

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

MARCH 1-7

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 7-8

"Lessons From the Camp of Israel"

it-1 497 ¶3

Congregation

In Israel responsible representatives often acted in behalf of the people. (Ezr 10:14) Thus, "chieftains of the tribes" made presentations after the setting up of the tabernacle. (Nu 7:1-11) Also, representatively attesting by seal the "trustworthy arrangement" of Nehemiah's day were priests, Levites, and "the heads of the people." (Ne 9:38-10:27) During Israel's wilderness trek, there were "chieftains of the assembly, summoned ones of the meeting, men of fame," 250 of whom joined Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On in congregating themselves against Moses and Aaron. (Nu 16:1-3) In keeping with divine direction, Moses selected 70 of the older men of Israel who were officers to help him carry "the load of the people" that he was unable to bear alone. (Nu 11:16, 17, 24, 25) Leviticus 4:15 mentions "the older men of the assembly," and it appears that the representatives of the people were the nation's older men, its heads, its judges, and its officers.—Nu 1:4, 16; Jos 23:2; 24:1.

it-2 796 ¶1

Reuben

In the camp of Israel the Reubenites, flanked by the descendants of Simeon and Gad, were situated on the S side of the tabernacle. When on the march this three-tribe division headed by Reuben followed

the three-tribe division of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. (Nu 2:10-16; 10:14-20) This was also the order in which the tribes made their presentation offerings on the day the tabernacle was inaugurated.—Nu 7:1, 2, 10-47.

w04 8/1 25 ¶1

Highlights From the Book of Numbers

8:25, 26. To fill the positions of the Levite service properly, and out of consideration for their age, older men were commanded to retire from compulsory service. However, they could volunteer to assist other Levites. While there is no retirement from being a Kingdom proclaimer today, the principle of this law teaches a valuable lesson. If because of advanced age a Christian cannot fulfill certain obligations, he may engage in a form of service that is within his power to perform.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 835

Firstborn, Firstling

Since the firstborn sons among the Israelites were those in line to become the heads of the various households, they represented the entire nation. Jehovah, in fact, referred to the whole nation as his "firstborn," it being his firstborn nation because of the Abrahamic covenant. (Ex 4:22) In view of his having preserved their lives, Jehovah commanded that "every male firstborn that opens each womb among the sons of Israel, among men and beasts," be sanctified to him. (Ex 13:2) Thus, the firstborn sons were devoted to God.

MARCH 8-14

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 9-10

"How Jehovah Leads His People"

it-1 398 ¶3

Camp

Movement of this vast camp from one site to another (about 40 such encampments are reviewed by Moses in Numbers 33) was also a marvelous display of organization. As long as the cloud rested over the tabernacle, the camp remained in place. When the cloud moved, the camp moved. "At the order of Jehovah they would encamp, and at the order of Jehovah they would pull away." (Nu 9:15-23) Two hammered silver trumpets communicated these orders of Jehovah to the camp in general. (Nu 10:2, 5, 6) Special fluctuating blasts signaled the breaking up of the camp. The first time this occurred was "the second year [1512 B.C.E.], in the second month, on the twentieth day." With the ark of the covenant in the lead, the first three-tribe division headed by Judah and followed by Issachar, then Zebulun, moved out. They were followed by the Gershonites and Merarites carrying their assigned parts of the tabernacle. Next came the three-tribe division headed by Reuben and followed by Simeon and Gad. After them came the Kohathites with the sanctuary, then the third three-tribe division, of Ephraim, followed by Manasseh and Benjamin. Finally, in the rear guard was the division headed by Dan and accompanied by Asher and Naphtali. Thus the two most numerous and powerful divisions took the positions of forward and rear guard.—Nu 10:11-28.

w11 4/15 4-5

Do You Discern the Evidence of God's Guidance?

How can we show that we appreciate God's guidance? The apostle Paul said: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive." (Heb. 13:17) Doing so may not always be easy. To illustrate: Put yourself in the place of an Israelite in Moses' day. Imagine that after you have been walking for some time, the pillar comes to a halt. How long will it stay there? A day? A week? Several months? You wonder, 'Is it worth unpacking all my possessions?' First, you may unpack only the most necessary items. Yet, after a few days, frustrated at searching through your belongings, you begin to unpack everything. But then, just when you have about finished unpacking, you see the pillar lifting—and you have to start packing again! That would not be so easy or convenient. Still, the Israelites had to "pull away right afterward."—Num. 9:17-22.

