

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying

Message One : Being Formed into an Army to Fight with God for His Interest on Earth

I. Overview:

It is not accurate to say that Numbers is merely a book of wanderings and repeated failures; Numbers is a book of victory and glory. The central thought of Numbers is that Christ is the meaning of life, the testimony, the center of God's people, and the Leader, the way, and the goal of their journey and fighting. In the Old Testament the Testimony refers to the law, which is a portrait of what God is. The book of Numbers records how God's chosen and redeemed people were formed into a priestly army to fight with God; on the one hand is for fighting the enemies and on the other hand is for maintaining the tabernacle, God's testimony. In the typology of the Old Testament, Canaan has two aspects; on the positive side it typifies Christ with His unsearchable riches and on the negative side it signifies the aerial part, the heavenly part of the kingdom of Satan. The church must be such a corporate warrior, fighting against Satan's aerial forces so that Christ can come back to inherit the earth.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. How can we say that from beginning to end Numbers is a glorious book?

According to man, it is a book of wanderings and repeated failures. From God's speaking, Numbers is not a book of failures but a book of victory and glory. Is it not glorious that on this earth God not only has a dwelling place but also a camp with an army? In the beginning God formed the army, and at the end we have a record of the dividing of the land conquered by this army.

B. What are the relationships between the picture of the twelve tribes encamped on the four sides of the tabernacle and New Jerusalem?

This picture of the twelve tribes encamped on the four sides of the tabernacle with the Levites in the center is a preview of the coming New Jerusalem. That city portrayed in Revelation has twelve gates, three on each of its four sides, containing the names of the twelve tribes. That means that the New Jerusalem in was revealed many centuries before, in the book of Numbers.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the general sketch and the central thought of Numbers.

The general sketch of Numbers is that the redeemed and sanctified Israelites were formed into a holy army of God, which was to proceed by following God's leading and was to fight for Him. Its central thought is that Christ is the meaning of life, the testimony, the center of God's people, and the Leader, the way, and the goal of their journey and fighting.

B. How is Christ revealed as the meaning of life for God's people in Numbers?

It seems that during the forty years in the wilderness, the two million Israelites were doing nothing. They did not engage in industry, commerce, or farming. But day by day they were busy with one thing, the Ark of God's testimony, which was the center of the tabernacle. For forty years the Israelites worked for the keeping of the Ark with the tabernacle. The Ark with the tabernacle was the meaning of their life.

Day 3 —

A. Why do we say that the law of God is a testimony of what God is?

This Christ, who is the meaning of the life of God's people, is God's testimony. In the Old Testament, the Testimony refers to the law. The two tablets on which the law was inscribed were called the Testimony and were placed in the Ark. Thus the Ark was called the Ark of the Testimony. A law is always a testimony of the one who made it, so the law of God is a testimony of what God is.

B. How is this Christ the leader, the way, and the goal of God's people?

Numbers reveals that this Christ is our Leader, our way, and our goal. To take the lead is to proceed on the way. Today we are following Him, who is leading us on His way and toward His goal, both of which are actually Himself. Worldly people have neither a way nor a goal, but we have Christ in all these aspects.

Day 4 —

A. Make a comparison between Numbers and Leviticus.

Leviticus stresses the redeemed's worship and living. Numbers stresses the redeemed's journey and fighting. In Leviticus God's redeemed were instructed in how to worship God and live a holy life. In Numbers God's redeemed were formed into an army and fought for Him throughout their journey. Here we can see three things; the formation of an army, the journeys of that army, and the fighting of the army.

B. Expound Num.1-2, "God's elect formed an army to protect His testimony."

Around the church as God's testimony today, there are many enemies. Thus, there is the need of an army to protect the testimony. The army was encamped around the tabernacle protecting the sphere, the realm, in which the tabernacle was erected. For the keeping of the Tent of Meeting, there was the need for a peaceful sphere. In Lord's recovery now we need young people to be an army encamped around the church life.

Day 5 —

A. How do we see principles revealed in Gen.1 with God's elect forming an army?

God desires a corporate man to represent Him in subduing and regaining this earth from the usurping hand of Satan. God had given Israel a good land called Canaan, but the Israelites had to take this land from the usurping hand of God's enemy. They could not gain the land easily; they had to fight inch by inch, defeating all their enemies. The purpose and goal of the fighting was to possess the land.

B. Explain the order of the spiritual experience—building, priesthood, army.

The book of Numbers is a book of vital principles for us to apply today. Where is the army now? Are you in the army? This is the problem. There is no army, because there is no building. If the church is not built, there is no priesthood, and if there is no priesthood, there is no army.

Day 6 —

A. Explain that in the typology of the Old Testament, Canaan has two aspects.

Canaan has these two aspects: on the positive side, Canaan, a land of riches, typifies the all-inclusive Christ with His unsearchable riches, and on the negative side, it signifies the aerial part, the heavenly part, of the dark kingdom of Satan. As the ruler of this world and as the ruler of the authority of the air, Satan has his authority and his angels. Thus, he has his kingdom, the authority of darkness.

B. Describe such a camping of the children of Israel in array being marvelous.

This army was formed with twelve tribes. It is wonderful that Jacob had exactly twelve sons, who became twelve tribes. Levi was consecrated to God for the service of the tabernacle; this shortage was made up by Joseph's receiving a double portion through his two sons. Levi had three sons who encamped around three sides of the tabernacle. Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons encamped at the front of the tabernacle.

III. Conclusion:

The book of Numbers, from its appearance, is a book recorded God's people wanderings and repeated failure, but in God's view it is a book of victory and glory. God wanted His chosen people being formed into His army because He did not deal with His enemy by Himself directly. The army is for God's redeemed people to fight so that God can gain the ground on earth to build up His kingdom with His habitation. In the typology of the Old Testament, Canaan has two aspects; it not only typifies the all-inclusive Christ with His unsearchable riches, but also signifies the aerial part, the heavenly part, of the dark kingdom of Satan. Today, the church must be a corporate warrior so that God's people may gain more of Christ for the building up of the Body, and the Body must be built up for the establishing and spreading of the kingdom of God so that Christ can come back to inherit the earth.