NUMBERS: MOVING FORWARD AS GOD'S PEOPLE
Part II: God's Sanctifying His People, Numbers 5:1-10:10
D. God's Honor Of Exemplary Leaders
(Numbers 7:1-89)

I. Introduction

A. "The principal lesson of Numbers is that God's people must walk by faith, trusting His promises, if they are to move forward" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Numbers: Theme," p. 206), so avoiding spiritual stagnation and moving forward makes Numbers a timeless book for all God's people!

B. We thus view Numbers 7:1-89 on God's honor of exemplary leaders for His people to move forward:

II. God's Honor Of Exemplary Leaders, Numbers 7:1-89.

A. Those who lead God's people are in positions of greater influence than the rest of His people, so if such leaders do what is exemplary and pleasing to the Lord, He greatly honors them to enhance their influence.

B. This occurred when Israel's tribal leaders gave great gifts to God for the tabernacle service, Numbers 7:1-89:

1. After Moses had erected the tabernacle, anointed it and sanctified it with all of its furnishings, the leaders of Israel's twelve tribes each of their own volition brought an offering to the Lord, Numbers 7:1-2.
2. They gave six covered carts, each leader contributing toward half a cart, and twelve oxen, a pair of oxen for each cart as gifts for the transportation of the tabernacle through the wilderness, Numbers 7:3-5.
3. God not only accepted these practical gifts, but He told Moses to assign them to the Levites as needed for the transportation of the tabernacle from Mount Sinai through the wilderness to Canaan, Numbers 7:6-9:
   a. Moses thus gave two wagons and four oxen to the Gershonite clan of the Levites to transport the tabernacle's curtains that weighed too much for them to be carried by foot (Numbers 7:7 with 3:25-26).
   b. Moses then gave four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarite clan of the Levites for transporting the much heavier wooden and metal framework pieces of the tabernacle (Numbers 7:8 with 3:35-37).
   c. However, Moses gave no wagons or oxen to the Kohathite clan of the Levites since their duty involved carrying the tabernacle's holy furnishings on foot suspended on poles (Numbers 7:9 with 3:29-31).
4. Each of the tribal leaders brought offerings to the Lord in addition to their contributions of the carts and oxen for the dedication of the altar of the tabernacle, Numbers 7:10.
5. God was so pleased with this exemplary voluntary generosity and dedication by Israel's leaders that He directed Moses to spread out the delivery of the offerings so that each donating leader would offer his offering on a special day apart from the other leaders, and that in front of the entire nation, Numbers 7:11.
6. These offerings were all of the same amount from each leader. Each man gave a silver plate of 130 shekels, a silver sprinkling bowl of 70 shekels filled with flour and olive oil, a gold ladle of 10 shekels filled with incense along with a young bull, a ram, a yearling male lamb as burnt offerings, a male goat for a sin offering, and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five yearling male lambs for fellowship offerings to the Lord, Numbers 7:10-17; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 223.
7. Significantly, the order of the leaders coming with their offerings corresponded precisely to the order of the tribes around the tabernacle (cf. Numbers 2:3-31 with 7:18-83). These leaders were clearly seeking to submit to the order God had established for them under the leadership of Moses!
8. Numbers 7:84-88 summarizes the total gifts these tribal leaders offered as follows: they gave nearly 60 pounds of silver (Numbers 7:84-85 with NIV footnote), nearly three pounds of gold (Numbers 7:86 NIV footnote) and 24 oxen, 60 rams, 60 male goats and 60 male lambs, each a year old, Numbers 7:87-88 NIV. In today's spot market for gold and silver, each man brought a total of around $20,000 in gold and silver along with 2 oxen, 5 rams, 5 male goats and 5 male lambs a year old besides half a wagon and an ox for it!

C. God's pleasure in the generous attitude exemplified by these twelve leaders who clearly planned as a group to make this offering as seen in how each man gave an equal share is noted in the fact that the Lord spoke to Moses about this matter from where God would normally commune only with the high priest – from the most holy place, over the mercy seat, between the two cherubim who stood on the mercy seat, Numbers 7:89; Ibid.

***Lesson**: When Israel's tribal leaders each gave a practical, costly contribution to the Lord, God honored them by giving each man his own special day in front of the entire nation to make his contribution, directing Moses about this matter from the important place above the mercy seat where He normally communed only with the high priest.*

***Application**: May the leaders of God's people provide good examples for the flock, what God greatly honors!*