How, then, do we react when we receive divine direction? Do we try to apply it "right afterward"? Or do we continue doing things just as we have been accustomed to doing them? Are we familiar with up-to-date directions, such as those regarding conducting home Bible studies, preaching to foreign-speaking people, regularly sharing in family worship, cooperating with Hospital Liaison Committees, and conducting ourselves properly at conventions? We also show our appreciation for God's guidance by accepting counsel. When faced with far-reaching decisions, we do not trust in our own wisdom but look to Jehovah and his organization for guidance. And just as a child seeks his parents'

protection when a storm rages, we seek protection in Jehovah's organization when, like a thunderstorm, the problems of this world strike us.

Spiritual Gems

***it-1* 199 ¶3 Assembly**

Importance of Assembling. The importance of taking full advantage of Jehovah's provisions for assembling to gain spiritual benefits is emphasized in connection with the annual Passover observance. Any male who was clean and was not on a journey but who neglected to keep the Passover was to be cut off in death. (Nu 9:9-14) When King Hezekiah called inhabitants of Judah and Israel to Jerusalem for a Passover celebration, his message was, in part: "You sons of Israel, return to Jehovah . . . do not stiffen your neck as your forefathers did. Give place to Jehovah and come to his sanctuary that he has sanctified to time indefinite and serve Jehovah your God, that his burning anger may turn back from you. . . . Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and he will not turn away the face from you if you return to him." (2Ch 30:6-9) Willful failure to attend would certainly have indicated a forsaking of God. And, while such festivals as the Passover are not observed by Christians, Paul fittingly urged them not to abandon regular assemblies of God's people, stating: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near."—Heb 10:24, 25; see CONGREGATION.

MARCH 15-21

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 11-12

"Why Avoid a Complaining Spirit?"

***w01* 6/15 17 ¶20**

Do Not Become Forgetful Hearers

²⁰The vast majority of Christians never succumb to sexual immorality. Yet, we need to be careful that we do not allow ourselves to pursue a course that leads to a pattern of murmuring that could result in divine disapproval. Paul admonishes us: "Neither let us put Jehovah to the test, as some of [the Israelites] put him to the test, only to perish by the serpents. Neither be murmurers, just as some of them murmured, only to perish by the destroyer." (1 Corinthians 10:9, 10) The Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron—yes, even against God himself—complaining about the miraculously provided manna. (Numbers 16:41; 21:5) Was Jehovah less offended by their murmuring than by their fornication? The Bible account shows that many murmurers were killed by serpents. (Numbers 21:6) On an earlier occasion, more than 14,700 rebellious murmurers were destroyed. (Numbers 16:49) So let us not put Jehovah's patience to the test by treating his provisions with disrespect.

***w06* 7/15 15 ¶17**

'Keep Free From Murmurings'

⁷How Israel's spirit had changed! Initial gratitude for their release from Egypt and deliverance through the Red Sea had moved them to sing praises to Jehovah. (Exodus 15:1-21) Faced with the discomforts of the wilderness and fearful of the Canaanites, however, the gratitude of

God's people was replaced by a spirit of discontent. Instead of thanking God for their freedom, they blamed him for what they wrongly viewed as deprivation. Murmuring was thus an expression of lack of proper appreciation for Jehovah's provisions. No wonder he said: "How long will this evil assembly have this murmuring that they are carrying on against me?"—Numbers 14:27; 21:5.

it-2 719 ¶4

Quarrel

Murmuring. Murmuring discourages and tears down. The Israelites, not long out of Egypt, murmured against Jehovah, finding fault with the leadership that he provided by his servants Moses and Aaron. (Ex 16: 2, 7) Later their complaints so discouraged Moses that he asked to die. (Nu 11:13-15) Murmuring can be a deadly danger to the murmurer. Jehovah counted the things said by murmurers about Moses as actually being a rebellious complaint against His own divine leadership. (Nu 14:26-30) Many lost their lives as a result of faultfinding.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 309

Manna

Description. Manna was "white like coriander seed" and had the "look" of bdellium gum, a waxlike and transparent substance having a form that resembles a pearl. Its taste was comparable to "that of flat cakes with honey" or "an oiled sweet cake." After being ground in a hand mill or pounded in a mortar, manna was boiled or made into cakes and baked.—Ex 16:23, 31; Nu 11:7, 8.

