

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)
Numbers 7:18–53

Peace be with you, brothers and sisters, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it is time for our Bible reading again. We will continue reading Numbers chapter 7. Today, we are reading verses 18 through 53.

To accurately understand chapter 7, we must notice the timing of each event and behold God's comprehensive work. Verse 1 of chapter 7 takes us back in time to the first day of the first month in the second year after leaving Egypt.

Numbers 7 records that the twelve tribes of Israel brought six covered carts and twelve oxen, followed by the offerings presented by the tribe of Judah. Taking place alongside and concurrently with these events are the occurrences in Leviticus 8, where Moses consecrated Aaron as high priest and his sons as priests. From the 1st through the 7th day of the first month—seven consecutive days—Leviticus 8:33–35 records: “And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting for seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For seven days he shall consecrate you. As he has done this day, so the Lord has commanded to do, to make atonement for you. Therefore, you shall stay at the door of the tabernacle of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded.”

Here we see that the priests stayed at the door of the tabernacle of meeting for seven full days without leaving its entrance. Perhaps this is why God instructed the dedication offerings of Israel's twelve tribes to be spread across twelve days. As the priests were undergoing training to receive their holy office, having a different tribe present its offerings each day provided the ideal opportunity for them to practice ministering at the altar.

Numbers chapter 7 is the longest single chapter in the entire Pentateuch. This is because from verse 12 to verse 83—72 verses in total—every six verses form a distinct unit documenting one tribe coming forward to present its offerings.

Yesterday, we read verses 12 through 17, which recorded the dedication of the tribe of Judah.

Verses 18–23: “On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, leader of Issachar, presented an offering. For his offering he presented one silver platter, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; one gold pan of ten shekels, full of incense; one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 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 Nethanel the son of Zuar.”

If we compare this with verses 12–17, we notice that apart from replacing Nahshon, the leader of Judah in verse 18, with Nethanel, the leader of Issachar, the presented offerings are completely identical—not a single word is changed. Of course, the closing line also exchanges Nahshon’s name for Nethanel’s.

There are two things here worth pondering deeply: First, why was it the tribe of Issachar that came next to present offerings? Second, why were the offerings entirely identical?

As we shared yesterday, these twelve days of offerings took place between the 1st and the 12th day of the first month in the second year, prior to God commanding Moses to organize the twelve tribes of Israel into a military order. The Bible does not explicitly state the required order for presenting offerings; it seems God entrusted the arrangement to Moses, who in turn left it to the leaders of the twelve tribes. Since they took the initiative to bring gifts for the altar, allowing them to decide the order autonomously seems the most natural approach.

The tribe of Judah courageously took responsibility and was the first to step forward in giving. Judah was the fourth son of Jacob and Leah, while Issachar was Leah’s fifth son. Sharing the same background, combined with similar aspirations

and interests, made it easy for them to walk closely together. The descendants of these two tribes shared an exceptionally close relationship; so as soon as Nahshon of Judah stepped forward first, Nethanel of Issachar was already prepared to present his offering on the second day.

I suspect that when Moses informed the twelve leaders on the 1st of the month that God wanted their offerings distributed across twelve days, the leaders quickly worked out the sequence based on their existing relationships—relationships deeply rooted in the origins and upbringings of their ancestors. As for why their gifts turned out to be completely identical, that too was likely the result of a consensus among the twelve leaders.

From Numbers chapter 1, we see that even the smallest tribe, Manasseh, numbered 32,200 adult men. Thus, while the volume of presented items was substantial, it posed no hardship for a tribe, tens of thousands strong. The true challenge in giving often lies in human nature: each person wants to demonstrate a greater willingness to give, seeking to be creative by bringing something larger, grander, or finer. On one hand, this attempts to show sincerity toward God; on the other, it wins praise from men. Yet here, all twelve tribal leaders presented identical offerings, demonstrating that they were all seasoned, mature leaders in spiritual character.

Given that the offerings were completely identical, the biblical narrative is remarkably unique. Scripture records these items line by line, repeating the exact list twelve times. At that time, writing materials were extremely expensive and the process painstaking. If the intent were merely to inform us of what was given, it would have sufficed to add a single line: “Nethanel, the leader of Issachar, presented the exact same offering.” That would have been simple and clear. Yet God instructed Moses to detail every single item twelve separate times—like a ledger account—to the point where readers might feel it is repetitive, let alone the person writing it. This shows how deeply God valued the offering brought by every single tribe. Moses recording it item by item reflects God remembering every detail of their sacrifice. It also ensured that future generations of each tribe would remember what their ancestors brought—how they offered what was pleasing to

God—so that the altar would maintain its proper place at the very center of Israelite life.

Moses' meticulous record of every contribution serves as a reminder to church financial workers today: handling finances in God's house must always be done with a deep fear of the Lord. Every contribution represents a saint's offering under the Holy Spirit's prompting, something God remembers eternally. Therefore, it must be handled with utmost care so as to leave no room for doubt; the accounts must be clear, transparent, and open. In modern times, churches have too often been marred by scandals of leaders abusing authority to misappropriate church assets—a severe offense against God's holiness and glory.

Since Moses took such great care to write all of this down, we ought to read every verse. However, to save time, I will not repeat the list of offerings in the remaining verses. Because the offerings of all twelve tribes were identical, and their spiritual significance was covered yesterday, I will refrain from repeating them here.

