

NUMBERS 15:22-41 (REMEMBERING AND PERFORMING)

The passage today is divided up into four separate sections, but none of them are disconnected from one another, nor are they disconnected from the first half of the chapter. Today, we see the Lord's laws concerning unintentional sin, but that seems to be a repeat of Chapter 4 of Leviticus. It is not, as will be explained.

After that comes the law concerning the committing of presumptuous sins. What does that mean, really? Would any of you call getting someone drunk a presumptuous sin? Maybe, maybe not. I guess it depends on who you are and what you think about such things. Would you call wasting governmental resources a presumptuous sin? As common as that is in the US, we might ignore that as one, but it is definitely against the law. How about committing adultery. Is that a presumptuous sin? How about murder? Would any of you call murder a presumptuous sin?

Text Verse: "Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.
¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.
¹⁶ For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*;
You do not delight in burnt offering.
¹⁷ The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise." Psalm 51:14-17

David wrote these words of the 51st Psalm after doing all of the things we just questioned. He got a guy drunk in order to bring about deception. He wasted the resources of his army while they were engaged in battle to do the same. And those things were because he had already committed adultery. And after those things didn't work, he had his loyal soldier killed to cover up what he had done. You've read the passage. It says that a person

who sins presumptuously is to be cut off from among His people. And yet, after he had been caught doing these things, Nathan the prophet said, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.” How did what was obviously intentional sin turn into unintentional sin? How was a certain death sentence commuted by the Lord?

It is because of just what David said in the psalm. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit. They are a broken and a contrite heart. God will not despise such things. A sin is presumptuous when it fails to take God into account at any point before, during, or after it is committed. There is no remedy for such an act. There is an example of what happens in such a case in today’s verses, and then there is the Lord’s word that the people are to take action to avoid sinning against Him at all, either unintentionally, or intentionally.

And all of these things – yes, every section, verse, and word points to a greater truth. They point to the coming of Messiah, and the granting of a new and better covenant which will come through Him. It’s all to be found in His superior word. And so let’s turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Sins of Omission and High-handed Sins (verses 22-31)

²² ‘If you sin unintentionally,

v’ki tishgu – “and if you are going astray.” Here we have a word which sets up the theme of the coming verses, *shagah*. It has only been seen thus far in Leviticus 4:13. It signifies, “to go astray.” It is a moral transgression which may occur through something like intoxication or being enraptured by the enticements of life. Although not specifically used when speaking of David and Bathsheba, the thought is certainly borne out in his being enticed to sin by being enraptured by her beauty. He went astray, and wandered down a very bad course. In the case of the verse we are looking at, the verb is

plural. It is speaking to the whole congregation concerning the actions of people. What is surprising concerning the words here is that they are not introduced with the regular formula which introduces main sections of thought – “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying.” Instead, they follow after the seemingly unrelated words of verses 17-21 which dealt with the ceremonial law of offering up a heave offering to the Lord.

But, when considering the first use of the word *shagah* in Leviticus 4, the placement here makes more sense. There, the word was used for acts of commission in violations of the law. Here, it deals with acts of omission. The Lord has been expressing the law to the people in regards to their entrance and occupation of Canaan.

These obligations upon them are binding, but if they fail to adhere to them, then it is a national *shagah*, a national going astray. Verses 17-21 gave instructions which pointed directly to Christ and His work. When they failed to comply with that, or any such thing which pointed to His fulfillment of the law, it was considered a national error. That continues with the next words...

²² (con't) **and do not observe all these commandments which the Lord has spoken to Moses—**

The Lord takes a failure to adhere to His commandments in the same light as actually violating one of His commandments. Here, the people are told, exactly, that the commandments which Moses has relayed to them were spoken directly to him by the Lord. They are His word, and they reflect His will. That process of revelation is then further explained with the next words...

