

132. Were the princes' offerings for themselves only, or were they acting in behalf of their tribes and families?
133. Why is it unlikely that all of the offerings occurred on a single day? If the offerings were spread over twelve days, how can we understand the meaning of "on the day", which suggests that the offerings occurred within a one-day period?
134. Discuss the significance of the term "prince" as it is used in reference to the leaders of the twelve tribes.
135. Why were no wagons provided for the Kohathites to carry their assigned burdens of the Tabernacle? Why should the Gershonites need only half as many wagons as did the Merarites?
136. Compute the value of the gifts of silver and gold which each prince brought as his offering. Add this for the combined total.
137. What special attitudes and purposes were expressed through the three kinds of offerings?
138. In what sense does the final verse (v. 89) fit the previous thrust of chapter seven?
139. Compare the offerings of the twelve princes with those of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. Why is the latter so much greater than the former?
140. Suggest some valuable lessons Christians may appropriate from this chapter.
141. How is it that Moses, who was not designated a high priest, could enter the Tent of Meeting to converse with the Lord?

## IX. ASSORTED LAWS AND INSTRUCTIONS (8:1-10:10)

### A. ON LIGHTING THE LAMPS IN THE TABERNACLE

vv. 1-4

TEXT

Chapter 8:1-4. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2.

Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. 3. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses. 4. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold; unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 8:1-4. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2. "Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you serve the lamps, the seven lamps will give light in front of the lampstands.'" 3. And Aaron did so: he served its lamps at the front of the lampstand as the Lord had commanded Moses. 4. Now this was the workmanship of the lampstand: it was of hammered gold; from its base to its flowers it was hammered work. So he made the lampstand according to the pattern which the Lord had shown Moses.

### COMMENTARY

The term "candlestick", found throughout the *KJV* and some others, is very misleading. As is commonly known, the sole provision for light in the tabernacle was an ornately carved lampstand with seven small bowls, in which olive oil was burned. It would be a necessity for the priests, since little or no natural light would ever be available for the performance of their duties.

The instructions to Aaron, also, are misleading in the older translations. He was told not to "light" the lamps, but to "attend them" or to set them up. The duty no doubt was refilling them with the oil, and lighting them as required. They would illuminate the table of showbread, opposite on the north side of the tabernacle, and the altar of incense, standing in front of the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The light thus tended and provided by Aaron make the ministrations of the priests possible, since their service was

entirely with the other two articles of furniture, and they had no duties which required them to use the lampstand itself.

Josephus (*Antiquities* III. 6, 7) says the seven lamps represented the sun, moon and planets, and were a constant symbol of God's creative power, and His work in creating light. Christian scholars have found the lamps symbolic of the Word of God, as in Psalm 119:114, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path," (cf also Prov. 6:23).

Little needs to be said about the lampstand itself. Of a single lump of solid gold, it was hammered into a base, shaft, and seven cups, each cup resting upon a separate branch. Three of these extended to the left and three to the right, with a single stem in the center. Its stand and its branches were ornately decorated with almond designs, branches and flowers and blossoms, (see Ex. 25:31-36). It was a magnificent piece, the work of Bezaleel and Oholiab, who had been specially endowed by the Spirit of God for the performance of their work, (Ex. 31:1ff.). Here, as in numerous other instances, God emphatically instructs them to work precisely according to the pattern He had entrusted to Moses.

#### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

142. What light was available in the Holy Place, other than that provided by the lampstand?
143. Describe the lampstand fully. Who had made it, and how did they gain their skill?
144. What was burned in the lampstand? What articles of the priests' service required this illumination?
145. At what times was Aaron to attend unto the lamp?
146. Why was God so insistent that this, and the other articles in the Tabernacle, should be made exactly as He commanded? Run the references on this point, and count the number of times God so directed Moses. Is there a lesson we can learn as Christians from the point?

B. CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES FOR SERVICE

vv. 5-22

TEXT

Chapter 8:5. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 6. Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. 7. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean. 8. Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering. 9. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together. 10. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites: 11. And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord. 12. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the Lord, to make an atonement for the Levites. 13. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the Lord. 14. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine. 15. And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering. 16. For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me. 17. For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself. 18. And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 19. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the

children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary. 20. And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them. 21. And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the Lord; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them. 22. And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 8:5. Again the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 6. "Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and purify them: sprinkle cleansing water upon them, and let them shave their whole bodies, and wash their clothes, thus making themselves clean. 8. Then let them take a young bull with its meal offering, fine flour mixed with oil, and a second bull you shall take for a sin offering. 9. And you shall bring the Levites before the Tent of Meeting. You shall also gather the whole congregation of the children of Israel together, 10. bring the Levites before the Lord; and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites. 11. Then Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord as an offering from the children of Israel, in order that they may perform the service of the Lord. 12. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bulls. Then offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering to the Lord to make atonement for the Levites. 13. Then you shall have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons in order to present them as a wave offering to the Lord. 14. "In this manner you shall set the Levites apart from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. 15. After that the Levites may enter into the Tent of Meeting to serve; but

you shall cleanse them and present them as a wave offering, 16. since they are entirely given to me from among the children of Israel. I have taken them unto myself in the place of every first child of the womb, the firstborn of all the children of Israel. 17. Every firstborn of the children of Israel is mine among the men and the animals; on the day that I brought death upon all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I set them apart unto myself. 18. But I have taken the Levites rather than each of the firstborn among the children of Israel. And I have given the Levites as dedicated ones to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel at the Tent of Meeting, and to make atonement in behalf of the children of Israel, and there may not be a plague among the children of Israel from their approaching the sanctuary." 20. Thus did Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel to the Levites: according to everything the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, the children of Israel did to them. 21. The Levites, also, purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes; then Aaron presented them as a wave offering before the Lord. 22. After that the Levites entered to do their service in the Tent of Meeting before Aaron and his sons; exactly as the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, they did to them.

#### COMMENTARY

Chapter three has already told us of the selection of the Levites for special service in the sanctuary (v. 5ff). But before they were to begin the performance of their duties, they must be fully set apart from the people of Israel in special rites of consecration. Our passage parallels the instructions of Leviticus 8. ICC cites Kuenen, "Nu. viii. 5-22 . . . is an insipid repetition and exaggeration of the account of the separation of the Levites . . . . If the author of these last-named chapters had supposed that the Levites, before entering on their duties, had to be purified, and presented to Yahwe . . . he would not have passed it over in silence . . . ." He concludes by saying the passage is a pericope added by some later writer.

On the other hand it is a bit surprising to discover *IB* defending the doubled passage by the suggestion of two results: the exaltation of the priesthood over the Levites (the Levites are simply cleansed; the priests are sanctified); and the notable differentiation between the Levites and the ordinary Israelites.

The Midrash, commenting upon the question, says that when Aaron saw the dedication offerings of the princes, he was much disappointed that neither he nor his tribe was represented. Therefore, God told him, "By your life! Your part is greater than theirs, since you kindle and prepare the lamps," *RCP*, p. 131. The process by which the Levites were cleansed was elementary: they were sprinkled with the water of purification, after which all hair was shaved from the body. We should notice what they were *not* to do: undergo a ceremonial washing, dress in the priestly robes, undergo the oil anointment, nor be sprinkled with the blood of sacrifices. *PC* assumes that the purpose for all these rituals was to assure personal cleanliness. Two bullocks were brought before the Lord; their uses are shown in v. 12: one is a sin offering; the other a burnt offering. These offerings were to be made after all the Israelites assembled and laid their hands upon the Levites, designating the fact that they represented the entire nation in their services. Aaron himself made the pronouncement of their consecration. The Levites must always consider themselves both the property and the servants of the Lord, standing in the stead of all the firstborn sons among the other tribes. Such a provision was a significant advance beyond the pagan practice of sacrificing the firstborn son, as unto Molech, a practice of which Jehovah could not conceivably approve, He much preferred, as it were, living sacrifices.

When God pledged that the nation would be spared the visitation of plagues as long as they were, through the Levites, faithful in their religious service, it was a landmark declaration. We can only understand this to mean that God allows such plagues to visit those who are logically expected to serve Him, but do not. History amply attests to the validity of this conclusion.

The conclusion of the verses merely demonstrates that the divine commission was carried out exactly as ordered.

### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

147. What purposes are achieved in repeating in this chapter a service which has previously been described?
148. Which of the ordinary portions of the ritual of cleansing are omitted upon this occasion? Why?
149. For what purposes were the two bullocks used?
150. What did it signify when all the people placed their hands upon the heads of the Levites? Does this lessen the duties of the people?
151. Why did God not command the literal sacrifice of Israel's firstborn?
152. Are we to consider that plagues and other catastrophes are always the result of widespread sinful conduct?
153. In what sense have the Levites been given to Aaron and his sons (v. 18)?
154. Discuss the importance of doing exactly what the Lord asks, as is recorded in verses 20, 22.

