

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

Numbers 7: 54-83

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 read from verse 54 to verse 83.

We have already read that after Israel came out of Egypt, from the first day to the seventh day of the first month of the second year, the leaders of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon, Gad, and Ephraim came on consecutive days to bring offerings for the altar. Taking place simultaneously was the seven-day ordination ceremony for Aaron and his sons — a period of training before the priests officially began their service. All of this is recorded in Leviticus chapter 8; the Bible does not spell out the specific order of events across those seven days, and the accounts are spread across two books, Numbers and Leviticus.

Perhaps we can surmise that each morning the leaders of the seven tribes came first to present their offerings, and Aaron and his sons stood at the door of the tabernacle to receive these offerings and assist the leaders in sacrificing on the altar.

We have also seen that among the offerings brought by the leaders there was the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering, but not the trespass offering. However, Leviticus 7:7 says, "As the sin offering is, so is the trespass offering; there is one law for them. The priest who makes atonement with it shall have it." Since the trespass offering and the sin offering follow the same statute, the priests over those seven consecutive days were practicing and learning how to offer all five basic sacrifices. Today we begin reading from the offerings presented on the eighth day.

Verses 54–59: "On the eighth day it was the leader of the children of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 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; 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 Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur."

On the eighth day of the first month, the leader of the tribe of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, came to present his offering — identical in every detail to those offered by the leaders of the preceding seven tribes. The details of these offerings and their spiritual types have already been shared; I will not repeat them. I invite the saints to review what was shared on the first day regarding the offering presented by the leader of the tribe of Judah and the corresponding daily Bible reading devotional.

The eighth day is the first day after the seven days. By this time the priests had completed the seven-day ordination ceremony, which could also be understood as a period of priestly training. Now on the eighth day, the priests were to officially take up their duties for the first time. Moses devoted two entire chapters — Leviticus chapters 9 and 10 — to recording what happened on this day.

Aaron, as the high priest, first offered the sin offering and burnt offering for himself so that he, the high priest, might be accepted by God; after that, he offered the gifts on behalf of the people of Israel. The offerings Aaron presented should have been the very offerings brought by Gamaliel of the tribe of Manasseh — identical to those of the previous seven days — which meant that Aaron and his sons should by now have had very thorough practice.

On this occasion Aaron and the priests assumed their duties officially. Aaron offered the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering on behalf of the people. When Aaron had finished and blessed the people, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before

the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar; all the people shouted and fell on their faces and worshiped God. What a glorious and holy scene.

The full details of Aaron and his sons serving as priests for the first time are all in Leviticus chapter 9; I cannot repeat them in detail here, and I invite the saints to review the daily Bible reading devotional on their own. This first official service in offering sacrifices is also the first instance recorded in Scripture of fire descending from heaven to consume the offering on the altar. God commanded that from that point on, the fire on the altar must never be extinguished; this heavenly fire was to serve as the source for burning incense, lighting the lamps, and offering sacrifices in the tabernacle, and common fire could no longer be used.

Right at the moment when the priests were performing their first official service, Leviticus chapter 10 records the tragedy of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's eldest and second sons. Perhaps they were so overwhelmed by the glorious spectacle that they forgot their identity as priests — that they must always carry in their hearts a reverent fear of God, with not the slightest carelessness. As a result, they entered the holy place and burned incense with common fire. God showed not the slightest tolerance: fire immediately went out from before God and consumed them.

Moses responded with great swiftness, immediately ordering their bodies carried out of the camp, while at the same time warning Aaron and his remaining two sons not to uncover their heads, not to tear their garments, not to touch the dead bodies, and not to leave the tabernacle — they were to continue carrying out the sacrificial rites on behalf of the people. Therefore, on the very eighth day when the tribe of Manasseh was presenting its offering, the tragedy of priests being burned to death occurred.

The tribe of Manasseh presented their offering on the eighth day, immediately after the tribe of Ephraim — an arrangement that was entirely natural, since Ephraim and Manasseh were brothers. And the eighth day of offering happened to coincide with the priests' first official service, which should have been an occasion of great joy and celebration, yet it unexpectedly gave way to such a tragedy.

To human eyes it seemed like an accident, but God appeared to have known it all along — and His provision was hidden in the names of the tribe of Manasseh. The one who came to present the offering was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, leader of the tribe of Manasseh. "Manasseh" means *causing to forget*; "Pedahzur" means *the rock has ransomed*; "Gamaliel" means *a reward of God*. In this sequence of names, God's immense mercy is already revealed — God forgot the mistake committed by the priests, because Christ, the Rock, had already accomplished redemption and would become the reward of God's people.

Verses 60–65: "On the ninth day it was the leader of the children of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni. 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; 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 Abidan the son of Gideoni."