²³ **all that the Lord has commanded you by the hand of Moses,**

Here it says, *b'yad Mosheh*, or “by the hand of Moses.” Moses didn’t just hear what the Lord said and then come out and speak the words to the people, leaving the possibility of error. Rather, the Lord spoke to Moses, and Moses recorded – with his own hand – everything that the Lord spoke. Thus, the command to the people is *b'yad Mosheh*, or “by the hand of Moses.” This was...

²³ (con’t) **from the day the Lord gave commandment and onward throughout your generations—**

There is the thought of introduction and continuation here. The Lord spoke, the word continues to speak through Moses’ hand, and that then follows in that same written word, as it says, *va'haleah l'dorotekem*, or “and onward throughout your generations.” It is a rather amazing thing to consider. The word is spoken, and it continues to speak.

It is not a temporary, changeable, or uncertain word. It is a set word which continues in an unaltered form. Obviously, however, if a New Covenant is introduced, the Old is made obsolete. But even in its obsolescence, it is unchanging. Thus, the Law of Moses, which is the word of the Lord, remains unchanged, even if it is no longer in force. When we study this law, it is the same law – once and forever delivered.

Understanding this, we look to the law, not for enforcement of its precepts upon us, but as a memorial that we have been freed from something so heavy and burdensome, that the grace we have received in Christ should be understood as exactly as it has been described throughout the years, amazing grace.

²⁴ **then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation,**

Now, a noun is used, *shegagah*. That was seen five times in Leviticus 5 & 6. It is unintentional sin. What this means is that something in the Law of Moses is not adhered to (an act of omission) that the congregation simply doesn't realize is occurring. It cannot be speaking of a rejection of the Law, where the people willingly reject what is stated, but that they are living out their lives in observance of the law and they, through time or carelessness, begin to let a part of the law slip from their national conscience so that it is no longer being observed. This could be a moral precept, a judicial precept, or a ceremonial one. Whatever they simply overlook as a command, they become guilty. If this happens...

^{24 (con't)} **that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the Lord,**

In these words, we have a testimony to the pardonable nature of the act of omission. The first offering mentioned is a burnt offering, not a sin offering. Further, the burnt offering is larger than the sin offering – it being a bull, whereas the sin offering is only a goat. The burnt offering looks to Christ whose life was wholly given to God in the fulfillment of the law on behalf of the people. Though the people may stray, Christ did not. The bull represents this on their behalf. It is, as it says, “a sweet aroma to the Lord,” just as Christ's life was said to be offered up in this way by Paul –

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” Ephesians 5:1, 2

Where the people failed, Christ prevailed. This is symbolized in this offering. They first offer the burnt offering in acknowledgment of Christ's perfect obedience to the law.

^{24 (con't)} **with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance,**

Both the grain and drink offerings have been carefully explained in their typology in regards to Christ. If you don't remember that, shame on you. Five demerits for each forgotten offering, and you should go back and watch the pertinent sermons to brush up.

²⁴ (con't) **and one kid of the goats as a sin offering.**

Only after the burnt offering is the sin offering mentioned. It is a *sayir izzim*, or a hairy goat; hair signifying awareness. In this case, it is awareness of sin. The people are aware of their sin and seek its atonement. It is the same offering made on the Day of Atonement for the sins of the people, and it represents the human life of Jesus, taking on our nature, but without sin, and yet then taking on our sin in His crucifixion. It is seen in Paul's words to the Corinthians –

“For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

²⁵ **So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it was unintentional;**

The sacrifice of the sin offering is one which atones, or covers, the sins of the congregation concerning their unintentional sins. This sacrifice is actually typical of that which is revealed by Christ as He was being crucified. In Luke 23 we read –

“And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’”
Luke 23:33, 34

The very act of crucifying the Lord, which was done in ignorance by the people, is the very thing which could actually bring about the atonement for all of Israel's sins, and for all of mankind's sins as well. What was pictured in the hairy goat offering for Israel, is fulfilled for the world in the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.

