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## **Barnes' Notes on the Bible** **Volume 2 -** **Numbers**

*By A. Fuller*

*To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:*

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# NUMBERS

## INTRODUCTION

The title commonly given to this book is evidently suggested by the two numberings of the people recorded in Numbers 1 and Numbers 26.

The book narrates the history of the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness from the completion of the law-giving at Sinai, <sup><0273></sup>Leviticus 27:34, to their mustering in the plains of Moab for actual entry into the land of promise.

Its contents may be divided into four parts:

- (a) Numbers 1—10:10;
- (b) <sup><0401></sup>Numbers 10:11—14;
- (c) Numbers 15—19;
- (d) Numbers 20—36.

The incidents are generally given in their chronological order, except in the third part. The five chapters comprised in this part appear to deal with a long period, from which only isolated episodes are given; and of these the dates can only be conjectured.

Between the two dates “the first day of the second month of the second year after they were come out of Egypt” (<sup><0401></sup>Numbers 1:1), and the death of Aaron (<sup><0433></sup>Numbers 33:38), intervene no less than 38 years and 3 months (compare <sup><0414></sup>Deuteronomy 2:14), the long and dreary period of tarrying in the wilderness until the disobedient generation had wasted away. (On the history of these years, see the notes at <sup><0401></sup>Numbers 20:1; 33:19.)

From the death of Aaron to the date given in the opening verses of Deuteronomy (<sup><0401></sup>Deuteronomy 1:1-3), occurred a space of exactly six months, in which all the events narrated in the fourth part of the Book of Numbers, from <sup><0401></sup>Numbers 20:1 to the end, would seem to have occurred, with the probable exception of the defeat of the king of Arad (<sup><0401></sup>Numbers 21:1-3).

As regards the authorship and date of composition, the notes of time, the tenor of the contents, no less than the direct assertions of the text itself, lead to the conclusion that Moses is properly spoken of as the writer of the Book of Numbers. It is in substance his work; though many portions of it were probably committed to writing many years before the whole was completed; and the concluding chapters were not written until toward the close of the 40th year after the Exodus.

# NUMBERS

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 1

**Numbers 1:1-4.** A month had passed away since the setting up of the tabernacle (<sup><0210></sup>Exodus 40:2,17): and the Sinaitic legislation was now complete (compare <sup><0273></sup>Leviticus 27:34).

A census (“sum”) was commanded, to be based not upon any fresh registration of individuals, but upon that which had accompanied the previous collection of the offerings. Compare <sup><0211></sup>Exodus 30:11, etc.; <sup><0225></sup>Exodus 38:25-28. The offerings had been probably tendered by the people in groups, and if certificates of registration were furnished to such groups, the new census might be easily carried out by means of these documents, and got through (<sup><0018></sup>Numbers 1:18) in a single day. The present registration enrolled persons “after their families, by the house of their fathers;” and was superintended not by the Levites (see <sup><0221></sup>Exodus 38:21 and note), but by (<sup><0004></sup>Numbers 1:4) an assessor for each tribe to act in the business with Moses and Aaron. The purpose now in view was not religious only. The census now taken would serve as a basis for various civil and military arrangements.

**Numbers 1:5-16.** The princes of the tribes, selected (<sup><0004></sup>Numbers 1:4) under divine direction, were for the most part the same persons as those chosen a few months previously at the counsel of Jethro (<sup><0121></sup>Exodus 18:21-26). Nahshon, prince of Judah, is mentioned in <sup><0023></sup>Exodus 6:23, and Elishama, in <sup><0326></sup>1 Chronicles 7:26,27. The peers of men like these were no doubt entitled, among their fellows, to the epithet “renowned,” <sup><0016></sup>Numbers 1:16.

**Numbers 1:20-46.** The enrollment, being taken principally for military purposes (compare <sup><0003></sup>Numbers 1:3,20), would naturally be arranged by hundreds, fifties, etc. (cf. <sup><0009></sup>2 Kings 1:9,11,13). In eleven tribes the number enrolled consists of complete hundreds. The difference, in this respect, observable in the case of the tribe of Gad here (<sup><0025></sup>Numbers 1:25), and of the tribe of Reuben at the later census (<sup><0007></sup>Numbers 26:7), is probably to be accounted for by the pastoral, and consequently nomadic,

habits of these tribes, which rendered it difficult to bring all their members together at once for a census. Judah already takes precedence of his brethren in point of numbers (compare <sup><0408></sup>Genesis 49:8 note), and Ephraim of Manasseh (compare <sup><0489></sup>Genesis 48:19,20).

<sup><0047></sup>**Numbers 1:47-54.** When a census of the tribe of Levi takes place. (<sup><0485></sup>Numbers 3:15; 26:62), “all” the males are counted from a month old and upward, and not, as in the other tribes, those only who were of age for service in the field.

<sup><0048></sup>**Numbers 1:48.** *had spoken* Render spake. The formal appointment is only now made, in reward for their zeal (<sup><0226></sup>Exodus 32:26-29), though reference to their future office appears previously in <sup><0252></sup>Leviticus 25:32ff, and they had already acted as assistants to the priests (compare <sup><0282></sup>Exodus 38:21).

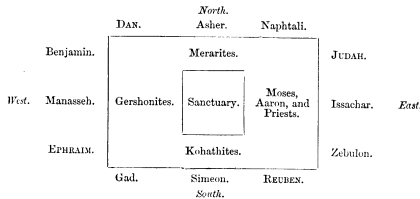
## NOTES ON NUMBERS 2

**Numbers 2:2.** *standard ... ensign* The “standard” marked the division, or camp (cf. <sup><000></sup>Numbers 1:9,16,24,31); the “ensign” the family. There would thus be four “standards” only, one for each “camp” of three tribes. The “standard” was probably a solid figure or emblem mounted on a pole, such as the Egyptians used. Tradition appropriates the four cherubic forms (<sup><3005></sup>Ezekiel 1:5-12; <sup><6007></sup>Revelation 4:7ff), the lion, man, ox, and eagle, to the camps of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan respectively; and this, as to the first, has a certain support from <sup><0400></sup>Genesis 49:9 (compare <sup><6005></sup>Revelation 5:5), and as to the third, from <sup><6307></sup>Deuteronomy 33:17.

*far off* See the margin, over against; i.e. facing the tabernacle on every side. The distance was perhaps 2,000 cubits or rather more than 1/4 mile: compare <sup><6000></sup>Joshua 3:4.

**Numbers 2:14.** *Reuel* Doubtless an error of transcription for Deuel (<sup><0014></sup>Numbers 1:14).

**Numbers 2:3-32.** The following plan shows the general arrangement of the camp, which would vary in different places according to local exigencies. The area of the camp might be about three square miles:



**Numbers 2:32-34.** Such was the ideal form of the encampment in the wilderness: a form reproduced in the square court with which the temple was eventually surrounded, and in the vision of the heavenly city as seen by Ezekiel (<sup><2680></sup>Ezekiel 48:20), and by John (<sup><6216></sup>Revelation 21:16; compare <sup><6010></sup>Revelation 20:9). Thus the camp of God’s earthly people was divinely ordered so as to set forth the completeness of His Church; and to illustrate by its whole arrangement, which was determined by the tabernacle in the center, both the dependance of all on God, and the access which all enjoyed to God.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 3

**Numbers 3:1.** The “generations” (see <sup><0004></sup>Genesis 2:4) now given, though entitled those of Aaron and Moses (Aaron standing first as the older brother), are those of Aaron only. The personal dignity of Moses, though it gave him rank as at the head of his tribe, was not hereditary. He had, and desired to have (<sup><0442></sup>Numbers 14:12; <sup><0210></sup>Exodus 32:10), no successor in his office but the distant prophet like unto himself (<sup><0818></sup>Deuteronomy 18:18). Aaron was the ancestor of a regular succession of priests.

**Numbers 3:3.** *whom he consecrated* i.e. whom Moses consecrated, or literally as in the margin, whose “hand he filled,” by conferring their office upon them (<sup><0800></sup>Leviticus 8:1ff).

**Numbers 3:7.** *keep his charge* i.e. so assist him that the obligations incumbent on him and on the congregation may be fulfilled.

**Numbers 3:13.** The concluding words are better expressed thus: “Mine shall they be, Mine, the Lord’s.” On the subject of the firstborn see the notes at <sup><0483></sup>Numbers 3:43-51.

**Numbers 3:26.** *the cords ... the service thereof* i.e. of the tabernacle, not of the hangings of the court, for these, with their cords and other fittings, belonged to the charge of the Merarites (<sup><0486></sup>Numbers 3:36,37). The tabernacle was under the care of the Gershonites.

**Numbers 3:27-32.** Of the Levites, the Kohathites, the kinsmen of Moses and Aaron, and the most numerous, have the most important charge confided to them, namely, that of the ark, the altars, and the more especially sacred furniture generally.

**Numbers 3:39.** *twenty and two thousand* A number on which the commutation with the firstborn of the twelve tribes depends (<sup><0483></sup>Numbers 3:43-46). The actual total of the male Levites is 22,300 (compare <sup><0482></sup>Numbers 3:22,28,34): and the extra 300 are considered by some to represent those who, being first-born themselves in the tribe of Levi, could not be available to redeem the first-born in other tribes. Others consider the difference due to an error in the Hebrew text.

The tribe of Levi is shown by this census to have been by far the smallest of the tribes.

<sup><0486></sup>**Numbers 3:43.** This result, when compared with the number of male adults (603,550, compare <sup><0482></sup>Numbers 2:32), is small, the usual proportion of first-born sons to a total male population being about one in four: and the explanation offered is that the law of <sup><0231></sup>Exodus 13:1,2, prescribed a dedication of those only who should be firstborn “thenceforward”.

On the other hand, the number is very large to be born among two millions of persons in a single year; and it must be admitted, that some unusual causes must have been concerned. Such, not to mention the divine blessing, may be found in the sudden development of national energies which would immediately ensue on the Exodus. Before that event, the miserable estate of the people, and especially the inhuman order for the destruction of their first-born, would check very seriously the ratio of marriages and births; and this ratio would naturally, when the check was removed, exhibit a sudden and striking increase.

<sup><0484></sup>**Numbers 3:44-51.** This redemption money (see the marginal references) would perhaps be exacted from the parents of the “youngest” children of the 22,273 (<sup><0483></sup>Numbers 3:43). The cattle of the Levites was doubtless taken in the gross as an equivalent for the first-born cattle of the other tribes, which of course, no less than the first-born of men, belonged to the Lord; and in future would have to be redeemed (<sup><0485></sup>Numbers 18:15; <sup><0519></sup>Deuteronomy 15:19).



## NOTES ON NUMBERS 4

**Numbers 4:4.** *about the most holy things* Omit “about.” The sense is, “this is the charge of the sons of Kohath, the most holy things:” i.e. the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread, the candlestick, and the golden altar, together with the furniture pertaining thereto. It appears, from a comparison of <sup><0046></sup>Numbers 4:16,28,33, that the ministry of the Kohathites was superintended by Eleazar, the older of the two surviving sons of Aaron; and that of the two other families by Ithamar.

**Numbers 4:6.** *wholly of blue* Compare <sup><0274></sup>Exodus 25:4 note. The third and external covering of the ark only was to be of this color. The table of showbread had (<sup><0048></sup>Numbers 4:8) an outer wrapping of scarlet; the altar (<sup><0043></sup>Numbers 4:13) one of purple.

*put in the staves* Probably, “put the staves in order.” These were never taken out of the golden rings by which the ark was to be borne (see <sup><0254></sup>Exodus 25:14,15), but would need adjustment.

**Numbers 4:20.** *to see when the holy things are covered* Render: to see the holy things for an instant. The expression means literally “as a gulp,” i.e. for the instant it takes to swallow.

**Numbers 4:23.** *enter in to perform the service* literally, as in the margin, “to war the warfare,” or, as the same phrase in part is rendered, <sup><0043></sup>Numbers 4:3, “enter into the host to do the work.” The language is military. The service of God is a sacred warfare (<sup><0084></sup>Numbers 8:24,25’s marginal reading).

**Numbers 4:28, 33** The Gershonites and Merarites are superintended by Ithamar, Aaron’s younger son, who had already had the oversight of the tabernacle in its construction (<sup><0281></sup>Exodus 38:21). Thus, readily do the permanent offices of the leaders of the Israelite community spring out of the duties which, under the emergencies of the first year of the Exodus, they had been led, from time to time, to undertake.

**Numbers 4:32.** *By name ye shall reckon the instruments* Or, assign them to their bearers singly, and “by name.” These “instruments” comprised the heavier parts of the tabernacle; and the order seems intended

to prevent individual Merarites choosing their own burden, and so throwing more than the proper share on others.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 5

**Numbers 5.** The general purpose of the directions given in this and the next chapter is to attest and to vindicate, by modes in harmony with the spirit of the theocratical law, the sanctity of the people of God. Thus, the congregation of Israel was made to typify the Church of God, within which, in its perfection, nothing that offends can be allowed to remain (compare <sup><0182></sup>Matthew 8:22; <sup><027></sup>Revelation 21:27).

<sup><018></sup>**Numbers 5:1-4.** Compare the marginal references. The precepts of Leviticus 13 and Leviticus 15 are now first fully carried out. They could hardly have been so earlier, during the hurry and confusion which must have attended the march out of Egypt, and the encampments which next followed.

<sup><018></sup>**Numbers 5:5-10.** The law of restitution: a passage supplementary to <sup><018></sup>Leviticus 5:5, etc., <sup><018></sup>Leviticus 6:5, etc.

<sup><018></sup>**Numbers 5:7.** *Recompense his trespass* i.e. make restitution to the person whom he has injured.

<sup><018></sup>**Numbers 5:8.)** *Whereby an atonement shall be made for him* literally, "which shall clear him of guilt as to it," i.e. as to the trespass.

<sup><018></sup>**Numbers 5:10.** *And every man's hallowed things shall be his* i.e. the priest's. The heave offerings (<sup><018></sup>Numbers 5:9) and dedicatory offerings (e.g. first-fruits) were to be the perquisite of the officiating priests.

<sup><018></sup>**Numbers 5:11-31.** The trial of jealousy. Since the crime of adultery is especially defiling and destructive of the very foundations of social order, the whole subject is dealt with at a length proportionate to its importance. The process prescribed has lately been strikingly illustrated from an Egyptian "romance," which refers to the time of Rameses the Great, and may therefore well serve to illustrate the manners and customs of the Mosaic times. This mode of trial, like several other ordinances, was adopted by Moses from existing and probably very ancient and widely spread institutions.

**Numbers 5:15.** The offering was to be of the cheapest and coarsest kind, barley (compare <sup><1200></sup>2 Kings 7:1,16,18), representing the abused condition of the suspected woman. It was, like the sin-offering (<sup><0451></sup>Leviticus 5:11), to be made without oil and frankincense, the symbols of grace and acceptableness. The woman herself stood with head uncovered (<sup><0458></sup>Numbers 5:18), in token of her shame.

**Numbers 5:17.** *The dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle* To set forth the fact that the water was endued with extraordinary power by Him who dwelt in the tabernacle. Dust is an emblem of a state of condemnation (<sup><0034></sup>Genesis 3:14; <sup><3077></sup>Micah 7:17).

**Numbers 5:19.** *Gone aside ...* literally, “gone astray from” thy husband by uncleanness; compare <sup><3042></sup>Hosea 4:12.

**Numbers 5:23.** *Blot them out with the bitter water* In order to transfer the curses to the water. The action was symbolic. Travelers speak of the natives of Africa as still habitually seeking to obtain the full force of a written charm by drinking the water into which they have washed it.

**Numbers 5:24.** *Shall cause the woman to drink* Thus was symbolised both her full acceptance of the hypothetical curse (compare <sup><3031></sup>Ezekiel 3:1-3; <sup><2456></sup>Jeremiah 15:16; <sup><6109></sup>Revelation 10:9), and its actual operation upon her if she should be guilty (compare <sup><1998></sup>Psalms 109:18).

**Numbers 5:26.** *The memorial thereof* See the marginal reference. “Memorial” here is not the same as “memorial” in <sup><0455></sup>Numbers 5:15.

**Numbers 5:27.** Of itself, the drink was not noxious; and could only produce the effects here described by a special interposition of God. We do not read of any instance in which this ordeal was resorted to: a fact which may be explained either (with the Jews) as a proof of its efficacy, since the guilty could not be brought to face its terrors at all, and avoided them by confession; or more probably by the license of divorce tolerated by the law of Moses. Since a husband could put away his wife at pleasure, a jealous man would naturally prefer to take this course with a suspected wife rather than to call public attention to his own shame by having recourse to the trial of jealousy. The trial by red water, which bears a general resemblance to that here prescribed by Moses, is still in use among the tribes of Western Africa.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 6

**Numbers 6:1-21.** The law of the Nazarite is appropriately added to other enactments which concern the sanctity of the holy nation. That sanctity found its highest expression in the Nazarite vow, which was the voluntary adoption for a time of obligations to high and strict modes of self-dedication resembling, and indeed in some particulars exceeding, those under which the priests were placed. The present enactments do not institute a new kind of observance, but only regulate one already familiar to the Israelites (<sup><000E></sup>Numbers 6:2).

**Numbers 6:2.** *A Nazarite* Strictly, Nazirite. This term signifies “separated” i.e., as the words following show, “unto God.” It became a technical term at an early date; compare <sup><071E></sup>Judges 13:5,7, 16:17.

**Numbers 6:3.** *Liquor of grapes* i.e. a drink made of grape-skins macerated in water.

**Numbers 6:4.** *From the kernels even to the husk* A sour drink was made from the stones of unripe grapes; and cakes were also made of the husks (<sup><200E></sup>Hosea 3:1). This interdict figures that separation from the general society of men to which the Nazarite for the time was consecrated.

**Numbers 6:5.** Among the Jews the abundance of the hair was considered to betoken physical strength and perfection (compare <sup><004E></sup>2 Samuel 14:25,26), and baldness was regarded as a grave blemish (compare <sup><020E></sup>Leviticus 21:20 note, <sup><083E></sup>Leviticus 13:40ff; <sup><022E></sup>2 Kings 2:23; <sup><003E></sup>Isaiah 3:24). Thus, the free growth of the hair on the head of the Nazarite represented the dedication of the man with all his strength and powers to the service of God.

**Numbers 6:7.** *The consecration of his God* i.e. the unshorn locks: compare <sup><023E></sup>Leviticus 25:5 note, where the vine, left during the Sabbatical year untouched by the hand of man, either for pruning or for vintage, is called simply a “Nazarite.”

The third rule of the Nazarite interdicted him from contracting any ceremonial defilement even under circumstances which excused such defilement in others: compare <sup><020E></sup>Leviticus 21:1-3.

**Numbers 6:9-12.** Prescriptions to meet the case of a sudden death taking place “by him” (i.e. in his presence). The days of the dedication of the Nazarite had to be recommenced.

**Numbers 6:13.** *When the days of his separation are fulfilled* Perpetual Nazariteship was probably unknown in the days of Moses; but the examples of Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, show that it was in later times undertaken for life. Again, Moses does not expressly require that limits should be assigned to the vow; but a rule was afterward imposed that no Nazarite vow should be taken for less than thirty days. To permit the vow to be taken for very short periods would diminish its solemnity and estimation.

