

Message #8**Numbers 7:1-89**

God does not speak to or through every church. I am convinced of that. Now most churches claim they are right with God and most churches typically offer some type of evidence that they claim proves it. Big numbers is one such example of evidence. Big offerings are another example. But the truth is, God's power and presence are only on those who meet His criteria and His criteria demands dedication, reverence and proper and acceptable offerings.

What you cannot help but notice when you come to this chapter is that there are 89 verses in it and most of those verses have to do with offerings and gifts. God's people were heading to great blessings and Moses wanted to show the attitude and the reverence they had for God that would lead to those blessings.

There should be an overwhelming outpouring of generosity among the people of God. They should willingly want to give to the Lord and the leaders needed to be an example of it. If the leaders don't give to the Lord, then it is hypocritical to ask the people to do it.

There is no question that Moses knew the importance of this place being dedicated to God. Each of the Tribes would want this place dedicated to God. Each tribe needed to reverence God and each tribe needed to share by giving their offerings to God. If they would do that God would bless them.

God will not bless or use Israel or anyone for that matter who does not give Him the reverence and respect He deserves. Anyone who neglects and refuses to honor God will suffer and there is no possible way God will display His glory to it or through it.

IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT GOD WILL GREATLY BLESS, EVERYTHING, INCLUDING THE PLACE OF WORSHIP AND THE LEADERSHIP, MUST BE DEDICATED TO GOD AND THE PEOPLE WILL HAVE A DESIRE TO BRING GENEROUS OFFERINGS TO GOD.

Before God would shower this nation with His blessings and before He would display His glorious presence with His people, He needed to be esteemed at the proper level.

Things needed to be consecrated and dedicated to Him. There is a difference between the secular and the sacred. When it comes to worship, God expects a reverence and respect. He expects this of the property and the people.

One commentator said there are really only two essential pieces of information in this chapter, "what the people gave to the Lord and the attitude with which they gave it" (Iain M. Duguid, *Numbers*, p. 98).

Now this chapter has four specific actions in it:

ACTION #1 – Moses anointed and consecrated the tabernacle and all its furnishings. **7:1**

The first thing Moses did once the Tabernacle was set up was anoint it, consecrate it and dedicate it to God. We learn from Exodus 40 that on the first day of the first month in the second year after Israel had been delivered from Egypt, the Tabernacle was up and Moses dedicated it to the LORD.

This was a special place of worship for Israel and Moses dedicated everything. Now it is not enough for Moses to recognize how sacred a place this is; it is also important that the people realize how sacred a place this is.

ACTION #2- The leaders of the people brought all of their offerings for the dedication. **7:2-83**

Do not overlook what is said in **verse 2**: “then the leaders of Israel.” If you don’t have leaders who realize the importance of the sacred place of worship and if you don’t have leaders who by example show the importance of giving offerings to God, you will not have God’s blessings.

Now this was a great moment in Israel’s history. **The leaders were so desirous of having such a wonderful relationship with God that they brought their offerings.** Moses saw this as such a meaningful and important event that he recorded each leader separately, even though the offerings are identical.

The various leaders of the tribes brought their offerings. There is no place where they were commanded to do this. **This was not a required offering; but apparently the people so realized that this Tabernacle was a very special, sacred place of worship that they voluntarily and willingly gave an amazing offering.** In fact, this must have been an amazing surprise to the priests and Moses because in **verse 5**, God told them to accept the offering and use it to support the Levites.

According to **verse 3** they showed up with six covered carts, twelve oxen, a cart for every two leaders and an ox for every tribe. When they presented them to Moses, God told him to accept them (**verses 4-5**). He was to take this and give it to the Levites for their service.

These offerings came as a shock to Moses. He had been given very specific offerings that were to be given to the Lord, but what was happening here was not in the list of things but God said accept these offerings.

Sometimes God’s people will bring offerings over and above what God even reveals in His Word. Sometimes people so reverence God and love God that they just give things or give themselves to the Lord’s church in ways beyond the norm.

Now it is important that Moses the leader find out if it were acceptable to God. Let’s suppose that some people in the church just decided to bring a special offering to the church to buy electric guitars and drum sets for the church.

The leadership would need to be in charge of whether or not that was an acceptable gift. So this was important for Moses to know. Now according to **verses 6-9**, the carts and the oxen were distributed to the Levites in accordance with their needs.

