

Life-Study of Numbers Summaries - Messages 1-5

Introduction

In Numbers we see **God's redeemed people being formed into His army and their journey in fighting for God**. The army is for God's people to fight so that God can gain the ground on earth to build up His kingdom with His habitation. Numbers stresses the redeemed's journey and fighting; God's redeemed were formed into an army and fought for Him throughout their journey.

The **general sketch** of Numbers is that the redeemed and sanctified Israelites were formed into a holy army of God, which was to proceed by **following God's leading and was to fight for Him**. The **central thought** of Numbers is that Christ is the **meaning of life**, the **testimony**, the **centre of God's people**, and the **Leader**, the **way**, and the **goal** of their journey and fighting.

Being Formed into an Army

Numbers 1 affords us a picture of the New Testament from the incarnation to the New Jerusalem. This is actually a summary of the history of the church. God is in the centre; that is, God is in the ark, in Christ. Now this wonderful One, the Triune God incarnated to be embodied as a man, has been expanded, increased, and enlarged. Eventually, the picture in Numbers shows us God and His chosen people mingled together as one entity to conquer the enemy on earth. The ultimate consummation of this work will be the New Jerusalem, which is the processed Triune God mingled with the transformed tripartite man.

The children of Israel were formed into a body to **fight for God as warriors and serve God as priests for the carrying out of God's purpose**, and to **fight for the protection of God's testimony**. The children of Israel were formed into a fighting army by being numbered by their families and leaders and according to their age. The families refer to the source of life and the leaders refer to the leadership under the authority of Christ in His Body. The numbering according to age signifies maturity in life.

The children of Israel encamped in array typifies **God's redeemed people being consummated in the New Jerusalem**. Every man encamping by his own standard, with the ensigns of their fathers' houses signifies that they were arranged without their choice according to their preference but according to God's ordination and arrangement. All the children of Israel were encamped facing the tent of meeting around the tent of meeting for the protection of the tabernacle of the testimony.

The Holy Service

The holy service is altogether with the Levites. The service is holy because it takes care of the tabernacle of the testimony of God. To minister is to serve, and to serve is to supply people by ministering to them. **The ministry of the priests and the Levites always supplies people with the riches of Christ**. Even the holy service of the priests and the Levites was **in the warfare**; the New Testament priests are warriors, and **our priestly service is a fighting**. The basic principle of the holy service is that it is without confusion; it is based on life.

The priests and the Levites had certain duties in the tabernacles' setting out. To set out is to go forward. Thus, what is covered in the holy service is not for a Christ who is inactive but for a Christ who is very active. **In His activity we must match Him**. In His New Testament economy, God does nothing without man. Man must be one with God, match God, and be bound together with God. Christ, the embodiment of God for His expansion, moves through those who love Him. **If we do not move, He cannot move. Rather, He is bound and even imprisoned within us. If we do not move, we become a prison to the Lord.**

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