֹד טָמְאָתוֹ בּוֹ:

יִזְאֵת הַתּוֹרָה אָדָם כִּי־יָמוּת בְּאֶהֱל כָּל־הַבָּא אֶל־  
הָאֶהֱל וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶהֱל יִטְמָא שְׁבַע־עַת יָמִים: טו וְכָל־  
כָּלִי פֶתוּחַ אֲשֶׁר אֵין־צֶמֶד פֶּתִיל עָלָיו טָמֵא הוּא:  
טז וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יִגַּע עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה בַּחֲלָל־חֶרֶב אוֹ  
בַּמָּת אוֹ־בַעֲצָם אָדָם אוֹ בַקֶּבֶר יִטְמָא שְׁבַע־  
עַת יָמִים:

יז וְלִקְחוּ לְטָמֵא מֵעֹפֹר שְׂרָפַת הַחֲטָאֹת וְנָתַן עָלָיו  
מִיָּם חַיִּים אֶל־כָּלִי: יח וְלִקַּח אֶזּוֹב וְטָבַל בְּמַיִם אִישׁ  
טְהוֹר וְהִזָּה עַל־הָאֶהֱל וְעַל־כָּל־הַכֵּלִים וְעַל־  
הַנֶּפֶשׁוֹת אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ־שָׁם וְעַל־הַנֶּגַע בַּעֲצָם אוֹ בַּחֲלָל  
אוֹ בַּמָּת אוֹ בַקֶּבֶר: יט וְהִזָּה הַטְּהַר עַל־הַטָּמֵא בַּיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְחָטְאוּ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
וְכָבַס בַּגָּדָיו וְרָחַץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָהַר בָּעֶרֶב: כ וְאִישׁ

has died and does not purify himself defiles the Dwelling of Yahweh;  
that man must be cut off from Israel; for, the water of purification has  
not flowed over him; he is unclean and his uncleanness remains in him.

<sup>14</sup> “This is the law when a man dies in a tent. Anyone who goes into the  
tent, or anyone who is already there, shall be unclean for seven days.

<sup>15</sup> And any open vessel with no lid or fastening shall be unclean.

<sup>16</sup> Anyone in the open country who touches a murder victim, or  
someone who has died naturally, or human bones or a tomb, shall be  
unclean for seven days.

<sup>17</sup> “For the unclean, you must take some of the ashes from burnt sin  
offering and spring water added in a vessel. <sup>18</sup> Then a clean person shall  
take hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent, all the vessels and  
everyone there, and on him who touched the bone, the slain, the corpse,  
or the tomb. <sup>19</sup> The clean man shall sprinkle the unclean on the third and  
seventh day, thus purifying him on the seventh day. He must then wash  
his clothes and bathe in water and be clean by evening. <sup>20</sup> If an unclean

<sup>14</sup> The word order of the phrase ‘when a man dies’ gives the classification and then the condition: ‘a man, when he dies’.

<sup>15</sup> In place of ‘lid or fastening’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘no cover fastened on it’.

<sup>16</sup> The NJB has ‘a corpse’ for ‘someone who has died naturally’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>17</sup> The verb translated ‘you must take’ is the perfect tense, 3MPL, with a *vav* consecutive; it may be worded as a passive (‘ashes must be taken’) but that may be too awkward for this sentence. It is probably best to render it with a generic ‘you’ (as NETB) to fit the instruction of the text.

<sup>18</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “...the bones, or the corpse, whether he was slain or died of natural causes, or the tomb.”

<sup>19</sup> The construction translated ‘thus purifying him’ uses a simple Piel with a pronominal suffix – ‘he shall purify him’; some commentators take this to mean that after he sprinkles the unclean, he must then purify himself, but that would not be the most natural way to read this form.

<sup>20</sup> On the potential harshness of this punishment, see #13 & #22.

אֲשֶׁר־יִטְמָא וְלֹא יִתְחַטֵּא וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא  
מִתּוֹךְ הַקֹּהֵל כִּי אֶת־מִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה טִמָּא מִי נִדָּה  
לֹא־זָרַק עָלָיו טִמָּא הוּא:

כֹּא וְהִיְתָה לָהֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם וּמִזֶּה מִי־הַנִּדָּה יִכַּבֵּס  
בְּגָדָיו וְהִנִּגֵּל בְּמֵי הַנִּדָּה יִטְמָא עַד־הָעֶרֶב: כִּב וְכֹל  
אֲשֶׁר־יִגְעֹבוּ הַטִּמָּא יִטְמָא וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ הַנִּגְעָת תִּטְמָא  
עַד־הָעֶרֶב: {פ}

man fails to purify himself in this way, he shall be cut off from the community, for he would defile the Sanctuary of Yahweh. The water of purification has not flowed over him, and he is unclean.

<sup>21</sup> “This shall be a perpetual law for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification must wash his clothes, and he who touches the water shall be unclean until evening. <sup>22</sup> Whatever an unclean person touches shall be unclean, and whoever touches it shall be unclean until evening.

---

<sup>21</sup> The verb ‘sprinkles’ (וּמִזֶּה) has the conjunction with it, which subordinates the following as the special law; it could literally be translated ‘and this shall be ... that the one who sprinkles’.

<sup>22</sup> This paragraph gives the indication of the weight of the matter, for ‘until evening’ is the shortest period of ritual uncleanness in the Law; the problem of contamination had to be taken seriously, but this was a relatively simple matter to deal with, if one were willing to obey the Law.



## NUMBERS 20

## במדבר פרק כ

<sup>א</sup> וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־הָעֵדָה מִדְּבַר־צִן בַּחֹדֶשׁ  
הָרִאשׁוֹן וַיָּשֶׁב הָעָם בְּקֹדֶשׁ וַתָּמָת שָׁם מִרְיָם  
וַתִּקָּבֶר שָׁם: <sup>ב</sup> וְלֹא־הָיָה מַיִם לָעֵדָה וַיִּקְהֲלוּ עַל־  
מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן: <sup>ג</sup> וַיִּרְבּוּ הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ  
לֵאמֹר וְלוֹ גִּוְעָנוּ בְּגֹועַ אֲחִינוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: <sup>ד</sup> וְלָמָּה  
הֵבֵאתֶם אֶת־קֹהֶל יְהוָה אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לָמוֹת  
שָׁם אֲנַחְנוּ וּבְעִירָנוּ: <sup>ה</sup> וְלָמָּה הֶעֱלִיתָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם  
לְהָבִיא אֵתָנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַרָע הַזֶּה לֹא מָקוֹם  
זֶרַע וְתֹאנָה וְגִפְלָן וְרִמּוֹן וּמַיִם אֵין לְשָׁתוֹת: <sup>ו</sup> וַיֹּבֹא  
מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן מִפְּנֵי הַקֹּהֶל אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד  
וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם: {פ}

<sup>ז</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>ח</sup> קַח אֶת־הַמַּטֵּה  
וְהַקֹּהֶל אֶת־הָעֵדָה אֹתָהּ וְאַהֲרֹן אֶחֱיָךְ וְדַבַּרְתֶּם

<sup>1</sup> The whole community of Israelites came to the desert of Zin in the first month. The people stayed in Kadesh; Miriam died there and was buried.  
<sup>2</sup> There was no water for the community and they united against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> The people challenged Moses, saying "We would rather have died as our brothers died before Yahweh! <sup>4</sup> And why have you brought Yahweh's community into this desert, for us and our livestock to die here? <sup>5</sup> Why did you lead us out of Egypt, only to bring us to this evil place? It is a place unfit for sowing, it has no figs, no vines, no pomegranates, and there is no water to drink!" <sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron left the assembly and went to the door of the Tent of Meeting. They fell on their faces and the glory of Yahweh appeared to them.  
<sup>7</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>8</sup> "Take the branch and call the community together, you and your brother Aaron. Then, in full view of

## NUMBERS 20

- <sup>1</sup> The text does not indicate here what year this was but this is probably the end of the wanderings, the 40<sup>th</sup> year; for, Aaron died some 40 years after the Exodus.
- <sup>2</sup> In place of 'united', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'gathered together'.
- <sup>3</sup> The verb here translated 'challenged' (as NJB – the NRSV has 'quarrelled with' and NETB has 'strove with') is יָרִיב; it is often used in the Bible for a legal complaint, a lawsuit, at least in form; it is a far more serious thing than grumbling – it is directed, intentional, and well-argued.
- <sup>4</sup> The opening conjunction (omitted by both the NJB & NRSV) records another thing that the people said in their complaint against Moses.
- <sup>5</sup> In the clause, 'only to bring', the infinitive construct (Hiphil) forms the subordinate clause of the preceding interrogative clause.
- <sup>6</sup> In the Pentateuch, the phrase, 'glory of Yahweh' generally refers to the presence of God himself.
- <sup>7</sup> NETB omits the participle, 'saying' (here following the NRSV – the NJB has 'and said'), considering it redundant in contemporary English.
- <sup>8</sup> The verb 'bring' is the perfect tense with *vav* consecutive, as in v. 9; these are imperfects, showing the results of commanding the rock.

אֶל־הַסֵּלַע לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְנָתַן מִיָּמִיו וְהוֹצֵאתָ לָהֶם מַיִם  
מִן־הַסֵּלַע וְהִשְׁקִיתָ אֶת־הָעֵדָה וְאֶת־בְּעִירָם:  
<sup>ט</sup> וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמִּטָּה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ:  
<sup>י</sup> וַיִּקְהֲלוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַקָּהָל אֶל־פְּנֵי הַסֵּלַע  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶם שְׁמַעוּ־נָא הַמְּרִים הַמִּן־הַסֵּלַע הַזֶּה  
נֹוצֵיא לָכֶם מַיִם: <sup>יא</sup> וַיִּרָם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת־  
הַסֵּלַע בַּמִּטָּהוּ פָּעַמַּיִם וַיֵּצְאוּ מִן־רַבִּים וַתִּשָּׂף  
הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם: {ס}

<sup>יב</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַל־אַהֲרֹן יַעֲזוּבָה  
הָאֲמִנָּתָם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכֹן לֹא  
תָבִיאוּ אֶת־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי  
לָהֶם: <sup>יג</sup> הֲמָה מִי מְרִיבָה אֲשֶׁר־דָּבְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּקְדָּשׁ בָּם: {ס}

<sup>יד</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה מַלְאָכִים מִקְדָּשׁ אֶל־מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם  
כֹּה אָמַר אַחִיד יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ אֶת כָּל־  
הַתְּלָאָה אֲשֶׁר מָצָאתָנוּ: <sup>טו</sup> וַיֵּרְדּוּ אֲבֹתֵינוּ מִצְרָיִמָּה

them, order this rock to give water: you will bring water out of the rock for them, and provide drink for the community and their cattle.”

<sup>9</sup> Moses took up the branch from before Yahweh, as he had directed him.

<sup>10</sup> Then Moses and Aaron called the assembly together in front of the rock and addressed them, “Listen now, you rebels. Shall we make water gush from this rock for you?” <sup>11</sup> Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the branch; water gushed in abundance, and the community drank and their cattle too.

<sup>12</sup> Then Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe that I could proclaim my holiness in the eyes of the Israelites, you shall not lead this assembly into the land I am giving them.” <sup>13</sup> These are the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites challenged Yahweh and he proclaimed his holiness.

<sup>14</sup> Moses sent messengers from Kadesh, “To the king of Edom: Your brother Israel says this: You know the great hardships we have suffered.

<sup>15</sup> Our ancestors went down into Egypt and stayed there a long time; but

<sup>9</sup> In place of ‘branch’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘staff’ and NETB has ‘rod’.

<sup>10</sup> The word translated ‘rebels’ is הַמְּרִים, but here as a vocative, ‘you rebels’; it was a harsh address, although well-earned.

<sup>11</sup> In place of ‘cattle’ (following the NJB), the NRSV has ‘livestock’ and NETB has ‘beasts’.

<sup>12</sup> What Moses and Aaron had done wrong remains a mystery. Possibly, Moses showed a lack of faith in striking the rock twice, a detail not occurring in the parallel Ex 17. In Dt 1:37, 3:26 & 4:21, Moses was punished for the people’s refusal to invade Canaan from Kadesh (Ch. 14).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Meribah’ (מְרִיבָה) means ‘quarrel’ (see #3). The incident is paralleled in Ex 17:1–7.

<sup>14</sup> Just before this verse, the Samaritan Pentateuch and Peshitta insert certain phrases from Dt 2:2–6 & 3:24–28.

<sup>15</sup> The verb here translated ‘treated us badly’ literally means ‘to act or do evil’; evil here is in the sense of causing pain or trouble.

וַנִּשָּׁב בְּמִצְרַיִם יָמִים רַבִּים וַיַּרְעוּ לָנוּ מִצְרַיִם  
וְלֹאֲבֹתֵינוּ: <sup>טז</sup> וַנִּצְעַק אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמַע קִלְנוּ וַיִּשְׁלַח  
מַלְאָךְ וַיֹּצֵאֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְהֵנָּה אֲנַחְנוּ בְּקֹדֶשׁ עִיר  
קֶצֶה גְבוּלָךְ: <sup>יז</sup> נַעֲבֹר־נָא בָאֲרָצְךָ לֹא נַעֲבֹר  
בְּשָׂדֶה וּבְכָרֶם וְלֹא נִשְׁתֶּה מִי בְּאֵר דֶּרֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ נֶלְךְ  
לֹא נָטָה יָמִין וּשְׂמֹאל עַד אֲשֶׁר־נַעֲבֹר גְּבוּלָךְ:  
<sup>יח</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אָדָם לֹא תַעֲבֹר בִּי פֶן־יַבְחִרְבּ אֲצֵא  
לְקִרְאָתְךָ: <sup>יט</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַסְלָה  
נַעֲלֶה וְאִם־מִיָּמִיד נִשְׁתֶּה אֲנִי וּמִקְנִי וְנָתַתִּי מַכְרָם  
רַק אִין־דָּבָר בְּרַגְלִי אֶעֱבֹרָה: <sup>כ</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תַעֲבֹר  
וַיֵּצֵא אָדָם לְקִרְאָתוֹ בָּעַם כָּבֵד וּבִיד חֲזָקָה:  
<sup>כא</sup> וַיִּמָּאֵן אָדָם נָתַן אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבֵר בְּגִבּוֹלוֹ וַיִּט  
יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַלָיו: {פ}

the Egyptians treated us and our ancestors badly. <sup>16</sup> We cried to Yahweh; he heard us and sent an angel to bring us out of Egypt. Now we are here at Kadesh, a town of the edge of your territory. <sup>17</sup> Now let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard, or drink water from any well; we will keep to the King's Highway without turning to right or left until we are clear of your frontiers." <sup>18</sup> Edom answered, "You shall not pass through, or we will come out with the sword against you." <sup>19</sup> The Israelites said to him, "We will keep to the highway; if we and our flocks drink any of your water, then we will pay for it; we are asking only to pass through on foot." <sup>20</sup> They replied, "You shall not pass," and Edom marched out to meet them with a great force, heavily armed. <sup>21</sup> At Edom's refusal to allow Israel passage through his territory, Israel turned away.

<sup>16</sup> The word translated 'angel' could also be rendered 'messenger'; some ambiguity may be intended in this report.

<sup>17</sup> The 'King's Highway' was the main Transjordanian route from Ezion-Geber on the Gulf of Aqaba to Damascus in Syria. Some scholars suggest that the name may have been given by the later Assyrians, but Bronze Age fortresses have been discovered along this highway, attesting to its existence in the time of Moses. The original name came from the king who developed the highway, probably as a trading road.

<sup>18</sup> After 'pass through', the NJB adds 'my country' and NETB adds 'me'; here, we follow the NRSV. Throughout this section, the MT uses singular pronouns, ('I' and 'my'), but it is the people of Israel that are intended, and so they may be rendered in the plural. Similarly, Edom speaks in the 1<sup>st</sup> person, probably from the king, but this too can be rendered plural.

<sup>19</sup> The end of this verse (from 'I am asking') here follows the NJB; the NRSV reads, "It is only a small matter; just let us pass through on foot," and NETB reads, "We will only pass through on our feet, without doing anything else."

<sup>20</sup> In place of 'they replied', here following the NRSV (but see #18), the NJB has 'Edom replied'. The translation of the end of this verse is interpretive: the literal translation is 'with many heavy people and with a strong hand'; it was a show of force, numbers and weapons, to intimidate the Israelites.

<sup>21</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through their territory; so Israel turned away from them."

כב ויסעו מקדש ויבאו בני־ישראל כל־העדה הַר הָהָר: כג ויאמר יהוה אל־משה ואל־אהרן בהַר הָהָר על־גְּבוּל אֶרֶץ־אֲדוֹם לֵאמֹר: כד יאסף אהרן אל־עַמּוּיו כִּי לֹא יבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל אֲשֶׁר־מְרִיתֶם אֶת־פִּי לְמִי מְרִיבָה: כה קח אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן ואת־אַלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ וְהֵעַל אֹתָם הַר הָהָר: כו וְהַפֶּשֶׁט אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְהַלְבַּשְׁתָּם אֶת־אַלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ וְאֶהֱרֹן יֵאָסֵף וּמָת שָׁם:

כז ויעש משה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶל־הָר הָהָר לְעֵינֵי כָל־הָעֵדָה: כח וַיִּפְשֹׁט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיַּלְבֵּשׁ אֹתָם אֶת־אַלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ וַיָּמָת אֶהֱרֹן שָׁם בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָר וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה וְאַלְעָזָר מִן־הָהָר: כט וַיֵּרְאוּ כָל־הָעֵדָה כִּי גֹעַ אֶהֱרֹן וַיָּבֹכוּ אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

22 And they set out from Kadesh, and the whole community of Israelites came to Mount Hor. 23 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the frontier of the land of Edom. He said, 24 “Aaron must be gathered to his people: he is not to enter the land I am giving to the Israelites, since you disobeyed my orders at the waters of Meribah. 25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up Mount Hor. 26 There, strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron will be gathered: he is to die there.”

27 Moses did as Yahweh ordered. In the sight of the whole community, they went up Mount Hor. 28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came back down the mountain. 29 When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

22 Mount Hor has not been identified. The traditional location is near Petra (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.4.7) but there is doubt about this location, since it is inside Edomite territory; another view places it nearer Kadesh Barnea, about 25 Km northeast at Jebel Madurah, on the NW edge of Edom.

23 In place of ‘at Mount Hor’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘in Mount Hor’.

24 The phrase ‘gathered to his people’ is the standard poetic expression for death: the bones would be buried, often with the bones of relatives in the same tomb, giving rise to the expression.

25 After ‘up’, NETB adds ‘on’.

26 The phrase ‘will be gathered’ is a truncated form of the usual expression (see #24): the NJB, NRSV & NETB all supply the words ‘to his people’.

27 The literal translation of ‘sight’ is ‘eyes’.

28 The NJB & NRSV omit the initial conjunction (‘and’), here following the MT & NETB. The literal translation of ‘then Moses’ is ‘and Moses’; the conjunction has been changed in the translation (following the NJB) to indicate the implied sequence of events within the narrative.

29 For this verse, the NJB reads, “The whole community saw that Aaron had died, and all the House of Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days.”

## NUMBERS 21

## במדבר פרק כא

- <sup>א</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַע הַכְּנַעֲנִי מֶלֶךְ-עָרָד יֹשֵׁב הַנֶּגֶב כִּי בָא יִשְׂרָאֵל דֶּרֶךְ הָאֲתָרִים וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשָּׁב מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁבִי: <sup>ב</sup> וַיִּדַּר יִשְׂרָאֵל נָדָר לַיהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אִם-נָתַן תִּתֵּן אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה בְּיָדִי וְהִחַרְמֹתִי אֶת-עֲרֵיהֶם: <sup>ג</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה בְּקוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-הַכְּנַעֲנִי וַיַּחֲרֶם אֹתָהֶם וְאֶת-עֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם-הַמָּקוֹם חֲרָמָה: {פ}
- <sup>ד</sup> וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהָר הָהָר דֶּרֶךְ יַם-סוּף לְסָבֵב אֶת-אֶרֶץ אֱדוֹם וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשֵׁיהֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ: <sup>ה</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר הָעָם בְּאֱלֹהִים וּבַמֶּשֶׁה לָמָּה הֵעֲלִיתֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לָמוֹת בְּמִדְבָּר כִּי אֵין לָחֶם וְאֵין מַיִם וְנַפְשֵׁנוּ קָצָה בַּלֶּחֶם הַקָּלָקָל:
- <sup>1</sup> The king of Arad, a Canaanite living in the Negeb, learned that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim. He attacked Israel and took some prisoners. <sup>2</sup> Israel then made this vow to Yahweh, "If you deliver this people into my power, I will lay their towns under a ban." <sup>3</sup> Yahweh heard the voice of Israel and delivered the Canaanites; and they laid them under ban, both them and their towns. This place was given the name Hormah.
- <sup>4</sup> They left Mount Hor by the road to the Sea of Suph, to skirt the land of Edom. On the way, the people lost patience. <sup>5</sup> They spoke against God and against Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this desert? For there is neither bread nor water here; we are sick of this miserable food."

## NUMBERS 21

- <sup>1</sup> The name 'Arad' (עָרָד) probably refers to a place some distance from Tel Arad in southern Israel; it could also refer to the region (like Edom).
- <sup>2</sup> On the surface, this does not sound like much of a vow, but the key is in the use of the verb for 'put under a ban' (עֲרִיהֶם): whatever was put to this ban (or 'devotion') belonged to God, either for his use, or for destruction. The oath was in fact saying that they would take nothing from this for themselves; it would simply be the removal of what was alien to the faith, or to God's program.
- <sup>3</sup> After 'Canaanites', the NJB, following the Samaritan Pentateuch, Peshitta & LXX (ὑποχείριστον αὐτοῦ) adds 'into their hands'; here, we follow the MT. 'Hormah' means 'destruction'.
- <sup>4</sup> The story of vv. 4-9 should be associated with the copper mines of the Arabah, where the metal was being exploited in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. At Meneiyeh (now Timnah), some small copper snakes have been discovered, presumably used, for warding off poisonous snakes. This mining area in the Arabah lies on the route from Kadesh to Aqaba (the 'Sea of Suph' is towards the Gulf of Aqaba, not to be confused with the 'Suph' of the Exodus - see #Ex 13:18). Settled occupation of Edom had not yet extended as far as the Gulf of Aqaba and the Israelites took the normal route allowing them to skirt round Edomite territory. This note is the only ancient information on the route taken by them.
- <sup>5</sup> The Israelites' opinion about the manna was clear enough - 'miserable'; the word used is קָלָקָל ('good-for-nothing', 'worthless', 'miserable').



וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה בָּעָם אֶת הַנְּחָשִׁים הַשָּׂרָפִים וַיִּנְשְׁכוּ  
 אֶת־הָעָם וַיָּמָת עַם־רַב מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: וַיָּבֹא הָעָם אֶל־  
 מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ חֲטֵאנוּ כִּי־דִבַּרְנוּ בַּיהוָה וּבָךְ  
 הַתַּפְּלִל אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּסַּר מֵעֲלֵינוּ אֶת־הַנָּחַשׁ וַיִּתְּפֹלֵל  
 מֹשֶׁה בְּעַד הָעָם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲשֵׂה לָךְ  
 שָׂרָף וְשִׂים אֹתוֹ עַל־גֹּסֶס וְהָיָה כָּל־הַנִּשְׁוֹךְ וְרָאָה  
 אֹתוֹ וְחָיָה: וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה נָחָשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וַיִּשְׁמְהוּ עַל־  
 הַגֹּסֶס וְהָיָה אִם־נִשְׁוֹךְ הַנָּחַשׁ אֶת־אִישׁ וְהִבִּיט אֶל־  
 נָחָשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וְחָיָה:

וַיִּסְעוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּאַבְתָּח: וַיִּסְעוּ מֵאַבְתָּח  
 וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּעֵי הָעֵבְרִים בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי מוֹאָב  
 מִמִּזְרַח הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: וַיִּסְעוּ מִשָּׁם וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּנֶחֱל זֶרֶד:  
 וַיִּסְעוּ מִשָּׁם וַיַּחֲנוּ מֵעֵבֶר אֲרֹנוֹן אֲשֶׁר בַּמִּדְבָּר  
 הַיָּצֵא מִגִּבְלֵי הָאֱמֹרִי כִּי אֲרֹנוֹן גְּבוּל מוֹאָב בֵּין  
 מוֹאָב וּבֵין הָאֱמֹרִי:

<sup>6</sup> At this, God sent fiery serpents among the people. Their bite brought death to many in Israel. <sup>7</sup> And the people came and said to Moses, “We have sinned by speaking against Yahweh and against you. Pray for us to Yahweh to take these serpents away from us.” Moses interceded for the people, <sup>8</sup> and Yahweh answered him, “Make a fiery serpent and put it on a standard. Anyone who is bitten and looks at it will survive. <sup>9</sup> Therefore, Moses fashioned a bronze serpent, which he put on a standard, and if a serpent bit anyone, he looked at the bronze serpent and lived.

<sup>10</sup> The Israelites set out and camped at Oboth. <sup>11</sup> Then they left Oboth and camped at Iye-Abarim, in the desert that borders Moab, towards the sunrise. <sup>12</sup> They set out from there and camped in the Wadi Zered. <sup>13</sup> They set out from there and camped beyond the Arnon, which begins in the desert at the border of the Amorites. For the Arnon is the frontier of Moab, between the Moabites and the Amorites.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Fiery serpents’ (the NRSV uses ‘poisonous serpents’) translates שָׂרָפִים (‘seraphim’) a term used in Is 30:6 for a winged serpent or dragon.

<sup>7</sup> The verb translated ‘take ... away’ is the Hiphil jussive with a *vav* consecutive; after the imperative, this form becomes a purpose clause.

<sup>8</sup> Vv. 8–9 echo serpent magic, as practised for example in ancient Egypt.

<sup>9</sup> The ‘serpent of bronze’ (*Nechushtan*) was an object of popular worship during the Israelite monarchy (2K 18:4).

<sup>10</sup> This late passage (vv. 10–20) is an attempt to fill the gaps in the ancient source material by using information from Ch. 33 (see #33:1) and Dt 2 to describe the itinerary. In it have been inserted two fragments of ancient Hebrew poetry (vv. 14–15 & 17–18).

<sup>11</sup> The places mentioned here are uncertain: ‘Oboth’ may be some 25 Km from the south end of the Dead Sea at a place called Ain El-Weiba; ‘Iye-Abarim’ may be the modern Mahay at the south-eastern corner of Moab.

<sup>12</sup> In place of ‘Wadi Zered’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘gorge of Zered’ and NETB has ‘valley of Zered’.

<sup>13</sup> The NJB has ‘in the land’ in place of ‘at the border’, here following the NRSV.

י<sup>ד</sup> עַל־כֵּן יֹאמַר בְּסֵפֶר מִלְחָמַת יְהוָה 14 That is why it says in the Book of the Wars of Yahweh:

אֶת־וְהֶב בְּסוּפָהּ וְאֶת־הַנַּחְלִים אֲרָנוֹן; “Waheb near Suphah and the Wadi Arnon,

טו וְאֶשֶׁל הַנַּחְלִים 15 and the slope of the ravine

אֲשֶׁר נָטָה לְשֶׁבֶת עַר that runs down to the site of Ar

וְנִשְׁעַן לַגְּבוּל מוֹאָב: and over against the frontier of Moab.”

טז וּמִשָּׁם בְּאֵרָה הָיָה הַבְּאֵר אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה 16 Thence, they went on to Beer; that is, the well of which Yahweh said  
לְמֹשֶׁה אֲסֹף אֶת־הָעָם וְאֶתְּנָה לָהֶם מַיִם: {ס} to Moses, “Call the people together and I will give them water.”

יז אִזּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת 17 Then it was that Israel sang this song:

עָלִי בְּאֵר עֲנוּלָה: “Spring up, well! Sing out for the well,

יח בְּאֵר חֲפְרוּהָ שָׂרִים 18 sunk by the princes,

כְּרוּהָ נְדִיבֵי הָעָם dug by the people’s leaders

בְּמַחֲקֶק בְּמִשְׁעֶנְתָּם with the sceptre, with their staves!”

יט וּמִמַּטָּנָה מִתָּנָה: 19 From the desert to Mattanah, and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and  
כ וּמִבְּמֹת הַגִּיאָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשֶׁדָּה מוֹאָב רֹאשׁ בְּמֹת: 20 and from Bamoth to the valley lying in the  
כא הַפְּסָגָה וְנִשְׁקָפָה עַל־פְּנֵי הַיְּשִׁימוֹן: {פ} Plains of Moab, by the Heights of Pisgah overlooking the desert.

14 The versions show a wide variation in the 1<sup>st</sup> line: the Samaritan Pentateuch has ‘Waheb on the Sea of Reeds’ and the LXX has ‘he has set Zoob on fire and the torrents of Arnon’ (*Zωοβ ἐφλόγισεν καὶ τοὺς χειμάρρους Ἀρνω*). Most translations take the two main words as place names: ‘Waheb’ (וְהֶב) and ‘Suphah’ (סוּפָה) but then there would be no subject or verb. The KJV, following the Vg (*Sicut fecit in mari Rubro*), made the first word a verb and read the second as ‘Red Sea’ – ‘what he did in the Red Sea’. Some emend ‘et waheb to ‘atah Yahweh, ‘the LORD came’.

15 ‘Ar’ is unknown; it is apparently an important city in the region.

16 This unique occurrence of ‘Beer’ as a place name is suspect, being perhaps taken from the song (v. 17). The name means ‘a well’.

17 After the adverb, ‘then’, the prefixed conjugation has the preterite force. The poem shows all the marks of being ancient.

18 The NRSV switches the order of the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 lines of this verse.

19 A scribe has misread the closing words of the poem: “and of the desert it (the well) is a gift (mattanah),” taking the common noun as a place name.

20 This verse is overburdened and confused. In the MT, ‘the Heights of Pisgah’ are in apposition to ‘the Plains of Moab’.

כא וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל מַלְאָכִים אֶל-סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ-הָאֱמֹרִי  
 לאמר: כב אַעְבְּרָה בְּאַרְצְךָ לֹא נָטָה בְּשָׂדֶה וּבְכָרֶם  
 לֹא נִשְׁתֶּה מִי בְּאֵר בְּדֶרֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ נֵלֶךְ עַד אֲשֶׁר-  
 נַעֲבֹר גְּבֻלְךָ: כג וְלֹא-נָתַן סִיחֹן אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבֵר  
 בְּגִבּוֹלוֹ וַיֹּאסֶף סִיחֹן אֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וַיֵּצֵא לִקְרֹאת  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמִּדְבָּרָה וַיָּבֹא יִהְצֶה וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 כד וַיִּכֶּהוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפִי-חֶרֶב וַיִּירֹשׁ אֶת-אַרְצוֹ מֵאֲרֹנֶן  
 עַד-יַבֶּק עַד-בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן כִּי עַז גְּבוּל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן:  
 כה וַיִּקַּח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל-הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֵּשֶׁב  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל-עָרֵי הָאֱמֹרִי בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן וּבְכָל-בְּנֵי-הָ:  
 כו כִּי חֶשְׁבּוֹן עִיר סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי הוּא וְהוּא  
 נִלְחָם בַּמֶּלֶךְ מוֹאָב הָרֹאשֹׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶת-כָּל-אַרְצוֹ  
 מִיָּדוֹ עַד-אֲרֹנֶן: כז עַל-כֵּן יֹאמְרוּ הַמְּשֻׁלִּים

<sup>21</sup> Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying <sup>22</sup> "Let me pass through your land. We will not stray into field or vineyard; we will not drink water from the wells; we will go by the king's highway until we are clear of your border." <sup>23</sup> But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his land. He mustered his people, marched into the desert against Israel, and reached Jahaz, where he fought Israel. <sup>24</sup> Israel struck him with sword and conquered his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the Ammonites; for, the Ammonite border was strong. <sup>25</sup> Israel took all these towns, and occupied all the Amorite towns, Heshbon and in all its villages, <sup>26</sup> For Heshbon was the city of King Sihon of the Amorites, and he had waged war on the previous king of Moab and had taken all the land out of his control, as far as the Arnon. <sup>27</sup> Hence, the poets sing:

<sup>21</sup> The 'Amorites' were a small Canaanite kingdom established to the north of the Arnon, with Heshbon as their capital. 'Sihon' had been victorious over the invading Moabites (vv. 28–29) but was in turn to be beaten by the Israelites.

<sup>22</sup> The Samaritan Pentateuch has, 'we go by the King's Highway' before 'we will not stray'.

<sup>23</sup> The last clause begins with a preterite with *vav* consecutive but may be subordinated to the next preterite as a temporal clause (as in NETB: 'when he came to Jahaz...').

<sup>24</sup> In place of 'for the border of the Ammonites was strong', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following the LXX (ὅτι Ἰαζήρ ὄρια νύων Ἀμμων ἐστίν) reads, 'for Jazer marked the Ammonite frontier'.

