



Numbers 2-5

1. Not all families in God's family hold the same rank or standing: 1) Judah and his "better" brothers (2:1-9 w/10-17, 18-32 = Judah's group resided on the "east side" – or the neighborhood closest to the entrance to the tabernacle and was considered "first" versus Rueben's group - though he was the firstborn – see Gen 49:1-12, 22-26), 2) The priests and Levites (1:51-53 w/2:33 = Priests/Levites were exempt from war and resided in neighborhood closest to the tabernacle; Eph 4:7 – "grace was given" = unmerited gifts based on what each person/family's actions deserved; e.g. 1Ti 1:12-13).

"The structure of the camp represents a geographical configuration which combines levels of relative holiness and prominence with ultimate inclusion of all the tribes within the camp. Everyone belongs somewhere, but some are more equal than others." – Dennis T. Olson

2. To advance God's kingdom on earth requires the covenant community obediently submit to and operate by clearly defined lines of order and structure (2:34; 1Co 12:7-28, 14:26-40).

3. God shows NO partiality (3:1-4; 1Pe 1:14-17).

4. The priests are : 1) the ordained sacred office in God's house given God's authority to guard the office, holy things, covenant and Law – i.e. to bind and loose (3:10 – "guard the priesthood", 3:38 – "guarding the sanctuary", 4:5-20 – "covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings...the holy things" w/18:5,7 w/Joh 20:21-23; 1Ti 5:21-25, 6:20; e.g. baptism and the LT), 2) never to be guilty of narcissism (3:10 – "guard the priesthood" = their focus is not the people but God and holiness).

5. Like the priests, the Levites also represent the people before God (3:11-20, 39-51) but: 1) are a non-ordained sacred office separate from the priests (3:5-6, 9), 2) are appointed to oversee/care for ("guard") the physical safety and upkeep of all physical things related to the house of God and its ministry including its priests, people and property (3:7-8 – "guard over him and over the whole congregation" = This includes the role of bouncer/enforcer – See v10, 21-31, 33-37, 4:1-4, 21- See also 18:1-4), 3) are under the authority and direction of the priests (3:9, 32, 4:27-28, 33 and 18:6), 4) are eligible to serve between the ages of 25 and 50 and then after that in a limited capacity - i.e. oversight and security roles only (4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47 w/8:24-26). Reconciling "thirty years old and up" to "twenty five years old and up" = The latter represents the age at which Levite men would begin their training versus the former which was the time when they were eligible for service in the tabernacle (4:3 – "come on duty for service in the tent" = Serve as priests at the tabernacle; 8:24 – "come to do duty in the service of the tent" = Do manual labor/be trained to be Levitical priests; See also Ezr 3:8 – "twenty years old and up" = Labor in building the Temple not serving as priests; See also 1Ch 23:3 w/24).

6. The two sacred offices of priest and Levite *still exist* in the New Covenant house of God – i.e. the church (Isa 66:20-21 w/Exo 19 :6 w/Rev 1:6, 5:10).

7. God will not dwell in the covenant community if those who deserve to be "put out of the camp" are tolerated (5:1-4).

8. There is no statute of limitations - nor exceptions, for making full restitution plus a penalty of 20% when a person realizes they are/were guilty of possessing property or services thru sinful means/measures while in the covenant community (5:5-9 w/6:1-5; e.g. rec'd an internet order of greater value than what was ordered and decided to keep it; e.g. rec'd more change back at the store than you should have and decided to keep it).

9. God expects husbands and wives to: 1) be jealous for each other's sexual purity/fidelity (5:11-14), 2) investigate w/the promise of consequences if their spouse is found guilty of immorality (5:15-30).

10. Those husbands or wives who do not investigate or seek consequences in relation to their cheating spouse share in their guilt (5:31).

11. You cannot escape God's justice (5:11-31 = Escaping the covenant community's ability to prosecute does not mean we have escaped God's finding other ways to punish those who are guilty).

12. Suspicion is enough to begin an investigation, but never enough to convict/accuse/condemn a person for a particular sin/crime (5:11-31; Num 35:30; Deu 17:6).

13. God is for the abortion of babies conceived through adultery (5:21-27 – "her womb shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away" = Literally, "Her womb shall discharge and her uterus shall drop out"; See NIV; "fall away" [Heb. "nephel"] = miscarriage/abortion – Psa 58:9; Job 3:16; Ecc 6:3; See also Hos 9:14-16).

"The consequence would be a spontaneous abortion or miscarriage of a fetus conceived by the illicit sexual activity." – Dennis T. Olson

"The priests are authorized in these cases to concoct a medical potion and administer it as an abortifacient." – Jon L. Berquist

"It is reasonable to conclude that at times, if not quite often, pregnancy ["her womb shall swell"] was material to the implementation of the ordeal. If this conclusion is correct, a pregnant woman who was "found out" by the ordeal would in fact lose her fetus; the ordeal would terminate her pregnancy." – Baruch Levine