**Numbers 6:14, 15.** The sin-offering (compare the marginal references), though named second, was in practice offered first, being intended to expiate involuntary sins committed during the period of separation. The burnt-offering (<sup>(R110)</sup>Leviticus 1:10ff) denoted the self-surrender on which alone all acceptableness in the Nazarite before God must rest; the peace-offerings (<sup>(R112)</sup>Leviticus 3:12ff) expressed thankfulness to God by whose grace the vow had been fulfilled. The offerings, both ordinary and additional, required on the completion of the Nazarite vow involved considerable expense, and it was regarded as a pious work to provide the poor with the means of making them (compare <sup>(R123)</sup>Acts 21:23ff; 1 Macc. 3:49).

**Numbers 6:18.** *Shave the head* As the Nazarite had during his vow worn his hair unshorn in honor of God, so when the time was complete it was natural that the hair, the symbol of his vow, should be cut off, and offered to God at the sanctuary. The burning of the hair “in the fire under the sacrifice of the peace offering” represented the eucharistic communion with God obtained by those who realised the ideal which the Nazarite set forth (compare the marginal reference).

**Numbers 6:20.** *The priest shall wave them* i.e. by placing his hands under those of the Nazarite: compare <sup>(R123)</sup>Leviticus 7:30.

**Numbers 6:21.** *Beside that that his hand shall get* The Nazarite, in addition to the offerings prescribed above, was to present free-will offerings according to his possessions or means.

**Numbers 6:22-27.** The priestly blessing (compare Ecclus. 36:17) is appointed as a solemn form to be used by the priests exclusively, and in this function their office as it were culminates (compare <sup><0812></sup>Leviticus 9:22 note). God Himself provides a formula, through which from time to time, as His people by obedience place themselves in true and right relationship to Him, the authorised mediators may pronounce and communicate His special blessing to them. It was a Jewish tradition that this blessing was given at the close of the daily sacrifice.

The structure of the blessing is remarkable. It is rhythmical, consists of three distinct parts, and mounts by gradual stages to that peace which forms the last and most consummate gift which God can give His people.

From a Christian point of view, and comparing the counterpart benediction of <sup><0734></sup>2 Corinthians 13:14, it is impossible not to see shadowed forth the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (compare <sup><2118></sup>Isaiah 6:3; <sup><0839></sup>Matthew 28:19). And the three several sets of terms correspond fittingly to the office of the Three Persons in Their gracious work for the redemption of man.

**Numbers 6:24.** *The LORD bless thee, and keep thee* The second clause here, as in the other three verses, defines more closely the general tenor of the preceding one. The singular number, which is observed throughout, indicates that the blessing is conferred on Israel “collectively.”

**Numbers 6:25.** *Make his face shine* This is an enhancement of the preceding benediction. “The face of God” imports not merely God’s good will in general, but His active and special regard. With the “face” or “eye of the Lord accordingly is connected alike the judicial visitation of the wicked. (<sup><0816></sup>Psalm 34:16), and His mercies to the righteous (<sup><0906></sup>Psalm 4:6).

**Numbers 6:26.** *Lift up his countenance upon thee* i.e. especially direct His thought and care toward thee: compare <sup><1192></sup>2 Kings 9:32, and similar phrases in <sup><0429></sup>Genesis 43:29; 44:21. Through such loving providence alone could the peace of God in which the blessing closes be given.

**Numbers 6:27.** *Put my name upon the children of Israel* i.e. pronounce My Sacred Name over them in blessing them. God will give effect to the benediction pronounced by the priests.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 7

~~0400~~ **Numbers 7:1.** *On the day that* i.e. “at the time that,” compare ~~0400~~ Genesis 2:4. The presentation of the gifts in fact occupied twelve days, as the sequel shows.

The enactments set forth in the chapters from Leviticus 10 to Numbers 6 inclusive, were doubtless promulgated at various times between the consecration of the tabernacle and the departure from Sinai, but are for convenience set out connectedly. The contents of the present chapter are accordingly placed after them. The order pursued throughout is justly noted as one which would naturally suggest itself to a narrator who was contemporary with the events.

~~0400~~ **Numbers 7:3.** *Covered wagons* Some prefer to render “litter (~~2360~~ Isaiah 66:20) wagons:” i.e. litters which were not on wheels, but borne by two oxen, one in front and one behind. Such conveyances would probably be more convenient than wheeled wagons in the rough country to be traversed.

~~0400~~ **Numbers 7:7-9.** To the Gershonites, who had to transport the hangings and coverings of the tabernacle, two wagons are assigned: to the Merarites, who had the charge of the solid parts of the tabernacle, four wagons. The furniture and vessels the Kohathites were to carry on their own shoulders. Compare ~~0400~~ Numbers 3:25,26,31,36,37.

~~0400~~ **Numbers 7:12-83.** The several princes make their offerings in the order assigned to the tribes (Numbers 2). It was doubtless the tribes themselves which presented these gifts through their chiefs. The twelve offerings are strictly alike, and were offered on twelve separate days.

~~0400~~ **Numbers 7:84-88.** The aggregate worth, by weight, of the whole of the offerings was about 438 British pounds: But the real worth of such a sum, when measured by the prices of clothing and food at that time, must have been vastly greater.

~~0400~~ **Numbers 7:89.** *With him* i.e. as marginal, “with God,” not (as some) with himself.



*He heard the voice of one speaking* Rather, he heard the voice speaking, or conversing. The effect was as though Moses was audibly addressed by another person: how this effect was produced we are not told.

Thus was the promise of ~~(1251)~~ Exodus 25:20-22 fulfilled; and that as an immediate response on the part of God to the cheerful readiness with which the tribes had made their offerings, and supplied everything needful for the Holy place and its service. All being now complete as God had appointed, and the camp purified from defilements, God meets Moses the mediator of the people, not as before on the peak of Sinai far away, but in the midst of them, in the dwelling-place which He henceforth vouchsafed to tenant.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 8

**Numbers 8:1-4.** The actual lighting of the lamps (compare the marginal references) was to be done to set forth symbolically the special presence which God had now (<sup><0478></sup>Numbers 7:89) actually established among His people.

**Numbers 8:5-22.** The Levites could only undertake their duties (Numbers 3; 4) after the formal exchange of the Levites for the first-born (<sup><0484></sup>Numbers 3:44-51).

The distinction between the “consecration” of the priests (Leviticus 8) and the less solemn “purification” (<sup><0482></sup>Numbers 8:21) of the Levites is marked. These rites of purification are similar to those incumbent on the priests of Egypt.

**Numbers 8:7.** *Water of purifying* literally, “sin water:” i.e. water to cleanse from sin; no doubt taken from the laver of the sanctuary, which was used by the priests for purification before they went into the tabernacle to minister (compare <sup><0487></sup>Numbers 5:17; <sup><0488></sup>Exodus 30:18ff).

The “sprinkling” of so large a body of men could have been only general, but tokens of individual purification are specified (compare also <sup><0483></sup>Leviticus 14:8).

**Numbers 8:8.** The two bullocks were “to make an atonement for the Levites,” and therefore are presented in their name. These offerings are similar to those prescribed in <sup><0484></sup>Leviticus 8:14ff at the consecration of the priests, except that the burnt-offering was on that occasion a ram. The larger victim corresponds to the larger number of the Levites.

**Numbers 8:10.** *The children of Israel* i.e. through the heads of their tribes, who (<sup><0482></sup>Numbers 7:2) no doubt acted for their tribesmen. This act, the distinguishing feature of the ceremony, represented the transfer to the Levites of the sacred duties originally incumbent on the whole people.

**Numbers 8:11.** *Offer ... offering* Compare the margin Aaron pointed to the Levites, and then waved his hands, indicating (compare <sup><0483></sup>Leviticus 7:30 note) that the offering was dedicated to God, and, again, by grant from Him, withdrawn for the use of the priests.

**Numbers 8:19.** *Make an atonement for the children of Israel* i.e. by performing those services which were due from the children of Israel; the omission of which by the children of Israel would, but for the interposition of the Levites, have called down “wrath” from God, or (<sup>04153</sup>Numbers 1:53) “plague.” The institution of the Levites was an extension of that mediatorial system which the people themselves, terrified at the direct manifestations to them of the divine presence, desired; see <sup>01625</sup>Deuteronomy 5:25. Further, it is suggested to us here as an act of mercy on the part of God; yet even the priests and Levites themselves were not always sufficiently heedful and reverent. Compare <sup>04710</sup>Numbers 17:10; <sup>03101</sup>Leviticus 10:1ff; <sup>00816</sup>2 Samuel 6:6 following.

**Numbers 8:21.** *Were purified* Rather, purified themselves; as directed in <sup>04807</sup>Numbers 8:7.

**Numbers 8:24.** *Twenty and five years old and upward* The permanent limit as distinguished from the temporary (<sup>04418</sup>Numbers 4:3,23,30), though David found it necessary to extend the period of the Levites’ service by causing it to commence at 20 years of age (<sup>13234</sup>1 Chronicles 23:24-28). This rule continued in force from the time of David downward (compare on <sup>44117</sup>2 Chronicles 31:17; <sup>15118</sup>Ezra 3:8).

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 9

**Numbers 9:1-5.** Passover at Sinai. This, as being kept in the first month, was prior in time to the numbering of Numbers 1:1ff, and to the other events narrated in this book. It is, however, recorded here as introductory to the ordinance of Numbers 9:6-14 in this chapter respecting the supplementary Passover; the observance of which was one of the last occurrences during the halt at Sinai.

**Numbers 9:5.** In some details, the present Passover differed both from that kept at the Exodus itself and from all subsequent Passovers. For example, the direction of Exodus 12:22 could not be carried out in the letter while the people were dwelling in tents; and may be regarded as superseded by Leviticus 17:3-6 (compare Deuteronomy 16:5ff).

In other points, such as how many lambs would be wanted, how the blood of the Paschal victims could be sprinkled upon the altar in the time specified, etc., the administrators of the Law of Moses would here, as elsewhere, have, from the nature of the case, power to order what might be requisite to carry the law into effect.

**Numbers 9:6.** *Certain men* Probably Mishael and Elizaphan, who buried their cousins, Nadab and Abihu, within a week of this Passover (Leviticus 10:4,5).

**Numbers 9:11.** The later Jews speak of this as the “little Passover.” Coming, as it did, a month after the proper Passover, it afforded ample time for a man to purify himself from legal defilement, as also to return from any but a very distant journey. Compare Hezekiah’s act (2 Chronicles 30:1-3).

**Numbers 9:12.** *According to all the ordinances* i.e. those relating to the Passover lamb, not those concerning the feast, for the Little Passover lasted, according to the Jews, only one day; nor was it held to be needful that at it leaven should be put away out of the houses.

**Numbers 9:15.** *The cloud ...* The phenomenon first appeared at the Exodus itself, Exodus 13:21,22. The cloud did not cover the whole structure, but the “tent of the testimony,” i.e. the enclosure which

contained the “ark of the testimony” (<sup><12516></sup>Exodus 25:16,22), and the holy place. The phenomenon is now again described in connection with the journeyings which are to be narrated in the sequel of the book.

<sup><1132></sup>**Numbers 9:22.** *A year* literally, “days,” idiomatically a year (<sup><12519></sup>Leviticus 25:29), an expression equivalent to “a full period,” though not necessarily the period of a year.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 10

**Numbers 10:2.** The trumpet was a straight instrument, differing in this respect from the curved horn or cornet; and is represented, among the other spoils of the temple, on the Arch of Titus. See <sup><1253></sup>Exodus 25:23 cut. From Egyptian monuments it appears that the Jewish trumpet was copied from that used in the armies of the Pharaohs. The cornet was at first a simple ram's horn (<sup><1814></sup>Joshua 6:4), and the metal instrument of later times preserved the original shape.

**Numbers 10:5, 6.** *Blow an alarm* i.e. along continuous peal. Compare <sup><1407></sup>Numbers 10:7, ye shall blow, but not sound an alarm: i.e. blow in short, sharp notes, not in a continuous peal. A third and a fourth alarm were probably blown as signals.

**Numbers 10:8.** *The sons of Aaron* As the trumpets were emblematic of the voice of God, the priests only were to use them. At this time there were only two "sons of Aaron;" but in later times, when the number of priests was greater, more trumpets were used; we read of seven in the times of Joshua and David (see the marginal references.); and of a hundred and twenty in that of Solomon (<sup><4512></sup>2 Chronicles 5:12).

**Numbers 10:9.** For examples of the employment of trumpets in war compare marginal references and <sup><4418></sup>2 Chronicles 20:28. By employment of them was signified the dependence of God's people on His aid.

**Numbers 10:10.** *In the day of your gladness* Compare <sup><1031></sup>Numbers 29:1; <sup><1823></sup>Leviticus 23:24; <sup><4272></sup>2 Chronicles 29:27; <sup><1510></sup>Ezra 3:10; <sup><1125></sup>Nehemiah 12:35,41; <sup><1818></sup>Psalms 81:3.

**Numbers 10:11.** At this point commences the second great division of the book, extending to the close of Numbers 14. The remaining verses of the present chapter narrate the actual break up of the camp at Sinai and the order of the march.

**Numbers 10:12.** *The wilderness of Paran* See <sup><1146></sup>Genesis 14:6 note. The wilderness is mentioned here by anticipation. The earliest halting-places, Kibroth-hattaavah and Hazeroth, were not within its limits (<sup><1115></sup>Numbers 11:35; 12:16).

**Numbers 10:13.** Rather, And they journeyed (or, set forth) in the order of precedence according to (i.e. established by) the commandment of the Lord, etc., and described in **Numbers 10:14-28**.

**Numbers 10:14.** *According to their armies* Compare **Numbers 1:3**. There were three tribal hosts in each camp; and each tribe had of course its subdivisions.

**Numbers 10:17.** A more precise determination of the method of executing the order given in **Numbers 2:17**. The appointed place of the tabernacle, in the midst of the host, was represented during the march by the ark, the holy vessels, etc. carried by the Kohathites. The actual structure of the tabernacle was borne in advance by the Gershonites and Merarites, immediately behind the camp of Judah; so as to be set up ready against the arrival of the sacred utensils borne by the Kohathites. Compare **Numbers 2; 4**.

**Numbers 10:29.** *Hobab, the son of Raguel* Or Reuel (**Exodus 2:18**). Reuel was probably not identical with Jethro: and Hobab was the brother-in-law, not the father-in-law, of Moses; the Hebrew word translated in the King James Version "father-in-law," signifying simply any relation by marriage (**Exodus 3:1** note). Hobab (**Judges 1:16; 4:11**) eventually accompanied the Israelites and obtained a settlement with them in the land of Canaan. Hobab and Jethro may have been brethren and sons of Reuel.

**Numbers 10:31.** *Thou mayest be to us instead of eyes* A proverbial expression still in use in the East. Hobab would indicate the spots where water, fuel, and pasture might be found, or warn them of the dangers from hurricanes, and point out localities infested by robbers.

**Numbers 10:33.** *Three days' journey* Probably a technical expression for such a distance as could not be traversed in a single day, and therefore not without intervals of encampment and due provision: compare **Genesis 30:36; Exodus 3:18; 5:3; 8:27; 15:22**. The technical use of the phrase "Sabbath-day's journey" for another average distance, **Acts 1:12**, is similar.

*The ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them* From **Numbers 10:21; 2:17** it would appear that the usual place of the ark during the march was in the midst of the host. It was evidently an exceptional case

when, in <sup><0608></sup>Joshua 3:3,6, the ark preceded the people into the bed of the Jordan. Hence, the words “went before them” do not here imply local precedence. The phrase, or its equivalent, is used of a leader going out in command of his troops, <sup><0277></sup>Numbers 27:17; <sup><0508></sup>Deuteronomy 31:3; <sup><0836></sup>1 Samuel 18:16; <sup><4010></sup>2 Chronicles 1:10; and similarly the ark may well be said to have gone at the head of the Israelites, when it was borne solemnly in the midst of them as the outward embodiment of the presence whose sovereign word was their law.

*A resting place* literally, “rest.” It is commonly understood of each successive encampment; or, in particular, of the first encampment. Yet the term would hardly be here employed, did it not carry with it a higher meaning, pointing to the promised rest of Canaan, for which the Israelites were now in full march, and from the speedy enjoyment of which no sentence of exclusion as yet debarred them. Compare the marginal references.

<sup><0408></sup>**Numbers 10:35, 36.** Each forward movement and each rest of the ark was made to bear a sacramental character. The one betokened the going forth of God against His enemies; the other, His gathering of His own people to Himself: the one was the pledge of victory, the other the earnest of repose.

<sup><0408></sup>**Numbers 10:36.** may be translated: “Restore” (i.e. to the land which their fathers sojourned in), “O LORD, the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel.” (Compare <sup><1806></sup>Psalms 85:4, where the verb in the Hebrew is the same.)



## NOTES ON NUMBERS 11

**Numbers 11.** This and the following three chapters recount the successive rebellions of the Israelites after their departure from Sinai; culminating in that by which they brought upon themselves the sentence of personal exclusion from the land of promise.

**Numbers 11:1.** See the marginal rendering. They murmured against the privations of the march.

*The fire of the LORD* Probably lightning; compare <sup><1978></sup>Psalm 78:21.

*In the uttermost parts* Rather, in the end. The fire did not reach far into the camp. It was quickly quenched at the intercession of Moses.

**Numbers 11:3.** *Taberah* i.e. “burning:” not the name of a station, and accordingly not found in the list given in Numbers 33, but the name of the spot where the fire broke out. This incident might seem (compare <sup><1113></sup>Numbers 11:34) to have occurred at the station called, from another still more terrible event which shortly followed, Kibroth-hattaavah.

**Numbers 11:4-35.** Occurrences at Kibroth-hattavah.

**Numbers 11:4.** *The mixt multitude* The word in the original resembles our “riff-raff,” and denotes a mob of people scraped together. It refers here to the multitude of strangers (see <sup><1238></sup>Exodus 12:38) who had followed the Israelites from Egypt.

**Numbers 11:5.** The natural dainties of Egypt are set forth in this passage with the fullness and relish which bespeak personal experience.

**Numbers 11:, 7.** *There is nothing at all ...* literally, “Nought at all have we except that our eyes are unto this manna;” i.e. “Nought else have we to expect beside this manna.” On the manna see <sup><1265></sup>Exodus 16:15 note; on bdellium see <sup><1012></sup>Genesis 2:12 note.

**Numbers 11:10.** The weeping was general; every family wept (compare <sup><812></sup>Zechariah 12:12), and in a manner public and unconcealed.

**Numbers 11:11-15.** The complaint and remonstrance of Moses may be compared with that in <sup><1190></sup>1 Kings 19:4ff; <sup><300></sup>Jonah 4:1-3, and contrasted with the language of Abraham (<sup><0183></sup>Genesis 18:23ff) The meekness of Moses (compare <sup><0413></sup>Numbers 12:3) sank under vexation into despair. His language shows us how imperfect and prone to degeneracy are the best saints on earth.

**Numbers 11:16.** *Seventy men of the elders of Israel* Seventy elders had also gone up with Moses to the Lord in the mount (<sup><0201></sup>Exodus 24:1,9). Seventy is accordingly the number of colleagues assigned to Moses to share his burden with him. To it, the Jews trace the origin of the Sanhedrim. Subsequent notices (<sup><0465></sup>Numbers 16:25; <sup><0076></sup>Joshua 7:6; 8:10,33; 9:11; 23:2; 24:1,31) so connect the elders with the government of Israel as to point to the fact that the appointment now made was not a merely temporary one, though it would seem to have soon fallen into desuetude. We find no traces of it in the days of the Judges and the Kings.