Abidan presented an identical offering. Those who came on the seventh and eighth days were descendants of Joseph; naturally it was the descendants of Joseph's brother Benjamin who came on the ninth day. Abidan the son of Gideoni, leader of the tribe of Benjamin, came to present his offering, which was identical to those of all the other leaders. This was also the second day of the priests' official service. Having gone through such dramatic swings the day before — from the heights of glory to the tragedy of the priests being struck down — we can imagine that the offerings of the second day felt particularly solemn.

God's provision for the priests is also hidden in the sequence of names: the one presenting the offering was Abidan the son of Gideoni, leader of the tribe of Benjamin. "Benjamin" means *the son of the right hand*, signifying that God would extend His mighty right hand to protect. "Gideoni" means *my cutter*, one who cuts

down; "Abidan" means *my father is judge*. God seemed here to be reminding both those who brought offerings and those who offered them always to remember the lesson of the previous day: God judges, God cuts down — but more than that, God extends His right hand to protect His people. So long as both the priests and the people of Israel maintained a heart of reverence toward God and handled the matters of offering and worship according to His command.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must understand the nature of our offerings — that is, our worship. Those saints who handle offerings within the church must understand that this is a holy matter. Whatever each saint presents, whether large or small in amount, it is their act of worship to God. When they present it with reverence, God will remember it forever; and the priests must handle it with holiness — this is God's requirement of the priests, and it must never be taken lightly, nor may any personal profit be drawn from it. This is something that greatly offends God. May God have mercy on us.

Verses 66–71: "On the tenth day it was the leader of the children of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 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; 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 Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai."

On the tenth day of the first month, Ahiezer, leader of the tribe of Dan, came to present his offering. Dan was the firstborn son of Rachel's maidservant Bilhah, and also the eldest among the four sons born of the maidservants. Ahiezer, leader of the tribe of Dan, presented an identical offering.

Verses 72–77: "On the eleventh day it was the leader of the children of Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran. 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; 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 Pagiel the son of Ocran."

On the eleventh day of the first month, Pagiel, leader of the tribe of Asher, came to present his offering. Asher was the second son born of Leah's maidservant, and the youngest among the sons of the maidservants. Pagiel, leader of the tribe of Asher, presented an identical offering.

Verses 78–83: "On the twelfth day it was the leader of the children of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan. 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; 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 Ahira the son of Enan."

The twelfth day of the first month was the day Ahira, leader of the last tribe — Naphtali — came to present his offering; he presented an identical offering. From the first to the twelfth day of the first month, the leaders of the twelve tribes came each day and presented identical offerings. The first seven days were the ordination ceremony for the priests, during which they learned how to offer sacrifices; the following five days were the priests' official service, in which they offered sacrifices on behalf of the people. With the sole exception of the eighth day — the first day

of the priests' official service — when a fatal error occurred and Aaron's eldest and second sons were consumed by heavenly fire, on all the remaining days the priests carried out their duties with a heart of reverence.

By the twelfth day of the first month, all twelve tribes had presented their offerings for the altar; the dedication of the altar was complete. And the priests had officially taken up their posts, establishing among Israel the priestly system for the service of God. The priests became the mediators between God and the people of Israel, bringing the Israelites before God by offering sacrifices on their behalf.

Of course, all the Old Testament offerings were shadows; the true sacrifice is Jesus Christ, and the true high priest is also Jesus Christ. The tabernacle is precisely the type of today's church. We are more blessed than the Israelites — in the time of Moses, God established the priestly system of service; the high priest Aaron offered animal sacrifices, and Aaron and his sons became the priestly system that served God.

And in the New Testament church, Jesus Christ Himself personally became our propitiation. On the cross He shed His blood and laid down His life for us, bearing the punishment for our sins; He is also the high priest who offered the sacrifice, presenting Himself as a burnt offering pleasing to God. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God the Father. He sent down the Holy Spirit, so that all who believe in Jesus Christ receive new birth; with the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we have become children of the heavenly Father.

We have also received a commission — to become priests of the New Testament gospel, establishing within today's church a system of service to God: proclaiming the gospel to bring people to salvation, and helping them grow in life so that they may be presented to God in maturity. What was foreshadowed in the Old Testament has become our reality in the New Testament.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, how grateful we are! What was foreshadowed in the Old Testament has today become reality in our church life. Help each of us, when we come to the Lord's Day worship each week, to bring our sin offering, our burnt offering, our grain offering, and our peace offering to present

on the altar. This is our offering, and it is our worship. Help every saint in the church to take up the priestly ministry, to become a priest of the New Testament gospel — proclaiming the gospel, bringing people to salvation, helping them learn to pray, and learn to read the Word. Bless the church where I am, that it may be filled with the reality of brothers and sisters dwelling together in harmony. We pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.