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Numbers

Moses Counts the People of Israel

1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the Meeting Tent.* This was in the Sinai Desert. It was on the first day of the second month of the second year after the people of Israel left Egypt. The Lord said to Moses: ²“Count all the people of Israel. List the name of each man with his family and his family group. ³You and Aaron must count all the men of Israel who are 20 years old or older. (These are the men who serve in the army of Israel.) List them by their group.* ⁴One man from each and every family group [will help you]. This man will be the leader of his family group. ⁵These are the names of the men who will stand with you [and help you];

- from Reuben’s family group—Elizur son of Shedeur;
- ⁶ from Simeon’s family group—Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;
- ⁷ from Judah’s family group—Nahshon son of Amminadab;
- ⁸ from Issachar’s family group—Nethanel son of Zuar;
- ⁹ from Zebulun’s family group—Eliab son of Helon;
- ¹⁰ from the descendants of Joseph
 - from Ephraim’s family group—Elishama son of Ammihud;
 - from Manasseh’s family group—Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;
- ¹¹ from Benjamin’s family group—Abidan son of Gideon;

- ¹² from Dan’s family group—Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;
- ¹³ from Asher’s family group—Pagiel son of Ocran;
- ¹⁴ from Gad’s family group—Eliasaph son of Deuel*;
- ¹⁵ from Naphtali’s family group—Ahira son of Enan.”

¹⁶All those men are the leaders of their families. The people also chose them to be leaders of their family groups. ¹⁷Moses and Aaron took these men who had been chosen to be leaders. ¹⁸And Moses and Aaron called all the people of Israel together. Then the people were listed by their families and their family groups. All the men who were 20 years old or older were listed. ¹⁹Moses did exactly what the Lord commanded—Moses counted the people while they were in the Sinai desert.

²⁰They counted Reuben’s family group. (Reuben was the firstborn* son of Israel.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²¹The total number of men counted from Reuben’s family group was 46,500.

²²They counted Simeon’s family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²³The total number of men counted from Simeon’s family group was 59,300.

²⁴They counted Gad’s family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

group(s) Or, “division(s).” This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

Deuel Or, “Reuel.”

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²⁵The total number of men counted from Gad's family group was 45,650.

²⁶They counted Judah's family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²⁷The total number of men counted from Judah's family group was 74,600.

²⁸They counted Issachar's family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²⁹The total number of men counted from Issachar's family group was 54,400.

³⁰They counted Zebulun's family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³¹The total number of men counted from Zebulun's family group was 57,400.

³²They counted Ephraim's family group. (Ephraim was Joseph's son.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³³The total number of men counted from Ephraim's family group was 40,500.

³⁴They counted Manasseh's family group. (Manasseh was also Joseph's son.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³⁵The total number of men counted from Manasseh's family group was 32,200.

³⁶They counted Benjamin's family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³⁷The total number of men counted from Benjamin's family group was 35,400.

³⁸They counted Dan's family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³⁹The total number of men counted from Dan's family group was 62,700.

⁴⁰They counted Asher's family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ⁴¹The total number of men counted from Asher's family group was 41,500.

⁴²They counted Naphtali's family group. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed by name with their families and family groups. ⁴³The total number of men counted from Naphtali's family group was 53,400.

⁴⁴Moses, Aaron, and the twelve leaders of Israel counted these men. (There was one leader from each family group.) ⁴⁵They counted every man who was 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army. Each man was listed with his family. ⁴⁶The total number of men counted was 603,550 men.

⁴⁷The families from the Levi family group were not counted with the other people of Israel. ⁴⁸The Lord had told Moses: ⁴⁹"Don't count the men from Levi's family group or include them with the other people of Israel. ⁵⁰Tell the men of Levi that they are responsible for the Holy Tent* of the Agreement. They must take care of that tent and all the things that are with it. They must carry the Holy Tent and everything in it. They must make their camp around it and take care of it. ⁵¹Whenever the Holy Tent is moved, the men of Levi must do it. Whenever the Holy Tent is set up, the men of Levi must do it. They are the men who will take care of the Holy Tent. If any person who is not from Levi's family group tries to take care of the tent, he must be killed. ⁵²The people of Israel will make their camps in separate groups.* Each person should camp near his family flag. ⁵³But the men of Levi must make their camp around the Holy Tent. The men of Levi will guard the Holy Tent of the Agreement. [They will protect the Holy Tent] so that nothing bad will happen to the people of Israel."

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the tent where God came to live among his people.

group(s) Or, "division(s)." This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

⁵⁴So the people of Israel obeyed all the things that the Lord commanded Moses.

The Camp Arrangement

2 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: ²“The people of Israel should make their camps around the Meeting Tent.* Each group* will have its own special flag, and each person will camp near his group’s flag.

³“The flag of the camp of Judah will be on the east side, where the sun rises. The people of Judah will camp near its flag. The leader of the people of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadab.

⁴There are 74,600 men in his group.*

⁵“Issachar’s family group will camp next to Judah’s family group. The leader of the people of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar.

⁶There are 54,400 men in his group.*

⁷“Zebulun’s family group will also camp next to Judah’s family group. The leader of the people of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon.

⁸There are 57,400 men in his group.*

⁹“There is a total of 186,400 men in Judah’s camp. All these men are divided into their different family groups. Judah will be the first group to move when the people travel from one place to another.

¹⁰“The flag of Reuben’s camp will be south of the Holy Tent.* Each group will camp near its flag. The leader of the people of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. ¹¹There are 46,500 men in this group.*

¹²“Simeon’s family group will camp next to Reuben’s family group. The leader of the people of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. ¹³There are 59,300 men in this group.*

¹⁴“Gad’s family group will also camp next to the people of Reuben. The leader of the people of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel.*

¹⁵There are 45,650 men in this group.*

¹⁶“There are 151,450 men in all the groups* in Reuben’s camp. Reuben’s camp

will be the second group to move when the people travel from place to place.

¹⁷“When the people travel, Levi’s camp will move next. The Meeting Tent* will be with them between the other camps. The people will make their camps in the same order that they move. Each person will be with his family flag.

¹⁸“The flag of the camp of Ephraim will be on the west side. The family groups of Ephraim will camp there. The leader of the people of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. ¹⁹There are 40,500 men in this group.*

²⁰“Manasseh’s family group will camp next to Ephraim’s family. The leader of the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

²¹There are 32,200 men in this group.*

²²“Benjamin’s family group will also camp next to Ephraim’s family. The leader of the people of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gideoni.

²³There are 35,400 men in this group.*

²⁴“There are 108,100 men in Ephraim’s camp. They will be the third family to move when the people travel from one place to another.

²⁵“The flag of Dan’s camp will be on the north side. The family groups of Dan will camp there. The leader of the people of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. ²⁶There are 62,700 men in this group.*

²⁷“The people from Asher’s family group will camp next to Dan’s family group. The leader of the people of Asher is Pagiel son of Ocran. ²⁸There are 41,500 men in this group.*

²⁹“Naphtali’s family group will also camp next to Dan’s family group. The leader of the people of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan. ³⁰There are 53,400 men in this group.*

³¹“There are 157,600 men in Dan’s camp. They will be the last family to move when the people travel from place to place. Each person will be with his family’s flag.”

³²So those were the people of Israel. They were counted by families. The total number of Israelite men in the camps, counted by groups,* is 603,550. ³³Moses obeyed the Lord and did not count the Levites with the other people of Israel.

³⁴So the people of Israel did everything the Lord told Moses. Each group camped under

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

group(s) Or, “division(s).” This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

Deuel Or, “Reuel.”

its own flag. And each person stayed with his own family and family group.

Aaron's Family, the Priests

3 This is the family history of Aaron and Moses at the time the Lord talked to Moses on Mount Sinai.

²Aaron had four sons. Nadab was the firstborn* son. Then there were Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ³These sons were the chosen* priests.

These sons were given the special work of serving the Lord as priests. ⁴But Nadab and Abihu died because they sinned while serving the Lord. They used fire that the Lord did not allow when they made an offering to the Lord. So Nadab and Abihu died there, in the Sinai desert. They had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar took their place and served the Lord as priests. This happened while their father Aaron was still alive.

Levites—the Priests' Helpers

⁵The Lord said to Moses, ⁶“Bring all the men from Levi’s family group. Bring them to Aaron the priest. Those men will be Aaron’s helpers. ⁷The Levites will help Aaron when he serves at the Meeting Tent.* And the Levites will help all the people of Israel when they come to worship at the Holy Tent.* ⁸The people of Israel should protect all the things in the Meeting Tent; it is their duty. But the Levites will serve the people of Israel by caring for these things. This will be their way of worshiping at the Holy Tent.

⁹“Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. The Levites were chosen from all the people of Israel to help Aaron and his sons.

¹⁰“Appoint Aaron and his sons to be priests. They must do their duty and serve as

priests. Any other person who tries to come near the holy things* must be killed.”

¹¹The Lord also said to Moses, ¹²“I told you that every family of Israel must give their firstborn* son to me—but now I am choosing the Levites to serve me. They will be mine. So all the other people of Israel will not have to give their firstborn sons to me.

¹³“When you were in Egypt, I killed all the firstborn* children of the Egyptians. At that time, I took all of the firstborn children of Israel to be mine. All of the firstborn children and all the firstborn animals are mine. But now I am giving your firstborn children back to you, and I am making the Levites mine. I am the Lord.”

¹⁴The Lord again talked to Moses in the Sinai desert. The Lord said, ¹⁵“Count all the families and family groups in Levi’s family group. Count every man or boy that is a month old or older.” ¹⁶So Moses obeyed the Lord. He counted them all.

¹⁷Levi had three sons. Their names were: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹⁸Each son was the leader of several family groups.

The Gershon family groups were: Libni and Shimei.

¹⁹The Kohath family groups were: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

²⁰The Merari family groups were: Mahli and Mushi.

Those are the families that belonged to Levi’s family group.

²¹The families of Libni and Shimei belonged to the family of Gershon. They were the Gershonite family groups. ²²There were 7,500 men and boys over one month old in these two family groups. ²³The Gershonite family groups were told to camp in the west. They made their camp behind the Holy Tent.*

²⁴The leader of the family groups of the Gershonite people was Eliasaph son of Lael. ²⁵In the Meeting Tent,* the Gershonite people had the job of taking care of the Holy Tent, the outer tent, and the covering. They also took care of the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ²⁶They cared for the curtain in

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

chosen Or, “anointed.” A special oil was poured on their heads to show they were chosen by God.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

tries ... holy things Or, “tries to serve as a priest.”

the courtyard. And they cared for the curtain at the entrance of the courtyard. This courtyard was around the Holy Tent and the altar.* And they cared for the ropes and for everything that was used with the curtains.

²⁷The families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, belonged to the family of Kohath. They were the Kohathite family groups. ²⁸In this family group there were 8,300* men and boys a month old or over. The Kohathite people were given the job of taking care of the things in the holy place. ²⁹The Kohathite family groups were given the area to the south of the Holy Tent.* This was the area where they camped. ³⁰The leader of the Kohathite family groups was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. ³¹Their job was to take care of the Holy Box,* the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the dishes of the Holy Place.* They also cared for the curtain and all the things that were used with the curtain.

³²The leader over the leaders of the Levite people was Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. Eleazar was in charge of all the people that took care of the holy things.

^{33–34}The family groups of Mahli and Mushi belonged to the Merari family. There were 6,200 men and boys that were one month old or older in the Mahli family group. ³⁵The leader of the Merari family group was Zuriel son of Abihail. This family group was given the area to the north of the Holy Tent.* This is the area where they camped. ³⁶The people from the Merari family were given the job of caring for the frames of the Holy Tent. They cared for all the braces, posts, bases, and everything that was used with the frames of the Holy Tent. ³⁷They also cared for all the posts in the courtyard around the Holy Tent. This included all the bases, tent pegs, and ropes.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

8,300 Some copies of the ancient Greek version have “8,300.” The Hebrew copies have “8,600.” See Num. 3:22, 28, 34, 39.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

Holy Box Or, “ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

³⁸Moses, Aaron, and his sons camped east of the Holy Tent,* in front of the Meeting Tent. They were given the work of caring for the Holy Place. They did this for all the people of Israel. Any other person who came near the Holy Place was to be killed.

³⁹The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to count all the men and boys one month old or older in Levi’s family group. The total number was 22,000.

Levites Take the Place of the Firstborn

⁴⁰The Lord said to Moses, “Count all the firstborn* men and boys in Israel who are at least one month old. Write their names on a list. ⁴¹In the past I said that I would take all the firstborn* men and boys of Israel. But now I, the Lord, will take the Levites. I will also take the firstborn animals from the Levites instead of taking all the firstborn animals from the other people in Israel.”

⁴²So Moses did what the Lord commanded. Moses counted all the firstborn* children of the people of Israel. ⁴³Moses listed all the firstborn men and boys that were one month old or older. There were 22,273 names on that list.

⁴⁴The Lord also said to Moses, ⁴⁵“I, the Lord, give this command: ‘Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn* men from the other families of Israel. And I will take the animals of the Levites instead of the animals of the other people. The Levites are mine. ⁴⁶There are 22,000 Levites, but there are 22,273 firstborn sons from the other families. This leaves 273 more firstborn sons than Levites. ⁴⁷Using the official measure,* collect five shekels* of silver for each of the 273 people. (The shekel by the official measure weighs 20 gerahs.*) Collect that silver from the people of Israel. ⁴⁸Give that silver to Aaron and his sons. It is the payment for the 273 people of Israel.’”

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

official measure Literally, “holy shekel,” the standard of measure used in the tabernacle and the temple.

five shekels Or, “2 ounces.”

gerah(s) A gerah is 1/50 of an ounce.

⁴⁹There were not enough Levites to take the place of 273 men from the other family groups. So Moses gathered the money for those 273 men. ⁵⁰Moses collected the silver from the firstborn* men of the people of Israel. He collected 1,365 shekels* of silver, using the official measure.* ⁵¹Moses obeyed the Lord. Moses gave the silver to Aaron and his sons just like the Lord commanded.

The Jobs of the Kohath Family

4 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²“Count the men in the families of the Kohath family group. (The Kohath family group is a part of Levi’s family group.) ³Count all the men from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army. These men will work in the Meeting Tent.* ⁴Their job is to take care of the most holy things in the Meeting Tent.

⁵“When the people of Israel travel to a new place, then Aaron and his sons must go into the Meeting Tent* and take down the curtain and cover the Holy Box of the Agreement* with it. ⁶Then they must cover all of this with covering made from fine leather.* Then they must spread the solid blue cloth over the leather and put the poles in the rings on the Holy Box.

⁷“Then they must spread a blue cloth over the holy table. Then they must put the plates, spoons, bowls, and the jars for drink offerings on the table. Also, put the special bread on the table. ⁸Then you must put a red cloth over all of these things. Then cover everything with fine leather.* Then put the poles in the rings of the table.

⁹“Then they must cover the lampstand and its lamps with a blue cloth. They must also cover all the things used to keep the lamps burning and all the jars of oil that are used in

the lamps. ¹⁰Then wrap everything in fine leather.* Then they must put all these things on poles used for carrying them.

¹¹“They must spread a blue cloth over the golden altar. They must cover that with fine leather.* Then they must put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar.

¹²“Then they must gather together all the special things that are used for worship in the Holy Place.* They must gather them together and wrap them in a blue cloth. Then they must cover that with fine leather.* They must put these things on a frame for carrying them.

¹³“They must clean the ashes out of the bronze altar and spread a purple cloth over it.

¹⁴Then they must gather together all the things that are used for worship at the altar. These are the fire pans, forks, shovels, and the bowls. They must put these things on the bronze altar. Then they must spread a covering of fine leather* over the altar. They must put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar.

¹⁵“Aaron and his sons must finish covering all the holy things in the Holy Place.* Then the men from the Kohath family can go in and begin carrying those things. In this way, they will not touch the Holy Place and die.

¹⁶“Eleazar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for the Holy Tent.* He will be responsible for the Holy Place* and for everything in it. He will be responsible for the oil for the lamp, the sweet-smelling incense,* the daily offering,* and the anointing oil.*”

¹⁷The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ¹⁸“Be careful! Don’t let these Kohathite men be destroyed. ¹⁹You must do these things so that the Kohathite men can go near the Most Holy Place* and not die. Aaron and his sons must

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

1,365 shekels Or, “35 pounds.”

official measure Literally, “temple shekel.”

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Holy Box of the Agreement Also called “ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like the seal or sea cow.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

daily offering Offerings that were placed twice each day in the Holy Place as a gift to God.

anointing oil Olive oil that was poured on people or things to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

Most Holy Place The room inside the Holy Tent where the Holy Box was kept.

go in and show each Kohathite man what to do. They must give each man the things he needs to carry. ²⁰If you do not do this, then the Kohathite men might go in and look at the holy things. If they look at those things, even for a moment, then they must die.”

The Jobs of the Gershon Family

²¹The Lord said to Moses, ²²“Count all the people of the Gershon family. List them by family and family group. ²³Count all the men who are from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army. These men will have the job of caring for the Meeting Tent.*

²⁴“This is what the Gershonite family must do and the things they must carry: ²⁵They must carry the curtains of the Holy Tent,* the Meeting Tent, its covering, and the covering made from fine leather.* They must also carry the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ²⁶They must carry the curtains of the courtyard that are around the Holy Tent and the altar. And they must carry the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard. They must also carry all of the ropes and all the things that are used with the curtains. The Gershonite men will be responsible for anything that needs to be done with these things. ²⁷Aaron and his sons will watch all the work that is done. Everything the Gershonite people carry and the other work they do will be watched by Aaron and his sons. You must tell them all the things that they are responsible for carrying. ²⁸This is the work that the men of the Gershonite family group must do for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work.”

The Jobs of the Merari Family

²⁹“Count all of the men in the families and family groups in the Merari family group. ³⁰Count all the men who are from 30 to 50 years old and served in the army. These men

will do a special work for the Meeting Tent.*

³¹When you travel, it is their job to carry the frames of the Meeting Tent. They must carry the braces, the posts, and the bases. They must also carry the posts that are around the courtyard. They must carry the bases, the tent pegs, the ropes, and everything that is used for the poles around the courtyard. List the names and tell each man exactly what he must carry. ³³These are the things that the people from the Merari family will do to serve in the work for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work.”

The Levite Families

³⁴Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the people of Israel counted the Kohathite people. They counted them by families and family groups. ³⁵They counted all the men from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army. These men were given special work to do for the Meeting Tent.*

³⁶There were 2,750 men in the Kohath family group that were qualified to do this work. ³⁷So these men from the Kohath family group were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* Moses and Aaron did this the way the Lord had told Moses to do.

³⁸Also, the Gershonite family group was counted. ³⁹All the men from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* ⁴⁰There were 2,630 men in the families of the Gershon family group that were qualified. ⁴¹So these men from the Gershon family group were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron did this the way the Lord had told Moses to do.