*Elders of the people, and officers over them* In English idiom, “elders and officers of the people.” Both elders and officers appear in Egypt (<sup><0086></sup>Exodus 3:16; 5:6ff): the former had headed the nation in its efforts after freedom; the latter were the subordinate, though unwilling, agents of Egyptian tyranny. The two classes no doubt were working together; and from those who belonged to either, perhaps from those who were both elders and officers, the council of Seventy was to be selected.

**Numbers 11:17.** *I will take of the spirit which is upon thee* Render rather separate from the spirit, etc.; i.e. they shall have their portion in the same divine gift which thou hast.

**Numbers 11:25.** *They prophesied* i.e. under the extraordinary impulse of the Holy Spirit they uttered forth the praises of God, or declared His will. Compare the marginal references.

*And did not cease* Rather, and added not, i.e. they prophesied at this time only and not afterward. The sign was granted on the occasion of their appointment to accredit them in their office; it was not continued, because their proper function was to be that of governing not prophesying.

**Numbers 11:26.** *Of them that were written* i.e. enrolled among the Seventy. The expression points to a regular appointment duly recorded and permanent.

**Numbers 11:29.** *Enviest thou for my sake?* (Compare <sup><4138></sup>Mark 9:38ff) The other members of the Seventy had been with Moses (compare <sup><4166></sup>Numbers 6:16,24,25) when the gift of prophecy was bestowed on them. They received “of the spirit that was upon him,” and exercised their office visibly through and for him. Eldad and Medad prophesying in the camp seemed to Joshua to be acting independently, and so establishing a separate center of authority.

**Numbers 11:31.** The southeast wind, which blew from the neighboring Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea, brought the quails (<sup><12163></sup>Exodus 16:13).

*Two cubits high* Better, “two cubits above the face of the ground:” i.e. the quails, wearied with their long flight, flew about breast high, and were easily secured by the people, who spread them all abroad for themselves (<sup><4113></sup>Numbers 11:32), in order to salt and dry them. The quail habitually flies with the wind, and low.

**Numbers 11:32.** *Ten homers* About 55 bushels. Compare <sup><13716></sup>Leviticus 27:16.

**Numbers 11:33.** *Ere it was chewed* Better, ere it was consumed. See <sup><4119></sup>Numbers 11:19,20. The surfeit in which the people indulged, as described in <sup><4132></sup>Numbers 11:32, disposed them to sickness. God’s wrath, visiting the gluttonous through their gluttony, aggravated natural consequences into a supernatural visitation.

**Numbers 11:34, 35.** (Kibroth-hattaavah has been identified by Palmer with the extensive remains, graves, etc., at Erweis El Ebeirig, and Hazeroth “enclosures” with Ain Hadherah.)

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 12

**Numbers 12:1-15.** Miriam, as a prophetess (compare <sup><0250></sup>Exodus 15:20,21) no less than as the sister of Moses and Aaron, took the first rank among the women of Israel; and Aaron may be regarded as the ecclesiastical head of the whole nation. But instead of being grateful for these high dignities they challenged the special vocation of Moses and the exclusive authority which God had assigned to him. Miriam was the instigator, from the fact that her name stands conspicuously first (<sup><0411></sup>Numbers 12:1), and that the punishment (<sup><0420></sup>Numbers 12:10) fell on her alone. She probably considered herself as supplanted, and that too by a foreigner. Aaron was misled this time by the urgency of his sister, as once before (Exodus 32) by that of the people.

<sup><0411></sup>**Numbers 12:1.** *The Ethiopian woman whom he had married* (Hebrew, “Cushite,” compare <sup><0023></sup>Genesis 2:13; 10:6) It is likely that Zipporah (<sup><0021></sup>Exodus 2:21) was dead, and that Miriam in consequence expected to have greater influence than ever with Moses. Her disappointment at his second marriage would consequently be very great.

The marriage of Moses with a woman descended from Ham was not prohibited, so long as she was not of the stock of Canaan (compare <sup><0241></sup>Exodus 34:11-16); but it would at any time have been offensive to that intense nationality which characterized the Jews. The Christian fathers note in the successive marriage of Moses with a Midianite and an Ethiopian a foreshadowing of the future extension to the Gentiles of God’s covenant and its promises (compare <sup><0480></sup>Psalms 45:9ff; Cant. 1:4ff); and in the complaining of Miriam and Aaron a type of the discontent of the Jews because of such extension: compare <sup><0150></sup>Luke 15:29,30.

<sup><0411></sup>**Numbers 12:2.** *Hath the LORD ...* i.e. Is it merely, after all, by Moses that the LORD hath spoken?

<sup><0411></sup>**Numbers 12:3.** *The man Moses was very meek* In this and in other passages in which Moses no less unequivocally records his own faults (compare <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 20:12ff; <sup><0024></sup>Exodus 4:24ff; <sup><0037></sup>Deuteronomy 1:37), there is the simplicity of one who bare witness of himself, but not to himself (compare <sup><0012></sup>Matthew 11:28,29). The words are inserted to explain

how it was that Moses took no steps to vindicate himself, and why consequently the Lord so promptly intervened.

<sup><4118></sup>**Numbers 12:8.** *Mouth to mouth* i.e. without the intervention of any third person or thing: compare the marginal references.

*Even apparently* Moses received the word of God direct from Him and plainly, not through the medium of dream, vision, parable, dark saying, or such like; compare the marginal references.

*The similitude of the LORD shall he behold* But, “No man hath seen God at any time,” says John (<sup><4118></sup>John 1:18: compare <sup><5416></sup>1 Timothy 6:16, and especially <sup><1230></sup>Exodus 33:20ff). It was not therefore the Beatific Vision, the unveiled essence of the Deity, which Moses saw on the one hand. Nor was it, on the other hand, a mere emblematic representation (as in <sup><3025></sup>Ezekiel 1:26ff, <sup><2009></sup>Daniel 7:9), or an Angel sent as a messenger. It was the Deity Himself manifesting Himself so as to be cognizable to mortal eye. The special footing on which Moses stood as regards God is here laid down in detail, because it at once demonstrates that the supremacy of Moses rested on the distinct appointment of God, and also that Miriam in contravening that supremacy had incurred the penalty proper to sins against the theocracy.

<sup><4122></sup>**Numbers 12:12.** *As one dead* leprosy was nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humors, of life; a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away. Compare the notes at Leviticus 13.

<sup><4123></sup>**Numbers 12:13.** *Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee* Others render these words: “Oh not so; heal her now, I beseech Thee.”

<sup><4124></sup>**Numbers 12:14.** *If her father ...* i.e. If her earthly parent had treated her with contumely (compare <sup><1230></sup>Deuteronomy 25:9) she would feel for a time humiliated, how much more when God has visited her thus?

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 13

**Numbers 13:1.** *And the LORD spake* The mission of the spies was first suggested by the Israelites themselves. See **Deuteronomy 1:22**.

**Numbers 13:2.** *A ruler* A comparison of the list with that of **Numbers 13:1:5** following shows that they were not the princes of the tribes, but heads of houses or families (**Numbers 12:4**).

Of the names here given those of Joshua and Caleb alone are otherwise known to us.

**Numbers 13:16.** Oshea, Hoshea, or Hosea, the name also of the last king of Israel and the first minor prophet, means “deliverance” or and by the hand of him who bore the title of “God’s salvation.” Jehoshua was contracted (compare **Nehemiah 8:17**) into Jeshua.

**Numbers 13:17.** *Southward* Rather, “by the Negeb,” or south-country; a well-defined tract of territory forming the southernmost and least fertile portion of the land of Canaan and of the subsequent inheritance of Judah. It extended northward from Kadesh to within a few miles of Hebron, and from the Dead Sea westward to the Mediterranean (see especially **Joshua 15:21-32**).

*Into the mountain* The hill-country of southern and central Canaan, mostly within the borders of Judah and Ephraim. It commences a few miles south of Hebron, and extending northward to the plain of Jezreel, runs out eventually northwest-ward into the sea in the headland of Carmel.

**Numbers 13:19.** *In tents* i.e. in open unwallled villages.

**Numbers 13:20.** *The time ... of the firstripe grapes* The first grapes ripen in Palestine in July and August: the vintage is gathered in September and October. This indication of date tallies with what we should have inferred from the previous narrative. For the Israelite host had quitted Sinai on the 20th day of the second month (**Numbers 13:10:11**), or about the middle of May: since then they had spent a month at Kibroth-hattaavah and a week at Hazeroth, and had accomplished, in all, from 150 to 200 miles of march: it therefore must have been at least the beginning of July, and may

have been a month later, when the spies were despatched into the land of promise.

**Numbers 13:21.** The wilderness of Zin was the northeastern portion of the wilderness of Paran.

Rehob (“mod.” Khurbeh) was probably the Beth-rehob of <sup><07183></sup>Judges 18:28, near Dan-Laish; and apparently to the north of it, since it gave its name to a Syrian kingdom (<sup><01083></sup>2 Samuel 8:3). The southern approach to Hamath from the plain of Coele-Syria, lay between those two ranges of Lebanon called Libanus and Antilibanus. A low screen of hills connects the northernmost points of these two ranges; and through this screen the Orontes bursts from the upper Coele-Syrian hollow into the open plain of Hamath.

**Numbers 13:22.** The progenitor of the Anakim was Arba “the father of Anak” (<sup><06513></sup>Joshua 15:13), from whom the city of Hebron took its name of Kirjath-Arba. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai were probably not individual warriors, but names of three tribes of the Anakim. Hence, we find them still in existence half a century later, when Caleb, who now brought tidings of them, became their eventual destroyer (<sup><06514></sup>Joshua 15:14).

*Now Hebron ...* This parenthesis explains that these two cities had a common founder, and were built, or perhaps, at least in the case of Zoan (Tanis, see <sup><01008></sup>Exodus 1:8; 2:5 notes) rebuilt, by the Hyksos, to which nations, once the conquerors of Egypt, the Anakim perhaps belonged. The Hyksos fortified and garrisoned Zoan as a defense of their Eastern frontier.

**Numbers 13:23.** The brook of Eshcol is by some identified with the rich valley immediately to the north of Hebron; (but by others with Wady Hanein to the south of Hebron). The valley was, in all likelihood, originally named after one of the three chiefs who were confederate with Abraham (<sup><01144></sup>Genesis 14:24); but, as often came to pass, the Israelites, wittingly or unwittingly, took up in a new and significant sense the name which they found; and to them the valley thus became the Valley of the Cluster. Bunches of grapes are found in Palestine of many pounds weight.

**Numbers 13:25.** *After forty days* They had no doubt in this time explored the whole land. However, it was with the southern part that the Israelites expected to have to deal immediately: and accordingly it is that

which is particularly referred to in the following verses, Hebron and its vicinity above all.

<sup><04133></sup>**Numbers 13:26.** Kadesh is usually identified with Ain-el-Weibeh, which lies in the Arabah, about 10 miles north of the place in which Mount Hor abuts on that valley, (or with Ain-Gadis in Jebel Magrah).

<sup><04139></sup>**Numbers 13:29.** *The Amalekites* See <sup><04145></sup>Numbers 14:25 note.

*The Canaanites* i.e. those of the Phoenician race: the word is here used in its narrow sense: compare <sup><01005></sup>Genesis 10:15-18 note.

<sup><04132></sup>**Numbers 13:32.** *A land that eateth up ...* i.e. it is a land which from its position is exposed to incessant attacks from one quarter and another, and so its occupants must be always armed and watchful.



## NOTES ON NUMBERS 14

**Numbers 14:5.** Already Caleb had endeavored to still the people before Moses (<sup><0433></sup>Numbers 13:30); already Moses himself (<sup><0402></sup>Deuteronomy 1:29ff) had endeavored to recall the people to obedience. After the failure of these efforts Moses and Aaron cast themselves down in solemn prayer before God (compare <sup><0462></sup>Numbers 16:22); and the appearance of the glory of the LORD in the “tabernacle of the congregation” (<sup><0410></sup>Numbers 14:10) was the immediate answer.

**Numbers 14:9.** *Their defense* literally, “their shadow,” i.e. their shelter as from the scorching sun: an Oriental figure. Compare the marginal references.

**Numbers 14:12.** *And disinherit them* By the proposed extinction of Israel the blessings of the covenant would revert to their original donor.

**Numbers 14:13-17.** The syntax of these verses is singularly broken. As did Paul when deeply moved, so Moses presses his arguments one on the other without pausing to ascertain the grammatical finish of his expressions. He speaks here as if in momentary apprehension of an outbreak of God’s wrath, unless he could perhaps arrest it by crowding in every topic of deprecation and intercession that he could mention on the instant.

**Numbers 14:21-23.** Render: But as truly as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD; (<sup><0442></sup>Numbers 14:22) all those men, etc.; (<sup><0443></sup>Numbers 14:23) shall not see, etc.

**Numbers 14:22.** *These ten times* Ten is the number which imports completeness. Compare <sup><0307></sup>Genesis 31:7. The sense is that the measure of their provocation was now full: the day of grace was at last over. However, some enumerate 10 different occasions on which the people had tempted God since the exodus.

Psalm 90, which is entitled “a Prayer of Moses,” has been most appropriately regarded as a kind of dirge upon those sentenced thus awfully by God to waste away in the wilderness.

**Numbers 14:24.** *My servant Caleb* Caleb only is mentioned here as also in <sup><0430></sup>Numbers 13:30ff. Both passages probably form part of the matter introduced at a later period into the narrative of Moses, and either by Joshua or under his superintendence. Hence, the name of Joshua is omitted, and his faithfulness together with its reward are taken for granted. In <sup><0443></sup>Numbers 14:30,38, both names are mentioned together; and these verses in all likelihood belong to the same original composition as <sup><0446></sup>Numbers 14:6-10.

**Numbers 14:25.** Render: And now the Amalekites and the Canaanites are dwelling (or abiding) in the valley: wherefore turn you, etc. (that so ye be not smitten before them). The Amalekites were the nomad bands that roved through the open pastures of the plain (<sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:45): the Canaanites, a term here taken in its wider sense, were the Amorites of the neighboring cities (compare <sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:45 with <sup><0444></sup>Deuteronomy 1:44), who probably lived in league with the Amalekites.

*Tomorrow* Not necessarily the next day, but an idiom for “hereafter,” “henceforward” (compare the marginal reading in <sup><0234></sup>Exodus 13:14; <sup><0446></sup>Joshua 4:6).

*By the way of the Red sea* That is, apparently, by the eastern or Elanitic gulf.

**Numbers 14:33.** *Your whoredoms* Their several rebellions had been so many acts of faithless departure from the Lord who had taken them unto Himself. And as the children of the unchaste have generally to bear in their earthly careers much of the disgrace and the misery which forms the natural penalty of their parents’ transgression; so here the children of the Israelites, although suffered to hope for an eventual entry into Canaan, were yet to endure, through many long years’ wandering, the appropriate punishment of their fathers’ willfulness.

**Numbers 14:34.** *My breach of promise* In the original, a word, found elsewhere only in <sup><3310></sup>Job 30:10, and meaning “my withdrawals” “my turning away.” See the margin.

**Numbers 14:45.** *Unto Hormah* literally, “the Hormah:” i.e. “the banning,” or “ban-place.” Compare <sup><0213></sup>Numbers 21:3; <sup><0214></sup>Joshua 12:14. According to the view taken of Kadesh (see <sup><0433></sup>Numbers 13:26), Hormah is identified, through its earlier name, Zephath (<sup><0017></sup>Judges 1:17), with es-

Safah on the southeastern frontier of Canaan, by which the Israelites quitted the Arabah for the higher ground, (or with Sebaita, which lies further to the west, about 25 miles north of Ain Gadis).

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 15

**Numbers 15.** The contents of the next five chapters must apparently be referred to the long period of wandering to which (<sup><0443></sup> Numbers 14:33) the people were condemned.

<sup><0452></sup>**Numbers 15:2.** To the Israelites of the younger generation is conveyed the hope that the nation should yet enter into the land of promise. The ordinances that follow are more likely to have been addressed to adults than to children; and we may therefore assume that at the date of their delivery the new generation was growing up, and the period of wandering drawing toward its close. During that period the meat-offerings and drink-offerings prescribed by the Law had been probably intermitted by reason of the scanty supply of grain and wine in the wilderness. The command therefore to provide such offerings was a pledge to Israel that it should possess the land which was to furnish the wherewithal for them.

<sup><0454></sup>**Numbers 15:4-12.** The meat-offering is treated in Leviticus 2. The drink-offering (<sup><0294></sup> Exodus 29:40; <sup><0323></sup> Leviticus 23:13), hitherto an ordinary accessory to the former, is now prescribed foreverly sacrifice.

<sup><0458></sup>**Numbers 15:18.** The general principle which includes the ordinance of this and the three verses following is laid down in <sup><0229></sup> Exodus 22:29; 23:19.

<sup><0453></sup>**Numbers 15:20, 21.** *Dough* “Coarse meal” (<sup><1605></sup> Nehemiah 10:37; <sup><3443></sup> Ezekiel 44:30).

<sup><0452></sup>**Numbers 15:22-31.** The heavy punishments which had already overtaken the people might naturally give rise to apprehensions for the future, especially in view of the fact that on the approaching entrance into Canaan the complete observance of the Law in all its details would become imperative on them. To meet such apprehensions a distinction is emphatically drawn between sins of ignorance (<sup><0413></sup> Leviticus 4:13ff) and those of presumption (<sup><0453></sup> Numbers 15:30,31). The passage deals separately with imperfections of obedience which would be regarded as attaching to the whole nation (<sup><0452></sup> Numbers 15:22-26), and those of individuals (<sup><0452></sup> Numbers 15:27-30).

**Numbers 15:24.** *Without the knowledge of the congregation* literally, as marginal. The words point to an error of omission which escaped notice at the time: i.e. to an oversight.

**Numbers 15:30.** *Presumptuously* The original (compare the margin, and Exodus 14:8) imports something done willfully and openly; in the case of a sin against God it implies that the act is committed ostentatiously and in bravado.

*Reproacheth the LORD* Rather, revileth or blasphemeth the LORD: compare Ezekiel 20:27.

**Numbers 15:32.** Moses mentions here, as is his wont (compare Leviticus 24:10-16), the first open transgression and its punishment in order to exemplify the laws which he is laying down. The offence of Sabbath-breaking was one for which there could be no excuse. This law at least might be observed even in the wilderness. Transgression of it was therefore a presumptuous sin, and was punished accordingly.

**Numbers 15:34.** Death had indeed been assigned as the penalty (Exodus 31:14; 35:2); but it had not been determined how that death was to be inflicted.

**Numbers 15:38.** *That they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue* Reader that they add to the fringes of the borders (or corners) a thread of blue (compare the marginal references). These fringes are considered to be of Egyptian origin. The ordinary outer Jewish garment was a quadrangular piece of cloth like a modern plaid, to the corners of which, in conformity with this command, a tassel was attached. Each tassel had a conspicuous thread of deep blue, this color being doubtless symbolic of the heavenly origin of the commandments of which it was to serve as a memento. Tradition determined that the other threads should be white — this color being an emblem of purity (compare Isaiah 1:18). The arrangement of the threads and knots, to which the Jews attached the greatest importance, was so adjusted as to set forth symbolically the 613 precepts of which the Law was believed to consist. In our Lord's time the Pharisees enlarged their fringes (Matthew 23:5) in order to obtain reputation for their piety. In later times however, the Jews have worn the fringed garment (*talith*) of a smaller size and as an under-dress. Its use is still retained, especially at morning prayer in the Synagogue.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 16

**Numbers 16.** The date of this rebellion cannot be determined, but <sup><0161></sup>Numbers 16:13,14 probably point to a period not much later than that of the rebellion at Kadesh.

