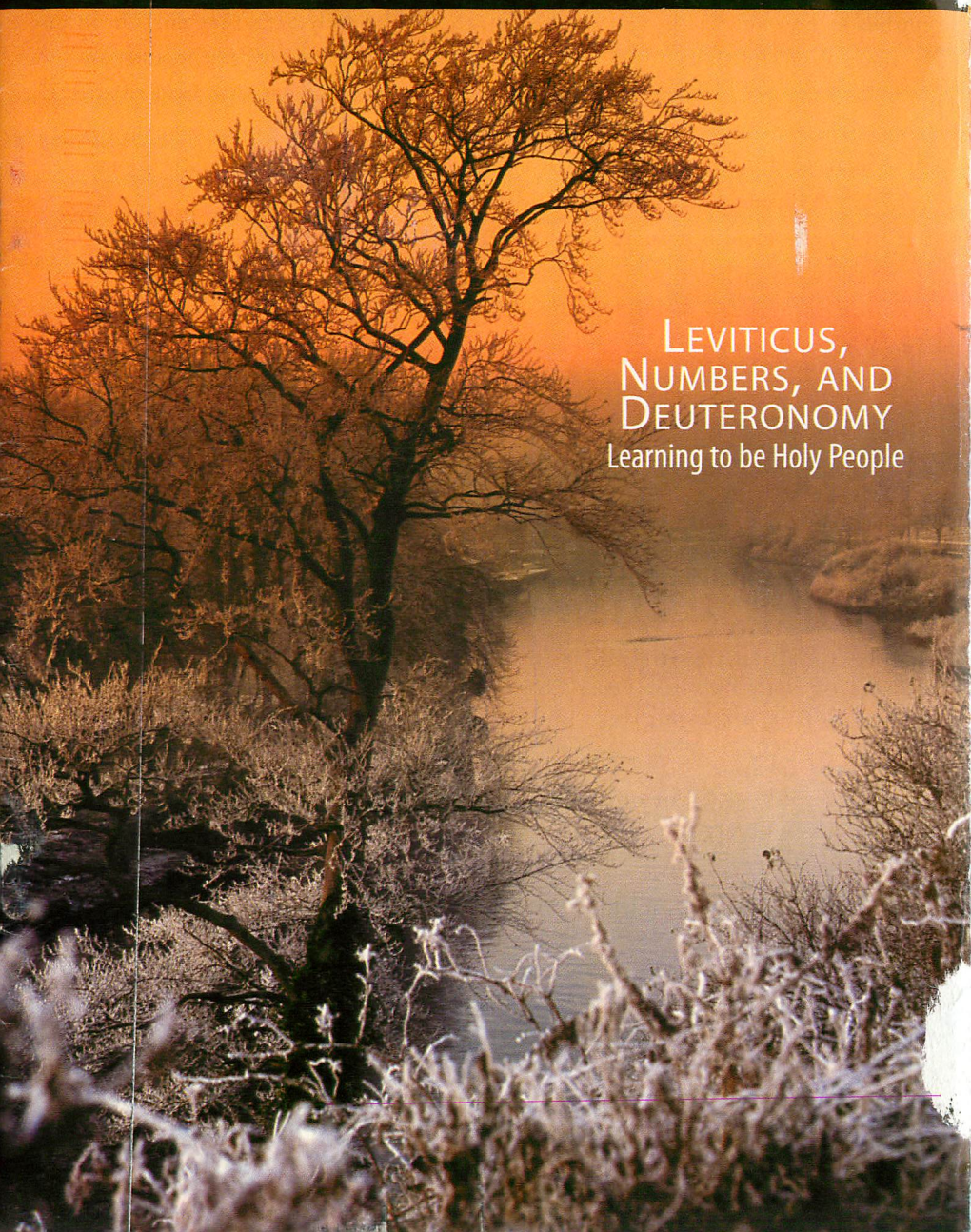


Daily Walk

GETTING GOD'S WORD INTO YOUR HEART

WALK THRU THE BIBLE

FEBRUARY 2009 \$2.95



LEVITICUS,
NUMBERS, AND
DEUTERONOMY
Learning to be Holy People

What People Are Saying . . . Testimonials:

God was very very specific in His instructions on building the Tabernacle, the sacrifices, the feasts, and how His people were to live. It reminds us how holy He is, and yet, how much He wants to meet with us.

— David

I have been reading the Bible each day along with Daily Walk and it has made such a difference in my life! God is becoming more and more real to me each day, and I am becoming closer to Him through spending time with Him. What a blessing!

— Carol

If you'd like to share with us how Daily Walk has impacted your life, please email us your thoughts at testimonials@walkthru.org

Interested in ordering additional copies of *Daily Walk* for your church, your friends, or as a gift?

Individual Orders:

Call **800-877-5539** or online at www.devotionals.org

Price: \$24/year;

\$36 in Canada (includes GST) and overseas

Bulk Orders:

800-998-0814 or email wtb@kable.com



Walk Thru the Bible is a member in good standing of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

How to Use Daily Walk Instructions:

With this devotional guide, **you can read through the entire Bible in one year.** Read the daily Scripture portion in one sitting or divide it to start and end your day with God's Word. If pressed for time, read the "Key Passage" for the main theme.

Overviews, charts, insights, and special features will help you grasp what God's Word is saying to you. Personal applications will enable you to draw on His truth when you need it.

So why not get started right now on your journey through God's Word? Keep track of what you read by checking the box beside the Scripture reference on each page.

MAGAZINE STAFF

PHILIP S. TUTTLE
President & CEO

CHIP BROWN
Senior Vice President North American Ministries

BRYANT HODGSON
Executive Director Publishing

PAULA A. KIRK
Editorial Director

DONNA E. PENNELL
Copy Editor

GARY HUNT
Graphic Designer

LEVITICUS

Delivered by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, the instructions of Leviticus pertain to Israel's personal and national life.

Leviticus—the new nation's book of worship—derives its name from the tribe of Levi, which was entrusted with the rituals and ceremonies of the people's approach to God and the physical care of the tabernacle. Leviticus solves the twin dilemmas of how a sinful people can achieve access to God (through animal sacrifices) and maintain fellowship with God (through obedience to His Word).

Focus	SACRIFICE				SANCTIFICATION			
Divisions	Voluntary Offerings	Compulsory Offerings	Priestly Orders	Personal Purity	National Purity	Priestly Purity	Future Purity	
	1	3 4	7 8	10 11	15 16	20 21	23 24 27	
Topics	Access to God by Sacrifice				Fellowship with God by Obedience			
	Priests				Feasts			
Place	Mount Sinai							
Time	About 1 Month							

DAILY WALK, VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 2009

© 2008 by Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, Inc. Contents may not be reproduced in any form unless authorized in writing by the publisher. Printed in the U.S.A. Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan.



Three Voluntary Offerings

Key Passage: Leviticus 1

CHAPTER 1

Burnt
Offering

CHAPTER 2

Grain
Offering

CHAPTER 3

Fellowship
Offering

Sweet Aroma Sacrifices

OVERVIEW Leviticus opens with a description of the five different sacrifices an Israelite could offer: three for those in fellowship with God (sweet aroma sacrifices) and two for those out of fellowship with God. The sweet aroma offerings were tailored to the person's ability to give. The burnt offering signified the offerer's devotion to God; the grain offering pointed to God's provision in life; and the fellowship offering pictured the thankful worshiper's fellowship with God.

YOUR DAILY WALK During a visit to Korea, two American businessmen were highly amused to see a young farmer hitched to a plow that was guided by his father. Later they learned that both father and son were Christians who had sold their only ox to provide money for a new church building.