²⁵ (con't) **they shall bring their offering, an offering made by fire to the Lord, and their sin offering before the Lord, for their unintended sin.**

Again, the offerings are noted first for the burnt offering, and then for the sin offering, demonstrating the state of the people's unintentional sin before the Lord. In following these prescriptions of the law, there is then release from the penalty of the sin...

²⁶ **It shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel**

In the acknowledgment of the wrongdoing, and in the act of making these offerings which anticipate Christ, the entire congregation is cumulatively forgiven for their transgression. Although there is no record, anywhere in the Old Testament, of this being done, there were plenty of times it was necessary. Example after example of such national failings are recorded.

Ironically, the one time such a petition is made, it is by the One being offered, and who is also the One who acknowledges that the offering is necessary. And even more ironically, it isn't until they acknowledge that He is that Offering that their sin will be atoned for. Zechariah 12 shows that they will eventually look upon the One whom they have pierced and they will mourn for Him in the realization of what He did for them, and what they did to Him. In Zechariah 13, it then says, "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

The words of this verse we are now looking at, anticipate what has been kept from Israel for 2000 years because of their sin of national ignorance. However, such is not the case with all who required this cleansing...

²⁶ (con't) **and the stranger who dwells among them, because all the people *did it unintentionally.***

These words anticipate the cleansing, not just of Israel, but of all who are among them. As the Gentiles have been grafted into the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12), when we acknowledge our guilt before the Lord, we are cleansed. His atonement is sufficient for all, just as is explained in Romans 4 and elsewhere.

²⁷ **'And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering.**

The instructions now move from unintentional collective sin to unintentional individual sin. When individual sin is unintentional, but it is realized to have been committed, the one who went astray was required to bring an *ets bat shnata*, or "a goat daughter of first year." The *ets* is a female goat which comes from a word signifying to be strong, as in able to prevail.

The *ets* is used elliptically in Hebrew to signify hair from the goat, and so we have the same picture, hair, signifying awareness, and the goat as an offering for sin. The offering is strong, as in capable, of atoning for the sin. Being a daughter of the first year implies innocence. All of the offering pictures Christ.

²⁸ **So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the Lord, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.**

Again, the priest is mentioned in the process. A person cannot conduct their own petitions before God. Rather, he needs a mediator. And a person cannot work off his sins. Rather, there needs to be a sacrifice to atone for them. And more, a person's sin is not ignored because it was unintentional. Rather, when it is realized as such, it must be acknowledged. And the forgiveness doesn't just come because the person has acknowledged it as such.

Rather, a person may say, "Yes, I did wrong," but that in and of itself does not bring forgiveness. An act of faith in the offering, which is then mediated by the priest in connection with the death of the substitute, is required. In all, the gospel is reflected in what is presented right here in this verse. A person sins, a Substitute dies for that sin, the sin is acknowledged, and the Sacrifice is received by faith. And that reception is offered through the Mediator to God. That gospel message is continued to be seen next...

²⁹ You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, *for* him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them.

Though the precept in verse 26 was speaking of those who are joined to Israel in a national way, and which will be dealt with in reality in the future, we now see that the atonement of Christ, typified in these offerings, extends to individuals who are strangers, meaning Gentiles, among Israel as well.

Christ's atonement is sufficient, as we have already noted, for the sin of the whole world. The forgiveness found in Christ is for any and all who will acknowledge Him and receive it by faith. Here it says *torah akhat*, law one. That equates directly to what Paul speaks of concerning there being one gospel, and only one.

³⁰ ‘But the person who does *anything* presumptuously, *whether he is native-born or a stranger,*

The words translated as “presumptuously,” are *b’yad ramah*. Literally, “hurled by hand.” It is a self-willed act of defiance or presumptuous sin, and it is one which can be committed by either a native-born or a stranger. The only comparable sin which this equates to in the New Testament is found in the gospels, and which is known as blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

Such blasphemy is misunderstood or misapplied, especially among charismatics, far too often in the church, and it results in ruined lives of those who are misled by such teachings. In short, for a person today, such blasphemy is limited to a life-long rejection of Christ, and thus dying apart from Christ’s all-sufficient atonement.