<sup><0161></sup>**Numbers 16:1.** Amram and Izhar were brothers (compare <sup><0168></sup>Exodus 6:18), and thus Korah, the “son,” i.e. descendant of Izhar, was connected by distant cousinship with Moses and Aaron. Though being a Kohathite, he was of that division of the Levites which had the most honorable charge, yet as Elizaphan, who had been made “chief of the families of the Kohathites” (<sup><0163></sup>Numbers 3:30), belonged to the youngest branch descended from Uzziel (<sup><0167></sup>Numbers 3:27), Korah probably regarded himself as injured; and therefore took the lead in this rebellion. Of the others, On is not again mentioned. He probably withdrew from the conspiracy. Dathan, Abiram, and On were Reubenites; and were probably discontented because the birthright had been taken away from their ancestor (<sup><0148></sup>Genesis 49:3), and with it the primacy of their own tribe among the tribes of Israel. The Reubenites encamped near to the Kohathites (compare <sup><0125></sup>Numbers 2:25 and plan), and thus the two families were conveniently situated for taking counsel together. One pretext of the insurrection probably was to assert the rights of primogeniture — on the part of the Reubenites against Moses, on the part of Korah against the appointment of Uzziel.

<sup><0162></sup>**Numbers 16:2.** The “princes” appear to have belonged to the other tribes (compare <sup><0127></sup>Numbers 27:3).

<sup><0163></sup>**Numbers 16:3.** *All the congregation are holy* Compare the marginal reference. Korah’s object was not to abolish the distinction between the Levites and the people, but to win priestly dignity for himself and his kinsmen (<sup><0160></sup>Numbers 16:10). This ultimate design is masked for the present in order to win support from the Reubenites by putting forward claims to spiritual equality on behalf of every Israelite.

<sup><0169></sup>**Numbers 16:9.** “Seemeth” is not in the original. Render it as: Is it too little for you, i.e. “is it less than your dignity demands?”

**Numbers 16:11.** The words of Moses in his wrath are broken. The Aaronic priesthood was of divine appointment; and thus in rejecting it, the conspirators were really rebelling against God.

**Numbers 16:13.** With perverse contempt for the promises, Dathan and Abiram designate Egypt by the terms appropriated elsewhere to the land of Canaan.

**Numbers 16:14.** *Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?* i.e. “blind them to the fact that you keep none of your promises;” “throw dust in their eyes.”

**Numbers 16:24.** The tent, “the tabernacle” of Korah, as a Kohathite, stood on the south side of the tabernacle of the Lord; and those of Dathan and Abiram, as Reubenites, in the outer line of encampment on the same side. Yet though the tents of these three were thus contiguous, they did not share the same fate. Korah and his company who dared to intrude themselves on the priestly office were destroyed by fire from the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the Lord (**Numbers 16:35**); the Reubenites, who had reviled Moses for the failure of the promises about the pleasant land, were suddenly engulfed while standing at their own tent-doors in the barren wilderness (**Numbers 16:31-33**).

**Numbers 16:27.** *Stood in the door of their tents* Apparently in contumacious defiance.

**Numbers 16:32.** *All the men ...* Not his sons (see **Numbers 26:11**), but all belonging to him who had associated themselves with him in this rebellion.

**Numbers 16:35.** Compare the marginal references The fire came out from the sanctuary or the altar.

**Numbers 16:37.** Aaron as High Priest and as one of those that offered incense (**Numbers 16:17**), could not be defiled by going among the dead.

The censers were not to be used again for censers, nor the coals on them for kindling the incense to be offered before the Lord. Yet neither of them could fittingly be employed for common purposes. The censers therefore were beaten into plates for the altar; the coals were scattered at a distance.

~~0468~~ **Numbers 16:38.** *These sinners against their own souls* That is, “against their own lives.” By their sin they had brought destruction upon themselves.

~~0465~~ **Numbers 16:45.** *They fell upon their faces* In intercession for the people; compare ~~0462~~ Numbers 16:22; 14:5.

~~0466~~ **Numbers 16:46.** *A censer* Rather, the censer. i.e. that of the high priest which was used by him on the great Day of Atonement: compare ~~0462~~ Leviticus 16:12; ~~8904~~ Hebrews 9:4.

~~0466~~ **Numbers 16:46-48.** A striking proof of the efficacy of that very Aaronic priesthood which the rebels had presumed to reject. The incense offering which had brought down destruction when presented by unauthorised hands, now in the hand of the true priest is the medium of instant salvation to the whole people. Aaron by his acceptable ministrations and his personal self-devotion foreshadows emphatically in this transaction the perfect mediation and sacrifice of Himself made by Christ.



## NOTES ON NUMBERS 17

**Numbers 17:2.** Compare <sup><26716></sup>Ezekiel 37:16ff.

**Numbers 17:3.** *Thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi*

The Levites had taken part in the late outbreak. It was therefore necessary to vindicate the supremacy of the house of Aaron over them; and accordingly his name was written on the rod of Levi, although being the son of Kohath, the second son of Levi (<sup><01616></sup>Exodus 6:16ff), he would not be the natural head of the tribe.

**Numbers 17:4.** *Before the testimony* See <sup><04770></sup>Numbers 17:10 note.

**Numbers 17:6.** The whole number of rods was twelve exclusive of Aaron's, as the Vulgate expressly states.

**Numbers 17:8.** *Yielded almonds* "Ripened almonds," i.e. "brought forth ripe almonds." The name almond in Hebrew denotes the "waking-tree," the "waking-fruit;" and is applied to this tree, because it blossoms early in the season. It serves here, as in <sup><2011></sup>Jeremiah 1:11,12, to set forth the speed and certainty with which, at God's will, His purposes are accomplished. So again the blossoming and bearing of Aaron's rod, naturally impotent when severed from the parent tree, may signify the profitableness, because of God's appointment and blessing, of the various means of grace (e.g. the priesthood, the sacraments), which of themselves and apart from Him could have no such efficacy. Compare <sup><2012></sup>Isaiah 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; <sup><26315></sup>Jeremiah 33:5; <sup><3062></sup>Zechariah 6:12.

**Numbers 17:10.** *The testimony* i.e. the two tables of the Law; compare <sup><02516></sup>Exodus 25:16 note. No doubt the rod lay in front of the tables within the ark. In the days of Solomon (<sup><1089></sup>1 Kings 8:9) there was nothing in the ark save the Two tables. Aaron's rod was probably lost when the ark was taken by the Philistines.

**Numbers 17:12, 13.** A new section should begin with these verses. They are connected retrospectively with Numbers 16; and form the immediate introduction to Numbers 18. The people were terror-stricken by the fate of the company of Korah and by the plague. Presumption passed by reaction into despair. Was there any approach for them to the tabernacle

of the Lord? Was there any escape from death, except by keeping aloof from His presence? The answers are supplied by the ordinances which testified that the God of judgment was still a God of grace and of love.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 18

**Numbers 18:1.** *The iniquity of the sanctuary* i.e. the guilt of the offences which an erring people would be continually committing against the majesty of God, when brought into contact, through the ordinances, with the manifestations of His presence. Compare the marginal reference.

*The iniquity of your priesthood* As the priests themselves were but men, they were strengthened to bear the iniquity of their own unintentional offences, by being entrusted with the ceremonial means of taking it away (compare Leviticus 16). The word “bear” has, in the Old Testament, this double sense of “enduring” and “removing;” but in the person of Christ, who atoned by His own endurance, the two are in effect one.

**Numbers 18:4.** *A stranger* i.e. every one not a Levite. So in **Numbers 18:7**, it denotes each one who was not a priest: compare **Numbers 3:10; 16:40**.

**Numbers 18:6, 7.** The Lord instructs here the priests that the office which they fill, and the help which they enjoy, are gifts from Him, and are to be viewed as such.

**Numbers 18:8.** *By reason of the anointing* See **Leviticus 7:35**.

**Numbers 18:10.** *In the most holy place* Rather, “among the most holy things;” as in **Numbers 4:4**: i.e. “As the most holy of things shalt thou eat it.” Accordingly, only the males of the priestly families could eat of the things here specified.

**Numbers 18:15.** *Surely redeem ... redeem* A stronger expression is intentionally used in reference to the redemption of the first-born of man than in reference to that of unclean beasts. For the rule as to the former admitted of no exception: the owner of the latter, if unwilling to redeem, might destroy the beasts. Compare the marginal references.

**Numbers 18:19.** *A covenant of salt* Compare the marginal reference. covenants were ordinarily cemented in the East by the rites of hospitality; of which salt was the obvious token, entering as it does into every article of diet. It indicates perpetuity: compare **Leviticus 2:13** note.

**Numbers 18:20.** *I am thy part and thine inheritance* Compare the marginal references.

**Numbers 18:21.** Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek: Jacob had promised the tithe of all wherewith God blessed him if he should return in peace to his father's house. But now first the Lord's tithes are assigned to the Levites for their support (compare **Leviticus 27:30**). The payment of tithes to them is recognized in **Nehemiah 10:37; 12:44; Tobit 1:7**.

**Numbers 18:23.** *Bear their iniquity* The words probably refer to the iniquity of the people; who would, had they approached the tabernacle have fallen, from their proneness to transgress, into overt acts of offence. Against such a result they were, through the ministrations of the Levites, mercifully protected. Compare **Numbers 18:1**.

**Numbers 18:24.** Here the tithes (and in **Numbers 18:26** the priestly tithes) are to be dedicated to their purpose by the ceremony of heaving them to the Lord. The tithes, being solemnly set apart for sacred purposes, became virtually a heave-offering, like the gifts for the tabernacle (**Exodus 25:2**).

**Numbers 18:27.** *Reckoned unto you* Or, by you. The Levites were, of their tithes, to pay tithe to the priests, just as other Israelites paid tithe to the Levites.

**Numbers 18:29.** *Out of all your gifts* The spirit of this law would extend to all the revenues of the Levites; of the increase of their cattle, as well as of their tithes, a tithe would be paid by them for the Lord's service.

**Numbers 18:32.** *Neither shall ye pollute ...* Rather, and by not polluting the holy things of the children of Israel, ye shall not die.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 19

**Numbers 19.** The principle that death and all pertaining to it, as being the manifestation and result of sin (<sup><0027></sup>Genesis 2:17), are defiling, and so lead to interruption of the living relationship between God and His people, is not now introduced for the first time, nor is it at all peculiar to the Mosaic law. It was, on the contrary, traditional among the Israelites from the earliest times, it is assumed in various enactments made already (compare <sup><012></sup>Numbers 5:2; 9:6ff; <sup><010></sup>Leviticus 10:1,7; 11:8,11,24; 21:1ff), and it is traceable in various forms among many nations, both ancient and modern. Moses adopted, here as elsewhere, existing and ancient customs, with significant additions, as helps in the spiritual education of his people.

The ordinance was probably given at this time because the plague which happened (<sup><016></sup>Numbers 16:46-50) about the matter of Korah had spread the defilement of death so widely through the camp as to seem to require some special measures of purification, more particularly as the deaths through it were in an extraordinary manner the penalty of sin.

<sup><012></sup>**Numbers 19:2.** *A red heifer* Red, in order to shadow forth man's earthly body, even as the name Adam bears allusion to the red earth of which man's body was fashioned.

*Without spot, wherein is no blemish* As with sin-offerings generally (<sup><013></sup>Leviticus 4:3).

*Upon which never came yoke* So here and elsewhere (see the marginal references), in the case of female victims.

<sup><013></sup>**Numbers 19:3.** The work would necessarily require a priest; yet as it rendered him unclean for the day (<sup><012></sup>Numbers 19:22), the high priest was relieved from performing it.

*Without the camp* The defilement was viewed as transferred to the victim that was to be offered for its removal. Under these circumstances the victim, like the defiled persons themselves, would be removed outside the camp. The particular pollution to be remedied by this ordinance was the indirect one resulting from contact with tokens and manifestations of sin, not the direct and personal one arising from actual commission of sin. So too the sinless antitype had to bear the reproach of associating with sinners

(<sup><0150></sup>Luke 5:30; 15:2). And as the red heifer was expelled from the precincts of the camp, so was the Saviour cut off in no small measure during His Life from the fellowship of the chief representatives of the theocracy, and put to death outside Jerusalem between two thieves. Compare <sup><0831></sup>Hebrews 13:11,12.

<sup><0496></sup>**Numbers 19:6.** Compare <sup><0840></sup>Leviticus 14:4 note.

<sup><0499></sup>**Numbers 19:9.** *Water of separation* In <sup><0480></sup>Numbers 8:7, the water of purification from sin is the “water of purifying.” So that which was to remedy a state of legal separation is here called “water of separation.”

<sup><0490></sup>**Numbers 19:10.** He that gathered the ashes became equally unclean with the others. For the defilement of the people, previously transferred to the heifer, was regarded as concentrated in the ashes.

<sup><0491></sup>**Numbers 19:11-29.** One practical effect of attaching defilement to a dead body, and to all that touched it, etc., would be to insure early burial, and to correct a practice not uncommon in the East, of leaving the dead to be devoured by the wild beasts.

Numbers 20 and Numbers 21 narrate the journey of the people from Kadesh round Mount Seir to the heights of Pisgah, near the Jordan, and the various incidents connected with that journey (compare <sup><0433></sup>Numbers 33:37-41). This formed the third and last stage of the progress of Israel from Sinai to Canaan, and took place in the fortieth year of the Exodus.

The incidents are apparently not narrated in a strictly chronological order (see <sup><0200></sup>Numbers 21:1). The leading purpose of Numbers 20 seems to be to narrate the loss by the people of their original leaders before their entrance into the land of promise.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 20

**Numbers 20:1.** *Even the whole congregation* This emphatic expression (compare <sup><0435></sup>Numbers 13:26; 14:1) points to a re-assembling of the people for the purpose of at last resuming the advance to the promised land. During the past 38 years the “congregation” had been bracken up. No doubt round the tabernacle there had continued an organised camp consisting of the Levites and others, which had been moved from time to time up and down the country (compare <sup><0635></sup>Numbers 33:18-36). But the mass of the people had been scattered over the face of the wilderness of Paran, and led a nomadic life as best suited the pasturage of the cattle; trafficking in provisions with surrounding tribes (compare <sup><0125></sup>Deuteronomy 2:26-29; <sup><0744></sup>Psalms 74:14); and availing themselves of the resources of a district which were in ancient times vastly greater than they now are.

These natural resources were supplemented, where needful, by miraculous aid. The whole guidance of Israel through the wilderness is constantly referred to God’s special and immediately superintending care (<sup><0800></sup>Deuteronomy 8:4 following; 29:5; <sup><0101></sup>Nehemiah 9:21; <sup><0261></sup>Isaiah 63:11-14; <sup><0100></sup>Amos 2:10, etc.).

Yet though God’s extraordinary bounty was vouchsafed to them, it is probable that this period was, among the perishing generation at all events, one of great religious declension, or even apostasy. To it must no doubt be referred such passages as <sup><0115></sup>Ezekiel 20:15ff; <sup><0105></sup>Amos 5:25 following; <sup><0300></sup>Hosea 9:10.

*Into the desert of Zin* The northeastern part of the wilderness of Paran (or, now definitely fixed by Palmer as the southeastern corner of the desert of Et-Tih, between Akabah and the head of Wady Garaiyeh.) The place of encampment was no doubt adjacent to the spring of Kadesh.

*In the first month* i.e. of the fortieth year of the Exodus.

**Numbers 20:2-6.** The language of the murmurers is noteworthy. It has the air of a traditional remonstrance handed down from the last generation. Compare marginal references.

**Numbers 20:8.** *Take the rod* That with which the miracles in Egypt had been performed (<sup><0108></sup>Exodus 7:8ff; 7:19ff; 8:5ff, etc.), and which had

been used on a similar occasion at Rephidim (<sup><0275></sup>Exodus 17:5 following). This rod, as the memorial of so many divine interpositions, was naturally laid up in the tabernacle, and is accordingly (<sup><0019></sup>Numbers 20:9) described now as taken by Moses “from before the Lord.”

<sup><0013></sup>**Numbers 20:11, 12.** The command (<sup><0018></sup>Numbers 20:8) was “Speak ye unto the rock.” The act of smiting, and especially with two strokes, indicates violent irritation on the part of Moses; as does also his unseemly mode of addressing the people: “Hear now, ye rebels.” The form too of the question, “must we, etc.,” directs the people not, as ought to have been the case, to God as their deliverer, but to Moses and Aaron personally. In fact the faithful servant of God, worn out by the reiterated perversities of the people, breaks down; and in the actual discharge of his duty as God’s representative before Israel, acts unworthily of the great function entrusted to him. Thus, Moses did not “sanctify God in the eyes of the children of Israel.” Aaron might have checked the intemperate words and acts of Moses, and did not. Hence, God punishes both by withdrawing them from their work for Him, and handing over its accomplishment to another.

<sup><0013></sup>**Numbers 20:13.** *The water of Meribah* i.e. “Strife.” The place is called “Meribah in Kadesh” (<sup><0274></sup>Numbers 27:14), and “Meribah-Kadesh” (<sup><0325></sup>Deuteronomy 32:51). to distinguish it from the “Meribah” of <sup><0272></sup>Exodus 17:2ff.

*And he was sanctified in them* An allusion doubtless to the name “Kadesh” (holy), which though not now bestowed, acquired a new significance from the fact that God here vindicated His own sanctity, punishing Moses and Aaron who had trespassed against it.

<sup><0014></sup>**Numbers 20:14.** Compare the marginal reference. It appears from comparing <sup><0013></sup>Numbers 20:1 with <sup><0338></sup>Numbers 33:38, that the host must have remained in Kadesh some three or four months. No doubt time was required for re-organization. In order to gain the banks of Jordan by the shortest route they had to march nearly due east from Kadesh, and pass through the heart of the Edomite mountains. These are lofty and precipitous, traversed by two or three narrow defiles. Hence, the necessity of the request in <sup><0017></sup>Numbers 20:17.

*Thy brother* An appeal to the Edomites to remember and renew the old kindnesses of Jacob and Esau (<sup><0301></sup>Genesis 33:1-17).



It appears from <sup><07117></sup>Judges 11:17 that a similar request was addressed to the Moabites.

<sup><0416></sup>**Numbers 20:16.** *An angel* See <sup><01127></sup>Genesis 12:7; <sup><01112></sup>Exodus 3:2, and notes. The term is to be understood as importing generally the supernatural guidance under which Israel was.

<sup><0411></sup>**Numbers 20:20.** The Israelites, without awaiting at Kadesh the return of their ambassador, commenced their eastward march. At the tidings of their approach the Edomites mustered their forces to oppose them; and on crossing the Arabah they found their ascent through the mountains barred. The notice of this is inserted here to complete the narrative; but in order of time it comes after the march described in <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 20:22.

<sup><0412></sup>**Numbers 20:22.** *Mount Hor* The modern Jebel Harun, situated on the eastern side of the Arabah, and close to Petra. This striking mountain, rising on a dark red bare rock, to a height of near 5,000 feet above the Mediterranean, is remarkable far and near for its two summits, on one of which is still shown a small square building, crowned with a dome, called the Tomb of Aaron.

