

## OFFER TWO AS A REGULAR BURNT OFFERING EACH DAY

Numbers 26:1-30:17

Key Verse 28:3,4

“Say to them: ‘This is the offering made by fire that you are to present to the Lord: two lambs a year old without defect, as a regular burnt offering each day. Prepare one lamb in the morning and the other at twilight.’”

Thank God for this blessed Easter time during which we can remember and celebrate Jesus who died for our sins and rose again (1 Cor 15:3,4). Last week, as I shared the gospel with my friend Paula, she asked me if I really believe in Jesus’ resurrection, why, and with what consequence. Numbers may seem to be an unsuitable text for this occasion. But I realize that in Numbers we can find the deep truth of Jesus’ death and resurrection for us. Today’s passage gives us the answer how we can live a new life by faith in him. Let’s continue our Numbers study with this question in mind, and humbly seek to live the new life that pleases God and testifies to him.

In the previous passage, Numbers 17-25, the Israelites came up to their 38<sup>th</sup> year in the desert. When the people complained en route, God sent deathly venomous snakes. Nothing could stop these snakes. But as Moses prayed for them, God elevated a bronze snake, through looking upon which they could be healed and live. As God has elevated the snake in the desert so he has also elevated Christ Jesus our Lord. Sin has deathly consequences, but the LORD gives healing and life for those who humbly repent and believe in him.

In this passage, God lays the foundation for the new generation to conquer and dwell in the Promised Land. It contains the second census of the next generation, and God’s establishment of the inheritance laws, the appointment of the new leader Joshua, and the establishment of the offering system for their new lives in the Promised Land. Through this passage, may we renew God’s grace and learn how we, the next generation, can live new lives as victorious conquerors.

### First, the second census (26:1-27:33)

Let’s read verses 26:1-2: “After the plague the Lord said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the

priest, ‘Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families—all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel.’” After wandering in the desert for 38 years, the Israelites finally camped at the plains of Moab, right in front of the Promised Land. There God commanded Moses and Eleazar to take a 2<sup>nd</sup> census of the Israelites.

The command for the 2<sup>nd</sup> census echoes God’s command to Moses and Aaron 38 years earlier: “Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man name by name, one by one.” (Num 1:2) At that time, God had wanted to form his people as an army to conquer the Promised Land. 603,550 men were counted (1:46). Unfortunately, they failed to conquer the promised land because of their fear and unbelief. As a consequence, they had to wander in the desert for 38 years until they all died (64-65), except Caleb and Joshua. Now God was reinstating his promise for the next generation, mobilizing them as his army to claim the Promised Land in the 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt. Man fails, but God is faithful and does not fail in his promises.

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> census, the total came to 601,730. (26:51) Despite the difficulty of life in the desert, and the plagues, the population was roughly the same. In the desert, God raised up a whole new generation, to continue his history, to fulfill his promise, and to conquer the Promised Land. The new generation was itself recipient of God’s grace, by his sovereignty, and faithfulness.

By God’s grace and mercy only, God counts us as one of his spiritual army of the next generation. In concrete, by God’s grace we are part of the family of UBF within the whole of God’s people. UBF ancestors accepted God’s promise from Exodus 19:5,6 to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation for all the world. Our spiritual ancestors carried this promise of God in their hearts as they served campus mission

through one-to-one Bible Study. When they carried God's promise in their hearts more than three thousand of them including your parents went as missionaries into all the world. Despite coming from a third world country, they conquered their mission fields and raised disciples of Jesus through faith. This is, why we are here. This year we are celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UBF mission in Europe and worldwide. Now, this promise of God and identity as his people, his army, has reached us, the next generation of the missionaries and the native UBF shepherds. God's promise and vision is to raise us as global spiritual leaders—influential and excellent Bible teachers and shepherds—for Germany, Europe, and to the ends of the earth. Through faith, you are counted as one of this people!

In my sinful nature, enflamed by the modern lie of individualism, I used to consider my birth as a next-gen UBF missionary a curse and I chafed against spiritual discipline and protested this identity that I did not choose by my own will. What a grace it is, however, that through my birth name and life key verse, Genesis 17:16, God has counted me as one of his next generation through whom he wants to continue and fulfill his promise.