<sup>25</sup> The literal translation of 'villages' is 'daughters'; the NJB reads 'all the town under its jurisdiction'.

<sup>26</sup> Modern students of the Bible often think that the conquest passages are crude and unjust but an understanding of the ancient Middle East is critical here. Sihon was not of the original population, whom he had destroyed to established his own kingdom.

<sup>27</sup> The poem, of which v. 30 is crucial and also corrupt, can be understood in two ways. 1: It is an Amorite victory song celebrating Sihon's defeat of Moab, inserted as a commentary on v. 26, though this requires more radical emendation of v. 30, which would then mean that Heshbon had

בָּאוּ חֶשְׁבֹּן  
תְּבִנָּה וְתִכּוֹנָן  
עִיר סִיחֹן:  
כח כִּי־אֵשׁ יֵצֵא מִחֶשְׁבֹּן  
לְהִבֶּה מִקְרִית סִיחֹן  
אָכְלָה עַר מוֹאָב  
בְּעָלֵי בָמוֹת אַרְנוֹן:  
כט אוֹי־לָךְ מוֹאָב  
אֲבָדְתָּ עַם־כְּמוֹשׁ  
נָתַן בָּנָיו פְּלִיטִם  
וּבְנֹתָיו בְּשִׁבִּית  
לְמֶלֶךְ אַמְרֵי סִיחֹן:  
ל וְנִירָם אֲבָד חֶשְׁבֹּן  
עַד־דִּיבֹן  
וְנָשִׁים עַד־נֹפַח  
אֲשֶׁר עַד־מִדְבָּא:

“Come to Heshbon!  
Let the city of Sihon  
be rebuilt on firm foundations!  
28 For fire came out from Heshbon,  
flame from the city of Sihon.  
It devoured Ar of Moab,  
and engulfed the heights of the Arnon.  
29 Woe to you, O Moab!  
People of Chemosh, you are lost!  
He has resigned his sons as fugitives,  
and his daughters as prisoners  
to Sihon, king of the Amorites.  
30 Their posterity has been destroyed  
from Heshbon all the way to Dibon,  
and we have lit a fire  
all the way from Nophah to Medeba.”

destroyed Moab. 2: It is an Israelite song, introduced by vv. 25–26, celebrating Israel’s victory over Sihon (v. 27 and an emended v. 30), but mentioning Sihon’s victory over Moab to enhance the triumph (vv. 28–29): Heshbon devoured the towns of Moab, but we, the Israelites, have destroyed Heshbon. This verse would then be an ironic invitation to come and rebuild it.

28 The MT reads ‘the lords’ (בעלי) in place of ‘engulfed’ (בלעה), here following the LXX (κατέπιεν).

29 ‘Chemosh’ (כְּמוֹשׁ) was the god of the Moabites.

30 The translation of this verse is uncertain (see #27). The 1<sup>st</sup> line follows the LXX (καὶ τὸ σπέρμα αὐτῶν ἀπολείται), whereas the MT reads ‘we shot at them’. The NRSV reads: ... So, their posterity perished

from Heshbon to Dibon,  
and we laid waste until fire spread to Medeba.

לֹא וַיֵּשְׁבּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ הָאֱמֹרִי: <sup>לב</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה  
 לְרַגֵּל אֶת־יַעֲזֹר וַיִּלְכְּדוּ בְּנֵתֶיהָ וַיִּירֶשׁ וַיּוֹרֶשׁ אֶת־  
 הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם: <sup>לג</sup> וַיִּפְּנוּ וַיַּעֲלוּ דֶרֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וַיֵּצֵא  
 עֹג מֶלֶךְ־הַבָּשָׁן לִקְרָאתָם הוּא וְכָל־עַמּוֹ לַמִּלְחָמָה  
 אֶדְרֵעִי: <sup>לד</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אַל־תִּירָא אֹתוֹ  
 כִּי בִיָּדִי נָתַתִּי אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־עַמּוֹ וְאֶת־אֶרְצוֹ  
 וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לְסִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר  
 יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבֹן: <sup>לה</sup> וַיָּכּוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־כָּל־  
 עַמּוֹ עַד־בִּלְתִּי הִשְׁאִיר־לוֹ שָׂרִיד וַיִּירְשׁוּ אֶת־אֶרְצוֹ:

<sup>31</sup> Israel settled in the land of the Amorites. <sup>32</sup> Moses sent men to spy out Jazer, and they took it and all its villages and evicted the Amorites who were there. <sup>33</sup> Then they turned and marched towards Bashan. Og king of Bashan marched out to meet them with all his people to give battle at Edrei. <sup>34</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, “Do not be afraid of him, for I have given him into your power, him and all his people and his country. Deal with him as you dealt with Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.” <sup>35</sup> So, they defeated him, his sons and all his people – there was no survivor – and they took possession of his country.

<sup>31</sup> In place of ‘Israel’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘the Israelites’.

<sup>32</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here (possible *vav*/*yod* confusion) warrants an explanation.

<sup>33</sup> The account of the war against Og serves both to round off the conquest and to justify the half-tribe of Manasseh’s claim to Bashan (a petty kingdom north of the Jabbok river), which the Israelites never owned in fact. Og was a figure of legend (see Dt 3:11).

<sup>34</sup> The literal translation of ‘power’ is ‘hand’.

<sup>35</sup> The literal translation of ‘survivor’ is ‘remnant’; the NJB reads ‘no one escaped’.



## NUMBERS 22

## במדבר פרק כב

א ויסעו בני ישראל ויחנו בְּעַרְבוֹת מוֹאָב מֵעַבְרָ לַיַּרְדֵּן יֵרֵחוֹ: {ס}

ב וירא בלק בן־צפּוֹר אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֹמְרֵי: ג ויגר מוֹאָב מִפְּנֵי הָעָם מֵאֲדָ כִּי רַב־הוּא וַיִּקֶּץ מוֹאָב מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ד ויאמר מוֹאָב אֶל־זִקְנֵי מִדְיָן עַתָּה יִלְחָכוּ הַקָּהָל אֶת־כָּל־סְבִיבֵתֵינוּ כְּלַחֵד הַשּׁוֹר אֶת יֶרֶק הַשָּׂדֶה וּבָלַק בֶּן־צַפּוֹר מִלֶּךְ לְמוֹאָב בָּעֵת הַהוּא: ה וישלח מְלָאכִים אֶל־בָּלַעַם בֶּן־בְּעֹר פְּתוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַנָּהָר אֶרֶץ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹ לְקַרְאֵלּוֹ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה עָם יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם הֲנֵה כָסָה אֶת־עֵין הָאָרֶץ וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב מִמְּלִי: ו ועתה לְכֵה־נָא אֶרְה־לִּי אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־עָצוּם הוּא מִמֶּנִּי אוֹלִי אוֹכֵל נֶכֶה־בּוֹ וַאֲגַרְשֵׁנוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ כִּי יִדְעֵתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־תְּבָרֵךְ מִבְּרָךְ וְאֲשֶׁר תָּאָר יוֹאָר:

1 Then the Israelites set out and pitched their camp in the Plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho.

2 Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, 3 and Moab was terrified of the people, because there were so many of them. Moab was overcome with fear of the Israelites; 4 and he said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will soon have cropped everything round us as closely as an ox crops the grass of the fields." Now Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at the time. 5 He sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, at Pethor on the River, in the land of the Amawites, saying, "Look how this people coming from Egypt has overrun the whole countryside; they have settled at my door. 6 Come, please, and curse this people for me; for, they are stronger than I am. We may then be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For, this I know: the man you bless is blessed, the man you curse is cursed."

## NUMBERS 22

- 1 The last phrase translates literally as, 'beyond the Jordan of Jericho', i.e. on a level with Jericho but on the other side of the Jordan from the point of view of someone living in Palestine.
- 2 Balaam is a soothsayer from the banks of the Euphrates who acknowledges Yahweh as his God (v. 18, etc.) and blesses Israel (23:11–12, 25–26, 24:10, and see Mi 6:5) but later traditions regard him as hostile, forced to bless Israel against his will (Dt 23:5–6, Jos 24:9–10, Ne 13:2), and leading Israel into idolatry at Peor (23:28, 31:16).
- 3 In place of 'overcome with fear', here following the NRSV, the NJB has simply 'afraid' and NETB has 'sick with fear'.
- 4 On Moab's league with Midian, see Ch. 31.
- 5 'Pethor' and the land of 'Amaw' (the Samaritan Pentateuch, Peshitta & Vg use 'Ammon') are known from cuneiform texts.
- 6 The ancients believed that the curse – the opposite of a blessing – releases a negative power that shapes future events.

וַיֵּלְכוּ זִקְנֵי מוֹאָב וְזִקְנֵי מִדְיָן וְקִסְמִים בְּיָדָם וַיָּבֹאוּ  
 אֶל-בָּלַעַם וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו דְּבָרֵי בָלָק: <sup>ח</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר  
 אֲלֵיהֶם לֵינוּ כֹּה הַלַּיְלָה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי אִתְּכֶם דָּבָר  
 כַּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֵלַי וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שְׂרֵי-מוֹאָב עִם-  
 בָּלַעַם: <sup>ט</sup> וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-בָּלַעַם וַיֹּאמֶר מִי  
 הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה עִמָּךְ: <sup>י</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלַעַם אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים  
 בָּלָק בֶּן-צֶפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב שָׁלַח אֵלַי: <sup>יא</sup> הִנֵּה הָעַם  
 הַיָּצֵא מִמִּצְרָיִם וַיִּכַּס אֶת-עֵין הָאָרֶץ עֲתָה לָכֶּה  
 קְבָה-לִּי אֹתוֹ אוֹלִי אוֹכֵל לֶחֶם בּוֹ וְגִרְשָׁתִּיו:  
<sup>יב</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-בָּלַעַם לֹא תֵלֵךְ עִמָּהֶם לֹא  
 תֵּאָר אֶת-הָעָם כִּי בְרוּךְ הוּא: <sup>יג</sup> וַיָּקַם בָּלַעַם בַּבֹּקֶר  
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-שְׂרֵי בָלָק לָכוּ אֶל-אַרְצְכֶם כִּי מֵאֵן יְהוָה  
 לָתֵתִי לְהֵלֵךְ עִמָּכֶם: <sup>יד</sup> וַיָּקוּמוּ שְׂרֵי מוֹאָב וַיָּבֹאוּ  
 אֶל-בָּלָק וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵאֵן בָּלַעַם הֵלֵךְ עִמָּנוּ:

<sup>7</sup> The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian set out, taking the fee for the divination with them. They found Balaam and gave him Balak's message. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Stay the night here and I will answer as Yahweh directs me." So, the chiefs of Moab stayed with Balaam. <sup>9</sup> And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men staying with you?" <sup>10</sup> And Balaam gave God this answer, "Balak son of Zippor has sent a message to me, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Look how this people coming from Egypt has spread over the face of the earth. Come and curse them for me; perhaps I will then be able to fight against them and drive them out." <sup>12</sup> But God said to Balaam, "You are not to go with them. You are not to curse this people; for, they are blessed." <sup>13</sup> So, Balaam rose in the morning and said to the chiefs sent by Balak, "Go back to your country! For, Yahweh will not let me go with you." <sup>14</sup> So, the chiefs of Moab rose and returned to Balak and said, "Balaam would not come with us."

<sup>7</sup> The literal translation of 'gave him' is 'spoke to him'.

<sup>8</sup> Throughout Chs 22–24, the conviction is expressed that a foreign priest-diviner, though not a member of the Covenant community, was obedient to Yahweh's will and that nothing could prevent the fulfilment of the divine purpose for Israel.

<sup>9</sup> The NRSV & NETB lack the word 'staying', here following the NJB.

<sup>10</sup> The NJB & NRSV end this verse, here following NETB, with, "... has sent me this message."

<sup>11</sup> In the phrase, 'be able to fight', the infinitive construct is used to express the object or complement of the verb 'to be able'.

<sup>12</sup> The word בָּרוּךְ ('blessed') is the Qal passive participle, serving here as the predicate adjective after the supplied verb 'to be'. The verb means 'enrich', in any way, materially, spiritually, physically. But the indication here is that the blessing includes the promised blessing of the patriarchs, a blessing that gave Israel the land.

<sup>13</sup> The implication is that Yahweh spoke to Balaam in a dream (see vv. 8, 19–20).

<sup>14</sup> In place of 'rose', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'left'.

טו וַיִּסַּף עוֹד בָּלַק שְׁלַח שָׂרִים רַבִּים וְנִכְבָּדִים  
מֵאֵלֶּה: טז וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-בָּלַעַם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ כֹּה אָמַר  
בָּלַק בֶּן-צִפּוֹר אֶל-נָא תִּמְנַע מֵהֵלֶךְ אֵלַי: ז' כִּי-כַבֵּד  
אֶכְבְּדָךְ מְאֹד וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמַר אֵלַי אֶעֱשֶׂה וְלֹכֶה-  
נָא קֹבֵה-לִּי אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה: י"ח וַיַּעַן בָּלַעַם וַיֹּאמַר  
אֶל-עֲבָדָי בָּלַק אִם-יִתְּנֵנִי בָלַק מְלֹא בֵיתוֹ כֶּסֶף  
וְזָהָב לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲבֹר אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי לַעֲשׂוֹת  
קִטְנָה אוֹ גְדוֹלָה: יט וְעַתָּה שִׁבּוּ נָא בְּזֶה גַם-אַתֶּם  
הַלֵּילָה וְאִדְעָה מִה-יִסַּף יְהוָה דִּבֶּר עִמִּי: כ' וַיָּבֹא  
אֱלֹהִים | אֶל-בָּלַעַם לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמַר לוֹ אִם-לִקְרָא לָךְ  
בָּאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים קוּם לֵךְ אִתָּם וְאֵךְ אֶת-הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-  
אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ אַתּוֹ תַעֲשֶׂה: כא וַיָּקָם בָּלַעַם בַּבֹּקֶר  
וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת-אַתָּנּוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ עִם-שָׂרֵי מוֹאָב:

כב וַיַּחֲרָאֵף אֱלֹהִים כִּי-הוֹלֵךְ הוּא וַיִּתְּיָצֵב מִלֶּאֶךְ  
יְהוָה בַּדֶּרֶךְ לְשַׁטֵּן לוֹ וְהוּא רָכַב עַל-אַתָּנּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי  
נַעֲרָיו עִמּוֹ: כג וַתֵּרָא הָאֲתוֹן אֶת-מִלְּאָךְ יְהוָה נֹצֵב

<sup>15</sup> Once again, Balak sent chiefs, more, and more renowned than the first.

<sup>16</sup> And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak son of Zippor, "Please do not let anything hinder you from coming to me; <sup>17</sup> for, I will surely load you with honours and do whatever you say.

Come, I beg you, and curse this people for me." <sup>18</sup> But Balaam answered the envoys of Balak, "Even if Balak gave me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the order of Yahweh my God in anything, great or small. <sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, please stay the night here yourselves, and I will learn what more Yahweh has to tell me." <sup>20</sup> And God came to Balaam during the night and said to him, "Have not these men come to summon you? Get up and go with them; but you must do nothing except what I tell you." <sup>21</sup> So, in the morning, Balaam rose, saddled his donkey, and set out with the officials of Moab.

<sup>22</sup> His going kindled the wrath of God, and the Angel of Yahweh took his stand on the road to bar his way. He was riding his donkey and his two servants were with him. <sup>23</sup> Now, the donkey saw the Angel of

<sup>15</sup> The literal translation of 'the first' (here following the NJB & NETB) is 'these' (as NRSV).

<sup>16</sup> For Balak's message, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Do not refuse, I beg you, to come to me."

<sup>17</sup> These 'honours' could have been wealth, prestige, or position.

<sup>18</sup> One should not take too rigidly that Balaam referred to Yahweh as his God; he is referring to the deity for which he is acting as the agent.

<sup>19</sup> The last clause is a verbal hendiadys, literally reading, "what Yahweh might add to speak."

<sup>20</sup> More literally translated, this verse ends, "but the word that I will say to you, that you must do."

<sup>21</sup> The donkey was considered a princely mount in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BCE (see Jg 5:10, 10:4 & 12:14).

<sup>22</sup> The 'wrath of God' follows the MT (and NRSV); the NJB, following the LXX (θυμῶ ὁ Θεός), has 'Yahweh's anger'.

<sup>23</sup> The literal translation of 'with his sword' is 'and his sword'.

בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַחֲרָבוֹ שְׁלוּפָה בְּיָדוֹ וַתֵּט הָאִתּוֹן מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ  
וַתֵּלֶךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיֵּךְ בַּלֶּעַם אֶת־הָאִתּוֹן לְהִטָּתָהּ  
הַדֶּרֶךְ:

כד וַיַּעֲמַד מֵלֶאֱדָיְהוָה בַּמִּשְׁעוֹל הַכְּרָמִים גֶּדֶר מִזֶּה  
וּגְדֵר מִזֶּה: כה וַתֵּרָא הָאִתּוֹן אֶת־מֵלֶאֱדָיְהוָה  
וַתִּלְחֹץ אֶל־הַקִּיר וַתִּלְחֹץ אֶת־רֶגְלָהּ בַּלֶּעַם אֶל־  
הַקִּיר וַיִּסֹּף לְהַכָּתָהּ:

כו וַיִּסֹּף מֵלֶאֱדָיְהוָה עֲבוּר וַיַּעֲמַד בְּמָקוֹם צָר  
אֲשֶׁר אֵין־דֶּרֶךְ לְנִטּוֹת יָמִין וּשְׂמָאוֹל: כז וַתֵּרָא  
הָאִתּוֹן אֶת־מֵלֶאֱדָיְהוָה וַתִּרְבֹּץ תַּחַת בַּלֶּעַם וַיַּחֲרֶה־  
אֵף בַּלֶּעַם וַיֵּךְ אֶת־הָאִתּוֹן בַּמִּקֵּל:

כח וַיִּפְתָּח יְהוָה אֶת־פִּי הָאִתּוֹן וַתֹּאמֶר לְבַלֶּעַם  
מִה־עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ כִּי הִכִּיתַנִּי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ רָגְלִים:  
כט וַיֹּאמֶר בַּלֶּעַם לָאִתּוֹן כִּי הִתְעַלְלָתְ בִּי לוֹ יִשְׁחָרֵב  
בְּיָדִי כִּי עָתָה הִרְגָתִיךָ: ל וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִתּוֹן אֶל־בַּלֶּעַם  
הֲלוֹא אֲנִכִּי אֶתְנֶנָּךְ אֲשֶׁר־רָכַבְתָּ עָלַי מֵעוֹדְךָ עַד־  
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הֲהִסְכֵּן הִסְכַּנְתִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ כֹּה וַיֹּאמֶר  
לֹא:

Yahweh standing on the road, with his drawn sword in his hand, and she turned off the road and made off across country; but Balaam beat her to turn her back on to the road.

<sup>24</sup> The Angel of Yahweh then took his stand on a narrow path among the vineyards, with a wall to the right and a wall to the left. <sup>25</sup> The donkey saw the Angel of Yahweh and brushed against the wall, grazing Balaam's foot. Balaam beat her again.

<sup>26</sup> The Angel of Yahweh moved and took up his stand in a place so narrow that there was no room to pass, right or left. <sup>27</sup> When the donkey saw the Angel of Yahweh, she lay down under Balaam. Balaam flew into a rage and beat the donkey with his stick.

<sup>28</sup> Then Yahweh opened the mouth of the donkey, which said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have beaten me thrice?" <sup>29</sup> Balaam answered the donkey, "Because you have mocked me! If I had had a sword in my hand, I would now have killed you." <sup>30</sup> The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey and have I not been your mount from your youth? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way?" He said, "No."

<sup>24</sup> The word translated 'narrow path' has a root meaning 'to be deep'; the LXX translators thought it was in a field in a narrow furrow.

<sup>25</sup> Literally translated, 'beat her again' is 'added to beat her', a verbal hendiadys.

<sup>26</sup> The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left."

<sup>27</sup> In place of 'lay', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'crouched'.

<sup>28</sup> The NJB separates the donkey's question into two: "What have I done to you? Why beat me three times like this?" Here, we follow the NRSV.

<sup>29</sup> In place of 'you have mocked me', here following the WEBBE, the NJB has 'you are playing the fool with me'.

<sup>30</sup> For the donkey's 2<sup>nd</sup> question, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "In all this time, have I ever failed to serve you?"

לֹא וַיִּגַּל יְהוָה אֶת־עֵינָיו בִּלְעָם וַיֵּרָא אֶת־מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה  
נֹצֵב בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְחָרְבּוֹ שְׁלֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ וַיִּקָּד וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ  
לְאַפָּיו: <sup>לֵב</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה עַל־מָה הִכִּיתָ  
אֶת־אַתְנָךְ זֶה שְׁלוֹשׁ רִגְלִים הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי יֵצְאָתִי  
לְשֹׁטֵן כִּי־יִרְט הַדֶּרֶךְ לְנִגְדִי: <sup>לֵב</sup> וַתֵּרָאֵלִי הָאֲתוֹן וַתֵּט  
לְפָנַי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ רִגְלִים אֲוִלִי נָטְתָה מִפְּנֵי כִי עָתָה  
גַּם־אֲתַכֶּה הַרְגָתִי וְאוֹתָהּ הַחַיִּיתִי: <sup>לֵד</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם  
אֶל־מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה חָטָאתִי כִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי כִי אַתָּה  
נֹצֵב לִקְרָאתִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְעָתָה אֶסְרֶע בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֲשׁוּבָה  
לִי: <sup>לֵה</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל־בִּלְעָם לֵךְ עִם־  
הָאֲנָשִׁים וְאַפֶּס אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־אָדְבָר אֵלֶיךָ אֲתוֹ  
תִּדְבָּר וַיֵּלֶךְ בִּלְעָם עִם־שָׂרֵי בָלָק:

לֹא וַיִּשְׁמַע בָּלָק כִּי בָא בִלְעָם וַיֵּצֵא לִקְרָאתוֹ אֶל־  
עִיר מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־גְּבוּל אַרְנוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶצֶה  
הַגְּבוּל: <sup>לֵז</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם הֲלֹא שְׁלַח

<sup>31</sup> Then Yahweh opened the eyes of Balaam. He saw the Angel of Yahweh standing on the road, a drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down and fell prostrate on his face. <sup>32</sup> The Angel of Yahweh said to him, "Why did you beat your donkey three times like that? I myself had come to bar your way; while I am here, your road is blocked. <sup>33</sup> The donkey saw me and turned aside from me three times. If she did not turn aside, then I would have killed you by now, though I would have spared her." <sup>34</sup> Balaam answered the Angel of Yahweh, "I have sinned. I did not know you were standing in my path. However, if you are angry with me, I will go back." <sup>35</sup> The Angel of Yahweh answered Balaam, "Go with these men but only say what I tell you to say." Therefore, Balaam went with the officials of Balak.

<sup>36</sup> Then Balak learned that Balaam was coming and went out to meet him, in the direction of Ar of Moab, at the border formed by the Arnon, the farthest point of the border. <sup>37</sup> Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send

<sup>31</sup> The verb translated 'fell prostrate' has the basic idea of 'bow oneself low to the ground', and perhaps in some cases the idea of 'coil up'. This is the normal posture of prayer and of deep humility in the ancient religious world.

<sup>32</sup> The NRSV uses 'perverse' for 'blocked'; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>33</sup> Many commentators consider אֲוִלִי ('perhaps') to be a misspelling in the MT in place of לֹא־יִלְכֶּנּוּ ('if ... not').

<sup>34</sup> 'Sinned' here is in the sense of any action, deliberate or not, that goes against God's will.

<sup>35</sup> This incident serves to remind Balaam that he must speak only what Yahweh bids him (cf. 1K 22:14), regardless of gifts or honours (v. 38).

<sup>36</sup> 'Ar of Moab' is from עִיר מוֹאָב ('a town of Moab'), but it refers to Ar, a fortified town dominating the Wadi Arnon (see 21:15). Balaam was, however, to utter his prophecies further north, near Mount Nebo, as he skirted the edge of the plateau overlooking the plain occupied by the Israelites. This was a long way north of the Arnon, marking the Moabite frontier, and in the former territory of Sihon.

<sup>37</sup> Balak again refers to his ability to 'honour' the seer: this meant payment for his service, usually gold, rings and jewellery, and some animals.



שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלָיְךָ לְקַרְאֲלֶךָ לָמָּה לֹא־הִלַכְתָּ אֵלַי  
הָאֲמָנָם לֹא אוֹכַל כַּבְדֶּךָ: <sup>לח</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל־בָּלָק  
הִנֵּה־בֵאתִי אֵלֶיךָ עַתָּה הִיכָל אוֹכַל דִּבֶּר מֵאוֹמָה  
הַדִּבֶּר אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁים אֱלֹהִים בְּפִי אֲתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר:

<sup>לט</sup> וַיֵּלֶךְ בִּלְעָם עִם־בָּלָק וַיָּבֹאוּ קִרְיַת חֲצוֹת: <sup>מ</sup> וַיַּזְבֵּחַ  
בָּלָק בָּקָר וְצֹאן וַיִּשְׁלַח לְבִלְעָם וּלְשָׂרִים אֲשֶׁר  
אִתּוֹ: <sup>מא</sup> וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח בָּלָק אֶת־בִּלְעָם וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ  
בַּמּוֹת בַּעַל וַיֵּרָא מִשָּׁם קֶצֶה הָעָם:

messengers to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Did you think, perhaps, I could confer no honours on you?" <sup>38</sup> Balaam answered Balak, "Here I am at your side. May I make myself clear to you now? The word that God puts into my mouth, this I must speak."

<sup>39</sup> Balaam went with Balak and they came to Kiriath-Huzoth. <sup>40</sup> Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent some to Balaam and the officials with him. <sup>41</sup> Next morning, Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-Baal, from where he could see the end of the camp.

---

<sup>38</sup> In the clause 'I must speak', the imperfect tense is taken as an obligatory imperfect.

<sup>39</sup> The NJB splits this verse into two separate sentences; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>40</sup> The understanding is that Balak was making a sacrifice for a covenant relationship, so he gave some of the meat to the men and to the seer.

<sup>41</sup> The name 'Bamoth Baal' (בַּמּוֹת בַּעַל) means 'the high places of Baal'. At the end of this verse, the NRSV adds 'of Israel'.

## NUMBERS 23

## במדבר פרק כג

<sup>א</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלַעַם אֶל-בָּלָק בְּנֵה-לִי בָזָה שְׁבַע מִזְבְּחֹת וְהִכֵּן לִי בָזָה שְׁבַע פָּרִים וְשְׁבַע אֵילִים: <sup>ב</sup> וַיַּעַשׂ בָּלָק כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בָּלַעַם וַיַּעַל בָּלָק וּבָלַעַם פֶּר וָאֵיל בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ: <sup>ג</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלַעַם לְבָלָק הֲתִיַּצֵּב עַל-עֲלֹתָי וְאֵלֶיךָ יִקְרָה יְהוָה לְקַרְאֹתִי וְדִבֶּר מִה־יִּרְאָנִי וְהִגִּדְתִּי לָךְ וַיֵּלֶךְ שָׁפִי:

<sup>ד</sup> וַיִּקַּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-בָּלַעַם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֶת-שְׁבַעַת הַמִּזְבְּחֹת עָרַכְתִּי וְאָעַל פֶּר וָאֵיל בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ: <sup>ה</sup> וַיֵּשֶׁם יְהוָה דְּבַר בְּפִי בָלַעַם וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוּב אֶל-בָּלָק וְכֹה תִדְבֹּר: <sup>ו</sup> וַיָּשָׁב אֵלָיו וְהִנֵּה נֹצֵב עַל-עֲלֹתָיו הוּא וְכָל-שָׂרֵי מוֹאָב: <sup>ז</sup> וַיֵּשָׂא מְשָׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר

מִן-אַרְסִי יִנְחֵנִי בָלָק  
מִלְךְ-מוֹאָב מִהַרְרֵי-קֶדֶם  
לְכֹה אָרֶה-לִּי יַעֲקֹב  
וּלְכֹה זַעֲמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל:

<sup>1</sup> Balaam said to Balak, "Build me seven altars, and bring here to me seven bulls and seven rams." <sup>2</sup> Balak did as Balaam asked and they made a high-offering of one bull and one ram on each altar. <sup>3</sup> Balaam then said to Balak, "Stand beside your high-offerings. I will go; perhaps Yahweh will allow me to meet him. Whatever he shows me I shall tell you." Then he withdrew to a bare hill.

<sup>4</sup> God met Balaam, who said to him, "I have prepared the seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar." <sup>5</sup> Yahweh then put a word in his mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and this is what you must say."

<sup>6</sup> So, he went back to him and found him standing by his high-offering, with all the chiefs of Moab. <sup>7</sup> And he recited his poem, saying:

"Balak brought me from Aram,  
the king of Moab from the hills of Kedem:  
Come curse Jacob for me;  
come, denounce Israel."

## NUMBERS 23

<sup>1</sup> Babylonian diviners resorted to the kind of sacrificial ceremony described in vv. 1–6 to obtain an omen.

<sup>2</sup> 'They offered' follows the MT, the NRSV reads 'Balak and Balaam offered'; the NJB, following the LXX (ἀνέχευσε), reads, 'he offered'.

<sup>3</sup> The verb הֲתִיַּצֵּב ('stand beside') means 'to take a stand' or 'station oneself'; it is more intentional than simply standing by something: he was to position himself by the sacrifice as Balaam withdrew to seek the oracle.

<sup>4</sup> The relative pronoun ('who') is added here in place of the conjunction to clarify that Balaam is speaking to God and not *vice versa*.

<sup>5</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, "... and thus you shall speak."

<sup>6</sup> The MT draws the vividness of the scene with the deictic particle הִנֵּה: Balaam returned, and *there he was*, standing there.

<sup>7</sup> The NRSV opens with: "Then Balaam uttered his oracle, saying:"

ח מה אֶקְבֹּל לֹא קִבָּה אֵל וּמָה  
 אֲזַעֵם לֹא זַעַם יְהוָה:  
 ט כִּי־מֵרָאשׁ צָרִים אֶרְאֶנּוּ  
 וּמִגְבְּעוֹת אֲשׁוּרָנּוּ  
 הֲנֵעַם לְבַדָּד יִשְׁכְּנוּ  
 וּבְגוֹיִם לֹא יִתְחַשְּׁבוּ:  
 י מִי מִנֵּה עֶפְרַיִם יַעֲקֹב  
 וּמִסֵּפֶר אֶת־רֹבַע יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 תָּמַת נַפְשִׁי מוֹת יִשְׁרָאֵל  
 וְתִהְיֶי אַחֲרֵיתִי כְּמָהוּ:

- 8 How shall I curse one when God does not curse?  
 How shall I denounce when God does not denounce?  
 9 Yes, from the top of the crags I see him,  
 from the hills I observe him.  
 See, a people dwelling apart,  
 not reckoned among the nations.  
 10 Who can count the dust of Jacob?  
 Who can number the dust-cloud of Israel?  
 Let me die the death of the just,  
 and let my end be one with his!"

יא וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם מַה עָשִׂיתָ לִּי לְקַבֹּל אֵיבִי  
 לְקַחְתִּיךָ וְהִנֵּה בִּרְכָתָ בְּרִיךְ: יב וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אַתָּה  
 אֲשֶׁר יָשִׁים יְהוָה בְּפִי אֶתֹּו אֲשֶׁמֶר לְדַבֵּר: יג וַיֹּאמֶר  
 אֵלָיו בָּלָק לֵךְ לְכֶה־נָּא אִתִּי אֶל־מָקוֹם אַחֵר אֲשֶׁר  
 תֵּרְאֶנּוּ מִשָּׁם אַפִּס קִצְהוּ תִרְאֶה וְכִלּוֹ לֹא תִרְאֶה  
 וְקִבְּנוּ־לִי מִשָּׁם: יד וַיִּקְחֵהוּ שִׂדְּהָ צִפִּים אֶל־רֹאשׁ

- 11 Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies but you bless them altogether!" 12 He answered, "Must I not take heed to say what Yahweh puts in my mouth?" 13 Balak said to him, "Come with me to another place from which you may see them; you shall see only part of them and shall not see them all; curse them for me from there." 14 He led him the Field of Spies, to the top of

8 The imperfect tense should here be classified as a potential imperfect ("How shall I curse/denounce?").

9 Israel is a chosen race (see #Dt 7:6), as its very numbers show.

10 Balaam prays that, by not cursing God's people, he may come to the end of his days as a righteous man. An alternative translation of 'dust-cloud' is 'fourth part'. The NJB, following the LXX (τρίτῳ), ends the verse with 'theirs', not 'his', as in the NRSV and MT.

11 The narrative of vv. 11–12 (see 22:20) is written with a touch of humour.

12 The verb שָׁמַר ('take heed') means 'guard' or 'watch', and here has the sense of 'be careful'; the nuance of the imperfect tense would be obligatory: 'I must be careful' – 'to say what Yahweh puts in my mouth' (the infinitive construct 'to say' is therefore serving as the direct object of שָׁמַר).