⁴²Also, the men in the families and family groups of the Merari family were counted. ⁴³All the men from 30 to 50 years old that had served in the army were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* ⁴⁴There were 3,200 men in the families of the Merari family group that were qualified. ⁴⁵So these men from the Merari family group were given their special work. Moses and Aaron did this the way the Lord told Moses to do.

Most Holy Place The room inside the Holy Tent where the Holy Box was kept.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like the seal or sea cow.

⁴⁶So Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the people of Israel counted all the people in Levi's family group. They had counted each family and each family group. ⁴⁷All the men between the ages of 30 and 50 that served in the army were counted. These men were given a special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* They did the work of carrying the Meeting Tent when they traveled. ⁴⁸The total number was 8,580.

⁴⁹So, each man was counted like the Lord commanded Moses. Each man was given his own work and told what he must carry. This was done just like the Lord commanded.

Rules About Cleanliness

5 The Lord said to Moses, ²"I command the people of Israel to keep their camp free from sickness and disease. Tell the people to send away from the camp any person who has a bad skin disease.* Tell them to send away from the camp any person who has a discharge.* And tell them to send away from their camp any person who has touched a dead body. ³It doesn't matter if that person is a man or a woman, send them away from your camp. Send them away so that they will not cause any more sickness and disease. I am living among you in your camp."

⁴So the people of Israel obeyed God's command. They sent those people outside the camp. They did what the Lord had commanded to Moses.

Paying for Doing Wrong

⁵The Lord said to Moses, ⁶"Tell this to the people of Israel: A person might do something bad to another person. (When someone does bad things to other people, he is really sinning against God.) That person is guilty. ⁷So that person must confess (tell about) the sin he has done. Then that person must fully pay for that wrong thing he did. And he must add one-fifth

to the payment and give it all to the person he had done wrong to. ⁸But maybe the person he did wrong to is dead. And, maybe that dead person doesn't have any close relatives to take the payment. In that case, the person who did wrong will give the payment to the Lord. That person will give the full payment to the priest. The priest must sacrifice the ram that makes people pure. This ram must be sacrificed to cover over the sins of the person who did wrong. But the priest can keep the rest of the payment.

⁹"If one of the people of Israel gives a special gift [to God], then the priest that accepts that gift can keep it. It is his. ¹⁰A person doesn't have to give these special gifts. But if he gives them, then the gifts belong to the priest."

Suspicious Husbands

¹¹Then the Lord said to Moses, ¹²"Tell these things to the people of Israel: A man's wife might be unfaithful to him. ¹³She might have sexual relations with another man and hide this from her husband. And there might not be anyone to tell him that she did this sin. Her husband might never know about the wrong thing she did. And the woman might not tell her husband about her sin. ¹⁴But the husband might begin to suspect that his wife sinned against him. He might become jealous. He might begin to believe that she is not pure and true to him. ¹⁵If that happens, then he must take his wife to the priest. The husband must also take an offering of 8 cups* of barley flour. He must not pour oil or incense* on the barley flour. This barley flour is a grain offering to the Lord. It is given because the husband is jealous. This offering will show that he believes that his wife has been unfaithful to him.

¹⁶"The priest will take the woman before the Lord and make her stand there. ¹⁷Then the priest will take some special water and put it in a clay jar. The priest will put some dirt from the floor of the Holy Tent into the water. ¹⁸The priest will force the woman to stand before the Lord. Then he will loosen her hair

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

bad skin disease Or, "leprosy." The Hebrew word includes many kinds of skin diseases.

discharge Fluid from a person's body, including pus from sores, a man's semen, or a woman's period flow.

8 cups Literally, "1/10 ephah."

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

and put the grain offering in her hand. This is the barley flour that her husband gave because he was jealous. At the same time, he will hold the clay jar of special water. This is the special water that brings trouble to the woman.

¹⁹“Then the priest will tell the woman that she must not lie. She must promise to tell the truth. The priest will say to her: ‘If you have not slept with another man, and if you have not sinned against your husband while you were married to him, then this water that causes trouble will not hurt you. ²⁰But if you have sinned against your husband—if you had sexual relations with a man who is not your husband—then you are not pure. ²¹If that is true, then you will have much trouble when you drink this special water. You will not be able to have any children. And if you are pregnant now, your baby will die.* Then your people will leave you and say bad things about you.’

“Then the priest must tell the woman to make a special promise to the Lord. The woman must agree that these bad things will happen to her if she lies. ²²The priest must say, ‘You must drink this water that causes trouble. If you have sinned, you will not be able to have children and any baby you have will die before it is born.’ And the woman should say: ‘I agree to do as you say.’

²³“The priest should write those warnings on a scroll.* Then he should wash the words off into the water. ²⁴Then the woman must drink the water that brings trouble. This water will enter her and, ²⁵if she is guilty, it will cause her much suffering.

²⁵“Then the priest will take the grain offering from her (the offering for jealousy) and raise it before the Lord. Then he will carry it to the altar.* ²⁶The priest will fill his hands with some of the grain and put it on the altar and let it burn there. After that, he will tell the woman to drink the water. ²⁷If the woman has sinned against her husband, then the water will bring her trouble. The water

will go into her body and cause her much suffering. Any baby that is in her will die before it is born, and she will never be able to have children. All the people will turn against her.* ²⁸But if the woman has not sinned against her husband and she is pure, then the priest will say that she is not guilty. Then she will be normal, and able to have children.

²⁹“So that is the law about jealousy. That is what you should do when a woman sins against her husband while she is married to him. ³⁰Or if the man becomes jealous and suspects his wife has sinned against him, then that is what the man should do. The priest must tell the woman to stand before the Lord. Then the priest will do all those things. This is the law. ³¹The husband will not be guilty of doing anything wrong. But the woman will suffer if she has sinned.”

Nazirites

6 The Lord said to Moses, ²“Tell these things to the people of Israel: A man or a woman might want to separate from other people for a time. This special time of separation allows a person to give himself totally to the Lord for a time. That person will be called a Nazirite.* ³During that time, that person must not drink any wine or other strong drink. The person must not drink vinegar that is made from wine or from other strong drink. That person must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. ⁴That person must not eat anything that comes from grapes during that special time of separation. That person must not even eat the seeds or the skins from grapes.

⁵“That person must not cut his hair during that special time of separation. He must be holy until the time that his separation is ended. He must let his hair grow long. That person’s hair is a special part of his promise to God. ⁶He will give that hair as a gift to God. So, that person must let his hair grow long until the time of separation is ended.

You will ... die Literally, “Your loins will fall and your belly will swell.”

scroll A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

All ... turn against her Literally, “She will be like a curse among the people.”

Nazirite A person who has made a special promise to God. The name is from a Hebrew word meaning, “to separate from.”

⁶“A Nazirite* must not go near a dead body during that special time of separation. Why? Because that person has given himself fully to the Lord. ⁷Even if his own father or mother or brother or sister dies, he must not touch them. This would make him unclean. He must show that he is separated and has given himself fully to God. ⁸During the whole time of his separation, he is giving himself fully to the Lord.

⁹“It might happen that the Nazirite* is with another person who dies suddenly. [If the Nazirite touches this dead man, the Nazirite will become unclean.*] If that happens, then the Nazirite must shave the hair from his head. (That hair was part of his special promise.) He must cut his hair on the seventh day, because on that day he is made clean.* ¹⁰Then on the eighth day, that Nazirite must bring two doves and two young pigeons to the priest. He must give them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* ¹¹Then the priest will offer one as a sin offering. He will offer the other as a burnt offering. The burnt offering will be a payment for the Nazirite’s sin. (He sinned because he was near a dead body.) At that time, the person will again promise to give the hair on his head as a gift to God. ¹²This means that person must again give himself to the Lord for another time of separation. That person must bring a one-year-old male lamb. He must give this lamb as a guilt offering. All of the days that he was separated are forgotten. The man must start over with a new time of separation. This must be done because he touched a dead body during his first time of separation.

¹³“After his time of separation is ended, a Nazirite must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent* ¹⁴and give his offering to the Lord. His offering must be:

A one-year-old male lamb with nothing wrong with it for a burnt offering;

A one-year-old female lamb with nothing wrong with it for a sin offering;
One ram with nothing wrong with it for a fellowship offering;

¹⁵ A basket of bread made without yeast (cakes made with fine flour mixed with oil).

Oil must be spread on these cakes.
The grain offerings and drink offerings that are a part of these gifts.

¹⁶“The priest will give these things to the Lord. And then the priest will make the sin offering and the burnt offering. ¹⁷The priest will give the basket of bread without yeast to the Lord. Then he will kill the ram as a fellowship offering to the Lord. He will give it to the Lord with the grain offering and the drink offering.

¹⁸“The Nazirite* must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* There he must shave off his hair that he grew for the Lord. That hair will be put in the fire that is burning under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.

¹⁹“After the Nazirite* has cut off his hair, then the priest will give him a boiled shoulder from the ram and a large and a small cake from the basket. Both of these cakes are made without yeast. ²⁰Then the priest will wave these things before the Lord. This is a wave offering. These things are holy and belong to the priest. Also, the breast and the thigh from the ram are waved before the Lord. These things also belong to the priest. After that, the Nazirite man can drink wine.

²¹“Those are the rules for a person who decides to make the Nazirite* promise. That person must give all of those gifts to the Lord. But a person might be able to give much more to the Lord. If a person promises to do more, then he must keep his promise. But he must give at least all the things listed in these rules for the Nazirite promise.”

Nazirite A person who has made a special promise to God. The name is from a Hebrew word meaning, “to separate from.”

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

The Priests' Blessings

²²The Lord said to Moses, ²³“Tell Aaron and his sons that this is the way they should bless the people of Israel. They should say:

- ²⁴ May the Lord bless you and keep you.
²⁵ May the Lord be good to you*
 and show you his kindness.
²⁶ May the Lord answer your prayers*
 and give you peace.”

²⁷Then the Lord said, “In that way, Aaron and his sons will use my name to give a blessing to the people of Israel. And I will bless them.”

Dedicating the Holy Tent

7 Moses finished setting up the Holy Tent.* On that day, he dedicated it to the Lord. Moses anointed* the Tent and all the things in it. Moses also anointed the altar* and all the things used with it. This showed that these things should be used only for worshiping the Lord.

²Then the leaders of Israel gave offerings to the Lord. These men were the heads of their families and leaders of their family groups. These were the same men who were in charge of counting the people. ³These leaders brought gifts to the Lord. They brought six covered wagons and twelve cows for pulling the wagons. (One cow was given by each leader. Each leader joined with another leader to give one wagon.) The leaders gave these things to the Lord at the Holy Tent.

⁴The Lord said to Moses, ⁵“Accept these gifts from the leaders. These gifts can be used in the work of the Meeting Tent.* Give these things to the Levite men. This will help them do their work.”

⁶So Moses accepted the wagons and the cows. He gave these things to the Levite men. ⁷He gave two carts and four cows to the men in Gershon’s group. They needed the wagons

and the cows for their work. ⁸Then Moses gave four wagons and eight cows to the men in Merari’s group. They needed the wagons and cows for their work. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest was responsible for the work of all these men. ⁹Moses did not give any cows or wagons to the men in Kohath’s group. Why? Because their job was to carry the holy things on their shoulders.

¹⁰Moses anointed* the altar.* That same day, the leaders brought their offerings for dedicating the altar. They gave their offerings to the Lord at the altar. ¹¹The Lord told Moses, “Each day one leader must bring his gift for dedicating the altar.”

^{12–83}* Each of the twelve leaders brought his gifts. These are the gifts:↓

Each leader brought one silver plate that weighed 3 1/4 pounds.* Each leader brought one silver bowl that weighed 1 3/4 pounds.* Both of these gifts were weighed by the official measure.* The bowl and the plate were each filled with fine flour mixed with oil. This was to be used as a grain offering. Each leader also brought a large gold spoon that weighed about 4 ounces.* The spoon was filled with incense.*

Each leader also brought 1 young bull, 1 ram, and 1 male lamb a year old. These animals were for a burnt offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader brought 2 cows, 5 rams, 5 male goats, and 5 male lambs a year old. All of these things were sacrificed for a fellowship offering.

On the first day, the leader of Judah’s family group, Nahshon son of Amminadab brought his gifts.

On the second day, the leader of Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar brought his gifts.

May ... to you Literally, “May the Lord make his face shine on you.”

May ... prayers Literally, “May the Lord lift his face to you.”

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on people or things to show they are chosen for a special work or purpose.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Verses 12–83 In the Hebrew text each leader’s gift is listed separately. But the text is the same for each gift, so it has been merged for easier reading.

3 1/4 pounds Or, “130 shekels.”

1 3/4 pounds Or, “70 shekels.”

official measure Literally, “holy shekel,” the standard of measure used in the tabernacle and the temple.

4 ounces Or, “10 shekels.”

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

On the third day, the leader of the people of Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon brought his gifts.

On the fourth day, the leader of the people of Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur brought his gifts.

On the fifth day, the leader of the people of Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai brought his gifts.

On the sixth day, the leader of the people of Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel* brought his gifts.

On the seventh day, the leader of the people of Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud brought his gifts.

On the eighth day, the leader of the people of Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur brought his gifts.

On the ninth day, the leader of the people of Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideon brought his gifts.

On the tenth day, the leader of the people of Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai brought his gifts.

On the eleventh day, the leader of the people of Asher, Pagiel son of Ocran brought his gifts.

On the twelfth day, the leader of the people of Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan brought his gifts.

⁸⁴So all those things were the gifts from the leaders of the people of Israel. They brought those things during the time that Moses dedicated the altar* by anointing* it. They brought 12 silver plates, 12 silver bowls, and 12 gold spoons. ⁸⁵Each silver plate weighed about 3 1/4 pounds.* And each bowl weighed about 1 3/4 pounds.* The silver plates and the silver bowls together all weighed about 60 pounds,* using the official measure* ⁸⁶The 12 gold spoons filled with incense* weighed 4 ounces* each, using the official measure. The 12 gold spoons all together weighed about 3 pounds.*

Deuel Or, “Reuel.”

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

anoint To pour olive oil on people or things to show they are chosen for a special work or purpose.

3 1/4 pounds Or, “130 shekels.”

1 3/4 pounds Or, “70 shekels.”

60 pounds Or, “2,400 shekels.”

official measure Literally, “holy shekel,” the standard of measure used in the tabernacle and the temple.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

4 ounces Or, “10 shekels.”

3 pounds Or, “120 shekels.”

⁸⁷The total number of animals for the burnt offering was 12 bulls, 12 rams, and 12 one-year-old male lambs. There were also the grain offerings that must be given with those offerings. And there were 12 male goats that were used for a sin offering to the Lord. ⁸⁸The leaders also gave animals to be killed and used as a fellowship offering. The total number of these animals was 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats, and 60 one-year-old male lambs. In this way, they dedicated the altar after Moses anointed* it.

⁸⁹Moses went into the Meeting Tent* to speak to the Lord. At that time, he heard the Lord’s voice speaking to him. The voice was coming from the area between the two Cherub angels on the special cover* on top of the Box of the Agreement.* [This was the way] God spoke to Moses.

The Lampstand

8 The Lord said to Moses, ²“Tell Aaron to put the seven lamps in the place I showed you. Those lamps will light the area in front of the lampstand.”

³Aaron did this. Aaron put the lamps in the right place and faced them so that they lighted the area in front of the lampstand. He obeyed the command that the Lord gave Moses. ⁴This is how the lampstand was made: It was made from hammered gold, all the way from the gold base [at the bottom] to the gold flowers [at the top]. It looked just like the pattern that the Lord had shown to Moses.

Dedicating the Levites

⁵The Lord said to Moses, ⁶“Separate the Levites from the other people of Israel. Make those Levites clean.* ⁷This is what you should

anoint To pour olive oil on people or things to show they are chosen for a special work or purpose.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

cover Also called “mercy seat.” The Hebrew word can mean “lid,” “cover,” or “place where sins are forgiven.”

Box of the Agreement Holy Box or “ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

do to make them pure. Sprinkle the special water from the sin offering* on them. This water will make them pure. Then they must shave their bodies and wash their clothes. This will make their bodies clean.

⁸“The Levite men must take a young bull and the grain offering that must be offered with it. This grain offering will be flour mixed with oil. Then take another young bull for a sin offering. ⁹Bring the Levite people to the area in front of the Meeting Tent.* Then bring all the people of Israel together at that place. ¹⁰Bring the Levite people before the Lord. The people of Israel will put their hands on them.* ¹¹Then Aaron will give the Levite people to the Lord—they will be like an offering to God. In this way, the Levite people will be ready to do their special work for the Lord.

¹²“Tell the Levite people to put their hands on the heads of the bulls. One bull will be a sin offering to the Lord. The other bull will be used as a burnt offering to the Lord. These offerings will make the Levite people pure.* ¹³Tell the Levite people to stand in front of Aaron and his sons. Then give the Levite men to the Lord. They will be like a wave offering. ¹⁴This will make the Levite people holy—it will show that they will be used in a special way for God. They will be different from the other people of Israel. The Levite people will belong to me.

¹⁵“So make the Levite people pure.* And give them to the Lord. They will be like a wave offering. After you do this they can come and do their work at the Meeting Tent.* ¹⁶The Israelite people will give me the Levites. They will belong to me. In the past, I told every Israelite family to give me their firstborn* son. But now I am taking the Levite

people in place of those firstborn sons from the other families in Israel. ¹⁷Every firstborn male in Israel is mine. It doesn’t matter if it is a man or animal, it is still mine. Why? Because I killed all the firstborn children and animals in Egypt. And I chose to take the firstborn sons to belong to me. ¹⁸But now I will take the Levite people in their place. I will take the Levite people in place of all the firstborn sons from the other families in Israel. ¹⁹I chose the Levite people from among all the people of Israel. And I give them as gifts to Aaron and his sons. I want them to do the work at the Meeting Tent. They will serve for all the people of Israel. They will help make the sacrifices that make the people of Israel pure. Then no great sickness or trouble will come to the people of Israel when they come near the holy place.”

²⁰So Moses, Aaron, and all the people of Israel obeyed the Lord. They did with the Levite people everything that the Lord commanded Moses. ²¹The Levites washed themselves and their clothes. Then Aaron gave them to the Lord like wave offerings. Aaron gave the offerings that covered their sins and made them pure. ²²After that, the Levite people came to the Meeting Tent* to do their work. Aaron and his sons watched them. They were responsible for the work of the Levite people. Aaron and his sons did the things that the Lord told Moses.

²³Then the Lord said to Moses, ²⁴“This is a special command for the Levite people: Every Levite man who is 25 years old or older must come and share in the work at the Meeting Tent.* ²⁵But when a man is 50 years old, he must retire from this work. He will not need to work again. ²⁶Those men 50 years old or older can help their brothers with their work at the Meeting Tent. But those men must not do the work themselves. You must do these things when you choose Levite men to do their work.”