^{30 (con’t)} that one brings reproach on the Lord, and he shall be cut off from among his people.

Here we have a new word, *gadaph*, which will be seen just seven times in Scripture. It signifies to revile or blaspheme, coming from a root which means to hack. Thus, it is as if hacking by word. In the Hebrew, the name Yehovah, or Lord, is in the emphatic position, revealing the scope of the crime. And thus, the sentence for such a crime is to be cut off from among his people.

³¹ Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *shall be upon him.*”

We have here a word only seen once so far, *bazah*, or to despise. This is what Esau did with his birthright, and now it is what is said to be done concerning the word of the Lord. There is contempt for the Lord’s word, and

thus there is contempt for the Lord. This can be equated with the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit which Israel's leaders were guilty of.

They had the word of God which spoke concerning the coming Messiah. Jesus stood there, the incarnate Word of God, as witnessed to by the word which came by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They attributed the work of Jesus to the devil, and thus they rejected the word which pointed to Jesus, and thus they despised that word, blaspheming the Holy Spirit in the process.

In this, they were, in fact, cut off and their guilt remained upon them. This is the idea which is presented now to Israel. In despising the word, and in breaking that commandment, they were to receive the punishment for their actions. As it says, *hikaret tikaret* – “completely cut off, he shall be cut off,” and his guilt remained unatoned for.

*Help me to remember to do what is right, O God
To You I make my address; may I remember my duty to You
Grant me wisdom on this path that I trod
That I will act always in holiness; in my life being true
May I hold fast to Your word always
When I am silent or when I speak
May I never depart from it, not for all of my days
Strengthen me, O God, in the times when I am weak
I know that I can do all things; yes, I know that it is true
Through Christ who strengthens me; in Him I am strong
And so I will trust in my Lord; all my days, this I will do
In my heart I will carry Him – Christ, my Strength and my Song*

II. The Weight and Memory of the Law (verses 32-36)

³² Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day.

The account now is companion to the account of the blasphemer which was seen in Leviticus 24. Placed side by side, this is evident. It goes directly from explaining high-handed sin to a demonstration of the penalty for such sin. Scripture gives no clue as to when this offense took place, but the placement of it here is to solidify the words which were just spoken concerning high-handed sin.

There really was no excuse for doing what he did. They were in the wilderness where there was nothing else to do on any given day, and so preparing for a Sabbath would be no chore on any other day. It is in defiance of a divinely established law, the reason for which was explained. It is something that was inconsistent with his identification with Israel. And it was done in the open, thus it was an open challenge to the Lord concerning a law that He had given.

³³ And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation.

One can almost see the attitude. If he was collecting sticks and someone said, "Hey, it's the Sabbath..." The guy might have said, "Oh no, I completely forgot." But here, he is brought before the leaders. Although the account doesn't say it, you can see him saying, "So what. I'm cold and I need sticks." The sin has gone from a sin of going astray, to one which is high-handed.

Thus, we have here an account which takes us through both of the previous sections, and what is to be done because of it. In this, he is brought to Moses, the prophet and lawgiver, Aaron, the established high priest and

thus mediator, and to all the congregation, meaning the leaders who represent them, and the ones to relay congregational matters to those below them. From there, it is unknown exactly what should be done...

³⁴ They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him.

Like the parallel account of the blasphemer of Leviticus 24, the person is placed in custody because they were unaware of what should be done. The word “explained” here is the same word, *parash*, that was used in Leviticus 24:12. It signifies to disperse, or separate, thus it is figuratively used to specify. By separating, one can then determine one thing from another.

The penalty of death for violating the Sabbath has already been given in Exodus 31:14, 15, and again in Exodus 35:2. And so, it may be that they wanted to be sure that gathering sticks was sufficiently considered as work, and if so, what type of death should be executed upon him. And so they await the answer...

³⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.”