MARCH 22-28

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 13-14

"How Faith Makes Us Courageous"

w06 10/1 16-17 ¶5-6

Courageous Through Faith and Godly Fear

⁵ Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, however, were eager to enter the Promised Land. The Canaanites "are bread to us," they said. "Their shelter has turned away from over them, and Jehovah is with us. Do not fear them." (Numbers 14:9) Were Joshua and Caleb being foolishly optimistic? By no means! Along with the rest of the nation, they had seen Jehovah humiliate mighty Egypt and its gods by means of the Ten Plagues. Then they saw Jehovah drown Pharaoh and his military force in the Red Sea. (Psalm 136:15) Clearly, the fear shown by the ten spies and those who were influenced by them was inexcusable. "How long will they not put faith in me for all the signs that I performed in among them?" said Jehovah, expressing his deep hurt.—Numbers 14:11.

⁶ Jehovah went right to the heart of the problem—the cowardly attitude of the people betrayed their lack of faith. Yes, faith and courage are intimately related, so much so that the apostle John could write concerning the Christian congregation and its spiritual warfare: "This is the conquest that has conquered the world, our faith." (1 John 5:4) Today, faith like that of Joshua and Caleb has resulted in the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom worldwide by over six million Witnesses of Jehovah, young and old, strong and frail. No enemy has been able to silence this mighty, courageous army.—Romans 8:31.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 740

The Land That God Gave to Israel

THE land that God gave to Israel was indeed a good land. When Moses sent spies ahead of the nation to explore the Promised Land and to obtain samples of its produce, they brought back figs, pomegranates, and a cluster of grapes that was so large that two men carried it between them on a bar! Though they drew back in fear because of lack of faith, they did report: The land “is indeed flowing with milk and honey.”—Nu 13:23, 27.

MARCH 29–APRIL 4

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | NUMBERS 15-16

“Beware of Pride and Overconfidence”

w11 9/15 27 ¶12

Are You Known by Jehovah?

¹² Nevertheless, while the nation of Israel was en route to the Promised Land, Korah perceived what he imagined to be problems in God’s arrangement. Then 250 other leading men in the nation sided with Korah in trying to make changes. Korah and the others must have felt secure about their relationship with Jehovah. They told Moses: “That is enough of you, because the whole assembly are all of them holy and Jehovah is in their midst.” (Num. 16: 1-3) What an overconfident and prideful attitude! Moses told them: “Jehovah will make known who belongs to him.” (**Read Numbers 16:5.**) By the end of the next day, Korah and all those who had sided with him in rebellion were dead.—Num. 16:31-35.

w11 9/15 27 ¶11

Are You Known by Jehovah?

¹¹ Moses and Korah stand in sharp contrast when it comes to demonstrating respect for Jehovah’s arrangement and his decisions. Their reactions had a bearing on how Jehovah viewed them. Korah was a Kohathite Levite, and he enjoyed many privileges, which likely included seeing the deliverance of the nation through the Red Sea, supporting Jehovah’s judgment against disobedient Israelites at Mount Sinai, and having a role in transporting the ark of the covenant. (Ex. 32:26-29; Num. 3:30, 31) He had evidently been loyal to Jehovah for years and was subsequently looked up to by many in the camp of Israel.

Spiritual Gems

w98 9/1 20 ¶1-2

Be Sure to Put First Things First!

Jehovah viewed the case more seriously. “In time,” the Bible states, “Jehovah said to Moses: ‘Without fail the man should be put to death.’” (Numbers 15:35) Why did Jehovah feel so strongly about what the man did?

The people had six days to gather wood as well as to handle their needs regarding food, clothing, and shelter. The seventh day was to be devoted to their spiritual needs. While it was not wrong to gather wood, it was wrong to use time that should have been set aside to worship Jehovah to do so. Although Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, does this incident not teach us a lesson in properly setting our priorities today?—Philippians 1:10.

APRIL 5-11

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 17-19

"I Am . . . Your Inheritance"

w11 9/15 13 ¶9

Are You Letting Jehovah Be Your Share?