"What a sacrifice!" exclaimed one businessman.

"Not really," replied a missionary accompanying the Americans.

"They were sorry they had but one ox to give to the Lord's work."

On one occasion Jesus was dining with a Pharisee named Simon when a woman interrupted the dinner in a startling way. Breaking a jar of ointment, she anointed the feet of Jesus with the costly perfume, prompting the Lord to respond: "Her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little" (Luke 7:47).

What is one way you can show your gratitude to God for His great love and forgiveness? Select a 21st century sacrifice of praise you can offer Him—perhaps in the form of a special offering or act of kindness—to say thank You to your heavenly Father who so richly deserves your gratitude.

*God looks
for the costly
gift—not
in terms of
monetary
value, but in
relation to
what we
have left.*

INSIGHT EXODUS AND LEVITICUS: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

Exodus emphasizes

- pardon
- God's approach to humanity
- salvation
- "Let my people go"

Leviticus emphasizes

- purity
- humanity's approach to God
- sanctification
- "Be holy, because I am holy"



Two Required Offerings

Key Passage: Leviticus 6

CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTERS 6-7
Sin Offering (Guilt)	Restitution Offering (Damage)	Law of the Offerings
Compulsory Offerings		Reviewing the Offerings

OVERVIEW In addition to the three sweet aroma offerings, God gives instruction regarding two other sacrifices—both required when sin had interrupted fellowship with Him. The sin offering—which covered sins of uncleanness, neglect, or thoughtlessness—provided restoration for the sinner, while reinforcing the seriousness of sin. The restitution offering—which covered sins of injury to God and others—provided compensation for the injured or offended party.

YOUR DAILY WALK What do a dented fender, a facial scar, and a scratched CD all have in common? (Hint: It has nothing to do with your teenager!) Give up? They are all constant reminders of unpleasant experiences: the fire hydrant that ran into your car; the razor that “gotcha”; your favorite CD that was ruined.

For the Israelites, there was another collection of reminders: the bleating of a lamb; the smell of fresh blood; the sight of rising smoke. All served to remind them that they were sinners. Every new sin, even an unintentional one, demanded that another animal be slain.

Doesn't that make you appreciate all the more the death of Jesus Christ for you? The fact that He died to set you free from the endless requirement of sacrifices is indeed great reason for rejoicing. Remind yourself often today of Christ's once-for-all-time sacrifice for you, and let that reminder bear the fruit of praise on your lips and in your life.

*Sin is so
big that it
takes Christ
with a cross
to measure it.*

INSIGHT SWEET AND SOUR OFFERINGS

Unlike the other three offerings, neither the sin offering nor the restitution offering was a sweet, pleasing fragrance to God, because sin is never sweet to God. Those two offerings foreshadow many details of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross.

- The victim was without spot or blemish.
- Sin was transferred from the offerer to the offering.
- The offering died in the sinner's place.
- The sin offering took place outside the camp.



Priestly Orders and Offense

Key Passage: Leviticus 9:23–10:7

CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9	CHAPTER 10
Consecration of the Priests	Ministry of the Priests	Restrictions on the Priests
Dedication	Duty	Disqualification

OVERVIEW After the sacrifices come the divine requirements for the priests who are to offer them. Moses consecrates Aaron and his four sons to minister in the tabernacle. Sacrifices and ceremonies take place for seven consecutive days, after which Aaron begins his duties. The joyous inaugural week abruptly ends, however, with the disobedience and death of two of Aaron's sons, which leads to a divine announcement of restrictions upon the priests' conduct.

YOUR DAILY WALK Has this ever happened to you? You are late for an appointment, and pushing the speed limit. Suddenly you catch a glimpse of flashing blue lights in your rearview mirror. You watch in numb despair as a police car draws ever closer and finally pulls over . . . the car next to you! Would that experience change your driving habits (at least for the next few miles)?

One of the reasons God gave the Old Testament was to provide flashing lights to warn of dangerous, sinful situations. Others have learned the hard way, but you don't have to—if you take their painful examples to heart. Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, met an untimely death because they took God's holiness lightly. In a moment of proud disobedience, they offered the wrong kind of fire in the wrong place, and paid for that act with their lives.

At the dinner table this evening, read aloud 1 Corinthians 10:11. Then, beginning with the story of Nadab and Abihu, share "Lessons from the Lives of Old Testament People" from which you can benefit today. After all, you'll never live long enough to duplicate all the mistakes of others—nor do you have to.

INSIGHT **THE HIGH PRIEST'S WARDROBE—FIT FOR ONE** There would be many priests, but only one high priest—one who would represent the people before God by entering the Holy of Holies to make atonement. To signify this unique role, only the high priest wore the ephod—a sacred garment of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen (Leviticus 8:1-13; see also Exodus 28:4-14).

*If you go
against the
grain of
God's law,
you get
splinters!*

THE FIVE OFFERINGS: SNAPSHOTS OF A SAVIOR

The five offerings of Leviticus 1–7 represent more than just animal sacrifices. They provide a five-dimensional foreshadowing of the perfect Sacrifice, Jesus Christ, who would later do away with the need for animal sacrifices once and for all.

The sweet sacrifices picture the person of Christ—the perfect voluntary Sacrifice with all His merits and perfections. The nonsweet sacrifices depict the work of Christ in bearing the sins and imperfections of human beings as the necessary consequence of God’s righteous demands.

THREE SWEET SACRIFICES (PERSON OF CHRIST)	Burnt	Christ, the Perfect Sacrifice
	Grain	Christ, the Perfect Man
	Fellowship	Christ, the Way to Fellowship with God
TWO NONSWEET SACRIFICES (WORK OF CHRIST)	Sin	Christ, the Atonement for Sin’s Guilt
	Restitution	Christ, the Atonement for Sin’s Damage



Personal Purity in Daily Life

Key Passage: Leviticus 11:45-47; 13:59; 14:54-57

CHAPTER 11

Rules Regarding
Food

CHAPTER 12

Rules Regarding
Motherhood

CHAPTERS 13–14

Rules Regarding
Leprosy

CHAPTER 15

Rules Regarding
Discharges

Home Matters

Health Matters

OVERVIEW Chapters 11–15 give instructions regarding uncleanness caused by animals, birth, leprosy, and discharges. Holiness demands a holy lifestyle. Purity is an indispensable part of worshiping a holy God, though it does impose some restrictions. For the Israelites this meant dietary laws, temporary quarantines after contact with specifically named substances, and rules regarding normal bodily functions. The word *unclean* means “ritual unfitness” rather than actual sin. Unfitness occurred in the flesh, and made the analogy that one must be made fit, or holy, to enter God’s presence. The word *unclean* occurs more than 90 times in these chapters, showing that obedience is no small matter with God. In fact, it is paramount.

*Cleanliness
may be next
to godliness,
but it is not
a substitute.*

YOUR DAILY WALK Commands such as “Wet Paint,” “Keep Off the Grass,” “Don’t Feed the Ducks,” or “Speed Limit” seem to whisper in our ears, “I dare you . . .” But did you ever stop to think why those rules are there? Someone is trying to look out for the best interests of you and others. They know that fresh paint looks better on park benches than on pants; that grass stays prettier when people aren’t trampling it to death; that ducks don’t survive well on a diet of Cheetos; and that gas—and people—last longer when driving safely. Such rules are for your own good.

The same was true for Israel’s laws. God gave these instructions for His people’s physical and spiritual protection: so no scavenger animals for dinner, no contact with leprous people, and plenty of baths. In today’s passage look for ways God protected His people through the laws He gave—even through some they couldn’t understand. He has the same desire for you.

