

Sermon #09 — *Christ in Numbers*

Title: **GOD REMEMBERS EVERYTHING**

Text: Numbers 7:1-89

Date: Sunday Morning — March 8, 2020

Subject: *God's Blessings of Grace in and by Christ*

Readings: *Mark 14:1-21*

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Introduction:

God remembers everything. If ever you are made to realize that every moment of your life is lived in the sight and company, in the hearing and presence of the all-holy, eternal, omniscient God, you will discover that life is serious business, because God remembers everything. That is the title of my message — **GOD REMEMBERS EVERYTHING**. Our text will be the 7th chapter of the Book of Numbers. **GOD REMEMBERS EVERYTHING** — (Numbers 7:1-89).

This is a very long chapter, the longest chapter in the Book of Numbers (89 verses). Let's read a good portion of it together.

(Numbers 7:1-17) And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and

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had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; (2) That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who *were* the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: (3) And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle. (4) And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (5) Take *it* of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service. (6) And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. (7) Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service: (8) And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. (9) But unto the sons of

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Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them *was that* they should bear upon their shoulders. (10) And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar. (11) And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar. (12) And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah: (13) And his offering *was* one silver charger, the weight thereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them *were* full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: (14) One spoon of ten *shekels* of gold, full of incense: (15) One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: (16) One kid of the goats for a sin offering: (17) And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this

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was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

NO REDUNDANCY

The carnal mind might read the next 66 verse of this chapter and think, “What awkward redundancy!” Indeed, had this chapter been written by man and written merely to record the facts pertaining to these offerings for the dedication of the tabernacle, it would be much shorter. If I were writing it, I would simply list the sacrifices and say each of the twelve princes of the twelve tribes of Israel offered these things, because they all offered exactly the same things and exactly the same amount of each.

But God’s thoughts are not our thoughts and God’s ways are not our ways. In the following verses (vv. 18-83), God the Holy Ghost inspired Moses to give us a detailed account of each man’s name, the tribe he represented, and the offering he brought to the sanctuary of God.

- Each name shines out in its own distinctness.

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- Each offering is minutely described and valued by God, according to the shekel of the sanctuary.

God delights to record every little act of service, every little loving gift. He never forgets the smallest thing. Not only does he not forget it himself, he makes certain that untold millions shall read the record! Those twelve princes of Israel, I am sure, never imagined that their names and their offerings were to be handed down, from age to age, to be read by countless millions!

So in the chapter before us, each prince in Israel gets his own appointed day for the presenting of his offering and his own allotted space on the eternal page of Inspiration, in the which the most complete record of his gifts is inscribed by God the Holy Ghost. — After showing high regard for each gift, the prince that brought it, and the tribe he represented, Moses continues with his inspired record in verse 84.

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(Numbers 7:84-89) This *was* the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: (85) Each charger of silver *weighing* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels *weighed* two thousand and four hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary: (86) The golden spoons *were* twelve, full of incense, *weighing* ten *shekels* apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons *was* an hundred and twenty *shekels*. (87) All the oxen for the burnt offering *were* twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering: and the kids of the goats for sin offering twelve. (88) And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings *were* twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This *was* the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed. (89) And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking

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unto him from off the mercy seat that *was* upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.

Proposition: God remembers everything, and keeps records, records by which he will judge all men (Daniel 7:10).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12). — Each one of us has a book that our great God is keeping on us. The things written in these books are official records in the Court of Heaven of the deeds of men, records by which all shall be judged in the last day. — That fact ought to get your attention.

OFFERINGS BROUGHT

The 12 princes of the 12 tribes of Israel brought their

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offerings to the Levites in six covered wagons pulled by twelve oxen.

The number 12 is a significant number in Scripture.

- 12 Sons of Jacob
- 12 Tribes of Israel
- 12 Apostles
- 12 Gates to the New Jerusalem
- 12 Angels at the Gates

Twelve represents the whole church of God's elect, the whole Israel of God, the whole body of Christ.

Everything involved in the worship of God was carried from place to place by six covered wagons.

All the tabernacle materials were carried in these wagons.

- There are no holy places in this world.
- Everything on earth, even the ordinances of divine worship, are moveable and temporary. — Only God our Savior is immoveable, unchangeable, and eternal (Malachi 3:6;

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Hebrews 13:8).

- The worship of God, all true worship is spiritual (John 4:23-24; Philippians 3:3)

How condescending, how gracious, how good God is! He has established his church in this world, the gathering of his elect in public worship and in that place, in the house of God, the church of the living God, God meets with, speaks to, and makes himself known to men (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:22; 1 Timothy 3:15-16).

SILVER AND GOLD

These offerings were substantial, costly offerings of silver and gold.