Passover

9 The Lord spoke to Moses in the Sinai desert. This was during the first month of the second year after the people of Israel came out of Egypt. The Lord said to Moses, ²“Tell the people of Israel to celebrate Passover at the

water from the sin offering In this water were the ashes from the red cow that had been burnt on the altar as a sin offering.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

put their hands on them This showed the people shared in appointing the Levite people to their special work.

make ... pure Literally, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

chosen time—³they must eat the Passover* meal at twilight* on the 14th day of this month. They must do this at the chosen time, and they must follow all the rules about Passover.”

⁴So Moses told the people of Israel to celebrate Passover.* ⁵The people did this in the Sinai desert at twilight* on the 14th day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just like the Lord commanded Moses.

⁶But some of the people could not celebrate Passover* that day. They were unclean* because they had touched a dead body. So they went to Moses and Aaron that day. ⁷Those people said to Moses, “We touched a person’s dead body and became unclean. The priests stopped us from giving gifts to the Lord at the chosen time. So we can’t [celebrate Passover] with the other people of Israel! [What should we do?]”

⁸Moses said to them, “I will ask the Lord what he says about this.”

⁹Then the Lord said to Moses, ¹⁰“Tell these things to the people of Israel: This rule will be for you and your descendants.* Maybe a person is not able to celebrate Passover* at the right time. Maybe that person is unclean* because he touched a dead body. Or maybe that person was away on a trip. ¹¹That person will still be able to celebrate Passover [at another time]. That person must celebrate Passover at twilight* on the 14th day of the second month. At that time, he must eat the lamb, the bread made without yeast, and the bitter herbs. ¹²That person must not leave any of that food until the next morning. And that person must not break any of the bones of the lamb. That person must follow all the rules about Passover. ¹³But any person who is able must celebrate Passover at the right time. If he is clean* and he is not away on a trip, then he has no excuse. If that person does not celebrate Passover at the right time, then he must be separated from his people. He is guilty

and must be punished! Why? Because he did not give the Lord his gift at the right time.

¹⁴“A foreigner living among you might want to share in the Lord’s Passover* with you. This is allowed, but that person must follow all the rules about Passover. The same rules are for everyone.”

The Cloud and the Fire

¹⁵On the day the Holy Tent,* the Tent of the Agreement, was set up, the Lord’s cloud covered it. At night, the cloud over the Holy Tent looked like fire. ¹⁶The cloud stayed over the Holy Tent all the time. And at night the cloud looked like fire. ¹⁷When the cloud moved from its place over the Holy Tent, the Israelites followed it. When the cloud stopped, that is the place where the people of Israel camped. ¹⁸This was the way the Lord showed the people of Israel when to move and when to stop and set up camp. While the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent, the people continued to camp in that same place. ¹⁹Sometimes the cloud would stay over the Holy Tent for a long time. The Israelites obeyed the Lord and did not move. ²⁰Sometimes the cloud was over the Holy Tent for only a few days. So the people obeyed the Lord’s command—they followed the cloud when it moved. ²¹Sometimes the cloud stayed only during the night—the next morning the cloud moved. So the people gathered their things and followed it. If the cloud moved, during the day or during the night, then the people followed it. ²²If the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent for two days, or a month, or a year, the people continued to obey the Lord. They stayed at that place and did not leave until the cloud moved. Then when the cloud rose from its place and moved, the people also moved. ²³So the people obeyed the Lord’s commands. They camped when the Lord told them to. And they moved when the Lord told them to. The people watched carefully and obeyed the Lord’s commands to Moses.

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every spring to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt.

twilight The time after the sun goes down, but before dark.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

descendants A person’s children and their future families.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

The Silver Trumpets

10 The Lord said to Moses: ²“Make two trumpets. Use silver and hammer it to make the trumpets. These trumpets will be for calling the people together and for telling them when it is time to move the camp. ³If you blow long blasts on both trumpets, then all the people must meet together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* ⁴But if you blow long blasts on only one trumpet, then only the leaders will come to meet with you. (These are the leaders of the twelve family groups of Israel.)

⁵“Short blasts on the trumpets will be the way to tell the people to move the camp. The first time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the family groups camping on the east [side of the Meeting Tent] must begin to move. ⁶The second time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the family groups camping on the south [side of the Meeting Tent] will begin to move. ⁷But if you want to gather the people together for a special meeting, then blow the trumpets in a different way—blow a long steady blast on the trumpets. ⁸Only Aaron’s sons, the priests, should blow the trumpets. This is a law for you that will continue forever, for generations to come.

⁹“If you are fighting an enemy in your own land, then blow loudly on the trumpets before you go to fight them. The Lord your God will hear you, and he will save you from your enemies. ¹⁰Also you should blow these trumpets for your special meetings, new moon days, and all your happy times together. Blow the trumpets when you give your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. This will be a special way for the Lord your God to remember you. I command you to do this; I am the Lord your God.”

The People of Israel Move Their Camp

¹¹On the 20th day of the second month of the second year after the people of Israel left Egypt, the cloud rose from above the Tent of the Agreement.* ¹²So the people of Israel

began their journeys. They left the Sinai desert and traveled until the cloud stopped in the desert of Paran. ¹³This was the first time the people moved their camp. They moved it the way the Lord commanded Moses.

¹⁴The three groups* from Judah’s camp went first. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Judah’s family group. Nahshon son of Amminadab was the commander of that group. ¹⁵Next came Issachar’s family group. Nethanel son of Zuar was the commander of that group. ¹⁶And then came Zebulun’s family group. Eliab son of Helon was the commander of that group.

¹⁷Then the Holy Tent* was taken down. And the men from the Gershon and the Merari families carried the Holy Tent. So the people from these families were next in line.

¹⁸Then came the three groups* from Reuben’s camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Reuben’s family group. Elizur son of Shedeur was the commander of that group. ¹⁹Next came Simeon’s family group. Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was the commander of that group. ²⁰And then came Gad’s family group. Eliasaph son of Deuel* was the commander of that group. ²¹Then came the people from the Kohath family. They carried the holy things [from inside the Holy Place]. These people came at this time so that the other people could set up the Holy Tent* and make it ready [at the new camp] before these people arrived.

²²Next came the three groups from Ephraim’s camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Ephraim’s family group. Elishama son of Ammihud was the commander of that group. ²³Next came Manasseh’s family group. Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was the commander of that group. ²⁴Then came Benjamin’s family group. Abidan son of Gideon was the commander of that group.

²⁵The last three family groups in the line were the rear guard for all the other family

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Tent of the Agreement The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the Box of the Agreement was kept.

group(s) Or, “division(s).” This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

Deuel Or, “Reuel.”

groups. These were the groups from Dan's camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Dan's family group. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was their commander. ²⁶Next came Asher's family group. Pagiel son of Ocran was the commander of that group. ²⁷Then came Naphtali's family group. Ahira son of Enan was the commander of that group. ²⁸That was the way the people of Israel marched when they moved from place to place.

²⁹Hobab was the son of Reuel, the Midianite. (Reuel was Moses' father-in-law.) Moses said to Hobab, "We are traveling to the land that God promised to give to us. Come with us and we will be good to you. The Lord has promised good things to the people of Israel."

³⁰But Hobab answered, "No, I will not go with you. I will go back to my homeland and to my own people."

³¹Then Moses said, "Please don't leave us. You know more about the desert than we do. You can be our guide. ³²If you come with us, then we will share with you all the good things that the Lord gives us."

³³So Hobab agreed, and they began traveling from the mountain of the Lord. The priests took the Box of the Lord's Agreement* and walked in front of the people. They carried the Holy Box for three days, looking for a place to camp. ³⁴The Lord's cloud was over them every day. And when they left their camp every morning, the cloud was there to lead them.

³⁵When the people lifted the Holy Box to move the camp, Moses always said,

"Get up, Lord!
May your enemies be scattered.
May your enemies run away from you."

³⁶And when the Holy Box was put in its place, Moses always said,

"Come back, Lord,
to the millions of people of Israel."

Box of the Lord's Agreement Holy Box or ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

The People Complain Again

11 The people started complaining about their troubles. The Lord heard their complaints. The Lord heard these things and became angry. Fire from the Lord burned among the people. The fire burned some of the areas at the edge of the camp. ²So the people cried to Moses for help. Moses prayed to the Lord and the fire stopped burning. ³So that place was called Taberah.* The people gave the place that name because the Lord caused a fire to burn in their camp.

The 70 Older Leaders

⁴The foreigners that had joined the people of Israel began wanting other things to eat. Soon all the people of Israel began complaining again. The people said, "We want to eat meat! ⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. That fish cost us nothing. We also had good vegetables like cucumbers, melons, chives, onions, and garlic. ⁶But now we have lost our strength. We never eat anything—only this manna!" ⁷(The manna was like small coriander seeds, and it looked like gum from a tree. ⁸The people gathered the manna. Then they used rocks to crush it and cooked it in a pot. Or they ground it into a flour and made thin cakes with it. The cakes tasted like sweet cakes cooked with olive oil. ⁹The manna fell on the ground each night when the ground became wet with dew.)

¹⁰Moses heard the people complaining. People from every family were sitting by their tents and complaining. The Lord became very angry, and this made Moses very upset. ¹¹Moses asked the Lord, "Lord, why did you bring this trouble on me? I am your servant. What did I do wrong? What did I do to upset you? Why did you give me responsibility over all these people? ¹²You know that I am not the father of all these people. You know that I did not give birth to them. But I must take care of them, like a nurse carrying a baby in her arms. Why do you force me to do this? Why do you force me to carry them to the land that you promised to our fathers? ¹³I don't have

Taberah This name means "burning."

enough meat for all these people! And they continue complaining to me. They say, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ ¹⁴I cannot take care of all these people alone. The burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵If you plan to continue giving me their troubles, then kill me now. If you accept me as your servant, then let me die now. Then I will be finished with all my troubles!”

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, “Bring to me 70 of the elders of Israel. These men are the leaders among the people. Bring them to the Meeting Tent.* Let them stand there with you. ¹⁷Then I will come down and speak with you there. The Spirit* is on you now. But I will also give some of that Spirit* to them. Then they will help you take care of the people. In this way, you will not have to be responsible for these people alone.

¹⁸“Tell these things to the people: Make yourselves ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you cried. The Lord heard your words when you said, ‘We need meat to eat! It was better for us in Egypt!’ So now the Lord will give you meat. And you will eat it. ¹⁹You will eat it for more than one, or two, or five, or ten, or even twenty days! ²⁰You will eat that meat for a whole month. You will eat the meat until you are sick of it. This will happen to you because you complained against the Lord. The Lord lives among you and knows what you need. But you cried and complained to him! You said, ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’”

²¹Moses said, “Lord, there are 600,000 men walking around here. And you say, ‘I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month!’ ²²If we were to kill all of the sheep and cattle, then that would still not be enough to feed this many people for a month. And if we caught all the fish in the sea, it would not be enough for them!”

²³But the Lord said to Moses, “Don’t limit the power of the Lord! You will see that I can do the things I say I can do.”

²⁴So Moses went out to speak with the people. Moses told them what the Lord said.

Then Moses gathered 70 of the elders (*leaders*) together. Moses told them to stand around the Tent. ²⁵Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. The Spirit* was on Moses. The Lord put that same Spirit on the 70 elders (*leaders*). After the Spirit came down on them, they began to prophesy.* But that was the only time these men ever did this.

²⁶Two of the elders, Eldad and Medad, did not go out to the Tent. Their names were on the list of elders (*leaders*), but they stayed in camp. But the Spirit also came on them, and they began prophesying* in camp. ²⁷A young man ran and told Moses. The man said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in camp.”

²⁸Joshua son of Nun said to Moses, “Moses, sir, you must stop them!” (Joshua had been Moses’ helper since Joshua was a boy.)

²⁹But Moses answered, “Are you afraid the people will think that I am not the leader now? I wish that all the Lord’s people were able to prophesy. I wish that the Lord would put his Spirit* on all of them!” ³⁰Then Moses and the leaders of Israel went back to the camp.

The Quails Come

³¹Then the Lord made a powerful wind to blow in from the sea. The wind blew quail* into that area. The quail flew all around the camp. There were so many quail that the ground was covered. The quail were about three feet deep on the ground. There were quail in every direction as far as a man can walk in one day. ³²[The people went crazy!] They went out and gathered quail all that day and all that night. And they gathered quail all the next day too! The smallest amount any person gathered was 60 bushels. Then the people spread the quail meat all around the camp [to dry in the sun].

³³People began to eat the meat, but the Lord became very angry. While the meat was still in their mouth, before the people could finish eating it, the Lord caused the people to become very sick. [Many people died and were buried

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Spirit Or, “spirit.”

prophesy Usually this means “to speak for God.” But here it might mean that God’s Spirit took control of these men in some special way.

quail A kind of bird.

in that place.”³⁴So the people named that place Kibroth Hattaavah.* They gave the place that name because that is the place they buried the people who had the strong desire for meat.

³⁵From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

Miriam and Aaron Complain About Moses

12 Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses. They criticized him because he married an Ethiopian* woman. They thought that it was not right for Moses to marry an Ethiopian woman. ²They said to themselves, “The Lord used Moses to speak to the people. But Moses is not the only one. The Lord also spoke through us!”

The Lord heard this. ³(Moses was a very humble man. He did not boast or brag. He was more humble than any other person on earth.) ⁴So, suddenly, the Lord came and spoke to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. The Lord said, “You three, come to the Meeting Tent,* now!”

So Moses, Aaron, and Miriam went to the Tent. ⁵The Lord came down in the tall cloud and stood at the entrance to the Tent. The Lord called out, “Aaron and Miriam!” Aaron and Miriam went to him. ⁶God said, “Listen to me! You will have prophets.* I, the Lord, will show myself to them in visions.* I will speak to them in dreams. ⁷But Moses is not like that. Moses is my faithful servant—I trust him with my whole house (*family*)! ⁸When I speak to him, I talk face to face with him. I don’t use stories with hidden meanings—I show him clearly the things I want him to know. And Moses can look at the very image of the Lord. So why were you brave enough to speak against my servant Moses?”

⁹The Lord was very angry at them. The Lord left them. ¹⁰The cloud rose from the Tent. Aaron turned and looked at Miriam.

Kibroth Hattaavah This name means “Graves of Strong Desire.”

Ethiopian Or, “Cushite,” a person from Ethiopia, in Africa.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

prophet(s) A person called by God to be special servant. God gave them messages to tell the people.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Her skin was white like snow—she had a terrible skin disease!

¹¹Then Aaron said to Moses, “Please, sir, forgive us for the foolish sin that we did.

¹²Don’t let her lose her skin like a baby that is born dead.” (Sometimes a baby will be born like that, with half of its skin eaten away.)

¹³So Moses prayed to the Lord, “God, please heal her from this sickness!”

¹⁴The Lord answered Moses, “If her father spit in her face, then she would be shamed for seven days. So put her outside the camp for seven days. After that time, she will become well. Then she can come back into the camp.”

¹⁵So they took Miriam outside the camp for seven days. And the people did not move from that place until she was brought in again.

¹⁶After that, the people left Hazeroth and traveled to the desert of Paran. The people camped in that desert.

The Spies Go to Canaan

13 The Lord said to Moses, ²“Send some men to explore the land of Canaan. This is the land that I will give to the people of Israel. Send one leader from each of the twelve family groups.”

³So Moses obeyed the Lord’s command. Moses sent out these leaders while the people were camped in the desert of Paran. ⁴These are the names of those leaders:

from Reuben’s family group—Shammua son of Zaccur;

⁵ from Simeon’s family group—Shaphat son of Hori;

⁶ from Judah’s family group—Caleb son of Jephunneh;

⁷ from Issachar’s family group—Igal son of Joseph;

⁸ from Ephraim’s family group—Hoshea* son of Nun;

⁹ from Benjamin’s family group—Palti son of Raphu;

¹⁰ from Zebulun’s family group—Gaddiel son of Sodi;

¹¹ from Joseph’s family group (Manasseh)—Gaddi son of Susi;

Hoshea Or, “Joshua.”

- ¹² from Dan's family group—Ammiel son of Gemalli;
- ¹³ from Asher's family group—Sethur son of Michael;
- ¹⁴ from Naphtali's family group—Nahbi son of Vophsi;
- ¹⁵ from Gad's family group—Geuel son of Maki.

¹⁶Those are the names of the men that Moses sent to look at and study the land. (Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by another name. Moses called him Joshua.)

¹⁷When Moses was sending them out to explore Canaan, he said, "Go through the Negev* and then into the hill country. ¹⁸See what the land looks like. Learn about the people who live there. Are they strong or are they weak? Are they few or are they many? ¹⁹Learn about the land that they live in. Is it good land or bad land? What kind of towns do they live in? Do the towns have walls protecting them? Are the towns strongly defended? ²⁰And learn other things about the land. Is the dirt good for growing things, or is it poor soil? Are there trees on the land? Also, try to bring back some of the fruit from that land." (This was during the time when the first grapes should be ripe.)

²¹So they went to explore the country. They explored the area from the Zin desert to Rehob and Lebo Hamath. ²²They entered the country through the Negev* and went to Hebron. (The town of Hebron was built seven years before the town of Zoan in Egypt.) Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai lived there. These men were descendants* of Anak. ²³Then the men went to Eshcol Valley. There, the men cut off a branch from a grapevine. The branch had a bunch of grapes on it. They put that branch on a pole. And two men carried it between them. They also carried some pomegranates,* and figs. ²⁴That place is called the Eshcol* Valley, because that is the

place where the men of Israel cut off the bunch of grapes.

²⁵The men explored that country for 40 days. Then they went back to the camp. ²⁶The people of Israel were camped near Kadesh, in the desert of Paran. The men went to Moses and Aaron and all the Israelite people. The men told Moses, Aaron, and all the people about the things they saw. And they showed them the fruit from the land. ²⁷The men told Moses, "We went to the land where you sent us. It is a land filled with many good things*! Here is some of the fruit that grows there. ²⁸But the people living there are very powerful. The cities are very large. The cities are strongly defended. We even saw some Anakite* people there. ²⁹The Amalekite people live in the Negev.* The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live near the sea and by the Jordan River."

³⁰Caleb told the people near Moses to be quiet. Then Caleb said, "We should go up and take that land for ourselves. We can easily take that land."

³¹But the men that had gone with him said, "We can't fight those people! They are much stronger than we are." ³²And those men told all the people of Israel that they were not strong enough to defeat the people in that land. They said, "The land we saw is full of strong people. Those people are strong enough to easily defeat any person who goes there. ³³We saw the giant Nephilim* people there! (The descendants* of Anak come from the Nephilim people.) They looked at us like we were little grasshoppers. Yes, we were like grasshoppers to them!"

The People Complain Again

14 That night all the people in the camp began yelling loudly. ²The people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

descendants A person's children and their future families.

pomegranates A red fruit with many small seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with the soft, juicy part of the fruit.

