

## Wilderness Wandering: Hope for a Future Generation (1444–1408 BC)

Numbers 15:1–31

### Law Concerning the Meal and Drink Offerings to be Added to Every Appropriate Animal Sacrifice

1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

- 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘When you enter the land where you are to live, which I am giving you,  
 3 and you make an offering by fire to the LORD from the herd or from the flock (whether a burnt offering or a sacrifice for discharging a vow or as a freewill offering or in your solemn feasts) to create a pleasing aroma to the LORD,  
 4 then the one who presents his offering to the LORD must bring a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with one fourth of a hin of olive oil.  
 5 You must also prepare one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering with the burnt offering or the sacrifice for each lamb.  
 6 Or for a ram, you must prepare as a grain offering two-tenths of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with one-third of a hin of olive oil,  
 7 and for a drink offering you must offer one-third of a hin of wine as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.  
 8 And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice for discharging a vow or as a peace offering to the LORD,  
 9 then a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with half a hin of olive oil must be presented with the young bull,  
 10 and you must present as the drink offering half a hin of wine with the fire offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.  
 11 This is what is to be done for each ox, or each ram, or each of the male lambs or the goats.  
 12 You must do so for each one according to the number that you prepare.

### The Law Applies to Foreigners and Israelites Alike

- 13 “Every native-born person must do these things in this way to present an offering made by fire as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.  
 14 If a resident foreigner is living with you—or whoever is among you in future generations—and prepares an offering made by fire as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, he must do it the same way you are to do it.  
 15 One statute must apply to you who belong to the congregation and to the resident foreigner who is living among you, as a permanent statute for your future generations. You and the resident foreigner will be alike before the LORD.  
 16 One law and one custom must apply to you and to the resident foreigner who lives alongside you.”

### Contribution of the First of the Dough

- 17 The LORD spoke to Moses:  
 18 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘When you enter the land to which I am bringing you  
 19 and you eat some of the food of the land, you must offer up a raised offering to the LORD.  
 20 You must offer up a cake of the first of your finely ground flour as a raised offering; as you offer the raised offering of the threshing floor, so you must offer it up.  
 21 You must give to the LORD some of the first of your finely ground flour as a raised offering in your future generations.

### Atonement for Inadvertent Sin by the Community

- 22 “If you sin unintentionally and do not observe all these commandments that the LORD has spoken to Moses—  
 23 all that the LORD has commanded you by the authority of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses and continuing through your future generations—  
 24 then if anything is done unintentionally without the knowledge of the community, the whole community must prepare one young bull for a burnt offering—for a pleasing aroma to the LORD—along with its grain offering and its customary drink offering, and one male goat for a purification offering.  
 25 And the priest is to make atonement for the whole community of the Israelites, and they will be forgiven, because it was unintentional and they have brought their offering, an offering made by fire to the LORD, and their purification offering before the LORD, for their unintentional offense.  
 26 And the whole community of the Israelites and the resident foreigner who lives among them will be forgiven, since all the people were involved in the unintentional offense.

### Atonement for Inadvertent Sin by the Individual

- 27 “If any person sins unintentionally, then he must bring a yearling female goat for a purification offering.  
 28 And the priest must make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally—when he sins unintentionally before the LORD—to make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.  
 29 You must have one law for the person who sins unintentionally, both for the native-born among the Israelites and for the resident foreigner who lives among them.

### Death Penalty for High-handed Sins

- 30 “But the person who acts defiantly, whether native-born or a resident foreigner, insults the LORD. That person must be cut off

from among his people.

31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person must be completely cut off. His iniquity will be on him.”

### Wilderness Wandering: Case Law—Capital Punishment for Sabbath Violation (1444–1408 BC)

Numbers 15:32–41

#### A Man is Stoned for Working on the Sabbath

32 When the Israelites were in the wilderness they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day.

33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to the whole community.

34 They put him in custody, because there was no clear instruction about what should be done to him.

35 Then the LORD said to Moses, “The man must surely be put to death; the whole community must stone him with stones outside the camp.”

36 So the whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

#### Tassels—A Visual Reminder to Serve Yahweh

37 The LORD spoke to Moses:

38 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them to make tassels for themselves on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and put a blue thread on the tassel of the corners.

39 You must have this tassel so that you may look at it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and obey them and so that you do not follow after your own heart and your own eyes that lead you to unfaithfulness.

40 Thus you will remember and obey all my commandments and be holy to your God.

41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.”

### Wilderness Wandering: Korah Incites Rebellion (1444–1408 BC)

Numbers 16:1–17:11

#### Korah Covets the Priesthood and Incites a Rebellion to Get It

16:1 Now Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth, who were Reubenites, took men

2 and rebelled against Moses, along with some of the Israelites, 250 leaders of the community, chosen from the assembly, famous men.

3 And they assembled against Moses and Aaron, saying to them, “You take too much upon yourselves, seeing that the whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the community of the LORD?”

#### Moses Inquires of Yahweh (see Numbers 20:6)

4 When Moses heard it he fell down with his face to the ground.

#### Moses Tells Korah Yahweh’s Decision

5 Then he said to Korah and to all his company, “In the morning the LORD will make known who are his, and who is holy. He will cause that person to approach him; the person he has chosen he will cause to approach him. [2 Tim 2:19]

6 Do this, Korah, you and all your company: Take censers,

7 put fire in them, and set incense on them before the LORD tomorrow, and the man whom the LORD chooses will be holy. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!”