The God of justice demands justice be served. For this Sabbath-breaker, it is time for lights out and a permanent nap in the sands of the desert. His bed would be the ground, and his blanket would be a heap of stones covered with his own blood. If even a small portion of the total number of people in the camp threw a stone, he would be so covered that the pile would be very large over him. The Lord has spoken, and His word is to be obeyed.

³⁶ So, as the Lord commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.

As was commanded, so it was done. He was taken outside the camp so as not to defile it, and they stoned him with stones, not even touching him in his death, but casting the implements of his execution from a distance. One major difference between this account and that of Leviticus 24 is that it says there they stoned him with a stone. Here it says they stoned him with stones. The reason for that subtle but important difference was explained then. If you've forgotten the reason, that's 2 demerits and a five-yard penalty. Time to brush up by reviewing that sermon this afternoon.

As the Sabbath was said to be given in Exodus 20 because the Lord created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh, it was thus an implicit denial of God being the Creator. If one didn't accept the creation account, then they would be denying the account of the Creator. Whether they believed the earth was eternal, or whether they believed it came about by a big-bang followed by evolution, such ideas are ultimately a denial of God.

To deny His word is to deny Him. This individual wanted to gather sticks more than he wanted to acknowledge the Creator, and he received the penalty for his errant ways. Other Sabbath-breakers are identified elsewhere in Scripture, and they do not receive what is commanded here. Such is seen, for example, in Nehemiah 13. They did not receive the same penalty for their conduct as this offender despite having committed like offenses.

However, the law is noted for punishing such first offenses. To not punish the first offense, but to then punish a later one would show an arbitrary nature of God's judgment. But to punish a first offense, and to not punish a later one would show that even under the heavy weight of the requirements of the law, mercy could be found.

Further, there is every reason to believe, especially because of the surrounding context, that he didn't just die because of what he did, but because of the presumptuous nature of how he did it. Unfortunately for this

dood, no leniency, as is later seen in examples such as in Nehemiah, was available. He died as an example of the heavy weight which is the Law of Moses. And, as a way of reminding the people of that weight, and thus of the penalty for violating that weight, we come to our final section of the day...

*Tassels for the four corners of the garments we wear
With a blue thread in them as well
Sewn by hands with tender care
Because surely they have a story to tell
Tassels to remind us of our law
Tassels with a blue thread in them as the Lord did tell
One hurting soul reached for Jesus' tassel, this I saw
And when she touched it she was healed and made well
Surely He has come with healing in His wings
And in Him is healing in every possible way
In knowing the meaning of the tassels my heart sings
And to God I am thankful forever, starting from today*

III. The Tzitzith (verses 37-41)

³⁷ Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

The words are not correct. It says, *v'yomer Yehovah el mosheh lemor*. "And the Lord **said** to Moses saying." The normal address is *daber*, or spoke. Here, as in several other passages, it is *amar*, or said. The idea then is that in the coming verses, there will be a complexity to the task which will require a partnership and people working together. The Lord next **says** to Moses...

³⁸ “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations,

The Lord instructs Moses to further instruct the children of Israel. They are to make *tzitzith*, or tassels for the corners of their garments. These *tzitzith* are now introduced, and they will be seen only four times. Three will be in this chapter, and once in Ezekiel 8:3 when speaking of a lock of hair of the prophet’s head.

The word comes from *tsiyts*, which is a widely translated word signifying glistening. Just as something glistens when the light shines off of it, so a *tzitzith* will extend out from the edge of a garment and adorn it like a flower. They appear to be the same as what are called *gedilim* in Deuteronomy 22:12.

These are to be placed on the *kanaph*, or corners. The word literally means wing, or an extremity. The traditional garment would be a four-cornered cloth with a hole in the middle. Thus, two corners would be on the front and two on the back. On each of these corners, or wings, a tassel was to be attached. Along with that...

³⁸ (con’t) and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.