Eshcol This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "a bunch of grapes."

filled with many good things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

Anakite These people were famous for being big, powerful fighters.

Nephilim A famous family of tall and powerful fighting men. See Gen. 6:2-4.

All the people came together and said to Moses and Aaron, “We should have died in Egypt or in the desert. [That would have been better than being killed in this new land.] ³Did the Lord bring us to this new land to be killed in war? The enemy will kill us and take our wives and children! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt.”

⁴Then the people said to each other, “Let’s choose another leader and go back to Egypt.”

⁵Moses and Aaron bowed low to the ground in front of all the people gathered there. ⁶Joshua and Caleb became very upset. (Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were two of the men who explored the land.) ⁷These two men said to all of the people of Israel gathered there, “The land that we saw is very good. ⁸It is a land filled with many good things.* And if the Lord is pleased with us, then he will lead us into that land. And the Lord will give that land to us! ⁹So don’t turn against the Lord! Don’t be afraid of the people in that land. We can defeat them. They have no protection, nothing to keep them safe. But we have the Lord with us. So don’t be afraid!”

¹⁰All of the people began talking about killing Joshua and Caleb with stones. But the Glory of the Lord* appeared over the Meeting Tent* where all the people could see it. ¹¹The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, “How long will these people continue to turn against me? They show that they don’t trust me. They show that they don’t believe in my power. They refuse to believe me, even after I have shown them many powerful signs. I have done many great things among them. ¹²I will kill them all with a terrible sickness. I will destroy them, and I will use you to make another nation. And your nation will be greater and stronger than these people.”

¹³Then Moses said to the Lord, “If you do that, the Egyptians will hear about it! They

know that you used your great power to bring your people out of Egypt. ¹⁴And the people of Egypt told the people in Canaan about it. They already know you are the Lord. They know that you are with your people. They know that the people saw you. Those people know about the special cloud. They know you use the cloud to lead your people during the day. And they know the cloud becomes a fire to lead your people at night. ¹⁵So you must not kill these people now. If you kill them, then all the nations that have heard about your power will say, ¹⁶‘The Lord was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them. So the Lord killed them in the desert.’

¹⁷“So now, Master, show your strength! Show it the way you said you would! ¹⁸You said, ‘The Lord is slow to become angry. The Lord is full of great love. The Lord forgives* people who are guilty and break the law. But the Lord always punishes people who are guilty. The Lord punishes those people, and he also punishes their children, their grandchildren, and even their great-grandchildren for those bad things!’* ¹⁹Now, show your great love to these people. Forgive their sin. Forgive them the same way you have been forgiving them since the time they left Egypt until now.”

²⁰The Lord answered, “Yes, I will forgive the people like you asked. ²¹But, I tell you the truth. As surely as I live and as surely as my power fills the whole earth, I make you this promise! ²²None of the people I led out of Egypt will ever see the land of Canaan. Those people saw my glory and the great signs that I did in Egypt. And they saw the great things that I did in the desert. But they disobeyed me and tested me ten times. ²³I made a promise to their ancestors.* I promised that I would give them that land. But none of these people who turned against me will ever enter that land! ²⁴But my servant Caleb was different. He

filled with many good things Literally, “flowing with milk and honey.”

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. Here this might be a bright, shining light, or it might be the tall cloud.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

forgives Or, “spares.”

But the Lord ... bad things Or, “The Lord credits the guilt of the fathers to their children and grandchildren, to the third and fourth generation.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

follows me completely. So I will bring him into the land that he has already seen. And his people will get that land. ²⁵The Amalekite and the Canaanite people are living in the valley. So tomorrow you must leave this place. Go back to the desert on the road to the Red Sea.”

The Lord Punishes the People

²⁶The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²⁷“How long will these bad people continue to complain against me? I have heard their complaints and their griping. ²⁸So tell them, ‘The Lord says that he will surely do all those things to you that you complained about. This is what will happen to you: ²⁹You will die in this desert. Every person who is 20 years old or older and was counted as one of my people will die. You complained against me, the Lord. ³⁰So none of you will ever enter and live in the land that I promised to give you. Only Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun will enter that land. ³¹You were afraid and complained that your enemies in that new land would take your children away from you. But I tell you that I will bring those children into the land. They will enjoy the things that you refused to accept. ³²As for you people, you will die in this desert.

³³“Your children will be shepherds here in the desert for 40 years. They will suffer because you were not faithful to me. They must suffer until all of you lie dead in the desert. ³⁴For 40 years you will suffer for your sins. (That is one year for each of the 40 days that the men explored the land.) You will know that it is a terrible thing for me to be against you.

³⁵“I am the Lord, and I have spoken. And I promise that I will do these things to all of these evil people. These people have come together against me. So they will all die here in this desert.”

³⁶Those men that Moses sent to explore the new land were the ones that came back and spread complaining among all the Israelite people. Those men said that the people were not strong enough to enter that land. ³⁷Those men were responsible for spreading the trouble among the Israelite people. So the Lord caused a sickness to kill all of those

men. ³⁸But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were among the men that were sent out to explore the land. And the Lord saved those two men. They did not get the sickness that caused the other ten men to die.

The People Try to Go into Canaan

³⁹Moses told all these things to the Israelite people. The people were very, very sad. ⁴⁰Early the next morning the people started to go up to the high hill country. The people said, “We have sinned. We are sorry that we did not trust the Lord. We will go to the place that the Lord promised.”

⁴¹But Moses said, “Why are you not obeying the Lord’s command? You will not be successful! ⁴²Don’t go into that land. The Lord is not with you so your enemies will easily defeat you. ⁴³The Amalekite people and Canaanite people will fight against you there. You have turned away from the Lord. So he will not be with you when you fight them. And you will all be killed in battle.”

⁴⁴But the people did not believe Moses. They went toward the high hill country. But Moses and the Box of the Lord’s Agreement* did not go with the people. ⁴⁵The Amalekite people and the Canaanite people living in the hill country came down and attacked the people of Israel. The Amalekites and the Canaanites easily defeated them and chased them all the way to Hormah.

Rules About Sacrifices

15 The Lord said to Moses, ²“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: I am giving you a land to be your home. When you enter that land, ³you must give special offerings made by fire to the Lord. Their smell will please the Lord. You will use your cows, sheep, and goats for burnt offerings, sacrifices, special promises, special gifts, fellowship offerings, or special holidays.

⁴“At the time a person brings his offering, he must also give a grain offering to the Lord. The

Box of the Lord’s Agreement Holy Box or ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

grain offering will be 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with 1 quart* of olive oil. ⁵Each time you offer a lamb as a burnt offering, you must also prepare a quart of wine as a drink offering.

⁶“If you are giving a ram, then you must also prepare a grain offering. This grain offering should be 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with 1 1/4 quarts* of olive oil. ⁷And you must prepare 1 1/4 quarts of wine as a drink offering. Its smell will please the Lord.

⁸“You might prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, a sacrifice, a fellowship offering, or to keep a special promise to the Lord. ⁹At that time, you must also bring a grain offering with the bull. That grain offering should be 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with 2 quarts* of olive oil. ¹⁰Also bring 2 quarts of wine as a drink offering. This will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. ¹¹Each bull or ram, or lamb or young goat that you give to the Lord must be prepared in this way. ¹²Do this for every one of these animals that you give.

¹³“That is the way every citizen of Israel must give the offerings made by fire to please the Lord. ¹⁴Foreigners will live among you. If those people give offerings made by fire to please the Lord, then they must offer them the same way you do. ¹⁵The same rules will be for everyone—the people of Israel and the foreigners living in your country. This law will continue forever. You and the people living among you will be the same before the Lord. ¹⁶This means that you must follow the same laws and the same rules. Those laws and rules are for you people of Israel and for the other people who are living among you.”

¹⁷The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁸“Tell the people of Israel these things: I am taking you to another land. ¹⁹When you eat the food that grows in that land, you must give part of that food as an offering to the Lord. ²⁰You will gather grain and grind it into flour to make

dough for bread. You must give the first of that dough as a gift to the Lord. It will be like the grain offering that comes from the threshing floor.* ²¹This rule will continue forever, you must give the first of that dough as a gift to the Lord.

²²“Now what should you do if you make a mistake and forget to obey one of the commands that the Lord gave Moses? ²³The Lord gave these commands to you through Moses. These commands started the day that the Lord gave them to you. And the commands continue forever. ²⁴So, what do you do if you make a mistake and forget to obey all of these commands. If all the people of Israel made that mistake, then together the people must offer one young bull as a burnt offering to the Lord. Its smell will please the Lord. Also remember to give the grain offering and the drink offering that must be offered with the bull. You must also give a male goat as a sin offering.

²⁵“So the priest must do the things that will make the people pure.* He must do this for all of the people of Israel. The people did not know they were sinning. But when they learned about it, they brought a gift to the Lord. They brought the offering made by fire and the sin offering. So the people will be forgiven. ²⁶All of the people of Israel and all the other people living among them will be forgiven. They will be forgiven because they did not know they were doing wrong.

²⁷“But if only one person makes a mistake and sins, then he must bring a female goat that is one year old. That goat will be the sin offering. ²⁸The priest must do the things that will make the person pure.* That person made a mistake and sinned before the Lord. But the priest made that person pure, and he will be forgiven. ²⁹That law is for every person who makes a mistake and sins. The same law is for the people born in the family of Israel and for the foreigners living among you.

8 cups Literally, “1/10 of an ephah.”

1 quart Literally, “1/4 hin.”

16 cups Literally, “2/10 of an ephah.”

1 1/4 quarts Literally, “1/3 hin.”

24 cups Literally, “3/10 of an ephah.”

2 quarts Literally, “1/2 hin.”

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

make ... pure Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

³⁰“But if a person sins and knows that he is doing wrong, then that person is against the Lord. That person must be separated from his people. It is the same for a person born into the family of Israel or for a foreigner living among you. ³¹That person did not think the Lord’s word was important. He broke the Lord’s commands. That person must surely be separated from your group. That person is guilty and must be punished!*

A Man Works on the Day of Rest

³²At this time, the people of Israel were still in the desert. It happened that a man found some wood to burn. So the man was gathering the wood, but it was the Sabbath* day. Some other people saw him doing this. ³³The people who saw him gathering the wood brought him to Moses and Aaron. And all the people gathered around. ³⁴They kept the man there because they did not know how they should punish him.

³⁵Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must die. All the people must throw stones at him outside the camp.” ³⁶So the people took him outside the camp and killed him with stones. They did this the way that the Lord commanded Moses.

God Helps His People Remember the Rules

³⁷The Lord said to Moses, ³⁸“Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them these things: I will give you something to remember my commands. Tie several pieces of thread together and tie them in the corner of your clothes. Put a piece of blue thread in each one of these tassels. You must wear these things now and forever. ³⁹You will be able to look at these tassels and remember all the commands that the Lord has given you. Then you will obey the commands. You will not do wrong by forgetting about the commands and doing the things that your own bodies and eyes want. ⁴⁰You will remember to obey all my commands. Then you will be God’s special people. ⁴¹I am the Lord your God. I am the

One who brought you out of Egypt. I did this to be your God. I am the Lord your God.”

Some Leaders Turn Against Moses

16 Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On turned against Moses. (Korah was the son of Izhar. Izhar was the son of Kohath, and Kohath was the son of Levi. Dathan and Abiram were brothers, the sons of Eliab. And On was the son of Peleth. Dathan, Abiram, and On were descendants* of Reuben.) ²Those four men gathered 250 other men from Israel together and came against Moses. They were leaders that had been chosen by the people. All the people knew them. ³They came as a group to speak against Moses and Aaron. These men said to Moses and Aaron, “You have gone too far—you are wrong! All the people of Israel are holy—the Lord still lives among them! You are making yourself more important than the rest of the Lord’s people.”

⁴When Moses heard these things, he bowed his face to the ground [to show he was not being proud]. ⁵Then Moses said to Korah and all his followers, “Tomorrow morning the Lord will show which person truly belongs to him. The Lord will show which person is truly holy. And the Lord will bring that person near to him. The Lord will choose that man, and the Lord will bring that man near to him. ⁶So Korah, you and all your followers should do this: ⁷Tomorrow put fire and incense* in some special pans. Then bring those pans before the Lord. The Lord will choose the person who is truly holy. You Levites have gone too far—you are wrong!”

⁸Moses also said to Korah, “You Levites, listen to me. ⁹You should be happy that the God of Israel chose you and made you special. You are different from the rest of the Israelite people. The Lord brought you near to him to do the special work in the Lord’s Holy Tent* to help the people of Israel worship him. Isn’t that enough? ¹⁰The Lord brought you Levite

descendants A person’s children and their future families.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

That ... punished Literally, “His guilt is on him.”

Sabbath Saturday, a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

people near to him [to help the priests]. But now you are trying to become priests also. ¹¹You and your followers have joined together and turned against the Lord! Did Aaron do anything wrong? No! So why are you complaining against Aaron?"

¹²Then Moses called Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But the two men said, "We will not come! ¹³You have brought us out of a land filled with many good things.* You brought us to the desert to kill us. And now you want to show that you have even more power over us. ¹⁴Why should we follow you? You did not bring us into the new land filled with many good things.* You did not give us the land God promised. You did not give us the fields or the vineyards. Will you make these men your slaves? No! We will not come."

¹⁵So Moses became very angry. He said to the Lord, "I never did anything wrong to these people. I never took anything from them—even a donkey! Lord, don't accept their gifts!"

¹⁶Then Moses said to Korah, "You and all your followers will stand before the Lord tomorrow. There will be Aaron and you and your followers. ¹⁷Each of you must bring a pan, put incense* on it, and present it to the Lord. There will be 250 pans [for the leaders] and one pan for you and one pan for Aaron."

¹⁸So each man got a pan and put burning incense* on it. Then they stood at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* Moses and Aaron also stood there. ¹⁹Korah also gathered all the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then the Glory of the Lord* appeared to every person there.

²⁰The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²¹"Move away from these men! I want to destroy them now!"

²²But Moses and Aaron bowed to the ground and cried out, "God, you know what

people are thinking.* Please don't be angry at all these people. Only one man really sinned."

²³Then the Lord said to Moses, ²⁴"Tell the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

²⁵Moses stood and went to Dathan and Abiram. All the elders (*leaders*) of Israel followed him. ²⁶Moses warned the people, "Move away from the tents of these evil men. Don't touch anything that belongs to them! If you do, then you will be destroyed because of their sins."

²⁷So the men moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram went to their tents. They stood outside of their tents with their wives, children, and little babies.

²⁸Then Moses said, "I will show you proof that the Lord sent me to do all the things I told you. I will show you that all those things were not my own idea. ²⁹These men here will die. But if they die in a normal way—the way men always die—then that will show that the Lord did not really send me. ³⁰But if the Lord causes these men to die in a different way—something new—then you will know that these men have truly sinned against the Lord. [This is the proof:] the earth will open and swallow these men. They will go down to their grave still alive. And everything that belongs to these men will go down with them."

³¹When Moses finished saying these things, the ground under the men opened. ³²It was like the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them. All of Korah's men, their families, and everything they owned went down into the earth. ³³Those people went down into their grave alive. Everything they owned went with them. Then the earth closed over them. They were finished—gone from the camp!

³⁴The people of Israel heard the cries of the men being destroyed. So they all ran in different directions and said, "The earth will kill us, too!"

³⁵Then a fire came from the Lord and destroyed the 250 men who were offering the incense.*

filled with many good things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright, shining light.

God, ... thinking Literally, "God, God of the spirits of all people."

³⁶The Lord said to Moses, ^{37–38}“Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to get all the incense* pans from the fire. Tell him to scatter the coals and ashes. Those men sinned against me, and their sin cost them their lives. But the incense pans are still holy.* The pans are holy because they gave them to the Lord. Hammer the pans into flat sheets. Use the metal sheets to cover the altar.* This will be a warning to all of the people of Israel.”

³⁹So Eleazar the priest gathered together all the bronze* pans that the men had brought. Those men were all burned up, but the pans were still there. Then Eleazar told some men to hammer the pans into flat metal. Then he put the metal sheets on the altar.* ⁴⁰He did this the way the Lord commanded him through Moses. This was a sign to help the people of Israel remember that only a person from the family of Aaron should burn incense* before the Lord. Any other person who burns incense before the Lord will die like Korah and his followers.

Aaron Saves the People

⁴¹The next day all the people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron. They said, “You killed the Lord’s people.”

⁴²Moses and Aaron were standing at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* The people gathered together at that place to complain against Moses and Aaron. But when they looked toward the Meeting Tent, the cloud covered it and the Glory of the Lord* appeared there. ⁴³Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Meeting Tent.

⁴⁴The Lord said to Moses, ⁴⁵“Move away from those people so that I can destroy them now.” So Moses and Aaron bowed with their faces to the ground.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean “copper,” “bronze,” or “brass.”

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright, shining light.

⁴⁶Then Moses said to Aaron, “Get your bronze* pan and some fire from the altar.* Then put incense* on it. Hurry to the group of people and do the things that will make the people pure.* The Lord is angry at them. The trouble has already started.”

^{47–48}So Aaron did what Moses said. Aaron got the incense* and the fire, and he ran to the middle of the people. But the sickness had already started among the people. So Aaron stood between the dead people and the people who were still alive. Aaron did the things to make the people pure.* And the sickness stopped there. ⁴⁹But 14,700 people died from that sickness—and that is not counting the people who died because of Korah. ⁵⁰So, the terrible sickness was stopped and Aaron went back to Moses at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.*

God Proves Aaron Is the High Priest

17 The Lord said to Moses, ²“Speak to the people of Israel. Get twelve wooden walking sticks from them. Get one from the leader of each of the twelve family groups. Write the name of each man on his walking stick. ³On the stick from Levi, write Aaron’s name. There must be one stick for the head of each of the twelve family groups. ⁴Put these walking sticks in the Meeting Tent* in front of the Box of the Agreement.* This is the place where I meet with you. ⁵I will choose one man to be the true priest. You will know which man I choose because his walking stick will begin to grow new leaves. In this way, I will stop the people from always complaining against you and me.”

⁶So Moses spoke to the people of Israel. Each of the leaders gave him a walking stick. There were twelve walking sticks. There was one stick from each leader of each family group. One of the walking sticks belonged to

make ... pure Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

Box of the Agreement Holy Box or “ark of the Covenant,” the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

Aaron. ⁷Moses put the walking sticks before the Lord in the Tent of the Agreement.*

⁸The next day Moses entered the Tent. He saw that Aaron's walking stick, the stick from the family of Levi, was the one that had grown new leaves. That walking stick had even grown branches and made almonds. ⁹So Moses brought out all the sticks from the Lord's place. Moses showed the walking sticks to the people of Israel. They all looked at the sticks, and each man took his own stick back.

¹⁰Then the Lord said to Moses, "Put Aaron's walking stick [back into the Tent] in front of the Agreement.* This will be a warning for these people who are always turning against me. This will stop their complaining against me, so that I won't destroy them." ¹¹So Moses did what the Lord commanded him.