INSIGHT A HOLY PEOPLE, A HORRIBLE DISEASE

In Old Testament times, leprosy was regarded as incurable. Leprosy is often used in the New Testament as a picture of sin. Like leprosy, sin’s treatment demands cleansing; and the forgiveness of sin, like the healing of leprosy, can be effected by God alone.



Holiest Day of the Year

Key Passage: Leviticus 16:1-22; 17:11

CHAPTER 16

Atonement
by Blood

Life of the Nation

CHAPTER 17

Abstaining
from Blood

Life of the Flesh

OVERVIEW The great Day of Atonement observed each year was Israel's most significant act of worship. On that day, the nation gathered to watch expectantly as the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with the blood of atonement to cover the sins of the nation for another year. Because blood was the central ingredient in Israel's national and personal forgiveness, God prohibited its use for any purpose except sacrifice to Him, for "it is the blood that makes atonement" (17:11).

INSIGHT COVERED AND PROTECTED FOR ANOTHER YEAR
The words *atonement*, *appease*, and *pacify* all come from the Hebrew root "to cover," which appears more than 100 times in the Old Testament. The same root occurs in Genesis 6:14, where Noah is commanded to cover the ark "with pitch inside and out." Just as the pitch covered the ark and protected its passengers, so the shed blood of the sacrifice stood between sinful humanity and the holy God whose law had been violated.

YOUR DAILY WALK Have you ever had to live with a gnawing uncertainty? A recurring illness? An overdue bill? The emotions of facing situations like those are intensely painful.

In Old Testament times, the emotions that charged the air on every Day of Atonement were just as intense. As the high priest cautiously entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the nation, one question was uppermost in everyone's mind: "Will God pass over our sins for another year?"

The awful reality of the Day of Atonement was this: Sins were never fully cleansed. They were only temporarily covered and sent away on the head of the scapegoat. The debt of sin remained unpaid, like a promissory note deferred from year to year.

Aren't you glad Jesus ended that uncertainty for all time? The long-standing debt of sin was nailed to His cross and was paid in full (Colossians 2:14). When you pay your bills this month, remind yourself of the price Jesus paid.

*The
wonder of
the cross is
not merely
the blood,
but whose
blood.*



A Holy People Uniquely His

Key Passage: Leviticus 18:1-5, 24-30

CHAPTER 18

Abstaining from
Sexual Sins

CHAPTER 19

Abstaining from
Social Sins

CHAPTER 20

Avoiding the
Penalty for Sins

Holy People

Holy God

OVERVIEW In addition to the regulations governing national holiness, God provides Israel with laws governing personal conduct and purity in matters pertaining to the family, the community, and society in general. Because of the central importance of obedience, God requires that violators be punished promptly and in a manner appropriate to the crime committed. God's strict guidelines for living reflect His desire that His people be holy and uniquely His.

YOUR DAILY WALK The chapters you read today are not pleasant, for in them you will discover the depths to which fallen human nature is capable of sinking: incest, child sacrifice, prostitution, bestiality, homosexuality.

More than 1,400 years later, Paul described human nature in these dismaying words: godlessness, wickedness, foolish hearts, sinful desires, sexual impurity, shameful lusts, indecent acts, evil, greed, depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice (see Romans 1:18-32). These lists look like today's headlines, for human nature has not changed.

With so many ways to go astray, is it any wonder that God must lay down so many rules for His children to follow before He can turn them loose in pagan Canaan? God desires that His people be transformed by their relationships with Him—not conformed to their world.

Are you transformed by godliness, or conformed to worldliness? (Or are you deformed by trying to be both?) Write down on a strip of paper those areas of your life in which you may be too much of a conformist (activities, personal life, speech). Use that as a bookmark in your Bible to remind you that "living what you read" is the transformation God desires.

INSIGHT TEN FAMILIAR COMMANDS IN AN UNFAMILIAR PLACE Last month you read Exodus 20:1-17, the passage containing the familiar Ten Commandments. But did you know most of the 10 are also contained in Leviticus 19? See how many you can find.

*A
Christian's
spiritual
health
is exactly
proportional
to his
devotion to
God.*



Priestly Purity

Key Passage: Leviticus 23

CHAPTER 21		CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 23
Priestly Defilements	Priestly Defects	Priestly Duties	Important Days
Holy Priests			Yearly Feasts

OVERVIEW Ministry to and for a holy people requires a holy priesthood. Because of their high calling, God placed more restrictions on their conduct and privileges. The priests had to be as physically perfect as possible and willing to avoid defilements that were permissible for others. The sacrifices they offered had to be without blemish. They were required to carry out their duties with meticulous attention to detail. Their busiest times of the year came during the holy convocations, joyous times of feasting and reflecting on God's goodness in dealing with the nation.

YOUR DAILY WALK Here is a statement worth considering, especially if you are the hard-driving kind of person commonly labeled as a workaholic: Seven days without relaxation makes one weak. On the seventh day of each week the Israelites were commanded to rest from their labors. Seven times each year they enjoyed a "holy holiday" to commemorate important days in their nation's history. These were no mere business meetings, but times of assembling, feasting, and celebrating.

How long has it been since you set aside your work to spend time alone or with your family enjoying a leisure activity? If your mind is constantly focused on your job, it will seldom be focused on God. In contrast, periodic times of refreshment and reflection will help to improve your attitude toward your work.

Look at your personal or family calendar and prayerfully consider whether a vacation is long overdue. It needn't be long to be refreshing. But it does need to be a priority in your schedule if it is ever to become more than just a good idea.

INSIGHT **HOW ABOUT THIS FOR A VACATION SCHEDULE?** Life in Israel was not all work, work, work. In addition to the weekly Sabbath days of rest, there were 19 days of national holiday: Passover (1), Unleavened Bread (7), Firstfruits (1), Pentecost (1), Trumpets (1), Day of Atonement (1), and Tabernacles (7). That makes 10 weeks of vacation a year.

*Jesus knows
we must
come apart
and rest
awhile, or
else we may
just plain
come apart.*



Future Purity in the Promised Land

Key Passage: Leviticus 25

CHAPTER 24	CHAPTER 25	CHAPTER 26	CHAPTER 27
Blasphemy to the Lord	Rest for the Lord	Blessing in the Lord	Vows to the Lord
Unholy Lips	A Holy Land		Holy Lips

OVERVIEW Leviticus closes with instructions regarding conversation and conduct in the land. Profanity (which breaks the third commandment) is dealt with severely; vows and freewill offerings to the Lord must be carried out in the promised way. Sandwiched between these two discussions are rules regarding regular periods of rest for the land. Every seventh year the land must rest from sowing and reaping, and every fiftieth year marks a jubilee when debts are cancelled and possessions revert to their original owners. To provide for both the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee, God promises to bless in abundance the prior year (in much the same way He supplied double the daily manna the day before each Sabbath). Would you have the faith to do what God required of Israel?

YOUR DAILY WALK After every six years of farming the land, the Israelites were commanded to leave it unplanted for an entire year.

In essence, God was asking them to place their source of livelihood completely in His hands. Leaning on His provision alone, they would experience the thrill of living by faith and watching God supply their daily needs. Imagine the excitement of watching farm land suddenly produce double and even triple its normal crop! God was saying to the people, "Just trust Me."

God has staked His reputation on the fact that when you obey Him, He will follow through on His promises. "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6). "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). Select one of those two verses and make it yours for today.

INSIGHT DON'T TAKE THOSE SABBATICAL YEARS LIGHTLY God's command to let the land rest every seven years (and again every 50 years) fell on deaf ears. Later, the people would go into captivity in Babylon and spend one year in exile for every sabbatical year they had ignored (2 Chronicles 36:20-21).