⁹ Think of the Levites, who did not receive a land inheritance. Since pure worship was their primary concern, for sustenance they had to rely on Jehovah, who told them: "I am your share." (Num. 18:20) Although we are not serving at a literal temple as the priests and Levites did, we can imitate their spirit, having confidence that Jehovah will provide for us. Our trust in God's power to provide becomes more and more important as we move deeper into the last days.—Rev. 13:17.

w11 9/15 7 ¶4

Jehovah Is My Share

⁴ What did that assignment mean for the Levites? Jehovah said that he was to be their share in the sense that rather than receiving a land inheritance, they were entrusted with a priceless privilege of service. Being "the priesthood of Jehovah" was their inheritance. (Josh. 18:7) The context of Numbers 18:20 shows that this did not leave them impoverished materially. (**Read Numbers 18:19, 21, 24.**) The Levites were to be given "every tenth part in Israel as an inheritance in return for their service." They would receive 10 percent of Israel's produce and of the increase of the domestic animals. In turn, the Levites were to contribute a tenth part of what they received, "of the very best of it," for the support of the priesthood. (Num. 18:25-29) The priests were

also given "all the holy contributions" that the sons of Israel brought to God at his place of worship. Members of the priesthood thus had good reason for believing that Jehovah would provide for them.

Spiritual Gems

g02 6/8 14 ¶2

Salt—A Precious Commodity

Salt also became a symbol of stability and permanence. Therefore, in the Bible a binding covenant was called "a covenant of salt," the parties often eating a meal together, with salt, to seal it. (Numbers 18:19) Under Mosaic Law, salt was to be added to sacrifices offered on the altar, doubtless denoting freedom from corruption or decay.

APRIL 12-18

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 20-21

"Maintain Your Meekness When Under Pressure"

w19.02 12 ¶19

Seek Meekness and Please Jehovah

¹⁹ **We will avoid making mistakes.** Think again about Moses. For decades he remained meek and pleased Jehovah. Then, toward the end of the difficult 40-year journey in the wilderness, Moses failed to display meekness. His sister, most likely the one who helped save his life in Egypt, had just died and was buried at Kadesh. And now once again the Israelites were insisting that they were not being cared for properly. This time they were "quarreling with Moses" over a lack of water. Despite all the miracles that Jehovah had

performed through Moses and despite Moses' long record of unselfish leadership, the people complained. They complained not only about the lack of water but also about Moses, as if it were his fault that they were thirsty.—Num. 20:1-5, 9-11.

w19.02 13 ¶20-21

Seek Meekness and Please Jehovah

²⁰ In the heat of anger, Moses lost his mild disposition. Rather than speak in faith to the rock, as Jehovah had commanded, Moses spoke in bitterness to the people and gave credit to himself. Then, he struck the rock twice and much water gushed out. Pride and anger caused him to make a painful mistake. (Ps. 106:32, 33) For his temporary lack of meekness, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land.—Num. 20:12.

²¹ From this incident, we learn valuable lessons. First, we must constantly work at maintaining our meek attitude. If we neglect it for a moment, pride may reassert itself and cause us to speak and act foolishly. Second, stress can weaken us, so we must strive to be meek, even when we are under pressure.

w09 9/1 19 ¶5

A Judge Who Is Firm for What Is Right

First, God had not directed Moses to speak to the people, let alone adjudge them rebels. Second, Moses and Aaron failed to glorify God. “You did not . . . sanctify me,” God said. (Verse 12) By saying “we shall bring out water,” Moses spoke as if he and Aaron—not God—were the providers of miraculous water. Third, the sentence was consistent with past judgments. God had denied the earlier generation of rebels entrance into Canaan,

so he did the same with Moses and Aaron. (Numbers 14:22, 23) Fourth, Moses and Aaron were Israel's leaders. Those with much responsibility have greater accountability to God.—Luke 12:48.

Spiritual Gems

w14 6/15 26 ¶12

Do You View Human Weakness as Jehovah Does?

¹² In each of these situations, Jehovah could have punished Aaron on the spot. But He discerned that Aaron was not a bad person or gravely at fault. It seems that Aaron allowed circumstances or the influence of others to turn him away from the right course. Yet, when he was confronted with his own mistakes, he readily admitted them and supported Jehovah's judgments. (Ex. 32:26; Num. 12:11; 20:23-27) Jehovah chose to focus on Aaron's faith and repentant attitude. Centuries later, Aaron and his descendants were still remembered as fearers of Jehovah.—Ps. 115:10-12; 135:19, 20.