For the 2018 Global Leadership Empowerment Forum, we had seven staff: Peter Lim, Joseph Lee, Peter Ryu, Sara Ryu, Joshua Park, Paulina Lee, and Maria Park. This year we have thirty-two new staff: Sarah Han, Lydia Lee Jr., Anna Lim, Sam Jeong, Lydia Point, Wendy Lin, Frank Lin, Josua Elsholz, Lydia Park, Sarah Yang, Matthäus Grigoriadis, Jinhong Park, Lydia Oh, Ester Cho, Daniel Gates, Pauline Lee, Anna So, Mary Lee, Grace Kim, Grace Baik, Ruth Park, Abraham Kim, Paul Choi, Samuel A. Chang, Sarah EJ Park, Andrew Choi, Lydia Han, Noah Schweitzer, Anna Sim, Banseok Cho, Petra Han, and Sera Lee. Each one is a precious one in the line of God's history, with precious spiritual parents and spiritual heritage, and in God, great spiritual potential as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Our hope and prayer for each one of them through GLEF is to claim God's promise by faith, and to empower them as God's kingdom of priests and holy nation (Ex 19:5,6). Let us not miss this spiritual hope of God, falling prey to individualism or pragmatism, but count and prepare ourselves with faith in the faithful, living God and his promise.

In chapter 27, the inheritance laws become added through the petition of Zelophehad's daughters. Zelophehad was a great-great grandson of Manasseh, one of the sons of Joseph. He had five daughters, but no son. According to the previously established inheritance laws, his daughters should receive no inheritance. Their father's name would disappear from his clan. Zelophehad's five daughters (Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah, and Tirzah) did not fatalistically or passively give up. Can all the women read verses 1b-2, from "They approached"? "They approached the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly and said,..." Wow! What strong and spirit-filled women, to come before Moses, Eleazar, and the whole assembly before God. They boldly petitioned that their father's inheritance be passed on to them.

Moses brought their case before the LORD. God was pleased with them and gave them their inheritance. And he gave a new inheritance rule that the inheritance of a sonless man should go to his daughters; that of a childless man should go to his brothers; and that of a man also without brothers should go to the nearest relative in his clan. This established that the inheritance from God is precious and was to be preserved within a family.

By God's sovereign grace, we have a spiritual inheritance from God, the spiritual legacies of UBF: 1. Go back to the Bible 2. World Mission through lay missionaries 3. Campus evangelism through one-to-one Bible Study 4. Manger ministry through house churches 5. Disciple-making ministry 6. Daily Bread and testimony writing 7. Giving spirit, "five loaves and two fish" 8. Pray to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This is the precious spiritual inheritance God has given us according to his promise in Exodus 19:5,6. Thank God, that this extraordinary and great spiritual inheritance is given to men and women alike! Like Zelophehad's daughters, let us boldly pray, "Give us property among our father's relatives!" (27:4) Let us fight to keep our spiritual inheritance, to honour the living God, and to take firm hold of his promise. If only we honour and please God, he will give us the land. (Num 14:8,9)

In verses 12-14, the LORD has Moses go up a mountain in the Abarim Range to look over the Promised Land, but does not allow him to enter it because he and Aaron had disobeyed God at

Meribah Kadesh (20:1-13). Moses does not sulk or condemn. He prays. Can all the men read Moses' prayer from "May the Lord..."? "May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd." (16-17) Moses' single concern was that God's people have a good shepherd. We can see here what it means that "Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." (Num 12:3) In other words, he was a good Shepherd, until the end of his life. The people had burdened him so (Num 11:10-15), and on several occasions had plotted mutiny against him (e.g. Num 12,14,16). Finally, it even costed him the entry into the Promised Land. But Moses prayed faithfully for his sheep that God would raise a Shepherd even when he was gone. God was pleased and had them commission Joshua, whom he had been preparing, and in whom was Moses' spirit of leadership, as the next leader of Israel. God was preparing the next generation to conquer the land. Thank God for many servants of God and bible teachers like Moses, who faithfully serve God's people as a shepherd, and who pray for and practically work to raise shepherds for the next generation. May God raise among us now many Joshuas who can shepherd God's people and lead spiritual warfare for God's honour.