Within the tassels was to be a thread, or cord, of blue. The word is *tekeleth*. It is the same blue used in the materials of the sanctuary. The dye comes from the cerulean mussel. It is a deep blue. As was seen in the Exodus sermons, and in earlier Numbers sermons where this color was used, blue signifies the law. That is derived from what is explicitly stated next...

³⁹ And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them,

The tassel was to be a reminder concerning the commandments of the Lord. Just as we might tie a string around our finger to remind us to do something, so Israel was to have these tassels as a constant reminder of their need to remember the Lord's commandments and to observe them. Thus, like the priests, the entire congregation of Israel had garments which bore a symbolical meaning. It set the entire nation apart in this manner. The reminder to remember and do the commands of the Lord is then contrasted with...

³⁹ (con't) **and that you *may* not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined,**

The circumcision of the flesh was to be a reminder to them that they were God's people. Thus, they should use their bodies in a physically holy manner. The *tzitzith* were for their garments to remind them of acting in spiritual holiness. There is harlotry of the body, and there is harlotry of the heart. Their eyes would incline them to both.

For the tassels, they were to help them as a constant reminder to focus on God's law, and not on pursuing pagan and idolatrous practices. Unfortunately, these very ends of their garments became a source of personal idolatry. Jesus rebuked the leaders of Israel for this in Matthew 23

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“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. ⁴ For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. ⁵ But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.’” Matthew 23:1-5

The enlarging of the borders of their garments is speaking of this practice. It was a way of pretending to be more pious than others, by showing off their desire to follow and do the Lord's commands, more than anyone else. It is like the guy that brings the most expensive Bible to church, but it is never opened and remains unread. Outward acts of piety rarely match the state of the heart.

⁴⁰ and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.

The first clause repeats what was just said, showing that the purpose of these was set. It was not to be a snazzy adornment that would change with fashion and custom, nor was it one to be used as the Pharisees used them, demonstrating superiority of self over that of others. Rather, it was for the purpose of remembering and doing the Lord's commandments, as well as...

^{40 (con't)} and be holy for your God.

Not in having the tassels, but in doing and keeping the Lord's commandments, they would be holy for their God. The tassels were simply an external reminder intended to ensure spiritual truths were realized in the people. And this is because...

***⁴¹ I *am* the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the Lord your God."**

This is a close repeat of what was last stated in Leviticus 26:45 –

"But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I *am* the Lord."

There towards the end of the chapter, the Lord spoke of His covenant promises, first to Jacob, Issac, and Abraham. Then He spoke of the covenant with people's ancestors who were brought out the land of Egypt. In other words, the Lord referred to both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. It is the Mosaic Covenant which is detailed now, and which is to be remembered by the wearing of these tassels.

The same Lord who has proclaimed that He will always remember this covenant with these people until they are brought into the New Covenant, is telling them to remember this same covenant as well. In fact, he closes out the Old Testament with this thought –

“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

⁶ And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:4-6

The thing about the covenant with Moses is that it promises another Prophet, like Moses, whom they were to hear. It also, during the time of Jeremiah, promises a New Covenant with Israel. Thus, in asking Israel to “Remember the Law of Moses,” it is asking the people to remember that the Law of Moses has an end, and that it only pointed to something greater.

The tassels on their garments, then, actually ask the people to remember... Messiah. They are to remember that He is coming, and that they must hear Him when He speaks. Therefore, the tassels are given as a picture of the coming Christ, just as everything else is. The blue cord contained within them is a reminder not of their fulfillment of the law, but of His. He is the

fulfillment of this beautiful blue cord in the tassel. Hints of this are actually seen in His ministry. This is what it says in Matthew –

“And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. ²¹ For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.’ ²² But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was made well from that hour.”
Matthew 9: 20-22

&

“When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, ³⁶ and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.” Matthew 14:34-36

It is the tassel that they reached for, understanding that He was to be the fulfillment of the law which they were reminded of with the wearing of their own tassels. One was to come who would heal the people, but not just physically. Christ’s mission was to heal the people spiritually as well. This is why this marvelous passage of Numbers ends as it does. It looks forward to the great and glorious Lord who came and walked among us in order to redeem us from the curse of the law.