¹²The people of Israel said to Moses, "We know that we will die! We are lost! We will all be destroyed!" ¹³Any person who even comes near the Lord's holy place will die. Is it true that we will all die?"

The Work of the Priests and Levites

18 The Lord said to Aaron, "You, your sons, and all the people in your father's family are now responsible for any wrong things that are done against the holy place. You and your sons are responsible for wrong things that are done against the priests. ²Bring the other Levite men from your family group to join you. They will help you and your sons do your work in the Tent of the Agreement.* ³Those people from the family of Levi are under your control. They will do all the work that needs to be done in the Tent. But they must not go near the things in the Holy Place* or the altar.* If they do, then they will die—and you will die also. ⁴They will join you and work with you. They will be responsible for

caring for the Meeting Tent.* All the work that must be done in the Tent will be done by them. No one else may come near the place where you are.

⁵"You are responsible for caring for the holy place and the altar.* I don't want to become angry with the people of Israel again. ⁶I myself chose the Levite people from among all the people of Israel. They are like a gift to you. I gave them to you to serve the Lord and work in the Meeting Tent.* ⁷But, Aaron, only you and your sons may serve as priests. You are the only ones that can go near the altar. You are the only ones that can go inside the curtain [into the Most Holy Place]. I am giving you a gift—your service as a priest. Anyone else that comes near [my] holy place must be killed."

⁸Then the Lord said to Aaron, "I myself gave you responsibility over all the special gifts people give to me. All the holy* gifts that the people of Israel give to me, I give to you. You and your sons can share in these gifts. They will always belong to you. ⁹The people will bring sacrifices, grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings. Those offerings are most holy. Your share in the most holy offerings will come from the parts that are not burned. All those things will be for you and your sons. ¹⁰Eat those things only in the very holy place. Every male in your family may eat them, but you must remember that those offerings are holy.

¹¹"And all the gifts that the Israelite people give as wave offerings will also be yours. I give this to you and your sons and your daughters. This is your share. Every person in your family that is clean* will be able to eat it.

¹²"And I give you all the best olive oil and all the best new wine and grain. These are the things that the people of Israel give to me, the Lord. These are the first things that they gather in their harvest. ¹³When the people gather a harvest, they bring all the first things to the Lord. So these things I will give to you.

Tent of the Agreement The Holy Tent where the Box of the Agreement was kept.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

holy Chosen or set aside for God.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

And every person in your family that is clean* may eat it.

¹⁴“Everything in Israel that is given to the Lord* is yours.

¹⁵“A woman’s first baby and an animal’s first baby must be given to the Lord. That baby will belong to you. If the firstborn animal is unclean,* then it must be bought back. If the baby is a child, that child must be bought back. [That child will again belong to its family.] ¹⁶They must make the payment when the baby is one month old. The cost will be 2 ounces* of silver. You must use the official measure* to weigh this silver. A shekel by the official measure is 20 gerahs.*

¹⁷“But you must not make a payment for the firstborn cow, sheep, or goat. Those animals are holy.* Sprinkle their blood on the altar* and burn their fat. This is an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord. ¹⁸But the meat from those animals will be yours. And also the breast from a wave offering will be yours. And the right thigh from other offerings will be yours. ¹⁹Anything that the people offer as holy gifts, I, the Lord, give to you. This is your share. I give it to you and your sons and your daughters. This law will continue forever. It is an agreement with the Lord that can’t be broken.* I make this promise to you and to your descendants.*”

²⁰The Lord also said to Aaron, “You will not get any of the land. And you will not own anything that the other people own. I, the Lord, will be yours. The Israelite people will get the land that I promised. But I am my gift to you.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

given to the Lord Things that were given to God and could not be bought back. See Lev. 27:28-29.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

2 ounces Literally, “5 shekels.”

official measure The standard measure used in the tabernacle or temple.

gerah(s) Or, “2/5 of an ounce.”

holy Chosen or set aside for God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

It is an agreement ... broken Literally, “It is an eternal, salt agreement before the Lord.”

descendants A person’s children and their future families.

²¹“The people of Israel will give one tenth of everything they have. So I give that one tenth to all the descendants* of Levi. This is their payment for the work that they do while they serve at the Meeting Tent.* ²²But the other people of Israel must never go near that Meeting Tent. If they do, then they must be put to death! ²³The Levite people who are working in the Meeting Tent are responsible for any sins against it. This is a law that will continue forever. The Levite people will not get any of the land that I promised to the other people of Israel. ²⁴But the people of Israel will give one tenth of everything they have to me. And I will give that one tenth to the Levite people. That is why I said these words about the Levite people: Those people will not get the land that I promised the people of Israel.”

²⁵The Lord said to Moses, ²⁶“Speak to the Levite people and tell them: The people of Israel will give one tenth of everything they own to the Lord. That one tenth will belong to the Levite people. But you must give one tenth of that to the Lord as your offering. ²⁷You will be given grain after it is harvested and juice from the winepress. Then that will also be your offering to the Lord. ²⁸In this way, you will also give an offering to the Lord in the same way that the other people of Israel do. You will get the one tenth that the people of Israel give to the Lord. And then you will give one tenth of that to Aaron the priest. ²⁹When the people of Israel give you one tenth of everything that they own, then you should choose the best and the holiest part of those things. That is the one tenth that you must give to the Lord.

³⁰“Moses, tell the Levite people: The people of Israel will give you one tenth of their harvest and of their wine. Then you will give the best part of that to the Lord. ³¹You and your families can eat all that is left. This is your payment for the work you do in the Meeting Tent.* ³²And if you always give the best part of it to the Lord, then you will never be guilty. You will always remember that

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

those gifts are the holy* offerings from the people of Israel. And you will not die.”

The Ashes of the Red Cow

19 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, ²“These are the laws from the teachings that the Lord gave to the people of Israel. Get a red cow that has nothing wrong with it. That cow must not have any bruises. And that cow must never have worn a yoke.* ³Give that cow to Eleazar the priest. Eleazar will take the cow outside the camp and kill it there. ⁴Then Eleazar the priest must put some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle some of the blood towards the Holy Tent. He must do this seven times. ⁵Then the whole cow must be burned in front of him. The skin, the meat, the blood, and the intestines must all be burned. ⁶Then the priest must take a cedar stick, a hyssop* branch, and some red string. The priest must throw those things into the fire where the cow is burning. ⁷Then the priest must wash himself and his clothes with water. Then he must come back into the camp. The priest will be unclean* until evening. ⁸The person who burns that cow must wash himself and his clothes in water. He will be unclean until evening.

⁹“Then a person who is clean* will collect the ashes from the cow. He will put those ashes in a clean place outside the camp. These ashes will be used when people must keep a special ceremony to become clean. These ashes will also be used to remove a person’s sins.

¹⁰“The person who collected the cow’s ashes must wash his clothes. He will be unclean* until evening.

“This rule will continue forever. This rule is for the citizens of Israel. And this rule is for the foreigners living with you. ¹¹If someone touches a dead person’s body, then he will be unclean* for seven days. ¹²He must wash himself with the special water on the third day

and again on the seventh day. If he does not do this, then he will remain unclean. ¹³If a person touches a dead body, then that person is unclean. If that person stays unclean and then goes to the Holy Tent,* then the Holy Tent becomes unclean. So that person must be separated from the people of Israel. If the special water is not thrown on an unclean person, then that person will stay unclean.

¹⁴“This is the rule about people who die in their tents. If a person dies in his tent, then everyone in the tent will be unclean.* They will be unclean for seven days. ¹⁵And every jar or pot without a lid becomes unclean. ¹⁶If anyone touches a dead body, then that person will be unclean for seven days. This is true if the dead body is out in the field or if the person was killed in war. Also, if anyone touches the bones from a dead person then that person is unclean.

¹⁷“So you must use the ashes from the burnt cow to make that person clean* again. Pour fresh water* over the ashes into a jar. ¹⁸A clean person must take a hyssop* branch and dip it into the water. Then he must sprinkle it over the tent, the dishes, and the people who were in the tent. You must do this to anyone that touches a dead person’s body. You must do this to anyone that touches the body of someone killed in war and to anyone that touches a grave or the bones from a dead person.

¹⁹“Then a clean* person must sprinkle this water on the unclean* person on the third day and again on the seventh day. On the seventh day, that person becomes clean. He must wash his clothes in water. He will become clean in the evening.

²⁰“If a person becomes unclean* and does not become clean,* that person must be separated from the people of Israel. That person was not sprinkled with the special water. He did not become clean. So he might make the Holy Tent* unclean. ²¹This rule will be for you forever. If a person is sprinkled with the special water, then he must also wash

holy Chosen or set aside for God.

yoke A piece of wood that joins two work animals together for pulling a wagon or plow.

hyssop A plant with fine branches and leaves used for sprinkling water or blood in cleansing ceremonies.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle,” the tent where God came to live among his people.

fresh water Literally, “living water.” This means fresh, flowing water.

his clothes. Any person who touches the special water will be unclean until evening. ²²If an unclean person touches someone else, then that other person also becomes unclean. That person will be unclean until evening.”

Miriam Dies

20 The people of Israel arrived at the Zin desert on the first month. The people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died, and she was buried there.

Moses Makes a Mistake

²There was not enough water for the people at that place. So the people met together to complain to Moses and Aaron. ³The people argued with Moses. They said, “Maybe we should have died in front of the Lord like our brothers did. ⁴Why did you bring the Lord’s people into this desert? Do you want us and our animals to die here? ⁵Why did you bring us from Egypt? Why did you bring us to this bad place? There is no grain. There are no figs, grapes, or pomegranates.* And there is no water to drink.”

⁶So Moses and Aaron left the crowd of people and went to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* They bowed down to the ground, and the Glory of the Lord* appeared to them.

⁷The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ⁸“Get the [special] walking stick. Take your brother Aaron and the crowd of people and go to that rock. Speak to the rock in front of the people. Then water will flow from the rock. And you can give that water to the people and to their animals.”

⁹The walking stick was [in the Holy Tent,] in front of the Lord. Moses took the walking stick like the Lord said. ¹⁰Moses and Aaron told the people to meet together in front of the rock. Then Moses said, “You people are always complaining. Now listen to me. I will cause water to flow from this rock.” ¹¹Moses

lifted his arm and hit the rock twice. Water began flowing from the rock. And the people and their animals drank that water.

¹²But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “All the people of Israel were gathered around. But you did not show me honor. You did not show the people of Israel that the power to make the water came from me. You did not show the people that you trusted in me. I will give those people the land that I promised them. But you will not lead them into that land!”

¹³This place was called the waters of Meribah.* This was the place where the Israelite people argued with the Lord. And this was the place that the Lord showed them that he was holy.

Edom Won’t Let Israel Pass

¹⁴While Moses was at Kadesh, he sent some men with a message to the king of Edom. The message said: “Your brothers, the people of Israel, say to you: You know about all the troubles that we have had. ¹⁵Many, many years ago our ancestors* went down into Egypt. And we lived there for many years. The people of Egypt were cruel to us. ¹⁶But we asked the Lord for help. The Lord heard us and sent an angel to help us. The Lord has brought us out of Egypt.

“Now we are here at Kadesh, where your land begins. ¹⁷Please let us travel through your country. We will not travel through any fields or vineyards. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along the King’s Road. We will not leave that road to the right or to the left. We will stay on the road until we have traveled through your country.”

¹⁸But [the king of] Edom answered, “You may not travel through our land. If you try to travel through our land, then we will come and fight you with swords.”

¹⁹The people of Israel answered, “We will travel along the main road. If our animals drink any of your water, we will pay you for it.

pomegranates A red fruit with many small seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with the soft, juicy part of the fruit.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright, shining light.

Meribah This name means “argument,” or “rebellion.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

We only want to walk through your country. We don't want to take it for ourselves."

²⁰But again Edom answered, "We won't allow you to come through our country."

Then [the king of] Edom gathered a large and powerful army and went out to fight against the people of Israel. ²¹[The king of] Edom refused to let the people of Israel travel through his country. And the people of Israel turned around and went another way.

Aaron Dies

²²All the people of Israel traveled from Kadesh to Mount Hor. ²³Mount Hor was near the border of Edom. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²⁴"It is time for Aaron to die and go to be with his ancestors.* Aaron will not enter the land that I promised to the people of Israel. Moses, I say this to you because both you and Aaron did not fully obey the command I gave you at the waters of Meribah.

²⁵"Now, bring Aaron and his son Eleazar up to Mount Hor. ²⁶Take Aaron's special clothes from him and put those clothes on his son Eleazar. Aaron will die there on the mountain. And he will go to be with his ancestors.*"

²⁷Moses obeyed the Lord's command. Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar went up on Mount Hor. All the people of Israel watched them go. ²⁸Moses removed Aaron's special clothes and put those clothes on Aaron's son Eleazar. Then Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Moses and Eleazar came back down the mountain. ²⁹All the people of Israel learned that Aaron was dead. So every person in Israel mourned* for 30 days.

War with the Canaanites

21 The Canaanite king of Arad lived in the Negev.* He heard that the people of Israel were coming on the road to Atharim. So the king went out and attacked the people of Israel. Arad captured some of the people and

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

mourn To show sadness for a person who died. In ancient Israel people often cried very loudly, wore special clothes, and put ashes on their head to show their sadness.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

made them prisoners. ²Then the people of Israel made a special promise to the Lord: "Lord, please help us defeat these people. If you do this, then we will give their cities to you. We will totally destroy them."

³The Lord listened to the people of Israel. And the Lord helped the people of Israel to defeat the Canaanite people. The people of Israel completely destroyed the Canaanite people and their cities. So that place was named Hormah.*

The Bronze Snake

⁴The people of Israel left Mount Hor and traveled on the road that goes to the Red Sea. They did this to go around the country of Edom. But the people became impatient. ⁵They began complaining against God and Moses. The people said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? We will die here in the desert! There is no bread! There is no water! And we hate this terrible food!"

⁶So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people. The snakes bit the people, and many of the people of Israel died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We know that we sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord. Ask him to take away these snakes." So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸The Lord said to Moses, "Make a bronze* snake and put it on a pole. If any person is bitten by a snake, then that person should look at the bronze snake on the pole. Then that person will not die." ⁹So Moses obeyed the Lord. He made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then when a snake bit any person, that person looked at the bronze snake on the pole and lived.

The Trip to Moab

¹⁰The people of Israel left that place and camped at Oboth. ¹¹Then they left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim in the desert east of Moab. ¹²They left that place and camped in Zered Valley. ¹³Then they moved and camped

Hormah This name means "completely destroyed," or "a gift given totally to God." See Lev. 27:28-29.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

across from the Arnon River in the desert. This river started at the Ammonite border. The valley was the border between Moab and the Amorites. ¹⁴That is why these words are written in the Book of the Wars of the Lord:

“... and Waheb in Suphah, and the Valleys of the Arnon, ¹⁵and the hills by the valleys that lead to the town of Ar. These places are at the border of Moab.”

¹⁶The people of Israel left that place and traveled to Beer.* This was the place with the well. This was the place where the Lord said to Moses, “Bring the people together here and I will give them water.” ¹⁷Then the people of Israel sang this song:

“Well, flow with water!

Sing about it!

¹⁸ Great men dug this well.

Important leaders dug this well.

They dug this well with their staffs
and walking sticks.

It is a gift in the desert.*”

So the people called that well “Mattanah.”

¹⁹The people traveled from Mattanah to Nahaliel. Then they traveled from Nahaliel to Bamoth. ²⁰The people traveled from Bamoth to the Valley of Moab. In this place the top of the Pisgah Mountain looks over the desert.

Sihon and Og

²¹The people of Israel sent some men to Sihon, the king of the Amorite people. The men said to the king, ²²“Allow us to travel through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along King’s Road. We will stay on that road until we have traveled through your country.”

²³But King Sihon would not allow the people of Israel to travel through his country. The king gathered together his army and marched out to the desert. He was marching to fight against the people of Israel. At Jahaz, the king’s army fought against the people of Israel.

²⁴But the people of Israel killed the king. Then they took his land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River. The people of Israel took the land as far as the Ammonite border. They stopped at that border because it was strongly defended by the Ammonite people. ²⁵Israel took all the Amorite cities and began living in them. They even defeated the city of Heshbon and all the small towns around it. ²⁶Heshbon was the city where Sihon, the Amorite king, lived. In the past, Sihon had fought with the king of Moab. Sihon had taken the land as far as the Arnon River. ²⁷That is why the singers sing this song:

Go in and build Heshbon again!

Make Sihon’s city strong.

²⁸ A fire began in Heshbon.

That fire began in Sihon’s city.

The fire destroyed Ar, Moab.

It burned the hills above Arnon River.

²⁹ It is bad for you, Moab.

You lost Chemosh’s* people.

His sons ran away.

His daughters were taken prisoners

by Sihon, king of the Amorites.

³⁰ But we defeated those Amorites.

We destroyed their towns

from Heshbon to Dibon,

from Nashim to Nophah, near Medeba.

³¹So the people of Israel made their camp in the land of the Amorite people.

³²Moses sent some men to look at the town of Jazer. After Moses did this, the people of Israel captured that town. They captured the small towns that were around it. The people of Israel forced the Amorite people who were living there to leave.

³³Then the people of Israel traveled on the road toward Bashan. Og, the king of Bashan, got his army and marched out to meet the people of Israel. He fought against them at Edrei.

³⁴But the Lord said to Moses, “Don’t be afraid of that king. I will allow you to defeat him. You will take his whole army and all his land. Do the same to him as you did to Sihon, the Amorite king that lived in Heshbon.”

Beer This Hebrew name means “Well.”

gift in the desert In Hebrew this is the name “Mattanah.”

Chemosh Chemosh was the god of the Moabite people.

³⁵So the people of Israel defeated Og and his army. They killed him and his sons and all his army. Then the people of Israel took all his land.

Balaam and the King of Moab

22 Then the people of Israel traveled to the Jordan Valley in Moab. They camped near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

^{2–3}Balak son of Zippor saw all the things that the people of Israel had done to the Amorite people. [The king of] Moab was very afraid, because there were so many people of Israel. Moab was really scared of them.

⁴The [king of] Moab said to the leaders of Midian, “This large group of people will destroy everything around us, the way a cow eats all the grass in a field.”

Balak son of Zippor was the king of Moab at this time. ⁵He sent some men to call Balaam son of Beor. Balaam was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River. This was where Balaam’s people lived.* This was Balak’s message: “A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover all the land. They have camped next to me. ⁶Come and help me. These people are too powerful for me. I know that you have great power. If you bless a person, then good things happen to him. And if you speak against a person, then bad things happen to him. So come and speak against these people. Maybe then I will be able to defeat them. Then I can force them to leave my country.”

⁷The leaders of Moab and Midian left. They went to talk to Balaam. They carried with them money to pay him for his service.* Then they told him what Balak had said.

