Firstborn Silver & Altar Dedication

Numbers 3:39-8:20

Reading Questions

1. Can a female be a first-born?
2. Why was silver given to Aharon and his sons in Numbers 3?
3. What age group of Lewites are in active service?
4. Are sons of Lewites determined by the Father's lineage or Mother's lineage?
5. Is confession of sins commanded?
6. How does understanding the vow of the Nazarite in Numbers 6 help prove that the disciple of יהושע Sha'ul (Paulus – commonly known as "Paul") was not against the Torah, that he never taught against it, and that he supported keeping the Laws?
7. Can someone do a Nazirite vow today?
8. When Mosheh went into the Tent of Meeting, from where did he hear the voice speaking with him?

Reading Answers

1. No. The phrase first-born always refers to a male as specified in Numbers 3:43.

2. When יהוה struck the first-born sons in Mitsrayim (Egypt) and spared the first-born sons of all the Yisra'elites, He set apart to Himself all the first-born sons in Yisra'el (Numbers 3:13). In other words, because יהוה saved the first-born sons of Yisra'el by the blood of the Passover sacrifice, they became His to serve how He chose. However, instead of taking the first-born sons of every single tribe, He took the entire tribe of Lewi (Levi). So the Lewites were the "ransom" for the first-born in Yisra'el. A ransom is something that is given to release something else or free something else, usually from a state of imprisonment or confiscation that is negative. In this case, the Lewites were given to free up the first-born in Yisra'el from a required duty.

   However, there were more first-born in Yisra'el than there were Lewites. So in order to account for the greater number of first-born in Yisra'el, five sheqels of silver were given for each additional person more than the number of Lewites. The math is as follows:

   Numbers 3:43 – All 1st Born Males In All of Yisra'el 1 Month Old & Above = 22,273
   - Numbers 3:39 – All Registered Ones of Lewi 1 Month Old & Above = 22,000
   Numbers 3:46 – First-Born In Yisra'el More Than The Number of Lewites = 273

It was for those 273 persons that the five sheqels of silver was to be paid to the sons of Aharon in order to set those 273 persons free from any requirement of service since their lives had been spared in Mitsrayim. This is why the silver was paid and why it was considered a "ransom", to the best of my understanding.

3. 30 to 50 years of age (Numbers 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47)

4. Father's lineage. We never see that the Mother's lineage is used to determine what tribe anyone is from. A good example is Numbers 4:34 which says the Qehathites were registered by their Fathers' house. A woman's tribe changes the moment she marries outside of her tribe, so it wouldn't make sense to determine tribe based upon the woman.

5. It appears this might actually be commanded according to Numbers 5:6-7. Confession of sins could be just meaning, sometimes, to just confess them to יהוה. However, sometimes it may be appropriate to confess them to others. One verse showing us this is James 5:16.

6. Numbers 6:18 shows that when the vow of the Nazirite is completed, he shaves his hair off. This is what is being spoken of in Acts 21:23-24. Sha'ul, also known as Paulus and commonly called Paul, supported the keeping of all of the commandments and law. "Paul" did what he did in the book of Acts to prove that the accusations against him about teaching against the law were **FALSE** accusations that were untrue and had no basis. "Paul's" writings, in what is commonly called "the New Testament", are **HIGHLY** misunderstood by **MANY** people throughout the entire world even today; and this **false** accusation against him exists even today. However, we can see very clearly "Paul" supported the law to prove that these accusations were false.

7. I don't see how this is possible. Offerings are required when the vow ends and if someone dies near you unexpectantly, for example, certain offerings are required. Without a functioning priesthood of the Sons of Aharon and a functioning Set-Apart Place (Temple) in Yerushalayim, you can't meet all the full requirements of the vow. In the case of a serious vow like this, I don't think you should "half-way" do it.

   There are times when parts of commandments can be individually done even if other related parts can't – such as the Feasts. We can't do the offerings for the Feast of Sukkot, for example, but we can do the other parts of the Feast such as dwelling in a Sukkah, rejoicing for 8 days, having a Miqra Qodesh (Set-Apart Gathering), and resting on the 1st and 8th Last Great Day. However, in the case of the Nazirite vow I think this is different because it is a very serious vow that tells you from the onset there will be offerings required when it ends. I don't think we should undertake a vow that will require additional offerings that otherwise would not have been required if we had not taken that vow.

So the main difference I see between the Nazirite vow and, for example, the Feast of Sukkot (just to give one example), is that the offerings for Sukkot are required **NO MATTER WHAT WE DO**… and yet we cannot do the physical offerings…. Whereas the offerings for the Nazirite vow are only required **IF WE MAKE THE DECISION** to take that vow…. And yet we cannot do those physical offerings either. So there is a difference, in my opinion; and for these reasons I would advise that nobody should be taking Nazirite vows at this time. You can choose to follow the rules of a Nazirite voluntarily, if you want (like avoiding wine, strong drink, etc. as listed in Numbers 6), but I would not make it an actual vow since you can't complete what's required at the end of it or if it is broken. Ecclesiastes 5:5 puts it well:

Ecclesiastes 5:5 – ***"It is better not to vow than to vow and not pay."***

In addition, when I say "you can choose to follow the rules of a Nazirite voluntarily" – I mean – excluding the growing hair requirement. 1 Corinthians 11:14 makes it clear men should not do that. So if you haven't taken that vow, men should keep hair short as 1 Corinthians 11:14 teaches. I do not believe we should take that vow, however – which means men should keep hair short.