<sup><0416></sup>**Numbers 20:26.** The priestly garments, wherewith Moses had invested Aaron (<sup><0307></sup>Leviticus 8:7-9), were put upon Eleazar by way of solemn transference of Aaron's office to him; compare <sup><1199></sup>1 Kings 19:19.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 21

**Numbers 21:1.** *King Arad the Canaanite* Rather, “the Canaanite, the king of Arad.” Arad stood on a small hill, now called Tel-Arad, 20 miles south of Hebron.

*In the south* See <sup><04317></sup>Numbers 13:17,22.

*By the way of the spies* i.e. through the desert of Zin, the route which the spies sent out by Moses 38 years before had adopted (compare <sup><04321></sup>Numbers 13:21).

*He fought against Israel* This attack (compare <sup><04301></sup>Numbers 20:1 and note), can hardly have taken place after the death of Aaron. It was most probably made just when the camp broke up from Kadesh, and the ultimate direction of the march was not as yet pronounced. The order of the narrative in these chapters, as occasionally elsewhere in this book (compare <sup><04301></sup>Numbers 9:1, etc.), is not that of time, but of subject matter; and the war against Arad is introduced here as the first of the series of victories gained under Moses, which the historian now takes in hand to narrate.

**Numbers 21:3.** *He called the name of the place* Render it as: “the name of the place was called.” The transitive verb here is, by a common Hebrew idiom, equivalent to an impersonal one.

*Hormah* i.e. “Ban.” See <sup><04445></sup>Numbers 14:45 and note. In <sup><04017></sup>Judges 1:17, we read that the men of Judah and Simeon “slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it;” and further, that “the name of the city was called Hormah.” But it does not follow that the name “Hormah” was first bestowed in consequence of the destruction of the place in the time of the Judges, and that in Numbers its occurrence is a sign of a post-Mosaic date of composition. The text here informs us that this aggression of the king of Arad was repelled, and avenged by the capture and sack of his cities; and that the Israelites “banned” them (compare <sup><04328></sup>Leviticus 27:28,29). But it was not the plan of the Israelites in the time of Moses to remain in this district. They therefore marched away southeastward; and no doubt for the time the Canaanites resumed possession, and restored the ancient name (Zephath). But Joshua again conquered the king of this district, and finally in the time of the early

Judges the ban of Moses and his contemporaries was fully executed. We have therefore in the passage before us the history of the actual origin of the name “Hormah.”

**Numbers 21:4.** The direct route to Moab through the valleys of Edom being closed against them (<sup><010D></sup>Numbers 20:20,21), they were compelled to turn southward. Their course lay down the Arabah; until, a few hours north of Akaba (Ezion-Geber) the Wady Ithm opened to them a gap in the hostile mountains, allowed them to turn to their left, and to march northward toward Moab (<sup><010B></sup>Deuteronomy 2:3). They were thus for some days (see <sup><020E></sup>Numbers 22:1 note) in the Arabah, a mountain plain of loose sand, gravel, and detritus of granite, which though sprinkled with low shrubs, especially near the mouths of the wadys and the courses of the winter-torrents, furnishes extremely little food or water, and is often troubled by sand-storms from the shore of the gulf. Hence, “the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.”

**Numbers 21:5.** *This light bread* i.e. “this vile, contemptible bread.”

**Numbers 21:6.** *Fiery serpents* The epithet (<sup><0105></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15; <sup><3109></sup>Isaiah 14:29; 30:6) denotes the inflammatory effect of their bite. The peninsula of Sinai, and not least, the Arabah, abounds in mottled snakes of large size, marked with fiery red spots and wavy stripes, which belong to the most poisonous species, as the formation of the teeth clearly show.

**Numbers 21:8.** *Make thee a fiery serpent* i.e. a serpent resembling in appearance the reptiles which attacked the people. The resemblance was of the essence of the symbolism (compare <sup><0105></sup>1 Samuel 6:5). As the brass serpent represented the instrument of their chastisement, so the looking unto it at God’s word denoted acknowledgment of their sin, longing for deliverance from its penalty, and faith in the means appointed by God for healing. In the serpent of brass, harmless itself, but made in the image of the creature that is accursed above others (<sup><0104></sup>Genesis 3:14), the Christian fathers rightly see a figure of Him (<sup><0104></sup>John 3:14,15) who though “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (<sup><3026></sup>Hebrews 7:26), was yet “made sin” (<sup><0101></sup>2 Corinthians 5:21), and “made a curse for us” (<sup><0103></sup>Galatians 3:13). And the eye of faith fixed on Him beholds the manifestation at once of the deserts of sin, of its punishment imminent and deprecated, and of the method of its remission devised by God Himself.

**Numbers 21:10, 11.** The earlier stations in this part of their journey were Zalmonah and Punon (<sup><0434></sup>Numbers 33:41,42). Oboth was north of Punon, east of the northern part of Edom, and is pretty certainly the same as the present pilgrim halting-place el-Ahsa. Ije (“ruinous heaps”) of Abarim, or Iim of Abarim, was so called to distinguish it from another Iim in southwestern Canaan (<sup><0459></sup>Joshua 15:29). Abarim denotes generally the whole upland country on the east of the Jordan. The Greek equivalent of the name is Peraea.

**Numbers 21:12.** *The valley of Zared* Rather, the brook or watercourse of Zared “the willow.” It is probably the present Wady Ain Franjy.

**Numbers 21:13.** The Arnon, now the Wady Mojob, an impetuous torrent, divided the territory which remained to the Moabites from that which the Amorites had wrested from them, <sup><0426></sup>Numbers 21:26.

**Numbers 21:14.** Of “the book of the wars of the LORD” nothing is known except what may be gathered from the passage before us. It was apparently a collection of sacred odes commemorative of that triumphant progress of God’s people which this chapter records. From it is taken the ensuing fragment of ancient poetry relating to the passage of the Arnon River, and probably also the Song of the Well, and the Ode on the Conquest of the Kingdom of Sihon (<sup><0417></sup>Numbers 21:17,18,27-30).

*What he did ...* The words which follow to the end of the next verse are a reference rather than a quotation. Contemporaries who had “the Book” at hand, could supply the context. We can only conjecture the sense of the words; which in the original are grammatically incomplete. The marg. is adopted by many, and suggests a better sense: supplying some such verb as “conquered,” the words would run “He” (i.e. the Lord) “conquered Vaheb in Suphah, and the brooks, etc.” Suphah would thus be the name of a district remarkable for its reeds and water-flags in which Vaheb was situated.

**Numbers 21:15.** *To the dwelling of Ar* Ar (compare <sup><0428></sup>Numbers 21:28; <sup><2850></sup>Isaiah 15:1) was on the bank of the Arnon, lower down the stream than where the Israelites crossed. Near the spot where the upper Arnon receives the tributary Nahaliel (<sup><0419></sup>Numbers 21:19), there rises, in the midst of the meadow-land between the two torrents, a hill covered with

the ruins of the ancient city (<sup><1631></sup>Joshua 13:9,16; compare <sup><1626></sup>Deuteronomy 2:36).

<sup><1616></sup>**Numbers 21:16.** Beer is probably the “Well,” afterward known as Beer-elim, the “well of heroes” (<sup><2153></sup>Isaiah 15:8).

<sup><1617></sup>**Numbers 21:17, 18.** This song, recognized by all authorities as dating from the earliest times, and suggested apparently by the fact that God in this place gave the people water not from the rock, but by commanding Moses to cause a well to be dug, bespeaks the glad zeal, the joyful faith, and the hearty cooperation among all ranks, which possessed the people. In after time it may well have been the water-drawing song of the maidens of Israel.

<sup><1618></sup>**Numbers 21:18.** *By the direction of the lawgiver* Some render, with the lawgiver’s scepter; i.e. under the direction and with the authority of Moses; compare <sup><1490></sup>Genesis 49:10, and note.

<sup><1619></sup>**Numbers 21:19.** *Nahaliel* i.e. “brook of God;” the modern Wady Enkheileh. The Israelites must have crossed the stream not much above Ar.

*Bamoth* Otherwise Bamoth-baal, “the high places of Baal” (<sup><1624></sup>Numbers 22:41): mentioned as near Dibon (Dhiban) in <sup><1637></sup>Joshua 13:17, and <sup><2152></sup>Isaiah 15:2. See <sup><1634></sup>Numbers 32:34.

<sup><1620></sup>**Numbers 21:20.** *In the country of Moab* Rather, in the field of Moab: the upland pastures, or flat downs, intersected by the ravine of Wady Waleh.

*Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon* Or, “toward the waste.” See <sup><1637></sup>Numbers 33:47. Pisgah was a ridge of the Abarim mountains, westward from Heshbon. From the summit the Israelites gained their first view of the wastes of the Dead Sea and of the valley of the Jordan: and Moses again ascended it, to view, before his death, the land of promise. The interest attaching to the spot, and the need of a convenient name for it, has led Christians often to designate it as “Nebo,” rather than as “the mountain of, or near to, Nebo;” but the latter is the more correct: Nebo denoted the town (<sup><2152></sup>Isaiah 15:2; <sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 48:1,22) on the western slope of the ridge.

**Numbers 21:24.** *Jabbok* (now Wady Zerka: compare <sup><0132></sup>Genesis 32:22) runs eastward under Rabbah of the children of Ammon, thence westward, and reaches the Jordan, 45 miles north of the Arnon. It was between Rabbah and Gerasa that it formed the Ammonite boundary.

**Numbers 21:25.** *Heshbon* Now Heshban, a ruined city, due east of the point where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea; conspicuous from all parts of the high plateau on which it stands, but concealed, like the rest of the plateau, from the valley beneath.

**Numbers 21:27.** *They that speak in proverbs* The original word is almost equivalent to “the poets.” The word supplies the title of the Book of Proverbs itself; and is used of the parable proper in <sup><3170></sup>Ezekiel 17:2; of the prophecies of Balsam in <sup><0237></sup>Numbers 23:7-10; 24:3-9; etc.; and of a song of triumph over Babylon in <sup><3140></sup>Isaiah 14:4.

**Numbers 21:29.** *Chemosh* The national God of the Moabites (compare the marginal references). The name probably means “Vanquisher,” or “Master.” The worship of Chemosh was introduced into Israel by Solomon (<sup><1110></sup>1 Kings 11:7; <sup><1231></sup>2 Kings 23:13). It was no doubt to Chemosh that Mesha, king of Moab, offered up his son as a burnt-offering (<sup><1231></sup>2 Kings 3:26,27).

In the first six lines (<sup><0217></sup>Numbers 21:27,28) the poet imagines for the Amorites a song of exultation for their victories over Moab, and for the consequent glories of Heshbon, their own capital. In the next lines (<sup><0219></sup>Numbers 21:29) he himself joins in this strain; which now becomes one of half-real, half-ironical compassion for the Moabites, whom their idol Chemosh was unable to save. But in the last lines (<sup><0231></sup>Numbers 21:30) a startling change takes place; the new and decisive triumph of the poet’s own countrymen is abruptly introduced; and the boastings of the Amorites fade utterly away. Of the towns Heshbon was the northernmost, and therefore, to the advancing Israelites, the last to be reached. Medeba, now Madeba, was four miles south of Heshbon (compare <sup><1307></sup>1 Chronicles 19:7,15).

**Numbers 21:32.** *Jaazer* To be identified probably with the ruins Sir or es-Sir 10 miles north of Heshbon. The occupation of it by the Israelites virtually completed their conquest of the Amorite kingdom; and prepared

the way for the pastoral settlements in it which they not long after established (<sup><0825></sup>Numbers 32:35).

<sup><0823></sup>**Numbers 21:33.** In these apparently unimportant words is contained the record of the Israelite (<sup><0829></sup>Numbers 32:39) occupation of Gilead north of the Jabbok; a territory which, though populated, like southern Gilead, by the Amorites (<sup><0809></sup>Deuteronomy 3:9; <sup><0810></sup>Joshua 2:10, etc.), formed part of the domain of Og king of Bashan, who was himself of a different race (<sup><0810></sup>Deuteronomy 3:2; <sup><0815></sup>Joshua 12:5; 13:11). We are not told whether they were led there by express warrant of God, or whether their advance upon Bashan was provoked by Og and his people.

*At Edrei* Now Edhra'ah, commonly Der'a; situate on a branch of the Jarmuk. This river formed the boundary between Gilead and Bashan.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 22

**Numbers 22.** With this chapter begins the fourth and last division of the Book of Numbers, comprising 14 chapters. In them are narrated the events which befell Israel while encamped in the plains of Moab, and certain instructions and arrangements are laid down by Moses with reference to their actual entry upon the promised inheritance.

**Numbers 22:1.** *The plains* Hebrew *araboth* <sup><16160></sup>; the word is the plural of that which is used to denote the whole depressed tract along the Jordan and the Dead Sea, and onward, where it is still called the Arabah (compare <sup><0204></sup>Numbers 21:4 note), to the Elanitic gulf.

*On this side Jordan by Jericho* Rather, across the Jordan of Jericho, i.e., that part of Jordan which skirted the territory of Jericho. This form of expression indicates the site of the camp in its relation to the well-known city of Jericho. See <sup><1000></sup>Deuteronomy 1:1.

**Numbers 22:2.** *Balak the son of Zippor* The comparison of <sup><0204></sup>Numbers 22:4 with <sup><0226></sup>Numbers 21:26 suggests that Balak was not the hereditary king but a Midianite, and that a change of dynasty had taken place. His father's name, Zippor, "Bird," reminds us of those of other Midianites, e.g., Oreb, "Crow," Zeeb, "Wolf." Possibly the Midianite chieftains had taken advantage of the weakness of the Moabites after the Amorite victories to establish themselves as princes in the land.

**Numbers 22:5.** Balaam the son of Beor was from the first a worshipper in some sort of the true God; and had learned some elements of pure and true religion in his home in the far East, the cradle of the ancestors of Israel. But though prophesying, doubtless even before the ambassadors of Balak came to him, in the name of the true God, yet prophecy was still to him as before a mere business, not a religion. The summons of Balak proved to be a crisis in his career: and he failed under the trial. When the gold and honors of Balak seemed to be finally lost, he became reckless and desperate; and, as if in defiance, counseled the evil stratagem by which he hoped to compass indirectly that ruin of God's people which he had been withheld from working otherwise. He thus, like Judas and Ahithophel, set in motion a train of events which involved his own destruction.



The name Balaam signifies “destroyer,” or “glutton,” and is in part identical with “Bela, son of Beor,” the first king of Edom (<sup><0135></sup>Genesis 36:32). The name “Beor” (“to burn up”) is that of the father, or possibly ancestor, of the prophet.

*Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people*

Rather, Pethor which was ... land. Pethor (Pitru, Assyrian) was on the river Sagura (modern: Sajur) near its junction with the Euphrates.

<sup><0217></sup>**Numbers 22:7.** *Rewards of divination* Rightly interpreted in <sup><0215></sup>2 Peter 2:15 as “the wages of unrighteousness.”

<sup><0218></sup>**Numbers 22:8.** Balaam must surely have known that God’s blessing was on the people with whose marvelous march forth from Egypt he was acquainted (<sup><0214></sup>Exodus 15:14; 18:1; <sup><0119></sup>Joshua 2:9), and from whom he had himself probably learned much (compare the language of <sup><0232></sup>Numbers 23:12 with <sup><0136></sup>Genesis 13:6, and that of <sup><0249></sup>Numbers 24:9 with <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 49:9). But his reply to the messengers next morning (<sup><0213></sup>Numbers 22:13), betrays the desire to venture to the utmost of that which God would not forbid rather than to carry out God’s will in hearty sincerity.

<sup><0215></sup>**Numbers 22:15.** Balak, like the ancient pagan world generally, not only believed in the efficacy of the curses and incantations of the soothsayers, but regarded their services as strictly venal. Hence, when his first offer was declined, he infers at once that he had not bid high enough.

<sup><0219></sup>**Numbers 22:19.** *Ye also* i.e., as the other envoys before you. Had Balaam possessed a sincere spirit of obedience, he would have found in the first instructions (<sup><0212></sup>Numbers 22:12) a final decision upon the matter. His hypocritical importunity with God when the fresh messengers came from Balak demonstrates his aversion to God’s declared will.

<sup><0222></sup>**Numbers 22:22.** *The angel* i.e., the Angel that led the Israelites through the wilderness (compare <sup><0216></sup>Numbers 20:16 and references), and subsequently appeared as the Captain of the LORD’S host to Joshua (<sup><0113></sup>Joshua 6:13). In desiring to curse Israel, Balaam was fighting against Israel’s Leader. The presence of the Angel in his path was designed to open his eyes, blinded by sin, to the real character of his course of conduct.

<sup><0224></sup>**Numbers 22:24.** *In a path of the vineyards* i.e., in a path shut in by vineyard-walls on each side. The progress from the road through the open

field (<sup><0223></sup>Numbers 22:23) to that walled in, and thence to the strait place, where there was no room to turn (<sup><0226></sup>Numbers 22:26), shows that Balaam was approaching a city, no doubt that which was the goal of his journey.

<sup><0228></sup>**Numbers 22:28.** *And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass* The account was perhaps given by Balaam to the Israelites after his capture in the war against Midian. Compare <sup><0308></sup>Numbers 31:8. That which is here recorded was apparently perceived by him alone among human witnesses. God may have brought it about that sounds uttered by the creature after its kind became to the prophet's intelligence as though it addressed him in rational speech. Indeed to an augur, priding himself on his skill in interpreting the cries and movements of animals, no more startling warning could be given than one so real as this, yet conveyed through the medium of his own art.

<sup><0232></sup>**Numbers 22:32.** *Is perverse* Rather, is headlong. Compare Peter's words (<sup><0216></sup>2 Peter 2:16), "the madness of the prophet."

<sup><0235></sup>**Numbers 22:35.** *Go with the men* A command, not a permission merely. Balaam, no longer a faithful servant of God, was henceforth overruled in all his acts so that he might subserve the divine purpose as an instrument.

<sup><0226></sup>**Numbers 22:26.** *A city of Moab* Or, Ir-Moab, probably the same with Ar-Moab (<sup><0215></sup>Numbers 21:15). As Balaam in his journey would avoid the districts occupied by the Israelites, he must have approached this city from the east, by the course of the Nahaliel; and in the name Balu'a, still borne by one of the upper branches of this stream, there is perhaps a reminiscence of the name of the prophet.

<sup><0239></sup>**Numbers 22:39.** *Kirjath-buzoth* i.e., "city of streets," within Balak's dominions, south of the Arnon, and identified either with the ruins of Shihan, 4 miles west by south of the site assigned to Ar or Ir, or with Kirjathaim (Kureivat).

<sup><0241></sup>**Numbers 22:41.** *That thence he might see* Rather, and thence he saw.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 23

**Numbers 23:1.** Balaam, after the general custom of the pagan, prefaced his divinations by sacrifice. In the number of the altars regard was probably had to the number of the then known planets. Yet Balaam evidently intended his sacrifice as an offering to the true God.

**Numbers 23:3.** Balaam apparently expected to mark some phenomenon in the sky or in nature, which he would be able, according to the rules of his art, to interpret as a portent. It was for such “auguries” (not as the King James Version “enchantments” **Numbers 23:23**) that he now departed to watch; contrast **Numbers 24:1**.

*An high place* Or, “A bare place on the hill,” as opposed to the high place with its grove of trees.

**Numbers 23:4.** *God met Balaam* God served His own purposes through the arts of Balaam, and manifested His will through the agencies employed to seek it, dealing thus with Balaam in an exceptional manner. To God’s own people auguries were forbidden (**Leviticus 19:26**).

