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## Sowing the Word

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*The Budding of Aaron's rod*

## **Numbers 15-17** **March 18th-24th, 2010**

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So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

(Nehemiah 8:8)

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## Helpful Study Resource:

*Explore the Book* by J. Sidlow Baxter

## Online Help:

*Numbers: The Incomplete Christian Life* by Ray C. Stedman

<http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/2987/0204.html>

[http://preceptaustin.org/numbers\\_commentaries.htm](http://preceptaustin.org/numbers_commentaries.htm)

## Commentary:

The commentary used with permission throughout  
this booklet is:

**With the Word Bible Commentary**

**by Warren W. Wiersbe.**

ISBN 0-8407-9108-9

# Outline

- I. Israel at Sinai: PREPARATION (1–10)
  - A. Counting - a Census of the people (1)
  - B. Arranging - ordering campsites around the Tabernacle (2)
  - C. Assigning - Counting the Levites, their duties assigned (3–4)
  - D. Maintaining - Standards for purity (5)
  - E. Separating - Nazirites (6)
  - F. Supporting - Offerings for the Tabernacle from Israel's leaders (7)
  - G. Inaugurating - Dedication of the Levites (8)
  - H. Guiding - Passover, Fiery cloud, silver trumpets (9:1–10)
  
- II. Sinai to Kadesh: FRUSTRATION (11–20:13)
  - A. Complaining - Complaints and solutions (11)
  - B. Criticizing - Miriam and Aaron criticize Moses (12)
  - C. Rebelling - Rebellion at Kadesh-barnea (13–14)
    - i. God gives hope - Additional laws for the Land (15)
  - D. Striving - Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (16)
    - i. God's Calling - Aaron's staff buds (17)
    - ii. God's Appointing - Duties of Levites (18)
    - iii. God's Cleansing - Purification by the ashes of a red heifer (19)
  - E. Misrepresenting - Moses strikes the rock (20:1–13)
  
- III. Kadesh to Moab: ANTICIPATION (20:14–36:13)
  - A. Blocking - Edom denies passage to Israel (20:14–21)
  - B. Replacing - Death of Aaron (20:22–29)
  - C. Saving - Bronze serpent (21:1–9)
  - D. Enabling - Israel defeats Sihon and Og (21:10–35)
  - E. Protecting - Balak and Balaam (22–24)
  - F. Disciplining - Israelites seduced by Moabites (25)
  - G. Counting - Second census of the people (26)
  - H. Discipling - Joshua to succeed Moses (27)
  - I. Worshipping - Regulations for worship and vows (28–29)
  - J. Committing - Regulations for vows (30)
  - K. Empowering - Israel defeats the Midianites (31)
  - L. Quenching - Settlement of Transjordan tribes (32)
  - M. Remembering - Review of the wilderness journey (33)
  - N. Expecting - Settlement of Canaan described (34–36)

**THURSDAY**

# Daily Bible Study

Thursday, March 18th, 2010

*Passage for today: **Numbers 15**  
Thru the Bible Reading: Psalm 133-134*

1. What are the main things that happen in Numbers 15?
2. What is God showing you in this chapter?

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# Daily Bible Study

Saturday, March 20th, 2010

***Passage for today: Numbers 17***  
***Thru the Bible Reading: Psalm 137-138***

1. What are the main things that happen in Numbers 17?
2. What is God showing you in this chapter?

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# Daily Bible Study

Sunday, March 21st, 2010

*Passage for today: Numbers 15*  
*Thru the Bible Reading: Psalm 139-140*

1. This is your second reading of this chapter during this week. What did you see this time that did not stick out to you last time?
2. What is God showing you in this chapter?

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# Daily Bible Study

Monday, March 22nd, 2010

***Passage for today: Numbers 16***  
***Thru the Bible Reading: Psalm 141-142***

1. This is your second reading of this chapter during this week. What did you see this time that did not stick out to you last time?
2. What is God showing you in this chapter?

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# Daily Bible Study

Tuesday, March 23rd, 2010

*Passage for today:* **Numbers 17**  
*Thru the Bible Reading:* **Psalm 143-144**

1. This is your second reading of this chapter during this week. What did you see this time that did not stick out to you last time?
2. What is God showing you in this chapter?

