

# Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

## Week 07: Leviticus 21-27 & Numbers 1-15, *Rebellion and Laws*

Welcome to week seven of the Bible reading coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters. And I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks. This week, we will finish the Bible stirred book Leviticus. And we'll start the Bible's fourth book numbers by going from Leviticus 21 through numbers 15, looking at something that I've entitled rebellion and laws.

Now, as we saw last week, Leviticus is named for the Levites, there have a tribe of priests who take care of the tabernacle and temple, who offer sacrifices, who interpret God's Word who preach and enforce God's laws. And then we're going to look at the book of Numbers, which is exactly what you think there's a lot of numbers, there's a lot of counting, there's a couple censuses in it. But don't let that discourage you, like we talked about last week. This is why I'm here, as the Bible reading coach, this is why we're going through this together. Because there are great treasures here if we pause before we read it, to see what's going on, and how to look at it and how to find what there is in these great passages. So let's get right to the passages.

First of all, Leviticus 21 and 22. We've got some rules for the priests. This is something that I want you to look for, that we don't typically pay a lot of attention to. Here and later in the Bible, the requirements for priests and later for church leaders in the New Testament, they are not what we would probably make them to be think about it when we make up stuff like when we write science fiction or fantasy. What requirements are there for the people in it? Who are the priests or the seers or the prophets? Or, you know, the Jedi, right? What do they do? What abilities do they have, they can perform magic, they can do incantations, they have third eye insight, they can make stuff float, they can feel what other people feel in a magical way, right? Or, or even in modern church leadership books. They talk about having skills for strategy and for leadership and so on. That's what we think church leadership and religious leadership should be about. But when you take a look in the Old Testament, that's not what you see, yes, you're gonna see some ceremonies, that seems strange to us. But in the Bible, the emphasis for God's leaders for the spiritual leaders of the people is about their moral behavior. It's about their emotional stability. It's about having a strong home life, treat your wife and your children well. It's about not taking bribes that's mentioned in several times in both the Old and New Testament. Don't get drunk, right? It's amazing.

There is nothing in there about being able to do to do magical things, prophetic things, even huge leadership skills, none of the stuff that we would associate with that. It's about character. God wants His people to represent his character. And God especially wants the spiritual leaders to represent his character. That's the most important thing. So take a look how these are really character based. We then move to the end of Leviticus and chapters 23 through 27. And you're going to see a list of feasts and fasts.

Back then they didn't have a calendar like we have today. In fact, that wasn't around until very recently, the Gregorian calendar was officially adopted in 1852. So we're barely over 150

years into using that now coming up on 200. To be generous with it. But before that, there were either various calendars for various cultures or they did a calendar like most cultures did, which is they built their year around feasts and fasts, the feasts, were about celebration and a way of thanking God. And the fasts were about abstinence, as a way of reminding them to repent of their sins and to stay humble before God. So their entire year was built around celebration and abstinence, thanking God and repenting for their sins back and forth.

And this is, this is a wonderful dynamic to keep in our minds in our hearts. As we approach God's Word as we worship as we go through our year, are we taking time to pause and to thank God and to celebrate are we taking time to pause and to consider and to reflect and to abstain from things we would normally enjoy as a way of humbling ourselves before God and as a way of repenting of our sins. That's how their entire calendar was arranged.

So even as you read about feasts and fasts that we don't observe anymore, the principle behind them, of celebrating and thanking God, and pausing to reflect and repent and to stay humble before God definitely still apply to us today. Then we move into the book of Numbers, and it begins in Chapters 1 through 4 with the counting, okay, so as you're going to read it, you're gonna see this tribe as this many people in this tribe is this many people and your eyes are gonna glaze over and you're going to go, Who cares how many people were in each tribe? Well, let me answer that question. Who cares how many people were in each tribe?