13 The Kethib/Qere difference here warrants an explanation, especially as this difference is not shown in the Mechon Mamre text.

14 The NRSV & NETB do not translate צִפִּים ('Spies'), here following the NJB.

הַפִּסְגָּה וַיִּבֶן שִׁבְעָה מִזְבְּחֹת וַיַּעַל פָּר וְאַיִל בְּמִזְבֵּחַ:  
 טו וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-בָּלָק הֲתִיַּצֵּב כֹּה עַל-עֹלֹתֶיךָ וְאֲנֹכִי  
 אֶקְרָה כֹּה: טז וַיִּקֶּר יְהוָה אֶל-בָּלָעָם וַיִּשֶׂם דָּבָר  
 בְּפִיו וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוּב אֶל-בָּלָק וְכֹה תִדְבֹּר: יז וַיָּבֹא אֵלָיו  
 וְהִנֵּה נֹצֵב עַל-עֹלֹתָיו וְשָׂרֵי מוֹאָב אִתּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ  
 בָּלָק מַה-תִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה:

יח וַיֵּשָׂא מְשָלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר  
 קוֹם בָּלָק וּשְׁמָע  
 הָאֲזִינָה עָדִי בְּנוֹ צִפּוֹר:  
 יט לֹא אִישׁ אֵל וַיִּכְזֹּב  
 וּבֶן-אָדָם וַיִּתְּנָחַם  
 הֵהוּא אָמַר וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה  
 וְדָבָר וְלֹא יְקִימֶנָּה:  
 כ הִנֵּה בִרְדִּי לְקַחְתִּי  
 וּבִרְדִּי וְלֹא אֲשִׁיבֶנָּה:  
 כא לֹא-הָבִיט אֹזֶן בִּיעֲקֹב  
 וְלֹא-רָאָה עֵמַל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

Pisgah. He built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

<sup>15</sup> He said to Balak, "Stand here by your high-offering, while I meet God there." <sup>16</sup> Yahweh met Balaam, put a word in his mouth, and said to him,

"Return to Balak and say this." <sup>17</sup> When he came to him, he found him still standing beside his high-offering with all the officials of Moab. Balak asked him, "What did Yahweh say?"

<sup>18</sup> Then Balaam declaimed his poem. He said:

"Arise, Balak, and listen,  
 give ear to me, son of Zippor.

<sup>19</sup> God is no man that he should lie,  
 no son of Adam to draw back.  
 Is it his to say and not to do,  
 to speak and not fulfil?

<sup>20</sup> The charge laid on me is to bless;  
 he has blessed and I cannot take it back.

<sup>21</sup> He has seen no guilt in Jacob;  
 marked no perversity in Israel.

<sup>15</sup> This verse uses כֹּה twice: 'stand here while I meet God there'.

<sup>16</sup> NETB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "and speak what I tell you."

<sup>17</sup> In place of 'officials', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'chiefs' and NETB has 'princes'.

<sup>18</sup> The NRSV opens with: "Then Balaam uttered his oracle, saying:"

<sup>19</sup> God's change of mind displays consistency of purpose, unlike human beings who manifest deceit and caprice (see #Ex 21:14).

<sup>20</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> line probably refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> speech, where Yahweh blessed Israel: Balaam knows he can do nothing to reverse what God has said.

<sup>21</sup> The NJB opens the verse with, "I have seen," not "He has seen," as in the MT & NRSV. Yahweh's kingship is an ancient poetic motif.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו עִמּוֹ  
 וּתְרוּעַת מֶלֶךְ בּוֹ:  
 כב אֵל מוֹצִיאֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם  
 כְּתוֹעַפֶת רֹאם לוֹ:  
 כג כִּי לֹא־נֹחַשׁ בִּיעֶקֶב  
 וְלֹא־קֶסֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל  
 כָּעֵת יֹאמְרוּ לִיעֶקֶב  
 וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל מַה־פָּעַל אֵל:  
 כד הֵן־עַם כְּלָבִיא יָקוּם  
 וּכְאֲרֵי יִתְנַשֵּׂא  
 לֹא יִשְׁכַּב עַד־יֹאכַל טֶרֶף  
 וְדַם־חַלְלִים יִשְׁתֶּה:

Yahweh his God is with him;  
 in him sounds the royal acclaim.

22 God has brought him out of Egypt;  
 he is like the wild ox's horns to him.

23 There is no omen against Jacob,  
 no divination against Israel.  
 Though men say to Jacob,  
 say to Israel, "What wonder has God to show?"

24 Here is a people like a lioness rising,  
 poised like a lion to spring;  
 not lying down till he has devoured his prey  
 and drunk the blood of his victims."

כה וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם גַּם־קֵב לֹא תִקְבְּנוּ גַם־  
 בִּרְדָּךְ לֹא תְבָרַכְנוּ: כו וַיַּעַן בִּלְעָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־בָּלָק  
 הֲלֹא דִבַּרְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר כָּל אֲשֶׁר־יֹדֹבֵר יְהוָה  
 אֶתּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה:

25 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Very well! Do not curse them at all; but  
 at least do not bless them at all!" 26 Balaam answered, saying to Balak,  
 "Have I not told you, saying: whatever Yahweh says, that is what I must  
 do?"

22 Instead of 'Elohim' for 'God', the MT has, 'El' (אֵל), which means 'God' but is also the proper name of the principal god of the Canaanite pantheon. The latter had already been identified with the God of the Patriarchs and with Yahweh. The 2<sup>nd</sup> line is difficult: alternative translations read, "he (Jacob) has the strength of the wild ox," or, "he (El) is like the horns of the wild ox."

23 Other translations of this verse have 'in Jacob' and 'in Israel'.

24 The oracle compares Israel first to a lioness, because she does the tracking and hunting of food while the lion moves up and down roaring and distracting the prey; but the lion is also the traditional emblem of Judah, Dan and Gad, as well as the symbol of royalty, so this also supports the motif of royalty as well as power for Israel.

25 The verbs 'curse' and 'bless' are preceded by the infinitive absolute ('by no means' – hence the translation, 'at all').

26 The clause, 'whatever Yahweh says', functions as the object of the verb at the end of the verse.



כז וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל-בִּלְעָם לְכֵה-נָא אֶקְחָךָ אֶל-  
מָקוֹם אֲחֵר אוֹלֵי יִישׁוּר בְּעֵינֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְקִבְּתוּ לִי  
מִשָּׁם: כח וַיִּקַּח בָּלָק אֶת-בִּלְעָם רֹאשׁ הַפְּעֹזֹר  
הַנִּשְׁקָף עַל-פְּנֵי הַיַּשְׁמֹן: כט וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל-בָּלָק  
בְּנֵה-לִי בָזָה שִׁבְעָה מִזְבְּחֹת וְהָבֵן לִי בָזָה שִׁבְעָה  
פָּרִים וְשִׁבְעָה אֵילִם: ל וַיַּעַשׂ בָּלָק כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר  
בִּלְעָם וַיַּעַל פָּר וְאֵיל בְּמִזְבֵּחַ:

<sup>27</sup> Then Balak said to Balaam, “Come then, let me take you to another place. From there, perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there.” <sup>28</sup> Therefore, Balak took Balaam to the summit of Peor, which overlooks the desert. <sup>29</sup> Then Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.” <sup>30</sup> And Balak did as Balaam asked and offered up one bull and one ram on each altar.

<sup>27</sup> Balak is stubborn, as indeed Balaam is persistent, but Balak still thinks that if another location were used it just might work. Balaam had actually told Balak in the prophecy that other attempts would fail, but Balak refuses to give up so easily; so, he insists they perform the ritual and try again. This time, however, Balaam will change his approach, and this will result in a dramatic outpouring of power on him.

<sup>28</sup> In place of ‘the desert’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘the wasteland’ and NETB leaves the Hebrew name (יִישְׁמֹן) un-translated as ‘Jeshimon’

<sup>29</sup> The NJB has ‘find me’ in place of ‘prepare ... for me’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>30</sup> Before ‘one bull’, the NJB adds ‘a holocaust of’.

## NUMBERS 24

## במדבר פרק כד

א וַיֵּרָא בַלְעָם כִּי טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא־הֵלֵךְ כְּפַעַם־בְּפַעַם לִקְרֹאת נְחָשִׁים  
וַיֵּשֶׁת אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר פָּנָיו: ב וַיֵּשָׂא בַלְעָם אֶת־עֵינָיו  
וַיֵּרָא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל שֹׁכֵן לְשִׁבְטָיו וְתָהִי עָלָיו רוּחַ  
אֱלֹהִים: ג וַיֵּשָׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר

נָאֻם בַּלְעָם בֶּנוֹ בְּעֹר

וְנָאֻם הַגִּבֹּר שְׂתֵם הָעֵין:

נָאֻם שִׁמְעֵ אִמְרֵ־אֵל ד

אֲשֶׁר מַחֲזִה שְׂדֵי יַחֲזִה

נִפֹּל וְגִלּוֹי עֵינָיו:

ה מֵה־טָבוֹ אֶהְלִיךְ יַעֲקֹב

מִשְׁכַּנְתִּיךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

ו כְּנַחֲלִים נָטִיּוֹ

כְּגִנֹּת עָלֵי נָהָר

כְּאַהֲלִים נִטְעַ יְהוָה

כְּאַרְזִים עַל־יְמִיִּם:

<sup>1</sup> Then, when Balaam saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens but set his face towards the desert. <sup>2</sup> When he lifted up his eyes, Balaam saw Israel, encamped tribe by tribe; and the spirit of God came on him <sup>3</sup> and he recited his oracle, saying:

“The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor,  
the prophecy of the man whose eyes are far-seeing,

<sup>4</sup> the prophecy of one who hears the word of God.

He sees what Shaddai makes him see,  
who falls down, but his eyes are opened.

<sup>5</sup> How fair are your tents, O Jacob,  
how fair your dwellings, O Israel!

<sup>6</sup> Like valleys that stretch afar,  
like gardens by the banks of a river,  
like aloes planted by Yahweh,  
like cedars beside the waters!

## NUMBERS 24

<sup>1</sup> The word נְחָשִׁים ('omens') could also be translated as 'auguries'; Balaam is not even making a pretence now of looking for such things, because they are not going to work: God has overruled them.

<sup>2</sup> The literal translation of 'tribe by tribe' is 'according to their tribes'.

<sup>3</sup> Alternative translations for 'far-seeing' (NJB) are 'true-seeing' (LXX, ἀληθινῶς ὁρῶν), 'closed' (MT) and 'clear' or 'open' (NRSV).

<sup>4</sup> In place of 'who falls down, but', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'receives the divine answer, and'.

<sup>5</sup> Here, the opening מֵה has an exclamatory sense, 'how' (see Gn 28:17).

<sup>6</sup> An alternative reading for 'valleys' is 'rows of palms'. The language here seems to be more poetic than precise: 'cedars' do not grow beside water.

ז יִזְלֹמִים מִדְּלִיז  
 וְזָרְעוֹ בְּמִים רַבִּים  
 וְיָרֵם מֵאַגַּג מֶלֶכּוֹ  
 וְתִנְשֹׂא מַלְכוֹתוֹ:  
 ח אֵל מוֹצִיאֻ מִמִּצְרַיִם  
 כְּתוֹעֶפֶת רֹאם לוֹ  
 יֹאכֹל גּוֹיִם צָרָיו  
 וְעִצְמוֹתֵיהֶם יִגְרֵם  
 וְחִצָּיו יִמְחֹץ:  
 ט כָּרַע שֹׁכֵב כְּאֶרֶץ וּכְלָבִיא  
 מִי יִקְיֶמְנוּ  
 מְבָרְכֶיךָ בְּרוּךְ  
 וְאֲרָרֶיךָ אָרוּר:

7 Water shall flow from his buckets,  
 and his seed shall have abundant water.  
 His king is greater than Agag,  
 and his kingdom held in honour.

8 God brings him out of Egypt;  
 he is like the wild ox's horns to him.  
 He devours the corpses of his enemies,  
 breaking their bones,  
 piercing them with his arrows.

9 He has crouched, he has lain down,  
 like a lion, like a lioness; who dare rouse him?  
 Blessed be those who bless you,  
 and accursed be those who curse you!"

י' וַיַּחֲרֹאף בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם וַיִּסְפֹּק אֶת־כַּפָּיו וַיֹּאמֶר  
 בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם לֵקֵב אֵיבִי קִרְאתֶיךָ וְהִנֵּה בִּרְכָתָ  
 בְּרִיךְ זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים: י"א וְעַתָּה בִּרְחֹלֶיךָ אֶל־  
 מְקוֹמְךָ אֲמַרְתִּי כִּבֵּד אֶכְבְּדְּךָ וְהִנֵּה מְנַעַךְ יְהוָה  
 10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he beat his hands  
 together, and Balak said to Balaam, "I brought you to curse my enemies,  
 but, instead, you have blessed them three times over! 11 Therefore, be off  
 with you, and go home. I promised to load you with honours, but

7 For the first 2 lines, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following the LXX (ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ καὶ κυριεύσει ἐν ἄλλοις) has, "A hero arises from their stock; he reigns over countless peoples."

8 The subject of the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, "He devours the corpses..." is Israel. The NJB omits the 3<sup>rd</sup> line (the meaning of which is uncertain) here taken from the NRSV. Much of this verse is uncertain, and the text is corrupt; for 'corpses', the MT has 'nations'.

9 Compare the last 2 lines with Gn 12:3.

10 Striking the hands together was a gesture of anger and reproach (see Job 27:23 & Lm 2:15).

11 In place of 'load you with honours', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'richly reward you'.

מִכְבוֹד: יב וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלַעַם אֶל־בָּלָק הֲלֹא גַם אֶל־  
מְלָאכֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַחְתָּ אֵלַי דִּבַּרְתִּי לֵאמֹר: יג אִם־  
יִתְּנֶלֶי בָּלָק מָלֵא בֵּיתוֹ כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲבֹר  
אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹבָה אוֹ רָעָה מִלְּבִי אֲשֶׁר־  
יְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אִתּוֹ אֲדַבֵּר: יד וְעַתָּה הִנְנִי הוֹלֵךְ לְעַמִּי  
לָכָה אֵינֶעָצֵף אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָעָם הַזֶּה לְעַמִּי  
בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים:

טו וַיֹּשֶׁא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר  
נֶאֱמַם בְּלַעַם בְּנוֹ בְּעֹר  
וְנֶאֱמַם הַגִּבֹּר שְׁתֵּם הָעֵינַי:  
טז נֶאֱמַם שִׁמְעֵ אִמְרֵי־אֵל  
וַיֵּדַע דַּעַת עֲלִיּוֹן  
מִחֲזָה שִׁדֵּי יַחֲזָה  
נָפַל וּגְלוּי עֵינָיו:  
יז אֲרֹאֲנוּ וְלֹא עָתָה  
אֲשׁוּרָנוּ וְלֹא קָרוֹב  
דֶּרֶךְ כּוֹכַב מִיַּעֲקֹב

Yahweh himself has deprived you of those honours.” <sup>12</sup> And Balaam answered Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers you sent to me: <sup>13</sup> Even if Balak gave me his house full of gold and silver I could not go against the command of Yahweh and do anything of my own accord, good or evil; what Yahweh says is what I will say. <sup>14</sup> Now that I am going back to my own people, let me warn you what this people will do to your people, in time to come.”

<sup>15</sup> Then he declaimed his poem. He said:

“The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor,  
the prophecy of the man with far-seeing eyes,  
<sup>16</sup> the prophecy of one who hears the word of God:  
of one who knows the knowledge of the Most High.  
He sees what Shaddai makes him see,  
who falls down, but his eyes are opened.  
<sup>17</sup> I see him – but not in the present,  
I behold him – but not close at hand:  
a star from Jacob takes the leadership;

<sup>12</sup> The NJB has ‘the messengers’ in place of ‘your messengers’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>13</sup> The literal translation of ‘command’ is ‘word’ (as NRSV).

<sup>14</sup> Balaam not only defies Balak’s command to get out but gives his last oracle without the preparatory rites of divination (see 23:1–6 and #24:1).

<sup>15</sup> The NRSV opens with: “So he uttered his oracle, saying:”

<sup>16</sup> In place of ‘who falls down, but’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘receives the divine answer, and’.

<sup>17</sup> In the ancient Middle East, a star signified a god and, consequently, a deified king (see also Is 14:12); here the word seems to refer to the Davidic dynasty from which the Messiah was to come. The ‘sons of Seth’ are the Bedouin tribes; the poem goes on to enumerate those of Israel’s enemies who lived on the borders of Canaan. In the last couplet of this verse, ‘forehead’ could be translated as ‘borderlands’, and ‘skull’ as ‘territory’.

וְקֶם שֶׁבֶט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל	a sceptre arises from Israel.
וּמַחֲזֵן פְּאֵתֵי מוֹאָב	It crushed the forehead of Moab
וְקִרְקַר כָּל־בְּנֵי־שֵׁת:	like the skulls of all the sons of Seth.
וְהָיָה אֶדוֹם יִרְשָׁה יח	18 Edom becomes a conquered land;
וְהָיָה יִרְשָׁה שְׂעִיר אִיבִיו	a conquered land is Seir.
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל עָשָׂה חֵיל:	Israel exerts his strength,
וַיֵּרֶד מִיַּעֲקֹב יט	19 Jacob dominates his enemies
וְהָאֲבִיד שָׁרִיד מַעִיר:	and destroys the fugitives from Ar."
כ וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עַמְלֵק וַיֵּשָׂא מְשָׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר	20 Balaam looked on Amalek and declaimed his poem. He said:
רֹאשִׁית גּוֹיִם עַמְלֵק	"Amalek was first among the nations!
וְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ עַד־אָבֵד:	But his posterity shall perish forever."
כא וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הַקִּנִּי וַיֵּשָׂא מְשָׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר	21 Then he looked on the Kenites and declaimed his poem. He said:
אֵיתָן מוֹשְׁבֶךָ	"Your house was firm, Kain,
וְשֵׂים בְּסֹלֶעַ קִנָּד:	and your nest perched high in the rock.
כב כִּי אִם־יִהְיֶה לְבֶעֱר קִין	22 But the nest belongs to Beor;
עַד־מָה אֲשׁוּר תִּשְׁבֶּךָ:	how long will you be Asshur's captive?"

18 'Seir' (שְׂעִיר) is the chief mountain range of Edom (Dt 33:2), and so the reference here is to the general area of Edom.

19 'Ar' is used in place of the Hebrew for 'town' (see #22:36).

20 The opening line of the poem probably means that Amalek held first place, or it thought that it was 'the first of the nations'.

21 A pun is made on the name 'Kenites' (קִנִּי) by using the word 'your nest' (קִנָּד); the location may be the rocky cliffs overlooking Petra. The Kenites were nomads (see 1Ch 2:55, where they appear as closely related to the Rechabites) intimately associated with Midian (Nb 10:29 & Jg 1:16). They were driven back by the Edomites (the 'Beor' of v. 22 seems to be the Edomite king of Gn 36:32) but penetrated as far as Amalekite territory (Jg 1:16, 1S 15:4-6, and see 1S 27:10 & 30:29), and even as far as the Plain of Esdraelon (Jg 4:11, 17, 5:24).

22 The text of the last line is very uncertain and emended from the LXX (Ἀσσύριοι σε αἰχμαλωτεύουσιν). The mention of Asshur is surprising here. It cannot refer to Assyria (as read by the LXX) or it would be very late (8<sup>th</sup> Century BCE); it may mean the tribe of Asshur (Gn 25:3).



כג וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר 23 Then he declaimed his poem. He said:  
 אֹזִי מִי יַחֲיֶה מִשְׁמֹו אֵל:  
 כד וְצִים מִיַּד כְּתִים 24 Ships come from the coasts of Kittim.  
 וְעֲנֹו אֲשׁוּר וְעֲנֹו-עֶבֶר  
 וְגַם-הוּא עַדִּי אֲבָד:  
 They bear down on Asshur, they bear down on Eber;  
 he too shall perish forever."

כה וַיָּקָם בַּלְעָם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשֹׁב לְמִקְוֹו וְגַם-בָּלָק הָלַךְ 25 Then Balaam rose up, left, and returned to his home; and Balak too  
 לְדַרְכּוֹ: {פ} went his way.

23 The 'Sea-people' refers to the Philistines and other invaders, who descended on Egypt and Palestine at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century BCE.

24 'Kittim' (כְּתִים) includes Cyprus and the coastal region of the eastern Mediterranean. 'Eber' (עֶבֶר) – see Gn 10:21, 11:14) were a people from whom Abraham was descended (Gn 11:26), the name 'Hebrew' being somehow connected with it (see 'Abram the Hebrew', Gn 14:13), whatever the real origin of the word may be.

25 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Then Balaam got up and went back to his place, and Balak also went his way."

## NUMBERS 25

## במדבר פרק כה

א וישב ישראל בשטים ויחל העם לזנות אל-בנות מואב: ב ותקראן לעם לזבחי אלהיהן ויאכל העם וישתחוו לאלהיהן: ג ויצמד ישראל לבעל פעור ויחראף יהוה בישראל:

ד ויאמר יהוה אל-משה קח את-כל-ראשי העם והזקע אותם ליהוה נגד השמש וישב חרון אפי-יהוה מישראל: ה ויאמר משה אל-שפטי ישראל הרגו איש אנשיו הנצמדים לבעל פעור:

ו והנה איש מבני ישראל בא ויקרב אל-אחיו את-המדינית לעיני משה ולעיני כל-עדת בני-ישראל והמה בלם פתח אהל מועד: ז וירא פניחס בן-אלעזר בן-אהרן הכהן ויקם מתוך העדה ויקח רמח בידו: ח ויבא אחר איש-ישראל אל-הקבה

<sup>1</sup> Israel settled at Shittim; the people took up prostitution with Moabite women. <sup>2</sup> They called them to the sacrifices of their gods and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. <sup>3</sup> With Israel thus joined to the Baal of Peor, the anger of Yahweh blazed out against Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people; impale them in the sun before Yahweh; then the burning anger of Yahweh will turn away from Israel." <sup>5</sup> Moses said to the judges in Israel, "Each of you must kill the men who have joined themselves to the Baal of Peor."

<sup>6</sup> Then, one of the Israelites came along, bringing the Midianite woman into his family, under the very eyes of Moses and the whole community of Israelites as they wept at the door of the Tent of Meeting. <sup>7</sup> When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest saw this, he stood up and left the assembly, seized a lance, <sup>8</sup> followed the Israelite into the

## NUMBERS 25

- <sup>1</sup> The original story of this chapter (vv. 1-5) assumes the same situation as the stories about Balaam (see #22:36). The sanctuary of Baal-Peor (23:28), between Israel and Moab, was frequented by both peoples, and the Moabite women seduced the Israelites into their gods (see 31:16).
- <sup>2</sup> This verse relates to the sacred banquet accompanying communion sacrifices – the Moabite women lured Israelites into idolatrous rites.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Baal', the Canaanite god of storm and fertility, was worshipped at the cult centre of Peor, or Beth-Peor (23:28, Dt 3:29).
- <sup>4</sup> The execution of the chiefs was atonement for the people, according to the ancient conception of corporate guilt (cf. 2S 21:1-6).
- <sup>5</sup> The literal translation of 'kill the men' is 'kill – a man his men'; the imperative is plural, and so 'man' is to be taken collectively.
- <sup>6</sup> The story assumes an attempt to seduce Israelites into intermarriage with Midianites, with the result that divine judgement came in the form of a plague (v. 9). In 31:16, Balaam is blamed for this incident.
- <sup>7</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> clause is subordinated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>: both begin with the preterite verbal form and there is a logical/chronological sequence involved.
- <sup>8</sup> The 'alcove' (קבה – literally, 'vaulted niche') was possibly intended for ritual prostitution; the NRSV uses 'tent'.

וַיִּדְקֹר אֶת־שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־הָאִשָּׁה  
 אֶל־קִבְתָּהּ וַתַּעֲצֹר הַמִּגָּפָה מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 ט וַיְהִיו הַמֵּתִים בַּמִּגָּפָה אַרְבָּעָה וְעֶשְׂרִים אָלֶף: {פ}  
 י וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: יא פִּינְחָס בֶּן־  
 אֱלֵעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן הָשִׁיב אֶת־חַמְתִּי מֵעַל בְּנֵי־  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּקֶּנָּאוּ אֶת־קִנְאָתִי בְּתוֹכָם וְלֹא־כָלִיתִי  
 אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּקֶּנָּאוֹתִי: יב לָכֵן אֲמַר הַנָּנִי נָתַן לִּי  
 אֶת־בְּרִיתִי שְׁלוֹם: יג וְהָיְתָה לִּי וּלְזֶרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו בְּרִית  
 כְּהֻנָּה עוֹלָם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר קָנָא לֵאלֹהֵיו וַיַּכְפֹּר עַל־  
 בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: יד וְשֵׁם אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמָּכָה אֲשֶׁר הָכָה  
 אֶת־הַמְּדִינִית זִמְרִי בֶן־סֻלּוֹא נָשִׂיא בֵּית־אָב  
 לְשִׁמְעוֹנִי: טו וְשֵׁם הָאִשָּׁה הַמָּכָה הַמְּדִינִית כּוֹזְבִי  
 בַּת־צֹר רֹאשׁ אֲמוֹת בֵּית־אָב בְּמִדְיָן הוּא: {פ}

alcove, and there ran them both through, the Israelite and the woman, right through the groin; and the plague that had struck the Israelites was arrested. <sup>9</sup> In the plague, twenty-four thousand of them had died.

<sup>10</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, saying: <sup>11</sup> “Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites, when he manifested such zeal for my sake among them, so I did not consume the Israelites in my zeal. <sup>12</sup> So say: To him I grant my Covenant of peace.

<sup>13</sup> For him and his descendants after him, this shall be a covenant of perpetual priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the Israelites.” <sup>14</sup> The name of the slain Israelite, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, leader of a clan of Simeon. <sup>15</sup> The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi, daughter of Zur, chief of a clan in Midian.

<sup>9</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Nevertheless those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.”

<sup>10</sup> The NJB & NETB omit the word, ‘saying’, no doubt because they consider it redundant in contemporary English; here, we follow the MT and the WEBBE.

<sup>11</sup> The literal translation of ‘manifested such zeal for my sake’ is ‘he was zealous with my zeal’; the repetition of forms for ‘zeal’ in the verse stresses the passion of Phinehas. The word, ‘zeal’, means a passionate intensity to protect or preserve divine or social institutions and is used frequently throughout the Bible.

<sup>12</sup> A ‘Covenant of peace’ (Ezk 34:25, 37:26) is one of welfare and well-being, based on right relation with God and harmonious relations in the community.

<sup>13</sup> The Aaronic line, traced through Phinehas (Ex 6:25), is guaranteed a perpetual priesthood, i.e. one that continues on perpetuity.

<sup>14</sup> A more literal translation for ‘clan’ (here following NETB) is ‘patriarchal House’ (as also in v. 15).

<sup>15</sup> The passage makes it clear that the both the Israelite’s and woman’s fathers were leaders, who were supposed to be preventing this thing from happening. The judgment was swift and severe, because the crime was so great, and the danger of it spreading was certain. Paul refers to this horrible incident when he reminds Christians not to do similar things (1Cor 10:6-8).

טז וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: י<sup>ח</sup> צַרְרוּר אֶת־  
הַמִּדְיָנִים וְהַכִּיתֶם אוֹתָם: י<sup>ח</sup> כִּי צַרְרוּרִים הֵם לָכֶם  
בְּנִכְלִיתָם אֲשֶׁר־נָפְלוּ לָכֶם עַל־דְּבַר־פְּעֹזֹר וְעַל־  
דְּבַר כְּזָבִי בַת־נִשְׂיָא מִדִּין אַחַתָּם הַמָּכָה בְּיוֹם־  
הַמַּגָּפָה עַל־דְּבַר־פְּעֹזֹר:

<sup>16</sup> Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, <sup>17</sup> “Bring trouble to the Midianites and destroy them, <sup>18</sup> for they bring trouble to you with their guile in the Peor affair and in the affair of Cozbi their sister, daughter of a prince of Midian, the woman who was killed the day the plague came on account of Peor.”

---

<sup>16</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “The LORD said to Moses.”

<sup>17</sup> For this verse, here following NETB, the NJB reads, “Harry the Midianites and strike them down,” and the NRSV has “Harass the Midianites, and defeat them.”

<sup>18</sup> Cozbi’s father, Zur, was one of five Midianite kings who eventually succumbed to Israel (31:8); when the text gives the name and family of a woman, it is asserting that she is important, at least for social reasons, among her people.

## NUMBERS 26

## במדבר פרק כו

<sup>א</sup> וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַמִּגְפָּה {פ} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אֱלֶעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר: <sup>ב</sup> שְׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם כָּל־יֵצֵא צָבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>ג</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְאֱלֶעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֹתָם בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל־יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ לֵאמֹר: <sup>ד</sup> מִן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כָּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵיכָאִם מֵאֲרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: <sup>ה</sup> רְאוּבֵן בְּכוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן חֲנוּךְ מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֲנֹכִי לְפָלֹא מִשְׁפַּחַת הַפְּלֹאִי: <sup>ו</sup> לְחֶצְרֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֲצֵרוֹנִי לְכַרְמִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַכַּרְמִי: <sup>ז</sup> אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת הָרְאוּבֵנִי וַיְהִיו פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וָאַרְבָּעִים אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים: <sup>ח</sup> וּבְנֵי פָלֹא אֱלִיאָב: <sup>ט</sup> וּבְנֵי אֱלִיאָב נְמוּאֵל וְדָתָן

<sup>1</sup> After this plague, Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest. He said: <sup>2</sup> "Take a census of the whole community of the Israelites, by their Patriarchal houses: all those of twenty year of ages and over, fit to bear arms in Israel." <sup>3</sup> Therefore, Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke to the people in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan opposite Jericho. They said: <sup>4</sup> "Take a census of the people, men of twenty years and over," as Yahweh had ordered Moses and the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt: <sup>5</sup> Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: The sons of Reuben: for Hanoch, the Hanochite clan; for Pallu, the Palluite clan; <sup>6</sup> for Hezron, the Hezronite clan; for Carmi, the Carmite clan. <sup>7</sup> These were the Reubenite clans. They numbered forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty men. <sup>8</sup> The sons of Pallu: Eliab. <sup>9</sup> The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram. These two,

### NUMBERS 26

- <sup>1</sup> The paragraph break ({פ}) after the 1<sup>st</sup> clause suggests that this may be a later addition, in order to add continuity from the previous chapter.
- <sup>2</sup> The literal translation of 'fit to bear arms' is 'who goes out in the army'.
- <sup>3</sup> The census of the Plains of Moab corresponds to the one taken on leaving Sinai (Ch. 1). The order of the tribes is different in the LXX and agrees with that in Gn 46 (see #15).
- <sup>4</sup> The NJB lacks, "Take a census of the people," and it closes v. 3 with, "They counted."
- <sup>5</sup> The MT has no preposition before 'Hanuch', but one has been supplied in the translation for clarity.
- <sup>6</sup> For 'Hezron' (חֶצְרֹן), the LXX reads Ασρων.
- <sup>7</sup> The Reubenites had decreased from 46,500 to 43,730.
- <sup>8</sup> Note that the MT has the plural term for 'sons', even though there is only one listed.
- <sup>9</sup> For 'Nemuel' (נְמוּאֵל), the LXX reads Νεμουηλ. The Kethib/Qere difference here (possible vav/yod confusion) warrants an explanation.



וַאֲבִירָם הָיוּ אֲדֹתָן וַאֲבִירָם קְרוּאֵי קְרִיאֵי הָעֵדָה  
אֲשֶׁר הָצִו עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן בְּעֵדַת־קֹרַח  
בְּהִצָּתָם עַל־יְהוָה: 'וּתִפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ  
וּתְבַלַּע אֹתָם וְאֶת־קֹרַח בְּמוֹת הָעֵדָה בְּאֹכַל הָאֵשׁ  
אֶת חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֹתַיִם אִישׁ וַיְהִיו לְנֶס: י<sup>א</sup> וּבְנֵי־קֹרַח  
לֹא־מָתוּ: {ס}

י<sup>ב</sup> בְּנֵי שִׁמְעוֹן לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם לְנִמְוֹאֵל מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַנְּמוּאֵלִי לִימִין מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיַּמִּינִי לִיכִין מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַיִּכִּינִי: י<sup>ג</sup> לְזֶרַח מִשְׁפַּחַת הַזֶּרַחִי לְשָׁאוּל מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַשָּׁאוּלִי: י<sup>ד</sup> אֶלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשִּׁמְעוֹנִי שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים  
אָלֶף וּמֵאֹתַיִם: {ס}

טו בְּנֵי גָד לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם לְצִפּוֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַצִּפּוֹנִי לַחֲגִי  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֲגִי לְשׁוּנִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשׁוּנִי: טז לְאֹזְנִי  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֹזְנִי לְעֵרִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הָעֵרִי: יז לְאֶרֹד  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֶרֹדִי לְאַרְאֵלִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאַרְאֵלִי:

Dathan and Abiram, men of repute in the community, were the ones who challenged Moses and Aaron; they belonged to the followers of Korah who challenged Yahweh. <sup>10</sup> The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them (Korah perished with his followers), when fire consumed the two hundred and fifty men. They became a warning.