*We live
by faith,
and faith
lives by
exercise.*

NUMBERS

Numbers begins with Israel's 11-day march from Sinai to Kadesh, records the subsequent rebellion and 38 years of wilderness wandering, and ends on the doorstep of the promised land. Numbers contrasts the faithfulness of God with the fickleness of His people. Even though He must judge their disobedience, God faithfully leads His people through 40 years of agony. Working through Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, God demonstrates His willingness to reward those who trust Him.

FOCUS	OLD GENERATION			DEATH		NEW GENERATION		
DIVISIONS	Counting the People	Cleansing the People	Complaints by the People	Spying Out the Land	Dying in the Wilderness	Snake and Seer	Second Census	Instructions on Entering
	1	4 5	8 9	12 13	16 17	20 21	25 26	30 31 36
TOPICS	Preparation			Postponement		Promise		
	Walking			Wandering		Waiting		
PLACE	Sinai to Kadesh			Wilderness		Kadesh to Moab		
TIME	2 Months			38 Years		A Few Months		



Counting and Ordering the People

Key Passage: Numbers 1:1-3, 45-46

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4
Counting the Nation	Arranging the Camp	Arranging the Levites	Assigning the Levites
Numbering the People		Numbering the Priests	

OVERVIEW The book of Numbers might well be called “the Book of Censuses,” for that is how it begins and ends. With the nation of Israel poised at Mount Sinai and ready to begin its march to Canaan, God commands Moses to number the fighting men and Levites. A detailed blueprint is given for arranging the people both on the march and in the camp. In the intervening 430 years since Joseph and his brothers moved to Egypt (Exodus 12:40), the nation’s fighting force has grown to an impressive 603,550, suggesting a total population of several million.

YOUR DAILY WALK Censuses are prominent throughout the pages of Scripture. In fact, the pivotal event of Scripture was associated with a census. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph were there because a census was being conducted (see Luke 2).

Even more important than the presence of censuses in the Bible is the purpose behind them: to show that God is a God of order and detail. Confusion and disorder in your home, church, or private life are a sure sign that God-honoring principles are being overlooked (1 Corinthians 14:40). Pick an area of your Christian life where the goal of doing all things “decently and in order” has proven elusive. Write it in the margin, and make it the target of your prayer and planning this week.

*Your life
can't go
according
to plan if
you have
no plan.*

INSIGHT ON YOUR MARK . . . GET SET . . . MARCH! Leviticus prepared the people for worship; Numbers prepares them for war. After reading today’s section, summarize the census and the preparations for the march to Canaan.

- Census of the warriors: _____ (total)
- Census of the workers: _____ Levites (one month upward)
_____ Levites (30 to 50 years)
- Largest tribe: _____ Its population: _____
- Smallest tribe: _____ Its population: _____
- Who takes care of the tabernacle? _____
- Who transports the tabernacle? _____

WANDERING THROUGH NUMBERS

Chapter	Summary	Chapter	Summary
1	Tallying Israel by tribes	21	Overthrow of the Amorites
2	Host organized for marching	22	Fear of Balaam's donkey
3	Exchanging Levites for firstborn		
4	Work for the Levites	23	Inspiration of Balaam's prophecies
5	Instructions for judging	24	Scope of Balaam's prophecies
6	Law of the Nazirites	25	Reward for Phinehas' zeal
7	Description of leaders' offerings	26	Audit of Israel's tribes
8	Emphasis on Levitical cleansing	27	Endorsement of Joshua's leading
9	Record of the second Passover	28	Law of offerings reviewed
10	Nation leaves Mount Sinai	29	Teachings for seventh month
11	Elders and quails given	30	Oath and vow laws
12	Sin of Miriam's murmuring		
13	Spies sent from Kadesh-barnea	31	Conquest of the Midianites
		32	Abode of Reuben, Gad
14	Judgment on Israel's behalf	33	Numbering of Israel's journeys
15	Offerings for the land	34	Assigning of land borders
16	Uprising led by Korah	35	Appointing cities of refuge
17	Rod of Aaron buds	36	Necessity of tribal marriage
18	Necessity of priestly service		
19	Eleazar and red cow		
20	Years of wandering end		

Taken from *The Acrostic Bible* by Barry Huddleston. © 1978. Used by permission.



Cleansing the People

Key Passage: Numbers 6:1-7:11

CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8
Clean Morals	Commendable Offerings	Consecrated Offerings	Clean Levites
Defilement		Dedication	

OVERVIEW Three weeks remain before the people leave Sinai to begin the last leg of their journey to Canaan. During this time Moses receives specific commands from God regarding how to cleanse the people and prepare them to enter the promised land. They must be free from immorality and jealousy; they must understand the binding nature of vows made to God; the Levites must realize the sacred nature of their calling. Through the generous gifts of the tribal leaders, the tabernacle implements and supplies are provided for worshipping the Lord.

YOUR DAILY WALK What is the most important tool you will ever use in your service for God? (Write in the margin the first thing that comes to mind.)

Perhaps you thought of a book or the Bible or a God-given ability. Here's another tool you may not have considered: your body.

Any service you render for God in this life will be done through the use of your body. And while you may pride yourself on the way you discipline your mind, your body may be one of the most neglected tools God has entrusted to you.

The Old Testament man or woman who wanted to be used in God's service but was not eligible as a Levite or priest could take the Nazirite vow. This vow involved abstaining from certain hindrances to holiness in order to be wholly devoted to the service of the Lord. It was a voluntary vow, difficult to get into and equally difficult to get out of. And yet it held the promise of personal blessing for those who successfully fulfilled it.

Is your body available to God today, cleansed and prepared for His use? Romans 12:1-2 will show you how, but only you can volunteer!

INSIGHT WHO TOOK "THE VOW"?

We all know of Samson, who took the Nazirite vow and thus let his hair grow long. But there are at least two others who also took that vow—Samuel, the last judge of Israel, and John the Baptist.

*The best
exercise for
strengthening
the heart is
reaching out
and lifting
people up.*



The People Complain

Key Passage: Numbers 10:11-13; 11:1-15

CHAPTER 9

A Cloudy
Pillar

CHAPTER 10

A Call
to March

CHAPTER 11

A Complaining
People

CHAPTER 12

A Covetous
Miriam

Preparations for the Journey

Problems on the Journey

OVERVIEW The time has come for the final journey to Canaan. After a special celebration of the Passover, the people watch as the pillar of cloud begins to move. Trumpets blare forth the exciting news: It is time to march! But the thrill of expectation soon gives way to the tedium of travel, and Moses is faced with numerous problems: complaints about the traveling conditions and the food, longings for the good old days in Egypt, hoarding the quail, and jealousy by Miriam and Aaron. In spite of the difficulties, the people finally arrive at Kadesh-barnea—on the doorstep of Canaan.

YOUR DAILY WALK How do you react when God's will for you turns out to be inconvenient? Do you think, "Maybe later, God, but not right now"?

For Israel, God's will was easily determined by the movement of the cloud covering the tabernacle. When it moved, they moved. When it lingered, they camped. At first glance that may seem like an exciting way to live—but consider the possibilities.

It is 3 a.m. You are sound asleep after a 14-hour march when the quiet desert air is shattered by a trumpet's blast. Time to march! Or consider another scene. For three days now the cloud has hovered motionless. You sense that any minute it is going to move, so instead of unpacking your tent and all those cooking pots, you just "live off the camel." Another day goes by. And another. Finally, you give in and begin the arduous task of unpacking. No sooner do you drive in the last tent peg when . . .