First of all God did, he ordered the counting. Secondly, they, they cared who how many people were in each tribe. And historians do, we really know an awful lot more about their culture and about their ideas about where they were about how they behaved. And a part of that is simply how many people they had to organize. So you don't have to know every single detail, nobody's going to ask you to memorize how many were in the tribe of Dan, but just to see a handful of things. So how should we read these passages? And why should we care? First of all, we should care because one, it's in the Bible. And two, because it shows that it's real life, you don't count fantasy people, or you just round it off, right? But when you're talking about actual real people who lived and died in real places, the fact that they give very precise numbers shows you that this really is real life stuff. So that's one of the reasons we should care.

Secondly, why should we read it? And how should we read it? Well, first of all, like I said, don't worry about exact numbers. But note that God cares about every single one of us enough to count every single one of us later on then, in the New Testament, it says that God cares about us so much, that he's got the hairs of our head numbered. And the counting in the Bible is never done, so that we can brag about having more than somebody else. It's a way of God reminding us that he cares about every detail of our life. So take a look at that, even during these counting spots.

We then move from 1, 1 through 4 to Numbers 5, through 10. And Numbers 5 through 10 are a few chapters, with laws that particularly are about the tabernacle. And then we see how God's presence will move and will guide them as they go through their time in the wilderness eventually, as well, as we'll get through soon. This is the challenging passage. So take notes of

three spots, especially first of all, there's the gorgeous, beautiful priestly blessing that we see in chapter 6 verses 24 through 26. Pause and just reflect on that when you get there. It's extraordinary. Secondly, take note of how God guides them, especially in chapter 9, verses 13 through 23. Take a note of that. And the note that at this point is when they leave Sinai.

Remember, up until now all of this has been happening at the base of the mountain where God met Moses with the burning bush, and where God gave them the 10 commandments. And in chapter 10, is where the narrative starts to pick back up because they leave there and they start traveling again. So take note of those three things in chapters 5 through 10. And then we'll conclude our reading this week with chapters 11 through 15, where we'll see some more laws. And we'll see some things about the tabernacle. And again, about God's presence moving this is where the storyline picks up a bit.

As we conclude the week, you're going to see that they're going to there's a big complaint that they have about we don't have any meat. And because they complain and whine so much about God's already provided he's already providing bread in the desert every morning that they just have to pick up. It's called manna, right? But they complain about not having meat and one of them back to Egypt again. So God says you want me to give you meat, and they eat more meat than they could possibly imagine. After that there's an attempted coup that Moses own family tries to take authority away from him. It tells you that church fights and family fights are nothing new. They are chronicled from the very beginning in the Bible, then they arrive at the edge of the promised land, they send in some spies, then they exhibit a horrible lack of faith when the spies come back with a report.

And in fact, the end of Numbers 13 is where I got the title for my first book. So if you're watching or reading this, because you've seen some of what I've written, my first book is called The Grasshopper Myth and it comes from the end of Numbers 13. So take a look at that, for that grasshopper passage. When you get to the end of Numbers 13. At that point, God gets so angry with her lack of faith that he wants to kill him all. He wants to restart with Moses and he offers that to Moses and Moses pleads for mercy. And because of Moses pleading for mercy, God instead of killing them off right then and starting brand new with Moses sentences them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. And he says everyone but Joshua and Caleb is going to die in the desert. Why not Joshua and Caleb, because they're the two spies that spoke up and said, we can take the land, everyone else is going to die as they wander in the wilderness for the next 40 years.

So as we conclude this passage this week, what should we look for, or as we go into it, what should we look for? Again, even with the ceremonies and laws that are strange to us, take a look at the basis of the ceremonies and laws is morality and character and separation holiness, that they're going to be different from the nations around them. Notice that God's special people don't get special privileges. As much as they're supposed to exhibit a greater morality and kindness and being an example of God's character. We mix that up, we think, Oh, you're chosen by God. Therefore, you're going to get all kinds of extra houses and Mercedes

right. And you know, if you're chosen by God, that gives you a greater sense of responsibility to be people of character and it happens here. It starts here.

Okay, so earlier I mentioned the priestly prayer, the beautiful Priestly Prayer, Numbers chapter 6 verses 24 through 26. So let me say it to you for you and over you as we conclude this episode together.

Numbers 6:24-26. "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face toward you, and give you peace."

See you next week.

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