### C. LIMITS OF AGE AND SERVICE FOR THE LEVITES vv. 23-26

#### TEXT

Chapter 8:23. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 24. This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in and wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: 25. And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more: 26. But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 8:23. Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 24. "This is the regulation of the Levites: from twenty-five years of age and up they shall go in to do service in the work of the Tent of Meeting. 25. But at the age of fifty they shall retire from service in the work, and not work any more. 26. However, they may help their brothers in the Tent of Meeting, to keep an obligation; but they shall not do any work themselves. You shall use this regulation upon the Levites in their commission."

## COMMENTARY

In 4:3-49, the ages for service among the Levites is given at thirty to fifty: but a careful reading will show the logical difference between the two prescriptions. In the earlier passage, the assignment is for the transportation of the tabernacle and its trappings; in the passage before us, the Levites are to render all the services necessary to its use. Such duties would include the tasks of cleaning, preparing the wood and water for sacrifices, slaughter of the animals, and dismantling or assembling the entire sanctuary. As *KD* well points out, "The transport of the tabernacle required the strength of a full-grown man, and therefore the more advanced age of thirty years; whereas the duties connected with the tabernacle when standing were a lighter description, and could easily be performed from the twenty-fifth year," p. 49.

When David established the tabernacle permanently on Mount Zion, he utilized the services of Levites as young as twenty (I Chron. 23:24, 25), saying specifically that this put an end to the transportation of the dwelling and its furnishings. It is most likely that such younger workers would have served only in a kind of apprenticeship, however.

Upon reaching the age of fifty, service was no longer compulsory among the Levites. They might, nevertheless, offer their assistance, and they were held in high honor among their younger counterparts.

## QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

155. Is there a contradiction between the regulations here, calling for the service of the Levites between ages 25-50 and that of Num. 4:3-49, in which the ages are set at 30-50? Explain and defend your answer.
156. What logical division of the work of the Levites might depend upon their ages?
157. How was David justified in using Levites as young as age 20 in service of the tabernacle?
158. What special activities might have been performed by Levites who had reached the retirement age?

## D. THE SECOND PASSOVER:

## A SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVANCE (9:1-14)

## TEXT

Chapter 9:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2. Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. 3. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. 4. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. 5. And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

6. And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day. 7. And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel? 8. And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.

9. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 10. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord. 11. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it. 13. But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin. 14. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the Lord; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 9:1. Thus spoke the Lord to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2. "Now let the children of Israel observe the Passover at its established time. 3. At twilight of the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe it at its established time, according to all its regulations, and all its laws." 4. And Moses told the children of Israel to observe the Passover in this manner. 5. The people observed the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; just as the Lord had commanded, the children of Israel did.

6. But some men who were unclean from a dead person could not observe the Passover on that day. They came before Moses and Aaron that day, and said to him, 7. "Although we are unclean because of a dead person, why are we prevented from giving the offering of the Lord at its scheduled time along with the children of Israel?" 8. Moses said to them, "Stand here, and I will hear what the Lord commands you."

9. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10. "Say to the children of Israel, 'If any of you become unclean from a dead person, or is traveling far away, he may, nevertheless, keep the Passover unto the Lord. 11. In the second month, on the fourteenth day at twilight, he shall keep it; he shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12. He shall not leave any of it until morning, nor break a single one of its bones; they shall observe it according to all the law of the Passover. 13. But the man who is clean, and is not away from home, yet fails to observe the Passover, he shall be excommunicated from his people, since he did not give the Lord's offering at its set time. He shall bear his sin. 14. And if a foreigner sojourns with you and would keep the Passover of the Lord according to the law of the Passover and according to its regulation, he may do so; you shall have one law, for both the stranger and the native of the land!"

#### COMMENTARY

The second passover of Israel, observed at Sinai, celebrated the completion of a full year's reprieve from Egypt. It is placed out of the proper chronological order in the text, having actually preceded the census and most of the other events of the book. The people may have doubted whether or not they were to keep the feast while in the wilderness; but the Lord resolves the question by commanding the feast at the same time of year as its institution. The itemized provisions are not repeated; it is unnecessary, since they would be remembered easily. The single detail which would not have matched the original circumstances was the command to smear the blood of the lamb upon the lintel: the tents of the wanderers would have nothing precisely comparable. We are not given an answer to this matter in the text. In later years, after Israel had been established in the Promised Land, the lamb's blood was sprinkled upon the altar (II Chron. 30:16).