⁸Balaam said to them, “Stay here for the night. I will talk to the Lord and tell you the answer he gives me.” So the leaders of Moab stayed there with Balaam that night.

⁹God came to Balaam and asked, “Who are these men with you?”

This ... lived Or, “This was the land of the Ammonites.”

for his service Or, “for the things he needed to make curses.” In ancient times, when people asked bad things to happen to other people, they often wrote the curses on special bowls and used them in ceremonies. They did this to try to force those bad things to happen. See Deut. 18:10.

¹⁰Balaam said to God, “The king of Moab, Balak son of Zippor, sent them to give me a message. ¹¹This is the message: A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover the land. So, come and speak against these people. Then maybe I will be able to fight them and force them to leave my land.”

¹²But God said to Balaam, “Don’t go with them. You must not speak against those people. They are my people.”

¹³The next morning Balaam got up and said to leaders from Balak, “Go back to your own country. The Lord will not let me go with you.”

¹⁴So the leaders of Moab went back to Balak and told him this. They said, “Balaam refused to come with us.”

¹⁵So Balak sent other leaders to Balaam. This time he sent many more than the first time. And these leaders were much more important than the first ones he sent. ¹⁶They went to Balaam and said: “Balak son of Zippor says this to you: Please don’t let anything stop you from coming. ¹⁷I will pay you very much if you will do what I ask.* Come and speak against these people for me.”

¹⁸Balaam gave Balak’s officials his answer. He said, “I must obey the Lord my God. I ¹⁹But you can stay here tonight like the other men did. And during the night I will learn what the Lord wants to tell me.”

²⁰That night, God came to Balaam. God said, “These men have come again to ask you to go with them. So you can go with them. But do only the things that I tell you to do.”

Balaam and His Donkey

²¹The next morning, Balaam got up and put a saddle on his donkey. Then he went with the leaders of Moab. ²²Balaam was riding on his donkey. Two of his servants were with him. While Balaam was traveling, God became angry. So the Lord’s angel stood in the road in front of Balaam. The angel was going to stop* Balaam.

²³Balaam’s donkey saw the Lord’s angel standing in the road. The angel was holding a

I will pay ... I ask Or, “I will honor you very much.”

stop Or, “oppose” or “accuse.”

sword in his hand. So the donkey turned from the road and went into the field. Balaam could not see the angel. So he was very angry with the donkey. He hit the donkey and forced it to go back on the road.

²⁴Later, the Lord's angel stood at a place where the road became narrow. This was between two vineyards. There were walls on both sides of the road. ²⁵Again the donkey saw the Lord's angel. So the donkey walked very close to one wall. This crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. So Balaam hit his donkey again.

²⁶Later the Lord's angel stood at another place. This was another place where the road became narrow. There was no place where the donkey could go around him. The donkey could not turn to the left or to the right. ²⁷The donkey saw the Lord's angel. So the donkey lay down with Balaam sitting on top of it. Balaam was very angry at the donkey. So he hit it with his walking stick.

²⁸Then the Lord caused the donkey to speak. The donkey said to Balaam, "Why are you angry at me? What have I done to you? You have hit me three times!"

²⁹Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made me look foolish. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now!"

³⁰But the donkey said to Balaam, "Look, I am your own donkey! You have ridden me for many, many years. And you know that I have never done this to you before!"

"That is true," Balaam said.

³¹Then the Lord allowed Balaam to see the angel. The Lord's angel was standing in the road, holding a sword in his hand. Balaam bowed low to the ground.

³²Then the Lord's angel asked Balaam, "Why did you hit your donkey three times? I am the one that came to stop* you. But just in time,* ³³your donkey saw me and turned away from me. That happened three times. If the donkey had not turned away, I probably

would have killed you already. And I would have let your donkey live."

³⁴Then Balaam said to the Lord's angel, "I have sinned. I did not know that you were standing in the road. If I am doing wrong, then I will go back home."

³⁵Then the Lord's angel said to Balaam, "No! You can go with these men. But be careful. Speak only the words that I will tell you to say." So Balaam went with the leaders that Balak had sent.

³⁶Balak heard that Balaam was coming. So Balak went out to meet him at the Moabite town* near the Arnon River. This was at the northern border of his country. ³⁷When Balak saw Balaam, he said to him, "I asked you before to come. I told you it was very, very important. Why didn't you come to me? I might not be able to pay you now."

³⁸Balaam answered, "But I am here now. I came, but I might not be able to do the thing you asked. I can only say the words that the Lord God tells me to say."

³⁹Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth. ⁴⁰Balak killed some cattle and some sheep as his sacrifice. He gave some of the meat to Balaam and some to the leaders that were with him.

⁴¹The next morning Balak took Balaam to the town of Bamoth Baal. From there, they could see part of the Israelite camp.

Balaam's First Message

23 Balaam said, "Build seven altars* here. And prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me." ²Balak did the thing that Balaam asked. Then Balak and Balaam killed a ram and a bull on each of the altars.

³Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here near this altar.* I will go to another place. Then the Lord will come to me, and he will tell me what I must say." Then Balaam went away to a higher place.

⁴God came to Balaam at that place. And Balaam said, "I have prepared seven altars.* And I have killed a bull and a ram as a sacrifice on each altar."

stop Or, "oppose" or "accuse."

But just in time Literally, "Just as the path in front of me dropped away, ..." or, "Because you are not doing right, ..." The Hebrew is very hard to understand.

Moabite town Or possibly, "Ar Moab."

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

⁵Then the Lord told Balaam what he should say. Then the Lord said, “Go back to Balak and say these things that I have given you to say.”

⁶So Balaam went back to Balak. Balak was still standing near the altar.* And all the leaders of Moab were standing there with them. ⁷Then Balaam said these things:

Balak king of Moab brought me here
from the eastern mountains of Aram.

Balak said to me,

“Come, speak against Jacob* for me.

Come, speak against the people
of Israel.”

⁸ But God is not against those people,
So I can’t speak against them either!
The Lord has not asked for bad things to
happen to those people.
So I can’t do that either.

⁹ I see those people from the mountain.
I see them from the high hills.
Those people live alone.

They are not part of another nation.

¹⁰ Who can count Jacob’s people?
They are as many as the grains of dust.
No one can count even a fourth of
the people of Israel.
Let me die like a good man.
Let my life end as happy as theirs!

¹¹Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? I brought you here to speak against my enemies. But you have only blessed them!”

¹²But Balaam answered, “I must say the things that the Lord tells me to say.”

¹³Then Balak said to him, “So come with me to another place. At that place you can see more of those people. You can’t see all of them—you can only see part of them. Maybe from that place you can speak against them for me.” ¹⁴So Balak led Balaam to Watchmen Hills.* This was on top of Mount Pisgah. At that place, Balak built seven altars.* And then Balak killed a bull and a ram on each altar as a sacrifice.

¹⁵So Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here by this altar.* I will go meet with God over at that place.”

¹⁶So the Lord came to Balaam and told Balaam what to say. Then the Lord told Balaam to go back to Balak and say those things. ¹⁷So Balaam went to Balak. Balak was still standing near the altar.* The leaders of Moab were there with him. Balak saw Balaam coming and said, “What did the Lord say?”

Balaam's Second Message

¹⁸Then Balaam said these things:

“Stand up, Balak, and listen to me.
Hear me, Balak son of Zippor.

¹⁹ God is not a man;
he will not lie.
God is not a human being;
his decisions will not change.
If the Lord says he will do something,
then he will do it.
If the Lord makes a promise,
then he will do the thing he promised.
²⁰ The Lord told me to bless those people.
The Lord blessed them,
so I cannot change that.
²¹ God saw no wrong in Jacob’s people.
God saw no sin in the people of Israel.
The Lord is their God,
and he is with them.

The Great King is with them!

²² God brought those people out of Egypt.
They are as strong as a wild ox.

²³ There is no power that can defeat
the people of Jacob.*

There is no magic that can stop
the people of Israel.

People will say this about Jacob
and about the people of Israel:

‘Look at the great things God did!’

²⁴ The people are as strong as a lion.
They fight like a lion.

And that lion will not rest,
until he has eaten his enemy.

And that lion will not rest,
until he drinks the blood

of the people who are against him.”

²⁵Then Balak said to Balaam, “You didn’t ask for good things to happen to those people.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Jacob This is another name for Israel.

Watchmen Hills Or, “the fields of Zophim.”

But you didn't ask for bad things to happen to them either!"

²⁶Balaam answered, "I told you before that I can only say the things that the Lord tells me to say."

²⁷Then Balak said to Balaam, "So come with me to another place. Maybe God will be pleased and will allow you to curse them from that place." ²⁸So Balak led Balaam to the top of Mount Peor. This mountain looks out over the desert.

²⁹Balaam said, "Build seven altars* here. Then prepare seven bulls and seven rams for the altars." ³⁰Balak did the thing that Balaam asked. Balak offered the bulls and rams on the altars.

Balaam's Third Message

24 Balaam saw that the Lord wanted to bless Israel. So Balaam did not try to change that by using any kind of magic. But Balaam turned and looked toward the desert. ²Balaam looked out across the desert and saw all the people of Israel. They were camped with the family groups in their different areas. Then the Spirit of God came to Balaam. ³And Balaam said these words:

"This message is from Balaam son of Beor.
I am speaking about things I see clearly.

⁴ I heard this message from God.
I saw what God All-Powerful* showed me.
I humbly tell what I clearly see.

⁵ "People of Jacob, your tents are beautiful!
People of Israel, your homes are beautiful!

⁶ You are like gardens
planted by the streams.
You are like gardens
growing by the rivers.
You are like sweet-smelling bushes
planted by the Lord.
You are like beautiful trees
growing by the water.

⁷ You will always have enough water,
enough water for your seeds to grow.

Your king will be greater than king Agag.
Your kingdom will be very great.

⁸ "God brought those people out of Egypt.
They are as strong as a wild ox.
They will defeat all their enemies.
They will break their bones
and shatter their arrows.

⁹ "Israel is like a lion,
curled up and lying down.
Yes, they are like a young lion,
and no one wants to wake him!
Any person who blesses you
will be blessed.
And any person who speaks against you
will have great troubles."

¹⁰Balak became very angry at Balaam. Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to come and speak against my enemies. But you have blessed them. You have blessed them three times. ¹¹Now leave and go home! I told you that I would give you a very good payment. But the Lord has caused you to lose your reward."

¹²Balaam said to Balak, "You sent men to me. Those men asked me to come. But I told them, ¹³'Balak can give me his most beautiful house filled with silver and gold. But I can still say only the things that the Lord commands me to say. I cannot do anything myself, good or bad. I must say what the Lord commands.' Surely you remember that I told your men these things. ¹⁴Now I am going back to my own people. But I will give you this warning. I will tell you what these people of Israel will do to you and your people in the future."

Balaam's Last Message

¹⁵Then Balaam said these things:

"This message is from
Balaam son of Beor.
I am speaking about things I see clearly.

¹⁶ I heard this message from God.
I learned what God Most-High taught me.
I saw what God All-Powerful*
showed me.

I humbly tell what I clearly see.

¹⁷ "I see the Lord coming, but not now.
I see him coming, but not soon.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

God All-Powerful Literally, "El Shaddai."

Israel at Peor

- A star will come from
the family of Jacob.*
A new ruler will come from
the people of Israel.
That ruler will crush the heads
of the Moabite people.
That ruler will crush the heads
of all the sons of Sheth.*
18 Israel will grow strong!
He will get the land of Edom.
He will get the land of Seir,* his enemy.
19 “A new ruler will come from
the family of Jacob.*
That ruler will destroy the people
left alive in that city.”
20 Then Balaam saw the Amalekite people
and said these words:
“Amalek is the strongest of all nations.
But even Amalek will be destroyed!”
21 Then Balaam saw the Kenite people and
he said these words:
“You believe that your country is safe,
like a bird’s nest* high on a mountain.
22 But you Kenite* people will be destroyed,
just like the Lord destroyed Cain.*
Assyria will make you prisoners.”
23 Then Balaam said these words:
“No person can live when God does this.
24 Ships will come from Cyprus.*
They will defeat Assyria and Eber.*
But those ships will also be destroyed.”
25 Then Balaam got up and went back home.
And Balak went his own way.

Jacob This is another name for Israel.

sons of Sheth Or, “Seth.” Seth was Adam’s third son. This might be like the phrases “son of Man (Adam)” and “son of Enosh” and mean simply “all those people.”

Seir Another name for Edom.

nest, Kenite, Cain A play on words. The names “Cain” and “Kenite” are like the Hebrew word meaning “nest.”

Cyprus Literally, “Kittim.” This might be Cyprus, Crete, or other places west of Israel in the Mediterranean Sea.

Eber This might mean the people living west of the Euphrates River, or it might mean the “Hebrews,” the descendants of Eber. See Gen. 10:21.

25 The people of Israel were camped near Acacia. At that time, the men began doing sexual sins* with Moabite women. 2–3 The Moabite women invited the men to come and join in their sacrifices to their false gods. So the Israelites joined in worshipping those false gods—they ate the sacrifices and worshiped those gods. At that place, the people of Israel began worshipping the false god, Baal of Peor. And the Lord became very angry at them.

4 The Lord said to Moses, “Get all the leaders of these people. Then kill them so that all the people can see.* Lay their bodies before the Lord. Then the Lord will not show his anger against all the people of Israel.”

5 So Moses said to Israel’s judges, “Each of you must find the men in your family group that have led people to worship the false god, Baal of Peor. Then you must kill those men.”

6 At the time, Moses and all the elders (*leaders*) of Israel were gathered together at the entrance to the Meeting Tent.* An Israelite man brought a Midianite woman home to his brothers.* He did this where Moses and all the leaders could see. Moses and the leaders were very sad. 7 Phinehas was the son of Eleazar and the grandson of Aaron the priest. Phinehas saw this man bring the woman into camp. So Phinehas left the meeting and got his spear. 8 He followed the Israelite man into the tent. Then he used the spear to kill the Israelite man and the Midianite woman in her tent.* He pushed the spear through both of their bodies. At that time, there was a great sickness among the Israelite people. But when Phinehas killed these two people, the sickness stopped. 9 A total of 24,000 people died from that sickness.

sexual sins Sexual sin was often part of the worship of false gods. So this can mean that the men were unfaithful to their wives and also that they were unfaithful to God by worshipping false gods.

so that all the people can see Literally, “before the sun.”

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

brothers Or, “family.”

her tent This was probably a special tent that showed this woman was a prostitute serving the false god Baal of Peor.

¹⁰The Lord said to Moses, ¹¹“I have strong feelings for my people—I want them to belong only to me! Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saved the people of Israel from my anger. He did this by showing those feelings for my people. So I will not kill the people like I wanted to. ¹²Tell Phinehas that I am making a peace agreement with him. ¹³This is the agreement: He and all of his family that live after him will always be priests. Why? Because he had strong feelings for his God. And he did the things that made the people of Israel pure.*”

¹⁴The Israelite man who was killed with the Midianite woman was named Zimri son of Salu. He was the leader of a family in Simeon’s family group. ¹⁵And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi.* She was the daughter of Zur. Zur was the head of a family and leader of a Midianite family group.

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁷“The Midianite people are your enemies. You must kill them. ¹⁸They have already made you their enemies. They tricked you at Peor. And they tricked you with the woman named Cozbi.* She was the daughter of a Midianite leader. But she was killed when the sickness came to the Israelite people. That sickness was caused because the people were tricked into worshipping the false god Baal of Peor.”

The People Are Counted

26 After the great sickness, the Lord spoke to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. ²He said, “Count the people of Israel. Count all the men who are 20 years old or older and list them by families. These are the men who are able to serve in the army of Israel.”

³At this time the people were camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River, across from Jericho. So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke to the people. They said, ⁴“You must count every man who is 20 years old or older. The Lord gave Moses this command.” Here is the list of the people of Israel that came out of Egypt:

⁵These are the people from Reuben’s family. (Reuben was the firstborn* son of Israel (*Jacob*).) The families were:

Hanoch—the Hanochite family.

Pallu—the Palluite family.

⁶ Hezron—the Hezronite family.

Carmi—the Carmite family.

⁷Those were the families in Reuben’s family group. There was a total of 43,730 men.

⁸Pallu’s son was Eliab. ⁹Eliab had three sons—Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. Remember, Dathan and Abiram were the two leaders that turned against Moses and Aaron. They followed Korah when Korah turned against the Lord. ¹⁰That was the time when the earth opened and swallowed Korah and all of his followers. And 250 men died! That was a warning to all the people of Israel. ¹¹But the other people who were from the family of Korah did not die.

¹²These are the families from Simeon’s family group:

Nemuel—the Nemuelite family.

Jamin—the Jaminite family.

Jakin—the Jakinite family.

¹³ Zerah—the Zerahite family.

Shaul—the Shaulite family.

¹⁴Those were the families in Simeon’s family group. There was a total of 22,200 men.

¹⁵These are the families in Gad’s family group:

Zephon—the Zephonite family.

Haggi—the Haggite family.

Shuni—the Shunite family.

¹⁶ Ozni—the Oznite family.

Eri—the Erite family.

¹⁷ Arodi—the Arodite family.

Areli—the Arelite family.

¹⁸Those were the families in Gad’s family group. There was a total of 40,500 men.

^{19–20}These are the families in Judah’s family group:

made ... pure Or, “atoned.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

Cozbi This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “my lie.”

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

Shelah—the Shelanite family.

Perez—the Perezite family.

Zerah—the Zerahite family.

(Two of Judah's sons, Er and Onan, died in Canaan.)

21 These are the families from Perez:

Hezron—the Hezronite family.

Hamul—the Hamulite family.

22 Those were the families from Judah's family group. The total number of men was 76,500.

23 The families in Issachar's family group were:

Tola—the Tolaite family.

Puah—the Puite family.

24 Jashub—the Jashubite family.

Shimron—the Shimronite family.

25 Those were the families from Issachar's family group. The total number of men was 64,300.

26 The families in Zebulun's family group were:

Sered—the Seredite family.

Elon—the Elonite family.

Jahleel—the Jahleelite family.

27 Those were the families from Zebulun's family group. The total number of men was 60,500.

28 Joseph's two sons were Manasseh and Ephraim. Each son became a family group with its own families. 29 Manasseh's families were:

Makir—the Makirite family. (Makir was the father of Gilead.)

Gilead—the Gileadite family.

30 The families from Gilead were:

Iezer—the Iezerite family.

Helek—the Helekite family.

31 Asriel—the Asrielite family.

Shechem—the Shechemite family.

32 Shemida—the Shemidaite family.

Hepher—the Hepherite family.

33 Zelophehad was the son of Hepher. But he had no sons—only daughters. His

daughters names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

34 Those are all the families in Manasseh's family group. The total number of men was 52,700.

35 The families in Ephraim's family group were:

Shuthelah—the Shuthelahite family.

