

6/11/89

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NUMBERS
"Vindication of Leadership"
Numbers 16:36-17:13

TAKE A VIEW

1. Any cursory study of Numbers 10-16 will reveal the dreadful rebelliousness of Israel. With all that God had done for the nation, it is difficult to see how they could be so antagonistic to God and His appointed leadership.
2. Take note that political leadership (Moses) and religious (Aaron) were both abhorred by the people. Mark it: when people are not right with God, they will often too soon find areas of disagreement with Him. God, have mercy!
3. Whatever, it was clear that the adult population would not get into the promised land (14:30), but the younger generation would (14:31; 15:2).
4. What with God's horrendous judgment over (16:1-35), now what? The Spirit gives three lessons to the people:

1. LESSON #1: SOMETHING TO REMEMBER vv. 36-40

a. What was used v. 36, 37

Here is a direct command of God to take the censers of Korah and his company. These were actually shovels to carry coal back and forth to the altar. The word "hallowed" means holy. This was metal devoted to God (Lev. 27:28).

b. What was done vv. 37, 38, 39

The hallowed shovels were beaten and hammered into sheets to overlay the altar. Eleazar is asked to supervise this project. The burnt offering altar is probably meant, although it was overlaid with bronze (Ex. 38:2) and incense altar with gold (Ex. 30:3).

c. What was remembered vv. 38, 40

The presence of hammered shovels on the altar were a sign (v. 38) and a memorial (v. 40). No one who was not of the seed of Aaron was to draw near to offer incense before the Lord. It is still true that no one is holier than another, but specific roles must be maintained in Israel (and in the Church).

REMEMBER GOD'S ORDER FOR WORSHIP
LESSON #1

2. LESSON #2: SOMETHING TO FEAR vv. 41-50

a. What was said v. 41

It is unbelievable, yet recorded that the very next day the people murmured against Moses and Aaron.

Accusation: Mass killing and that of the Lord's people! This could not go unchallenged.

b. What was done vv. 42-45

The presence of God was seen over the tabernacle. This was God's glory. Obviously, this was a special event. Then, the Lord spoke to Moses about further judgment. This is the third time in this chapter Moses/Aaron fell to the ground (cf. vv. 4, 22, 45).

c. What was ordered vv. 46-50.

Moses commanded Aaron to use a censer to make an atonement for the people. This is obviously divine grace. Note that Aaron actually stood between the dead and the living to stop the plague. What a picture of the Cross of Christ. 14,700 died in the plague (v. 49).

FEAR GOD'S JUDGMENT FOR SIN

LESSON #2

3. LESSON #3 SOMETHING TO ACCEPT 17:1-13

Note: 16:36-50 is 17:1-15; 17:1-13 is 17:16-28 in the Hebrew Bible. This shows the relationship of these incidents to one another.

a. What was intended vv. 5, 10

God was aiming to put to rest the murmuring of Israel. He wanted it to cease forever!

b. What was proposed vv. 1-5

Each tribe (plus Levi) was to bring their staff before the ark of the covenant. Note: Staff and tribe are the same Hebrew term. God's selection for priesthood would sprout! Such a miracle!

c. What was found vv. 6-9

Only Aaron's rod (Levi) budded, blossomed, produced almonds within 12 hours. Incredible!

d. What was concluded vv. 10-13

1) Aaron's rod was to be kept as proof before the testimony against rebellion. 2) People feared they would die.

ACCEPT GOD'S LEADERSHIP

LESSON #3