APRIL 19-25

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 22-24

“Jehovah Turns a Curse Into a Blessing”

bt 53 ¶5

Declaring “the Good News About Jesus”

⁵ Today, as in the first century, persecution of God's people has not silenced their preaching. Time and again, forcing Christians to move from one place to another—either prison or another land—has only helped to introduce the Kingdom message to people in the new location. For instance,

during World War II, Jehovah's Witnesses were able to give an outstanding witness in Nazi concentration camps. A Jew who encountered the Witnesses there relates: "The fortitude of prisoners who were Jehovah's Witnesses convinced me that their faith was based on the Scriptures—and I became a Witness myself."

it-2 291 Madness

Madness of Opposition to Jehovah. The prophet Balaam foolishly wanted to prophesy against Israel in order to receive money from King Balak of the Moabites, but Jehovah overruled and prevented his efforts. The apostle Peter wrote about Balaam that "a voiceless beast of burden, making utterance with the voice of a man, hindered the prophet's mad course." For Balaam's madness the apostle used the Greek word *pa·ra·phro·ni'a*, which has the thought of "being beside one's mind." —2Pe 2:15, 16; Nu 22:26-31.

Spiritual Gems

w04 8/1 27 ¶2

Highlights From the Book of Numbers

22:20-22—Why did Jehovah's anger blaze against Balaam? Jehovah had told the prophet Balaam that he should not curse the Israelites. (Numbers 22:12) However, the prophet went with Balak's men with the full intention of cursing Israel. Balaam wanted to please the Moabite king and receive a reward from him. (2 Peter 2:15, 16; Jude 11) Even when Balaam was forced to bless rather than curse Israel, he sought the king's favor by suggesting that Baal-worshipping women be used to seduce Israelite men. (Numbers 31:15, 16) Thus,

the reason for God's anger against Balaam was the prophet's unscrupulous greed.

APRIL 26–MAY 2

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 25-26

"Can One Person Make a Difference?"

Ivs 118 ¶1-2

"Flee From Sexual Immorality!"

A FISHERMAN goes to a spot where he can find the type of fish he wants to catch. He selects the bait and casts his line into the water. He waits patiently, and when the fish bites, he snaps the hook into the fish's jaw and reels in his catch.

²In a similar way, people can be caught. For example, the Israelites had almost reached the Promised Land when they camped on the Plains of Moab. The king of Moab promised to give a man named Balaam a lot of money if he would bring a curse on Israel. Eventually, Balaam found a way to make the Israelites bring a curse on themselves. He carefully chose the bait. He sent young Moabite women into the Israelite camp to seduce the men.—Numbers 22:1-7; 31:15, 16; Revelation 2:14.

Ivs 119 ¶4

"Flee From Sexual Immorality!"

⁴Why did so many Israelites fall for Balaam's plan? They were thinking only of their own selfish pleasure, and they forgot all that Jehovah had done for them. The Israelites had many reasons to be loyal to God. He had freed them from slavery in Egypt, fed them in the wilderness, and brought them safely to the border of the Promised Land. (Hebrews 3:12) Still, they

were seduced by sexual immorality. The apostle Paul wrote: “Neither let us practice sexual immorality, as some of them committed sexual immorality, only to fall.” —1 Corinthians 10:8.

Spiritual Gems

***it-1* 359 ¶1-2**

Boundary

It thus appears that the distribution of the land among the tribes was governed by two factors: the result of the casting of the lot, and the size of the tribe. The lot may have established only the approximate location of the land inheritance each tribe would have, thus designating an inheritance in one section or another of the land, such as to the N or S, E or W, along the coastal plain, or in the mountainous region. The decision of the lot proceeded from Jehovah and hence would serve to prevent jealousy or quarreling among the tribes. (Pr 16:33) By this means God would also guide matters so that the situation of each tribe would fall in accordance with the inspired deathbed prophecy of the patriarch Jacob recorded at Genesis 49:1-33.

After the casting of the lot had determined the geographic location of a tribe, it would then be necessary to determine the extent of its territory on the basis of the second factor: its proportionate size. “You must apportion the land to yourselves as a possession by lot according to your families. To the populous one you should increase his inheritance, and to the sparse one you should reduce his inheritance. To where the lot will come out for him, there it will become his.” (Nu 33:54) The decision of the lot as to the basic geographic loca-

tion would stand, but adjustment could be made as to the size of the inheritance. Thus, when Judah’s territory was found to be too large, its land area was reduced by assigning portions of it to the tribe of Simeon.—Jos 19:9.