#### Moses Reveals the True Motive Behind Korah’s Rebellion

8 Moses said to Korah, “Listen now, you sons of Levi!

9 Does it seem too small a thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the community of Israel to bring you near to himself, to perform the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the community to minister to them?

10 He has brought you near and all your brothers, the sons of Levi, with you. Do you now seek the priesthood also?

11 Therefore you and all your company have assembled together against the LORD! And Aaron—what is he that you murmur against him?”

#### Moses Tries to Talk With Dathan and Abiram But They Refuse

12 Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, “We will not come up.

13 Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of the land that flows with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness? Now do you want to make yourself a prince over us?”

14 Moreover, you have not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey, nor given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Do you think you can blind these men? We will not come up.”

15 Moses was very angry, and he said to the LORD, “Have no respect for their offering! I have not taken so much as one donkey from them, nor have I harmed any one of them!”

#### **Moses Repeats Yahweh’s Instructions**

16 Then Moses said to Korah, “You and all your company present yourselves before the LORD—you and they, and Aaron—tomorrow. 17 And each of you take his censer, put incense in it, and then each of you present his censer before the LORD: 250 censers, along with you, and Aaron—each of you with his censer.”

18 So everyone took his censer, put fire in it, and set incense on it, and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting, with Moses and Aaron.

#### **Yahweh Prepares to Kill the Entire Community**

19 When Korah assembled the whole community against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting, then the glory of the LORD appeared to the whole community.

20 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron:

21 “Separate yourselves from among this community, that I may consume them in an instant.”

22 Then they threw themselves down with their faces to the ground and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all people, will you be angry with the whole community when only one man sins?”

#### **Yahweh Permits the People to Separate Themselves from Korah’s Assembly**

23 So the LORD spoke to Moses:

24 “Tell the community: ‘Get away from around the homes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’”

25 Then Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel went after him.

26 And he said to the community, “Move away from the tents of these wicked men, and do not touch anything they have, lest you be destroyed because of all their sins.”

27 So they got away from the homes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side, and Dathan and Abiram came out and stationed themselves in the entrances of their tents with their wives, their children, and their toddlers.

#### **Yahweh Kills the Assembly of Korah**

28 Then Moses said, “This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will.

29 If these men die a natural death, or if they share the fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me.

30 But if the LORD does something entirely new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up along with all that they have, and they go down alive to the grave, then you will know that these men have despised the LORD!”

31 When he had finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open,

32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, along with their households, and all Korah’s men, and all their goods.

33 They and all that they had went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed over them. So they perished from among the community. [[Jude 1:4, 10–13](#)]

34 All the Israelites who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “What if the earth swallows us too?”

35 Then a fire went out from the LORD and devoured the 250 men who offered incense.

#### **Korah’s Censers Turned Into a Covering for the Altar**

36 The LORD spoke to Moses:

37 “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to pick up the censers out of the flame, for they are holy, and then scatter the coals of fire at a distance.

38 As for the censers of these men who sinned at the cost of their lives, they must be made into hammered sheets for covering the altar, because they presented them before the LORD and sanctified them. They will become a sign to the Israelites.”

39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers presented by those who had been burned up, and they were hammered out as a covering for the altar.

40 It was a memorial for the Israelites, that no outsider who is not a descendant of Aaron should approach to burn incense before the LORD, that he might not become like Korah and his company—just as the LORD had spoken by the authority of Moses.

#### **The People Are Angered by Korah’s Death and Assemble Against Moses and Aaron**

41 But on the next day the whole community of Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You have killed the LORD’s people!”

**Yahweh Sends a Plague Against the Entire Community**

42 When the community assembled against Moses and Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting—and the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

43 Then Moses and Aaron stood before the tent of meeting.

44 The LORD spoke to Moses:

45a “Get away from this community, so that I can consume them in an instant!”

**Yahweh Permits Moses and Aaron to Save the People**

45b But they threw themselves down with their faces to the ground.

46 Then Moses said to Aaron, “Take the censer, put burning coals from the altar in it, place incense on it, and go quickly into the assembly and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the LORD—the plague has begun!”

47 So Aaron did as Moses commanded and ran into the middle of the assembly, where the plague was just beginning among the people. So he placed incense on the coals and made atonement for the people.

48 He stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped.

49 Now 14,700 people died in the plague, in addition to those who died in the event with Korah.

50 Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and the plague was stopped.

**Yahweh Instructs Moses to Prepare a Ceremony of Confirmation**

17:1 The LORD spoke to Moses:

2 “Speak to the Israelites, and receive from them a staff from each tribe, one from every tribal leader, twelve staffs; you must write each man’s name on his staff.

3 You must write Aaron’s name on the staff of Levi; for one staff is for the head of every tribe.

4 You must place them in the tent of meeting before the ark of the covenant where I meet with you.

5 And the staff of the man whom I choose will blossom; so I will rid myself of the complaints of the Israelites, which they murmur against you.”

6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a staff, one for each leader, according to their tribes—twelve staffs; the staff of Aaron was among their staffs.

7 Then Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

**Yahweh Confirms His Selection of the Aaronic Priesthood**

8 On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony—and the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted, and brought forth buds, and produced blossoms, and yielded almonds!

9 So Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his staff.

10 The LORD said to Moses, “Bring Aaron’s staff back before the testimony to be preserved for a sign to the rebels, so that you may bring their murmurings to an end before me, that they will not die.” [[Heb 9:3–4](#)]

11 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him—this is what he did.

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