

Read the Whole Bible with Pastor

Monday (April 3) – Numbers 7

Now that the tabernacle is finished, it is dedicated in a twelve-day ceremony. This seems rather extravagant compared to a dedication service for a new church building today, but consider that at this time, the tabernacle is the only house of God on earth. The repetitive account of the gifts presented over the twelve days reads like an ancient version of the song The Twelve Days of Christmas.

Tuesday (April 4) – Numbers 8

Aaron and his sons had been ordained as priests in chapter 8 of Leviticus. Now, in chapter 8 of Numbers, the rest of the Levites are consecrated for service to God. The general Levites could not offer sacrifices themselves. Yet they assisted the priests and devoted themselves to the care and maintenance of the tabernacle. Today, our pastors may be assisted in their duties by the elders, altar guild, and other members of the congregation, though unlike the Levites, those who assist our pastors today are usually volunteers. Ritual animal sacrifice was a lot of work and required a small army of full-time workers.

God had previously declared that every firstborn son or animal belonged to Him as the firstfruits of the womb. Now God explains that He has claimed the tribe of Levi in exchange for the firstborn of Israel. This foreshadows our Lord Jesus, who gives up His life to God in exchange for ours. Every Levite man served from the ages of twenty-five to fifty, though he was not permitted to perform certain tasks until he reached the age of thirty. Priests were ordained and began their service at a similar age, though there was no retirement age for the priesthood. This explains why Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was still serving as a priest while an old man (Luke 1:5–7). So long as a priest was physically able and had not disqualified himself from office for some other reason, he was free to continue to serve. The same is true for our pastors today.

Wednesday (April 5) – Numbers 9

God reiterates His instructions for the Passover, which was first instituted in Exodus 12. Even those who are ritually unclean, and would be temporarily excluded from other communal events, are to keep the Passover. In fact, the penalty for failing to celebrate this feast is excommunication.

In our day many well-meaning but misguided Christians attempt to recreate the Passover. Some will even invite a Jewish speaker into church to host a Seder meal. However well intentioned, this is not a good practice. Everything about the Old Testament Passover was a type and a shadow of the true Passover that was to come. Our true enemy is not Pharaoh the ruler of Egypt, but sin, death, and the devil. Jesus is the true Passover Lamb. His blood marks the doorposts of our hearts so that the avenging angel passes over us. Old Testament Passover is superseded by New Testament Holy Communion. If a practicing Jew would like to learn of Passover, he should ask a Christian to teach him its true meaning, not the other way around.

The second half of chapter 9 explains how the Israelites marched or set up camp in accord with the presence of the Lord. To be God's people meant to follow His lead, which was beyond their understanding or control. Likewise, no pastor, board of elders, or congregation sets the agenda for the Church. We are Christians, that is, followers of Christ. So long as we are gathered by the Holy Spirit around the Word of God, we remain the true Church. If we ever abandon God's Word and set out on our own, promoting our own agendas and following our own itching ears, we have ceased to be the people of God. Lord, keep us in Thy Word and work!

Thursday (April 6) – Numbers 10

Whenever the twelve tribes are listed in relation to the tabernacle, Judah is always first—first to present a gift, first when on the march, and first (front and center) when camping around the tabernacle. This is because the Messiah was promised to come from the tribe of Judah (see Genesis 49:8–10).

Friday (April 7) – Numbers 11, 12

The sinful nature can find reason to complain about any good gift from God, even the Bread of Heaven (manna). This time Moses loses his patience with the people and begs God to kill him. (Keep this in mind if you plan to complain to your pastor. He likely has less patience than Moses.) God responds by ordaining seventy men to help share Moses' burden. The number of Israelites at this time is close to the number of members in the LCMS. Imagine the burden that would be on our president, Pastor Harrison, if we all lived in one place and he were the only pastor.

Saturday (April 8) – Numbers 13

Miriam and Aaron become jealous of Moses' authority. As people often do, they find an unrelated issue to use as ammunition against Moses: his Ethiopian wife. Congregations sometimes employ this tactic today, targeting the pastor's wife when they are unhappy with the pastor. After Miriam is struck with leprosy (she seems to have been the ringleader), Aaron and Moses intercede for her, and God grants her healing. Miriam is the only named Israelite in the Old Testament to be cured of leprosy. (Naaman was a Syrian. See Luke 4:27)

Sunday (April 9) – Numbers 14

Having reached the borders of the Promised Land, Moses sends a man from each tribe to spy out the land. Ten of the spies bring back an evil report. Factually, most of what they report is true: there are giants in the land—men of great stature who descended from Anak. (Goliath of Gath will also be one of the Anakim.) Yet, the report of the ten spies is evil because they conclude that God Himself is incapable of bringing them into the land. Unbelief looks to itself and its own abilities rather than to God and His promises. The remaining two spies, Joshua, Moses' assistant, and Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, give a faithful report (v. 30).