

Numbers 15-16

October 30, 2011

Introduction:

15:1-38 In **chapter 15** we learn of various laws and offerings that the Jews were to follow. If any non-Jews were living among them, they too had to follow the same laws.

What do we learn from the end of **verse 2**?

- God is the source of what we have; what we have has been *given* to us. Since we belong to the Lord (**1 Corinthians 6:19**), all that we have belongs to Him. See **Deuteronomy 8:6-20**. Each of these offerings they made were to remind them that God was their provider.

15:8 **Verse 15** mentions the word “sacrifice”. What does it mean to sacrifice?

- When you make a sacrifice you give up (lose) something that you had. If you sacrifice a bull, then you lose the bull.

What was God teaching His people by having the people make these sacrifices?

- He was teaching them to trust Him. He is their source. They give up what they have and then must trust Him to provide for them.

How does God do this same thing with us today?

- When we tithe and give offerings, we give up what we have and therefore have less than we did. As a result of this we have to trust Him and He reveals Himself to us by providing for us. God wants us to trust Him for our needs. Those are the lessons of the manna, the quail, and the water from the rock.

What do we learn about “unintentional” sin in **verses 27 and 28**?

- Unintentional sin is still sin. It has to be atoned for, too. If no one ever intentionally sinned, Christ would still have had to die for our unintentional sin.

What do we learn about sin and sinners in **verse 30**?

- If someone is defiant in his rebellion against God and His laws, then that person is to be disfellowshipped (removed from the congregation). This is not referring to someone who did something that he knew was wrong; this is the person who doesn't care that he is doing wrong and will not repent. He is *defiant* toward God.

15:32-36 In **verses 32 to 36**, what do you make of the severity of this punishment?

- God is trying to teach His people to live His way. After idolatry (**commandments 1-3**), Sabbath-keeping was the next commandment. Like the tithe, the Sabbath reminds us whose we are and what we are to live for. Contrary to current liberal thought, the severity of the punishment of a crime is the best deterrent to people committing that crime.

Men are given to sin because they don't immediately reap what they sow and the judgment for their sin is not immediate. See **Ecclesiastes 8:11**. (11 When a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong.)

Is the severity of God's punishment found in the New Testament?

- **Yes.** Jesus said more about hell than all of the other Biblical writers combined. The “cross” shows the severity of God as He punished His Son for our sin. Jesus paid for our sin; He took our hell. God is loving and forgiving, but He is still righteous and a God of wrath who judges sin. **See Hebrews 12:29 and 10:26-31.**

15:39 What does **verse 39** say about “following” our “heart”?

- We are not to follow our hearts (or eyes); we are to tame them. To “follow our heart” is to do what we *feel* like doing...which is almost always wrong until we are substantially redeemed. To follow your heart is to be driven by selfishness and lust. To follow your eyes is to walk by sight (what you think and feel) rather than be faith (**what God has said – 2 Corinthians 5:7**).

16:1-40 Who can tell us what happens in **chapter 16 verses 1 to 40**?

- Korah and some others decide that they have as much of a right to be the leaders of Israel as do Moses and Aaron. Moses proposes a test and they all appear before the Lord in front of the Tabernacle. God tells Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from the people because He was going to destroy them. They plead for the innocent and God judges the leaders of the rebellion. The ground swallows Korah and the other two primary leaders, along with their families and possessions. A fire from the Lord killed the other **250 lesser leaders** involved in the rebellion.

16:3 What was the basis of Korah’s rebellion?

- He decided that he and others had as much of a right to lead the nation, as did Moses and Aaron.

Was he right or wrong? And why?

- He was clearly wrong. God was so offended by their rebellion against His ordained authority that he destroyed the entire families of the three main leaders and took the lives of the **250 other leaders**.

How does this lesson apply to us today?

- It is a serious thing to God to rebel on those He places over us (pastors in the church, parents in the home, etc.).

God chooses and appoints leaders. He places people in His church as He desires. See 1 Corinthians 12:18. (12) Those leaders are to be respected and followed. See 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 and Hebrews 13:17.

16:11 What do we learn from **verse 11**?

- Korah and his following thought that they were gathering together against Moses and Aaron. In reality, their rebellion was against the Lord. This is like **14:2 & 27** where they grumbled against Moses, but their real complaint was with the Lord.

We often throw our complaints at people over us and around us when we are unhappy with our lives. The truth is that we are angry at God for not giving us the life, marriage, children, job, money, happiness, etc. that we think we deserve.

16:41-50 What takes place in **verses 41 to 50**?

- The congregation blames Moses and Aaron for the deaths of those who rebelled. God again tells Moses that He will destroy the people. A plague breaks out and 14,700 people die before Aaron makes atonement and stops the plague.

What do you think about who the people blamed in verse 41?

- God had just the day before *miraculously* taken the lives of the rebels (the earth swallowed three families and fire from heaven **killed 250 men**). Unhappy people find somebody to blame and that somebody is usually a leader. People want to blame a father or parents or a pastor or a coach for their unhappiness rather than taking responsibility for their own lives. This blaming shows how utterly unrealistic and unreasonable that petty people can be. These are non-leaders who clearly need strong leaders to lead them. Give these people their way, and they will march right to their deaths back in Egypt.