<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding, the sons of Korah did not perish.

<sup>12</sup> The sons of Simeon by their families: for Nemuel, the Nemuelite family; for Jamin, the Jaminite family; for Jachin, the Jachinite family; <sup>13</sup> for Zerah, the Zerahite family; for Shaul, the Shaulite family. <sup>14</sup> These were the Simeonite family. They numbered twenty-two thousand and two hundred men.

<sup>15</sup> The sons of Gad by their families: for Zephon, the Zephonite family; for Haggi, the Haggite family; for Shuni, the Shunite family; <sup>16</sup> for Ozni, the Oznite family; for Eri, the Erite family; <sup>17</sup> for Arod, the Arodite family; for Areli, the Arelite family. <sup>18</sup> These were the families

<sup>10</sup> The clause in parenthesis follows the NJB; the NRSV reads 'along with Korah' after 'swallowed them'.

<sup>11</sup> The NJB lacks the word, 'notwithstanding', here following the NRSV.

<sup>12</sup> For 'Jamin' (יַמִּין) & 'Jachin' (יַכִּין), the LXX has, respectively, *Iamin* & *Iachin*.

<sup>13</sup> For 'Zerah' (זֶרַח) & 'Shaul' (שָׁאוּל), the LXX has, respectively, *Zaza* & *Σαουλ*.

<sup>14</sup> Simeon suffered the greatest loss during the desert sojourn (compare 1:23; see Gn 49:5–7): before entering Sinai, the tribe numbered 59,300 (the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest); now it was about 1/3 its original size.

<sup>15</sup> At this point, the LXX inverts the order of the tribes.

<sup>16</sup> The MT of Gn 46:16 reads 'Ezbon' (אֶצְבֹּן) in place of 'Ozni' (אֹזְנִי).

<sup>17</sup> For 'Arod' (אֶרֹד), Gn 46:16 (אֶרֹדִי) & the LXX (*Aroadi*) read 'Arodi'.

<sup>18</sup> The Gadites decreased from 45,650 to 40,500.

י"א אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־גַד לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם אַרְבָּעִים אָלֶף  
וְחָמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: {ס}

י"ט בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה עֵר וֹנָן וַיָּמָת עֵר וְאֹנָן בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן:  
כ וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם לְשִׁלָּה מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַשְּׁלֹנִי לְפֶרֶץ מִשְׁפַּחַת הַפְּרָצִי לְזֶרַח מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַזֶּרַחִי: כא וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי־פֶרֶץ לְחֶזְרוֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֲצֹרָנִי  
לְחָמוּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֲמוּלִי: כב אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת יְהוּדָה  
לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם שֵׁשָׁה וְשִׁבְעִים אָלֶף וְחָמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: {ס}  
כג בְּנֵי יִשָּׂשכָר לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם תּוֹלַע מִשְׁפַּחַת הַתּוֹלָעִי  
לְפֻוֹה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַפּוּוֹנִי: כד לְיִשׁוּב מִשְׁפַּחַת הַיִּשְׁבִּי  
לְשִׁמְרוֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁמֹרֹנִי: כה אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת  
יִשָּׂשכָר לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם אַרְבָּעָה וְשָׁשִׁים אָלֶף וּשְׁלֹשׁ  
מֵאוֹת: {ס}

כו בְּנֵי זְבוּלֹן לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם לְסֶרֶד מִשְׁפַּחַת הַסֶּרְדִּי  
לְאֵלֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֵלֹנִי לְיַחֲלָאֵל מִשְׁפַּחַת

of the sons of Gad counted. They numbered forty thousand and five hundred men.

<sup>19</sup> The sons of Judah: Er and Onan, but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. <sup>20</sup> The sons of Judah by their families: for Shelah, the Shelahite family; for Perez, the Perezite family; for Zerah, the Zerahite family.

<sup>21</sup> The sons of Perez were: for Hezron, the Hezronite family and for Hamul, the Hamulite family. <sup>22</sup> These were the families of Judah counted. They numbered seventy-six thousand and five hundred men.

<sup>23</sup> The sons of Issachar, by their families: for Tola, the Tolaite family; for Puvah, the Puvahite family; <sup>24</sup> for Jashub, the Jashubite family; for Shimron, the Shimronite family. <sup>25</sup> These were the families of Issachar counted. They numbered sixty-four thousand and three hundred men.

<sup>26</sup> The sons of Zebulun by their families: for Sered, the Seredite family; for Elon, the Elonite family; for Jahleel, the Jahleelite family. <sup>27</sup> These

<sup>19</sup> After the 1<sup>st</sup> instance of 'Onan', some LXX MSS add 'Selom, Phares and Zara' (Σελωμ καὶ Φαρσεσ καὶ Ζαρα) (cf. v. 20).

<sup>20</sup> An alternative spelling of 'Shelahite' (as NJB & NETB) is 'Selanite', following the LXX (Σηλωνι, as NRSV).

<sup>21</sup> In place of 'Hamul' (חָמוּל, here following the MT), the Samaritan Pentateuch has 'Hamuel'.

<sup>22</sup> The Judahites increased from 74,600 to 76,500.

<sup>23</sup> An alternative spelling of 'Puvahite' (following the NJB) is 'Punite' (following the NRSV & NETB and derived from the LXX – Φουαι).

<sup>24</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Shimron' (שְׁמֹרֹן) is Σαμαραυ.

<sup>25</sup> The Issacharites increased from 54,400 to 64,300.

<sup>26</sup> For 'Elon' (אֵלֹן) and 'Jahleel' (יַחֲלָאֵל), the LXX reads, respectively, Αλλων & Αλληλ.

<sup>27</sup> The Zebulunites showed a slight increase from 57,400 to 60,500.

הַיְחֻלָּאִי: כִּי אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַזְּבוּלֹנִי לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם  
שָׁשִׁים אָלֶף וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: {ס}

כח בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם מְנַשֶּׁה וְאַפְרַיִם: כט בְּנֵי  
מְנַשֶּׁה לְמַכִּיר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמַּכִּירִי וּמַכִּיר הוֹלִיד אֶת־  
גִּלְעָד לְגִלְעָד מִשְׁפַּחַת הַגִּלְעָדִי: ל אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי גִלְעָד  
אִיעָזָר מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאִיעָזָרִי לְחֵלֶק מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֵלְקִי:  
לא וְאַשְׂרִיאֵל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֲשֵׁרֵאֵלִי וְשֶׁכֶם מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַשִּׁכְמִי: לב וְשִׁמְדָּע מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁמִידָעִי וְהֶפֶר  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶפְרִי: לג וְצִלְפַּחַד בֶּן־חֶפֶר לֹא־הָיוּ לוֹ  
בָּנִים כִּי אִם־בָּנוֹת וְשֵׁם בָּנוֹת צִלְפַּחַד מַחֲלָה וְנֹעָה  
חַגִּלָּה מִלְכָּה וְתִרְצָה: לד אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת מְנַשֶּׁה  
וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם וַחֲמִשִּׁים אָלֶף וְשֶׁבַע מֵאוֹת: {ס}  
לה אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי־אַפְרַיִם לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם לְשׁוּתֵלַח  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשְּׁתֵּלַחִי לְבֶכֶר מִשְׁפַּחַת הַבְּכָרִי לְתָחַן  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַתַּחְנִי: לו וְאַלֶּה בְּנֵי שׁוּתֵלַח לְעֶרְן

were the families of Zebulun counted. They numbered sixty thousand and five hundred men.

<sup>28</sup> The sons of Joseph by their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. <sup>29</sup> The sons of Manasseh: for Machir, the Machirite family; now, Machir became the father of Gilead: for Gilead, the Gileadite family. <sup>30</sup> These were the families of Gilead: for Iezer, the Iezerite family; for Helek, the Helekite family; <sup>31</sup> and for Asriel, the Asrielite family; Shechem, the Shechemite family; <sup>32</sup> and for Shemida, the Shemidaite family; Hephher, the Hephherite family. <sup>33</sup> Now Zelophehad son of Hephher had no sons but only daughters; and these are the names of Zelophehad's daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. <sup>34</sup> These were the families of Manasseh. They numbered fifty-two thousand and seven hundred men.

<sup>35</sup> These are the sons of Ephraim by their families: for Shuthelah, the Shuthelahite family; and, for Becher, the Becherite family; and, for Tahan, the Tahanite family. <sup>36</sup> And these are the sons of Shuthelah:

<sup>28</sup> The priority of Manasseh over Ephraim (compare 1:10) points to a very old historical situation (Gn 48:13–22) and suggests that this list is older than that of Ch. 1.

<sup>29</sup> For 'Gilead' (גִּלְעָד), the LXX reads *Γαλααδ*.

<sup>30</sup> In place of 'Iezer' (יֵעֶזָר) & 'Helek' (חֵלֶק), the LXX has, respectively, *Αχιεζερ* & *Χελεγ*.

<sup>31</sup> The NJB lacks the opening 'and for', here following the NRSV (as also in v. 32).

<sup>32</sup> For 'Shemida' (שְׁמִידָע) & 'Hephher' (הֶפֶר), the LXX reads, respectively, *Συμαερ* & *Οφερ*.

<sup>33</sup> For the 5 daughters, the LXX reads, '*Μαλα και Νουα και Εγλα και Μελχα και Θερσα*'.

<sup>34</sup> The Manassehites increased from 32,200 to 52,700.

<sup>35</sup> The LXX does not mention 'Becher' and his family.

<sup>36</sup> For 'Eran' (עֶרְן), the LXX reads *Εδεν*.

מִשְׁפַּחַת הָעֵרָנִי: <sup>לז</sup> אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־אֶפְרַיִם  
לְפָקְדֵיהֶם שָׁנִים וְשִׁלְשִׁים אָלֶף וַחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת אֵלֶּה  
בְּנֵי־יוֹסֵף לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם: {ס}

<sup>לח</sup> בְּנֵי בִנְיָמִן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבִלַּע מִשְׁפַּחַת הַבִּלְעִי  
לְאַשְׁבֵּל מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאֲשַׁבְּלִי לְאַחִירָם מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הָאַחִירָמִי: <sup>לט</sup> לְשׁוֹפָם מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשׁוֹפָמִי לְחוּפָם  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחוּפָמִי: <sup>מ</sup> וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי־בִלַּע אָרְד וְנַעֲמָן  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָרְדִי לְנַעֲמָן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַנַּעֲמִי: <sup>מא</sup> אֵלֶּה  
בְּנֵי־בִנְיָמִן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם חֲמִשָּׁה וָאַרְבָּעִים  
אָלֶף וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת: {ס}

<sup>מב</sup> אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי־דָן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְשׁוּחָם מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַשׁוּחָמִי אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת דָּן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם: <sup>מג</sup> כָּל־  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשׁוּחָמִי לְפָקְדֵיהֶם אַרְבַּעַה וְשִׁשִּׁים אָלֶף  
וָאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: {ס}

for Eran, the Eranite family. <sup>37</sup> These were the families of Ephraim counted. They numbered thirty-two thousand and five hundred men.

<sup>38</sup> The sons of Benjamin, by their families: for Bela, the Belaite family; and for Ashbel, the Ashbelite family; and for Ahiram, the Ahiramite family; <sup>39</sup> for Shephupham, the Shephuphamite family; for Hupham, the Huphamite family. <sup>40</sup> Bela had Ard and Naaman for sons: for Ard, the Ardite family and for Naaman, the Naamanite family. <sup>41</sup> These were the sons of Benjamin by clans. They numbered forty-five thousand and six hundred men.

<sup>42</sup> These were the sons of Dan, by their families: for Shuham, the Shuhamite family. These were the sons of Dan, by their families. <sup>43</sup> All the Shuhamite families numbered sixty-four thousand and four hundred men.

<sup>37</sup> This is a significant reduction from the first count of 40,500.

<sup>38</sup> For 'Ahiram' (אַחִירָם), the LXX reads *Iaxigav*.

<sup>39</sup> For 'Shephupham', here following the MT (שְׁפּוּפָם), the Samaritan Pentateuch has 'Shupham' (as does NETB); the LXX reads *Σωφαν* and lacks the reference to 'Hupham'.

<sup>40</sup> For 'Ard' (אַרְדִּי), the LXX has 'Adar' (*Αδαρ*) – cf. 1Ch 8:3.

<sup>41</sup> The Benjaminites increased from 35,400 to 45,600. A footnote in NETB (the 2003 version – the latest online version lacks the note) states that the 'Greek version' has 35,500 here; however, in [our source document](#), the number given agrees with the MT (πέντε καὶ τεσσαράκοντα χιλιάδες καὶ ἑξακόσιοι) and, in the MS represented by the [Rahlfs-Hanhart text](#), the number is 32,500 (δύο καὶ τριάκοντα χιλιάδες καὶ πεντακόσιοι). There is clearly some disagreement, either between the various LXX Codices or in the transcriptions thereof.

<sup>42</sup> For 'Shuham' (שׁוּחָם), the LXX reads *Σαμι*.

<sup>43</sup> The Danites increased from 62,700 to 64,400.

מד בני אשר למשפחתם לימנה משפחת הימנה  
לישוי משפחת הישוי לבריעה משפחת הבריעי:  
מה לבני בריעה לחבר משפחת החברי למלכיאל  
משפחת המלכיאלי: מו ושם בת אשר שרח:  
מז אלה משפחת בני אשר לפקדיהם שלשה  
וחמשים אלף וארבע מאות: {ס}

מח בני נפתלי למשפחתם ליחצאל משפחת  
היחצאלי לגוני משפחת הגוני: מט ליצר משפחת  
היצרי לשלם משפחת השלמי: נ אלה משפחת  
נפתלי למשפחתם ופקדיהם חמשה וארבעים  
אלף וארבע מאות: נא אלה פקודי בני ישראל  
שש-מאות אלף ואלף שבע מאות ושלשים: {פ}

נב וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: נג לאלה תחלק  
הארץ בנחלה במספר שמות: נד לרב תרבה

<sup>44</sup> The sons of Asher, by their families: for Imnah the Imnahite family; for Ishvi, the Ishvihite family; for Beriah, the Beriahite family. <sup>45</sup> For the sons of Beriah: for Heber, the Heberite family and for Malchiel, the Malchielite family. <sup>46</sup> The name of the daughter of Asher was Serah. <sup>47</sup> These were the families of Asher. They numbered fifty-three thousand and four hundred men. <sup>48</sup> The sons of Naphtali, by their families: for Jahzeel, the Jahzeelite family; for Guni, the Gunite family; <sup>49</sup> for Jezer, the Jezerite family; for Shillem, the Shillemite family. <sup>50</sup> These were the Naphtalites grouped by their families. The sons of Naphtali counted numbered forty-five thousand and four hundred men. <sup>51</sup> The Israelites counted numbered in all six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty men. <sup>52</sup> Yahweh said to Moses: <sup>53</sup> "To these the land is to be shared out as a heritage, according to the number of names. <sup>54</sup> To more you are to give

<sup>44</sup> For 'Imnah' (יִמְנָה), 'Ishvi' (יִשְׂוִי) & 'Beriah' (בְּרִיעָה), the LXX reads, respectively, *Iamiv, Iesou & Baqia*.

<sup>45</sup> NETB reads 'Malkiel' in place of 'Malchiel', here following the MT (מַלְכִּיָּאֵל), LXX (Μελχιηλ), NJB & NRSV.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. 1 Ch 7:30.

<sup>47</sup> The Asherites increased from 41,500 to 53,400.

<sup>48</sup> For 'Jahzeel' (יַחְצִאֵל) & 'Guni' (גֻּנִי), the LXX reads *Ασιηλ & Γαυνι*, respectively.

<sup>49</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Shillem' (שִׁלֵּם) is *Σελλημ*.

<sup>50</sup> The Naphtalites decreased from 53,400 to 45,400.

<sup>51</sup> This number shows only a slightly smaller total in the 2<sup>nd</sup> census; the 1<sup>st</sup> was 603,550.

<sup>52</sup> At the end of this verse, the MT adds 'saying', but this participle is redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>53</sup> The NJB lacks the opening 'to these', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>54</sup> Literally translated, this verse opens, "To many you will multiply his inheritance and to a few you will lessen his inheritance."



נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלַמֶּעֶט תִּמְעֵיט נַחֲלָתוֹ אִישׁ לְפִי פִקְדָּיו יִתֵּן  
נַחֲלָתוֹ: <sup>נ</sup>אֲדָ-בְגוּרָל יַחֲלֹק אֶת-הָאָרֶץ לְשִׁמּוֹת  
מִטּוֹת-אֲבֹתָם יִנְחִלוּ: <sup>נ</sup>עַל-פִּי הַגּוּרָל תִּחֲלֹק  
נַחֲלָתוֹ בֵּין רַב לַמֶּעֶט: {ס}

<sup>נ</sup>וְאֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַלְוִי לַמִּשְׁפָּחֹת לְגֶרְשׁוֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַגֵּרְשֹׁנִי לְקַהַת מִשְׁפַּחַת הַקְּהַתִּי לְמֶרָרִי מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַמֶּרָרִי: <sup>נ</sup>חֵאֱלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת לְוִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַלִּבְנִי  
מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶבְרֹנִי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַמַּחֲלִי מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַמּוֹשִׁי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַקְּרָחִי וְקַהַת הוֹלֵד אֶת-עֲמָרָם:  
<sup>נ</sup>ט וְשֵׁם אִשְׁת׃ עֲמָרָם יוֹכָבֵד בַּת-לְוִי אֲשֶׁר יָלְדָהּ  
אֶת־הַלְוִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְתֵלֵד לְעֲמָרָם אֶת-אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת-  
מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת מָרִים אֶחָתָם: <sup>ס</sup>וְיֹלֵד לְאֶהֱרֹן אֶת-נָדָב  
וְאֶת-אֲבִיהוּא אֶת-אֶלְעָזָר וְאֶת-אִיתָמָר: <sup>ס</sup>א וְיִמָּת  
נָדָב וְאֲבִיהוּא בְּהַקְרִיבֵם אֲשֶׁר-זָרָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

a large area of land, to fewer a small area; to each the heritage will be according to its enrolment. <sup>55</sup> But the land shall be divided by lot. They shall inherit according to the names of their fathers' tribes; <sup>56</sup> their inheritance is to be divided by lot, between the more and the fewer.

<sup>57</sup> These, by their families, are the Levites that were registered: for Gershon, the Gershonite family; for Kohath, the Kohathite family; for Merari, the Merarite family. <sup>58</sup> These are the Levite families: the Libnite family, the Hebronite family, the Mahlite family, the Mushite family and the Korahite family. Kohath was the father of Amram. <sup>59</sup> The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, born to him in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister. <sup>60</sup> Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu and Eleazar and Ithamar. <sup>61</sup> But Nadab and Abihu died when they brought unlawful fire before Yahweh. <sup>62</sup> Altogether, the number of those enrolled was twenty-three

<sup>55</sup> In place of 'patriarchal', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'ancestral'.

<sup>56</sup> NETB has 'apportioned' in place of 'divided', here following the MT & NJB.

<sup>57</sup> The Levites are listed separately, after the description of the land allocation, as they did not receive an inheritance.

<sup>58</sup> Vv. 57 & 58 give two different clan divisions of the Levites; the second is probably the earlier, preserving the memory of the original concentration of the Levites in the south (Hebron, Libnah). 1Ch 6:1-15 attempts reconciliation.

<sup>59</sup> The literal translation of 'of Levi, born to him' is 'who she bore him to Levi'; the verb has no expressed subject: either one could be supplied, such as 'her mother', or it could be treated as a passive.

<sup>60</sup> NETB splits the verses differently here, having "To Amram ... their sister," as v. 60 and this and the following verse combined as v. 61.

<sup>61</sup> The expression 'unlawful fire' (אֲשֶׁר-זָרָה) seems imprecise and has been interpreted numerous ways; the infraction may have involved any of the following or a combination thereof: **1** using coals from some place other than the burnt offering altar; **2** using the wrong kind of incense; **3** performing an incense offering at an un-prescribed time; or **4** entering the Holy of Holies at an inappropriate time (Lv 16:1-2)

<sup>62</sup> In place if the 2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence of 'the Israelites', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'them'.

סב וַיְהִיו פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף כָּל־זָכָר  
 מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעֲלָה כִּי לֹא הִתְּפַקְדּוּ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי לֹא־נָתַן לָהֶם נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 סג אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּקְדוּ  
 אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ:  
 סד וּבְאֵלֶּה לֹא־הָיָה אִישׁ מִפְּקוּדֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן  
 הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּקְדוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי:  
 סה כִּי־אָמַר יְהוָה לָהֶם מוֹת יָמָתוּ בְּמִדְבַּר וְלֹא־  
 נֹתַר מֵהֶם אִישׁ כִּי אִם־כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה וִיהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־  
 נֹון: {ס}

thousand – every male of one month and over, for they were not  
 numbered among the Israelites because they received no inheritance  
 among the Israelites. <sup>63</sup> Such were the men registered by Moses and  
 Eleazar the priest, who took this census of the Israelites in the plains of  
 Moab, near the Jordan, opposite Jericho. <sup>64</sup> However, not one of them  
 was among those who had been registered by Moses and Aaron when  
 they numbered the Israelites in the desert of Sinai; <sup>65</sup> for Yahweh had  
 said of them, “They will surely die in the desert,” and not one of them  
 remained, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of  
 Nun.

<sup>63</sup> The NRSV has ‘enrolled’ in place of ‘took this census of’, here following the NJB.

<sup>64</sup> The phrase ‘who had been’ has been added for clarity, following NETB.

<sup>65</sup> The NJB does not include Yahweh’s words as a quotation.

## NUMBERS 27

## במדבר פרק כז

א וַתִּקְרְבֵנָה בָנוֹת צִלְפָּחַד בֶּן־חֶפֶר בֶּן־גִּלְעָד בֶּן־מָכִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מְנַשֶּׁה בֶּן־יוֹסֵף וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בָּנָתָיו מַחֲלָה נֹחַ וְחֹגְלָה וּמִלְכָּה וְתִרְצָה:  
ב וַתַּעֲמִדְנָה לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וּלְפָנֵי אֱלֵעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וּלְפָנֵי הַנָּשִׂאִם וְכָל־הָעֵדָה פָּתַח אֶהֱמוּעַד לֵאמֹר:  
ג אֲבִינוֹ מָת בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהוּא לֹא־הָיָה בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַנוֹעֲדִים עַל־יְהוָה בַּעֲדַת־קֹרַח כִּי־בַחֲטָאוֹ מָת וּבָנִים לֹא־הָיוּ לוֹ: ד לָמָּה יִגְרַע שֵׁם־אֲבִינוֹ מִתּוֹךְ מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ כִּי אֵין לוֹ בֶּן תִּנָּה־לָנוּ אַחֲזָה בְּתוֹךְ אַחֵי אֲבִינוֹ: ה וַיִּקְרַב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטָן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: {פ}  
ו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ז כֵּן בָּנוֹת צִלְפָּחַד דִּבַּרְתְּ נָתַן תִּתֵּן לָהֶם אַחֲזַת נַחֲלָה בְּתוֹךְ אַחֵי אֲבִיהֶם וְהָעֵבֶרְתָּ אֶת־נַחֲלַת אֲבִיהֶן לָהֶן: ח וְאֶל־בְּנֵי

<sup>1</sup> Then the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh son of Joseph, of the family of Manasseh came. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. <sup>2</sup> They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the whole community, at the door of the Tent of Meeting, saying, <sup>3</sup> “Our father died in the desert; he was not among the company of those who conspired against Yahweh, Korah’s party; it was for his own sin that he died without sons. <sup>4</sup> Why must our father’s name be lost to his clan? Since he had no son, give us some property among our father’s kinsmen.” <sup>5</sup> Moses brought their case before Yahweh.

<sup>6</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>7</sup> “The daughters of Zelophehad have a just case. Give them a property for their inheritance among their father’s kinsmen; and pass on to them their father’s inheritance. <sup>8</sup> Then

## NUMBERS 27

<sup>1</sup> The Vg lacks the phrase ‘of the family of Manasseh’.

<sup>2</sup> The NJB & NETB, following the MT literally, repeat ‘before’ before ‘Eleazar’ and ‘the leaders’; here, we follow the NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> The punishment for unbelief (Ch. 14) left the next generation’s rights intact; the punishment for Korah’s sin (Chs 16–17) affected descendants.

<sup>4</sup> In Israel, a family inheritance was to remain in the family (36:7, 1K 21:3), thereby perpetuating the ancestral name. The request of the daughters of Zelophehad was unusual in that, according to ancient law, women did not normally inherit property.

<sup>5</sup> NETB opens this verse with the conjunction ‘so’. Note that the trailing ן on אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטָן is an enlarged letter; it appears this way in most MSS.

<sup>6</sup> NETB omits the participle, ‘saying’, considering it redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>7</sup> For ‘give them’, the MT uses the infinitive absolute with the imperfect tense: the imperfect is functioning as the imperfect of instruction, and so the infinitive strengthens the force of the instruction.

<sup>8</sup> The literal translation of ‘if a man dies’ is ‘a man, if he dies’.

יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּדְבֹּר לֵאמֹר אִישׁ אֶת־נַחֲלַת אָבִיהֶן לֵהֲנֹת:  
 ט וְאִם־אֵין לוֹ כִּי־יָמוּת וּבֶן אֵין לוֹ וְהֶעֱבַרְתָּם אֶת־  
 נַחֲלָתוֹ לְבָתָּו: י' וְאִם־אֵין לוֹ אֲחִים וְנָתַתָּם אֶת־  
 נַחֲלָתוֹ לְאָחִי אָבִיו: י"א וְאִם־אֵין אֲחִים לְאָבִיו  
 וְנָתַתָּם אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְשֹׂאֲרוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֵלָיו  
 מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ וַיִּרַשׁ אֹתָהּ וְהָיְתָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֻקַּת  
 מִשְׁפָּט כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲלֶה אֶל־הָר הָעֲבָרִים  
 הַזֶּה וּרְאֵה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 יג וְרָאִיתָהּ אַתָּה וְנָאֲסַפְתָּ אֶל־עַמִּיךָ גַּם־אַתָּה  
 כַּאֲשֶׁר נֶאֱסַף אֶהֱרֹן אַחִיךָ: יד כַּאֲשֶׁר מְרִיתָם פִּי  
 בַּמִּדְבָּר־צֹן בְּמִרְיַבַּת הָעֵדָה לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי בַּמִּים  
 לְעֵינֵיהֶם הֵם מִי־מִרְיַבַּת קָדֵשׁ מִדְבָּר־צֹן: {ס}

טו וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: טז יִפְקֹד יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַת לְכָל־בֶּשֶׂר אִישׁ עַל־הָעֵדָה: יז אֲשֶׁר־  
 יֵצֵא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיאֵם

say this to the Israelites, "If a man dies without sons, his inheritance is to pass to his daughter; <sup>9</sup> and, if he has no daughter, then his inheritance is to go to his brothers; <sup>10</sup> and, if he has no brothers, then his inheritance is to go to his father's brothers. <sup>11</sup> If his father has no brothers, then his inheritance is to go to the nearest kinsman of his clan: he is to take possession. This shall be a statutory ordinance for the Israelites, as Yahweh has ordered Moses."

<sup>12</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, "Climb this mountain of Abarim, and see the land I have given to the Israelites. <sup>13</sup> After you have seen it, you shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was. <sup>14</sup> For you rebelled in the desert of Zin when the community complained against me, when I ordered you to sanctify me before their eyes by means of the water." (These were the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the desert of Zin.)

<sup>15</sup> Then Moses said to Yahweh, saying, <sup>16</sup> "May Yahweh, God of the spirits that give life to all living creatures, appoint a leader for this community, <sup>17</sup> to be at their head in all they do, a man who will lead

<sup>9</sup> The NJB makes this verse a separate sentence and omits the opening conjunction (as also for v. 10).

<sup>10</sup> For 'his inheritance is to go', here following the NJB, the NRSV reads 'you shall give his inheritance'.

<sup>11</sup> The phrase 'statutory ordinance' translates מִשְׁפָּט לְחֻקַּת; it is a fixed enactment, established by God, which determines justice.

<sup>12</sup> After 'Abarim', the LXX adds 'this Mount Nebo' (τοῦτο ὄρος Ναβαν).

<sup>13</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> verbs are perfect tense with a *vav* consecutive; in such parallel clauses, the first may be subordinated, here as a temporal clause.

<sup>14</sup> The verb 'you rebelled' is in the 2MPL form.

<sup>15</sup> The NJB omits 'then' and 'saying', here following NETB & the NRSV respectively.

<sup>16</sup> The word translated 'appoint' (יִפְקֹד) is the same verb that is used throughout the book for the aspect of 'numbering' the people.

<sup>17</sup> The opening phrases of this verse comprehensively cover the functions of the leader (Dt 28:6, 1S 29:6, 2K 19:27).

וְאֲשֶׁר יִבְיֹאֵם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֵדֶת יְהוָה כְּצֹאֵן אֲשֶׁר  
אֵין־לָהֶם רֹעֶה:

י' וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קַח־לְךָ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון  
אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסִמַּכְתָּ אֶת־יָדְךָ עָלָיו:  
יט וְהִעֲמַדְתָּ אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי אֱלֹעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וּלִפְנֵי כָל־  
הָעֵדָה וְצִוִּיתָה אֹתוֹ לְעִינֵיהֶם: כ וְנָתַתָּה מִהוֹדְךָ  
עָלָיו לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ כָל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כא וּלִפְנֵי  
אֱלֹעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן יַעֲמֹד וְשָׁאֵל לוֹ בְּמִשְׁפַּט הָאוּרִים  
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל־פִּיו יֵצְאוּ וְעַל־פִּיו יָבֹאוּ הוּא וְכָל־  
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֹתוֹ וְכָל־הָעֵדָה: כב וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר  
צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיַּעֲמֵדְהוּ לִפְנֵי  
אֱלֹעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וּלִפְנֵי כָל־הָעֵדָה: כג וַיִּסְמְךָ אֶת־יָדָיו  
עָלָיו וַיִּצְוֵהוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}

them out and bring them in, so that the community of Yahweh may not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

<sup>18</sup> Yahweh answered Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit. Lay your hand on him. <sup>19</sup> Then bring him before Eleazar the priest and the whole community and commission him in their presence <sup>20</sup> and to give him your authority, so that the whole community of Israelites may obey him. <sup>21</sup> He shall present himself to Eleazar the priest, who is to make inquiry for him before Yahweh, according to the rite of the Urim. At his command, all the Israelites shall go out and come in with him, the whole community.” <sup>22</sup> Moses did as Yahweh had ordered. He took Joshua and brought him before Eleazar the priest and the whole community, <sup>23</sup> laid his hands on him and gave him his orders, as Yahweh had commanded through the authority of Moses.

<sup>18</sup> Like Moses, Joshua was held to be a charismatic leader, ‘a man in whom the spirit dwells’ (11:17, 24:2). The word, ‘Spirit’, probably refers to the Holy Spirit, which would likely be a permanent endowment for Joshua; but it is also possible to take it to refer to a proper spirit to do all the things required of such a leader (which ultimately is a gift from the Spirit of God).

<sup>19</sup> The verb translated ‘commission’ has a wide range of meanings, and so here in this context the idea of instructing gives way to a more general sense of commissioning for duty.

<sup>20</sup> For the word here translated ‘authority’, the LXX (δόξης), Peshitta & Vg (gloriæ) read ‘glory’; this form occurs only here in the Pentateuch but elsewhere it is rendered ‘majesty’, or ‘splendour’ (see Ps 96:6). The authority being transferred here is both spiritual and civil.

<sup>21</sup> At Joshua’s word, given in obedience to the sacred oracle, the people shall go ‘out to’ battle and ‘come in’ the camp (v. 17, Dt 3:28). The ‘Urim’ (וּרִים) and the Thummim were the sacred lots that the priest had in his pouch, the ‘breastplate’ as it has traditionally been called.

<sup>22</sup> The literal translation of ‘brought’ is ‘stood’.

<sup>23</sup> The literal translation of ‘authority’ is ‘hand’.



