

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Numbers 7: 10-17

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. We continue to read Numbers chapter 7. Today we will read from verse 10 to verse 17.

After the Israelites departed from Egypt, on the first day of the first month of the second year, Moses erected the Tabernacle. He anointed the Tabernacle and all its furnishings with the holy anointing oil, thereby consecrating them and making them holy. From within the Tabernacle, God spoke to Moses, and Moses recorded God's words. These became the Book of Leviticus that we have today. Since we studied Leviticus during the second half of last year, the brothers and sisters should still remember it well.

On the first day of the first month, God was extremely busy, and so was Moses. In one continuous revelation, God gave instructions concerning the five basic offerings, which are recorded in Leviticus chapters 1–7. Then, in Leviticus chapter 8, which most likely also took place on the first day of the first month, God commanded Moses to assemble the entire congregation of Israel at the entrance of the Tabernacle. In the presence of all the people, Moses anointed Aaron as the high priest and also anointed Aaron's sons as priests. The people saw Aaron clothed in the holy garments of the high priest, garments of glory and beauty. The entire ceremony for ordaining the priests is recorded in Leviticus chapter 8. We cannot describe it in detail here, so please refer to the daily Bible reading on Leviticus 8.

Perhaps the glory of this priestly office deeply moved the leaders of the twelve tribes. They willingly presented six covered carts and twelve oxen as an offering for the service of the Tabernacle. Following God's instructions, Moses accepted these offerings and immediately distributed them to the descendants of Gershon and Merari to assist them in transporting the Tabernacle. However, he gave none to the descendants of Kohath, because they were responsible for carrying the holy

furnishings. These sacred objects had to be borne on their shoulders and were not to be transported on ox carts.

Verse 10: “Now the leaders offered the dedication offering for the altar when it was anointed; so the leaders offered their offering before the altar.”

This was still the first day of the first month of the second year, the very day on which the altar was anointed. The altar referred to here was the bronze altar in the outer court, which was visible to all the Israelites. This altar was closely connected with the people of Israel, for every sacrifice they offered had to be presented upon it. By this time, God had already revealed the five basic offerings: the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass (guilt) offering.

The leaders of the twelve tribes had just presented the covered carts and oxen. Then, of their own free will, they brought additional offerings to dedicate the altar. Personally, I believe that by this point Moses had already taught the people about the five basic offerings and how they were to be presented, and he had also completed the ordination of the high priest and the priests. All of these activities took place before the bronze altar. As the tribal leaders stood at the entrance of the Tabernacle watching these events unfold, they were deeply moved. Consequently, they desired to have a share in the ministry of the altar. They requested that a ceremony be held for the dedication of the altar and willingly brought abundant offerings.

From a spiritual perspective, the altar has two aspects of significance: one points to Christ, and the other points to the believers. From Christ's perspective, the five basic offerings are all types of Christ in different aspects of His work. Christ is the sin offering, offered upon the altar for the sins of all humanity. He shed His precious blood to pay the debt of our sins and to deal with our sin. At the same time, He is also the burnt offering and the grain offering, wholly consumed upon the altar, manifesting His perfect humanity and fully satisfying the Father's will. Christ is not only the sacrifice but also the Great High Priest who offers the sacrifice. Through the grace of forgiveness, He brings us into the Most Holy Place, before the mercy

seat, where we may meet with God. Thus, the altar is the place where Christ reveals God's salvation to us.

From the believers' perspective, once we have received Christ's salvation and entered the Tabernacle, the first spiritual threshold we encounter is the consecration represented by the bronze altar. As Paul writes in Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." The leaders of the twelve tribes truly understood God's heart. They willingly presented their offerings as a symbol of the dedication of the altar.

Verse 11: "For the Lord said to Moses, "They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar."

God was very pleased with the offerings they presented. He instructed Moses to accept their offerings and added a further detail: unlike the offering of the covered carts and oxen, which had been presented together, the offerings for the dedication of the altar were to be presented one leader each day. Since Israel had twelve tribes, the dedication would continue for twelve consecutive days, with one tribal leader presenting his offering each day. The dedication of the altar was initiated voluntarily by the twelve leaders. God delighted in their willingness and therefore instructed that their offerings be spread out over twelve days.