Verses 24–29: “On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, leader of the children of Zebulun, presented an offering...”

Eliab presented the exact same offering. On the 3rd day of the first month, Eliab, the leader of the tribe of Zebulun, presented his sacrifice. Zebulun was Leah's sixth son.

Verses 30–35: “On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, leader of the children of Reuben, presented an offering...”

Elizur presented the exact same offering. On the 4th day of the first month, Elizur, the leader of Reuben, presented his sacrifice. Reuben was Leah's first son and Jacob's firstborn, though he forfeited his birthright due to indulging in worldly passion. Consequently, the kingship fell to Judah, the priesthood to Levi, and the double-portion land blessing to Joseph. Yet in God's mercy, the tribe of Reuben was

preserved; hence, the identical offering presented by Elizur, leader of Reuben, was naturally accepted by God.

Verses 36–41: “On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, leader of the children of Simeon, presented an offering...”

Shelumiel presented the exact same offering. On the 5th day of the first month, Shelumiel, the leader of Simeon, presented his sacrifice. Simeon was Leah’s second son. Originally, Simeon and his younger brother Levi were cut from the same cloth—both cruel by nature. Their massacre at Shechem grieved Jacob deeply. When Jacob blessed his sons on his deathbed, he could hardly utter a blessing over these two brothers; as recorded in Genesis 49:5–7: “Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let my soul not enter their council; let not my honor be united to their assembly; for in their anger, they slew a man, and in their self-will, they hamstrung an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.”

Yet during the golden calf incident, the tribe of Levi directed their fierce nature inward against sin, demonstrating absolute obedience to God and becoming set apart to serve Him. The tribe of Simeon was likewise preserved under God’s mercy. The offering presented by Shelumiel, leader of Simeon, was also accepted by God.

Verses 42–47: “On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, leader of the children of Gad, presented an offering...”

Eliasaph presented the exact same offering. On the 6th day of the first month, Eliasaph of the tribe of Gad presented his sacrifice. Gad was the first son born to Jacob through Leah’s maidservant Zilpah, and his name means “Good Fortune.” By order of birth, Levi should have followed Simeon; but because the entire tribe of

Levi had been set apart for divine service, the tribe of Gad stepped up to take Levi's place in the order.

In Moses' era, the tribe of Gad must have performed exceptionally well. In Moses' blessing upon Gad in Deuteronomy 33:20–21, he wrote: "...He dwells as a lion... He came with the heads of the people; he administered the justice of the Lord, and His judgments with Israel."

Moses specifically noted that "he came with the heads of the people," showing that Eliasaph maintained a wonderful harmony with the leaders of the other Israeli tribes. He was capable of uniting with people of different backgrounds, serving as a vital bridge between generations. Coming right after the leader of Simeon, his presentation paved the way for the leader of Ephraim.

Verses 48–53: "On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, leader of the children of Ephraim, presented an offering..."

Elishama presented the exact same offering. On the 7th day of the first month, Elishama of the tribe of Ephraim presented his sacrifice. Ephraim was a son of Joseph; to bestow a double portion upon Joseph, Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own. Elishama presented the exact same offering.

The tribes that offered sacrifices during the first six days were all linked to Leah. Ephraim, however, was Rachel's grandson—highly favored by Jacob and receiving a blessing greater than his older brother Manasseh. The tribe of Ephraim had every reason to bring a distinct, grander offering to signal their special gratitude to God. Yet Elishama still brought the exact same offering. He did not seek to stand out or outshine others; he simply presented an offering pleasing to God.

Dear brothers and sisters, when we make offerings to God before others, we often feel the impulse to show off—whether in financial giving, dedication of time, or service of talent. We frequently hope to do better than others, but this is actually a competitive heart, which hinders our offerings from being acceptable to God.

At Edgewater Christian Fellowship, there is a beautiful ministry I would like to highlight, as it may serve as an encouraging model for other churches. A group of saints burdened for prayer established a prayer group. Monday through Friday, a designated saint prepares prayer points covering the church and its members and posts it to the group. This is a wonderful expression of mutual love and encouragement. Generally, these prayers are thorough, addressing various needs within the body. After reading, the saints in the group echo the sentiment in their hearts and simply add an “Amen”—no extra words needed. Just like the leaders of the twelve tribes, everyone is content to present the same offering. Occasionally, when unexpected situations arise, vigilant saints will promptly add a prayer topic, and the rest naturally respond with “Amen”—meaning: “Your prayer is my prayer; I don't need to be flashy or unique, I simply present the same prayer.” In truth, this is the very foundation of church unity in one heart and one mind—it is truly beautiful.

We will stop here today on the 7th day of the first month. Occurring on this very same day was the completion of the seven-day consecration ceremony for the priests. The offerings presented by the tribes over these preceding seven days provided the exact practical training the priests needed as they learned to serve. Before such a wonderful arrangement by God, we can only offer our thanksgiving and praise.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, You delight in us presenting ourselves to You with a simple and pure heart. Free from comparison or deliberate striving, but in quiet, everyday faithful service—You take joy in such offerings. Bless my local church and its saints, that every person would willingly and purely surrender themselves into Your gracious hands. May our individual offerings upon the altar become the foundation of unity within the church. Bless my local church; in Jesus' holy name we pray.