

Offerings and Dedications (Chapter 7) The Tent for the LORD

Until now, the narrative in Numbers has been in chronological order. In these chapters (7-9), however, the reader must take a little "sidetrack." Beginning with chapter seven is a section that details the dedication of the Tent of Meeting from Exodus 40. There we had a summary of the dedication services, but here more information is given. It does follow somewhat naturally to talk more about the dedication of the Tabernacle here, since a discussion of the "dedication" of the Nazirite has just been completed in chapter six. As you read these chapters, consider how important God's house was to the Israelites and how they set it apart as a special place of worship.

Vocabulary

Consecrate – to set something aside for service to the LORD; separate and dedicated

Dedication of the Altar

Each tribe brought gifts before the LORD when the tabernacle was dedicated. Together they brought six carts and twelve oxen to be used in the service of the Tent. Then for twelve days, one tribe after another brought special dedication offerings to God. The offerings were identical.

One silver plate (3.75 pounds)

One silver sprinkling bowl (1.75 pounds)

One gold dish (4 ounces)

One young bull, one ram, one male year-old lamb (for burnt offering)

One male goat (for sin offering)

Two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male year-old lambs (for fellowship offering)

- ! Although every tribe's gifts were the same, they are all carefully listed here. Why do you think God chose to record it this way in the Scriptures?
- ! What was significant about the fact that all the gifts were identical?
- ! On what basis does God accept *our* gifts?
- ! The burnt offerings and sin offerings were to take care of the sins of the people. Do you remember the significance of the fellowship offering and meal from Leviticus?

God Speaks

Then Moses entered the Tent of Meeting and God began to speak to him. He heard the voice coming from the Ark of the Covenant.

Dedicating the Levites (Chapter 8)

Positioning the Lamps

First, the LORD gave Moses brief instructions as to how the lamps were supposed to be arranged in the Tent. They were to be positioned so that they lit the area in front of the lampstand, symbolizing the fact that true light comes from God.

Setting Apart the Levites

As we have already learned, the Levites were the "clergy" in Israel, charged with the care and worship surrounding the house of God. Just as the Tent of Meeting was dedicated to the LORD, so the Levites were consecrated that they might serve in God's presence.

- 1) Levites purified – by having the water of cleansing sprinkled on them. Then they were to shave their bodies and wash their clothes.
- 2) Levites offer – The Levites offered two bulls, one for sin offering and one for burnt offering before the LORD.
- 3) Levites offered – The Levites were offered them to the LORD by being "waved" in front of the altar.

After the Levites were consecrated, they were to begin their work in and around the tabernacle. The Levites could serve the Tent until the age of 50 when they had mandatory retirement. The retirees could assist the younger men, but could do none of the actual work themselves.

! Consider how carefully the LORD took care of the tabernacle. How we ought to care for our houses of worship!