The number twelve represents the fullness of God's governmental order and eternal completeness. In the Bible's final revelation, Revelation chapters 21 and 22, when we enter the eternal state, we find the number twelve appearing throughout: the New Jerusalem has twelve gates, twelve pearls, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written on the gates, and the city's wall has twelve foundations, bearing the names of the twelve apostles of the New Testament. Thus, the number twelve signifies the eternal completeness of God's divine administration. When people are willing to consecrate themselves to God, God also desires that their consecration attain an eternal and complete character. In the Old Testament, all

twelve tribes shared in it; in the New Testament, all twelve apostles likewise shared in it. Not one was left out.

God decreed that the dedication of the altar should last for twelve days, yet He did not explicitly specify the order in which the tribes were to present their offerings. Some matters God established definitively—for example, the twelve-day period of dedication. This pertained to His divine administration and therefore had to be obeyed. However, regarding the order of presentation, God gave no explicit instructions. Perhaps that decision was left to Moses, or perhaps to the twelve tribal leaders themselves.

Please remember that this event took place on the first day of the first month of the second year, whereas the order of Israel's encampment was not established until the first day of the second month. Therefore, God had not yet officially assigned the positions of the twelve tribes or their marching order. Personally, I am inclined to believe that Moses already had an order in mind, but he did not impose it as a rule. Instead, he allowed the twelve leaders to make the decision themselves. In fact, this is also a lesson that elders in the church today need to learn. Whenever possible, they should give believers who are willing to consecrate themselves greater freedom and room to exercise their willingness. This provides the best opportunity for them to learn to discern God's heart and to follow His leading. If what they do happens to correspond exactly to the genuine needs of the church, it demonstrates that both the leaders and the believers are walking according to the Holy Spirit. Is that not even better than having the elders prescribe every detail themselves?

Verse 12: “And the one who offered his offering on the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah.”

Nahshon, the son of Amminadab from the tribe of Judah, was the first to present his offering. The name Judah means "praise." The true significance of consecration is to bring praise to God. Perhaps the leader of Judah was courageous and willing to take responsibility. While the others were still hesitating, he was willing to step

forward first. We know that Judah later became the royal tribe. One of the foremost qualifications for a king is the courage to bear responsibility and the willingness to lead when others do not yet know how to move forward.

As for who should go first and who should follow, God seems to have given no specific instructions. Perhaps the leader of Judah had listened carefully as Moses explained the five basic offerings. He had also witnessed the ordination of the priests and observed that, with the exception of the trespass (guilt) offering, the other four offerings had already been presented during the ordination ceremony. As a result, he quickly learned how to present the grain offering, the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the peace offering. Next, we will examine these offerings one by one.

Verse 13: “His offering was one silver platter, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering.”

According to Leviticus 2:1–4, the grain offering could consist of fine flour mixed with oil, or it could be prepared as baked cakes. Whether it was unleavened cakes mixed with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil, it was always to be made without leaven.

The grain offering presented by the leader of Judah was unique. What was distinctive was not the offering itself, but the vessels in which it was presented. He brought one silver platter weighing one hundred and thirty shekels. Scripture specifically states that the weight was according to the shekel of the sanctuary, meaning it was measured by the most accurate standard, unlike the scales of the marketplace, which might be inaccurate or dishonest. One hundred and thirty shekels weighed approximately 1.5 kilograms (about 3.3 pounds), making it a substantial vessel. He also brought one silver bowl weighing seventy shekels, approximately 800 grams (about 1.8 pounds). Both vessels were filled with fine

flour mixed with oil. The platter may have held unleavened cakes mixed with oil, while the bowl likely contained fine flour mixed with oil.

The grain offering is a type of the perfect humanity of Christ, while the silver vessels represent Christ's redemption. The broad platter and the deep bowl both signify that the grace of Christ's redemption is immeasurably broad and deep, available to all who are willing to receive it.