Obedience to God's will is not always convenient, but it is always profitable. Do you see a pillar of cloud moving in your life? What do you suppose you ought to do about it?

*Some
people ask
the Lord to
guide them;
then they
grab the
steering
wheel.*

INSIGHT QUAIL DINNER—ALL YOU CAN EAT!

When God sent quail in response to the people's complaining, the least amount gathered by one person was ten homers. One homer is eleven bushels—a total of 880 gallons.



Spying Out the Land

Key Passage: Numbers 13:1-2, 26-33; 14:20-35

CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14	CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 16
A Divided Heart	A Deadly Result	A Divine Code of Law	A Premature Death for Korah
Twelve Spies	Wandering	Regulations	Rebellion

OVERVIEW Following the Lord's instructions, Moses selects one representative from each of the 12 tribes to form a scouting party. Their assignment: to spy out the defenses of the land and bring back a sample of the produce grown there. The 12 obey and, like many a committee, return with a divided report. Ten see only the obstacles; two see the opportunities. The nation, disheartened and faithless, threatens to stone Moses and return to Egypt rather than face what lies ahead. As a result, God condemns that unbelieving generation to 40 years of fruitless wandering in the wilderness.

INSIGHT . . . 8 . . . 9 . . . 10 . . . YOU'RE OUT! (14:22)

On 10 separate occasions the Israelites grumbled and murmured against God. Can you find what prompted each complaint?

- Exodus 5:20-21 _____
- Exodus 14:10-12 _____
- Exodus 15:24 _____
- Exodus 16:2-3 _____
- Exodus 16:20, 27 _____
- Exodus 17:2-3 _____
- Exodus 32:1-4 _____
- Numbers 11:1 _____
- Numbers 11:4-5 _____
- Numbers 13:26-14:3 _____

*So often the
first screw
that works
loose in a
person's head
is the one
that holds
the tongue
in place.*

YOUR DAILY WALK Every part of the human body gets tired eventually, except the tongue! It is no accident the Bible describes the tongue as sharp (Psalm 140:3); sly (Proverbs 25:23); and untamable (James 3:8).

Do you have trouble controlling your tongue? Then ask your spouse or a close Christian friend to hold you accountable (see Colossians 4:6). Every time you make an ungracious remark during the next seven days, you must pay 50 cents. Try it! What you lose in material wealth you'll more than regain in spiritual maturity.



Dying in the Wilderness

Key Passage: Numbers 20:1-13

CHAPTER 17

Rod of
Aaron

Establishing the Priesthood

CHAPTER 18

Responsibilities
of the Levites

CHAPTER 19

Red
Cow

Enforcing National Purity

CHAPTER 20

Rebellion of
the People

OVERVIEW Throughout their wilderness wanderings, the children of Israel are reminded of two things: death and hope. Death as the result of their unbelief at Kadesh-barnea, and hope in the promise that God would still give His people a land of their own. God's authority continues to rest with Moses and Aaron, as demonstrated in the miracle of Aaron's budding rod. And the priests and Levites are still God's chosen servants to lead the nation in corporate worship. But death becomes the constant companion of the Israelites on their march: death in the sacrifices, death of the red cow for purification, and the death of the high priest Aaron.

YOUR DAILY WALK Find a hammer, nail, and piece of wood. Drive the nail halfway into the wood; then remove it carefully. What do you have left? (To make this a truly memorable experience, drive the nail into your front door, or substitute your favorite piece of furniture.)

That illustration provides a parable of the permanent results of sin. Once confessed, sin receives God's full forgiveness (1 John 1:9)—like removing the nail from the piece of wood. But you will not be able to erase fully the scars that sin leaves behind.

Are you, like Moses, tempted to "strike a rock" when God has told you to "speak softly"? Weigh the consequences ahead of time. Christ not only died that sin might be forgiven, He died that sin might be avoided. Thank Him for a scar or nail hole you'll never have to carry because you were willing to say no to sin and yes to Him.

*Sin
produces a
moment of
gratification
and an
eternity of
remorse.*

INSIGHT COW IN THE OLD, SAVIOR IN THE NEW Chapter 19 describes God's provision for the people's uncleanness by using water mingled with the ashes of a red cow. This curious rite becomes clearer in the light of Hebrews 9:11-14 as a foreshadowing of Jesus. Just as the ashes of the sin offering had a purifying effect when applied by water, so Jesus' offering for sin purifies all to whom it is applied by His Spirit.



The Bronze Snake and Brash Seer

Key Passage: Numbers 21-22

CHAPTER 21	CHAPTERS 22-24	CHAPTER 25
Conquest and Complaint	Call and Prophecies of Balaam	Calamity in the Camp
Success	Sovereign Blessing	Sin

OVERVIEW As the Israelites march to Canaan, they meet and defeat three enemies: the Canaanites, Amorites, and Bashanites. But on the heels of victory they suffer defeat at the hands of a persistent foe: grumbling. Because of the people's constant complaining, God sends fiery snakes to chasten His rebellious nation. The threat of Israel's advance prompts the neighboring pagan nations to hire the prophet Balaam to bring down a curse upon God's people. But instead of a curse, Balaam delivers a sweeping witness to the glorious future of Yahweh's nation. What Balaam could not do with his voice, however, is accomplished by his evil influence, as the Israelites give in to idolatry and mixed marriage.

YOUR DAILY WALK Find a small piece of sandpaper and tuck it in your pocket or purse. Then read the next few paragraphs thoughtfully and prayerfully.

In chapter 21 the nation of Israel conquered three national powers. Smashing victories! Stunning triumphs! But for some of the people, it wasn't enough. After all, they were still on the wrong side of the Jordan and didn't possess even a spadeful of the promised land. Their impatience led to criticism, and criticism to fiery judgment.

One key to consistency in the Christian life is to simply give God time to work. Rough edges take time to smooth. Growth to maturity never occurs overnight. But each day can be a step in the right direction.

Is God using a little sandpaper on your life right now? How can you cooperate with, rather than oppose, the work of the Master Carpenter?

INSIGHT JESUS AND NUMBERS—THEY GO TOGETHER! Look up the following verses in Numbers to discover how they provide a preview of Jesus centuries before His birth:

- Snake of bronze (21:4-9; John 3:14)
- Water from rocks (20:11; 1 Corinthians 10:4)
- Manna (11:7-9; John 6:31-33)

*When
opportunity
knocks, a
grumbler
complains
about the
noise.*



Second Census

Key Passage: Numbers 26:52-56; 27:18-23

CHAPTER 26

Another Numbering
of the Nation

Census

CHAPTER 27

Another Leader
for the Nation

Succession

CHAPTERS 28-30

Another Code of Worship
for the Nation

Ceremony

OVERVIEW Now that the journey is virtually over, it is time for a second census—both to assess Israel's military strength and to apportion the soon-to-be conquered territory of Canaan. In addition, it is time to appoint Moses' successor—the one who will lead the people in their conquest. God's choice is Joshua, one of only two members of the generation that left Egypt to survive the wilderness wanderings and enter the promised land. Under Joshua's leadership, the nation will enjoy both military victory and spiritual vitality as they obey God's commands and fulfill their holy obligations.

INSIGHT TALLYING UP THE SECOND CENSUS BY TRIBES (FILL IT IN)

TRIBE	1ST CENSUS	2ND CENSUS	TRIBE	1ST CENSUS	2ND CENSUS
1. Reuben	46,500	_____	7. Ephraim	40,500	_____
2. Simeon	59,300	_____	8. Manasseh	32,200	_____
3. Gad	45,650	_____	9. Benjamin	35,400	_____
4. Judah	74,600	_____	10. Dan	62,700	_____
5. Issachar	54,400	_____	11. Asher	41,500	_____
6. Zebulun	57,400	_____	12. Naphtali	53,400	_____

YOUR DAILY WALK After multiplying from a family of 70 to a nation of 600,000 fighting men in the space of about 400 years, Israel actually declined in population during the next 40 years. In part, the lack of growth was because of the numerous judgments God sent to discipline Israel's disobedience: for example, 14,700 dead after Korah's rebellion (16:49); 24,000 dead after following Balaam's teaching (25:9).