## במדבר פרק כח

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב צוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אֶת־קִרְבָּנִי לַחֲמִי לְאִשִּׁי  
רִיחַ נִיחֹחַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ לְהַקְרִיב לִי בְמוֹעֵדוֹ: ג וְאָמַרְתָּ  
לָהֶם זֶה הָאֵשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרִיבוּ לַיהוָה כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־  
שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם שְׁנַיִם לְיוֹם עֹלָה תָּמִיד: ד אֶת־הַכֶּבֶשׂ  
אֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה בַבֹּקֶר וְאֵת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין  
הָעֶרְבִים: ה וְעִשְׂרִית הָאִיֶּפֶה סֹלֶת לְמִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה  
בְּשֶׁמֶן כֹּתִית רְבִיעֶת הַהֵיזֶן: ו עֹלֹת תָּמִיד תַּעֲשֶׂה  
בַּהֶר סִינִי לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: ז וְנִסְכּוֹ רְבִיעֶת  
הַהֵיזֶן לַכֶּבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד בַּקֹּדֶשׁ הַסֵּךְ נִסְךְ שֶׁכֶר לַיהוָה:  
ח וְאֵת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים כְּמִנְחָת  
הַבֹּקֶר וְכִנְסָכּוֹ תַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: {פ}

## NUMBERS 28

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Command the Israelites: "Be sure to bring my offering, my food of burnt offering, a pleasing aroma for me, at the due time." <sup>3</sup> "Tell them: This is the burnt offering you must offer to Yahweh: Two yearling lambs without blemish, daily, as a continual high-offering. <sup>4</sup> One lamb you must offer in the morning, the other at dusk, <sup>5</sup> with an oblation of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one quarter of a hin of beaten oil. <sup>6</sup> It is a continual high-offering ordained at Mount Sinai as a pleasing aroma, a burnt offering to Yahweh. <sup>7</sup> Its libation shall be of one quarter of a hin for each lamb; in the sanctuary, you shall pour out a libation of strong drink for Yahweh. <sup>8</sup> The other lamb you must offer at dusk; as the oblation and libation of the morning, give it as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma for Yahweh.

### NUMBERS 28

- <sup>1</sup> Chs 28–29 deal with the liturgical cycle of Lv 23 but in their own distinctive fashion: with a view to the organisation of Temple worship, they systematise the arrangements of Lv 23:13 & 17–18 (see Ezk 45:21–25, 46:11, 13–15).
- <sup>2</sup> The Hebrew sentence translated, "Take care..." begins with the accusative 'my offering': it is suspended at the beginning as an independent accusative to itemise the subject matter; the 2<sup>nd</sup> accusative is the formal object of the verb, which could also be taken in apposition to the 1<sup>st</sup> accusative.
- <sup>3</sup> The sacrifice was to be kept burning, but each morning the priests would have to clean the grill and put a new offering on the altar; so, the idea of a 'continual high-offering' is more that of a 'regular offering' (as NRSV).
- <sup>4</sup> The literal translation of 'at dusk', here following the JPS, is 'between the evenings'.
- <sup>5</sup> 'One tenth of an ephah' is just under 2L and 'one quarter of a hin' is about 1L. In place of 'beaten oil', following the JPS, the NJB has 'purest oil'.
- <sup>6</sup> Before 'at Mount Sinai', the NJB adds 'long ago'.
- <sup>7</sup> The word translated 'strong drink' (שֶׁכֶר) can mean 'barley beer' in the Accadian cognate and also in Hebrew when joined to the word for wine.
- <sup>8</sup> The literal translation of 'at dusk', here following the JPS, is 'between the evenings'.

ט וּבַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת שְׁנֵי כִבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם  
וּשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן וְנִסְכּוֹ:  
י עֹלֹת שַׁבַּת בְּשַׁבָּתוֹ עַל־עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וְנִסְכָּהּ: {פ}

יא וּבְרֵאשֵׁי חֲדָשֵׁיכֶם תִּקְרִיבוּ עֹלָה לַיהוָה פָּרִים  
בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁנַיִם וְאַיִל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה  
שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם: יב וּשְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת מִנְחָה  
בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לֶפָר הָאֶחָד וּשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֹלֶת  
מִנְחָה בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לְאַיִל הָאֶחָד: יג וְעֶשְׂרֹן עֶשְׂרֹן  
סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לִכְבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד עֹלָה רִיחַ  
נִיחֹחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: יד וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם חֲצִי הַהֵין יְהִיָּה  
לֶפָר וּשְׁלִישֵׁת הַהֵין לְאַיִל וּרְבִיעֵת הַהֵין לִכְבֹּשׁ יֵין  
זֹאת עֹלֹת חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדֶשׁוֹ לְחֹדֶשִׁי הַשָּׁנָה: טו וּשְׁעִיר  
עֲזִים אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת לַיהוָה עַל־עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה  
וְנִסְכּוֹ: {ס}

9 “On the Sabbath day: two yearling rams without blemish and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as an oblation, mixed with oil, and its libation. <sup>10</sup> This is the high-offering for every Sabbath, beside the continual high-offering and its libation.

11 “At each new moon, you must offer a high-offering to Yahweh: two young bulls, one ram, and seven yearling lambs without blemish; <sup>12</sup> for each bull, an oblation of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; for each ram, an oblation of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; <sup>13</sup> for each lamb, an oblation of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; this is a high-offering, a pleasing aroma, a burnt offering to Yahweh. <sup>14</sup> Their libation is to be half a hin of wine for a bull, one third of a hin for a ram, and one quarter of a hin for a lamb. This is the high-offering for each new moon, every month of the year.

<sup>15</sup> Beside the continual high-offering, one male goat shall be offered to Yahweh, as a sin offering, with its libation.

<sup>9</sup> The Sabbath offering is mentioned only here in the Torah.

<sup>10</sup> The literal translation of the opening clause is ‘the burnt offering of the Sabbath by its Sabbath’. The NJB has ‘in addition to’ in place of ‘beside’, here following the JPS (as also in v. 15).

<sup>11</sup> Since the year was based on a lunar calendar, a festival was held at each New Moon (10:10, 1S 20:5, Is 1:14, Am 8:5).

<sup>12</sup> Throughout the Torah, NETB uses the phrase, ‘olive oil’, in place of ‘oil’; although the substance in question was undoubtedly olive oil, the MT does not specify this.

<sup>13</sup> The NJB uses ‘appeasing fragrance’ in place of ‘pleasing aroma’ throughout this section.

<sup>14</sup> The literal translation of ‘every month’ is ‘a month in its month’.

<sup>15</sup> The literal translation of ‘one male goat’ is ‘a kid of the goats’.

טז וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ  
פֶּסַח לַיהוָה: יז וּבַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה חֹג  
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מִצּוֹת יֹאכֵל: יח בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרֹא־  
קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־מְלֶאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: יט וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם  
אִשָּׁה עֹלָה לַיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁנַיִם וְאֵיל אֶחָד  
וְשִׁבְעָה כִבְשִׁים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם:  
כ וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֶת בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים  
לֶפֶר וּשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל תַּעֲשׂוּ: כא עֶשְׂרֹן עֶשְׂרֹן  
תַּעֲשֶׂה לַכֶּבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַכִּבְשִׁים: כב וְשֹׁעִיר  
חֲטָאת אֶחָד לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם: כג מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת הַבֶּקָר  
אֲשֶׁר לְעֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־אֹלֶה: כד כָּאֹלֶה  
תַּעֲשׂוּ לַיּוֹם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לֶחֶם אִשָּׁה רֵיח־נִיחֹחַ  
לַיהוָה עַל־עוֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה וְנִסְכּוֹ: כה וּבַיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרֹא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלֶאכֶת  
עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: {ס}

16 "The fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of Yahweh,  
17 and the fifteenth day of this month is a feast day. For seven days,  
unleavened bread shall be eaten. 18 On the first day, there will be a holy  
convocation. You must do no ordinary work. 19 You shall offer to  
Yahweh a burnt offering as a high-offering: two young bulls, a ram and  
seven yearling lambs without blemish. 20 Their oblation of fine flour  
mixed with oil is to be three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths  
for the ram 21 and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. 22 There must  
also be a he-goat for the sin offering, to make atonement for you. 23 You  
shall offer these in addition to the morning high-offering, which is a  
continual high-offering. 24 You must do this every day for seven days. It  
is nourishment, a burnt offering – a pleasing aroma for Yahweh, to be  
offered in addition to the perpetual high-offering and its accompanying  
libation. 25 On the seventh day, you must hold a solemn assembly; you  
will do no ordinary work.

16 For this verse, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV reads, "On the fourteenth day of the first month there shall be a Passover offering to the LORD."

17 The NRSV & NETB have 'festival' in place of 'feast day', here following the NJB.

18 In place of 'holy convocation', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'solemn assembly'.

19 The literal translation of 'without blemish' is 'unblemished they shall be to you'.

20 For 'their oblation', the NJB reads 'the accompanying oblation'.

21 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "one-tenth shall you offer for each of the seven lambs."

22 In place of 'sin offering', here following the NRSV (& NJB), NETB has 'purification offering'.

23 The NRSV has 'which belongs to the regular burnt offering' in place of 'which is a continual high-offering'.

24 The NRSV opens this verse, here following the NJB, with, "In the same way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of an offering by fire."

25 The literal translation of 'ordinary work' is 'work (of) service'; this means any occupational work, that is, the ordinary service.

כּוּ וּבִיּוֹם הַבְּכוּרִים בְּהַקְרִיבְכֶם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה  
 לַיהוָה בַּשָּׁבָעֲתֵיכֶם מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-  
 מְלָאכָת עֲבָדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: כִּי זֶה קִרְבָּתְכֶם עוֹלָה  
 לְרִיחַ נִיחָח לַיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי-בָקָר שְׁנַיִם אִיל אֶחָד  
 שְׁבַעֲנָה כִבְשִׂים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה: כֹּחַ וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֶת בָּלוּלָה  
 בַּשֶּׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לַפָּר הָאֶחָד שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים  
 לְאִיל הָאֶחָד: כֹּט עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לִכְבֵּשׁ הָאֶחָד  
 לְשִׁבְעַת הַכִּבְשִׂים: לִשְׁעִיר עֲזִים אֶחָד לְכַפֵּר  
 עֲלֵיכֶם: לֹא מִלֵּבָד עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתוֹ תַעֲשׂוּ  
 תָּמִיד יְהִיוּ-לָכֶם וְנִסְפִּיהֶם: {פ}

<sup>26</sup> “On the day of the first-fruits, when you make your offering of new grain to Yahweh at your feast of Weeks, you are to hold a holy convocation; you must do no ordinary work. <sup>27</sup> You must offer as a high-offering, a pleasing aroma for Yahweh: two young bulls, one ram and seven yearling lambs. <sup>28</sup> Their oblation of fine flour mixed with oil is to be three-tenths of an ephah for each bull, <sup>29</sup> two-tenths for the ram and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. <sup>30</sup> There must also be a goat, for performing the rite of atonement over you. <sup>31</sup> You shall offer these in addition to the perpetual high-offering and its accompanying oblation. They shall be without blemish.

<sup>26</sup> The NJB has ‘fruits’ in place of ‘grain’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>27</sup> The NRSV & NETB have ‘seven lambs a year old’ in place of ‘seven yearling lambs’, here following the NJB.

<sup>28</sup> In place of the opening ‘their’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘the accompanying’.

<sup>29</sup> The NRSV & NETB include the clause ‘two-tenths for the ram’ in v. 28; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>30</sup> The NJB, following the LXX (περὶ ἁμαρτίας), adds ‘as a sacrifice for sin’ after ‘goat’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>31</sup> The NJB omits, “They shall be without blemish.” The sentence possibly belongs to v. 27.

## NUMBERS 29

## במדבר פרק כט

<sup>א</sup> וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָתָ עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם: <sup>ב</sup> וַעֲשִׂיתֶם עֹלָה לְרִיחַ גִּיחַח לַיהוָה פֶּר בֶּן־בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם: <sup>ג</sup> וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֹת בָּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרִינִים לִפְרֹשֶׁן שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִינִים לְאֵיל: <sup>ד</sup> וְעֶשְׂרֹן אֶחָד לִכְבֹּשׂ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַכִּבְשִׂים: <sup>ה</sup> וְשְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת לִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם: <sup>ו</sup> מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת הַחֹדֶשׁ וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְעֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט לְרִיחַ גִּיחַח אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה: {ס} <sup>ז</sup> וּבַעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעָנִיתֶם אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: <sup>ח</sup> וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֹלָה לַיהוָה רִיחַ גִּיחַח פֶּר בֶּן־בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה

<sup>1</sup> "On the first day of the seventh month you are to hold a solemn assembly; you must do no heavy work. It is a day for you to blow the horns. <sup>2</sup> You must offer as a high-offering, a pleasing aroma for Yahweh: one young bull, one ram, seven yearling lambs without blemish. <sup>3</sup> Their oblation of fine flour mixed with oil is three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, <sup>4</sup> and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. <sup>5</sup> There must also be a he-goat for the sin offering, to make atonement for you. <sup>6</sup> This is beside the monthly high-offering and its oblation, the continual high-offering and its oblation, and their libations according to the law – a pleasing aroma, a burnt offering to Yahweh. <sup>7</sup> "On the tenth day of this seventh month, you are to hold a solemn assembly. You shall fast and do no work. <sup>8</sup> You shall offer as a high-offering to Yahweh, a pleasing aroma: one young bull, one ram and seven yearling lambs without blemish. <sup>9</sup> The accompanying oblation of

## NUMBERS 29

- <sup>1</sup> For the last sentence, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "It is your day of Acclamations."  
<sup>2</sup> In place of 'pleasing aroma', the NJB has 'appeasing fragrance' the NRSV has 'pleasing odour' and NETB has 'sweet aroma'.  
<sup>3</sup> 1/10 of an ephah is just under 2L.  
<sup>4</sup> The total grain offering is over 10L.  
<sup>5</sup> NETB has 'purification' in place of 'sin', here following the NJB & NRSV.  
<sup>6</sup> The feast described in vv. 1-6 was possibly the vestiges of an ancient warrior feast in honour of Yahweh Sabaoth, at the beginning of the year.  
<sup>7</sup> The verb translated 'fast' (following the NJB) seems to mean 'humble yourself'; there is no explanation given for it. In the days of the prophets, fasting seems to be associated with it (see Is 58:3-5), and possibly the symbolic wearing of ashes.  
<sup>8</sup> After 'lambs', the NJB adds 'of your choice'.  
<sup>9</sup> 1 ephah is about 22 litres or about 2/3 of a bushel.



תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם: <sup>ט</sup> וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֶת בִּלְוִלָה בַּשֶּׁמֶן  
שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לִפְרֵי שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד:  
י' עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לִכְבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַכֹּבָשִׁים:  
יא שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלֶּבֶד חֲטָאת הַכֹּפָרִים  
וְעֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכֶּיהָ: {ס}

יב וּבַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ  
יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְחַגְתֶּם  
חֹג לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: יג וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֹלָה אִשֶּׁה  
רִיחַ נִיחָח לַיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים  
אֵילִם שְׁנָיִם כֹּבָשִׁים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעַת עֶשְׂרֹנִים  
תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ: יד וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֶת בִּלְוִלָה בַּשֶּׁמֶן  
שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לִפְרֵי הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת עֶשְׂרֹנִים  
שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד לְשְׁנֵי הָאֵילִם: טו וְעֶשְׂרוֹן  
עֶשְׂרוֹן לִכְבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד לְאַרְבַּעַת עֶשְׂרֹנִים כֹּבָשִׁים:  
טז וְשְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד  
מִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכָּהּ: {ס}

fine flour mixed with oil is to be three-tenths of an ephah for the bull,  
two-tenths for the ram <sup>10</sup> and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs.  
<sup>11</sup> You shall offer a he-goat for the sin offering, in addition to the sin  
offering of atonement, and to the continual high-offering with its  
accompanying oblation and libations.

<sup>12</sup> “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you are to hold a  
solemn assembly, you must do no heavy work, and for the space  
of seven days you are to celebrate a festival for Yahweh. <sup>13</sup> You must  
offer as a high-offering, a burnt offering, and a pleasing aroma for  
Yahweh: thirteen young bulls, two rams and fourteen yearling  
lambs without blemish. <sup>14</sup> And the accompanying oblation of fine  
flour mixed with oil is to be three-tenths of an ephah for each of  
the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams <sup>15</sup> and one  
tenth for each of the fourteen lambs, <sup>16</sup> along with one he-goat as a sin  
offering. This is in addition to the perpetual high-offering and its  
oblation and its libation.

<sup>10</sup> The total grain offering is over 10L.

<sup>11</sup> In place of ‘sin offering for atonement’, here following the NRSV (and NETB), the NJB has ‘the victim for sin at the feast of Atonement’.

<sup>12</sup> The offering for the Festival of Shelters (Lv 23:33–36) exceeds that of any other convocation.

<sup>13</sup> Note that, compared to previous sacrifices, there are 12 extra bulls: one for each tribe of Israel.

<sup>14</sup> The proportion of oil to grain remains the same as in previous sacrifices.

<sup>15</sup> The total grain offering is over 100L.

<sup>16</sup> The MT reads ‘sin offering, in addition to’; we split the sentence up (here following the NJB) to highlight the fact that the ‘oblation and libation’ are associated with the ‘continual high-offering’, but not the ‘he-goat’.

יז וּבַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי פָּרִים בְּנֵי־בָקָר שְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר אֵילִם  
שְׁנַיִם כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעָה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם:  
יח וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם לִפְּרִים לָאֵילִם וּלְכֹבָשִׁים  
בַּמִּסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: יט וְשַׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת  
מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם: {ס}

כ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פָּרִים עֲשֶׂתִּי־עֶשֶׂר אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם  
כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעָה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם:  
כא וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם לִפְּרִים לָאֵילִם וּלְכֹבָשִׁים  
בַּמִּסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: כב וְשַׁעִיר חֲטָאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד  
עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם: {ס}

כג וּבַיּוֹם הָרְבִיעִי פָּרִים עֶשְׂרֵה אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם כְּבָשִׂים  
בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעָה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם: כד מִנְחָתָם  
וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם לִפְּרִים לָאֵילִם וּלְכֹבָשִׁים בַּמִּסְפָּרָם  
כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: כה וְשַׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת  
הַתָּמִיד מִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם: {ס}

17 “On the second day: twelve young bulls, two rams and fourteen yearling lambs without blemish, 18 and their oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; 19 also one he-goat for the sacrifice for sin. This is in addition to the continual high-offering with its oblation and libations.

20 “On the third day: eleven bulls, two rams and fourteen yearling lambs without blemish, 21 and their oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; 22 also one he-goat for the sin offering. This is in addition to the continual high-offering with its oblation and libations.

23 “On the fourth day: ten bulls, two rams and fourteen yearling lambs without blemish, 24 and their oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; 25 also one he-goat for the sin offering. This is in addition to the continual high-offering with its oblation and libations.

17 After ‘day’, NETB adds ‘you must offer’; here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV (as also in vv. 20 & 23).

18 In place of ‘and their’, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads ‘the accompanying’ (as also in vv. 21 & 24).

19 In place of ‘continual’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘perpetual’ and the NRSV has ‘regular’ (as also in vv. 22 & 25).

20 See #17.

21 See #18. Other translations for ‘oblation’ (here following the NJB) are ‘food offering’ and ‘meal offering’.

22 See #19. The term, ‘high-offering’ translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן – ‘Most High God’) – the offering was for God alone. Other common translations are ‘burnt offering’ and ‘whole offering’ – the animal was burnt completely.

23 See #17.

24 See #18. Another translation for ‘libations’ is ‘drink offerings’.

25 See #19 & #22.

כוּ וּבַיּוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי פָּרִים תִּשְׁעָה אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם  
כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעָה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם:  
כז וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם לַפָּרִים לָאֵילִם וּלְכִבְשִׂים  
בְּמִסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: כח וְשַׁעִיר חַטָּאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד  
עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכָּיהָ: {ס}

כט וּבַיּוֹם הַשֵּׁשִׁי פָּרִים שְׁמֹנֶה אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם כִּבְשִׂים  
בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעָה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם: ל וּמִנְחָתָם  
וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם לַפָּרִים לָאֵילִם וּלְכִבְשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם  
כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: לא וְשַׁעִיר חַטָּאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת  
הַתָּמִיד מִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכָּיהָ: {ס}

לב וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי פָּרִים שִׁבְעָה אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם  
כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה אַרְבַּעָה עֶשֶׂר תְּמִימִם:  
לג וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם לַפָּרִים לָאֵילִם וּלְכִבְשִׂים  
בְּמִסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: לד וְשַׁעִיר חַטָּאת אֶחָד מִלֶּבֶד  
עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד מִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכָּיהָ: {ס}

<sup>26</sup> “On the fifth day: nine bulls, two rams and fourteen yearling lambs without blemish, <sup>27</sup> and oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; <sup>28</sup> also one he-goat for the sin offering. This is in addition to the continual high-offering with its oblation and libations.

<sup>29</sup> “On the sixth day: eight bulls, two rams and fourteen yearling lambs without blemish, <sup>30</sup> and their oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; <sup>31</sup> also one he-goat for the sin offering. This is in addition to the continual high-offering with its oblation and libations.

<sup>32</sup> “On the seventh day: seven bulls, two rams and fourteen yearling lambs without blemish, <sup>33</sup> and their oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; <sup>34</sup> also one he-goat for the sin offering. This is in addition to the continual high-offering with its oblation and libations.

<sup>26</sup> After ‘day’, NETB adds ‘you must offer’; here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV (as also in vv. 29 & 32).

<sup>27</sup> In place of ‘and their’, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads ‘the accompanying’ (as also in vv. 30 & 33).

<sup>28</sup> In place of ‘continual’, here following NETB, the NJB has ‘perpetual’ and the NRSV has ‘regular’ (as also in vv. 31 & 34).

<sup>29</sup> See #26.

<sup>30</sup> See #27. See #18. Another translation for ‘libations’ is ‘drink offerings’.

<sup>31</sup> See #28. The term, ‘high-offering’ translates עֹלָה, connecting it to a name for God (עֶלְיוֹן – ‘Most High God’) – the offering was for God alone. Other common translations are ‘burnt offering’ and ‘whole offering’ – the animal was burnt completely.

<sup>32</sup> See #26.

<sup>33</sup> See #27. Other translations for ‘oblation’ (here following the NJB) are ‘food offering’ and ‘meal offering’.

<sup>34</sup> See #28 & #31.

לֹה בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי עֲצַרְתָּ תִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָתָ  
עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: לֹו וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֹלָה אֱשֶׁה רִיחַ  
נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה פֶּר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה  
שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם: לֹו מִנְחָתָם וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם לִפְרָ לְאֵיל  
וּלְכִבְשִׂים בְּמִסְפָּרָם כַּמִּשְׁפָּט: לֹו וְשַׁעִיר חַטָּאת  
אֶחָד מִלִּבֵּד עֹלֹת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכָּהּ: לֹט אֵלֶּה  
תַּעֲשׂוּ לַיהוָה בְּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם לִבֵּד מִנְדְּרֵיכֶם  
וְנִדְבַתֵּיכֶם לְעֹלֹתֵיכֶם וּלְמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם וּלְנִסְכֵּיכֶם  
וּלְשִׁלְמֵיכֶם:

<sup>35</sup> “On the eighth day you must all assemble. You must do no heavy work. <sup>36</sup> You must offer as a high-offering, a burnt offering, an pleasing aroma for Yahweh: one bull, one ram and seven yearling rams without blemish, <sup>37</sup> their oblation and libations, as prescribed, according to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; <sup>38</sup> also one he-goat for the sin offering, along with the continual high-offering with its oblation and libations. <sup>39</sup> This is what you are to do for Yahweh at your solemn feasts, beside your votive and voluntary offerings, your high-offerings, oblations and libations, and your communion sacrifice.”

<sup>35</sup> In place of ‘you shall do not heavy work’, here following the NJB, NETB has ‘you must do not ordinary work on it’ and the NRSV has ‘you shall not work at your occupations’.

<sup>36</sup> In place of ‘pleasing aroma’, the NJB has ‘appeasing fragrance’ and the NRSV has ‘pleasing odour’.

<sup>37</sup> The NJB has ‘in proportion to’ in place of ‘according to’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>38</sup> The NJB has ‘perpetual’ in place of ‘continual’, here following NETB, and the NRSV has ‘regular’.

<sup>39</sup> In place of ‘communion sacrifice’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘offerings of well-being’ and NETB has ‘peace offerings’.

## במדבר פרק ל

## NUMBERS 30

- א וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: {פ}
- ב וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשֵׁי הַמִּטּוֹת לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה: ג אִישׁ כִּי־יָדַר נָדָר לַיהוָה אֹו־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבַעַה לְאַסֵּר אֶסֶר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחַל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכֹל־הֵיצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה:
- ד וְאִשָּׁה כִּי־תִדָּר נָדָר לַיהוָה וְאָסְרָה אֶסֶר בְּבֵית אָבִיהָ בְּנוֹעֲרֶיהָ: ה וְשָׁמַע אָבִיהָ אֶת־נִדְרָהּ וְאָסְרָה אֲשֶׁר אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ וְהַחֲרִישׁ לָהּ אָבִיהָ וְקָמוּ כָל־נִדְרֶיהָ וְכָל־אֶסֶר אֲשֶׁר־אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ יִקּוּם: ו וְאִם־הִנֵּיא אָבִיהָ אֹתָהּ בְּיוֹם שָׁמְעוֹ כָּל־נִדְרֶיהָ וְאָסְרֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר־אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ לֹא יִקּוּם וַיהוָה יִסְלַח־לָהּ כִּי־הִנֵּיא אָבִיהָ אֹתָהּ:
- ז וְאִם־הָיוּ תְהִיָּה לְאִישׁ וְנִדְרֶיהָ עָלֶיהָ אוֹ מִבְטָא שְׁפָתֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ: ח וְשָׁמַע אִישָׁהּ
- 1 And Moses told the Israelites exactly what Yahweh had commanded him.
- 2 Moses spoke to the leaders of the tribes of the Israelites. He said, "This is what Yahweh has ordered: 3 "If a man makes a vow to Yahweh or takes a formal pledge under oath, he must not break his word: whatever he promises by word of mouth he must do.
- 4 "If a woman makes a vow to Yahweh or takes a formal pledge, while still in her father's house, in her youth, 5 and if he hears of this vow or pledge made by her and says nothing to her, her vow, whatever it may be, shall stand, and the pledge she has taken, whatever it may be, shall stand. 6 But if the father, on the day he learns of it, disallows it, then none of the vows or pledges she has taken shall stand. Yahweh will absolve her, since her father has expressed his disapproval.
- 7 And if she takes a husband, while being bound by her vows or by a pledge voiced without due reflection, 8 and her husband hears of it but

## NUMBERS 30

- 1 This is 29:40 in the NRSV; subsequent verses of this chapter are therein decremented; the numbering scheme here is that of the MT (and NJB).
- 2 The literal translation of 'leaders' is 'heads'.
- 3 Vows made by men (Gn 28:20–22, Jg 11:30–31) are absolutely binding (compare Lv 27, Dt 23:21–23).
- 4 Vv. 4–16 reflect a society in which women were subordinate to men, who could nullify a vow if he felt that it was rash or thoughtless.
- 5 The verb קוּם ('stand') has the idea with it is that what she vows is established as a genuine oath with the father's approval (or acquiescence).
- 6 The verb 'absolve' has often been translated 'forgive' but that would suggest a sin that needed forgiving.
- 7 This paragraph refers to the case where the woman gets married while her vows are still unfulfilled.
- 8 The husband's silence is treated in the same way as that of her father (v. 5).



בְּיוֹם שִׁמְעוֹ וְהִחְרִישׁ לָהּ וְקָמוּ נִדְרֶיהָ וְאִסְרָהּ  
אֲשֶׁר-אִסְרָהּ עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ יִקְמוּ: <sup>ט</sup> וְאִם בְּיוֹם שִׁמְעַ  
אִישָׁהּ יִנְיֹא אוֹתָהּ וְהִפֵּר אֶת-נִדְרָהּ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ  
וְאֵת מִבְטָא שְׁפָתֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר אִסְרָהּ עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ וַיהוָה  
יִסְלַח-לָהּ:

י' וְנִדְרֵי אֲלֻמָּנָה וְגֵרוּשָׁה כָּל אֲשֶׁר-אִסְרָהּ עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ  
יִקְמוּ עָלֶיהָ: י"א וְאִם-בֵּית אִישָׁהּ נִדְרָה אוֹ-אִסְרָהּ  
אֶסֶר עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ בְּשִׁבְעָה: י"ב וְשָׁמַע אִישָׁהּ וְהִחְרִישׁ  
לָהּ לֹא הִנְיֹא אֹתָהּ וְקָמוּ כָּל-נִדְרֶיהָ וְכָל-אֶסֶר  
אֲשֶׁר-אִסְרָהּ עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ יִקְמוּ: י"ג וְאִם-הִפֵּר יִפֹּר  
אֹתָם | אִישָׁהּ בְּיוֹם שִׁמְעוֹ כָּל-מוֹצֵא שְׁפָתֶיהָ  
לְנִדְרֶיהָ וּלְאֶסֶר נַפְשָׁהּ לֹא יִקְמוּ אִישָׁהּ הַפֹּרִם  
וַיהוָה יִסְלַח-לָהּ:

י"ד כָּל-נִדְרֵי וְכָל-שְׁבָעַת אֶסֶר לְעֹנֶת נַפֶּשׁ אִישָׁהּ  
יִקְיָמוּ וְאִישָׁהּ יִפְרֹנוּ: טו' וְאִם-הִחְרִישׁ יַחְרִישׁ לָהּ  
אִישָׁהּ מִיוֹם אֶל-יוֹם וְהִקִּים אֶת-כָּל-נִדְרֶיהָ אוֹ אֶת-

remains silent about her on the day he learns of it, her vows shall stand and the pledge she has taken shall stand. <sup>9</sup> But if, on the day he learns of it, he disallows her, this will annul the vow that she has made or the pledge that binds her, voiced without due reflection. Yahweh will absolve her.

<sup>10</sup> "The vow of a widow or of a divorced woman and all pledges taken by her are binding on her. <sup>11</sup> If she has made a vow or taken a pledge under oath while in her husband's house <sup>12</sup> and if, when the husband learned of it, he said nothing to her and did not disallow her, then all her vows shall stand and all her pledges shall stand. <sup>13</sup> But if the husband, when he hears of it, annuls it on the day he learns of it, no word of mouth, vow or pledge shall stand. Since the husband has annulled them, Yahweh will absolve her.

<sup>14</sup> "Any vow or oath binding on the wife, her husband may endorse or annul. <sup>15</sup> If, by the following day, the husband has said nothing to her, it means that he endorses all her vows, or all her pledges. He endorses

<sup>9</sup> The verb translated 'annul' (וְהִפֵּר) is the Hiphil perfect with a *vav* consecutive; it functions here as the equivalent of an imperfect tense.

<sup>10</sup> The exception to the general rule is a vow made by a woman when widowed or divorced.

<sup>11</sup> In place of 'taken a pledge under oath', here following the NJB, the NRSV reads 'bound herself by a pledge with an oath'.

<sup>12</sup> For 'all her vows' and 'all her pledges', the NJB reads, respectively, 'the vow, whatever it is' and 'the pledge, whatever it is'.

<sup>13</sup> The verb translated 'annuls' is the imperfect tense in the conditional clause; it is intensified with the infinitive absolute, which would have the force of saying that he annulled them unequivocally, or he made them null and void.

<sup>14</sup> The expression, 'binding on the wife', (literally, 'that binds her to afflict her soul') commonly means 'to fast', but commentators are agreed that it has a wider sense here. The NRSV explicitly adds the phrase 'to deny herself'.

<sup>15</sup> The last sentence uses the infinitive absolute for 'remains silent' to strengthen the idea.

כִּלְאַסְרֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ הַקִּים אֹתָם כִּי־הִחְרַשׁ לָהּ  
בְּיוֹם שָׁמְעוֹ: <sup>טז</sup> וְאִם־הִפָּר יִפְר אֹתָם אַחֲרֵי שָׁמְעוֹ  
וְנִשָּׂא אֶת־עֻנָּהּ: <sup>יז</sup> אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה  
אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בֵּין אִישׁ לְאִשְׁתּוֹ בֵּין־אָב לְבָתּוֹ בְּנַעֲרֶיהָ  
בֵּית אָבִיהָ: {פ}

them if he remains silent on the day he learns of them. <sup>16</sup> But, if he annuls them a longer time after he learnt of them, he must bear the burden of her fault.” <sup>17</sup> These are the laws ordained by Yahweh to Moses, between man and wife, and between a father and his daughter while still young and in her father’s home.

---

<sup>16</sup> In other words, he will pay the penalty for making her break her vows if he makes her stop what she vowed. It will not be her responsibility.

<sup>17</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “These are the statutes that the LORD commanded Moses concerning a husband and his wife, and a father and his daughter while she is still young and in her father’s house.”

