

2018 BIBLE TALKS—UNVEILING NUMBERS

Session 5

Christ Revealed in Numbers

Hymns, #510

- 1 I've found the One of peerless worth,
My heart doth sing for joy;
And sing I must, for Christ I have:
Oh, what a Christ have I!
- 2 My Christ, He is the Lamb of God,
Who full salvation brings;
He is the Sun of Righteousness,
With healing in His wings.
- 3 My Christ, He is the Tree of Life
With fruit abundant, sweet;
My hunger He doth satisfy;
Of Him I daily eat.
- 4 My Christ, He is the smitten Rock
Whence living waters burst;
He is the fountain in my heart
Which quenches all my thirst.
- 5 Christ is my life, my light, my way,
My comfort and my health,
My peace, my rest, my joy, my hope,
My glory and my wealth.
- 6 Christ is my wisdom and my pow'r,
My boast and righteousness,
My vict'ry and redemption sure,
My truth and holiness.
- 7 Christ is my Savior, Shepherd, Lord,
My Advocate above,
My Counsellor, my Father, God,
My Brother, Friend, and Love.
- 8 Christ is my Captain and my Guard,
My Teacher and my Guide,
My Bridegroom, Master and my Head;
In me doth He reside.
- 9 Christ is my Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Prophet full of sight;
My Priest that stands 'twixt me and God,
My King that rules with might.
- 10 Christ is the Author of my faith,
And its Perfecter too,
My Mediator, Guarantee,
And faithful Witness true.
- 11 Christ is my everlasting home,
My all-sufficient land;
My fortress, tower, hiding-place,
And my eternal stand.
- 12 Christ is my sabbath and new moon,
My morning and my day,
My age and my eternity
That ne'er will pass away.
- 13 Christ is my trust and my desire,
In comeliness replete,
My satisfaction and delight,
Who all my need doth meet.
- 14 My Christ, the all-inclusive One,
My Christ what shall I call?
He is the first, He is the last,
My Christ is All in all.
- 15 Since such a treasure I possess,
My heart doth sing for joy;
And I must sing, and sing again;
Oh, what a Christ have I!

Scripture Reading: John 5:39; Num. 2:1-2; 9:18; 33:53

- John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me.
- Num. 2:1-2 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, the children of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard with the ensigns of their fathers' households; they shall encamp facing the Tent of Meeting on every side.
- Num. 9:18 At the commandment of Jehovah the children of Israel set out, and at the commandment of Jehovah they encamped; as long as the cloud settled upon the tabernacle, they remained encamped.
- Num. 33:53 And you shall take possession of the land and dwell in it, for to you I have given the land to possess it.

I. The central thought of the entire Bible is Christ, for the Bible is focused on Christ as the center—John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44.

II. The central thought of Numbers is that Christ is the meaning of life, the testimony, the center of God's people, and the Leader, the way, and the goal of their journey and fighting:

- A. Christ is the meaning of the life of God's people:
1. It seems that during the forty years in the wilderness, the two million Israelites were doing nothing; they did not engage in industry, commerce, or farming.
 2. But day by day they were busy with one thing—the ark of God's testimony; the ark of the testimony was the center of the tabernacle, which was called the tabernacle of the testimony; for forty years the Israelites worked for the keeping of the ark with the tabernacle—Num. 7:89; 1:50, 53.
 3. The ark with the tabernacle was the meaning of their life; if there had not been an ark, the life of the Israelites would not have had any meaning.
 4. Since the ark typifies Christ, the meaning of the Israelites' life was to take care of Christ as the testimony of God.
- B. Christ is God's Testimony—Num. 17:4, 7:
1. In the Old Testament, the testimony refers to the law—Exo 25:16, 31:18.
 2. The law, as a portrait of what God is, typifies Christ as the embodiment of God in all His divine attributes—John 1:17-18; Col. 2:9.
 3. Thus, Christ is the portrait of God, and He is the testimony of what God is—John 1:1, 14.
 4. God's people should not only take Christ as the meaning of life but also live a life of testifying Christ; when God's people have this kind of living, Christ becomes their testimony.
- C. Christ is the center of God's people—Num. 2:1-34:
1. This is portrayed by the way the children of Israel were encamped around the tabernacle with three tribes on each side; the four camps, each composed

- of three tribes, and the three families of the tribe of Levi all took the tabernacle with the ark as the center—Num. 2:2, footnote 2.
- 2. The children of Israel thus took Christ as the meaning of life, the testimony, and the center.
- 3. This shows us that as the church today we should take Christ as our meaning of life, our testimony, and our center.
- D. Christ as the Leader, the Way, and the Goal—Num. 9:15-23, 17 and footnote 1:
 - 1. This Christ, who is the meaning of our life, our testimony, and our center, is One who is moving, acting, and always proceeding onward.
 - 2. In His proceeding onward, He is our Leader, our way, and our goal—Matt. 23:10; John 14:6; Phil. 3:12-14.
 - 3. Worldly people have neither a way nor a goal, but we have Christ not only as our Leader but also as our way and our goal.

