

A Cross Centered Life

Intro:

Num 24:1-9

Set his face towards the wilderness...how lovely are your tents...your encampments...like palm groves that stretch afar

Balaam gets a glimpse of the camp from above and what does he see?

He sees the beauty of the camp - it causes him to prophecy both about Israel and ultimately about Christ - who came out of Egypt and who offers rivers of living water to all who believe in Him...

Transition:

But he does not merely prophecy about Israel - it is specifically something about the camp itself that is significant

It is the order and the layout that makes him comment - there is something here for us to see as well...

Main Idea:

Behold the picture

Behold the frame

Implication:

1 Cor 1:17-18

Paul calls the gospel here "the word of the cross"

This word of the cross is called the power of God Himself

1 cor 2:1-2

The cross was the center of his preaching

Gal 6:14

It was also the center of his life

But what does this look like?

Application:

Col 2:6-15

The cross centered life frees you from a life based on feelings but brute facts - God does indeed love you - and He proved it for you beyond all doubts in space and time and history - the cross is your evidence of this fact (14)

Col 2:16-19

The cross centered life frees you from a life based on legalism and performance - God did not relate to His people through their righteousness but through sacrifice and grace - ultimately pointing to Christ and His Cross

Col 2:20-23

The cross centered life is a life lived free from guilt - the cross declares once for all that IT IS FINISHED

Col 3:1-4

Finally the cross centered life is a life lived in victory - every time you look to the cross you find that it is empty - Christ is risen and His victory is a guarantee of yours

If God wanted to paint the tribes of Israel as living a cross centered life in the wilderness...how much more should we, now, in this wilderness?

Articles for further study:

<https://superiorword.org/numbers-24-1-11-balaams-third-oracle/>

<https://blogs.bible.org/the-tabernacle-of-moses-gods-heavenly-pattern-for-our-spiritual-transformation-part-v-the-most-holy-place/>

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Text:

Behold the picture

Num. 1:47 ¶ **But the Levites were not listed along with them by their ancestral tribe.**

Num. 1:48 For the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Num. 1:49 "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not list, and you shall not take a census of them among the people of Israel.

Num. 1:50 But **appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony**, and over all its furnishings, and over all that belongs to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, **and they shall take care of it and shall camp around the tabernacle.**

Num. 1:51 When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. **And if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death.**

Num. 1:52 The people of Israel shall pitch their tents by their companies, each man in his own camp and each man by his own standard.

Num. 1:53 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, **so that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony."**

Num. 1:54 Thus did the people of Israel; they did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

ex 25:8-22 (the levites at the center of the camp - taking care of the belongings protecting them guarding them from the people? - something important they were guarding - exactly as I show you...why?)

heb 9:1-12; 10:19-25 ("tabernacle of testimony" as a story to point fwd to the gospel and to the work of Christ - lk 24 - walled off protected - not for you - mediated by priesthood...blocked by a veil...and then...)

Jn 1:14, 18 (all that was seen before was shadows and types but we have the full picture of His work)

jn 20:1-15 (behold the picture in the wilderness...meticulously painted by God all those years before - planned from the beginning...so what about the layout?)

Behold the frame

Num. 2:1 ¶ The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

Num. 2:2 "The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' houses. **They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side.**

Num. 2:3 Those to camp on the **east side** toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah by their companies, the chief of the people of Judah being Nahshon the son of Amminadab,

Num. 2:4 his company as listed being 74,600.

Num. 2:5 Those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar, the chief of the people of Issachar being Nethanel the son of Zuar,

Num. 2:6 his company as listed being 54,400.

Num. 2:7 Then the tribe of Zebulun, the chief of the people of Zebulun being Eliab the son of Helon,

Num. 2:8 his company as listed being 57,400.

Num. 2:9 All those listed of the camp of Judah, by their companies, were **186,400**. They shall set out first on the march.

Num. 2:10 ¶ "On the **south side** shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their companies, the chief of the people of Reuben being Elizur the son of Shedeur,

Num. 2:11 his company as listed being 46,500.

Num. 2:12 And those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon, the chief of the people of Simeon being Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai,

Num. 2:13 his company as listed being 59,300.

Num. 2:14 Then the tribe of Gad, the chief of the people of Gad being Eliasaph the son of Reuel,

Num. 2:15 his company as listed being 45,650.

Num. 2:16 All those listed of the camp of Reuben, by their companies, were **151,450**. They shall set out second.

Num. 2:17 ¶ "Then the tent of meeting shall set out, with the camp of the **Levites in the midst** of the camps; as they camp, so shall they set out, each in position, standard by standard.

Num. 2:18 ¶ "On the **west side** shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their companies, the chief of the people of Ephraim being Elishama the son of Ammihud,

Num. 2:19 his company as listed being 40,500.

Num. 2:20 And next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh, the chief of the people of Manasseh being Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur,

Num. 2:21 his company as listed being 32,200.

Num. 2:22 Then the tribe of Benjamin, the chief of the people of Benjamin being Abidan the son of Gideon,

Num. 2:23 his company as listed being 35,400.

Num. 2:24 All those listed of the camp of Ephraim, by their companies, were **108,100**. They shall set out third on the march.

Num. 2:25 ¶ "On the **north side** shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their companies, the chief of the people of Dan being Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai,

Num. 2:26 his company as listed being 62,700.

Num. 2:27 And those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, the chief of the people of Asher being Pagiel the son of Ochran,

Num. 2:28 his company as listed being 41,500.

Num. 2:29 Then the tribe of Naphtali, the chief of the people of Naphtali being Ahira the son of Enan,

Num. 2:30 his company as listed being 53,400.

Num. 2:31 All those listed of the camp of Dan were **157,600**. They shall set out last, standard by standard."

Num. 2:32 ¶ These are the people of Israel as listed by their fathers' houses. All those listed in the camps by their companies were 603,550.

Num. 2:33 But the Levites were not listed among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Num. 2:34 ¶ **Thus did the people of Israel. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out**, each one in his clan, according to his fathers' house.

ex 29:1, 10-14 (is there a significance in this arraignment? remember God is spelling out for them every detail in ways that may not have made sense to them but is for sure supposed to make sense for us...this order of camping is almost certainly an ideal meant to paint a picture - what is the picture? Lets start with the middle - the levites the tabernacle of testimony - Aaron the priest offers a bull - remember what He did - this is a picture of grace...but there is more...he brings the body outside the camp top dispose of it...who cares...???)

Heb 13:7-14 (we are to go outside the camp - to meet Him not in the confines of a tabernacle or a temple but outside the camp in the wilderness... where Jesus was crucified...on a cross...!!!)

Jn 3:9-16 (if God was pointing to the cross in the serpent on the pole in numbers...why not the encampment around the tabernacle?is this what we are to see here?)

Jn 5:36-39 (Balaam might not have understood the import of what he was seeing - but we do...Behold the prophetic picture, behold the prophetic frame - behold the gospel in the wilderness - behold the cross centered life...)