## במדבר פרק לא

<sup>א</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>ב</sup> נָקֵם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים אַחֲרֵי תֹאסֹף אֶל-עַמִּיךָ: <sup>ג</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם לֵאמֹר הִחַלְצוּ מֵאִתְּכֶם אַנְשִׁים לְצָבָא וְיִהְיוּ עַל-מִדְיָן לְתֵת נִקְמַת-יְהוָה בְּמִדְיָן: <sup>ד</sup> אֵלֶּךְ לַמָּטָה אֵלֶּךְ לַמָּטָה לְכָל מִטּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּשְׁלָחוּ לְצָבָא: <sup>ה</sup> וַיִּמְסְרוּ מֵאֲלֵפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלֶּךְ לַמָּטָה שְׁנַיִם-עָשָׂר אֵלֶּךְ חֲלוּצֵי צָבָא: <sup>ו</sup> וַיִּשְׁלַח אַתָּם מֹשֶׁה אֵלֶּךְ לַמָּטָה לְצָבָא אֹתָם וְאֶת-פִּינְחָס בֶּן-אֱלֵעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן לְצָבָא וְכָלִי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְחֻצְצֹרוֹת הַתְּרוּעָה בְיָדוֹ:

<sup>ז</sup> וַיִּצְבְּאוּ עַל-מִדְיָן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה וַיַּהַרְגוּ כָּל-זָכָר: <sup>ח</sup> וְאֶת-מַלְכֵי מִדְיָן הָרְגוּ עַל-חֲלָלֵיהֶם אֶת-אֹוִי וְאֶת-רָקֵם וְאֶת-צֹור וְאֶת-חֹור

## NUMBERS 31

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, <sup>2</sup> "Exact full vengeance for the Israelites on the Midianites. Afterwards, you will be gathered to your people." <sup>3</sup> Moses said to the people, "Some of you must take arms to wage Yahweh's campaign against Midian, to carry out the vengeance of Yahweh on Midian. <sup>4</sup> Put a thousand men in the field from each of the tribes of Israel." <sup>5</sup> So out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe were conscripted, twelve thousand armed for battle. <sup>6</sup> Moses put them in the field, one thousand from each tribe, with Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest, to go with them carrying the sacred vessels and the trumpets for sounding the alarm.

<sup>7</sup> And they waged the campaign against Midian, as Yahweh had commanded Moses, and they put every male to death. <sup>8</sup> Furthermore, they killed the kings of Midian with the rest of their slain: Evi, and

### NUMBERS 31

- <sup>1</sup> The text of this chapter logically follows on from the incident at Peor and introduces regulations for the conduct of holy war, for the division of the booty and for the sharing out of the Holy Land.
- <sup>2</sup> This would be the last major enterprise that Moses would have to undertake; he would soon die and 'be gathered to his people', as Aaron was.
- <sup>3</sup> The war was commanded by Yahweh and was to be divine vengeance on the Midianites, so it was holy war: no Israelite then could take spoils in this – it was not a time for plunder and aggrandisement.
- <sup>4</sup> The number is a round number; God does not want or need a large army in order to obtain victory.
- <sup>5</sup> For this verse, the NJB reads, "In this way, Israel's hosts provided twelve thousand men equipped for war, one thousand from each tribe."
- <sup>6</sup> Phinehas was sent instead of Eleazar; for, the High Priest, more than other priests, had to avoid contact with the dead (Lv 21:10–15).
- <sup>7</sup> Despite this annihilation, the Midianites were a formidable foe in a later period (Jg 6).
- <sup>8</sup> What was Balaam doing among the Midianites? This pagan diviner had been hired by Israel's enemies.

וְאֶת־רֹבַע חֲמִשָּׁת מַלְכֵי מִדְיָן וְאֶת בְּלָעַם בֶּן־בְּעֹר  
הֲרָגוּ בַּחֶרֶב: <sup>ט</sup> וַיִּשְׁבּוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־נְשֵׁי מִדְיָן  
וְאֶת־טַפָּם וְאֶת כָּל־בְּהֶמְתָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־מִקְנֵהֶם  
וְאֶת־כָּל־חֵילָם בְּזָזוּ: <sup>י</sup> וְאֶת כָּל־עֲרֵיהֶם בְּמוֹשְׁבֹתָם  
וְאֶת כָּל־טִירֹתָם שָׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ: <sup>יא</sup> וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־כָּל־  
הַשָּׁלָל וְאֶת כָּל־הַמִּלְקֹחַ בְּאָדָם וּבְבִהֶמָּה: <sup>יב</sup> וַיָּבֹאוּ  
אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אֱלֶעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת־הַשְּׂבִי וְאֶת־הַמִּלְקֹחַ וְאֶת־הַשָּׁלָל אֲלֵהֶם מַחֲנֶה  
אֶל־עֵרְבַת מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־יַרְדֵּן יֶרִיחוֹ: {ס}

<sup>יג</sup> וַיֵּצְאוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאֱלֶעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְכָל־נְשֵׂי־אֵי הָעֵדָה  
לִקְרֹאתָם אֶל־מַחֲוֹץ לַמַּחֲנֶה: <sup>יד</sup> וַיִּקְצָץ מֹשֶׁה עַל  
פְּקוּדֵי הַחֵיל שָׂרֵי הָאֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי הַמֵּאוֹת הַבָּאִים  
מִצָּבָא הַמִּלְחָמָה: <sup>טו</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מֹשֶׁה הַחֵייתֶם  
כָּל־נַקְבָּה: <sup>טז</sup> הֵן הִנֵּה הָיוּ לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַבֵּר  
בְּלָעַם לְמַסֵּר־מַעַל בַּיהוָה עַל־דְּבַר־פְּעֹר וְתָהִי  
הַמַּגֵּפָה בַּעֲדַת יְהוָה: <sup>יז</sup> וְעַתָּה הֲרָגוּ כָּל־זָכָר בַּטָּף

Rekem, and Zur, and Hur and Reba, the five Midianite kings; they also put Balaam the son of Beor to the sword. <sup>9</sup> And the Israelites took the Midianite women captive with their little ones, and they plundered all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. <sup>10</sup> They set fire to the towns where they lived and all their encampments. <sup>11</sup> Then, taking all their booty, all that they had captured, man and beast, <sup>12</sup> they took the captives, spoil, and booty to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest and to the whole community of Israelites, at the camp in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan opposite Jericho.

<sup>13</sup> Moses, Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the community went out of the camp to meet them. <sup>14</sup> Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, who had come back from service in the war. <sup>15</sup> Moses said to them, "Have you allowed all the women to live? <sup>16</sup> These women, on Balaam's advice, caused the Israelites to renounce Yahweh in the affair at Peor: hence the plague which struck the community of Israel. <sup>17</sup> So, kill all the male

<sup>9</sup> The NJB has 'young children' in place of 'little ones', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>10</sup> The ban applied to the encampments and forts of this group of Midianite tribes living in the region of Moab.

<sup>11</sup> In place of 'man and beast', here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'people and animals'.

<sup>12</sup> Literally translated, this verse ends, 'the Jordan of Jericho'.

<sup>13</sup> The NRSV has 'outside of the camp' in place of 'out of the camp' and places the clause after 'meet them'; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>14</sup> In place of 'service in the war', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'this military expedition'.

<sup>15</sup> According to the ideology of holy war, the enemy was offered as sacrifice to Yahweh (1S 15).

<sup>16</sup> The NJB has 'these were the very ones who' in place of 'these women', here following the NRSV, and NETB has 'look, these people'.

<sup>17</sup> The command to kill women and children is terrible but the entire life of the ancient world was tribal warfare.

וְכָל־אִשָּׁה יָדַעַת אִישׁ לְמִשְׁכַּב זָכָר הָרְגוּ: י<sup>ח</sup> וְכָל־  
הַטָּף בְּנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ מִשְׁכַּב זָכָר הַחֲיוּ  
לָכֶם: י<sup>ט</sup> וְאַתֶּם חָנוּ מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל־  
הָרֶג נֶפֶשׁ וְכָל־נֶגַע בַּחֲלָל תַּתְּחַטְּאוּ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי  
וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי אַתֶּם וְשִׁבְיָכֶם: כ<sup>י</sup> וְכָל־בֶּגֶד וְכָל־כְּלִי־  
עוֹר וְכָל־מַעֲשֵׂה עֵזִים וְכָל־כְּלִי־עֵץ תַּתְּחַטְּאוּ: {ס}

כא וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַצָּבָא הַבָּאִים  
לְמִלְחָמָה זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־  
מֹשֶׁה: כב אַךְ אֶת־הַזָּהָב וְאֶת־הַכֶּסֶף אֶת־הַנְּחֹשֶׁת  
אֶת־הַבְּרֹזֶל אֶת־הַבַּדִּיל וְאֶת־הָעֹפֶרֶת: כג כָּל־דָּבָר  
אֲשֶׁר־יָבֹא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בָאֵשׁ וְטָהַר אַךְ בְּמִי נָדָה  
יִתְּחַטֵּא וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבֹא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בַּמַּיִם:  
כד וְכִבְסֶתֶם בְּגָדֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְטָהַרְתֶּם וְאַחֵר  
תָּבֹאוּ אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה: {ס}  
כה וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כו שָׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ  
מַלְקוֹחַ הַשְּׁבִי בָאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה אֹתָהּ וְאַלְעָזָר

children; kill also all the women who have slept with a man. <sup>18</sup> Spare the  
lives only of the young girls who have not slept with a man and keep  
them for yourselves. <sup>19</sup> As for you, you must camp for seven days  
outside the camp, all of you who have killed a man or touched a corpse.  
Purify yourselves, you and your prisoners, on the third and seventh  
days; <sup>20</sup> purify also clothing, everything made of skin, everything woven  
of goats' hair and everything made of wood."

<sup>21</sup> Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had come back from  
this campaign, "This is a statute of the Law, which Yahweh has  
commanded Moses. <sup>22</sup> Whereas the gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, and  
lead, <sup>23</sup> everything that can withstand fire, shall be passed through fire  
and it will be clean, yet it must still be purified with water for  
purification. Whatever cannot resist fire, you must pass through water.  
<sup>24</sup> Wash your clothes on the seventh day and you will then be clean;  
afterwards, you may come back to the camp."

<sup>25</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>26</sup> "With Eleazar the priest and  
the heads of the patriarchal houses in the community, count the spoils

<sup>18</sup> Some scholars see this story as fictitious, composed during the Exile.

<sup>19</sup> Both soldiers and captives had to be cleansed before they could enter the camp.

<sup>20</sup> These articles could absorb uncleanness (Lv 11:24–38).

<sup>21</sup> In place of 'soldiers who had come back from this campaign', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'troops who had gone to battle.'

<sup>22</sup> The NRSV lacks the opening 'whereas', here following the NJB.

<sup>23</sup> Purification by fire was an ancient ritual, tainted in part with paganism. On it, the text superimposes the ritual for water of purification (#19:1).

<sup>24</sup> The NJB has 'you may then' in place of 'afterward, you may', here following the NRSV.

<sup>25</sup> NETB lacks the word 'saying', considering the participle redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>26</sup> The literal translation of the idiom here translated as 'count' is 'take up the head', meaning take a census, or count the totals.



הַכֹּהֵן וְרֹאשֵׁי אֲבוֹת הָעֵדָה: כִּי וְחָצִיתָ אֶת־הַמִּלְקוֹחַ  
 בֵּין תַּפְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה הַיִּצָּאִים לַצָּבָא וּבֵין כָּל־  
 הָעֵדָה: כֹּחַ וְהִרְמַתָּ מִכֶּסֶּ לַיהוָה מֵאֵת אֲנָשֵׁי  
 הַמִּלְחָמָה הַיִּצָּאִים לַצָּבָא אֶחָד נֶפֶשׁ מִחֲמֵשׁ  
 הַמֵּאוֹת מִן־הָאָדָם וּמִן־הַבָּקָר וּמִן־הַחֲמֹרִים וּמִן־  
 הָעֶצָאן: כֹּחַ מִמַּחְצִיתָם תִּקְחוּ וְנָתַתָּה לְאַלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן  
 תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה: לְ וּמִמַּחְצֵת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּקַּח אֶחָד  
 אֶחָז מִן־הַחֲמִשִּׁים מִן־הָאָדָם מִן־הַבָּקָר מִן־  
 הַחֲמֹרִים וּמִן־הָעֶצָאן מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה וְנָתַתָּה אֹתָם  
 לְלוֹוִים שְׂמֵרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה:

לֹא וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה וְאַלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה  
 אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: לִבְ וַיְהִי הַמִּלְקוֹחַ יָתֵר הַבָּז אֲשֶׁר בָּזְזוּ  
 עִם הַצָּבָא צֹאן שֵׁשׁ־מֵאוֹת אֵלֶף וְשִׁבְעִים אֵלֶף  
 וְחֲמִשָּׁת אֲלָפִים: לִג וּבָקָר שְׁנַיִם וְשִׁבְעִים אֵלֶף:  
 לִד וְחֲמֹרִים אֶחָד וְשָׁשִׁים אֵלֶף: לֵה וְנִפְשׁ אָדָם מִן־

and the captives, man and beast. <sup>27</sup> Then share out the spoil, half and half, between those who fought the campaign and the rest of the community. <sup>28</sup> As Yahweh's portion, you will set aside, from the share of the combatants who took part in the campaign, one out of every five hundred persons, of the oxen, of the donkeys and of the sheep. <sup>29</sup> Take it from the half share that is their due, and give it to Eleazar the priest, as an offering to Yahweh. <sup>30</sup> From the half that is due to the Israelites, you will take one out of every fifty persons, of the oxen, of the donkeys, of the sheep and of all other animals, and give them to the Levites who have charge of the Dwelling of Yahweh."

<sup>31</sup> Thus, Moses and Eleazar the priest did as Yahweh has commanded Moses. <sup>32</sup> Now the plunders, the remainder of the booty captured by the soldiers, came to six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, <sup>33</sup> and seventy-two thousand head of cattle, <sup>34</sup> and sixty-one thousand donkeys, <sup>35</sup> and in persons, women who had not known a man by lying

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to note that the booty is divided between the warriors and the general community.

<sup>28</sup> The verb translated 'set aside' is the Hiphil ('you shall cause to be set aside'); the perfect with *vav* continues the sequence of the instructions.

<sup>29</sup> This offering was regarded as the 'tribute for Yahweh' (vv. 32–41)

<sup>30</sup> The people were to give two percent from their half to the Levites (vv. 42–47).

<sup>31</sup> Alternatives for the opening 'thus' (here following the NJB) are 'then' (as NRSV) and 'so' (as NETB).

<sup>32</sup> A more literal translation for 'captured' would be 'plundered'. In place of 'sheep and goats', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'small stock'.

<sup>33</sup> In place of 'head of cattle', the JPS has 'beeves'.

<sup>34</sup> Throughout this section, the MT & LXX agree on the numbers of animals taken as booty.

<sup>35</sup> Here again we encounter one of the difficulties of the book, the use of the large numbers: only 12,000 soldiers fought the Midianites but they brought back this amount of plunder, including 32,000 girls.

הַנָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ מִשְׁכָּב זָכָר כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ שָׁנִים  
וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אָלֶף: <sup>לו</sup> וְתָהִי הַמַּחֲצָה חֵלֶק הַיִּצְאִים  
בַּצֹּבָא מִסֶּפֶר הַצֹּאן שְׁלֹש־מֵאוֹת אָלֶף וּשְׁלֹשִׁים  
אָלֶף וּשְׁבַע־אֲלָפִים וְחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: <sup>לז</sup> וְיִהְיֶה הַמֶּכֶס  
לַיהוָה מִן־הַצֹּאן שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת חֲמֵשׁ וּשְׁבַע־עֶשְׂרִים  
וְהַבֶּקֶר שֵׁשָׁה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אָלֶף וּמֶכֶס לַיהוָה  
שָׁנִים וּשְׁבַע־עֶשְׂרִים: <sup>לט</sup> וְחֲמֵרִים שְׁלֹשִׁים אָלֶף וְחֲמֵשׁ  
מֵאוֹת וּמֶכֶס לַיהוָה אֶחָד וּשְׁשִׁים: <sup>מ</sup> וְנֶפֶשׁ אָדָם  
שֵׁשָׁה עָשָׂר אָלֶף וּמֶכֶס לַיהוָה שָׁנִים וּשְׁלֹשִׁים  
נֶפֶשׁ: <sup>מא</sup> וַיִּתֵּן מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מֶכֶס תְּרוּמַת יְהוָה  
לְאַלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:  
<sup>מב</sup> וּמִמַּחֲצִית בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר חָצָה מֹשֶׁה מִן־  
הָאָנָשִׁים הַצֹּבָאִים: <sup>מג</sup> וְתָהִי מַחֲצֵת הָעֵדָה מִן־  
הַצֹּאן שְׁלֹש־מֵאוֹת אָלֶף וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אָלֶף שְׁבַע־  
אֲלָפִים וְחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת: <sup>מד</sup> וּבֶקֶר שֵׁשָׁה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים

with him, thirty-two thousand in all. <sup>36</sup> Half of them, which were assigned to those who had taken part in the war, namely three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, <sup>37</sup> of which Yahweh's portion of sheep was six hundred and seventy-five, <sup>38</sup> and the cattle numbered thirty-six thousand, of which Yahweh's portion was seventy-two. <sup>39</sup> And the donkeys were thirty thousand five hundred, of which Yahweh's portion was sixty-one, <sup>40</sup> and the people were sixteen thousand, of which Yahweh's portion was thirty-two people. <sup>41</sup> And Moses gave Eleazar the priest the tribute, the portion set aside for Yahweh, in accordance with the instructions that Yahweh gave to Moses.

<sup>42</sup> As for the half that was due to the Israelites, which Moses had separated from that of the men who were fighting, <sup>43</sup> this half, the community's share, came to three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep, <sup>44</sup> and thirty-six

<sup>36</sup> The LXX translates these large numbers in the following format: 'three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred' (τριακόσιαι χιλιάδες καὶ τριάκοντα χιλιάδες καὶ ἑπτακισχίλια καὶ πεντακόσια).

<sup>37</sup> The NJB omits 'sheep', here following the MT & WEBBE.

<sup>38</sup> The word 'numbered' does not appear in the MT and has been added in the translation for clarity.

<sup>39</sup> The NJB omits 'the donkeys were', including the word 'donkeys' after the number.

<sup>40</sup> The literal translation of 'people' is 'souls'.

<sup>41</sup> The NJB omits the word 'the tribute', here following the NRSV.

<sup>42</sup> For 'men who were fighting', here following the MT, the NRSV has 'troops', NETB has 'warriors' and the NJB has 'combatants'.

<sup>43</sup> The NJB has 'small stock' in place of 'sheep and goats', here following the NRSV. The clumsy, repetitive use of the word 'thousand' in the translation here reflects the wording of the Hebrew text.

<sup>44</sup> In place of 'head of cattle', the JPS has 'beeves'.

אֵלֶּף: <sup>מה</sup> וַחֲמֵרִים שְׁלֹשִׁים אֵלֶּף וַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת:  
<sup>מו</sup> וַנִּפֶּשׂ אָדָם שֵׁשָׁה עָשָׂר אֵלֶּף: <sup>מז</sup> וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה  
מִמַּחְצֵת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הָאֶחָז אֶחָד מִן  
הַחֲמִשִּׁים מִן־הָאָדָם וּמִן־הַבְּהֵמָה וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם לְלוֹוִים  
שֹׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־  
מֹשֶׁה:

<sup>מח</sup> וַיִּקְרְבוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הַפְּקָדִים אֲשֶׁר לְאֶלְפֵי הַצָּבָא  
שָׂרֵי הָאֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי הַמֵּאוֹת: <sup>מט</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה  
עַבְדֶּיךָ נִשְׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר  
בְּיָדֵנוּ וְלֹא־נִפְקַד מִמֶּנּוּ אִישׁ: <sup>נ</sup> וַנִּקְרָב אֶת־קִרְבָּן  
יְהוָה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר מָצָא כְּלִי־זָהָב אֶצְעָדָה וְצִמִּיד  
טַבַּעַת עָגִיל וְכוּמָז לְכַפֵּר עַל־נַפְשֵׁינוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:  
<sup>נא</sup> וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה וְאֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַזָּהָב מֵאֹתָם כָּל  
כְּלֵי מַעֲשֵׂה: <sup>נב</sup> וַיְהִי כִלְיָהָב הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר  
הָרִימוּ לַיהוָה שֵׁשָׁה עָשָׂר אֵלֶּף שְׁבַע־מֵאוֹת  
וַחֲמִשִּׁים שֶׁקֶל מֵאֵת שָׂרֵי הָאֲלָפִים וּמֵאֵת שָׂרֵי  
הַמֵּאוֹת:

thousand head of cattle, <sup>45</sup> and thirty thousand five hundred donkeys,  
<sup>46</sup> and sixteen thousand persons. <sup>47</sup> And, from the share of the Israelites,  
Moses took one drawn out of every fifty, both of man and of beast, and  
gave them to the Levites who had charge of the Dwelling of Yahweh, in  
accordance with the instructions that Yahweh gave to Moses.

<sup>48</sup> The commanders of the thousands of the host who had fought the  
campaign, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds,  
came to Moses <sup>49</sup> and said to Moses, "Your servants have numbered the  
soldiers under their command: not one is missing. <sup>50</sup> And further, we  
bring as an offering to Yahweh the gold ornaments we have found,  
armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings, and brooches, to make  
atonement for us before Yahweh." <sup>51</sup> Moses and Eleazar the priest  
accepted this gold from them, all in the form of crafted ornaments.  
<sup>52</sup> This offering of gold given by them to Yahweh amounted to sixteen  
thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels, all given by the captains of  
thousands and the captains of hundreds.

<sup>45</sup> The NRSV lacks the opening conjunction, as also in v. 44.

<sup>46</sup> Note that the MT uses a word for 'persons' that is not gender specific.

<sup>47</sup> In place of 'Israelites' share', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'this half'.

<sup>48</sup> The theology of vv. 48-54, like vv. 21-24 is more developed: the war involves contact with the profane and atonement is required.

<sup>49</sup> The NJB omits 'to Moses', here following the MT & NRSV, and NETB has 'to him'. The literal translation of 'numbered' is 'lifted up the heads of'.

<sup>50</sup> The atonement was because of ritual defilement by the dead.

<sup>51</sup> In place of 'in the form of crafted ornaments', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has just 'this jewellery'.

<sup>52</sup> The weight of gold here was in excess of 200 Kg.

נג אנשי הצבא בזזו איש לו: נד ויקח משה ואלעזר  
 הכהן את-הזהב מאת שרי האלפים והמאות  
 ויבאו אתו אל-אהל מועד זכרון לבני-ישראל  
 לפני יהוה: {פ}

53 Each of the soldiers took his own booty; 54 but Moses and Eleazar the  
 priest received the gold from the captains of thousands and of  
 hundreds; and they carried it to the Tent of Meeting as a reminder to  
 Yahweh of the Israelites.

---

53 These two verses may be an editorial addition (see #48).

54 The purpose of the offering was to ask the Lord to remember Israel, but it would also be an encouragement for Israel as they remembered the great victory.

## NUMBERS 32

## במדבר פרק לב

- <sup>א</sup> וּמִקְנֵהוּ רֹב הָיָה לְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וּלְבְנֵי-גָד עֲצוֹם מְאֹד וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת-אֶרֶץ יַעֲזֹר וְאֶת-אֶרֶץ גִּלְעָד וְהָנָה הַמְּקוֹם מְקוֹם מִקְנֵה: <sup>ב</sup> וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי-גָד וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-עֲלֵעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶל-נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר: <sup>ג</sup> עֲטָרוֹת וְדִיבֹן וַיַּעֲזֹר וְנִמְרָה וְחֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאֶלְעֵלָה וְשֶׁבַם וְנֶבֹו וּבְעֹן: <sup>ד</sup> הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה יְהוָה לְפָנֵי עַדְתִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶרֶץ מִקְנֵה הֹוא וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ מִקְנֵה: {ס}
- <sup>ה</sup> וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִם-מִצָּאֵנוּ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ יִתֵּן אֶת-הָאֶרֶץ הַזֹּאת לַעֲבָדֶיךָ לְאַחֲזָה אֶל-תַּעֲבָרֵנוּ אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן:
- <sup>ו</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְבְנֵי-גָד וּלְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן הֲאֵחִיכֶם יָבֹאוּ לְמִלְחָמָה וְאַתֶּם תֵּשְׁבוּ פֹה: <sup>ז</sup> וְלָמָּה תִּנּוּאוּן תִּנְיָאוֹן אֶת-לֵב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַבְרֹל אֶל-הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן לָהֶם יְהוָה: <sup>ח</sup> כֹּה עָשׂוּ אֲבֹתֵיכֶם בְּשַׁלְחִי אֹתָם
- <sup>1</sup> Now, the Reubenites and the Gadites owned a very great multitude of cattle. And, when they observed that the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead was an ideal place for cattle, <sup>2</sup> the Gadites and the Reubenites went to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the community, saying, <sup>3</sup> “Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Sebam, and Nebo, and Beon, <sup>4</sup> which Yahweh has subdued in the sight of the congregation of Israel, is ideal for cattle, and your servants have cattle.
- <sup>5</sup> If we have deserved your friendship,” they said, “give this land to your servants for our own; do not have us cross the Jordan.”
- <sup>6</sup> Moses said to the Gadites and the Reubenites, “Must your brothers go to war while you stay here? <sup>7</sup> Why do you keep the Israelites from entering the land that Yahweh has given them? <sup>8</sup> Your fathers did this, when I sent them from Kadesh-Barnea to inspect the land. <sup>9</sup> When they

## NUMBERS 32

- <sup>1</sup> The literal translation of ‘an ideal place for cattle’ is ‘the place was a place for/of cattle’.
- <sup>2</sup> Throughout this section, the NJB has ‘sons of Gad’ and ‘sons of Reuben’ in place of ‘Gadites’ and ‘Reubenites’, here following the NRSV.
- <sup>3</sup> In place of ‘Sebam’ (שֶׁבַם), the LXX (Σεβαμα) & Samaritan Pentateuch (שבמה) have ‘Sibmah’ (cf. v. 38).
- <sup>4</sup> The verb translated ‘subdued’ (הִכָּה) is the Hiphil perfect of a term that can mean ‘smite’, ‘strike’, ‘attack’, or ‘destroy’.
- <sup>5</sup> The verb ‘have us cross’ is in the Hiphil jussive: ‘make us cross’ might be harsh but being ‘taken across’ with the rest is what they want to avoid.
- <sup>6</sup> The sentence has a *vav* disjunctive prefixed to the pronoun, ‘you’, which fits best here as introducing a circumstantial clause. Cf. Jg 5:16–17.
- <sup>7</sup> The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here (possible *vav*/*yod* confusion) warrants an explanation.
- <sup>8</sup> Vv. 8–13 summarise Chs 13–14.
- <sup>9</sup> The NJB lacks the opening ‘when’ and adds ‘but’ before ‘they kept’; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.



מִקְדָּשׁ בְּרָנַע לְרֹאוֹת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: <sup>ט</sup> וַיַּעֲלוּ עַד־נַחֲלֹ  
 אֲשָׁכּוֹל וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיָּנִיאוּ אֶת־לֵב בְּנֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבַלְתִּי־בֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן לָהֶם  
 יְהוָה: <sup>י</sup> וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיִּשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר:  
<sup>יא</sup> אִם־יִרְאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָעֲלִים מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים  
 שָׁנָה וּמֵעַלָּה אֶת הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם  
 לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב כִּי לֹא־מֵלֶאֱוֹ אַחֲרָי: <sup>יב</sup> בַּלְתִּי כָּלֹב  
 בֶּן־יִפְנֶה הַקְנֹזִי וַיהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון כִּי מֵלֶאֱוֹ אַחֲרָי  
 יְהוָה: <sup>יג</sup> וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף יְהוָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנְעַם בַּמִּדְבָּר  
 אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה עַד־תָּם כָּל־הַדּוֹר הָעֹשֶׂה הָרַע  
 בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה: <sup>יד</sup> וְהָנָה קִמְתָּם תַּחַת אֲבֹתֵיכֶם תִּרְבּוּת  
 אֲנָשִׁים חֲטָאִים לְסָפוֹת עוֹד עַל חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה אֶל־  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>טו</sup> כִּי תָשׁוּבוּן מֵאַחֲרָיו וְיָסַף עוֹד לְהַנִּיחוֹ  
 בַּמִּדְבָּר וְשַׁחַתְתֶּם לְכָל־הָעָם הַזֶּה: {ס}

<sup>טז</sup> וַיָּגִשׁוּ אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ גְדֹרֶת צֹאן נִבְנְהָ לְמִקְנֵנוּ פֹה  
 וְעָרִים לְטַפָּנוּ: <sup>יז</sup> וְאַנְחֵנוּ נַחֲלֵץ חַיִּים לְפָנַי בְּנֵי

went up to the Wadi Eshcol and inspected the land, they kept the Israelites from entering the land that Yahweh had given them. <sup>10</sup> So, the wrath of Yahweh blazed out that day and he swore, <sup>11</sup> “Surely, none of these men of twenty years and over, who came out from Egypt, shall set eyes on the land that I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For they have not followed me faithfully, <sup>12</sup> except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua son of Nun: these indeed have followed Yahweh faithfully.” <sup>13</sup> The wrath of Yahweh blazed out against Israel and he made them wander in the desert for forty years, until all the generation that offended Yahweh had disappeared; <sup>14</sup> and now you, you rise up in your father’s place, offshoot of sinful stock, to add still more to the burning wrath of Yahweh against Israel! <sup>15</sup> If you turn away from him, he will once again abandon them in the desert, and you will bring about the ruin of all this people.”

<sup>16</sup> They came to him and said, “We will build sheepfolds here for our flocks and towns for our children, <sup>17</sup> but we will take up arms to lead

<sup>10</sup> At the end of this verse, the NJB adds ‘this oath’; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

<sup>11</sup> After ‘twenty years and older’, the LXX adds ‘those knowing the bad and the good’ (οἱ ἐπιστάμενοι τὸ κακὸν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν).

<sup>12</sup> In place of ‘faithfully’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘unreservedly’ and NETB has ‘wholeheartedly’ (as also in v. 11).

<sup>13</sup> The verb rendered ‘had disappeared’ (as NJB & NRSV) is difficult, since it has the idea of ‘finished’ (as NETB); it could be ‘consumed’ here.

<sup>14</sup> In place of ‘offshoot of sinful stock’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘brood of sinners’.

<sup>15</sup> The construction translated ‘once again abandon’ uses a verbal hendiadys, with the verb ‘to add’ serving to modify the main verb.

<sup>16</sup> In place of ‘to him’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘up to him’ and NETB has ‘very close to him’.

<sup>17</sup> The phrase ‘take up arms’ follows the LXX (ἐνοπλισάμενοι); the MT reads ‘arm in haste’ (חַשִּׁים, from the root ‘to hurry’); but, in light of the LXX and Vg (*ipsi armati*), the text should probably be emended to חוֹמָשִׁים, a Qal passive participle meaning ‘in battle array’.

יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם־הִבִּיאֲנָם אֶל־מְקוֹמָם וַיֹּשְׁבוּ  
טַפָּנוּ בְּעָרֵי הַמְּבֻצָּר מִפְּנֵי יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ: י<sup>ח</sup> לֹא נָשׁוּב  
אֶל־בְּתִינוּ עַד הַתְּנַחֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ נַחֲלָתוֹ:  
יט<sup>כ</sup> כִּי לֹא נִנְחַל אֹתָם מֵעַבְרֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן וְהַלָּא כִּי בָאָה  
נַחֲלָתָנוּ אֵלֵינוּ מֵעַבְרֵי הַיַּרְדֵּן מִזְרַחָה: {פ}

כ<sup>כ</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מֹשֶׁה אִם־תַּעֲשׂוּן אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה  
אִם־תַּחֲלֹצוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לַמִּלְחָמָה: כא<sup>כא</sup> וְעַבְרֵי לָכֶם  
כָּל־חֲלוּץ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַד הִזְרִישׁוּ אֶת־  
אִיְבּוֹ מִפְּנֵיו: כב<sup>כב</sup> וְנִכְבְּשָׁה הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְאַחֲרֵי  
תָּשְׁבוּ וְהִיִּיתֶם נָקִים מִיְּהוָה וּמִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְהִיִּיתָה  
הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לָכֶם לְאֻחֻזָּה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: כג<sup>כג</sup> וְאִם־לֹא  
תַּעֲשׂוּן כֵּן הִנֵּה חֲטֹאתֶם לַיהוָה וְדַעוּ חֲטֹאתְכֶם  
אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֹתְכֶם: כד<sup>כד</sup> בְּנוּ־לָכֶם עָרִים לְטַפְּכֶם  
וְגִדַּרְתֶּם לְצִנְאֲכֶם וְהִיצֵא מִפִּיכֶם תַּעֲשׂוּ:

כה<sup>כה</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנֵי־גַד וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר  
עֲבַדְיָךְ יַעֲשׂוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר אָדָנִי מִצִּוָּה: כו<sup>כו</sup> טַפָּנוּ נָשִׁינוּ

the Israelites until we have brought them to their place: but our children  
will stay in our fortified towns, safe from the inhabitants of the country.