*I have prepared seven altars* And therefore Balaam expected that God on His part would do what was desired by the donor; compare **Numbers 22:15** note.

**Numbers 23:7.** *Aram* Or, “highland.” This term denotes the whole elevated region, from the northeastern frontier of Palestine to the Euphrates and the Tigris. The country between these streams was especially designated “Aram-naharaim,” or “Aram of the two rivers:” the Greeks called it Mesopotamia; and here, according to **Deuteronomy 23:4**, was Balaam’s home. Compare **Numbers 22:5** note.

**Numbers 23:9.** *For from the top of the rocks ...* The “for” indicates the constraint under which Balaam felt himself. He had been met by God in his own way; from the cliff he had watched for the expected augury; and by the light of this he here interprets, according to the rules of his art, the destiny of Israel.

*Dwell alone* i.e., apart from others, undisturbed by their tumults, and therefore in safety and just security. Compare the same idea in marginal

reference; <sup><2488></sup>Jeremiah 49:31; and <sup><3374></sup>Micah 7:14. This tranquility was realized by the Israelites so long as they claved to God as their shelter and protection. But the inward “dwelling alone” was the indispensable condition of the outward “dwelling alone,” and so soon as the influence of the pagan world affected Israel internally, the external power of paganism prevailed also. Balaam himself, when he eventually counseled tempting the people into sin, acted upon the knowledge that God’s blessing and Israel’s prosperity depended essentially on faithfulness to God.

<sup><0230></sup>**Numbers 23:10.** *The fourth part of Israel* i.e., each one of the four camps, into which the host of Israel was divided (see Numbers 2), seemed to swarm with innumerable multitudes. Possibly Balaam could only see one camp. Balaam bears testimony in this verse to the fulfillment of the promises in <sup><0136></sup>Genesis 13:16; 28:14.

*The righteous* i.e., the ancestors of Israel, who “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off” (<sup><38113></sup>Hebrews 11:13). With their histories Balaam was familiar, particularly with that of Abraham, “the righteous man” whom God had “raised up from the east (and) called to His foot” (<sup><23102></sup>Isaiah 41:2).

*Let my last end be like his* Render rather, “last estate,” for the reference is not so much to the act of death, as to all that followed upon it — to the future, in which the name and influence of the deceased person would be perpetuated.

<sup><02313></sup>**Numbers 23:13.** Balak seems to hope that the prophet’s words in <sup><02310></sup>Numbers 23:10 reflected the impression conveyed by the scene before him at the moment of the augury; and so that the sight of a mere few straggling Israelites in the utmost part of the camp might induce a different estimate of their resources and prospects.

<sup><02314></sup>**Numbers 23:14.** *The field of Zophim* Or, “of watchers.” It lay upon the top of Pisgah, north of the former station, and nearer to the Israelite camp; the greater part of which was, however, probably concealed from it by an intervening spur of the hill. Beyond the camp Balaam’s eye would pass on to the bed of the Jordan. It was perhaps a lion coming up in his strength from the swelling of that stream (compare <sup><2499></sup>Jeremiah 49:19) that furnished him with the augury he awaited, and so dictated the final similitude of his next parable.

<sup><0231></sup>**Numbers 23:20.** *I have received commandment to bless* literally, “I have received to bless.” The reason of his blessing lay in the augury which he acknowledged, and in the divine overruling impulse which he could not resist, not in any “commandment” in words.

<sup><0232></sup>**Numbers 23:21.** “Iniquity” and “perverseness” are found together again in the Hebrew of <sup><9107></sup>Psalm 10:7; 90:10, and elsewhere; and import wickedness together with that tribulation which is its proper result.

*The shout* The word is used (<sup><0234></sup>Leviticus 23:24 note) to describe the sound of the silver trumpets. The “shout of a king” will therefore refer to the jubilant sounds by which the presence of the Lord as their King among them was celebrated by Israel.

<sup><0232></sup>**Numbers 23:22.** *An unicorn* A wild bull, the now extinct Aurochs, formidable for its size, strength, speed, and ferocity.

<sup><0233></sup>**Numbers 23:23.** *Enchantment ... divination* More strictly “augury” and “soothsayer’s token,” or the omen that was superstitiously observed. “Soothsayer” is the term applied to Balaam in <sup><1332></sup>Joshua 13:22.

The verse intimates that the seer was at last, through the overruling of his own auguries, compelled to own what, had he not been blinded by avarice and ambition, he would have discerned before — that there Was an indisputable interference of God on Israel’s behalf, against which all arts and efforts of man must prove vain. The sense suggested by margin (i.e., that the soothsayer’s art was not practiced in Israel) would be strictly true (compare the <sup><0234></sup>Numbers 23:4 note).

*According ...* Rather, in due time it shall be told to Jacob, etc. God will, through His own divinely appointed means (e.g. the Urim and Thummim), reveal to Israel, as occasion may require, His will and purposes.

<sup><0238></sup>**Numbers 23:28.** The position of Peor northward from Pisgah, along the Abarim heights, is approximately determined by the extant notices of Beth-peor.

*Jeshimon* was the waste, in the great valley below, where stood Beth-jeshimoth, “the house of the wastes.”

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 24

**Numbers 24:2.** Balaam gazed over the camp of Israel that stretched before him, and allowed the spectacle to work its own influence upon him.

**Numbers 24:3.** *Whose eyes are open* i.e., opened in inward vision, to discern things that were hidden from ordinary beholders.

**Numbers 24:4.** The “falling” of which Balaam speaks was the condition under which the inward opening of his eyes took place. It indicates the force of the divine inspiration overpowering the seer. The faithful prophets of the Lord do not appear to have been subject to these violent illapses (<sup>2087</sup>Daniel 8:17; <sup>6017</sup>Revelation 1:17).

In Balaam and in Saul (<sup>0928</sup>1 Samuel 19:24) the word of God could only prevail by first subduing the alien will, and overpowering the bodily energies which the will ordinarily directs.

**Numbers 24:6.** *As gardens by the river’s side* Balaam’s language reflects the famous artificial gardens along the banks of his own river, the Euphrates.

*As the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted* The latter words contain an apparent reference to Paradise (compare <sup>0008</sup>Genesis 2:8). The aloe, imported from China and the far distant east, furnished to the ancients one of the most fragrant and precious of spices; compare <sup>3958</sup>Psalms 45:8; <sup>1077</sup>Proverbs 7:17.

*As cedar trees beside the waters* i.e., as the noblest of trees branching forth in the fairest of situations: an image of majestic beauty, as that of the last verse was of rare fecundity.

**Numbers 24:7.** Balaam’s native soil was ordinarily irrigated by water fetched from the neighboring Euphrates, and carried in buckets suspended from the two ends of a pole. Thus the metaphor would import that Israel should have his own exuberant and unfailing channels of blessing and plenty. Some take the word to be predictive of the future benefits which, through the means of Israel, were to accrue to the rest of the world.

*Agag* The name, apparently hereditary (compare 1 Samuel 15) to the chieftains of Amalek, means “high.” The words point to the Amalekite kingdom as highly prosperous and powerful at the time (compare <sup><0201></sup>Numbers 24:20); but also to be far excelled by the future glories of Israel. The Amalekites never in fact recovered their crushing defeat by Saul (<sup><0151></sup>1 Samuel 15:2ff), though they appear again as foes to Israel in the reign of David (1 Samuel 27 and 30). The remnant of them was destroyed in the reign of Hezekiah (<sup><1343></sup>1 Chronicles 4:43).

<sup><0244></sup>**Numbers 24:14.** *I will advertise thee* i.e., “I will advise thee,” words which refer to the ensuing prophecy.

<sup><0246></sup>**Numbers 24:16.** *And knew, the knowledge of the Most High* With the addition of these words, which point to the greater importance and the more distinctly predictive character of what follows, the introduction to this last parable is the same as the introduction to the preceding parable.

<sup><0247></sup>**Numbers 24:17.** Render, I see him, though he be not now: I behold him, though he be not near. Balaam here describes what is actually before him in inward vision.

*Him* i.e., the prince, represented in the succeeding words by the Star and Scepter. The star has among all nations served as a symbol of regal power and splendour: and the birth and future glory of great monarchs were believed by the ancients to be heralded by the appearance of stars or comets: compare also <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 14:12; <sup><2780></sup>Daniel 8:10; <sup><6116></sup>Revelation 1:16,20; 2:1; 9:1.

*The corners of Moab* literally, “the two sides of Moab,” i.e., the length and breadth of the land: compare <sup><2485></sup>Jeremiah 48:45.

*Destroy all the children of Sheth* Rather, “overthrow the sons of tumult,” i.e., the warriors of Moab, whose valour and fierceness is frequently referred to elsewhere (compare <sup><0255></sup>Exodus 15:15; <sup><2354></sup>Isaiah 15:4; 16:6, etc.) Compare <sup><2485></sup>Jeremiah 48:45.

<sup><0248></sup>**Numbers 24:18.** *Seir* The older name of the mountain-land, south of Moab, and east of the Arabah, which the Edomites inhabited (<sup><0338></sup>Genesis 32:3; 36:8,9).

<sup><0249></sup>**Numbers 24:19.** *Destroy him that remaineth of the city* i.e., shall destroy those of every city that had previously escaped. The phrase tersely

describes a conqueror who first defeats his enemies in battle, and then hunts out the fugitives until he has cut off all of every place (compare <sup><01116></sup>1 Kings 11:16).

The victories of David were a partial accomplishment of the predictions (<sup><0244></sup>Numbers 24:14,18), but did not exhaust them.

It is apparent that Edom and Moab are named by Balaam, as they are also by the prophets (compare e.g., <sup><2114></sup>Isaiah 11:14), as representatives of the pagan nations (<sup><0248></sup>Numbers 24:8) who were hostile to the theocracy. As Jacob therefore figures as a constant type of the kingdom of Messiah in the prophets, so do Edom and Moab of the enemies of that kingdom; and in the threatened ruin of Edom and Moab is indicated the eventual destruction of all that resist the kingdom of God in its power.

The “Star” and “Sceptre” of the prophecy, like the “Sceptre” and “Lawgiver” of <sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10, point also naturally to a line of princes rather than to an individual; or rather are emblems of the kingdom of Israel generally. Thus, the victories of David and his successors, generation after generation, over Edom and Moab, are unquestionably recurring and progressive accomplishments of what Balaam foretold; but in addition the prophecy reaches forward to some further and culminating accomplishment; and that too in “the latter days” (<sup><0244></sup>Numbers 24:14), the ordinary prophetic designation for the time of the Messiah (compare the marginal references).

To a Christian the connection between the Star and Sceptre of Balaam and the Star of the king of the Jews, which the wise men saw (<sup><0102></sup>Matthew 2:2), is self-evident.

<sup><0244></sup>**Numbers 24:20.** *When he looked* i.e., in spirit, as he saw the Star (<sup><0247></sup>Numbers 24:17).

*Amalek was the first of the nations* Rather, is pre-eminent among the neighboring nations: compare the same expression in <sup><0101></sup>Amos 6:1. Hence, the force of the words (<sup><0247></sup>Numbers 24:7) “higher than Agag,” i.e., than the king of this powerful nation (compare <sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:45; <sup><0278></sup>Exodus 17:8). This rank, due to the warlike prowess of the tribe, Balaam contrasts with its approaching downfall and extinction.

<sup><0242></sup>**Numbers 24:21.** *The Kenites* First mentioned (<sup><0159></sup>Genesis 15:19) as one of the tribes whose territory was promised to Abraham. In <sup><0116></sup>Judges



1:16, where we read of them as moving with the children of Judah, to establish themselves in the pastures south of Arad, Moses' father-in-law is spoken of as a Kenite (compare <sup><07041></sup>Judges 4:11). It appears therefore, since Moses' father-in-law was a prince or priest of Midian (<sup><07015></sup>Exodus 2:15ff), that the Kenites must have been of Midianite extraction, and so descended from Abraham through Keturah (<sup><07212></sup>Genesis 25:2).

But it seems unlikely that the Kenites of <sup><07019></sup>Genesis 15:19, who were to be dispossessed by the descendants of Abraham, were identical with those of whom Balaam speaks, and who were, because of good offices rendered at the time of the Exodus, always regarded as kinsmen and friends by Israel (compare <sup><07016></sup>1 Samuel 15:6; 27:10). Rather, is it probable that the Kenites of <sup><07019></sup>Genesis 15:19 were a Canaanite people, who derived their name from the city Kain, which fell eventually within the borders of the tribe of Judah (<sup><07052></sup>Joshua 15:22); and that the descendants of Hobab, who appear in <sup><07016></sup>Judges 1:16 as making war in this very district, possessed themselves of this city, and with it of the name Kenite also. This they would seem to have already done when Balsam uttered his prediction; and in the next verse it is, as the margin correctly indicates, not of the Kenite, but of Kain the city, that he speaks. Nor is it surprising to find them in possession of their new abode in the promised land, while the Israelites were yet in their tents. It may well be that this roving band of Midianites had already entered Canaan, perhaps along the shores of the Dead Sea, and by routes impracticable for the huge host of Israel, and had, as a kind of advanced guard, made a beginning of the conquest of the country.

From <sup><13054></sup>1 Chronicles 2:54,55, we learn that the Rechabites were a branch of the Kenites; and the name Salmaites, always given to the Kenites in the Targums, connects them with Salma, the son of Caleb, there mentioned. Jeremiah 35 shows how tenaciously, for many centuries, they held fast the nomadic habits of their race.

*Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock* Render, Strong (or firm) be thy dwelling-place, and put thou thy nest in the rock (or cliff). In the Hebrew there is a play on the words ken, "nest," and Kain, the name of the Kenites' abode. This nest in the cliff might be the city of Hazazon-tamar or Engedi, if that be (as is likely) the "city of palm-trees," from which they went up subsequently (<sup><07016></sup>Judges 1:16). But there is another site, about 10 miles south of Engedi, to which Balaam's words would be more appropriate, on the summit of the cliff rising

perpendicularly from the level of the western shore of the Dead Sea, where was afterward built the city of Masada, the scene of the closing tragedy of the Jewish-Roman war. It is not likely that such a natural fortress would ever have been unoccupied, or even excluded from a place in the list of the cities of Judah. Nor is there any site in the Holy land which a rude but warlike people might more fittingly designate as either Ken, the Nest, or Kain, the Possession.

**Numbers 24:22.** Render, For Kain shall surely not be destroyed (literally “be for destruction”) until Asshur, etc. The words are not, as they appear in the King James Version, a prediction of evil to the Kenites, but a promise, on the contrary, of safety to be long continued to them (compare Numbers 10:32; Jeremiah 35:19).

**Numbers 24:23.** *When God doeth this* The eventual carrying away of the allies of Israel by Assyria presented itself to Balaam as the ruin of all peace and safety upon earth. One prediction was however, yet wanting, and is next given, namely, that the conquerors of the Kenites should fare no better than the Kenites themselves.

**Numbers 24:24.** *Chittim* i.e., Cyprus, the nearest of the western islands, the only one visible from Palestine, and so the representative to Balsam and to Israel of all those unknown western regions across the Mediterranean Sea, from which were at length to come the conquerors of the mighty empires of the East. Compare Isaiah 23:1,12; Jeremiah 2:10.

*Eber* i.e., the descendants of Shem. Of these Asshur was one (compare marginal references), and is here specified by name, since the Assyrians attained, in the empires of Babylon and Nineveh, to an extraordinary grandeur, and were destined to a most signal and irretrievable fall.

*He also* i.e., the conqueror of Asshur and Eber who should come across the sea. It is not revealed from where the blow should come that should overthrow in its turn the power that prevailed over the great monarchies of the East.

**Numbers 24:25.** *Returned to his own place* i.e., among the Midianites to plot by new means against the people of God, and to perish in his sin (Numbers 31:8,16; Revelation 2:14).

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 25

**Numbers 25.** The records of the neighboring cities of the plain, and the circumstances of the origin of Moab (<sup><0193></sup>Genesis 19:30ff) suggest that the people among whom Israel was now thrown were more than ordinarily licentious.

<sup><0212></sup>**Numbers 25:2.** *And they called* i.e., “the daughters of Moab called.”

<sup><0213></sup>**Numbers 25:3.** *Joined himself* i.e., by taking part in the sacrificial meals as described in the last verse. Compare <sup><0245></sup>Exodus 34:15; <sup><0308></sup>1 Corinthians 10:18. The worship of Baal was attended with the grossest impurity, and indeed partly consisted in it (<sup><2044></sup>Hosea 4:14; 9:10).

*Baal-peor* i.e., the Baal worshipped at Peer, the place mentioned in <sup><0228></sup>Numbers 23:28 (compare Baal-meon, <sup><0428></sup>Numbers 32:38). (The identification of this god with Chemosh in <sup><0212></sup>Numbers 21:29 is now given up.)

<sup><0204></sup>**Numbers 25:4.** *Take* i.e., assemble the chiefs of the people to thee (compare the phrase “took men,” in <sup><0460></sup>Numbers 16:1). The offenders were to be first; slain by the hands of “the judges of Israel” (<sup><0215></sup>Numbers 25:5), and afterward hung up “against the sun” (i.e., publicly, openly; compare <sup><0012></sup>2 Samuel 12:12) as an aggravation of their punishment. This would be done by impaling the body or fastening it to a cross. Compare <sup><0212></sup>Deuteronomy 21:23 note, and <sup><0219></sup>2 Samuel 21:9.

<sup><0216></sup>**Numbers 25:6.** *A Midianite woman* literally, “the Midianite woman,” the particular one by whom he had been enticed (compare <sup><0215></sup>Numbers 25:15 and <sup><0618></sup>Numbers 31:18). Her high rank proves that Zimri had not fallen in with her by mere chance, but had been deliberately singled out by the Midianites as one whom they must at any price lead astray.

*Weeping before the door of the tabernacle* The plague (<sup><0219></sup>Numbers 25:9) had already broken out among the people: and the more God-fearing had assembled at the door of the tabernacle of God (compare the marginal reference.) to intercede for mercy, when Zimri committed the fresh and public outrage just described.

**Numbers 25:8.** *Into the tent* The inner recess in the tent, fashioned archwise, and appropriated as the sleeping-chamber and women's apartment.

**Numbers 25:9.** *Twenty and four thousand* Paul (<sup><4008></sup>1 Corinthians 10:8) says "three and twenty thousand," following probably the Jewish tradition which deducted one thousand as the number slain by the hands of their brethren.

**Numbers 25:11.** *Hath turned my wrath away* The signal example thus made of a leading offender by Phinehas was accepted by God as an expiation (literally in <sup><0253></sup>Numbers 25:13 "covering;" see the note at the typical significance <sup><0104></sup>Leviticus 1:4), and the exterminating wrath which had gone forth against the whole people was arrested (<sup><0461></sup>Psalms 106:30).

The act of Phinehas must be regarded as exceptional. It was an extraordinary deed of vengeance, justified by the singular atrocity of the crime which provoked it; but it does not confer the right to every man to punish summarily any gross and flagrant breach of divine law committed in his presence. Compare the act of Mattathias (1 Macc. 2:24-26).

The act was its own justification. Its merit consisted in the evidence it gave that the heart of Phinehas was right before God. He was "zealous with God's zeal," and abhorred the presumptuous wickedness of Zimri, as God abhorred it. He therefore risked his own life by dealing according to their deserts with two influential and defiant evil-doers; and his act, done in the face of Moses and the people, and for them, was accepted by God as a national atonement; and rewarded by the people (compare the leadership assigned to him in <sup><0306></sup>Numbers 31:6; <sup><0213></sup>Joshua 22:13).