(Numbers 7:84-86) This *was* the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: (85) Each charger of silver *weighing* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, each bowl seventy: all the silver

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vessels *weighed* two thousand and four hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary: (86) The golden spoons *were* twelve, full of incense, *weighing* ten *shekels* apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons *was* an hundred and twenty *shekels*.

- Silver speaks of atonement and truth.
- Gold speaks of our Savior's eternal Godhead.

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and only by mercy and truth, only by the satisfaction of justice by the doing and dying of the Son of God (Proverbs 16:6; Psalm 85:10). Only in the cross of Christ can mercy and truth meet together. Only in the crucified Christ can righteousness and peace kiss each other.

THREE MEN

These gifts were given to the Levites, those men who spent their lives in doing the service of the tabernacle. Three men are mentioned: Merari, Gershon, and Kohath. The gifts were divided to them

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according to the work assigned to them.

Merari's job was to manage the pillars, sockets, pins, and cords that held those linen curtains that surrounded the courtyard of the tabernacle. He and his sons were assigned the task of keeping accurate records of every item. They had to account for each item when the tabernacle was taken down and put back up again. And they bore those items from place to place (4:29-33).

Gershon's job was to bear and maintain all the curtains and various skin coverings, and the things which held them in place as the tabernacle was moved from place to place in the wilderness (4:21-28).

The offerings of these 12 princes were divided between Merari and Gershon.

- two wagons and four oxen to Gershon
- and 4 wagons and 8 oxen to Merari.

The amount given was proportionate to the labor involved in the tasks. Both these men were involved

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with the exterior elements of the tabernacle.

But none of the offerings were given to Kohath. He and his sons were the bearers of the furniture of the tabernacle. — **These Kohathites distinctly represented our Savior, the Lord Jesus.**

They were the ones who put the golden staves in the rings and bore **the brazen altar**. — That brazen altar was the place of sacrifice. It represented the place (Mt. Calvary) where our Lord Jesus Christ offered himself as a sacrifice to God to make satisfaction for our sins.

These men also carried **the laver**. — This laver was the place where the priests of God bathed and cleansed themselves. It speaks of Christ our cleansing fount and the washing of the water by the word, as faith is worked in us by his Spirit (Zechariah 13:1; Titus 3:3-5).

The men of Kohath carried the golden **lampstand**. — Christ, the Light of the World, the Light of God.

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They carried the **table of showbread**. — Christ the Bread of Heaven, the Bread of Life, the Bread upon which we Feed! The sons of Kohath carried on their shoulders the **altar of incense**. — Christ our Intercessor and Advocate. And they carried **the ark of the covenant**. — Christ our Mercy Seat, Atonement, and Propitiation. — The revelation of the glory of God.

The typology is as plain and clear as the nose on your face. — The Sons of Kohath in their work typified the Lord Jesus Christ in his work of redemption. Merari and Gershon portray the church needing the help of God and one another's help, using natural things to carry on their tasks. — We cannot bear our burdens alone. We must have help.

But Kohath pictures Christ accomplishing the work of salvation alone. He suffered and died alone. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree alone. He, by himself, purged our sins. He neither needed nor received help from anyone. He neither needed

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nor received anything from men in order to accomplish the task before him (Isaiah 63:1-5).

(Isaiah 63:1-5) Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (2) Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. (5) And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.

DIVINE RECORD

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Verses 12-83 give us a precise and exact accounting by God, a divine record, of every item offered by these twelve princes. Every prince is named by name and everything that he gave is listed down to the last farthing. If you will read the entire chapter, you will see that each prince brought and gave exactly the same gifts.

Do you see how thorough the accounting is? It is the same with every prince and his offering. God kept the record of everything that his princes gave to him, every sacrifice they made, every offering. God remembered it all, and he did so with precise exactness.

OUR WORKS

We have before us, in picture, wonderful encouragement concerning our lives as God's people in this world, assuring us that in Christ, being one with the Lord Jesus Christ, our works, our service, our lives, and our persons are accepted with God in him.

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We have great difficulty thinking about, let alone speaking of, our works. We are much more comfortable speaking of the works of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and rightly so.

- Any proclamation of personal virtue is always suspect.
- The believer is hard pressed to see anything he does as good.
- And there is sin in all that we do, no matter how noble the intention or how taxing the labor (Romans 7:15-25).

(Romans 7:15-25) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would

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not, that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

- The Lord Jesus teaches us plainly that after we have done all our duty we must confess that we are most unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10).
- We know that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).
- If we are pressed to honestly recall anything that we have done for God and his glory we cringe, for we know that all we do contains so much of self that we dare not claim it as worthwhile.

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- We also know that we are told to maintain good works (Titus 3:8) and that God every believer to walk in a life of good works (Ephesians 2:10).
- We know that our giving is rarely sacrificial, for it flows from our abundance.
- We know that, more often than not. our prayers are little more that flowery phrases intended to impress God and others.
- We know that our love for God and for the brethren is frail and weak and often changes due to circumstance.