Is God enlarging or shrinking your sphere of influence? Jabez, an obscure figure in 1 Chronicles 4:10, prayed: "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request." God delights in blessing obedient children. Talk to Him about an "expanded border" with which you want to be entrusted.

*Every great
person has
first learned
how, when,
and whom
to obey.*



Preparing to Possess the Land

Key Passage: Numbers 33

CHAPTER 31

Destruction
of Midian

Warfare

CHAPTER 32

Decision of
Reuben and Gad

Wisdom

CHAPTER 33

Description of
the Journey

Wandering

OVERVIEW During the final days of his life, Moses is active in at least three roles: commander-in-chief of Israel's army; administrator of the nation's internal affairs; and travel guide, bringing the people to the plains of Moab. The Israelite army, using only a token force of troops, exterminates Midian for its idolatrous influence. Later Moses must deal with the request by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh that they be allowed to settle east of the Jordan. The section closes with a review of the travel route from Egypt to Moab.

YOUR DAILY WALK Numbers 33 is both one of the darkest and one of the brightest chapters in the Bible. It is a dark chapter because it chronicles the journey from Egypt to Moab—a journey that should have taken weeks, but instead consumed four decades plus the lives of an entire generation.

But the picture is not all dark, for chapter 33 also portrays the nation's movement under the watchful eye of God. Guided through barren wilderness, provided with manna from heaven, protected from marauding bands, the people experienced God's tender care daily, even as they felt the sting of His discipline.

Christian, do you view God's discipline in your life as "pain with a purpose"? God loves us too much to allow disobedience to go unpunished. Having read chapter 33, write these words in the margin of your Bible: "A chapter that should have read differently."

A chapter is being written in your life today. How will it read? Learn a lesson from Israel's mistake: Take God at His word.

INSIGHT VICTORY WITHOUT CASUALTY

Chapter 31 describes the extermination of the Midianites—a command delivered earlier by God (25:16-17). This most remarkable confrontation would prove to be Moses' last military battle. Twelve thousand Israelite troops engaged an innumerable host of Midianites. When the battle was over and the Israelites assembled to determine their losses, not a single man was missing—a miraculous case of divine protection!

*The real
question is
not why
some pious,
humble,
believing
people
suffer, but
why some
do not.*



Entering the Land

Key Passage: Numbers 34:1-15

CHAPTER 34

Borders of
the Land

Geographic Boundaries

CHAPTER 35

Cities of
Refuge

Legal Boundaries

CHAPTER 36

Laws of
Inheritance

OVERVIEW The book of Numbers closes with a list of the geographic boundaries of the promised land and the names of those who will apportion the land to the nine and a half tribes still awaiting the inheritance. Since the Levites are allotted no land, they are given 48 cities scattered throughout Canaan. Laws are established to provide for justice in cases of manslaughter and to protect the inheritance of families who have no surviving male heir.

YOUR DAILY WALK You cannot enjoy what you do not possess. God had promised to give His people a great land. You'll find the description of its borders in chapter 34. It extended as far north as Mount Hor and Lebo Hamath, as far south as Kadesh Barnea and the Wadi of Egypt (Wadi el-Arish), and as far east as the Jordan River. Sadly, Israel would seldom enjoy the full extent of these promised boundaries. Only briefly in the reigns of David and Solomon would the nation encompass that much territory.

Was God's promise no good? Or was there something else that kept the people from enjoying the full blessing God intended? Every promise has two parts: the promise itself, and the possession of that promise by the person for whom it is intended. God told His nation repeatedly, "Go in and possess the land. It's all yours!" But because of unbelief and indifference, the people settled for God's second best. They could not enjoy what they did not possess.

Look back through the sections you've already read. Is there a promise you've yet to possess—a blessing from God you've yet to stake your claim to? What are you waiting for?

INSIGHT OBSCURE NAMES, OUTSTANDING TRUTHS

Of those leaders from each tribe selected by God to allot the land (34:16-29), only Caleb is familiar. But consider the names of others: Shemuel, "name of God"; Elidad, "God has loved"; Hannel, "favor of God"; Elizaphan, "my God protects"; Paltiel, "God is my deliverance"; Pedahel, "God has redeemed." Names can carry timeless truths, can't they?

*We cannot
rely on
God's
promises
without
obeying His
command-
ments.*

DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy addresses the new generation destined to possess the land of promise—the survivors of the 40-year wilderness wandering. Like Leviticus, Deuteronomy contains much legal detail, but its emphasis is on laymen rather than the priests and sacrifices. In his three farewell sermons that comprise the book, Moses stresses both the importance of obedience if the people are to learn from their predecessors, and the faithfulness of God who “brought us out . . . [to] give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers” (6:23).

Focus	Past				Present				Future																																															
Divisions	Reviewing the Wanderings				Recalling God's Laws				Ceremonial Laws				Civil Laws				Social Laws				Commitment to the Covenant				Conclusion of Moses' Life																															
	1				4				5				11				12				16				17				20				21				26				27				30				31				34			
Topics	Looking Back								Looking In												Looking Up																																			
	History								Holiness												Heritage																																			
Place									Moab																																															
Time									About 2 Months																																															



Reviewing the Wanderings

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 1, 4

CHAPTER 1

Israel's Unbelief at
Kadesh Barnea

CHAPTERS 2-3

God's Undergirding
in Battle

CHAPTER 4

Moses' Urgings
to Obedience

Looking Back

Looking Beyond

OVERVIEW Deuteronomy opens with the first of Moses' three sermons—a review of the nation's history, with particular emphasis on God's dealings with His people. Moses recalls Israel's failure to claim the land because of the people's unbelief, and the 40 years of judgment that followed. He reviews Israel's history for the benefit of the new generation, which has already shown some distressing similarities to their parents. Finally, he reminds them of the primary lesson from Israel's history: Obedience brings blessing; rebellion brings ruin.

YOUR DAILY WALK Have you ever read a 500-page novel that should have been a short story, or heard a speaker stretch a five-minute talk into 45 minutes? If so, then you know how irritating it can be to drag out a task longer than necessary.

God's plan for Israel's conquest of Canaan was straightforward: a short march from Kadesh Barnea, a series of faith-inspired battles, and total victory. But Israel took God's simple plan and through disobedience turned an 11-day trip (1:2) into a 40-year tragedy. Someone has said that the Israelites were slow travelers because they were slow learners. It took them 40 years to learn a lesson they should have mastered in less than two weeks.

Has God been trying to teach you a lesson in recent days that you've been resisting? Or do you have a task you need to do, but you've been putting it off, dragging it out because of a lack of faith or motivation? On an index card, write one thing you know God wants you to do today, and carry it with you as a reminder of your commitment to the task. When God says "March!" make short work of it.

*Postponed
obedience is
disobedience.*

INSIGHT KING SIZE . . . IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD Og, king of Bashan—whom the Israelites defeated and killed (Numbers 21:33-35)—was the last of a race of people called Rephaim (Deuteronomy 3:11). Jewish tradition describes Og as a physical giant, a fact seemingly verified by the biblical record which states that his bed was 13.5 feet long by 6 feet wide.