The Gershonites, who had to carry the curtains (Num. 4:24-26) needed two carts and four oxen (**v. 7**).

Four carts went to the Merarites, the least significant group, but the group who had to do the greatest amount of lifting. They were responsible to move the frames, posts and bases of the tabernacle (v. 31:32) (**v. 8**).

According to **verse 9**, the Kohathites did not receive any carts because their cargo was the ark of the covenant and the content of the Holy of Holies, which they carried with special hand-carried poles.

This was not a philosophy of share the wealth equally. God knows what is needed by each individual priest and He supplies what is needed and wise are those leaders who understand that.

This is interesting because if you would have just looked at the amount that went to each of the Levites, you would assume that the most prestigious got the most. Truth is the most prestigious didn't get anything. They were privileged to be able to carry the holy items, including the Word of God.

Now in **verses 10-83**, the leaders each present their dedication offerings, one per day for twelve days.

Now the actual offering consisted of a silver bowl or plate and a sprinkling bowl each filled with fine flour mixed with oil. A gold dish filled with incense, a young bull, a ram, and a male lamb for a burnt offering, followed by one male goat for a sin offering. To conclude the offerings they also brought two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs.

Day #1 - The Offering of Nahshon the son of Amminidab of the tribe of Judah. **7:12-17**

Day #2 - The Offering Of Nethanel the son of Zuar of the tribe of Issachar. **7:18-23**

Day #3 - The Offering of Eliab the son of Helon of the tribe of Zebulun. **7:24-29**

Day #4 - The offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur of the tribe of Reuben. **7:30-35**

Day #5 - The offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai of the tribe of Simeon. **7:36-41**

Day #6 - The offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel of the tribe of Gad. **7:42-47**

Day #7 - The offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud of the tribe of Ephraim. **7:48-53**

Day #8 - The offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur of the tribe of Manasseh. 7:54-59

Day #9 - The offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni of the tribe of Benjamin. 7:60-65

Day #10 - The offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai of the tribe of Dan. 7:66-71

Day #11 - The offering of Pagiel the son of Ochron of the tribe of Asher. 7:72-77

Day #12 - The offering of Ahira the son of Enan of the tribe of Naphtali. 7:78-83

What we see is that these offerings were given in a systematic way and they were given by faithful leaders who represented their tribes faithfully. It is no wonder that God fellowshiped with these people. They revered Him and gave of their substance to Him and He blessed them for that.

ACTION #3 – Moses gives a summary of every offering that was given at the dedication.
7:84-88

This apparently was such a monumental moment that Moses, who is writing the inspired Word of God, gave a recap of this amazing offering. This was such an unusual event that Moses summarized the offering.

They gave twelve silver plates; each amounting to 130 shekels.

They gave twelve silver bowls; each amounting to 70 shekels.

They gave twelve golden dishes; each totally 10 shekels.

They gave twelve oxen.

They gave twelve bulls.

They gave twelve rams.

They gave twelve male lambs with their grain offerings.

They gave twelve male goats with their sin offerings.

They gave 24 bull oxen for peace offerings.

They gave 60 rams.

They gave 60 goats.

They gave 60 one year old male lambs.

They gave all of this of their own volition after everything had been dedicated to God. This was an overwhelming, unsolicited outpouring of love for God that came from each person and every tribe in Israel. This was an amazing offering.

ACTION #4 – God accepted the dedication and spoke to Moses. **7:89**

Notice the conjunction “now” that begins the verse. Because these people loved God and willingly gave their offerings, God came to their midst. God spoke to Moses and through Moses.

God does keep track of offerings His people give. He sees the real value of the offering. He sees the sacrifice behind the offering. When He sees that His people love Him and want to sacrificially give to Him, He will truly bless them.

Now this passage of Scripture may be applicable to us in many ways and prompt us to ask ourselves some very personal questions. By the way, there were no emotional “guilt-driven appeals” made to solicit this offering. But I do think it is legitimate for each of us to ask some introspective questions:

- 1) Do I view the church as a sacred place dedicated to God that is worthy of my offerings?
- 2) Do I ever give offerings to God over and above the normal offerings simply because I love Him and reverence Him?
- 3) Does God accept my offering because He knows I give it sacrificially out of My love for Him?
- 4) Have I ever looked around the church and spotted a need and over and above my regular offering and gone to a leader and sought to meet it?