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# Daily Bible Study

Wednesday, March 24th, 2010

***Passage for today: Numbers 15-17***

1. What has come together for you in these three chapters as you read this week?
2. What questions do you have that remain?
3. What is the main thing God is showing you in these chapters?

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# With the Word Bible Commentary

## Numbers 15

**Assurance (1–21).** God gave the people a word of assurance when He said, “When you have come into the land” (italics added). In spite of the nation’s sins, the new generation would make it to Canaan and possess the land. (See 2 Tim. 2:11–13.) When they did, they were expected to take time to thank God and worship Him. Do you pause to thank God for sharing His blessings with you?

**Obedience (22–29).** God made provision for the forgiveness of unintentional sins. Of course, innocent animals had to die to provide forgiveness, just as Jesus had to die to make our cleansing possible.

**Arrogance (30–36).** In His law, God made no provision for presumptuous sin, for such sinners were despising God’s Word and defying His authority. God in His mercy could forgive such sins, as He did with David (2 Sam. 12), but He did not put Himself under obligation. The man who deliberately violated the Sabbath discovered that God is not mocked.

**Remembrance (37–41).** The tassels were small things, yet they carried a big message: Israel belonged to God and must respect and obey His commandments. It is not wrong to have reminders that point us to God, provided they don’t replace God or His Word. We are to “seek those things which are above” (Col. 3:1).

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). With the word Bible commentary (Nu 15:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

# With the Word Bible Commentary

## Numbers 16

A successful leader is often accused of exalting himself, especially by those who are jealous of him and want to take his place. It is true that all of God's people are set apart by Him and for Him, but it is also true that God calls some of His people to be leaders in special places of service. Without leadership, we would have chaos.

Leaders often get blamed for things they did not do (vv. 12–14). Moses wanted to lead the nation into their inheritance, but the unbelief of the people kept them out. It is easier for rebels to find a scapegoat than to confess their own sins. They said that Egypt was a "land flowing with milk and honey." Their statement showed where their hearts really were.

The opposition was impressive: 250 leaders, all united against Moses. But Moses was not intimidated; he took the matter to the Lord and let Him be the judge. God will vindicate His servants better than they can vindicate themselves. Once again, the love and intercession of Moses saved the very people who had created problems for him. (See Rom. 12:14–21.)

Nearly fifteen thousand people died because of four men who wanted to promote themselves. That danger is still with us, and we must heed Proverbs 16:18; 18:12; and 1 Peter 5:5–6.

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). *With the word Bible commentary* (Nu 16:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Numbers 14:2

Written by: *C H Spurgeon*

Taken from: *Morning and Evening*

# With the Word Bible Commentary

## Numbers 17

God had disciplined the people because of their *murmuring* and rebelling, but the problem was not yet solved. One of Israel's besetting sins was murmuring (1 Cor. 10:10), a sin that we must avoid today (Phil. 2:14).

Korah, a Levite, was not satisfied to serve in the tabernacle according to God's will; he wanted a "promotion" so he could enjoy all the privileges of the priests. It is good to desire spiritual growth and progress, but we must beware selfish ambition that glorifies the servant and not the Master (Phil. 2:3–4). "Selfish ambition" is one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), and it brings destruction.

God vindicated His servants by bringing *death* to some of their opponents and by giving *life* to Aaron's rod. By the power of God, the dead rod produced beauty and fruit. Spiritual leadership will be recognized by its life and fruitfulness, which come from being in the Holy of Holies with God.

How unpredictable is human nature! One day, the people wanted to serve in the tabernacle; the next day, they were afraid to get near it! They did not sincerely fear God; they feared only His judgment. They *needed* leadership far more than they realized.

*Complaining : God's people are commanded not to complain (Phil. 2:14); therefore, complaining is a sin. When we complain, we give evidence of unbelief in our hearts and lack of gratitude toward God. If we were truly "giving thanks always for all things" (Eph. 5:20), we would not be complaining. The best way to overcome a complaining spirit is to accept God's will by faith and thank Him for His goodness, even if we don't see anything good happening. Romans 8:28 is still there for us to claim!*

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). With the word Bible commentary (Nu 17:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.