**Numbers 25:12.** *My covenant of peace* Equivalent to "the covenant of My peace." God established with Phinehas in particular that covenant which He had made generally with all his people; and among its blessings peace is especially mentioned, because of the peace between God and the congregation which Phinehas had brought about. As an additional gift there is assigned to him and his seed forever the office of peace-making, the legitimate function of the priesthood (compare <sup><0114></sup>Ephesians 2:14); and the covenant was thus to him a covenant not only of peace but of life (compare the marginal reference). Phinehas became highpriest after the death of his father Eleazar, and the office, with a short interruption from the days of Eli

to those of David, when for unknown reasons it was filled by the descendants of his uncle Ithamar, was perpetuated in his line; nor indeed is it known to have departed from that line again until the typical priesthood of the sons of Aaron was merged in the actual priesthood of the Saviour of mankind.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 26

**Numbers 26.** The mustering of the tribes described in this chapter was immediately preparatory to the war against Midian, and to the invasion of Canaan which shortly followed. With a view also to an equitable allotment of the land to be conquered (compare <sup><ORIS></sup>Numbers 26:54) the numbers of the several tribes were taken according to their families.

<sup><ORIS></sup>**Numbers 26:1.** *After the plague* These words serve to show approximately the date at which the census was taken, and intimate the reason for the great decrease in numbers which was found to have taken place in certain tribes. Compare <sup><ORIS></sup>Deuteronomy 4:3 and <sup><ORIS></sup>Numbers 26:5 note in this chapter.

<sup><ORIS></sup>**Numbers 26:5** following The tribes are mentioned in the same order as in the earlier census (Numbers 1), except that Manasseh here precedes Ephraim; probably as being now the larger tribe.

The following table shows the numbers of the tribes at each census:

	At Sinai	In the Plains of Moab
Reuben	46,500	43,730
Simeon	59,300	22,200
Gad	45,650	40,500
Judah	74,600	76,500
Issachar	54,400	64,300
Zebulun	57,400	60,500
Ephraim	40,500	32,500
Manasseh	32,200	52,700
Benjamin	35,400	45,600
Dan	62,700	64,400
Asher	41,500	53,400
Naphtali	53,400	45,400
	<b>603,550</b>	<b>601,730</b>

Seven of the tribes, of which three are tribes belonging to the camp of Judah, show an increase of numbers; and five, among whom are the three

belonging to the camp of Reuben, show a decrease. The greatest increase of any one tribe is in Manasseh. The most remarkable decrease is in Simeon, which now shows less than half its former strength. To this tribe Zimri, the chief offender in the recent transgression, belonged (<sup><0254></sup>Numbers 25:14). Probably his tribesmen generally had followed his example, and had accordingly suffered most severely in the plague. In the parting blessing of Moses, uttered at no great interval from this date, the tribe of Simeon alone is omitted.

The families of all the tribes, excluding the Levites, number 57. The ancestral heads after whom these families are named correspond nearly with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jacob, enumerated in <sup><0448></sup>Genesis 46:8ff. Both lists consist mainly of grandchildren of Jacob, both contain also the same two grandchildren of Judah, and the same two grandchildren of Asher. The document in Genesis should be regarded as a list, not of those who went down in their own persons with Jacob into Egypt, but of those whose names were transmitted to their posterity at the date of the Exodus as the heads of Israelite houses, and were reckoned the early ancestors of the people.

<sup><0430></sup>**Numbers 26:10.** *Together with Korah* i.e., they were engulfed at the same time that Korah perished, for Korah himself appears to have died among the two hundred and fifty incense offerers at the door of the tabernacle, not with Dathan and Abiram (compare <sup><0462></sup>Numbers 16:32 note).

<sup><0431></sup>**Numbers 26:11.** *The children of Korah died not* Compare <sup><0438></sup>Numbers 26:58. Samuel the prophet was of this family, and Heman, “the king’s seer” (<sup><3162></sup>1 Chronicles 6:22,33; 25:5). Several of the Psalms appear from the titles to have been composed for the sons of Korah: compare titles of Psalm 42; 44; 45, etc.

<sup><0435></sup>**Numbers 26:51.** This shows a decrease of 1,820 from the number at Sinai; a decrease due to the recent plague.

<sup><0436></sup>**Numbers 26:56.** *According to the lot ...* This method was adopted not only in order to preclude jealousies and disputes, but also that the several tribes might regard the territories as determined for them by God Himself: compare <sup><0463></sup>Proverbs 16:33.

**Numbers 26:59.** *whom her mother bare* literally, “whom she bare;” the subject is wanting, and the verb is in the feminine gender. The words “her mother” are merely conjectural. The text is probably imperfect.

**Numbers 26:62.** The total number of male Levites, 23,000, shows an increase of 1,000 on the number at Sinai (**Numbers 3:39**). It is doubtless to be taken as a round number; and, as before, includes the male children from a month old and upward, as well as the male adults.

**Numbers 26:64.** It appears from **Deuteronomy 2:14,15** that the generation numbered at the former census had perished before the host crossed the brook Zered.



## NOTES ON NUMBERS 27

**Numbers 27:1.** Women in Israel had not, up to the present time, enjoyed any distinct right of inheritance. Yet a father, whether sons had been born to him or not, had the power, either before or at his death, to cause part of his estate to pass to a daughter; in which case her husband married into her family rather than she into his, and the children were regarded as of the family from which the estate had come. Thus, Machir, ancestor of Zelophehad, although he had a son Gilead, left also, as is probable, an inheritance to his daughter, the wife of Hezron of the tribe of Judah, by reason of which their descendants, among whom was Jair, were reckoned as belonging to the tribe of Manasseh (<sup><0434></sup>Numbers 32:41; <sup><1321></sup>1 Chronicles 2:21ff).

**Numbers 27:2.** *By the door of the tabernacle of the congregation* The place of solemn assembly of the elders. The daughters of Zelophehad made their suit to the princes, the heads of tribes and of families, who were making the census under the superintendence of Moses and Eleazar.

**Numbers 27:3.** *But died in his own sin* i.e., perished under the general sentence of exclusion from the land of promise passed on all the older generation, but limited to that generation alone. By virtue of the declaration in <sup><0431></sup>Numbers 14:31 the daughters of Zelophehad claim that their father's sin should not be visited upon them.

**Numbers 27:4.** *Give unto us* As representing our father; that so he, through us his representatives, may enjoy a like inheritance with his brethren.

**Numbers 27:12.** *Mount Abarim* See <sup><0211></sup>Numbers 21:20 note.

**Numbers 27:16.** *The God of the spirits of all flesh* An acknowledgment that man, who is but flesh (compare <sup><0013></sup>Genesis 6:3), is of himself helpless; and “lives and moves and has his being” in God (<sup><4173></sup>Acts 17:28). The words are suitably employed here to introduce an entreaty that God would not leave the congregation without a guide and leader, and in <sup><0432></sup>Numbers 16:22 as a preface to an intercession that the whole people should not suffer for the sin of a, few.

**Numbers 27:18.** in whom is the spirit Compare **Genesis 41:38.** Joshua was endowed by God with the requisite spiritual qualifications for the office. Moses however, was to lay his hands upon him, both in order to confer formal and public appointment, and also (compare **Deuteronomy 34:9**) to confirm and strengthen the spiritual gifts already bestowed. The previous reception of the inner grace did not dispense with that of the outward sign; compare the case of Cornelius (**Acts 10:44-48**); and Paul's baptism after his miraculous conversion (**Acts 9:18**).

**Numbers 27:20.** *Of thine honor* i.e., of thy dignity and authority (compare **Numbers 11:17,28**). Joshua was constituted immediately vice-leader under Moses, by way of introduction to his becoming chief after Moses' death.

**Numbers 27:21.** *And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest ...* Joshua was thus to be inferior to what Moses had been. For Moses had enjoyed the privilege of unrestricted direct contact with God: Joshua, like all future rulers of Israel, was to ask counsel mediately, through the High Priest and those means of inquiring of God wherewith the high priest was entrusted. Such counsel Joshua seems to have omitted to seek when he concluded his hasty treaty with the Gibeonites (**Joshua 9:3ff**).

*Judgment of Urim* See **Exodus 28:30** note.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 28

**Numbers 28.** The daily offering had been already commanded (<sup><0238></sup>Exodus 29:38), and no doubt additional offerings had become customary on festivals. But no such elaborate system as is here prescribed was or could possibly have been observed in the wilderness: compare <sup><6128></sup>Deuteronomy 12:8,9. The regulations of this and the next chapter therefore point to the immediate prospect of that settlement in Canaan which alone could enable the Israelites to obey them. Compare the ordinances in Numbers 15.

<sup><0822></sup>**Numbers 28:2.** *My offering, and my bread ...* Or, my offering, even my bread, etc. Offering is here *korban* <sup><47133></sup> (compare <sup><0802></sup>Leviticus 1:2; <sup><4071></sup>Mark 7:11), a term in itself of quite general import, but often especially applied, as apparently in this instance, to the meat-offering which accompanied the sacrifices. This meat-offering connected itself, from its very nature, with the life of the Israelites in Canaan, not with their life in the wilderness; and it was annexed to the animal sacrifices as a token that the people must dedicate to God their property and the fruits of their labor as well as their own persons. See <sup><0432></sup>Numbers 15:2 note and <sup><0206></sup>Leviticus 21:6.

<sup><0822></sup>**Numbers 28:7.** The original of the word “strong wine” *shechar* <sup><47941></sup> is a term usually employed to describe strong drink other than wine (<sup><0809></sup>Leviticus 10:9 note). The Israelites in the wilderness had, in their lack of wine, substituted shechar made from barley for it. They had thus observed the spirit, though not the letter of the ordinance. The drink-offering was either poured round the foot of the altar; or on the altar, and so upon the flesh of the sacrifice by which the altar was covered (compare <sup><0219></sup>Exodus 30:9).

<sup><0822></sup>**Numbers 28:9-10.** The Sabbath-offering, not previously enjoined, consisted of two lambs, properly accompanied, in addition to the regular daily offering.

<sup><0821></sup>**Numbers 28:11-15.** The New-moon offering is here also commanded for the first time. The goat as a sin-offering, though mentioned last, would seem in fact to have been offered first (compare the precedents

in Exodus 29; Leviticus 5; 8; 9; 14; 16). The sin-offering, which (<sup>4852</sup>Numbers 15:22-26) had been contemplated in cases where a sin had been committed ignorantly without the knowledge of the congregation, was henceforth not to be offered merely at discretion, as circumstances might seem to require, but to be regularly repeated, not less frequently than once a month.

<sup>4826</sup>**Numbers 28:16-25.** The Passover offering was the same as that of the New moon, and was repeated on each of the seven days of the festival, thus marking the importance and the solemnity of the occasion. The details of the offering had not been previously prescribed.

<sup>4825</sup>**Numbers 28:26-31.** The festival offering at the season of first-fruits was to be offered on one day only; and was the same with that of the new moon and Passover. It nearly though not entirely accords with the sacrificial offering prescribed in <sup>4838</sup>Leviticus 23:18ff.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 29

**Numbers 29:1-6.** The ordinance of the Feast of Trumpets was to be observed on the opening day of that month within which the great Day of the Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles fell (compare **Leviticus 23:23ff**). The special offering for the day anticipated that of the great Day of Atonement.

**Numbers 29:7-11.** The offering on the great Day of Atonement was the same with that just specified. The great ceremonies of the day are described in **Leviticus 16**.

**Numbers 29:12-34.** Feast of tabernacles: compare **Leviticus 23:33ff**. The offerings required at this feast were the largest of all. It was especially one of thankfulness to God for the gift of the fruits of the earth; and the quantity and the nature of the offerings (see **Numbers 29:7-11**) were determined accordingly.

**Numbers 29:32.** Stress is laid on the number seven, the holy symbolic covenant number, by way of intimation that the mercies of the harvest accrued by virtue of God's covenant. The diminishing number of bullocks sacrificed on the preceding days of the Feast (compare **Numbers 29:13,17**, etc.), is adjusted simply to obtain the coincidence before us on the seventh day; but some have thought that the gradual evanescence of the Law until the time of its absorption in the Gospel is here presignified in the Law itself.

**Numbers 29:35-38.** The offerings prescribed for the closing day of the Feast of tabernacles were the same with those appointed for the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. The solemnities of the month thus terminated, as

a whole, with the same sacrifices with which, three weeks before, they had been introduced; and the Day of Atonement, even though succeeded by the rejoicings of the Feast of tabernacles, thus left its impress on the whole month.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 30

**Numbers 30.** The regulations respecting vows appropriately follow those given respecting sacrifices, since a large proportion of vows would always relate to the presentation of such offerings. Rules had already been given (Leviticus 27) for the estimation of things vowed to God. It is probable that this fresh legislation dealing especially with vows made by persons in a state of tutelage, was occasioned by some case of practical difficulty that had recently arisen; and it is addressed by Moses to “the heads of the tribes” (<sup><OR15></sup>Numbers 30:1), who would in their judicial capacity have to determine questions on these subjects.

There is no provision in the chapter for annulling vows made by boys and young men; from which it has been inferred that the vows of males were in all cases and circumstances binding.

<sup><OR15></sup>**Numbers 30:2.** The “vow” was positive; the “bond” negative or restrictive. By a vow a man engaged to dedicate something to God, or to accomplish some work for Him: by a bond he debarred himself from some privilege or enjoyment. A vow involved an obligation to do: a bond, an obligation to forbear doing.

<sup><OR15></sup>**Numbers 30:3.** *Being in her father’s house in her youth* It was not ordinarily until her betrothal or marriage, that the female passed (some suppose by purchase) from the power of her father to that of her husband.

<sup><OR15></sup>**Numbers 30:5.** *The LORD shall forgive her* i.e., shall remit the obligation. (Compare <sup><11518></sup>2 Kings 5:18.)

<sup><OR15></sup>**Numbers 30:6.** Rather, And if she shall at all be an husband’s, and her vows shall be upon her, or a rash utterance of her lips, wherewith she hath bound her soul, etc. The “at all” intimates that the case of a girl betrothed but not yet actually married is here especially contemplated. After betrothal, a woman continued to reside, until the period of her marriage arrived, in her father’s house; but her property was from that time forward vested in her husband, and she was so far regarded as personally his, that an act of faithlessness to him was, like adultery, punishable with death (<sup><16223></sup>Deuteronomy 22:23,24). Hence, his right to control her vows even before he actually took her home as his wife.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 31

**Numbers 31:2.** *The Midianites* The Moabites are not included. It would thus seem that it was the Midianites, and they only, who deliberately set themselves to work the corruption of Israel.

**Numbers 31:3.** *Avenge the LORD of Midian* The war against the Midianites was no ordinary war. It was indeed less a war than the execution of a divine sentence against a most guilty people.

Doubtless there were many among the Midianites who were personally guiltless as regards Israel. But the rulers deliberately adopted the counsel of Balaam against Israel, and their behests had been but too readily obeyed by their subjects. The sin therefore was national, and the retribution could be no less so.

But the commission of the Israelites in the text must not be conceived as a general license to slay. They had no discretion to kill or to spare. They were bidden to exterminate without mercy, and brought back to their task (<sup>Numbers 31:14</sup>) when they showed signs of flinching from it. They had no alternative in this and similar matters except to fulfill the commands of God; an awful but doubtless salutary manifestation, as was afterward the slaughter of the Canaanites, of God's wrath against sin; and a type of the future extermination of sin and sinners from His kingdom.

**Numbers 31:5.** *Were delivered* Or, "were told off."

**Numbers 31:6.** *Phinehas* He was marked out as the fitting director of the expedition by his conduct (compare <sup>Numbers 25:7-13</sup>) in the matter of Zimri and Cozbi.

*With the holy instruments, and the trumpets* Or rather, "with the holy instruments, to wit, the trumpets," for the trumpets themselves seem to be the instruments intended.

**Numbers 31:8.** *And they slew ... were slain ...* Render: And the kings of Midian they put to death, beside those that fell in the battle; namely, etc. From which it would seem that beside these five, put to death after the battle, there were other Midianite kings who perished fighting.

The five chieftains here mentioned were vassals of Sihon the Amorite (<sup><0632></sup>Joshua 13:21).

<sup><0610></sup>**Numbers 31:10.** *Goodly castles* Rather, both here and in <sup><0256></sup>Genesis 25:16, hamlets. The word is derived from a word *tor* <sup><12905></sup> signifying “a row” or “range” (compare <sup><0623></sup>Ezekiel 46:23); and probably indicates those collections of rude dwellings, made of stones piled one on another and covered with tent-cloths, which are used by the Arabs to this day; and which are frequently mentioned as douars in narratives of the French campaigns in Algeria. These dwellings would be formed usually in a circle. See the word “Hazereth,” in <sup><0415></sup>Numbers 11:35.

<sup><0611></sup>**Numbers 31:11.** The “prey” refers to the captives and live-stock: the “spoil” to the ornaments and other effects.

<sup><0616></sup>**Numbers 31:16.** *Caused ... to commit trespass* More literally, “became to the children of Israel for a cause (or, incitement) of treachery to the Lord.”

<sup><0622></sup>**Numbers 31:22.** *Brass* Render copper. See <sup><0102></sup>Genesis 4:22 note. The verse is curious as illustrating the variety of metals in use at this early date for domestic purposes. All these metals were common in Egypt centuries before the date of the Exodus.

<sup><0629></sup>**Numbers 31:29.** *An heave-offering* Render simply an offering, and compare <sup><04824></sup>Numbers 18:24. The verb from which the word here rendered “heave-offering” is derived, is rightly translated “levy” in <sup><0628></sup>Numbers 31:28.

<sup><0632></sup>**Numbers 31:32.** Compare <sup><0611></sup>Numbers 31:11, and render “And the prey” (i.e., the live prey) “in addition to the spoil which the men of war seized, etc.” The “spoil” is described in <sup><0615></sup>Numbers 31:50.

The number of sheep, beeves, asses, and persons taken is given in this and following verses in round thousands. Hence, the Lord’s tribute (<sup><0629></sup>Numbers 31:29,37,38, etc.), being the 500th part of the half, comes out also in round numbers. The enormous amount both of live stock and of personal ornament was characteristic of the Midianites. When they invaded Israel in the days of the Judges, their wealth was still of the same kind (<sup><0105></sup>Judges 6:5; 8:24ff). The Bedouins, notwithstanding their wild nomadic life, retain their ancestral love of finery to the present day.



**Numbers 31:49.** There is no mention of any resistance on the part of the Midianites. The Israelites saw in this and in the preservation of all those engaged, proofs that the Lord had been with them in the work, and hence, the free-will oblation of **Numbers 31:50.**

**Numbers 31:50.** The “chains” were “armlets” (**2 Samuel 1:10**). The “rings” were “finger-rings,” or “seal-rings;” and the “tablets” were worn suspended from the neck (**Exodus 35:22**).

*To make an atonement for our souls before the LORD* Compare **Exodus 30:11-16**. The atonement was not for any special offence committed (which would have called for a sacrifice of blood-shedding), but rather like the half-shekel given at the census in the Book of Exodus (loc. cite), was an acknowledgment of having received undeserved mercies. These, if unacknowledged, would have entailed guilt on the soul.