Verse 14: "One gold pan of ten shekels, full of incense."

The grain offering was always to be accompanied by frankincense. The leader of Judah presented one gold pan (or one small golden dish) weighing ten shekels, filled with frankincense. Because frankincense was extremely precious, it was placed in a small vessel made of gold. When the priest offered the grain offering, he was to take a handful of the grain offering together with all of the frankincense and burn it upon the altar. As the frankincense was burned, its fragrant aroma ascended before God, bringing Him satisfaction. Frankincense is a type of Christ's resurrection.

Gold also has two aspects of spiritual significance. From God's perspective, it represents the divine nature of God. From the believers' perspective, it represents our faith. Through the resurrection power of Christ, we are able, by faith, to become partakers of the divine nature. This is precisely what Peter exhorts believers to pursue in 2 Peter 1:4–7: "...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." In this way, we become partakers of God's divine nature. In other words, the character of Jesus Christ is progressively formed within us.

Verse 15: “One young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering.”

The grain offering was presented together with the burnt offering. In addition to the grain offering, the leader of Judah presented three animals as a burnt offering: one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old. For the burnt offering, the animal was to be slaughtered, skinned, and cut into pieces, then placed upon the altar and completely consumed by fire until it became ashes, as an offering made by fire to God.

Jesus Christ is the most perfect Burnt Offering, completely satisfying the will of God. We also should follow the example of Christ, offering ourselves to God as a burnt offering, seeking to please Him. Just as the burnt offering was wholly consumed upon the altar, believers are called to place themselves entirely in God's hands, holding nothing back, so that our lives may become pleasing to Him.

Verse 16: “One kid of the goats as a sin offering.”

The leader of Judah also presented a sin offering, consisting of one male goat, to make atonement for the entire tribe of Judah. The presentation of the sin offering acknowledges that as long as people live in the flesh, they still possess a sinful nature. Therefore, there is always a need for a sin offering.

In typology, Christ is the Sin Offering. He bore the penalty for our sins so that we may come before the altar with a pure and sincere heart to worship and offer ourselves to God. Because Christ has become our Sin Offering, our sins have been atoned for, and we are able to approach God with cleansed hearts and worship Him in sincerity and truth.

Verse 17: “and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.”

Finally, the peace offering was presented. The peace offering could take the form of a thanksgiving offering, a vow offering, or a freewill offering. After a person had offered the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering, peace between God and man was restored. Therefore, the peace offering could be presented. It was a sacrifice shared by both God and man.

The peace offering presented by the leader of Judah was especially abundant: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. The fat and the kidneys of the sacrificial animals were to be burned upon the altar as God's portion. The breast was to be presented as a wave offering and given to the priest. The thigh also belonged to the priest. The remaining meat belonged to the one who brought the offering. Thus, the leader of Judah and the people of the tribe of Judah were able to enjoy the peace offering together at the entrance of the Tabernacle, giving thanks to God together. It was a joyful celebration in which God and His people shared peace and rejoiced together.

These were the offerings presented by Nahshon the son of Amminadab. Again and again, God records the names of those who brought the offerings, for He remembers the devotion and godliness of His people.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus Christ, Thank You for offering Yourself upon the altar, giving us a place to stand before God. Through the grace of Your redemption, our sins have been forgiven, and we are willing to come before the altar to offer ourselves to You. We desire to present the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering, and finally the peace offering, so that both God and His people may rejoice together.

The leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel have set a wonderful example for us. They willingly came before the altar to present their offerings, and You appointed that they should continue offering for twelve consecutive days. The same is true today. You delight in our willing consecration, and You remember every offering we make, down to the smallest detail, throughout eternity. Thank You for valuing us so highly. Even our smallest acts of service and sacrifice are remembered by You forever. What marvelous grace this is!

Please give me a willing heart to consecrate myself to You. Help me continually seek opportunities to serve, offering my money, my time, and my abilities, using all that I have and all that I am able to do to bless Your church. Please preserve in me the willingness to consecrate myself to You today, and bless my life. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!