Beker—the Bekerite family.

Tahan—the Tahanite family.

36 Eran was from Shuthelah's family. Eran's family was the Eranite family.

37 Those were the families in Ephraim's family group. The total number of men was 32,500. Those are all the people who came from Joseph's family groups.

38 The families in Benjamin's family group were:

Bela—the Belaite family.

Ashbel—the Ashbelite family.

Ahiram—the Ahiramite family.

39 Shupham—the Shuphamite family.

Hupham—the Huphamite family.

40 The families from Bela were:

Ard—the Ardite family.

Naaman—the Naamanite family.

41 Those were all the families in Benjamin's family group. The total number of men was 45,600.

42 The families in Dan's family group were:

Shuham—the Shuhamite family group.

That was the family group from Dan's family group. 43 There were many families in the Shuhamite family group. The total number of men was 64,400.

44 The families in Asher's family group were:

Imnah—the Imnite family.

Ishvi—the Ishvite family.

Beriah—the Beriite family.

45 The families from Beriah were:

Heber—the Heberite family.

Malkiel—the Malkielite family.

⁴⁶(Asher also had a daughter named Serah.)
⁴⁷Those were the families in Asher's family group. The total number of men was 53,400.

⁴⁸The families from Naphtali's family group were:

Jahzeel—the Jahzeelite family.

Guni—the Gunitite family.

⁴⁹ Jezer—the Jezerite family.

Shillem—the Shillemite family.

⁵⁰Those were the families from Naphtali's family group. The total number of men was 45,400.

⁵¹So the total number of men of Israel was 601,730.

⁵²The Lord said to Moses, ⁵³"The land will be divided and given to these people. Each family group will get enough land for all of the people who were counted. ⁵⁴A large family will get much land, and a small family will get less land. The land that they get will be equal to the number of people who were counted. ⁵⁵But you must use lots* to decide which family gets which part of the land. Each family group will get its share of the land. And that land will be given the name of that family group. ⁵⁶Land will be given to each family—large and small. And you will throw lots to make the decisions."

⁵⁷They also counted Levi's family group. These are the families from Levi's family group:

Gershon—the Gershonite family.

Kohath—the Kohathite family.

Merari—the Merarite family.

⁵⁸These are also families from Levi's family group:

The Libnite family.

The Hebronite family.

The Mahlite family.

The Mushite family.

The Korahite family.

Amram was from the Kohath family group.
⁵⁹Amram's wife was named Jochebed. She was also from Levi's family group. She was

born in Egypt. Amram and Jochebed has two sons, Aaron and Moses. They also had a daughter, Miriam.

⁶⁰Aaron was the father of Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ⁶¹But Nadab and Abihu died. They died because they made an offering to the Lord with fire that was not allowed.

⁶²The total number of men from Levi's family group was 23,000. But these men were not counted with the other people of Israel. They did not get a share of the land that the Lord gave to the other people.

⁶³Moses and Eleazar the priest counted all these people. They counted the people of Israel while they were in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho. ⁶⁴Many years before, in the Sinai desert, Moses and Aaron the priest counted the people of Israel. But all those people were dead. None of those people were still alive. ⁶⁵Why? Because the Lord told those people of Israel that they would all die in the desert. The only two men who were left alive were Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Zelophehad's Daughters

27 Zelophehad was the son of Hepher. Hepher was the son of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Makir. Makir was the son of Manasseh. Manasseh was the son of Joseph. Zelophehad had five daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ²These five women went to the Meeting Tent* and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and all the people of Israel.

The five daughters said, ³"Our father died while we were traveling through the desert. Our father died a natural death. He was not one of the men that joined Korah's group. (Korah was the man who turned against the Lord.) But our father had no sons. ⁴This means that our father's name will not continue. It is not fair that our father's name will not continue. His name will end because he had no sons. So we ask you to give us some of the land that our father's brothers will get."

lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

⁵So Moses asked the Lord what he should do. ⁶The Lord said to him, ⁷“The daughters of Zelophehad are right. They should share the land with their father’s brothers. So give them the land that you would have given to their father.

⁸“So make this law to the people of Israel, ‘If a man has no son, and he dies, then everything he owns should be given to his daughter. ⁹If he has no daughter, then everything he owns should be given to his brothers. ¹⁰If he has no brothers, then everything he owns should be given to his father’s brothers. ¹¹If his father had no brothers, then everything he owns should be given to the closest relative in his family. This should be a law among the people of Israel. The Lord gives this command to Moses.”

Joshua Is the New Leader

¹²Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go up on one of mountains in the desert east of the Jordan River. There you will see the land that I am giving to the people of Israel. ¹³After you have seen this land, then you will die like your brother Aaron. ¹⁴Remember when the people became angry at the water in the desert of Zin. Both you and Aaron refused to obey my command. You did not honor me and show the people that I am holy.” (This was at the water of Meribah* near Kadesh in the desert of Zin.)

¹⁵Moses said to the Lord, ¹⁶“The Lord is the God who knows what people are thinking. Lord, I pray that you will choose a leader for these people.* ¹⁷I pray that the Lord will choose a leader that will lead them out of this land and bring them into the new land. Then the Lord’s people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

¹⁸So the Lord said to Moses, “Joshua son of Nun will be the new leader. He is very wise.* Make him the new leader. ¹⁹Tell him to stand

before Eleazar the priest and all the people. Then make him the new leader.

²⁰“Show the people that you are making him leader,* then all the people will obey him. ²¹If Joshua needs to make a decision, then he will go to Eleazar the priest. Eleazar will use the Urim* to learn the Lord’s answer. Then Joshua and all the people of Israel will do the things God says. If he says, ‘go to war,’ then they will go to war. And if he says, ‘go home,’ then they will go home.”

²²Moses obeyed the Lord. Moses told Joshua to stand before Eleazar the priest, and all the people of Israel. ²³Then Moses put his hands on him to show that he was the new leader. He did this the way the Lord had told him.

Daily Offerings

28 Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ²“Give this command to the people of Israel. Tell them to be sure to give the grain offerings and sacrifices to me at the right time. Those are the offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord. ³These are the offerings made by fire that they must give to the Lord. Every day they must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ⁴Offer one of the lambs in the morning, and offer the other lamb at twilight.* ⁵Also give a grain offering of 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with 1 quart* of olive oil.” ⁶(They started giving the daily offerings at Mount Sinai. They were offerings made by fire. Their smell pleased the Lord.) ⁷The people must also give the drink offerings that go with the offerings made by fire. They must give 1 quart* of wine with every lamb. Pour that drink offering [on the altar] in the Holy Place. This is a gift to the Lord. ⁸Offer the second lamb at twilight.* Offer it just like the morning offering. Also give the drink offering that goes

Show ... leader Literally, “Give him some of your glory.”

Urim Used together with the Thummim to learn God’s answer to questions. They were probably like lots—stones, sticks, or bones that were thrown like dice to make decisions.

twilight The time after the sun goes down, but before dark.

8 cups Literally, “1/10 of an ephah.”

1 quart Literally, “1/4 hin.”

twilight The time after the sun goes down, but before dark.

water of Meribah Or, “water of rebellion”.

The Lord ... these people Literally, “May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all people, appoint a man for this community.”

Joshua ... is very wise Literally, “Take Joshua son of Nun. He is a man with a spirit in him.” This might mean that Joshua was very wise, or it might mean that God’s Spirit was with him.

with it. This will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord.”

Sabbath Offerings

⁹“On the Sabbath,* you must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. You must also give a grain offering of 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil, and a drink offering. ¹⁰This is a special offering for the day of rest. This offering is in addition to the regular daily offering and drink offering.”

Monthly Meetings

¹¹“On the first day of each month you will offer a special burnt offering to the Lord. This offering will be 2 male bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹²With each bull, you must give a grain offering of 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil. And with the ram, you must give a grain offering of 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil. ¹³Also give a grain offering of 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with each lamb. This will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. ¹⁴The drink offering will be 2 quarts* of wine with each bull, 1 1/4 quarts* of wine with the ram, and 1 quart* of wine with each lamb. That is the burnt offering that must be offered each and every month of the year. ¹⁵In addition to the regular daily burnt offering and drink offering, you must also give 1 male goat to the Lord. That goat will be a sin offering.

Passover

¹⁶“The Lord’s Passover will be on the 14th day of the first month. ¹⁷The Festival of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of that month. This holiday lasts for seven days. The only bread you can eat is bread made without yeast. ¹⁸You must have a special

meeting on the first day of this holiday. You will not do any work on that day. ¹⁹You will give burnt offerings to the Lord. The burnt offerings will be 2 bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ^{20–21}You must also give a grain offering of 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with each bull, and 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with the ram, and 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil for each lamb. ²²You must also give 1 male goat. That goat will be a sin offering to make you pure.* ²³You must give those offerings in addition to the morning burnt offerings that you give every day.

²⁴“In the same way, each day for seven days, you must give the offerings made by fire to the Lord and the drink offerings that go with them. The smell of these offerings will please the Lord. The offerings will be food [for the people]. You must give these offerings in addition to the burnt offerings that you give every day.

²⁵“Then, on the seventh day [of this holiday], you will have another special meeting. You will not do any work on that day.

Festival of Weeks (Pentecost)

²⁶“At the Festival of Firstfruits* (the Festival of Weeks) use the new crops to give a grain offering to the Lord. At that time, you must also call a special meeting. You must not do any work on that day. ²⁷You must offer a burnt offering. It will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. You must offer 2 bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁸You must also give 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with each bull and 16 cups* with each ram, ²⁹and 8 cups* with each lamb. ³⁰You must also sacrifice 1 male goat to make you pure.* ³¹You must give those offerings in addition to the daily burnt offerings and the grain offering you give with them. Be sure

Sabbath Saturday, a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

16 cups Literally, “2/10 of an ephah.”

24 cups Literally, “3/10 of an ephah.”

8 cups Literally, “1/10 of an ephah.”

2 quarts Literally, “1/2 hin.”

1 1/4 quarts Literally, “1/3 hin.”

1 quart Literally, “1/4 hin.”

make ... pure Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

Firstfruits Grain, such as wheat, and other crops that began to ripen around May and June. The first crops harvested were given to God.

there is nothing wrong with the animals or the drink offerings that you give with them.

Festival of Trumpets

29 “There will be a special meeting on the first day of the seventh month. You will not do any work on that day. That is the day for blowing the trumpet.* ²You will offer burnt offerings. Their smell will please the Lord. You will offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³You will also offer 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with the bull, 16 cups* with the ram, ⁴and 8 cups* with each of the 7 lambs. ⁵Also, offer 1 male goat for a sin offering to make you pure.* ⁶Those offerings are in addition to the New Moon* sacrifice and its grain offering. And they are in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings. Those must be done according to the rules. They must be offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord.

The Day of Atonement

⁷“There will be a special meeting on the tenth day of the seventh month. During that day you must not eat any food.* And you must not do any work. ⁸You will offer burnt offerings. Their smell will please the Lord. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ⁹You must also offer 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with the bull, 16 cups* with the ram, ¹⁰and 8 cups* with each of the 7 lambs. ¹¹You will also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the sin offering for the Day of

Atonement.* This will also be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

Festival of Shelters

¹²“There will be a special meeting on the 15th day of the seventh month. [This will be the Festival of Shelters.*] You must not do any work on that day. You must celebrate a special holiday for the Lord for seven days. ¹³You will offer burnt offerings. They will be offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord. You will offer 13 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹⁴You must also offer 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with each of the 13 bulls, 16 cups* with each of the 2 rams, ¹⁵and 8 cups* with each of the 14 lambs. ¹⁶You must also offer 1 male goat. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

¹⁷“On the second day [of this holiday], you must offer 12 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹⁸You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ¹⁹You must also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²⁰“On the third day [of this holiday], you must offer 11 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²¹You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ²²You must also give 1 goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²³“On the fourth day [of this holiday], you must offer 10 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing

blowing the trumpet Or, “shouting.” This might mean that this is a day for shouting and being happy.

24 cups Literally, “3/10 of an ephah.”

16 cups Literally, “2/10 of an ephah.”

8 cups Literally, “1/10 of an ephah.”

make ... pure Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

New Moon The first day of the Jewish month. This was a special day of worship.

you ... food Literally, “You will humble your souls.”

Day of Atonement Also called “Yom Kippur”—a very important holiday for the Jews. On this day, the high priest went into the Most Holy Place and did the ceremony that atoned (*covered or erased*) the sins of the people.

Festival of Shelters Also called “Succoth” or “Feast of Tabernacles.” At this time in ancient Israel, Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem and camped out in tents and temporary shelters to help them remember their time in the Sinai desert.

wrong with them. ²⁴You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ²⁵You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²⁶“On the fifth day [of this holiday], you must offer 9 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁷You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ²⁸You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²⁹“On the sixth day [of this holiday], you must offer 8 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³⁰You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs. ³¹You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

³²“On the seventh day [of this holiday], you must offer 7 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³³You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ³⁴You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

³⁵“The eighth day [of this holiday] is a very special meeting for you. You must not do any work on that day. ³⁶You must offer a burnt offering. It will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³⁷You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bull, ram, and lambs. ³⁸You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

³⁹“At the special holidays you must bring your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, and fellowship offerings. You must give those offerings to the Lord. Those

offerings are in addition to any special gift you might want to give to the Lord and any offering that is part of any special promise you make.”

⁴⁰Moses told the people of Israel about all of the things that the Lord had commanded him.

Special Promises

30 Moses spoke with all the leaders of the Israelite family groups. Moses told them about these commands from the Lord:

²“If a person wants to make a special promise to God, or if that person promises to give something special to God, then let him do that thing. But that person must do exactly what he promises!

³“A young woman might still be living in her father’s house. And that young woman might make a special promise to give something to the Lord. ⁴If her father hears about the promise and agrees, then the young woman must do the thing she promised. ⁵But if her father hears about the promise and does not agree, then she is free from her promise. She does not have to do the thing she promised. Her father stopped her, so the Lord will forgive her.

⁶“A woman might make a special promise to give something to the Lord and then get married. ⁷If the husband hears about the promise and doesn’t object, then the woman must do the thing she promised. ⁸But if the husband hears about the promise and refuses to let her keep her promise, then the wife does not have to do the thing she promised. Her husband broke the promise—he did not let her do the thing she said. So the Lord will forgive her.

⁹“A widow* or a divorced woman might make a special promise. If she does, then she must do exactly what she promised. ¹⁰A married woman might make a promise to give something to the Lord. ¹¹If her husband hears about the promise and lets her keep her promise, then she must do exactly what she promised. She must give everything she promised. ¹²But if her husband hears about the promise and refuses to let her keep the promise, then she

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to take care of them.

does not have to do what she promised. It does not matter what she promised, her husband can break the promise. If her husband breaks the promise, then the Lord will forgive her. ¹³A married woman might promise to give something to the Lord, or she might promise to do without something,* or she might make some other special promise to God. The husband can stop any of those promises, and the husband can let her keep any of those promises. ¹⁴How does the husband let his wife keep her promises? If he hears about the promises and does not stop them, then the woman must do exactly what she promised. ¹⁵But if the husband hears about the promises and stops them, then he is responsible for breaking her promises.*”

¹⁶Those are the commands that the Lord gave to Moses. Those are the commands about a man and his wife, and about a father and his daughter that is still young and living at home in her father’s house.

Israel Fights Back Against the Midianites

31 The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ²“I will help the people of Israel get even with the Midianites. After that, Moses, you will die.*”

³So Moses spoke to the people. He said, “Choose some of your men to be soldiers. The Lord will use those men to get even with the Midianites. ⁴Choose 1,000 men from each of the family groups of Israel. ⁵There will be a total of 12,000 soldiers from the family groups of Israel.”

⁶Moses sent those 12,000 men to war. He sent Phineas, the son of Eleazar the priest, with them. Phineas took the holy things and the horns and trumpets with him. ⁷The people of Israel fought the Midianites like the Lord had commanded. They killed all of the Midianite men. ⁸Among the people that they killed were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with a sword.

do without something Literally, “humble her soul.” Usually this means to make the body suffer in some way, such as by not eating food.

he ... her promises Literally, “he carries her guilt.”

you will die Literally, “you will be gathered to your people.”

⁹The people of Israel took the Midianite women and children as prisoners. They also took all their sheep, cows, and other things. ¹⁰Then they burned all their towns and villages. ¹¹They took all the people and animals ¹²and brought them to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the other people of Israel. They brought all of the things they took in war to the camp of Israel. The people of Israel were camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was on the east side of the Jordan River across from Jericho. ¹³Then Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the people went out of the camp to meet with the soldiers.

¹⁴Moses was very angry against the leaders of the army. He was angry against the commanders of 1,000 men and against the commanders of 100 men that came back from the war. ¹⁵Moses said to them, “Why did you let the women live? ¹⁶These are the women who caused the men of Israel to turn away from the Lord during the Balaam incident—that time at Peor. The disease will again come to the Lord’s people. ¹⁷Now, kill all the Midianite boys. And kill all the Midianite women who had lived with a man. Kill all the Midianite women who have had sexual relations with any man. ¹⁸You can let all the young girls live—but only if they never had sexual relations with any man. ¹⁹And then, all of you men who killed other people must stay outside the camp for seven days. You must stay outside the camp even if you just touched a dead body. On the third day, you and your prisoners must make yourselves pure. You must do the same thing again on the seventh day. ²⁰You must wash all of your clothes. You must wash anything made with leather, wool, or wood. You must become pure.”

²¹Then Eleazar the priest spoke to the soldiers. He said, “Those are the rules that the Lord gave to Moses. Those rules are about soldiers coming back from war. ^{22–23}But the rules for things that can be put in the fire are different. You must put gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, or lead into the fire. And then wash those things with water and they will be pure. If things cannot be put in fire, then you must still wash them with water. ²⁴On the seventh day you must wash all of your clothes. Then

you will become pure. After that you can come into camp.”

²⁵Then the Lord said to Moses, ²⁶“You, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders should count all of the prisoners, animals, and all of the things that the soldiers took in war. ²⁷Then divide those things between the soldiers that went to war and the rest of the people of Israel. ²⁸Take part of those things from the soldiers that went to war. That part will belong to the Lord. The Lord’s share is one thing for every 500 things. This includes people, cows, donkeys, and sheep. ²⁹Take those things from the soldiers’ half of the things they took in war. Then give those things to Eleazar the priest. That part will belong to the Lord. ³⁰And then, from the people’s half, take one thing for every 50 things. This includes people, cows, donkeys, sheep, or any other animal. Give that share to the Levites. Why? Because the Levites take care of the Lord’s Holy Tent.”

