

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

Numbers 10: 11-20

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it is time to read the bible again. We continue to read Numbers chapter 10. Today, we are reading verses 11 through 20.

Making the silver trumpets was the final preparation before the Israelites set out, in order to ensure the unified movement of the Israelites. Once the silver trumpets had been made, the Israelites also understood the meaning represented by the silver trumpets. Now everything was ready; they were only waiting for the cloud to lead the Israelites forward.

Verses 11-13: “Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.”

On the twentieth day of the second month in the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt, the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. This was the sign that the Israelites were to begin moving forward. If we look back, the Israelites arrived at the wilderness of Sinai three full months after the Exodus, that is, on the fifteenth day of the fourth month in the first year. They began camping in the wilderness of Sinai and remained there until the twentieth day of the second month in the second year, when the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle and they were to begin moving forward.

Therefore, they stayed in the wilderness of Sinai for ten months and five days. During such a long period of time, they received the law, built the tabernacle,

listened to Moses teach all kinds of commandments, statutes, and judgments, established the system of service for the priests and the Levites, and also organized the twelve tribes of Israel into an army. Now they were no longer a disorderly crowd, but the army of the LORD.

They had kept their first Passover in the wilderness, which was on the fourteenth day of the first month in the second year. Those who could not keep the feast because of touching a corpse also made up the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month, and they also made up the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now it had come to the twentieth day of the second month. Everything was ready, and the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle.

Here the Bible especially points out that it was “the tabernacle of the Testimony,” emphasizing that the Israelites’ setting out in the wilderness was for them to become God’s testimony, because the ark was the ark of the Testimony. The Israelites left the wilderness of Sinai and went toward the wilderness of Paran. They traveled for about three days before arriving at the first station. This was the first time they set out according to what the LORD had commanded through Moses.

It is very special that this passage points out that this was the first time they set out. Why does it say that this was the first time? When they left Egypt, there was also the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire leading them forward, but at that time they were only leaving Egypt. They were still a disorderly crowd. They did not have God dwelling with them, they did not have God as their center, they did not have God governing them, they were not God’s army, and they could not bear God’s testimony. Now, after ten months and five days, they had the service of the priests and the Levites, they had been organized into the army of the LORD, and according to what the LORD had commanded, they followed the leading of the cloud and set out for the first time, moving toward the good land promised by God.

Now God recognized that their movement was in God’s will, under God’s government, and toward the destination appointed by God. Dear brothers and sisters, it is the same with the church today. Not all activities of the church are recognized by God. Only activities that are out of God, governed by God, according

to God's principles, and reaching God's purpose can be counted as the church moving forward.

Verses 14-16: "The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first according to their armies; over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. And over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon."

At this time, the two silver trumpets sounded the alarm for the first time. This was the signal for the camp of Judah, which was camped on the east side, to set out. The standard of the camp of Judah went first, moving forward with the banner of the camp of Judah raised. The camp of Judah had three tribes: Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

The tribe of Judah went first. The one leading the army of Judah was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. The tribe of Issachar followed closely behind. The one leading the army of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. Then came the tribe of Zebulun. The one leading the army of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon.

Verse 17: "Then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle."

Immediately after the camp of Judah came the Gershonite clan and the Merarite clan of the tribe of Levi. Earlier, we read that when the Israelites moved forward, the descendants of Gershon were responsible for carrying the curtains of the tabernacle and the screens surrounding the tabernacle. These soft items were very large in volume. After the descendants of Gershon took them down, they loaded them onto two covered carts, pulled by four oxen.

After the descendants of Gershon took down the curtains and screens, the descendants of Merari then followed by taking down all the structural items, such

as the boards, silver sockets, and pillars in the tabernacle, as well as the bronze pillars and bronze sockets in the outer court. These structural items were numerous and extremely heavy. The descendants of Merari used four covered carts and eight oxen to transport them.

After the descendants of Gershon and the descendants of Merari finished taking everything down and loading it onto the ox carts, they followed closely behind the camp of Judah and moved forward. These two clans were positioned between the camp of Judah and the camp of Reuben, receiving protection from these two camps. When it was time to camp, they could also first set up the structural items and then hang the curtains and screens. Once everything was prepared, they would be ready for the most holy objects to be placed inside.

Verses 18-20: “And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies; over their army was Elizur the son of Shedeur. Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. And over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.”

After the Gershonite clan and the Merarite clan of the tribe of Levi, the two silver trumpets sounded the alarm for the second time. This was the signal for the camp of Reuben to set out. The first to set out was the standard of the camp of Reuben. There were three tribes in the camp of Reuben: Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. These three tribes moved forward in order. The one leading the army of Reuben was Elizur the son of Shedeur. The one leading the army of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. The one leading the army of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

When the Israelites moved forward, they did so completely according to the order arranged by God, following the sound of the priests’ trumpets and setting out in order. This was the army of the LORD. Today the church is also the elite soldiers of Jesus Christ. The path by which the church moves forward should also be orderly, bearing a beautiful testimony to this world.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. The church is Your Body, and You are the Head of the church. In this crooked and perverse last age, You want the church to shine as lights and bear a beautiful testimony to this world. You want every member in the church to be able to receive the direction of the Head, and each one, according to the measure of his life and the gifts that have been developed, to fulfill his function in the church. As an army, the church protects the testimony of the church, like the descendants of Gershon caring for and carrying the coverings and curtains of the church, as well as the screens that separate it from the world; and there are also many descendants of Merari doing the heaviest work in the church. All these are the testimony of the church, and not one can be lacking. May You bless the church where I am. Help every saint in the church to find his own function in the church and faithfully fulfill his duty. When You come again, may he receive Your praise as “a good and faithful servant.” Bless my church life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.