The Passover is to be kept, literally, "between the two evenings," a phrase which later was understood to refer to the time between three and five o'clock in the afternoon.

Leviticus 7:21 declared a man unclean for having touched the corpse of a man or a beast. Should he disregard his uncleanness and participate in a sacrifice, he was to be cut off from among his people. The two unnamed men, temporarily unclean, earnestly desire to participate in the meaningful feast, but with equally strong feelings, they do not want to do so at the risk of excommunication. As was his custom, Moses did not presume to settle the question. Upon consulting God, he was informed they might keep their tryst with the Lord exactly one month later. The same exception was to be allowed for one whose travels kept him from the company of his people when the feast day came. The same regulations applied to the later observation as to the first.

A new note is sounded when God warns against deliberately absenting oneself from the feast for no valid reason—such a one is to be disfellowshipped, a penalty as significant as the death sentence in a society as tightly knit as that of Israel's.

The final words do not require that a sojourner participate in the feast; they simply allow such participation. If the alien chooses to become involved, he is under the same regulations as the Israelites. The feast was prescribed in exact details none of which might be altered.

#### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

159. Upon what grounds might the Israelites have believed they were not to observe the Passover regularly until they occupied the Promised Land?
160. Which of the original provisions for the feast could they not have observed in the wilderness?
161. Explain what is meant by the phrase "at even".
162. Why would the Israelite take care not to participate in any sacrifice while he was ceremonially unclean?
163. Could not Moses have given a judgment on the matter of allowing the two men to observe the Passover—must he have taken the question to the Lord?

164. Why should God allow a postponement of the feast at all?
165. Explain the significance of the penalty levied against anyone who deliberately absented himself from the Passover without a proper reason.
166. Why should any stranger or sojourner be permitted to join in the Passover? What conditions were laid upon him if he chose to do so?

## E. THE CLOUD OVER THE TABERNACLE vv. 15-23

## TEXT

Chapter 9:15. And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony; and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. 16. So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. 17. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. 18. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. 19. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. 20. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. 21. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. 22. Or whether it were two days or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. 23. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 9:15. On the day that the Tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered it, the Tent of Testimony. In the evening it had the appearance of fire above the Tabernacle until morning. 16. It was this way from then on: the cloud covered the Tent during the day, and an appearance of fire during the night. 17. Whenever the cloud was lifted from above the Tent, the children of Israel would then set forth; and at whatever place the cloud stopped, the children of Israel would camp. 18. At the word of the Lord the children of Israel would set forth, and at the word of the Lord they would camp; while the cloud remained over the Tabernacle, they stayed in camp. 19. And when the cloud remained over the Tabernacle several days, the children of Israel kept the commandment of the Lord and did not travel. 20. Sometimes the cloud stayed a few days over the Tabernacle. Then they stayed encamped, according to the commandment of the Lord; or, according to the commandment of the Lord, they journeyed. 21. Sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning; and when the cloud was taken up in the morning, they traveled. Whether the cloud was taken up by day or by night, they traveled. 22. or, if it were two days, or a month or a year that the cloud remained over the Tabernacle, abiding over it, the children of Israel stayed in camp and did not travel; but when it was lifted up, they traveled. 23. At the commandment of the Lord they stayed in camp, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed; they kept the commandment of the Lord, when He commanded them through Moses.

## COMMENTARY

The presence of the Lord at the Tabernacle was a continual matter, from the moment of its erection. We are taken back to the point of the completion of the Tent to establish the fact. Far from needless redundancy, the Divine Presence is stated here just prior to the account of leaving its original site. Wherever Israel was to go, they were assured of two fundamental facts: God was with them at all times, and He led them

in every step of their travels. In a real sense, then, there was no time when Israel was aimlessly wandering about. They were informed by the movement or the halting of the cloud and fire, when to move, when and where to stop moving, and how long to remain in each encampment.

There was one appearance of the overwhelming glory of God within the Tabernacle—the Shekinah—which came upon the tent at its initial construction and was so great as to delay Moses' own entry within (see Ex. 40:34, 35). But the cloud specified in our text is not precisely the same. While both are of God's glory and presence, the first such phenomenon was temporary; the second was continual.

We are not told how long the Israelites camped at their various stations excepting on a few occasions; we do not know where they spent as much as one year after leaving Sinai. But the question is academic. Moses' point is simple: the length of the rest is not the important factor, it is the ever-present God who leads them who is being cited.

#### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

167. What were the two primary functions of the cloud and the pillar of fire?
168. Is it proper to say that the Israelites "wandered" during the time they spent in the wilderness before they came to the Land of Promise?
169. What reasons can you give for a very brief period of encampment; or for a very long one?

#### F. THE SILVER TRUMPETS (10:1-10)

##### TEXT

Chapter 10:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Make these two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. 3. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble

themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4. And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. 5. When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. 6. When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. 7. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. 8. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. 9. And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. 10. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God.

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 10:1. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 2. "Make two trumpets of silver; of one beaten piece each, you shall make them. You shall use them to call the congregation, and for the traveling of the camps. 3. And when they blow them, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the door of the Tent of Meeting. 4. If they blow only one trumpet, then the princes, heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves to you. 5. When you blow an alarm, the camps that lie on the east side shall go forward. 6. When you blow the second alarm, the camps that lie on the south side shall go forward: they shall blow an alarm for their travels. 7. But when the congregation is to be assembled, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. 8. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and they shall be a law for you forever throughout your generations. 9. And if you go to war in your

land against an oppressor enemy, you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets; and you shall be remembered before the Lord God, and you shall be saved from your enemies. 10. Also, in the day of your gladness and in your feast days, and in the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of the peace offerings, so that they may be a memorial to you before your God: I am the Lord your God.

### COMMENTARY

The trumpet named here, the *chatsotserah*, was almost certainly a long slender tube of silver with a widened mouth. Two other trumpets were known, the *cheren* and the *shopbar*, both curved after the general shape of the ram's horn; often they were actually the ram's horn itself. Two of the trumpets are prescribed, doubtless giving distinctive sounds in order that even a single blast might be recognized at once.

Since the signal for Israel to move from one place to another was the removal of the cloud and pillar, trumpets might seem unnecessary. The purpose of the instruments was not simply to signal movement, but to give an orderly method for the tribes to follow as they disbanded their sites. They further served to call the entire assembly together for any special occasions, for announcements, or for hearing the Lord's instructions in a given situation: unique signals were also established for summoning the princes of the tribes to receive their personal advice from Moses and Aaron.

When the signal of the trumpets designated a forward march, the first sound called the tribes from the east of the Tabernacle: Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. The sound was a long, unbroken note, distinguished from short, sharp tones as in v. 7. The second signal called Reuben, Simeon and Gad from the south. For some unknown reason, the order in which the western and northern tribes is not given; the LXX assigns the west to the third signal, and the northern three to the final blast.

Since the trumpets were to be used only for religious purposes, they were to be kept as sacred utensils; their use was restricted to the sons of Aaron. When they were sounded under the circumstances of war, it was to summon the soldiers—such would have been impossible in Canaan with the tribes widely scattered, and only two trumpets—it was to pronounce to Israel that they were dependent upon Jehovah in battle, cf. 31:6 and II Chron. 13:12, 14. When they were sounded to call the congregation of Israel into holy assembly, it was in conjunction with the designated feasts, at the start of each month, and at appropriate times during the offerings of those days. Later sacred history records that the trumpets were also blown on some very auspicious occasions: when the ark of the covenant was removed from the tent of Obed-edom unto the tent prepared for it by David (I Chron. 15:24ff.); it was sounded when Solomon's temple was dedicated (II Chron. 5:12—Solomon had here increased the number to 120 trumpets and 120 priests); when the foundation of the second temple was laid (Ezra 3:10); at the consecration of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 12:35, 41); as well as other occasions of the festivals 29:27).

#### QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

170. Describe the kind of horn used for setting Israel forth on their journeying, and compare it to the other types of trumpets we know about from that time.
171. For what reasons were the trumpets assigned to the sons of Aaron?
172. Why were only two trumpets designated for the use to which these are ascribed?
173. Differentiate between the type of sound made for marching orders and the sound which called the princes of the congregation together.
174. How did the sounding of the trumpets contribute to the orderly process of marching?

175. For what regular, ordinary purposes were the trumpets blown?
176. What was the primary reason for blowing the trumpets at the time of war?
177. What corollary promise did the Lord make unto Israel if they would faithfully remember to sound the trumpets before confronting their enemies in battle?
178. List the occasions upon which the trumpets were used in later history, beyond those originally prescribed.
179. What alteration did Solomon make in the number of trumpets and trumpeters when the temple was consecrated?