In the end, everything about this law points to Christ. He is our Sacrifice for sin. Curse removed. He is the One who frees us from the penalty of our presumptuous acts of sin by granting mercy through faith. Curse removed. Though the law demanded death for Sabbath violations, Christ is now our Sabbath rest! Curse removed.

And this is all because He is our Healer – both physically and spiritually. In Him is the fulfillment of the law, and so when we look to Him in faith we can gladly say, “Thank God! Curse removed!” Let us trust in Christ, rest in Christ,

and honor our heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ all of our days.
Yes, may it be so.

Closing Verse: “But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.” Malachi 4:2

Next Week: Numbers 16:1-15 Choose wisely, because unless on the Lord
you call... (Set up for a Fall) (30th Numbers Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and
purpose for you. It may seem at times as if you are lost in a desert,
wandering aimlessly. But the Lord is there, carefully leading you to the Land
of Promise. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for
you and through you.

Remembering and Performing

If you sin unintentionally
And do not observe all these commandments as instructed to do
Which the Lord has spoken to Moses—
All that the Lord has commanded you

By the hand of Moses
From the day the Lord gave commandment and onward
Throughout your generations—
Then it will be, according to this word

If it is unintentionally committed
Without the knowledge of the congregation
-----this violation of His word
That the whole congregation shall offer one young bull
As a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the Lord
With its grain offering and its drink offering
According to the ordinance, so it shall be
And one kid of the goats as a sin offering
As instructed by Me

So the priest shall make atonement
For the whole congregation of the children of Israel
And it shall be forgiven them
For it was unintentional, for them it shall go well
They shall bring their offering
An offering made by fire to the Lord
And their sin offering before the Lord
For their unintended sin, according to this word

It shall be forgiven the whole congregation
Of the children of Israel, so shall it be
And the stranger who dwells among them
Because all the people did it unintentionally
And if a person sins unintentionally
Then he shall bring a female goat
In its first year as a sin offering

Of this, please make careful note
So the priest shall make atonement for the person
Who sins unintentionally, in his sin
When he sins unintentionally before the Lord
To make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him
You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally
For him who is native-born among the children of Israel
And for the stranger who dwells among them
As to you I now instruct and tell

But the person who does anything presumptuously
Whether he is native-born or a stranger, so to you I say
That one brings reproach on the Lord
And he shall be cut off from among his people
-----so it shall be this way

Because he has despised the word of the Lord
And has broken His commandment, in his sin
That person shall be completely cut off
His guilt shall be upon him
Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness
They found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day
And those who found him gathering sticks
Brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation
-----to see what the Lord would say

They put him under guard, which means things were looking grim
Because it had not been explained what should be done to him
Then the Lord said to Moses
“The man must be put to death, surely
All the congregation shall stone him with stones
Outside the camp, so shall it be

So, as the Lord commanded Moses
Yes, as the Lord did decide
All the congregation brought him outside the camp
And stoned him with stones, and he died
Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying
These words to him He was then relaying

“Speak to the children of Israel:
Tell them to make tassels on the corners, so they shall do
Of their garments throughout their generations
And to put in the tassels of the corners a thread of blue
And you shall have the tassel
That you may look upon it
And remember all the commandments of the Lord
And do them, so to you I this law submit

And that you may not follow the harlotry
To which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined
-----in this life as you trod

And that you may remember and do all My commandments
And be holy for your God
I am the Lord your God
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God I am the Lord
your God
So circumspectly you must always tread
Lord God, we are even now in a wilderness
And we are wanting to be led by You
Without You to direct, our lives would be a mess
And so be our guide, O God; You who are faithful and true

We long for the water in this barren land
May it flow forth from the Rock, our souls to satisfy
Give us this refreshing, spiritual hand
And may we take it, and to our lives daily it apply

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to you for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...