III. Numbers reveals that we may enjoy the all-inclusive Christ, the embodiment of the processed and dispensing Triune God, in the following aspects:

- A. Enjoying Christ as our Sabbath and all the feasts—Num. 28—29
- B. Enjoying Christ as the real Nazarite living absolutely for God—6:1-21; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 10:9; cf. Matt. 2:23 and footnote 2
- C. Enjoying Christ as grace and eternal blessings—Num. 6:22-27; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:3-14
- D. Enjoying Christ as the red heifer for the washing of the believers' uncleanness—Num. 19:2; 1 John 1:7
- E. Enjoying Christ as the brass Serpent to take away the sin of the believers that they may have eternal life—Num. 21:8-9; John 3:14-15.
- F. Enjoying Christ as the cities of refuge for the believers—Num. 35:10; Eph. 1:7
- G. Enjoying Christ as the all-inclusive land with the bountiful supply for the believers—Num. 33:53; Col. 1:12

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

The full type of the church in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers is a type of the church in the mystical union with the all-inclusive Christ, who is the embodiment of the processed and dispensing Triune God. This mystical union is our destiny and our destination. In different kinds of circumstances and in dealing with different

persons, we may say, "O Lord Jesus, I need You!" What does it mean to tell the Lord that we need Him? It actually means that we enjoy Him. Day by day, we may enjoy the all-inclusive Christ, the embodiment of the processed and dispensing Triune God, as our good land.

1. As the Passover and the Unleavened Bread

According to the type in Exodus, we first enjoy Christ as the Passover and the unleavened bread (1 Cor. 5:7-8). The Passover is for us to be saved, and the unleavened bread is for us to live a life without sin.

2. As the Heavenly Manna and the Rock That Flows Out the Living Water

After experiencing Christ as the Passover and after beginning to enjoy Him as the unleavened bread, we go on to enjoy Him as the heavenly manna and the rock that flows out the living water (1 Cor. 10:3-4).

3. As the Divine Law for God's Expression, Bearing God's Image That Man May Know God

Even the law is a type of Christ, for it typifies Christ as God's expression, bearing God's image that man may know God (John 1:18; Heb. 1:3a).

4. As the Tabernacle of God, with the Ark as the Center of God's Testimony

John 1:14 reveals that Christ tabernacled among us. He is the tabernacle of God, with the ark as the center of God's testimony.

5. As the Propitiation Place for God to Meet with Man in His Righteousness

According to Romans 3:25, Christ is the propitiation place—the cover, or lid, of the ark—for God to meet with man in His righteousness. Christ is thus the place where God meets with His people.

6. As the High Priest bearing and Embracing God's Redeemed People

In the Old Testament the high priest wore the shoulder plates and the breastplate. This typifies Christ as the High Priest bearing and embracing in love God's redeemed people (Heb. 4:14-15; 7:25-26).

7. As All the Offerings for the Believers

The Old Testament typifies and the New Testament reveals that Christ is all the offerings for the believers (Heb. 10:5-7, 9-10).

8. As the Sabbath and All the Feasts to the Believers

The books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers have much to say concerning the Sabbath and the feasts. These typify Christ as the reality of the Sabbath and of all the feasts to the believers (Col. 2:16-17).

9. As the Real Nazarite Living Absolutely for God

Numbers 6 speaks of the Nazarite vow. Christ is the real Nazarite living absolutely for God (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 10:9; cf. Matt. 2:23 and note 2).

10. As the Red Heifer for the Washing of the Believers' Uncleaness

Christ is also the reality of the type of the red heifer for the washing of the believers' uncleaness (1 John 1:7).

11. As the Brass Serpent to Take Away the Sin of the Believers That They May Have Eternal Life

John 3:14 and 15 reveal that Christ is the brass serpent to take away the sin of the believers that they may have eternal life.

12. As the Cities of Refuge for the Believers

Today we may also enjoy Christ as the One who is the cities of refuge for the believers (Eph. 1:7).

13. As the All-inclusive Land with the Bountiful Supply for the Believers

Finally, Christ is the all-inclusive land with the bountiful supply for the believers

(Col. 1:12; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19). This is for the building up of the house of God on earth (Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 3:15), for the establishing of the kingdom of God on earth (Acts 1:3; Rom. 14:17), and, ultimately, for the consummation of the house of God and the kingdom of God as the New Jerusalem in eternity for the fulfillment of God's eternal economy (Rev. 21:1-2). Therefore, what is portrayed concerning the church in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers will have its ultimate consummation in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. (*Life-study of Numbers*, msg. 53)

Questions:

1. Everyone is busy. How can our lives be more meaningful and valuable?
2. How can the picture of the encamping of the Israelites in chapter 2 of Numbers be applied to our church life today?
3. This message enumerates many aspects of Christ. Which aspect(s) have you experienced subjectively? Please share your experience.

(All excerpts are quoted from the publications of Living Stream Ministry: www.ministrybooks.org)