Recalling God's Promises

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 5:1-21; 6:1-9

CHAPTER 5

Something Old:
Ten Commandments

Obedience Demanded

CHAPTER 6

Something New:
Great Commandment

CHAPTER 7

Something Future:
Certain Victory

Obedience Rewarded

OVERVIEW Moses' second sermon (which extends through chapter 26) contains many of the same commands previously received at Mount Sinai. Moses starts with the basics, the Ten Commandments, and then urges the parents to teach these precepts faithfully to their children. There is a note of urgency in Moses' request. The promised land remains to be conquered and enjoyed. God is looking for a generation of obedient people that He can lead in victory and thereby fulfill His long-standing promise.

YOUR DAILY WALK **WANTED**—Energetic, young couple for demanding assignment. Must have boundless reserves of patience, stamina, and optimism. Must be able to function reasonably well on three hours of sleep, diagnose childhood ailments, and read the same book 27 times without appearing bored. Must together be skilled as a nurse, counselor, teacher, and taxi driver. Full-time position. No paid vacations. Salary not commensurate with experience. Those applying will be screened to determine their sanity.

*Train up a
child in the
way he
should
go — and
go there
yourself
once in a
while.*

In case you haven't guessed yet, the "Position Available" is for parents. And what greater challenge for a parent is there than to communicate God's timeless truth to a tender young life? Fortunately, God has a word of counsel just for you. You'll find it in 6:6-7—the key to passing on the vitality of your faith. It's not lecturing or giving your child good books to read, but rather taking advantage of the teachable moments in the daily classroom of life such as mealtime, playtime, and bedtime. Look for a teachable moment in your child's life today. Then seize it and use it for eternity. You'll both be glad you did.

INSIGHT PUTTING THE LAW IN A BOX

The command to make the law "as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads" (Deuteronomy 6:8) was taken literally by pious Jews who, even to this day, attach small boxes containing portions of Scripture to their foreheads and arms. How much of God's Word do you carry everywhere you go?



Warnings for a New Generation

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 8:1-20; 10:12-13

CHAPTER 8

Remember
God's Blessing

A Painful Reminder

CHAPTER 9

Remember the
Golden Calf

CHAPTER 10

Respond to
God's Leading

A Profitable Response

CHAPTER 11

Respond to
God's Loving

OVERVIEW Moses once again takes the Israelites back into their national history to illustrate that God is true to His word. He is a God who loves to bless His people, as demonstrated during the wilderness wanderings. For 40 years God prevented clothes from wearing out while He faithfully provided life-sustaining manna. And He constantly set before His people the promise of even greater blessing once they entered the land. But the golden calf incident was a painful reminder that disobedience brings swift punishment.

YOUR DAILY WALK Are you a detail-oriented person? Here's a little quiz to see how observant you are:

1. How many light bulbs are there in your bedroom?
2. How many buttons are on the outfit you are wearing?
(No peeking allowed!)
3. How many miles (to the nearest 100) are on the odometer of your car?

Those may seem like insignificant details—and they are. But when it comes to the commandments of God, there is no such thing as an unimportant detail. Look at these verses from today's section: "Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today" (8:1). "Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert" (8:2). "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (8:3).

Pick a command from today's reading, and try to write down 10 observations about it. Then once you have pondered the command, practice it. It's a lifestyle that pleases God (10:12-13).

*God never
commands
and
commissions
without
providing
grace to
obey.*

INSIGHT **TAKING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT ISN'T DUE** In 8:10-20, Moses warned the people that when they occupied and prospered in Canaan, they would be tempted to take the credit, concluding that "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me" (8:17). But Moses offered a quick cure for such misguided pride. Can you spot it in 9:6-24?



Ceremonial Laws in the Land

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 13:6-10; 14:22-15:11

CHAPTER 12

CHAPTER 13

CHAPTER 14

CHAPTER 15

CHAPTER 16

Religious Laws Concerning . . .

Eating

Idolatry

Animals

Debts

Feasts

"These are the decrees . . . you must be careful to follow" (12:1).

OVERVIEW In chapter 12, Moses moves from the broad principles of the Ten Commandments to the more detailed regulations that will govern the daily conduct of God's people in the promised land. Religious life must be characterized by intolerance of idolatrous influences, by strict attention to the sanctity of life, and by careful personal hygiene. Every seventh year will bring the forgiveness of debts, and three yearly feasts will commemorate important events in the nation's history.

YOUR DAILY WALK There is something money can't buy and it's called poverty. Poverty is nothing new, for "there will always be poor people in the land" (15:11).

But God does not see it as a hopeless situation. A divine plan for poverty relief is recorded in today's section—a plan that, if followed, might make government poverty programs obsolete.

1. Forgive all debts every seven years.
2. Faithfully observe all of God's commands.
3. Freely give to assist those in need.

*Compassion
is what
makes a
person feel
pain when
somebody
else hurts.*

The first part of this three-point program could be legislated, but the last two require voluntary compliance and a proper heart attitude. If the people of Israel would do this, God told them: "You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you" (15:6). Try God's "Poverty Program" on a friend in need, and watch what happens. After all, there's something else money can't buy—Christian compassion.

INSIGHT MURDER WITHOUT A WEAPON

Chapter 13 describes how grave an offense it was for one person to persuade another to disobey God or turn to false idols. Such a person was to be put to death immediately, with the first stone being thrown by the one in danger of being persuaded, even if that person was a near relative (13:6-10). The offender was to be treated as a murderer. Has God's opinion changed about the seriousness of such a sin today? Read Mark 9:42.

THE BOOK OF TRANSITION

DEUTERONOMY

The Book of Deuteronomy acts as a bridge between the books of Numbers and Joshua.

NUMBERS	DEUTERONOMY	JOSHUA
Old generation sins and dies out.	Leader of old generation (Moses) recounts the history of his generation and draws lessons from it.	Joshua assumes leadership over new generation.
New generation grows up and comes to the border of the land.	New generation is warned by Moses to avoid sins of their parents.	New generation enters land and embarks on conquest.
Old generation inhabits only the wilderness and has no real possessions.	New generation receives renewed assurance that God will give them the land for their possession.	New generation claims possession of the land as God had directed.
Old generation lives in tents and eats manna and quail.	New generation hears of the promise of permanent homes in a land of "milk and honey."	New generation builds homes and settles in the land.
Revelation of the wrath of God.	Revelation of the love of God.	Revelation of the power of God.



Civil Laws in the Land

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 18:9-22

CHAPTER 17	CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 20
Crowning a King	Proving a Prophet	Protecting the Innocent	Winning a War
Governmental Laws		Humanitarian Laws	

OVERVIEW In addition to the laws regulating national worship, Moses also delivers civil laws for governing the internal affairs of the nation. Holiness should not be practiced in the tabernacle only. Justice, truthfulness, and humane behavior must characterize all the nation's dealings. Moses anticipates three situations that are sure to arise once the people are in the promised land: (1) the desire to crown a king; (2) the need to examine a prophet's credentials to determine if he speaks for God; and (3) the need for a refuge to protect those who have committed manslaughter unintentionally.

YOUR DAILY WALK When was the last time you had a brush with the occult? Before you lightly pass off that question, consider the pagan activities that the Israelites were strictly forbidden to practice: magic spells, witchcraft, interpreting omens, consulting with spirits. Now compare that list with some of the seemingly harmless activities Christians sometimes engage in today:

- reading books or viewing movies dealing with sorcery
- foretelling the future using cards, stars, or Ouija boards
- planning the day's activities on the basis of a horoscope

*God's
laws last
longer than
those who
break them.*

Are you dabbling with the very things God has told you to despise? God told His people: "Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD" (18:12). Those who belong to God have no business trafficking in the things of Satan. Check up on your life for any innocent-looking forms of the occult, and deal with them today. God expects your full devotion.