**Numbers 31:52.** The value of the offering was about 20,000 British pounds.

**Numbers 31:53.** This verse seems to imply that the soldiers, as distinct from the officers (compare **Numbers 31:49**), did not make any offering from their plunder. Of course besides the gold there would be much spoil of less precious materials; see **Numbers 31:20,22**.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 32

**Numbers 32.** The record of the last war to the east of the Jordan is followed by the assignment of the lands already conquered to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to certain families of the tribe of Manasseh.

**Numbers 32:1.** *Jazer* Compare the marginal reference. This district, although included in the land of Gilead, seems to have had special attractions for the Israelite settlers. All travelers in Gilead, the modern Belka, bear witness to its richness as compared with the country to the west of the Jordan. Its general character is that of an upland pasture, undulating and thickly timbered. In the last respect its northern portions excel its southern; but for fertility of soil the southern province is preferred by the Arabs, in whose lips it has passed into a proverb: "Thou canst not find a country like the Belka."

**Numbers 32:3.** See Numbers 32:34-38 notes.

**Numbers 32:8.** *Your fathers* The generation of the Exodus was now substantially extinct. Compare Numbers 26:64,65.

*Kadesh-barnea* See Numbers 13:26.

**Numbers 32:12.** *The Kenezite* Kenaz (<sup>Genesis 36:11</sup>) was the name of one of the "dukes of Edom:" but Israel and Edom were of kindred origin, and the use of similar names by the two peoples is not surprising.

**Numbers 32:23.** *Be sure your sin will find you out* literally, "know ye your sin that it will find you out." Moses implies that their sin would eventually bring its own punishment along with it.

**Numbers 32:27.** *Before the LORD* i.e., immediately in front of the sacred tokens of the Lord's presence; compare Numbers 10:17 note.

**Numbers 32:33.** *Half the tribe of Manasseh* That is, (compare Numbers 32:39; Joshua 17:1) the families of Machir. Moses, when assigning to the pastoral tribes the inheritance which they desired, appropriated to these Manassites especially the district they had already subdued, as a reward for their valour and exploits. Thus the whole of the conquered country was provisionally disposed of, and the forwardness anti

valour of the Machirites rewarded. It seems clear from <sup><0629></sup>Numbers 32:39 and <sup><0670></sup>Joshua 17:1, that the claims of the Machirites arose simply out of their exploits.

<sup><0623></sup>**Numbers 32:34-36.** The cities here named fall into three groups. On Dibon, compare <sup><0619></sup>Numbers 21:19. The Moabite stone was discovered here in 1868. This city, occupied on the first acquisition of the territory by the Gadites, and assigned by Joshua to the Reubenites, was eventually recaptured by the Moabites, in whose hands it remained. Ataroth, i.e., “crowns” (Attarus?) was seven miles northwest of Dibon. Aroer (Arair) lay between Dibon and the Arnon.

*Atroth, Shophan*, was Atroth-Shophan, i.e., Atroth, or Ataroth of Shophan, or “of the burrow;” thus distinguished from the Ataroth named in the verse preceding from which it was probably not far distant. These four cities may be styled the Dibon settlement.

<sup><0625></sup>**Numbers 32:35.** *Jaazer* (compare <sup><0630></sup>Numbers 32:1) with the neighboring “Jogbehah” (Jebeiha), seven miles to the northeast, formed the second group.

<sup><0626></sup>**Numbers 32:36.** The third Gadite settlement lay in the valley of the Jordan, to the west of the preceding. It comprised the cities of Bethnimrah (Nimrun) and “Beth-haran” (Beit-ha-ran).

<sup><0627></sup>**Numbers 32:37,38.** The Reubenites established themselves more compactly than the Gadites. Elcalch (el-'Al) a mile to the northeast; Nebo (Nebbeh) probably three miles to the southwest; Baal-meon (Main) nearly two miles to the south; Kirjathaim (Kureiyat?): and Shibmah, more properly Sibmah, famous at a later period for its vines (compare <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 16:8), four miles east of Heshbon; all clustered round the old Amorite Capital. The Reubenites probably retained at the partition all these cities with the exception of Heshbon, which, passing to the Levites, were thenceforth reckoned as within the tribe of Gad.

Neither the Reubenites nor the Gadites were “builders” in the sense of founders of the cities of which they thus took possession. They probably fortified them, for the first time or afresh, so as to render them places of safety for their families during the campaigns on the other side of the Jordan; and provided them with all conveniences for their flocks and herds.

**Numbers 32:39.** *The children of Machir* Machir, the son of Manasseh, was long since dead: even his sons had been brought up upon Joseph's knees (<sup><01523></sup>Genesis 50:23). But the renown acquired by his descendants raised his family almost to the dignity of a tribe; and the Machirites are in the next verse styled Machir, just as the children of Judah or of Ephraim are often spoken of as Judah or Ephraim. So in <sup><01514></sup>Judges 5:14 Machir is coupled with Ephraim and Zebulun.

*Went* i.e., "had gone:" the statement is preparatory to the ensuing record of the grant to them of the land they had won.

*Gilead* More strictly part of north Gilead; which, though inhabited by the Amorites, had belonged to the kingdom of Og. Gilead was the district from which had sprung the ancestress of the Machirites (compare <sup><01374-1></sup>1 Chronicles 7:14).

**Numbers 32:41.** The exploits of Jair — he was the conqueror of Argob (<sup><01514></sup>Deuteronomy 3:14) — gave new luster to his name; and the fame of the family is attested by the history of Jair the Israelite judge, doubtless a descendant; perhaps also by the mention of Jairus (<sup><01084></sup>Luke 8:41), the ruler of the synagogue at the neighboring city of Capernaum.

*Havoth-jair* That is, the villages, or rather groups of tents, or "kraals," of Jair. Originally they were twenty-three in number (<sup><01322></sup>1 Chronicles 2:22): in the days of the younger Jair, to whom they probably descended by inheritance, they either had increased to thirty, or were reckoned at that round number (<sup><01710></sup>Judges 10:4).

**Numbers 32:42.** *Kenath* Now Kenawat, an important site near the southern extremity of the tract el-Lejah, and on the western slopes of the mountains of the Hauran. The name given to it by its conqueror, as in other cases, fell ere long into disuse, and the old name has held its ground to this day.

The notices, both Scriptural and traditional, of the conquest of northeastern Gilead and Bashan by the Machirites, plainly intimate that it was effected by a few chiefs of great military prowess, who overran rapidly a far larger district than they could colonize. The father of Jair, however, Segub, was of the tribe of Judah (compare <sup><01271></sup>Numbers 27:1, and note; <sup><01322></sup>1 Chronicles 2:21,22), and it is likely that the Manassite leaders induced many of the more adventurous of this tribe, and some possibly of other

tribes, to join them in their enterprise against Bashan (see ~~698~~ Joshua 19:34).

The Machirites did not exterminate the whole population of this district (see ~~635~~ Joshua 13:15, etc.). The conquest of the district east of Jordan seems never to have been so effectually accomplished as that on the other side.

During the troublous times of the Judges the eastern Manassites rendered good service to the nation; compare ~~754~~ Judges 5:14. Gideon, and probably Jephthah, were of this tribe, and reflect in a later generation the warlike and adventurous spirit which Jair and Nobah exhibited in the days of Moses.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 33

**Numbers 33:1-49.** This list was written out by Moses at God's command (<sup><0812></sup>Numbers 33:2), doubtless as a memorial of God's providential care for His people throughout this long and trying period.

**Numbers 33:3-6.** For these places, see the marginal reference.

**Numbers 33:8.** *Pi-hahiroth* Hebrew "Hahiroth," but perhaps only by an error of transcription. However, the omitted "pi" is only a common Egyptian prefix.

*Wilderness of Etham* i.e., that part of the great wilderness of Shur which adjoined Etham; compare <sup><0152></sup>Exodus 15:22 note.

The list of stations up to that at Sinai agrees with the narrative of Exodus except that we have here mentioned (<sup><0830></sup>Numbers 33:10) an encampment by the Red Sea, and two others, Dophkah and Alush (<sup><0832></sup>Numbers 33:12-14), which are there omitted. On these places see <sup><0270></sup>Exodus 17:1 note.

**Numbers 33:16,17.** See the <sup><0415></sup>Numbers 11:35 note.

**Numbers 33:18.** *Rithmah* The name of this station is derived from retem, the broom-plant, the "juniper" of the King James Version. This must be the same encampment as that which is said in <sup><0436></sup>Numbers 13:26 to have been at Kadesh.

**Numbers 33:19.** *Rimmon-parez* Or rather Rimmon-perez, i.e., "Rimmon (i.e., the Pomegranate) of the Breach." It may have been here that the sedition of Korah occurred.

**Numbers 33:19-36.** The stations named are those visited during the years of penal wandering. The determination of their positions is, in many cases, difficult, because during this period there was no definite line of march pursued. But it is probable that the Israelites during this period did not overstep the boundaries of the wilderness of Paran (as defined in <sup><0402></sup>Numbers 10:12), except to pass along the adjoining valley of the Arabah; while the tabernacle and organized camp moved about from place to place among them (compare <sup><0811></sup>Numbers 20:1).

Rissah, Haradah, and Tahath are probably the same as Rasa, Aradeh, and Elthi of the Roman tables. The position of Hashmonah (Heshmon in <sup><0657></sup>Joshua 15:27) in the Azazimeh mountains points out the road followed by the children of Israel to be that which skirts the southwestern extremity of Jebel Magrah.

<sup><0634></sup>**Numbers 33:34.** *Ebronah* i.e., “passage.” This station apparently lay on the shore of the Elanitic gulf, at a point where the ebb of the tide left a ford across. Hence, the later Targum renders the word as “fords.”

<sup><0635></sup>**Numbers 33:35.** *Ezion-gaber* “Giant’s backbone.” The Wady Ghadhyan, a valley running eastward into the Arabah some miles north of the present head of the Elanitic gulf. A salt marsh which here overspreads a portion of the Arabah may be taken as indicating the limit to which the sea anciently reached; and we may thus infer the existence here in former times of an extensive tidal haven, at the head of which the city of Ezion-geber stood. Here it was that from the time of Solomon onward the Jewish navy was constructed (<sup><0026></sup>1 Kings 9:26; 22:49).

<sup><0634></sup>**Numbers 33:41-49.** Zalmonah and Punon are stations on the Pilgrim’s road; and the general route is fairly ascertained by a comparison of these verses with <sup><0204></sup>Numbers 21:4, etc.

<sup><0635></sup>**Numbers 33:50-56.** The expulsion of the Canaanites and the destruction of their monuments of idolatry had been already enjoined (see the marginal references); and <sup><0635></sup>Numbers 33:54 is substantially a repetition from <sup><0246></sup>Exodus 26:53-55. But the solemn warning of <sup><0635></sup>Numbers 33:55,56 is new. A call for it had been furnished by their past transgressions in the matter of Baal-peor, and by their imperfect fulfillment, at the first, of Moses’ orders in the Midianite war.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 34

<sup><0641></sup>**Numbers 34:2.** *The land of Canaan* The name Canaan is here restricted to the territory west of the Jordan.

<sup><0641></sup>**Numbers 34:3-5.** The southern boundary commenced at the Dead Sea. The broad and desolate valley by which the depressed bed of that sea is protected toward the south, is called the Ghor. A deep narrow glen enters it at its southwest corner; it is called Wady-el-Fikreh, and is continued in the same southwestern direction, under the name of Wady el-Marrah; a wady which loses itself among the hills belonging to “the wilderness of Zin;” and Kadesh-barnea (see <sup><0435></sup>Numbers 13:26 note), which is “in the wilderness of Zin,” will be, as the text implies, the southernmost point of the southern boundary. Thence, if Kadesh be identical with the present Ain el-Weibeh, westward to the river, or brook of Egypt, now Wady el-Arish, is a distance of about seventy miles. In this interval were Hazar-addar and Azmon; the former being perhaps the general name of a district of Hazerim, or nomad hamlets (see <sup><0623></sup>Deuteronomy 2:23), of which Adder was one: and Azmon, perhaps to be identified with Kesam, the modern Kasaimah, a group of springs situate in the north of one of the gaps in the ridge, and a short distance west of Ain el-Kudeirat.

(Others consider the boundary line to have followed the Ghor along the Arabah to the south of the Azazimeh mountains, thence to Gadis round the southeast of that mountain, and thence to Wady el-Arish.)

<sup><0641></sup>**Numbers 34:7-9.** The northern border. On the “Mount Hor,” compare <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 20:22 note. Here the name denotes the whole western crest of Mount Lebanon, 80 miles in length, commencing east of Zidon, and terminating with the point immediately above the entrance of Hamath (compare <sup><0432></sup>Numbers 13:21). The extreme point in the northern border of the land was the city of Zedad (Sadad), about 30 miles east of the entrance of Hamath. Hence, the border turned back southwestward to Ziphron (Zifran), about 40 miles northeast of Damascus. Hazar-enan may be conjecturally identified with Ayun ed-Dara, a fountain situate in the very heart of the great central chain of Antilibanus.



**Numbers 34:10-12.** Shepham, the first point after Hazar-enan, is unknown. The name Riblah is by some read Har-bel, i.e., “the Mountain of Bel;” the Har-baal-Hermon of **Judges 3:3**. No more striking landmark could be set forth than the summit of Hermon, the southernmost and by far the loftiest peak of the whole Antilibanus range, rising to a height of 10,000 feet, and overtopping every other mountain in the Holy land. Ain, i.e. the fountain, is understood to be the fountain of the Jordan; and it is in the plain at the southwestern foot of Hermon that the two most celebrated sources of that river, those of Daphne and of Paneas, are situate.

The “sea of Chinnereth” is better known by its later name of Gennesaret, which is supposed to be only a corruption of Chinnereth. The border ran parallel to this sea, along the line of hill about 10 miles further east.

**Numbers 34:16-29.** Of the representatives now selected through Moses beforehand, who were all princes, i.e. heads of chief families, in their respective tribes (see **Numbers 13:2**), Caleb alone, of the tribe of Judah, is otherwise known to us (see **Numbers 13:4ff**). The order in which the tribes are named is peculiar to this passage. If they be taken in pairs, Judah and Simeon, Benjamin and Dan, Manasseh and Ephraim, Zebulun and Issachar, Asher and Naphtali, the order of the pairs agrees with the order in which the allotments in the Holy land, taken also in couples, followed each other in the map from south to north.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 35

**Numbers 35:2.** *Suburbs* Rather, “pasture-grounds,” required for their large cattle, for their sheep and goats, and for all their beasts whatever they might be (Numbers 35:3).

**Numbers 35:5.** *From without the city* Omit “from.” The demarcation here intended would run parallel to the wall of the city, outside which it was made. To guard against any restrictions of area, due to such causes as the irregular forms of the cities or the physical obstacles of the ground, it was ordained that the suburb should, alike on north, south, east, and west, present, at a distance of one thousand cubits (or, nearly one-third of a mile) from the wall, a front not less than two thousand cubits in length; and, by joining the extremities of these measured fronts according to the nature of the ground, a sufficient space for the Levites would be secured.

**Numbers 35:6.** The Levitical cities were in an special manner the Lord’s; and therefore the places of refuge, where the manslayer might remain under the protection of a special institution devised by divine mercy, were appropriately selected from among them. No doubt also the Priests and Levites would be the fittest persons to administer the law in the doubtful cases which would be sure to occur: compare Numbers 35:24 note.

**Numbers 35:8.** Nine cities were eventually given to the Levites from the large joint inheritance of Judah and Simeon; three were taken from the territory of Naphtali, and the other tribes gave each four apiece.

**Numbers 35:12.** *The avenger* Hebrew *goel*, a term of which the original import is uncertain. The very obscurity of its etymology testifies to the antiquity of the office which it denotes. That office rested on the principle of Genesis 9:6, “whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” The unwritten code of the East conceded to the nearest kinsman of a murdered man the right of avenging the blood that had been shed. Such rude justice necessarily involved grave evils. It gave no opportunity to the person charged with crime of establishing his innocence; it recognized no distinction between murder, manslaughter, and accidental homicide; it perpetuated family blood-feuds, the avenger of blood being

liable to be treated in his turn as a murderer by the kinsman of the man whom he had slain. These grievances could not be removed as long as there was no central government, but they might be mitigated; and to do this was the object of the institution in the text (compare <sup><1213></sup>Exodus 21:13).

Among the Arab tribes, who are under the control of no central authority, the practice of blood-revenge subsists in full force to the present day.

*The congregation* i.e. local court, consisting of the elders of the city (<sup><1310></sup>Joshua 20:4).

<sup><1316></sup>**Numbers 35:16-25.** The sense is: Inasmuch as to take another man's life by any means whatsoever is murder, and exposes the murderer to the penalty of retaliation; so, if the deed is done in hostility, it is in truth actual murder, and the murderer shall be slain; but if it be not done in hostility, then the congregation shall interpose to stop the avenger's hand.

<sup><1319></sup>**Numbers 35:19.** *When he meeteth him* Provided, of course, it were without a city of refuge.

<sup><1324></sup>**Numbers 35:24.** The case of the innocent slayer is here contemplated. In a doubtful case there would necessarily have to be a judicial decision as to the guilt or innocence of the person who claimed the right of asylum.

<sup><1325></sup>**Numbers 35:25.** The homicide was safe only within the walls of his city of refuge. He became a virtual exile from his home. The provisions here made serve to mark the gravity of the act of manslaughter, even when not premeditated; and the inconveniences attending on them fell, as is right and fair, upon him who committed the deed.

*Unto the death of the high priest* The atoning death of the Saviour cast its shadow before on the statute-book of the Law and on the annals of Jewish history. The high priest, as the head and representative of the whole chosen family of sacerdotal mediators, as exclusively entrusted with some of the chief priestly functions, as alone privileged to make yearly atonement within the holy of holies, and to gain, from the mysterious Urim and Thummim, special revelations of the will of God, was, preeminently, a type of Christ. And thus the death of each successive high priest presignified

that death of Christ by which the captives were to be freed, and the remembrance of transgressions made to cease.

<sup><0650></sup>**Numbers 35:30.** *By the mouth of witnesses* i.e. two witnesses, at the least (compare the marginal references). The provisions of this and the following verses protect the enactments of this chapter from abuse. The cities of refuge were not intended to exempt a criminal from deserved punishment.

<sup><0651></sup>**Numbers 35:31.** *No satisfaction* Rather, ransom (see <sup><0210></sup>Exodus 21:30). The permission to demand pecuniary compensation for murders (expressly sanctioned by the Koran) undoubtedly mitigates, in practice, the system of private retaliation; but it does so by sacrificing the principle named in <sup><0652></sup>Numbers 35:12,33.

<sup><0654></sup>**Numbers 35:34.** *For I the LORD dwell ...* An emphatic protest against all enactment or relaxation of laws by men for their own private convenience.

## NOTES ON NUMBERS 36

~~<BIB>~~ **Numbers 36:1-13.** The daughters of Zelophehad had obtained an ordinance (~~<BIB>~~ Numbers 28:6-11) which permitted the daughters of an Israelite dying without male issue to inherit their father's property. The chiefs of the Machirites, of whom Zelophehad had been one, now obtain a supplemental enactment, directing that heiresses should marry within their own tribe.

~~<BIB>~~ **Numbers 36:4.** *Be taken away* i.e. be permanently taken away. The jubilee year, by not restoring the estate to the tribe to which it originally belonged, would in effect confirm the alienation.

~~<BIB>~~ **Numbers 36:11.** *Unto their father's brothers' sons* Or more generally, "unto the sons of their kinsmen."