18 We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has his inheritance.  
19 We will not inherit with them on the other bank of Jordan or  
beyond, since our inheritance has fallen to us here, east of the Jordan.”

20 Moses said to them, “If you do this, if you are prepared to fight before  
Yahweh, 21 and if all those of you who bear arms cross the Jordan before  
Yahweh, until he has driven all his enemies from before him, 22 then,  
once the land has become subject to Yahweh, you may go back; you shall  
be free of your obligation towards Yahweh and Israel, and this land shall  
be your inheritance before Yahweh. 23 However, if you do not, you will  
have sinned against Yahweh; and be sure your sin will find you out.  
24 Build towns, then, for your young children and folds for your flocks;  
but do what you have promised.”

25 So, the Gadites and the Reubenites said to Moses, “Your servants will  
do as my lord commands. 26 Our children, our wives, our flocks and all

18 Before ‘his inheritance’, the NJB adds ‘taken possession of’; here, we follow the NRSV.

19 After the first instance of ‘Jordan’ (יַרְדֵּן), NETB adds ‘River’, for clarity.

20 In place of ‘this’, here following the NRSV (NETB has ‘this thing’), the NJB has ‘as you have said’.

21 NETB has ‘his presence’ in place of ‘before him’, here following the NRSV (& NJB, which lacks ‘from’).

22 In place of ‘subject to Yahweh’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘subdued before the LORD’.

23 The nuance of the perfect tense verb translated ‘you will have sinned’ has to be the future perfect.

24 The literal translation of ‘what you have promised’ is ‘that which has gone out of your mouth’.

25 In place of ‘as my lord commands’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘as you order, sir’.

26 The NJB has ‘will stay’ in place of ‘shall remain there’, here following the NRSV, and NETB has ‘will be there’.

מִקְנֵנוּ וְכָל־בְּהֶמְתָּנוּ יִהְיוּ־שָׁם בְּעָרֵי הַגִּלְעָד:  
כִּי וַעֲבַדְיָהּ יַעֲבְרוּ כָל־חֵלּוֹן צָבָא לִפְנֵי יְהוָה  
לְמַלְחָמָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָדָנִי דִּבֶּר:

כֹּחַ וַיִּצֹו לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת אֱלֶעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ  
בֶּן־נֹון וְאֶת־רָאשֵׁי אֲבוֹת הַמִּטּוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
כֹּט וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֲלֵהֶם אִם־יַעֲבְרוּ בְּנִי־גָד וּבְנֵי־  
רְאוּבֵן | אֶתְכֶם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן כָּל־חֵלּוֹן לְמַלְחָמָה  
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְנִכְבְּשָׁה הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵיכֶם וְנָתַתֶּם לָהֶם  
אֶת־אֶרֶץ הַגִּלְעָד לְאַחֲזָה: <sup>ל</sup> וְאִם־לֹא יַעֲבְרוּ  
חֵלּוּצִים אִתְּכֶם וְנֶאֱחָזוּ בְּתַכְכֶּם בָּאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן:

<sup>לא</sup> וַיַּעֲנוּ בְּנֵי־גָד וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן לֵאמֹר אֵת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־עַבְדֶּיךָ כֵּן נַעֲשֶׂה: <sup>לב</sup> נָחֲנוּ נַעֲבֹר חֵלּוּצִים  
לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וְאֶתְּנוּ אַחֲזָת נַחֲלָתָנוּ מֵעַבְר  
לַיַּרְדֵּן: <sup>לג</sup> וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם | מֹשֶׁה לִבְנֵי־גָד וּלְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן  
וְלַחֲצִי | שִׁבְט | מְנַשֶּׁה בֶּן־יִזְסָף אֶת־מַמְלַכַת סִיחֹן  
מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת־מַמְלַכַת עֹוג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן הָאֶרֶץ  
לְעָרֶיהָ בְּגִבְלֹת עָרֵי הָאֶרֶץ סָבִיב:

our livestock shall remain there in the towns of Gilead, <sup>27</sup> but your servants, every man armed for war, will cross over to fight before Yahweh, just as my lord has ordered."

<sup>28</sup> Then Moses gave directions about them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua son of Nun, and to the leaders of the ancestral houses of the tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> Moses said to them, "If the Gadites and the Reubenites, all who bear arms, cross the Jordan to fight with you before Yahweh then, once the land is in your power, you will give them the land of Gilead for their possession. <sup>30</sup> But if they do not cross over in arms with you, then they must have their possessions with you in the land of Canaan."

<sup>31</sup> The Gadites and the Reubenites replied, "What Yahweh has said to your servants, we will do. <sup>32</sup> We cross in arms before Yahweh into the land of Canaan; but you must give us possession of our inheritance on this side of the Jordan." <sup>33</sup> Moses gave them – the Gadites, the Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph – the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land and the towns within its boundaries and the frontier towns of the land.

<sup>27</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with 'as you have ordered'.

<sup>28</sup> In place of 'ancestral houses', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'patriarchal Houses' and NETB has 'families'.

<sup>29</sup> The literal translation of 'in your power' is 'subdued before you'.

<sup>30</sup> So, the assignment of the Gadites' & Reubenites' land in Transjordan depended on them fighting in Canaan.

<sup>31</sup> The literal translation of the reply is, "That which Yahweh has spoken to your servants, thus we will do."

<sup>32</sup> After 'Jordan', NETB adds 'River', for clarity.

<sup>33</sup> The 'half-tribe of Manasseh' refers to that located east of the Jordan, as distinct from that settled in the region around Shechem (Jos 17:1–3).

לד ויבנו בני־גַד אֶת־דִּיבֹן וְאֶת־עֵטְרוֹת וְאֶת עֶרְעֹר:  
 לה וְאֶת־עֵטְרוֹת שׁוֹפָן וְאֶת־יַעְזֹר וַיִּגְבְּהָהּ: לוֹ וְאֶת־  
 בֵּית נִמְרָה וְאֶת־בֵּית הָרֹן עָרֵי מִבְצָר וְגִדְלוֹת צֶאֱן:  
 לז וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן בָּנוּ אֶת־חֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאֶת־אֶלְעֵלָא וְאֶת־  
 קְרִיתִים: לח וְאֶת־נֶבֹז וְאֶת־בְּעֵל מְעֹן מוֹסֶבֶת שֵׁם  
 וְאֶת־שִׁבְמָה וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְשֵׁמֹת אֶת־שְׁמוֹת הָעָרִים  
 אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ: לט וַיִּלְכּוּ בְנֵי מָכִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה גִלְעָדָה  
 וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ וַיּוֹרֶשׁ אֶת־הָאֲמָרִי אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ: מ וַיִּתֵּן מֹשֶׁה  
 אֶת־הַגִּלְעָד לְמָכִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה וַיֵּשֶׁב בָּהּ: מא וַיֵּאִיר  
 בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה הַלֵּךְ וַיִּלְכֹּד אֶת־חֻתִּיָּהֶם וַיִּקְרָא אֶתְהֶן  
 חֹת יֵאִיר: מב וְנֹבַח הַלֵּךְ וַיִּלְכֹּד אֶת־קִנְתָּה וְאֶת־  
 בְּנֵיתֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא לָהּ נֹבַח בְּשֵׁמוֹ: {פ}

<sup>34</sup> And the Gadites rebuilt Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, <sup>35</sup> and Atroth-Shophan, and Jazer, and Jogbehah, <sup>36</sup> and Beth-Nimrah, and Beth-Haran, fortified towns and folds for the flocks. <sup>37</sup> And the sons of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kiriathaim, <sup>38</sup> and Nebo, and Baal-Meon (the names of which were altered) and Sibmah; and they gave their names to the towns they had built. <sup>39</sup> And the sons of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead; and they conquered it and drove out the Amorites who were there. <sup>40</sup> And Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh and he settled therein. <sup>41</sup> And Jair the son of Manasseh went and seized their encampments and called them the Havvoth-Jair. <sup>42</sup> And Nobah went and seized Kenath, with its outlying villages, and renamed it Nobah after his own name.

<sup>34</sup> The towns attributed to Gad and Reuben extended beyond the territories of Jazer and ancient Gilead (see v. 1), as far as the Arnon, which was the frontier of Moab; that is to say, they covered the former kingdom of Sihon. Their geographical distribution does not indicate two territories, and the lists reflect an age when Gad and Reuben had come to be regarded as a single entity (see Jos 13:8).

<sup>35</sup> The LXX has simply 'Shophar' (Σωφαρ) in place of 'Atroth-Shophan' (עֵטְרוֹת שׁוֹפָן), and lacks 'Jogbehah' (יִגְבְּהָהּ).

<sup>36</sup> For 'Beth-Nimrah' (בֵּית נִמְרָה) & 'Beth-Haran' (בֵּית הָרֹן), the LXX reads, respectively, Ναμβραν & Βαιθαραν.

<sup>37</sup> Reuben's territory extended from Heshbon south to the Arnon, the frontier of Moab (Jos 13:15–23).

<sup>38</sup> The LXX omits the mention of 'Nebo' (נֶבֹז) and, for 'Baal-Meon' (בְּעֵל מְעֹן) reads Βεελμεων.

<sup>39</sup> 'Machir' (26:29, see #Gn 50:23) received the territory of King Og (21:33), which included the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan (Jos 13:29–31).

<sup>40</sup> The literal translation of 'therein' is 'in it'.

<sup>41</sup> The NJB translates the name 'Havvoth-Jair' (חֹת יֵאִיר) into 'the Encampments of Jair', as does the LXX (Ἐπαύλεις Ιαιρ).

<sup>42</sup> The NJB ends this verse, here following NETB, with, "and called it Nobah after himself."

## במדבר פרק לג

## NUMBERS 33

א אלה מסעי בני־ישראל אשר יצאו מארץ  
מצרים לצבאתם ביד־משה ואהרן: ב ויכתב משה  
את־מוצאיהם למסעיהם על־פי יהוה ואלה  
מסעיהם למוצאיהם:

ג ויסעו מרעמסס בחדש הראשון בחמשה עשר  
יום לחדש הראשון ממחרת הפסח יצאו בני־  
ישראל ביד רמה לעיני כל־מצרים: ד ומצרים  
מקברים את אשר הכה יהוה בהם כל־בכור  
ובאלהיהם עשה יהוה שפטים:

ה ויסעו בני־ישראל מרעמסס ויחנו בספת:  
ו ויסעו מספת ויחנו באתם אשר בקצה המדבר:  
ז ויסעו מאתם וישבו על־פי החירת אשר על־פני  
בעל צפון ויחנו לפני מגדל: ח ויסעו מפני החירת

<sup>1</sup> Here are the stages of the journey of the Israelites when they came out in a body from the land of Egypt, under the hand of Moses and Aaron.

<sup>2</sup> Moses wrote down their starting points whenever they broke camp on Yahweh's orders. Here are the stages according to their starting points.

<sup>3</sup> They left Rameses in the first month. On the fifteenth day of the first month, on the day following the Passover, the Israelites set out defiantly in the sight of all Egypt. <sup>4</sup> The Egyptians were burying those of their own people whom Yahweh had struck down, all the firstborn. Yahweh had carried out his judgement on their gods.

<sup>5</sup> The Israelites left Rameses and camped at Succoth. <sup>6</sup> They left Succoth and camped at Etham, which is on the edge of the desert. <sup>7</sup> They left Etham, turned back to Pi-Hahiroth, which faces Baal-Zephon, and encamped before Migdol. <sup>8</sup> They left Pi-Hahiroth, crossed over the sea

### NUMBERS 33

<sup>1</sup> In place of 'in a body', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'in military formation' and NETB has 'by their divisions'.

<sup>2</sup> The literal translation of 'on Yahweh's orders' is 'by Yahweh's mouth'.

<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of 'defiantly' is 'with a high hand'; the phrase is usually used for arrogant sin and pride, the defiant fist, as it were. The image of the high hand can also mean the hand raised to deliver the blow (Job 38:15).

<sup>4</sup> For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "The LORD executed judgments even against their gods."

<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of this verse, the NJB adds 'then' and the NRSV adds 'so'; here, we follow NETB.

<sup>6</sup> Throughout the Pentateuch, the NRSV has 'wilderness' in place of 'desert', here following the NJB. For 'Ethan', the LXX reads *Bouθav*.

<sup>7</sup> NETB spells out 'Pi-Hahiroth' (פִּי הַחִירוֹת) as a three-word name, 'Pi-ha-Hiroth'; the LXX renders the name *Εἰρωθ*.

<sup>8</sup> 'Etham' is the 'Shur' of Ex 15:22. Before 'Pi-Hahiroth', the Samaritan Pentateuch, Peshitta and many medieval Hebrew MSS have 'from before'. For the name 'Marah' (מָרָה), the LXX has the translation 'bitterness' (*Πικριών*).



וַיַּעֲבְרוּ בְּתוֹךְ-הַיָּם הַמִּדְבָּרָה וַיֵּלְכוּ דֶרֶךְ שְׁלֹשֶׁת  
יָמִים בַּמִּדְבָּר אֹתָם וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּמָרָה: <sup>ט</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מִמָּרָה  
וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵילָמָה וּבְאֵילָם שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה עֵינֹת מַיִם  
וְשִׁבְעִים תְּמָרִים וַיַּחֲנוּ-שָׁם: <sup>י</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מֵאֵילָם וַיַּחֲנוּ  
עַל-יַם-סוּף: <sup>יא</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מִיַּם-סוּף וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר-סִין:  
<sup>יב</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מִמִּדְבָּר-סִין וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּדֹפְקָה: <sup>יג</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ  
מִדֹּפְקָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּאַלוּשׁ: <sup>יד</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מֵאַלוּשׁ וַיַּחֲנוּ  
בְּרִפְדִּים וְלֹא-הָיָה שָׁם מַיִם לָעָם לְשָׁתוֹת: <sup>טו</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ  
מִרִּפְדִּים וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי:

<sup>טז</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מִמִּדְבָּר סִינַי וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּקִבְרֹת הַתְּאֻוָּה:  
<sup>יז</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מִקִּבְרֹת הַתְּאֻוָּה וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּחֲצֹרֹת: <sup>יח</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ  
מִחֲצֹרֹת וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּרִתְמָה: <sup>יט</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מִרִּתְמָה וַיַּחֲנוּ  
בְּרִמּוֹן פֶּרֶץ: <sup>כ</sup> וַיֵּסְעוּ מִרִּמּוֹן פֶּרֶץ וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּלִבְנָה:

into the desert, marched three days' journey in the desert of Etham, and encamped at Marah. <sup>9</sup> They left Marah and reached Elim; at Elim, there are twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there. <sup>10</sup> They left Elim and encamped by the Sea of Reeds; <sup>11</sup> and they left the Sea of Reeds and encamped in the desert of Sin. <sup>12</sup> They left the desert of Sin and encamped at Dophkah; <sup>13</sup> and they left Dophkah and encamped at Alush; <sup>14</sup> and they left Alush and encamped at Rephidim; and there was no water there for the people to drink. <sup>15</sup> Then they left Rephidim and encamped in the desert of Sinai;

<sup>16</sup> They left the desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-Hattaavah. <sup>17</sup> They left Kibroth-Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth; <sup>18</sup> they left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. <sup>19</sup> They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-Perez; <sup>20</sup> they left Rimmon-Perez and camped at Libnah. <sup>21</sup> They left

<sup>9</sup> NETB has 'fountains' in place of 'springs', here following the NJB & NRSV.

<sup>10</sup> Throughout the Pentateuch, the NRSV has 'Red Sea' in place of 'Sea of Reeds', here following the NJB.

<sup>11</sup> NETB has 'Zin' in place of 'Sin', here following the MT (סִין), NJB & NRSV.

<sup>12</sup> NETB omits the final letter in its spelling of the name 'Dophkah' (דֹּפְקָה) and the LXX renders the name Παφακα.

<sup>13</sup> Throughout this section, NETB has 'camped in' rather than 'encamped at' (here following the NJB).

<sup>14</sup> The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "where there was no water for the people to drink."

<sup>15</sup> The LXX renders the name 'Rephidim' (רִפְדִּים) as Παφιδιν.

<sup>16</sup> The LXX translates the name, 'Kibroth-Hattaavah' (קִבְרֹת הַתְּאֻוָּה), reading 'Tombs of Desire' (Μνημασιν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας).

<sup>17</sup> At the beginning of this, and many other verses in this section, the NJB adds the conjunction 'then'; here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>18</sup> The LXX renders the name 'Rithmah' (רִתְמָה) as Παθαμα.

<sup>19</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Rimmon-Perez' (רִמּוֹן פֶּרֶץ) is Ρεμμων Φαρεις.

<sup>20</sup> For 'Libnah' (לִבְנָה), the LXX reads Λεμωνα.

<sup>21</sup> In place of 'Rissah' (רִסָּה), some MSS of the LXX have Δεσσα (misreading ד for ר), while others have Ρεσσα.

**כא** וַיִּסְעוּ מִלִּבְנָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְרִסָּה: **כב** וַיִּסְעוּ מִרְסָּה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְקֶהֱלָתָה: **כג** וַיִּסְעוּ מִקֶּהֱלָתָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְהַר־  
**שֹׁפֶר:** **כד** וַיִּסְעוּ מִהַר־שֹׁפֶר וַיַּחֲנוּ בְחָרָדָה: **כה** וַיִּסְעוּ מִחָרָדָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְמַקְהֶלֶת: **כו** וַיִּסְעוּ  
מִמַּקְהֶלֶת וַיַּחֲנוּ בְתַחַת: **כז** וַיִּסְעוּ מִתַּחַת וַיַּחֲנוּ בְתָרַח: **כח** וַיִּסְעוּ מִתָּרַח וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּמִתְקָה: **כט** וַיִּסְעוּ  
מִמִּתְקָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְחִשְׁמוֹנָה: **ל** וַיִּסְעוּ מִחִשְׁמוֹנָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּמִסְרוֹת: **לא** וַיִּסְעוּ מִמִּסְרוֹת וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּבִנֵי יַעֲקֹן:  
**לב** וַיִּסְעוּ מִבְּנֵי יַעֲקֹן וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּחֹר הַגִּדְגָּד: **לג** וַיִּסְעוּ מִחֹר הַגִּדְגָּד וַיַּחֲנוּ בִּיטְבַתָּה: **לד** וַיִּסְעוּ מִיטְבַתָּה  
וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּעִבְרֹנָה: **לה** וַיִּסְעוּ מִעִבְרֹנָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּעִזִּיֹן

Libnah and camped at Rissah; <sup>22</sup> they left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. <sup>23</sup> They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher; <sup>24</sup> they left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. <sup>25</sup> They left Haradah and encamped at Makheloth; <sup>26</sup> and they left Makheloth and encamped at Tahath. <sup>27</sup> They left Tahath and encamped at Terah; <sup>28</sup> they left Terah and encamped at Mithkah; <sup>29</sup> they left Mithkah and encamped at Hashmonah; <sup>30</sup> they left Hashmonah and encamped at Moseroth. <sup>31</sup> They left Moseroth and encamped at Bene-Jaakan. <sup>32</sup> They left Bene-Jaakan and encamped at Hor-Gidgad. <sup>33</sup> They left Hor-Haggidgad and encamped at Jotbathah. <sup>34</sup> They left Jotbathah and encamped at Abronah. <sup>35</sup> They left Abronah and encamped at

<sup>22</sup> The LXX has *Μακελλαῖ* (cf. v. 25) in place of 'Kehelathah' (קֶהֱלָתָה).

<sup>23</sup> The LXX does not have 'Mount' before 'Shepher'.

<sup>24</sup> For 'Haradah' (חָרָדָה), the LXX reads *Χαράδα*.

<sup>25</sup> Note that the name *Μακηλωῖ* here in the LXX is different from that in vv. 22–23.

<sup>26</sup> In place of 'Tahath' (תַּחַת), the LXX has *Κατααῖ*.

<sup>27</sup> In place of 'Terah', here following the MT (תָּרַח), NJB & NRSV, NETB follows the LXX (*Ταραῖ*) and reads 'Tarah'.

<sup>28</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Mithkah' (מִתְקָה) is *Ματεκκα*.

<sup>29</sup> In place of 'Hashmonah' (חִשְׁמוֹנָה), some LXX MSS have *Σελμωνα* and others have *Ασσεμωνα*.

<sup>30</sup> For 'Moseroth' (מִסְרוֹת), the LXX reads *Μασσουρουῖ*.

<sup>31</sup> In place of 'Bene-Jaakan' (בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹן), the LXX has *Βαναια*.

<sup>32</sup> In place of 'Hor-Haggidgad', here following the MT (חֹר הַגִּדְגָּד) and NRSV, the NJB has 'Hor-Gidgad'; the LXX translates part of the name, reading 'the mountain of Gadgad' (τὸ ὄρος Γαδγαδ).

<sup>33</sup> In place of 'Jotbathah' (יֹטְבַתָּה), the LXX has *Ετεβαθα*.

<sup>34</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Abronah' (עִבְרֹנָה) is *Εβρωνα*.

<sup>35</sup> For 'Ezion-Geber' (עִזִּיֹן גִּבְרָה), the LXX reads *Γεσιωνγαβεζ* (or *Γεσιων Γαβεζ* in some MSS).

גִּבֶּר: לוֹ וַיִּסְעוּ מֵעֵצִין גִּבֶּר וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר־צֵן הוּא קָדֵשׁ:

לוֹ וַיִּסְעוּ מִקָּדֵשׁ וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּהָר הָהָר בְּקֶצֶה אֶרֶץ אֲדוֹם: לֹחַ וַיַּעַל אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־הָהָר עַל־פִּי יְהוָה וַיָּמָת שָׁם בַּשָּׁנָה הָאַרְבָּעִים לְצֵאת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ: לט וְאֶהֱרֹן בֶּן־שָׁלֹשׁ וָעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָת שָׁנָה בְּמָתוֹ בְּהָר הָהָר {ס}

מ וַיִּשְׁמַע הַכְּנַעֲנִי מֶלֶךְ עָרֹד וְהוּא יָשָׁב בְּנֶגֶב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן בְּבֶא בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

מא וַיִּסְעוּ מִהָר הָהָר וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּצַלְמֹנָה: מב וַיִּסְעוּ מִצַּלְמֹנָה וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּפוּנוֹן: מג וַיִּסְעוּ מִפוּנוֹן וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּאַבְתָּ: מד וַיִּסְעוּ מֵאַבְתָּ וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּעֵי הָעֲבָרִים בְּגִבּוֹל מוֹאָב: מה וַיִּסְעוּ מֵעֵיִם וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּדִיבֹן גָּד:

Ezion-Geber. <sup>36</sup> They left Ezion-Geber and encamped in the desert of Zin, that is, at Kadesh.

<sup>37</sup> They left Kadesh and encamped at Mount Hor, on the borders of the land of Edom. <sup>38</sup> Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor on Yahweh's orders and it was there that he died, in the fortieth year of the exodus of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on the first day of the month. <sup>39</sup> Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died at Mount Hor.

<sup>40</sup> The king of Arad, a Canaanite who lived in the Negeb in the land of Canaan, was informed when the Israelites arrived.

<sup>41</sup> They left Mount Hor and encamped at Zalmonah. <sup>42</sup> They left Zalmonah and encamped at Punon. <sup>43</sup> They left Punon and encamped at Oboth. <sup>44</sup> They left Oboth and encamped at Iye-Abarim in the territory of Moab. <sup>45</sup> They left Iyim and encamped at Dibon-Gad. <sup>46</sup> They left

<sup>36</sup> The LXX adds 'and they left the desert of Zin and encamped at Pharan' (καὶ ἀπῆρσαν ἐκ τῆς ἐρήμου Σιν καὶ παρενέβαλον εἰς τὴν ἔρημον Φαραν).

<sup>37</sup> In place of 'Mount Hor, on the borders of', here following the MT, the LXX reads, 'Hor, the mountain bordering' (Ὠρ τὸ ὄρος πλησίον).

<sup>38</sup> The literal translation of 'on Yahweh's orders' is 'at the mouth of Yahweh'.

<sup>39</sup> Note that Aaron had exceeded the 'maximum age' specified in Gn 6:3 by three years.

<sup>40</sup> For this verse, the NRSV reads, "The Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negeb in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the Israelites."

<sup>41</sup> For 'Mount Hor', the LXX reads 'Hor the mountain' (Ὠρ τοῦ ὄρους).

<sup>42</sup> The LXX rendering of 'Punon' (פוּנוֹן) is Φινω.

<sup>43</sup> For 'Oboth' (אַבְתָּ), the LXX reads Ωβωθ.

<sup>44</sup> In place of 'Iye-Abarim' (עֵי הָעֲבָרִים), the LXX reads 'Gai, on the other side' (Γαι ἐν τῷ πέραν).

<sup>45</sup> 'Iyim' (עֵיִם) is a shortened form of the name 'Iye-Abarim' mentioned in v. 44. The LXX rendering of 'Dibon-Gad' (דִּיבֹן גָּד) is Δαιβων Γαδ.

<sup>46</sup> In place of 'Almon-Diblathaim' (עֲלֹמֶן דִּבְלַת־יָמָה), the LXX has Γελμων Δεβλαθαιμ.

מִזְוִיסְעוֹ מִדִּיבֹן גַּד וַיִּחַנוּ בְּעַלְמֹן דְּבַלְתִּימָה:  
מִזְוִיסְעוֹ מִעַלְמֹן דְּבַלְתִּימָה וַיִּחַנוּ בְּהָרֵי הָעֲבָרִים  
לִפְנֵי נָבוֹ: מִחַ וַיִּסְעוּ מֵהָרֵי הָעֲבָרִים וַיִּחַנוּ בְּעֶרְבַת  
מוֹאָב עַל יַרְדֵּן יֶרִיחוֹ: מִט וַיִּחַנוּ עַל־הַיַּרְדֵּן מִבֵּית  
הַיְשֻׁמֹּת עַד אֲבֵל הַשְּׁטִים בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב: {ס}

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל־יַרְדֵּן  
יֶרִיחוֹ לֵאמֹר: נֹא דַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ  
אֲלֵהֶם כִּי אַתֶּם עֲבָרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן:  
וְהוֹרַשְׁתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם  
וְאַבְדֶּתֶם אֶת כָּל־מִשְׁכֵּיתֶם וְאֶת כָּל־צִלְמֵי מִסְכַּתְתֶּם  
תֹּאבְדוּ וְאֶת כָּל־בְּמוֹתֶם תִּשְׁמִידוּ: נִג וְהוֹרַשְׁתֶּם  
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁבַּתֶּם־בָּהּ כִּי לָכֶם נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ  
לְרֶשֶׁת אֹתָהּ: נִד וְהִתְנַחֲלֶתֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּגֻזְלָהּ  
לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתֵיכֶם לְרֹב תִּרְבּוּ אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלִמְעַט  
תִּמְעִיט אֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ אֶל־אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא לוֹ שְׁמָה הַגּוֹזֵל

Dibon-Gad and encamped at Almon-Diblathaim.<sup>47</sup> They left Almon-Diblathaim and encamped in the Abarim Mountains facing Nebo.<sup>48</sup> They left the Abarim Mountains and encamped in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan by Jericho.<sup>49</sup> They encamped near the Jordan between Beth-ha-Jeshimoth and Abel-ha-Shittim, on the plains of Moab.

<sup>50</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan opposite Jericho. He said: <sup>51</sup> “Speak to the Israelites, saying to them: “When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan,<sup>52</sup> you must drive out all the inhabitants of the country from before you. You must destroy their sculptured stones, and you must destroy all their statues of cast metal, and you must demolish all their high places.<sup>53</sup> You will drive out the inhabitants and take possession of this land and you will settle in it; for, I have given the land to you to possess it.<sup>54</sup> You are to divide it by lot according to your families. To a large clan you will give a greater inheritance, to a small clan you will give a lesser inheritance.

<sup>47</sup> The LXX rendering of ‘Nebo’ (נָבוֹ) is *Naβav*.

<sup>48</sup> In place of ‘by Jericho’, here following NRSV, the NJB has ‘facing Jericho’.

<sup>49</sup> The NRSV & NETB omit the ‘ha’ elements of the two names in this verse; here, we follow the MT (בֵּית הַיְשֻׁמֹּת, אֲבֵל הַשְּׁטִים) & NJB; the LXX renders the two names *Αισιμωθ* & *Βελσαττιμ*, respectively.

<sup>50</sup> The NRSV places the clause ‘in the plains ... Jericho’ at the beginning of the verse; here, we follow the MT & NJB.

<sup>51</sup> For ‘have crossed’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV uses the present tense, ‘cross over’.

<sup>52</sup> The NRSV has ‘figured’ in place of ‘sculptured’, here following the NJB.

<sup>53</sup> In place of ‘the land’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has the pronoun ‘it’.

<sup>54</sup> In place of ‘the tribes of your fathers’, the NJB has ‘ancestral tribes’.

לֹא יִהְיֶה לְמִטּוֹת אֲבֹתֵיכֶם תִּתְנַחֲלוּ: <sup>55</sup> וְאִם-לֹא  
תֹרִישׁוּ אֶת-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר  
תֹּתִירוּ מֵהֶם לְשָׁכִים בְּעֵינֵיכֶם וּלְצִנִּינִם בְּצַדֵּיכֶם  
וְצָרְרוּ אֵתְכֶם עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם יֹשְׁבִים בָּהּ:  
<sup>56</sup> וְהָיָה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּמְיִיתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם אֲעָשֶׂה  
לָכֶם: {פ}

Where the lot falls, that will be his. Make this apportionment according to the tribes of your fathers. <sup>55</sup> However, if you do not drive the inhabitants of the country before you, then those you have spared will be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides; they will harass you in the land where you live <sup>56</sup> and I will deal with you as I meant to deal with them.”

---

<sup>55</sup> NETB has ‘irritants’ in place of ‘barbs’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

<sup>56</sup> For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “And I will do to you as I thought to do to them” and NETB reads “And what I intended to do to them I will do to you.”



## במדבר פרק לד

## NUMBERS 34

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב צֹו אֶת־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי־אַתֶּם בָּאִים אֶל־הָאָרֶץ  
כְּנָעַן זֹאת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תִּפְּל לָכֶם בְּנַחֲלָה אֶרֶץ  
כְּנָעַן לַגְּבֻלָּתֶיהָ: ג וְהָיָה לָכֶם פָּאת־נֹגֵב מִמִּדְבַּר־צִן  
עַל־יְדֵי אֲדוֹם וְהָיָה לָכֶם גְּבוּל נֹגֵב מִקְצֵה יַם־  
הַמֶּלַח קָדְמָה: ד וְנָסַב לָכֶם הַגְּבוּל מִנֹּגֵב לַמַּעֲלָה  
עַקְרָבִים וְעָבַר צִנָּה וְהָיָה וְהָיוּ תּוֹצְאֹתָיו מִנֹּגֵב  
לְקֹדֶשׁ פְּרָנֶעַ וַיֵּצֵא חֲצֵר־אֲדָר וְעָבַר עֲצֻמָּנָה:  
ה וְנָסַב הַגְּבוּל מֵעֲצֻמֹּן נַחֲלָה מִצְרַיִם וְהָיוּ תּוֹצְאֹתָיו  
הַיָּמָה:

ו וְגְבוּל יָם וְהָיָה לָכֶם הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל וְגְבוּל זֶה־יְהִיָּה  
לָכֶם גְּבוּל יָם: ז וְזֶה־יְהִיָּה לָכֶם גְּבוּל צִפּוֹן מִן־הַיָּם  
הַגָּדוֹל תִּתָּאוּ לָכֶם הָר הָהָר: ח מִהָר הָהָר תִּתָּאוּ

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, <sup>2</sup> "Give the Israelites this order: "When you go into the land (of Canaan), this is the territory that will be your inheritance. This is the land of Canaan defined by its boundaries. <sup>3</sup> "The southern part of your country will stretch from the desert of Zin, on the borders of Edom. Your southern boundary will start on the east at the end of the Salt Sea. <sup>4</sup> It will then turn south towards the Ascent of the Scorpions and go by Zin to end in the south at Kadesh-Barnea. Then it will go towards Hazar-Addar and pass through Azmon. <sup>5</sup> From Azmon the boundary will turn towards the Torrent of Egypt and end at the Sea.