INSIGHT "GIVE ME A KING OR GIVE ME DEATH"

Because of Israel's desire to be like the neighboring countries who all had kings, God granted her an earthly kingship, beginning with Saul. Even so, Yahweh's kings were radically different from other kings. Israel's king was a fellow servant of the covenant (17:15) and had to obey it (17:18-19). The king was the ultimate authority in other countries; in Israel, Yahweh was the ultimate authority.



Social Laws in the Land

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 23:1-8; 26:16-19

CHAPTER 21

CHAPTERS 22-23

CHAPTERS 24-25

CHAPTER 26

in the Home

Promoting Peace and Purity . . .
in the Camp

in the Courts

in the Land

Domestic Tranquility

National Tranquility

OVERVIEW Today's reading is long, but it contains fascinating insights into some "what if" questions that will no doubt arise once the people are in the land. Moses covers such topics as how to purify the land from an unsolved murder, how to administer capital punishment, who is eligible for membership in the congregation and who is excluded, how to avoid the extinction of a family name, and when and how money may be loaned for interest. Such regulations are essential if the people of God are to live in peace and purity in the promised land.

YOUR DAILY WALK Is God concerned about things like cruelty to animals and preservation of the species? How about accurate scales at the meat market and protection from loan sharks?

All of the above and more are discussed in today's reading. At first you may have thought you'd stumbled across a disjointed collection of do's and don'ts. But God is interested in every detail of life. Whatever affects His people concerns Him. His love and compassion extend even to the treatment of animals: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain" (25:4). "If you come across a bird's nest beside the road . . . do not take the mother with the young" (22:6), thus preserving the species.

Aren't you glad the God who created and sustains nature is also the God who created and sustains you? Write down three other evidences of God's care from today's reading. Then read Matthew 6:25-34. The God who looks after lilies and birds is looking after you.

INSIGHT THE 41ST BLOW IS A NO-NO

Chapter 25 describes corporal punishment's place in the life of the nation. It was never to be used to extract a confession, and was only to be applied after the suspect was found guilty. Even in punishment, the dignity of the individual was to be preserved. The Jews kept the letter of the "40-lash limitation" law but not the spirit of it (see 2 Corinthians 11:24).

*God,
who needs
nothing,
brings into
existence
wholly
unnecessary
creatures so
that He
may love
and perfect
them.*



Commitment to the Covenant

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 27-28

CHAPTER 27	CHAPTER 28	CHAPTER 29	CHAPTER 30
Punishment for Disobedience	Promises and Penalties	Demands of the Covenant	Decision of the Nation
Characteristics of the Covenant		Choosing the Covenant	

OVERVIEW In his final sermon, Moses solemnly tells the people about the blessings and curses that will accompany their obedience to (or rebellion against) God's covenant. Obedience will bring prosperity, provision, and protection from God. Disobedience will lead to disaster. The nation may choose for itself which path it will take, but the consequences of its decision are predetermined. Moses wisely counsels the people to "choose life" (30:19).

YOUR DAILY WALK Have you ever been in the awkward position of having to discipline someone else's child? It usually doesn't work very well because that child is not yours. There is no parent-child relationship to give your demands for obedience the ring of authority. Discipline works best when relationship precedes requirements.

God's requirements for Israel are well summarized in the phrase: "Obey the LORD your God and follow His commands and decrees" (27:10). On what basis could God require their obedience? Verse 9 supplies the answer: They were His people. He had called their father Abraham centuries before, had preserved them in Egypt, and had redeemed them from bondage by the blood of the Passover lamb. Verses 9 and 10 are in direct relationship. Because Israel belonged to God, she was to obey.

Refresh your walk with God by recalling why He deserves and expects your obedience. He has saved you by His grace (Ephesians 2:8-9), and you are taught to call Him "Father" (Luke 11:2). Write down one thing the fatherhood of God tells you about your relationship with Him, and share it today with your children (or father).

INSIGHT A TOUGH CHALLENGE FOR ANY FARMER The figurative use of "bronze" and "iron" in Deuteronomy 28:23 graphically depicts an extended drought. With the sky above as metallic as bronze and the soil below as hard and impenetrable as iron, cultivation would be impossible.

*Muslims
have 99
names for
God, but
among them
all, they do
not have
"our Father."*



Conclusion of Moses' Life

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 31, 34

CHAPTER 31	CHAPTER 32	CHAPTER 33	CHAPTER 34
Commissioning a Successor	Composing a Song	Delivering a Blessing	Dying on Mt. Nebo
"No prophet has arisen again in Israel like Moses" (34:10).			

OVERVIEW With Israel ready to cross the Jordan into the promised land, Moses' responsibilities as deliverer and guide are completed. He assigns Joshua to be his successor before giving a last warning to the people to remain true to the covenant. Moses turns his final message into an easily-remembered song and teaches it to the people so they, in turn, can pass it on to future generations. After a parting blessing, he climbs Mount Nebo to catch a glimpse of Canaan, then dies in a location known only to God.

YOUR DAILY WALK Did you ever wish you were someone else? Children at play openly imitate their favorite heroes. Though adults are more subtle, they often try to pattern themselves after a popular personality, a successful executive, or an inspirational leader.

Trying to be someone you're not is never easy. There is always the danger that you'll forget who you want to be and accidentally be yourself. From God's viewpoint, desiring to be like someone else is not only unnecessary, it is potentially harmful. God never asks you to be someone or something you cannot be. When God called Joshua to lead the nation, He did not ask him to be another Moses. Moses and his leadership style were totally unique. For deliverance from Egypt, Moses was the man. For military campaigns and conquests in Canaan, however, Joshua was God's choice.

God has a job for you where He can use your talents, gifts, and abilities in distinctive service. Ask Him to show you what it is. Whatever assignment God gives you, don't try to be a Joshua, a Moses, or anyone else. Just be yourself and let God use you.

The hardest thing to hide is something that is not there.

INSIGHT A SPUNKY SENIOR CITIZEN . . . AT AGE 120
Moses' reference to his inability to "cross the Jordan" (31:2) does not mean he was getting feeble from old age (see 34:7). Rather, he had been forbidden earlier by God to enter the promised land (Numbers 20:12).

A PROMISE WORTH CLAIMING

Picture this: You discover you've won a two-week vacation in the Caribbean, absolutely free, and all you have to do is claim your prize. Do you wait for the prize to appear? No—you claim it! You were promised the vacation, but you have to claim it.

Now think about God's promises to His people. This month you saw Him guarantee a lush, fruitful home to the Israelites who fled Egypt. Yet they sadly postponed the blessings of this promised land because of their lack of faith.

Throughout the Bible, God makes many promises, such as assurances of provision (Matthew 6:31-34); of an abundant, fulfilling life (John 10:10); of freedom from fear and worry (Deuteronomy 31:8; Philippians 4:6-7); of love, joy, and peace (Galatians 5:22-23); and much, much more.

But every promise has two aspects: the promise itself and the appropriation of that promise by the person to whom it is given. Like a free trip pledged to us, God's promises need to be

believed confidently in faith so that we can benefit fully from them.

Perhaps the most important gift from God that we can claim is the promise of eternal life. Jesus says: "My sheep listen to my voice . . . and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10:27-28). Now that's a promise worth claiming!

Won't you accept the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ? All you have to do is confess your sins, accept the living Christ as Savior and Master of your life, and believe in—lay claim to—your gift of salvation. It's the beginning of a new life that lasts forever.

If you want to speak to someone about beginning a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, call 1-888-NeedHim.