³¹So Moses and Eleazar did what the Lord commanded Moses. ³²The soldiers had taken 675,000 sheep, ³³72,000 cows, ³⁴61,000 donkeys, ³⁵and 32,000 women. (Those are only the women who had not had sexual relations with any man.) ³⁶The soldiers that went to war got 337,500 sheep. ³⁷They gave 675 sheep to the Lord. ³⁸The soldiers got 36,000 cows. They gave 72 cows to the Lord. ³⁹The soldiers got 30,500 donkeys. They gave 61 donkeys to the Lord. ⁴⁰The soldiers got 16,000 women. They gave 32 women to the Lord. ⁴¹Moses gave all of those gifts for the Lord to Eleazar the priest, like the Lord had commanded him.

⁴²Then [Moses counted] the people’s half. This was their share that Moses had taken from the soldiers that had gone to war. ⁴³The people got 337,500 sheep, ⁴⁴36,000 cows, ⁴⁵30,500 donkeys, ⁴⁶and 16,000 women. ⁴⁷For every 50 things, Moses took one thing for the Lord. This included the animals and the people. Then he gave those things to the Levites. Why? Because they took care of the Lord’s Holy Tent. Moses did this like the Lord commanded.

⁴⁸Then the leaders of the army (the leaders over 1,000 men and the leaders over 100 men) came to Moses. ⁴⁹They told Moses, “We, your

servants, have counted our soldiers. We have not missed any of them. ⁵⁰So we are bringing the Lord’s gift from every soldier. We are bringing things that are made of gold—arm bands, bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces. This gift to the Lord is to make us pure.*”

⁵¹So Moses took all of those things made from gold and gave them to Eleazar the priest. ⁵²The gold that the leaders of 1,000 men and the leaders of 100 men gave to the Lord weighed about 420 pounds.* ⁵³The soldiers kept the rest of their share of the things they took in war. ⁵⁴Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the leaders of 1,000 men and the leaders of 100 men. Then they put that gold in the Meeting Tent.* This present was a memorial* before the Lord for the people of Israel.

Family Groups East of the Jordan River

32 The family groups of Reuben and Gad had many, many cows. Those people looked at the land near Jazer and Gilead. They saw that this land was good for their cows. ²So the people from the family groups of Reuben and Gad came to Moses. They spoke to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the people. ^{3–4}They said, “We, your servants, have many, many cows. And the land that we have fought against is a good land for cows. This land includes the area around Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah,* Nebo, and Beon. ⁵If it pleases you, we would like this land to be given to us. Don’t take us to the other side of the Jordan River.”

⁶Moses told the people from the family groups of Reuben and Gad, “Will you let your brothers go and fight while you settle here? ⁷Why are you trying to discourage the people of Israel? You will make them not want to cross the river and take the land that the Lord has given to them! ⁸Your fathers did

make ... pure Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

420 pounds Literally, “16,750 shekels.”

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

memorial Something that helps people remember things that happened in the past.

Sibmah Or, “Sebam.”

the same thing to me. In Kadesh Barnea I sent spies to look at the land. ⁹Those men went as far as Eshcol Valley. They saw the land. And those men discouraged the people of Israel. Those men made the people of Israel not want to go into the land that the Lord had given to them. ¹⁰The Lord became very angry at the people. The Lord made this promise: ¹¹'None of the people who came from Egypt and are 20 years old or older will be allowed to see this land. I made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised to give this land to these people. But they have not truly followed me. So they will not get this land.' ¹²Only Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun truly followed the Lord!

¹³"The Lord was very angry against the people of Israel. So the Lord made the people stay in the desert for 40 years. The Lord made them stay there until all the people who had sinned against the Lord were dead. ¹⁴And now you are doing the same thing that your fathers did. You sinful people, do you want the Lord to be even more angry against his people? ¹⁵If you quit following the Lord, then the Lord will make Israel stay even longer in the desert. Then you will destroy all of these people!"

¹⁶But the people from Reuben's and Gad's family groups went to Moses. They said, "We will build cities for our children and barns for our animals here. ¹⁷Then our children can be safe from the other people that live in this land. But we will gladly come and help the other people of Israel. We will bring them to their land. ¹⁸We will not come back home until everyone in Israel has taken his part of the land. ¹⁹We won't take any of the land west of the Jordan River. No! Our part of the land is east of the Jordan River."

²⁰So Moses told them, "If you do all of these things, then this land will belong to you. But your soldiers must go before the Lord into battle. ²¹Your soldiers must cross the Jordan River and force the enemy to leave the country. ²²After the Lord helps us all take the land, then you can go back home. Then the Lord and Israel will not think that you are guilty. Then the Lord will let you have this land. ²³But if you don't do these things, then you will be sinning

against the Lord. And know for sure that you will be punished for your sin. ²⁴Build cities for your children and barns for your animals. But then, you must do what you promised."

²⁵Then the people from the family groups of Gad and Reuben said to Moses, "We are your servants. You are our master. So we will do what you say. ²⁶Our wives, children, and all our animals will stay in the Gilead cities. ²⁷But we, your servants, will cross the Jordan River. We will march before the Lord into battle, like our master says."

²⁸So Moses, Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and all the leaders of the family groups of Israel heard them make that promise. ²⁹Moses said to them, "The people of Gad and Reuben will cross the Jordan River. They will march before the Lord into battle. They will help you take the land. And you will give the land of Gilead as their part of the country. ³⁰They promise to help you take the land of Canaan."

³¹The people of Gad and Reuben answered, "We promise to do what the Lord commanded. ³²We will cross the Jordan River and march before the Lord into the land of Canaan. And our part of the country is the land east of the Jordan River."

³³So Moses gave that land to the people of Gad, to the people of Reuben, and to half of Manasseh's family group. (Manasseh was Joseph's son.) That land included the kingdom of Sihon the Amorite and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan. That land included all the cities around that area.

³⁴The people of Gad built the cities of Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, ³⁵Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, ³⁶Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran. They built cities with strong walls, and they built barns for their animals.

³⁷The people of Reuben built Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, ³⁸Nebo, Baal Meon, and Sibmah. They used the names of the cities that they built again. But they changed the names of Nebo and Baal Meon.

³⁹People from Makir's family group, went to Gilead. (Makir was Manasseh's son.) They defeated the city. They defeated the Amorites that lived there. ⁴⁰So Moses gave Gilead to Makir from Manasseh's family group. So his

family settled there. ⁴¹Jair, from the family of Manasseh, defeated the small towns there. Then he called them Towns of Jair. ⁴²Nobah defeated Kenath and the small towns near it. Then he called that place by his own name.

Israel's Journey from Egypt

33 Moses and Aaron led the people of Israel out of Egypt in groups.* Here are the places they traveled. ²Moses wrote about the places they traveled. Moses wrote the things that the Lord wanted. Here are the places they traveled and when they left:

³On the 15th day of the first month, they left Rameses. That morning after Passover, the people of Israel marched out of Egypt with their arms raised [in victory]. All the people of Egypt saw them. ⁴The Egyptians were burying all of the people that the Lord killed. They were burying all of their firstborn* [sons]. The Lord had shown his judgment against the gods* of Egypt.

⁵The people of Israel left Rameses and traveled to Succoth. ⁶From Succoth they traveled to Etham. The people camped there at the edge of the desert. ⁷They left Etham and went to Pi Hahiroth. This was near Baal Zephon. The people camped near Migdol.

⁸The people left Pi Hahiroth and walked through the middle of the sea. They went toward the desert. Then they traveled for three days through the Etham desert. The people camped at Marah.

⁹The people left Marah and went to Elim and camped there. There were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees there.

¹⁰The people left Elim and camped near the Red Sea.*

¹¹The people left the Red Sea* and camped in the Zin desert.

¹²The people left the Zin desert and camped at Dophkah.

group(s) Or, “division(s).” This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

gods This might be the false gods of Egypt or here it might mean the king and other powerful leaders in Egypt.

Red Sea Or, “Reed Sea.” See 1 Kings 9:26.

¹³The people left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

¹⁴The people left Alush and camped at Rephidim. At that place, there was no water for the people to drink.

¹⁵The people left Rephidim and camped in the Sinai desert.

¹⁶The people left the Sinai desert and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

¹⁷The people left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

¹⁸The people left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

¹⁹The people left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

²⁰The people left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

²¹The people left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

²²The people left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

²³The people left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

²⁴The people left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

²⁵The people left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

²⁶The people left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

²⁷The people left Tahath and camped at Terah.

²⁸The people left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

²⁹The people left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

³⁰The people left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

³¹The people left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

³²The people left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

³³The people left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

³⁴The people left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

³⁵The people left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

³⁶The people left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the Zin desert.

³⁷The people left Kadesh and camped at Hor. This was the mountain at the border of the country Edom. ³⁸Aaron the priest obeyed the Lord and went up Mount Hor. Aaron died at that place. Aaron died on the first day of the fifth month. That was the 40th year after the people of Israel had left Egypt. ³⁹Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor.

⁴⁰Arad was a town in the Negev,* in the land of Canaan. The Canaanite king in that place heard that the people of Israel were coming. ⁴¹The people left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

⁴²The people left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

⁴³The people left Punon and camped at Oboth.

⁴⁴The people left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim. This was at the border of the country Moab.

⁴⁵The people left Iyim (*Iye Abarim*) and camped at Dibon Gad.

⁴⁶The people left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

⁴⁷The people left Almon Diblathaim and camped on the mountains of Abarim near Nebo.

⁴⁸The people left the mountains of Abarim and camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho. ⁴⁹They camped by the Jordan River in the Jordan Valley in Moab. Their camp went from Beth Jeshimoth to Acacia Field.

⁵⁰At that place, the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ⁵¹“Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them these things: You will cross the Jordan River. You will go into the land of Canaan. ⁵²You will take the land from the people you find there. You must destroy all of their carved statues and idols. You must destroy all of their high places.* ⁵³You will take the land and you will settle there. Why? Because I am giving this land to you. It will belong to your families. ⁵⁴Each of your families will get part of the land. You will throw lots* to decide

which family gets each part of the country. Large families will get large parts of the land. Small families will get small parts of the land. The lots will show which family gets which part of the land. Each family group will get its part of the land.

⁵⁵“You must force those other people to leave the country. If you let those people stay in your country, then they will bring many troubles to you. They will be like stickers in your eyes and they will be like thorns in your side. They will bring many troubles to the country where you will be living. ⁵⁶I showed you what I would do—and I will do that to you if you let those people stay in your country.”

The Borders of Canaan

34 The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ²“Give this command to the people of Israel: You are coming to the land of Canaan. You will defeat this country. You will take the whole land of Canaan. ³On the south, you will get part of the Zin desert near Edom. Your southern border will start at the southern end of the Dead Sea. ⁴It will cross south of Scorpion Pass. It will go through the Zin desert to Kadesh Barnea, and then to Hazar Addar and then it will pass through Azmon. ⁵From Azmon, the border will go to the River of Egypt,* and it will end at the Mediterranean Sea. ⁶Your western border will be the Mediterranean Sea. ⁷Your northern border will begin at the Mediterranean Sea and go to Mount Hor (*in Lebanon*). ⁸From Mount Hor, it will go to Lebo Hamath, and then to Zedad. ⁹Then that border will go to Ziphron and it will end at Hazar Enan. So that will be your northern border. ¹⁰Your eastern border will begin at Enan and it will go to Shepham. ¹¹From Shepham, the border will go east of Ain to Riblah. The border will continue along the hills by Lake Galilee.* ¹²Then the border will continue along the Jordan River. It will end at the Dead Sea. Those are the borders around your country.”

¹³So Moses gave this command to the people of Israel, “That is the land that you will

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were usually on the hills and mountains.

lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

River of Egypt That is, the stream called, “Wadi El-Arish.”

Lake Galilee Literally, “Kinnereth Lake.”

get. You will throw lots* to divide the land among the nine family groups and half of Manasseh's family group. ¹⁴Reuben's and Gad's family groups, and half of Manasseh's family group have already taken their land. ¹⁵Those two and a half family groups took the land near Jericho—they took the land east of the Jordan River.”

¹⁶Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ¹⁷“These are the men who will help you divide the land: Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, ¹⁸and the leaders of all the family groups. There will be one leader from each family group. Those men will divide the land. ¹⁹These are the names of the leaders:

- from Judah's family group—Caleb son of Jephunneh;
- ²⁰ from Simeon's family group—Shemuel son of Ammihud;
- ²¹ from Benjamin's family group—Elidad son of Kislon;
- ²² from Dan's family group—Bukki son of Jogli;
- ²³ from Joseph's descendants from Manasseh's family group—Hanniel son of Ephod;
- ²⁴ from Ephraim's family group—Kemuel son of Shiphtan;
- ²⁵ from Zebulun's family group—Elizaphan son of Parnach;
- ²⁶ from Issachar's family group—Paltiel son of Azzan;
- ²⁷ from Asher's family group—Ahihud son of Shelomi;
- ²⁸ from Naphtali's family group—Pedahel son of Ammihud.”

²⁹The Lord chose those men to divide the land of Canaan among the people of Israel.

The Levites' Towns

35 The Lord spoke to Moses. This was in the Jordan Valley in Moab, near the Jordan River, across from Jericho. The Lord said, ²“Tell the people of Israel that they should give some of the cities in their part of

the land to the Levites. The people of Israel should give those cities and the pastures around them to the Levites. ³The Levites will be able to live in those cities. And all the cows and other animals that belong to the Levites will be able to eat from the pastures around those cities. ⁴How much of your land should you give to the Levites? From the walls of the cities, go out 1,500 feet*—all of that land will belong to the Levites. ⁵Also, all of the land 3,000 feet* east of the city, and 3,000 feet south of the city, and 3,000 feet west of the city, and 3,000 feet north of the city will belong to the Levites. (The city will be in the middle of all that land.) ⁶Six of those cities will be cities of safety. If a person accidentally kills someone, then that person can run to those towns for safety. In addition to those six cities, you will also give 42 more cities to the Levites. ⁷So you will give a total of 48 cities to the Levites. You will also give them the land around those cities. ⁸The large families of Israel will get large pieces of land. The small families of Israel will get small pieces of land. So the large family groups will give more cities and the small family groups will give fewer cities to the Levites.”

⁹Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ¹⁰“Tell the people these things: You people will cross the Jordan River and go into the land of Canaan. ¹¹You must choose towns to be cities of safety. If a person accidentally kills another person, then that person can run to one of those cities for safety. ¹²That person will be safe from anyone from the dead man's family that wants to get even. That person will be safe until he is judged in court. ¹³There will be six cities of safety. ¹⁴Three of those cities will be east of the Jordan River. And three of those cities will be in the land of Canaan, west of the Jordan River. ¹⁵Those cities will be places of safety for citizens of Israel, and for foreigners and travelers. Any of those people will be able to run to one of those cities if he accidentally kills someone.

1,500 feet Literally, “1,000 cubits.” The people probably let their sheep and cows use this land.

3,000 feet Literally, “2,000 cubits.” The Levites probably used this land for gardens and vineyards.

lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

¹⁶“If a person uses an iron weapon* to kill someone, then that person must die. ¹⁷And if a person takes a rock and kills someone, then that person must die. (But the rock must be the size of rock that would normally be used for killing people.) ¹⁸And if a person uses a piece of wood to kill someone, then that person must die. (The piece of wood must be a weapon that people normally use for killing people.) ¹⁹A member of the dead man’s family* can chase that murderer and kill him.

^{20–21}“A person might hit someone with his hand and kill him. Or a person might push someone and kill him. Or a person might throw something at someone and kill him. If the killer did that from hate, then he is a murderer. That person must be killed. A member of the dead man’s family* can chase that murderer and kill him.

²²“But a person might accidentally kill someone. That person didn’t hate the person he killed—it was only an accident. Or a person might throw something and accidentally kill someone—he didn’t plan to kill anyone. ²³Or a person might throw a rock. And that rock might fall on someone that person didn’t see and the rock might kill that person. That person didn’t plan to kill anyone. That person didn’t hate the person he killed—it was only an accident. ²⁴If that happens, then the community must decide what to do. The community’s court must decide if a member of the dead man’s family* can kill that person. ²⁵If the community decides to protect the killer from the dead man’s family, then the community must take him back to his city of safety. And the killer must stay there until the official high priest* dies.

^{26–27}“That man must never go outside the limits of his city of safety. If he goes outside those limits, and if a member of the dead man’s family* catches him and kills him, then that member won’t be guilty of murder. ²⁸The

person who accidentally killed someone must stay in his city of safety until the high priest dies. After the high priest dies, that person can go back to his own land. ²⁹Those rules will be the law forever in all of the towns of your people.

³⁰“A killer should be put to death as a murderer only if there are witnesses. No person can be put to death if there is only one witness.

³¹“If a person is a murderer, then he must be put to death. Don’t take money and change his punishment. That murderer must be killed.

³²“If a person killed someone and then ran to one of the cities of safety, then don’t take money to let him go home. That person must stay in that city until the high priest dies.

³³“Don’t let your land be ruined with innocent blood. If a person murders someone, then the only payment for that crime is that the murderer must be killed! There is no other payment that will free the land from that crime. ³⁴I am the Lord! I will be living in your country with the people of Israel. I will be living there, so don’t make it unclean* [with the blood of innocent people].”

The Land of Zelophehad’s Daughters

36 Manasseh was Joseph’s son. Makir was Manasseh’s son. Gilead was Makir’s son. The leaders of Gilead’s family went to talk to Moses and the leaders of Israel’s family groups. ²They said, “Sir, the Lord commanded us to get our land by throwing lots.* And sir, the Lord commanded Zelophehad’s land be given to his daughters. Zelophehad was our brother. ³Maybe a man from one of the other family groups will marry one of Zelophehad’s daughters. Will that land leave our family? Will the people of that other family group get that land? Will we lose the land that we got by throwing lots? ⁴People might sell their land. But, in the Jubilee year,* all of the land is returned to the family group that really owns it. At that time, who will get the land that

iron weapon This shows the murderer chose a weapon he knew could kill the other person.

member of the dead man’s family Literally, “the blood avenger.” Usually, this was a friend or family member that would chase a dead man’s murderer and kill him.

official high priest Literally, “the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.”

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Jubilee year See Lev. 25 for the rules the Jews were to follow during this special time.

belongs to Zelophehad's daughters? Will our family lose that land forever?"

⁵Moses gave this command to the people of Israel. This command was from the Lord. "These men from Joseph's family group are right! ⁶This is the Lord's command to Zelophehad's daughters: If you want to marry someone, then you must marry someone from your own family group. ⁷In this way, land will not be passed from family group to family group among the people of Israel. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to his own ancestors.* ⁸And if some woman gets her father's land, then she must marry someone from her own family group. In this way, each person will keep the land that

belonged to his ancestors. ⁹So, the land must not be passed from family group to family group among the people of Israel. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to his own ancestors."

¹⁰Zelophehad's daughters obeyed the Lord's command to Moses. ¹¹So Zelophehad's daughters—Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah—married their cousins on their father's side of the family. ¹²Their husbands were from Manasseh's family group, so their land continued to belong to their father's family and family group.

¹³So those are the laws and commands that the Lord gave to Moses in the Jordan Valley in Moab by the Jordan River, across from Jericho.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.