<sup>6</sup> "Your western border will be the Great Sea; this will be your western border. <sup>7</sup> This will be your northern border: You will draw a line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor; <sup>8</sup> from Mount Hor, you will draw a line to

## NUMBERS 34

- <sup>1</sup> Vv. 1-12 give a detailed description of the frontiers of Canaan, coinciding with those of the Egyptian province of Canaan at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. Canaan did not extend to the eastern side of the Jordan (vv. 13-15). Here, the territory is described as the Promised Land (see v. 2), which is defined elsewhere in different terms (see #Ex 23:13, #Jg 20:1 and #Dt 1:7).
- <sup>2</sup> The NRSV places the parentheses in this verse differently: "When you enter the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall to you for an inheritance, the land of Canaan, defined by its boundaries)."
- <sup>3</sup> The phrase, 'southern part of your country' refers to the corner or extremity of the Negev (נֹגֵב), the South.
- <sup>4</sup> The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- <sup>5</sup> The 'Sea' here refers to the Mediterranean.
- <sup>6</sup> The word for west is simply 'sea', because the sea is west of Israel.
- <sup>7</sup> Here, 'Mount Hor' appears to refer to the mountains in the northern part of Lebanon; it is not the same as the site of Aaron's death (33:38).
- <sup>8</sup> The NJB translates the first part of the name 'Lebo-Hamath' (לְבָא חַמַּת), reading 'the pass of Hamath'.

לְבָא חֲמַת וְהָיוּ תוֹצְאוֹת הַגִּבֵּל צִדְדָה: <sup>ט</sup> וַיֵּצֵא הַגִּבֵּל  
זַפְרֹנָה וְהָיוּ תוֹצְאוֹתָיו חֲצֵר עֵינָן זֶה־יְהִיָּה לָכֶם גִּבּוֹל  
צִפּוֹן: <sup>י</sup> וְהָתְאוּיֹתֶם לָכֶם לַגִּבּוֹל קִדְמָה מִחֲצֵר עֵינָן  
שִׁפְמָה: <sup>יא</sup> וַיֵּרֶד הַגִּבֵּל מִשְׁפֵּם הַרְבֵּלָה מִקֶּדֶם לְעֵין  
וַיֵּרֶד הַגִּבֵּל וּמַחֲהָ עַל־כֶּתֶף יַם־כְּנָרֶת קִדְמָה:  
<sup>יב</sup> וַיֵּרֶד הַגִּבּוֹל הַיַּרְדֵּנָה וְהָיוּ תוֹצְאוֹתָיו יַם הַמֶּלַח  
זֹאת תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם הָאָרֶץ לַגְּבֻלָתֶיהָ סָבִיב:

<sup>יג</sup> וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֹאת הָאָרֶץ  
אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנַחֲלוּ אֹתָהּ בְּגוֹרֵל אֲשֶׁל צוּהָ יְהוָה לָתֵת  
לְתִשְׁעַת הַמִּטּוֹת וַחֲצֵי הַמִּטָּה: <sup>יד</sup> כִּי לָקְחוּ מִטָּה  
בְּנֵי הָרְאוּבֵנִי לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם וּמִטָּה בְּנֵי־הַגָּדִי לְבֵית  
אֲבֹתָם וַחֲצֵי מִטָּה מִנִּשָּׁה לָקְחוּ נַחֲלָתָם: <sup>טו</sup> שְׁנֵי  
הַמִּטּוֹת וַחֲצֵי הַמִּטָּה לָקְחוּ נַחֲלָתָם מֵעֵבֶר לַיַּרְדֵּן  
יֵרָחוּ קִדְמָה מִזְרַחָה: {פ}

<sup>טז</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: <sup>יז</sup> אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת  
הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־יִנְחֲלוּ לָכֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶלְעָזָר

Lebo-Hamath, and the border will end at Zedad. <sup>9</sup> It will go on to Ziphron and end at Hazar-Enan; this will be your northern border.

<sup>10</sup> You will draw your eastern border from Hazar-Enan to Shepham.

<sup>11</sup> The border will go down from Shepham towards Riblah on the east side of Ain. Further, down it will keep to the eastern shore of the Sea of Chinnereth. <sup>12</sup> The frontier will then follow the Jordan and end at the Salt Sea. This will be your land and the borders surrounding it."

<sup>13</sup> Moses commanded the Israelites: "This is the land you shall inherit by lot, which Yahweh has ordered to be made over to the nine tribes and the half-tribe. <sup>14</sup> The tribe of the Reubenites with its ancestral houses and the tribe of the Gadites with its ancestral houses have already taken their heritage, and the half-tribe of Manasseh has also taken its. <sup>15</sup> These two tribes and the half-tribe have been given their heritage beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho, to the east, towards the sunrise."

<sup>16</sup> And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>17</sup> "These are the names of the men who will apportion the land to you for inheritance: Eleazar the

<sup>9</sup> At the beginning of this verse, the NJB adds 'from there'.

<sup>10</sup> Throughout this paragraph, the NJB & NRSV have 'boundary' in place of 'border', here following NETB.

<sup>11</sup> The 'Sea of Chinnereth' is the Lake of Gennesareth.

<sup>12</sup> The 'Salt Sea' is the Dead Sea.

<sup>13</sup> The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with, "Moses then gave the Israelites this order."

<sup>14</sup> In place of 'its', here following the MT, the NJB has 'its heritage'.

<sup>15</sup> Jericho is said to be to the east, presupposing a standpoint within Canaan rather than in Transjordan.

<sup>16</sup> NETB omits the word 'saying', considering the participle redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>17</sup> The verb here translated 'apportion' can be translated simply as 'divide' but it has more the idea of allocation as an inheritance,

הַכֹּהֵן וַיהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון: יְיָ וְנָשִׂיא אֶחָד נָשִׂיא אֶחָד  
מִמֶּטֶה תִקְחוּ לְנַחֵל אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: יְיָ וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת  
הָאֲנָשִׁים

priest and Joshua the son of Nun,<sup>18</sup> and you will take one leader from  
every tribe to take possession of the land;<sup>19</sup> and these are the names of  
the men:

לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה:	כ	20	“Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh;
וְלְמִטֵּה בִנְיָמִן שִׁמְעוֹן שְׁמוּאֵל בֶּן־עַמִּיהוּד:	כא	21	and of the tribe of the Simeonites, Shemuel son of Ammihud;
לְמִטֵּה בִנְיָמִן אֶלִידָד בֶּן־כְּסִלּוֹן:	כב	22	of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad son of Chislon;
וְלְמִטֵּה דָנ בִּנְיָדָן נָשִׂיא בֻקִי בֶן־יֹגְלִי:	כג	23	and of the tribe of the Danites a leader, Bukki son of Jogli;
לְבָנִי יוֹסֵף	כד	24	of the Josephites:
לְמִטֵּה בְנֵי־מְנַשֶּׁה נָשִׂיא חַנִּיאל בֶּן־אֶפְדֹּ:	כה	25	of the tribe of Manasseh a leader, Hanniel son of Ephod;
וְלְמִטֵּה בְנֵי־אֶפְרַיִם נָשִׂיא קִמּוּאֵל בֶּן־שִׁפְטָן:	כו	26	and of the tribe of the Ephraimites a leader, Kemuel son of Shiptan;
וְלְמִטֵּה בְנֵי־זְבוּלֹן נָשִׂיא אֶלִיצָפָן	כז	27	and of the tribe of the Zebulunites a leader, Elizaphan
בֶּן־פָּרְנַח:			son of Parnach;
וְלְמִטֵּה בְנֵי־יִשָּׁשְׁכָר נָשִׂיא פַלְטִיאל בֶּן־עֶזֶן:			and of the tribe of the Issacharites a leader, Paltiel son of Azzan;
וְלְמִטֵּה בְנֵי־אֲשֵׁר נָשִׂיא אַחִיהוּד בֶּן־שִׁלְמוֹ:			and of the tribe of the Asherites a leader, Ahihud son of Shelomi;

<sup>18</sup> This sense of the phrase ‘one leader from every tribe’ is created by repetition, literally: ‘one leader, one leader from the tribe’.

<sup>19</sup> The names of vv. 19–28, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, are new: the generation previously listed died without entering Canaan (14:23, 26:64–65).

<sup>20</sup> The NJB has ‘sons of Simeon’ in place of ‘Simeonites’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>21</sup> In this list, the NJB & NRSV omit the opening conjunction (‘and’); here, we include it when the MT opens with the corresponding particle (ו).

<sup>22</sup> The NJB has ‘the leader’ in place of ‘a leader’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>23</sup> In place of ‘Josephites’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘sons of Joseph’.

<sup>24</sup> Throughout this list, the NJB has ‘for the tribe’ in place of ‘of the tribe’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>25</sup> The NRSV hyphenates the name ‘Elizaphan’ – ‘Eli-Zaphan’.

<sup>26</sup> In this list, the NJB & NRSV omit the opening conjunction (‘and’); here, we include it when the MT opens with the corresponding particle (ו).

<sup>27</sup> The NJB has ‘sons of Asher’ in place of ‘Asherites’, here following the NRSV

כח 28 וּלְמֹטֶה בֶּנִי־נַפְתָּלִי נָשִׂיא פְּדַהֶאֱל  
בֶּן־עַמִּיהוּד: and of the tribe of the Naphtalites a leader, Pedahel  
son of Ammihud."

כט 29 אֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה לְנַחֵל אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן: {פ} These were the ones whom Yahweh ordered to divide the land of  
Canaan into heritages for the Israelites.

---

<sup>28</sup> The NJB has 'sons of Naphtali' in place of 'Naphtalites', here following the NRSV

<sup>29</sup> In place of 'ones', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'men'.

## במדבר פרק לה

א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל־יַרְדֵּן  
יְרֵחוֹ לֵאמֹר: ב צוֹ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָתַנּוּ לַלְוִיִּם  
מִנַּחֲלַת אֲחֻזָּתָם עָרִים לְשִׁבְתָּ וּמִגְרָשׁ לָעָרִים  
סְבִיבֹתֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם: ג וְהָיוּ הָעָרִים לָהֶם  
לְשִׁבְתָּ וּמִגְרָשֵׁיהֶם יִהְיוּ לְבִהֲמָתָם וּלְרִכְשָׁם וּלְכָל  
חֵיתָם: ד וּמִגְרָשֵׁי הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם מִקִּיר  
הָעִיר וְחוּצָהּ אֵלָּהּ אַמָּה סְבִיב: ה וּמִדֹּתָם מִחוּץ  
לָעִיר אֶת־פֶּאֶת־קִדְמָהּ אֶלְפִים בָּאַמָּה וְאֶת־פֶּאֶת־  
נֹגֶב אֶלְפִים בָּאַמָּה וְאֶת־פֶּאֶת־יָם אֶלְפִים בָּאַמָּה  
וְאֶת פֶּאֶת צָפוֹן אֶלְפִים בָּאַמָּה וְהָעִיר בְּתוֹךְ זֶה  
יְהִי לָהֶם מִגְרָשֵׁי הָעָרִים: ו וְאֵת הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר  
תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אֵת שְׁש־עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לָנֶס  
שָׁמָּה הָרֹצֵחַ וְעַל־יָהֶם תִּתְּנוּ אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתֵּים עִיר:  
ז כָּל־הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַלְוִיִּם אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמֹנֶה

## NUMBERS 35

<sup>1</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab, by the Jordan at Jericho, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Direct the Israelites to give to the Levites, out of the inheritance they possess, towns in which to live and give the Levites pastureland round the towns. <sup>3</sup> The towns are to be their homes and the pastureland is for their cattle, their possessions and all their animals. <sup>4</sup> The pastureland around the towns that you make over to the Levites shall extend, from the walls of the towns, for a thousand cubits all round. <sup>5</sup> Outside the town, measure two thousand cubits to the east, two thousand cubits to the north, two thousand cubits to the west and two thousand cubits to the north, the town lying in the centre; this is to be the pastureland for the towns. <sup>6</sup> The towns you give to the Levites will be the six cities of refuge, where you shall permit a manslayer to flee; and you are to hand over to them forty-two towns in addition. <sup>7</sup> Altogether, you will make over to the Levites forty-eight towns with

### NUMBERS 35

<sup>1</sup> This section has two main parts, the Levitical cities (vv. 1-8) and the Cities of Refuge (vv. 9-34).

<sup>2</sup> Despite the regulation to the contrary in 18:20ff, the Levites were to be given towns, among which were the cities of refuge (see #Jos 21:1).

<sup>3</sup> In place of 'their homes', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'theirs to live in'.

<sup>4</sup> The standard cubit in the OT is assumed by most authorities to be about 45 cm in length, so this would be a distance of 450 metres.

<sup>5</sup> V. 4 speaks of the distance from the wall as being 450 metres but here the measurements are describes as 900 m. Various proposals have been made in order to harmonize vv. 4 & 5, including the suggestion that the cubits of the Levitical pasture lands are frontages of land – in other words, on each side of the town there was a block of land with a frontage of 2,000 cubits (v. 5), and a depth of 1,000 cubits (v. 4).

<sup>6</sup> 'Manslayer' translates the verb 'to kill' in participial form, providing the subject of the clause.

<sup>7</sup> In place of 'pastureland', NETB has 'grazing lands'



עִיר אֲתֶהֱן וְאֶת־מִגְרֵשֵׁיהֶן: <sup>ח</sup> וְהָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ  
מֵאַחֲזֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הָרֹב תִּרְבּוּ וּמֵאֵת  
הַמְּעַט תִּמְעִיטוּ אִישׁ כְּפִי נִחְלָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִנְחָלוּ יִתֵּן  
מֵעָרָיו לְלוֹוִים: {פ}

<sup>ט</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר: יֹדֶבֶר אֶל־בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן  
אֶרֶצָה כְּנָעַן: <sup>יא</sup> וְהִקְרִיתֶם לָכֶם עָרִים עָרֵי מִקְלָט  
תִּהְיֶינָה לָכֶם וְגַם שָׁמָּה רֹצֵחַ מִכַּה־נֶּפֶשׁ בְּשֹׁגְגָה:  
<sup>יב</sup> וְהָיוּ לָכֶם הָעָרִים לְמִקְלָט מִגָּאֹל וְלֹא יָמוּת  
הָרֹצֵחַ עַד־עֲמֻדוֹ לִפְנֵי הָעֵדָה לְמִשְׁפָּט: <sup>יג</sup> וְהָעָרִים  
אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ שֵׁשׁ־עָרֵי מִקְלָט תִּהְיֶינָה לָכֶם: <sup>יד</sup> אֵת  
שְׁלֹשׁ הָעָרִים תִּתְּנוּ מֵעֵבֶר לַיַּרְדֵּן וְאֵת שְׁלֹשׁ  
הָעָרִים תִּתְּנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן עָרֵי מִקְלָט תִּהְיֶינָה:  
<sup>טו</sup> לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְגֵר וּלְתוֹשֵׁב בְּתוֹכָם תִּהְיֶינָה

their pastureland. <sup>8</sup> Of the towns that you grant out of the possession of the Israelites, more will be taken from those who hold more, and fewer from those who hold less. Everyone will make over towns to the Levites in proportion to the inheritance he himself has received."

<sup>9</sup> Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>10</sup> "Say this to the Israelites: "When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, <sup>11</sup> you are to select towns which you will make into cities of refuge where a man who has killed a person unintentionally may find sanctuary. <sup>12</sup> These towns will be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood, so that the manslayer may not die without judgement before the community. <sup>13</sup> The towns that you must make over will serve you as six cities of refuge: <sup>14</sup> the three that you make over on this side of the Jordan and the three that you make over in the land of Canaan are to be cities of refuge. <sup>15</sup> These six towns will be a refuge, for the Israelites as well as for the stranger and the

<sup>8</sup> The NJB has 'less' in place of 'fewer', here following NETB (the towns are discreet, enumerable objects).

<sup>9</sup> NETB omits the participle 'saying', considering it redundant in contemporary English.

<sup>10</sup> The NJB has 'and reach' in place of 'into', here following the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>11</sup> The 6 cities of refuge (Dt 4:41-43, 19:1-13, Jos 20) represent an attempt to restrain the tribal law of blood revenge so that a killer might receive a trial (v. 12). Early legislation stipulated that a person might seek asylum from the avenger, or next of kin, whose duty was to uphold family rights by killing the murderer of a relative (see Ex 21:12-14).

<sup>12</sup> On the word 'manslayer', see #6.

<sup>13</sup> The NJB has just 'you' in place of 'that you must', here following the NRSV.

<sup>14</sup> The NJB & NRSV have 'beyond' in place of 'on this side' (here following NETB) but it should be remembered that this law was proclaimed *before* the Israelites crossed into Canaan for the first time.

<sup>15</sup> In place of 'the stranger and the settler among you', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'for the resident or transient alien among them'.

שֶׁשֶׁהָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְמַקְלָט לְנוֹס שָׁמָּה כָּל־מִבְּהַ-  
נֶפֶשׁ בְּשַׁגָּגָה:

טז וְאִם־בְּכֵלִי בְרִזָּל הִכָּהוּ וַיָּמָת רֹצֵחַ הוּא מוֹת  
יוֹמָת הָרֹצֵחַ: <sup>יז</sup> וְאִם בְּאֶבֶן יָד אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת בָּהּ הִכָּהוּ  
וַיָּמָת רֹצֵחַ הוּא מוֹת יוֹמָת הָרֹצֵחַ: <sup>יח</sup> אוֹ בְּכֵלִי עֵץ־  
יָד אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת בּוֹ הִכָּהוּ וַיָּמָת רֹצֵחַ הוּא מוֹת יוֹמָת  
הָרֹצֵחַ: <sup>יט</sup> גֹּאֵל הַדָּם הוּא יָמִית אֶת־הָרֹצֵחַ בְּפָגְעוֹ־  
בּוֹ הוּא יִמָּתְנוּ: <sup>כ</sup> וְאִם־בְּשֹׁנְאָה יִהְדַּפְּנוּ אוֹ־הַשְּׁלִיךְ  
עָלָיו בְּצִדְיָהּ וַיָּמָת: <sup>כא</sup> אוֹ בְּאֵיבָה הִכָּהוּ בְּיָדוֹ וַיָּמָת  
מוֹת־יוֹמָת הַמִּבְּהָה רֹצֵחַ הוּא גֹּאֵל הַדָּם יָמִית אֶת־  
הָרֹצֵחַ בְּפָגְעוֹ־בּוֹ:

כב וְאִם־בְּפֶתַע בְּלֹא־אֵיבָה הִדְּפוּ אוֹ־הַשְּׁלִיךְ עָלָיו  
כָּל־כֵּלִי בְּלֹא צִדְיָהּ: <sup>כג</sup> אוֹ בְּכָל־אֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת בָּהּ  
בְּלֹא רְאוּת וַיִּפֹּל עָלָיו וַיָּמָת וְהוּא לֹא־אוֹיֵב לוֹ וְלֹא

settler among you, where anyone who has killed accidentally may find sanctuary.

<sup>16</sup> “But if he hits him with an iron tool so he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. <sup>17</sup> If he hits him with a stone in the hand so he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. <sup>18</sup> Or if he hits him with a wooden weapon in the hand so he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. <sup>19</sup> The avenger of blood must put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he must kill him. <sup>20</sup> But if he strikes him out of hatred or hurls something at him, lying in wait, and he dies, <sup>21</sup> or in enmity hits him with his fist, then he who struck him must die; he is a murderer; the avenger of blood must kill him when he meets him.

<sup>22</sup> “But if he pushes another suddenly without enmity, or hurls an object without lying in wait, <sup>23</sup> or without seeing him dropped a stone on him capable of causing death and so killed him, though he bore him no

<sup>16</sup> The clause translated ‘so he died’ is the preterite of ‘die’, with the *vav* consecutive showing the natural result of the blow.

<sup>17</sup> In place of ‘in the hand’, the NJB has ‘capable of killing’, as also in v. 18.

<sup>18</sup> Before ‘be put to death’, NETB adds ‘surely’ (as also in vv. 16 & 17).

<sup>19</sup> The ‘avenger of blood’ (‘go-el’, גֹּאֵל) was the victim’s nearest relative (Gn 4:15, 9:6, Dt 19:12, and see 2S 14:11). The go-el was also the official protector of his relations: he was especially bound to prevent the alienation of their landed property (Lv 25:23–25, Rt 4:3ff). By extension, God was called the go-el of Israel (Ps 19:14, Is 41:14, Jr 50:34). The basic idea is that of protection.

<sup>20</sup> For this verse, here following NETB, the NJB reads, “If the killer has maliciously manhandled his victim, or thrown some weapon to kill him.”

<sup>21</sup> In place of ‘hits’, the NJB has ‘dealt him the death blow’.

<sup>22</sup> For this verse, the NJB reads, “But if he has manhandled his victim by chance, without malice, or thrown some missile at him not meaning to hit him.”

<sup>23</sup> The NRSV uses ‘unintentionally’ for ‘without seeing’; the NJB (but not the 1<sup>st</sup> edition) has ‘meant for killing’ in place of ‘capable of causing death’.

מִבְקֶשׁ רָעָתוֹ: כִּד וְשָׁפְטוּ הָעֵדָה בֵּין הַמָּכָה וּבֵין  
גֹּאֵל הַדָּם עַל הַמְשַׁפְּטִים הָאֵלֶּה: כֵּה וְהָצִילוּ הָעֵדָה  
אֶת־הַרֹצֵחַ מִיַּד גֹּאֵל הַדָּם וְהִשִּׁיבוּ אֹתוֹ הָעֵדָה אֶל־  
עִיר מִקְלָטוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נָס שָׁמָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב בָּהּ עַד־מוֹת  
הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדֹל אֲשֶׁר־מָשַׁח אֹתוֹ בְּשֶׁמֶן הַקֹּדֶשׁ:  
כּו וְאִם־יֵצֵא יֵצֵא הַרֹצֵחַ אֶת־גְּבוּל עִיר מִקְלָטוֹ אֲשֶׁר  
יָנוּס שָׁמָּה: כִּז וּמָצָא אֹתוֹ גֹּאֵל הַדָּם מִחוּץ לַגְּבוּל  
עִיר מִקְלָטוֹ וְרָצַח גֹּאֵל הַדָּם אֶת־הַרֹצֵחַ אֵין לוֹ דָּם:  
כח כִּי בְּעִיר מִקְלָטוֹ יֵשֶׁב עַד־מוֹת הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדֹל  
וְאַחֲרֵי מוֹת הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדֹל יָשׁוּב הַרֹצֵחַ אֶל־אָרֶץ  
אֲחֻזָּתוֹ: כט וְהָיוּ אֵלֶּה לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת מִשְׁפָּט  
לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּכֹל מוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם:

ל כָּל־מִכְּהַנֶּפֶשׁ לְפִי עֵדִים יִרְצַח אֶת־הַרֹצֵחַ וְעַד  
אֶחָד לֹא־יִעֲנֶה בְּנֶפֶשׁ לְמוֹת: לא וְלֹא־תִקְחוּ כֹפֶר  
לְנֶפֶשׁ רֹצֵחַ אֲשֶׁר־הוּא רָשָׁע לְמוֹת כִּי־מוֹת יוֹמָת:  
לב וְלֹא־תִקְחוּ כֹפֶר לָנוּס אֶל־עִיר מִקְלָטוֹ לָשׁוּב

malice and wished him no harm,<sup>24</sup> then the community must decide in accordance with these rules between the manslayer and the avenger of blood,<sup>25</sup> and so rescue the killer from the avenger of blood. They will send him back to the original city of refuge, and he will stay there until the death of the High Priest who was anointed with the holy oil.<sup>26</sup> If the killer should leave the bounds of the city of refuge where he has sought sanctuary<sup>27</sup> and the avenger of blood encounters him outside the bounds of his city of refuge, the avenger of blood may kill him without incurring bloodguilt.<sup>28</sup> For the killer should stay in his city of refuge until the death of the High Priest: only after the death of the High Priest may he go back to the land of his home.<sup>29</sup> These regulations shall have force of law for you and your descendants, wherever you may be.

<sup>30</sup> “In any case of homicide, the murderer must be put to death on the word of witnesses; but the evidence of a single witness is not enough to uphold a capital charge.<sup>31</sup> You shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer condemned to death; he must die.<sup>32</sup> Nor are you to accept

<sup>24</sup> In place of ‘manslayer’, the NJB has ‘the one who struck the blow’.

<sup>25</sup> In place of ‘original city of refuge’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘the city of refuge where he had sought sanctuary’.

<sup>26</sup> The NRSV repeats ‘original city of refuge’ in place of ‘city of refuge where he has sought sanctuary’, here following the NJB.

<sup>27</sup> The NJB has ‘fear of reprisals’ in place of ‘incurring bloodguilt’, here following the NRSV.

<sup>28</sup> For ‘the killer’, the MT simply has ‘he’; the referent of the pronoun is specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>29</sup> NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB & NRSV, with ‘in all the places where you live’.

<sup>30</sup> The literal translation of ‘on the word of’ is ‘at the mouth of’; the metonymy stresses it is at their report.

<sup>31</sup> The NRSV & NETB end this verse with ‘put to death’; here, we follow the NJB.

<sup>32</sup> In place of ‘priest’, here following the MT (& NETB), the NJB & NRSV, following the LXX (ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας) & Peshitta, have ‘High Priest’.

לְשִׁבֶּת בָּאָרֶץ עַד־מֹות הַכֹּהֵן: לֵי וְלֹא־תַחֲנִיפוּ אֶת־  
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בָּהּ כִּי הַדָּם הוּא יַחֲנִיף אֶת־  
הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא־יִכָּפֹר לַדָּם אֲשֶׁר שִׁפְדָּ־בָהּ כִּי־  
אִם בַּדָּם שִׁפְכוּ: לֵי וְלֹא תַטְמֵא אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר  
אַתֶּם יֹשְׁבִים בָּהּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹכָהּ כִּי אֲנִי  
יְהוָה שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

ransom for anyone who, having sought sanctuary in his city of refuge,  
wishes to come back and live at home before the death of the priest.  
<sup>33</sup> Do not pollute the country you live in. Blood pollutes the country and,  
for the country, the only expiation for bloodshed in it is the blood of the  
man who shed it. <sup>34</sup> You must not defile the land you inhabit, the land  
in which I dwell; for I, Yahweh, dwell among the Israelites.”

---

<sup>33</sup> The NJB uses the word ‘pollute’ in place of ‘profane’ (twice in this verse); here, we follow the NRSV & NETB.

<sup>34</sup> The NJB has ‘live’ in place of ‘dwell’, here following the NRSV.

## במדבר פרק לו

א וַיִּקְרְבוּ רָאשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת לְמִשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־גִלְעָד בֶּן־מְכִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיְדַבְּרוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וּלְפְנֵי הַנְּשָׂאִים רָאשֵׁי אֲבוֹת לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶת־אֲדֹנִי צֹוֶה יְהוָה לָתֵת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ בְּנַחֲלָה בְּגֹזֶרֶל לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲדֹנִי צֹוֶה בִּיהוָה לָתֵת אֶת־נַחֲלַת צֶלְפָּחָד אֶחָיו לְבָנָיו: ג וְהָיוּ לְאֶחָד מִבְּנֵי שְׁבִטֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנָשִׁים וְנִגְרַעַה נַחֲלָתָן מִנַּחֲלַת אֲבֹתָיו וְנוֹסֵף עַל נַחֲלַת הַמָּטָה אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶינָה לָהֶם וּמִגִּזְרֵל נַחֲלָתָן יִגְרַע: ד וְאִם־יִהְיֶה הַיָּבֵל לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנוֹסֶפֶה נַחֲלָתָן עַל נַחֲלַת הַמָּטָה אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶינָה לָהֶם וּמִנַּחֲלַת מָטָה אֲבֹתָיו יִגְרַע נַחֲלָתָן:

ה וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־פִּי יְהוָה לֵאמֹר כֵּן מָטָה בְּנֵי־יוֹסֵף דְּבָרִים: ו זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לְבָנֹת צֶלְפָּחָד לֵאמֹר לְטוֹב בְּעֵינֵיהֶם תִּהְיֶינָה לְנָשִׁים אֲדָם לְמִשְׁפַּחַת מָטָה אֲבֵיהֶם תִּהְיֶינָה

## NUMBERS 36

<sup>1</sup> Then the heads of families in the clan of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, of the Josephite clans, came forward and spoke before Moses and the leaders, the Israelite heads of families; <sup>2</sup> they said: "Yahweh has ordered my lord to give the land by lot to the Israelites; and my lord was ordered by Yahweh to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. <sup>3</sup> Now, if they marry someone from another tribe in the Israelites, their property will be taken away from our fathers' heritage. The property of the tribe into which they marry will be increased and the property allotted to us diminished. <sup>4</sup> And, when the jubilee comes round for the Israelites, the property of these women will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they then belong, and lost to the inheritance of our own ancestral tribe."

<sup>5</sup> Moses gave the following ruling to the Israelites, according to Yahweh's word. He said: "The tribe of the sons of Joseph is in the right. <sup>6</sup> This is Yahweh's ruling for the daughters of Zelophehad: They may marry whom they please, providing they marry into a clan of their

## NUMBERS 36

<sup>1</sup> The literal translation of 'the heads of families in the clan of Gilead' (here following the NJB) is 'the heads of the fathers by the family of the Gileadites'. After 'Moses', the LXX (καὶ ἐναντίῳ Ἐλεάζαρ τοῦ ἱερέως) and Peshitta add 'and before Eleazar the priest'.

<sup>2</sup> The infinitive construct 'to give' serves here as the complement or object of the verb, answering what Yahweh had commanded Moses.

<sup>3</sup> The literal translation of 'into which they marry' is 'which they will be to them', meaning, to those who have them, i.e., the marriages.

<sup>4</sup> This verse is additional: it refers to the law of jubilee (see Lv 25:8–55), concerned with land that was sold, not inherited.

<sup>5</sup> The literal translation of 'at Yahweh's bidding' (here following the NJB) is 'by the word of Yahweh'.

<sup>6</sup> This law prevents tribal intermarriage only when the woman is an heiress.



לְנָשִׁים: <sup>ז</sup> וְלֹא־תִסָּב נַחֲלָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמָּטָה  
 אֶל־מָטָה כִּי אִישׁ בְּנַחֲלַת מָטָה אֲבֹתָיו יִדְבְּקוּ בְנֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: <sup>ח</sup> וְכָל־בֵּת יִרְשֶׁת נַחֲלָה מִמָּטוֹת בְּנֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶחָד מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת מָטָה אָבִיהָ תִּהְיֶה  
 לְאִשָּׁה לְמַעַן יִירָשׁוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ נַחֲלַת  
 אֲבֹתָיו: <sup>ט</sup> וְלֹא־תִסָּב נַחֲלָה מִמָּטָה לְמָטָה אַחֵר כִּי־  
 אִישׁ בְּנַחֲלָתוֹ יִדְבְּקוּ מָטוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

<sup>י</sup> בְּאִשֶּׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בֶּן עָשׂוֹ בָּנוֹת  
 צִלְפַּחַד: <sup>יא</sup> וְתִהְיֶינָה מַחֲלָה תַרְצָה וְחַגְלָה וּמִלְכָּה  
 וְנֹעָה בָּנוֹת צִלְפַּחַד לְבְנֵי דְדִיָּהוּן לְנָשִׁים:  
<sup>יב</sup> מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת בְּנֵי־מְנַשֶּׁה בֶּן־יוֹסֵף הָיוּ לְנָשִׁים וְתִהְיֶי  
 נַחֲלָתָן עַל־מָטָה מִשְׁפַּחַת אֲבִיהֶן: <sup>יג</sup> אֵלֶּה הַמִּצְוֹת  
 וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ:  
 {ש}

father's tribe. <sup>7</sup> The heritage of the Israelites is not to be transferred from tribe to tribe; every man of the Israelites is to remain bound to the heritage of his ancestral tribe. <sup>8</sup> Every daughter who has a heritage in one of the tribes of the Israelites must marry into a clan of her own ancestral tribe, so that the Israelites may each preserve the heritage of his father. <sup>9</sup> No heritage may be transferred from tribe to tribe: every tribe of the Israelites will stay bound to its own heritage."

<sup>10</sup> The daughters of Zelophehad did as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

<sup>11</sup> Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah, daughters of Zelophehad, married the sons of their father's brothers. <sup>12</sup> Since they married into the clans of the Manassehites, the descendants of Joseph, their heritage reverted to the tribe of their father's clan. <sup>13</sup> Such were the commandments and laws that Yahweh prescribed for the Israelites through Moses, on the plains of Moab near the Jordan by Jericho.

<sup>7</sup> The literal translation of 'transferred' is 'turned aside'.

<sup>8</sup> The subject of the last clause is 'Israelites' and the verb is plural to agree with it; but the idea is collective as the word translated 'each' indicates: 'so that the Israelites may possess – each man the inheritance of his fathers'.

<sup>9</sup> In place of 'tribe to tribe', here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have 'one tribe to another'.

<sup>10</sup> The MT places the clauses of this verse in a different order: "As Yahweh had ordered Moses, so the daughters of Zelophehad did."

<sup>11</sup> They married in the family as they were instructed, but the meaning of דְדִיָּהוּן ('father's brothers') is not necessarily restricted to uncles.

<sup>12</sup> In place of 'Manassehites', here following NETB, the NJB and NRSV have 'sons of Manasseh'.

<sup>13</sup> This verse is a concluding statement, covering all the laws given in Moab (22:1–36:12).