What are we to do? Look away. Look out yonder to the One who sits on the throne, who is the Measurer of all things and as he accounts a thing, that is precisely the way it is. — Christ is our acceptance. We are truly one with him. God accepts us, and accepts our works in him as works of perfect righteousness.

Look at these twelve princes, sinners all. And remember that God raised you from the dung-hill and set you among princes. And note well that the

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princes did not give an account, it was God. Also note that **God remembered their offerings on an individual basis** — “*each prince on his day.*” Every prince made his offering for the consecration and glory of the tabernacle on his day.

This speaks of an appointed time, when your good works will be done. Our works are ordained of God and will be accomplished at God’s appointed time, on our day. Let us be about the business of worship and prayer and serving the people of God. God will do the accounting.

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But this is the good news. — He will remember precisely, exactly and will account for every one of them. In the end he will say to you, if you are his, “*Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*”

While rich men cast large sums money into the treasury, Christ remembered and called it to our attention by writing it in his book, the poor **widow’s**

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mite. They gave of their abundance. She gave her life. She gave all she had, went home to an empty cupboard and lay down in the arms of him who had given her everything according to the riches of his grace. Christ remembered and used her as example of what it is to give.

The harlot who broke open the alabaster box of ointment, and poured it on her Master's head to anoint him for his burial, was despised by the disciples, but Christ remembered and fixed it so that all his people would also remember (Mark 14:3-9).

Neither one of those women built a church building, cast out a devil, nailed 99 theses to a church door and began a revolution. They did not sit at the synod of Dort and argue against Arminianism. They did what they could and what they did is recorded in the everlasting Word of God (Matthew 25:34-40; Mark 9:41). — God accepts us, accepts our sacrifices, accepts our works, accepts our service, accepts our lives in Christ (Romans 1:1-16; Ecclesiastes 9:7-10).

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(Romans 16:1-16) I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: (2) That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. (3) Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: (4) Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. (5) Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. (6) Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. (7) Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. (8) Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. (9) Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. (10) Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*. (11) Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of

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Narcissus, which are in the Lord. (12) Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. (13) Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. (14) Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. (15) Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. (16) Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

(Ecclesiastes 9:7-10) Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. (8) Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. (9) Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. (10) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work,

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nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

In that great day when the record books of heaven are opened, God will find nothing in them about us, except holiness, righteousness, and goodness.

— God remembers everything, except his people's sin (Hebrews 6:10; Revelation 2:2; 14:13).

(Jeremiah 50:20) In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall be* none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

(Hebrews 6:10) For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

(Revelation 2:2) I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried

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them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.

(Revelation 14:13) And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

THE MERCY SEAT

These things God spoke to Moses from the Mercy Seat. — Hear me now — God only speaks to sinners from, through, in, and by the Mercy Seat, Christ Jesus. If God comes to you, he must come only in Christ, only by the Mercy Seat. If you come to God, you must come only in Christ, only by the Mercy Seat (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 7:25). In this business of Salvation, “*Christ is all!*”

Like the twelve princes of Israel, all who are born of God bring exactly the same thing to God, exactly the same sacrifice, exactly the same righteousness,

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exactly the same obedience, exactly the same perfection, exactly the same life of good works. — We bring nothing to God but Christ. He is our freewill offering. And God accepts us in him, by him, and with him. And God who remembers everything shall reward us accordingly.

Look at the last two verses of Leviticus 7. Here the Holy Spirit lumps all these sacrifices together, as if to declare that all these great sacrifices of divine worship and all the instructions concerning them are for one great purpose. — The sacrifices were all given to point sinners to Christ. They were all typical of Christ. And all have been fulfilled by Christ (Leviticus 7:37-38; Hebrews 10:10-14).

“This *is* the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings; Which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of

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Israel to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai.”

Christ is what we bring to God. He is our Atonement, Silver of Ransom and our Gold, our God of infinite worth, our Mercy and our Truth. He is our Incense of Acceptance, well-pleasing to God.

- Christ is our true Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1; Ephesians 4:32-5:2).
- The Lord Jesus Christ is our true Meat Offering, our Offering of Firstfruits (Leviticus 2; 1 Corinthians 15:19-23).
- Our Savior is our true Peace Offering (Leviticus 3; Romans 4:25-5:11).
- He is our one and only Sin Offering (Leviticus 4; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Galatians 3:13-14).
- The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God himself, is our only and our true Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5; Isaiah 53:1-12).
- Christ is our Altar of earth, the Altar of God’s making, by which we come to God.

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Christ is our Sacrifice, in whom alone sinners have access to and acceptance with the holy Lord God. He is the Burnt-offering, the Meat-offering, the Peace-offering, the Sin-offering, and the Trespass-offering for all his people. If we would come to God, we must come to God by him. Blessed be his name, we can and do come to God by him.

Amen.