### **Second, the offering system and the seven festivals for the new life (28:1-30:17)**

In chapters 28-29, God speaks to Moses yet again about the offering system (c.f. Ex 29:38-41). Let's read 28:1-2: "The LORD said to Moses, 'Give this command to the Israelites and say to them: 'See that you present to me at the appointed time the food for my offerings made by fire, as an aroma pleasing to me.'" The offering that pleases God is not the offering according to our whims, availability, or capacity, but what and when pleases him, as he commands.

What, then, was to be offered, when? The daily offering was introduced as the basic foundation, to be offered everyday, on top of which special offerings were to be added. Let's read the key verses, verses 3-4: "Say to them: 'This is the offering made by fire that you are to present to the Lord: two lambs a year old without defect, as a regular burnt offering each day. Prepare one lamb in the morning and the other at twilight.'" By offering the daily offering, the priests were to

come to God twice a day on behalf of the people, once in the morning and once in the evening. The priesthood was not a 9-5 day job, but a life. In this way, the entire day, day and night, was offered to God on behalf of the people, everyday. The daily offering laid the rhythmic foundation in their new life in the Promised Land, so that they started and ended each day by coming to God.

What was to be offered, as a minimum, each day? With each lamb was to be offered a grain offering of about 3.2 kg of the finest flour mixed with about 1 L of the best olive oil, along with 1 L of wine. This is about 3 packages of the finest flour mixed with 1 bottle of olive oil (about 50 croissants), alongside 1 bottle of wine with each lamb. What might this offering have cost them? Consider that the Israelites were wandering through the desert, eating manna. Their herds and livestock were their most precious wealth and security. God commanded them to offer this costly offering twice daily, morning and evening, without fail as "a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD."

On top of the daily offering, there was to be a Sabbath offering, a monthly offering to be offered on the first of every month, the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread offerings that included offerings over the course of 7 days, the offerings of firstfruits, that for the Festival of Weeks, for the Festival of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and for the 8 days of the Festival of Tabernacles.

These offerings and festivals constituted their regular life pattern, day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year. Underneath all this, like clockwork, was the regular twice-daily offering.

Why did God emphasize that such an offering system be instituted by the next generation in their new lives in the Promised Land? Through the offering system and festival calendar the Israelites had to learn relationship, identity and divine discipline on a daily basis. In other words, through the offering system and festivals God wanted to form the Israelite community as his holy people that could be a kingdom of priests for all the world. The offering system teaches us, that growing as God's people means to live in a love relationship with God everyday (in fact, at least twice daily) and offering God practically our time, resources, and strength. We can think about the meaning of the offering and festival system in at least two points. First it was to

recognize God's mercy. Second, it was to trust in God's faithfulness to fulfill his promise.

God had heard their groaning in their slavery (Ex 2:23-24), was concerned about them, and was faithful to his covenant with their forefather Abraham. He had raised Moses as a shepherd to lead them out of Egypt, through the astounding plagues and miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. And he had given them his promise to raise them as his kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Ex 19:5,6) By God's mercy, the Israelites were chosen and redeemed to be God's people, with God's blessing. God had heard their groaning in their slavery (Ex 2:23-24), was concerned about them, and raised Moses as a shepherd to lead them out of Egypt, through the astounding plagues and miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. And he had given them who were once a slave nation his promise to raise them as his kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Ex 19:5,6) They had been like spiritual babies receiving the care of their father. Despite their many failures and grumbings God had been faithful to them and helped them grow in a love relationship with him and to grow from people with slave mentality to his royal and holy priests. In fact, God's heart, time, materials, and strength used for them was incomparable with what he asked of them.

By God's mercy in Jesus, we who were once slaves to our sin, have been redeemed and made as one of his people. We were enemies of God in our sin. In fact, in sin we were already living dead. But God saw the suffering of our souls and gave his son Jesus as the sacrifice to reconcile us to him. (Col 1:21-22) Jesus is the one who offered his own life as the Lamb of God (Jo 1:29) for us. Because of him we have received God's mercy of forgiveness and inclusion in the people of God with God's promise. "and just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Ro 6:4b)

Like the Israelites, standing at the brink of the Promised Land, we can either stay stuck in our old life or move powerfully into the Promised Land, establishing the new life of offering that pleases God. Romans 6:13 admonishes us, "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and the parts of your body to him as an instrument of righteousness."