8. From above the lid of atonement that was on the Ark of the Witness, from between two of the keruviym (Numbers 7:89).

Reading Notes

- Notice how in Numbers 4:15 it says the sons of Qehath were to lift up the altar and other Set-Apart objects, but yet they couldn't actually touch the Set-Apart objects. What we learn from this is that the poles themselves were not considered to be the set-apart objects, but rather just the poles to lift the set-apart objects with. This also shows us that because the poles were not physically connected to the set-apart objects, it was not considered "touching" to touch something that touched the Set-Apart objects. Touching would literally mean skin contact; and the fact that they could touch the poles and still live helps to clarify that point exactly.

- The registered ones from 30 to 50 years of age of the Lewites in chapter 4 were as follows:
    - Sons of Qehathites – 2,750 (Numbers 4:36)
    - Sons of Gereshon – 2,630 (Numbers 4:40)
    - Sons of Merari – 3,200 (Numbers 4:44)
    - Total of Lewi 30-50 Years of Age – 8,580 (Numbers 4:48)

- In 1979, Gabriel Barkay found two small, tiny, silver scrolls with Paleo Hebrew text from Numbers 6:24-26 on them which can fit in the palm of one's hand. These were found by him in Ketef Hinnom which is near Yerushalayim and date back to the latter end of the 7th century B.C. which makes them older than the Dead Sea Scrolls and the oldest known Scrolls to date. Just search the Internet for Silver Scrolls Gabriel Barkay and you will find much information about this.

- To "bless" actually means to kneel down. We can see this in the following verse:

> Genesis 24:11 – *"And he made his camels **kneel down** outside the city by a fountain of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water."*

The word here in the Hebrew which is translated "kneel down" is from Strong's # H1288 which is usually translated as "bless" or "blessed". Literally, it does mean to kneel down or bend the knee. You could say, he made the camels "bend the knee" outside the city. Similarly, to "bless someone" is to "bend the knee" to them. This could have been taken in a figurative sense, of course, and not necessarily always meant that a literal bending of the knee occurred, but a literal bending of the knee cannot necessarily be ruled out either.

Some would say, "Ridiculous! יהוה doesn't bend His knee to us! We bend our knees to Him!"

Correct, we do bend our knees to Him, we should bless Him! However, take this into consideration:

> John 13:5 – After that He put water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

For him to do wash their feet in a basin, it appears he could have possibly been on his knees. The King of Kings… on his knees washing feet of His OWN disciples?!?!?!?!?!?

> John 13:13-15 – "You call me Teacher and Adon, and you say well, for I am. Then if I, Adon and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

He led by example….. May יהוה help us to serve as יהושע did!!!!

But wait… back to our discussion on Numbers 6:24-26…

> John 5:19 – Therefore יהושע responded and said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son is able to do none at all by Himself, but **only that which He sees the Father doing**, because whatever He does, the Son also likewise does."

Ahhhhh… now it all, maybe, makes a bit more sense. Perhaps when יהושע was on His knees washing the feet of His disciples, this too was something He saw His Father, our Father, יהוה do… even if figuratively. Something to ponder indeed.

One brother brought up a good point, when I heard him say something like, *"Aren't we asking יהוה to serve us when we ask him for things? He is doing things for us all the time! He is constantly serving us!"* Maybe this brother is right. May **יהוה** give us all more understanding about Numbers 6:24-26 and how He loves us!

By the way – I am not saying that bending the knee is equivalent to worship. Obviously **יהוה** does not worship ANYONE… but all should worship **יהוה**. Worship is when we are prostrated down on both knees, bending our face to the ground. Bending the knee is not the same as worship, which means literally to bow down.

Also, I have begun, many times, literally bending the knee when blessing **יהוה** for the good land (Deuteronomy 8:10). Usually I do this with one knee bent. As you do this, you may be reminded also of how men commonly, traditionally, bend down on one knee when "proposing" to a woman to marry her. This tradition is not worship in my opinion, but is more similar to the man blessing the woman, in a sense. However, a marriage agreement should be between a man and the woman's Father, not just the man and the woman alone, so I do not recommend men "propose to women", but rather speak to the woman's Father about marriage (if you are both believer's in **יהושע** and followers of the Way); but this is getting into a whole separate topic which we will not go into detail about here or cover in these notes.

- See related verses below for "Seven Lamps" as mentioned in Numbers 8:2. Those verses and others similar could turn into a very interesting study! It is amazing how all of the things in **יהוה**'s law picture and represent other things! We can't just think the law is some physical-only law – it is a spiritual law (Romans 7:14). The things in the Torah (Law) have GREAT significance!!!!

Related Verses

Confession of Sins: Leviticus 5:5, 16:21, 26:40, Numbers 5:6-7, Ezra 10:1, Nehemiah 1:6, 9:2-3, Psalms 32:5, 38:18, Daniel 9:20, Matthew 3:6, Mark 1:5, Acts 19:18, 1 John 1:9, James 5:16
Nazarite: Judges 13-16, Lamentations 4:7, Amos 2:11-12, Acts 21:20-24
Vows: Genesis 28:20, 31:13, Leviticus 7:16, 22:18-23, 27:2-8, Numbers 21:2, 30:1-16, Deuteronomy 23:18-23, Judges 11:30-39, 1 Samuel 1:11, 2 Samuel 15:7-8, Psalms 22:25, 50:14, 61:5, 8, 65:1, 66:13, 76:11, 116:14, 18, 132:2, Proverbs 20:25, 31:2, Ecclesiastes 5:1-7, Isaiah 19:21, Jonah 1:16, 2:9, Nahum 1:15, Malachi 1:14
Seven Lamps: Exodus 25:37, 37:23, Zechariah 4:2, Revelation 1:12-13, 20, 2:1, 4:5