Like the Israelites, we can grow in our relationship, identity and divine discipline (= capacity) as God's holy people and royal priests by offering to God twice daily through early morning and evening prayer for God's work in and through us among our sheep. We must keep celebrating the Sabbath with our Worship Services in the morning and in the afternoon and evening testimony-writing, and also teach our children, our friends and sheep to do so. We also have the weekly offering of 360 1:1 Bible Studies, with each leader bringing the personal offering of 12 1:1 Bible Studies each week. Last week we celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of M. Monika and S. Ehrfurcht Kösters. Today and next week, we offer our Easter Worship Service, with a life-giving sermon, joyful dance and choir, delicious cakes, and many students. All the precious time, energy, and resources are our practical life offerings to God as our expressions of thanks and praise, and the exercise of our new life in him.

When I asked my friend Katrina what a modern parallel of offering a lamb or a bull might be, she said, "giving up your most precious thing, your source of security," and this not just once, but daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. This might mean regularly offering your job, money, house, even your family. It is about a *life* of offering. We have such examples among us.

My mother was a brilliant student of French literature who dreamt of being a professor in France. When the door opened to be a missionary to Canada instead, going as a sewing machine operator, she was moved by Jesus in John 1:14: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus is the one who gave his glory in heaven to make his dwelling among sinners and to give them eternal life. Because of this Jesus, she offered her personal dream and life-projection and went to Canada as a sewing machine operator missionary. In Canada, her missionary life was totally new and really intensive. The missionaries worked 8-10 hours per day as sewing machine operators. On top of that, they studied English, studied the Bible, fished, and fed sheep. They practically lived the offering life by which God transformed them as his kingdom of priests and holy nation. God is now using my mother and father as royal priests for Canadian students and next gens at the University of Toronto. Offering me, their first child, to God for his world mission,

was the most costly offering to them. But God was pleased by it and through it he is making them royal priests who raise many more priests in Germany, Europe, Latin America, North America, the CIS, and the whole world.

M. Dr. Peter Chang completed his PhD, as the first of missionaries in Germany, in Pharmacy. But he offered his degree to serve as a full-time shepherd and served holding onto Mk 11:22 and Mk 6:37. He had faith in the wonderful vision of God and Jesus' compassionate heart, like Moses, both of whom gave their lives for the shepherdless sheep. When his wife, M. Sarah, heard of his decision to serve full time, she reduced her working hours so that she could also serve full-time, and she was his best coworker, sharing the same spirit. They offered their entire lives daily, morning to late evening (sometimes straight through to the next morning), their house church, children, and grandchildren to God. Because of their sacrifice, God blessed Bonn ministry and raised many house churches, Bible teachers, prayer warriors, and servants for world mission.

Nowadays, many Christians think that life of faith is only internal (a matter of thoughts). Some Christians complain inwardly because they think they have to offer too much to the cause of God. I was in the latter group. I repent that I did not keep God's costly grace and his priceless promise as the centre of my heart. Instead, like the Israelites I stubbornly held onto my slavishness and in practice, couldn't live a fruitful new life. How foolish I was! God redeemed us with the precious blood of Jesus, not so that we might remain stuck in our slavery of sin, but so that we might live new lives in relationship with him! Do you want to be a slave or a royal priest of the living God? Let's claim God's grace and promise by faith, through living practical lives of offering to him each day.

The preparation for our upcoming GLEF costs heart-labour, time, physical labour, and resources. Our prayer is that God help us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices practically from early morning to late evening with thanks for God's mercy and faith in his promise. May God help us to live the new life as his kingdom of priests and holy nation.

Through this passage we learned to practically live a new life of offering to God out of thanks for his grace and faith in his

promise. Thank God for his grace of counting each one of us in Jesus as his people, and for his faithfulness to his great promise in Exodus 19:5,6 (1 Pe 2:9). May God raise the next generation as his people, who live daily by faith, offering every part of themselves to God. Through living a life of practical offering, may we be formed in the new life, heart, and faith as God's kingdom of priests and holy nation.