

NUMBERS

Lesson 4 - Chapter 3

Verse 11 begins a fascinating divine instruction that is almost lost to both Christianity and Judaism. This is an instruction that I stated to you last week, and told you we'd get it into a little more later.....so here we are. And, the instruction takes place in verses 11-13; it is that the Levites are to REPLACE the first-born of the other tribes of Israel. That is, whereby God, in some special way, regarded all the firstborn males of the tribes of Israel as special and set-apart for Him.....a kind of ownership or adoption by God.....NOW He has taken the Levites, in total, as His own in substitute of all the firstborns of Israel. That special status of Israelite firstborns, as over and above the firstborns of other nations, came about in Exodus 13:1, when the firstborns of Israel were commemorated to God as a remembrance of their Passover salvation.

Last week we discussed that a Biblical principle is that all firstborns (or better, firstlings because it applies to humans, animals, and plants), the first of everything, belongs to God. This does NOT just apply to Israel but to everybody, at least all who worship the God of Israel. And we saw this principle applied in Egypt when Yehoveh killed all the firstborn of humans and animals among households that didn't protect those firstborns by painting the blood of a yearling Ram on the doorposts of their homes (the first Passover).

Yet just as Israel as a whole was God's set apart people, so all the firstborns of Israel held a special status above the firstborns of gentiles. In fact, the implication is quite heavy.....a near certainty, really.....that BEFORE the establishment of the priesthood, the firstborns held a sacred status before the Lord.

Before there was a priesthood (and remember, the priesthood of Israel didn't exist until Moses and Mt. Sinai), it was the duty of the firstborn of each family to perform sacrifices and other rituals on behalf of the family. The firstborn was a kind of pre-priesthood family priest. And as we have discussed on a number of occasions this custom (as were many others) was neither unique NOR new to Israel. We'll find documents dating back 1000 years before this time (from Mesopotamian cultures) that specify certain religious and spiritual duties for the firstborn son of the family. And chief among these duties was to carry on all that was involved with ancestor worship and ritual.

This duty began with the responsibility of the firstborn to properly bury his parents. Thereafter the firstborn was to bring oil, and food, even water to the gravesite for the use of his deceased parents' spirits. During these rituals the names of the parents were recited because in some undefined way keeping the memory of the individual alive kept that individual's spirit alive.

Now if the firstborn son conducted the ancestor worship rituals properly, then the spirits of his dead ancestors were to intercede on his behalf with the gods. If the worship was done improperly then no intercession was possible and the spirits of his dead ancestors MIGHT even turn on him and make trouble for him; anything from causing disease to crop failure, to making his wife barren.

I tell you about all this ancestor worship because it was prevalent throughout the known world in ancient times, even well before Abraham. And it was in full swing at the time of Moses. So we see traces of ancestor worship practices in the vocabulary Israel used as well as in the rituals of Israel (though of course they're used for a similar, but different, purpose because Yehoveh in no way tolerated ancestor worship among His people). In fact there is little doubt in my mind that the reason we see the phrase "he died and went to be with his fathers" in several places in the Bible (in referring to death).....but mostly in the older parts of the Old Testament....is that it was a common phrase used at funerals that reflected the general custom of ancestor worship. I also have no doubt that the Israelites coming up out of Egypt believed in ancestor worship because it was almost universal in that era.

Let me remind you that what happens after death is VERY hazy and not directly addressed ANYWHERE in the Old Testament. This tells me that those who wrote the Old Testament weren't sure what happened after death and different eras had different traditions about it all, which also undoubtedly varied among the various Middle Eastern cultures.

Now since ancestor worship was believed to have much to do with how one's own life played out (full of good things or bad things) it was central to each culture's overall worship practices. There is little doubt in the minds of the learned Rabbis (and I agree with their conclusions) that the firstborns of Israel....up until the moment the Levitical priesthood was established.....were the family priests. Not in any organized way but simply as long-held custom.

So with all that in mind we can begin to see that much would change for Israel (rather drastically, I might add) when Yehoveh established a divinely ordained, set-apart group of priests where the authority lay in one particular tribe. So the change was that the ritual duties were transferred from being the charge of each separate family as each family saw fit, to a specified group of priests under a common set of laws and ordinances (the Law), and under centralized control (that of the High Priest), and the firstborn son, now being relieved of the duties he had formerly performed as kind of a family priest, had his status changed. This change was, no doubt, seen as a demotion of sorts and would not have been well received.

Therefore we see that Levites assumed the status and responsibilities and many of the duties formerly held by the firstborns. So in verse 11 we have the Lord saying, "I hereby take the Levites from among the Israelites IN PLACE OF all the firstborns....." The transference of duty from the firstborn to the priestly tribe was complete. I hope this wasn't little detour has made the proper impact upon you, because it does mark a momentous sea change in how Israel would operate as opposed to how it had in the past; and perhaps even more it made Israel appear quite different and odd over-and-against how all other cultures they interacted with would operate.

The replacement of firstborns was to be exacting ordered by Yehoveh was not to be only general or symbolic; it would be done on a one-to-one basis; each male Levite was to be a substitute for **one** currently living firstborn of Israel. We'll see this fascinating scenario fleshed out very shortly. I tell you this before we get to it in the Scripture again because THIS was one of the primary purposes of the census taken of the Levites.....and ONLY the Levites.....that is commanded by Yehoveh, beginning in verse 14. That is, it was necessary to determine just how many male Levites there were, because that determined just how many of the regular male Israelites (non-Levites) firstborns would be covered, and for those not covered, it required special arrangements.

Last week we discussed the census of the Israelites as apart from the census of the tribe of Levi. This was because Yehoveh set-apart the Levites as His and servants. One could reasonably say that God adopted the tribe of Levi away from Jacob making them His own. From here forward, then, the Levites are considered separate from Israel.

Now the census taken of the Levites was similar to the one ordered in chapter 1 of all of Israel. One major difference, however, is that in the census of all Israel.....which, by the way was only of MALE Israelites....a male had to be 20 years of age or older in order to be counted. This was because the purpose of that census was military conscription. Let me make clear that the term "firstborn" ONLY applies to males. Firstborn daughter is an oxymoron..... there is no such thing. And this is because the Firstborn is more of an **office** conferred upon a male child than of simple order of birth. That is, the first son born to a man didn't necessarily hold the office and perform the duties of the Firstborn, though in general they did. Those duties and rights and privileges could be given to another son.....for any number of reasons.....and it was not that terribly unheard of for that to happen. In fact that exact thing occurred in the lives of the first 3 Patriarchs: Abraham sired Ishmael, who was born first, and then along came Isaac. But Abraham gave the firstborn office to Isaac. Isaac sired Esau, who was born first, and then out came Esau's twin brother Jacob. But Isaac gave the firstborn office to Jacob (although it was through trickery as it was not Isaac's intention to do so). Jacob sired several sons with Rueben being the first son born, but Jacob gave the office of firstborn to Judah, the 4th son born to him, at least partially as punishment upon Reuben for defiling one of Jacob's concubines.

In the census of the Levites the age of the males to be counted began at only 1 MONTH of age so even the tiniest infant boys were included. Why one month? Two reasons: 1st, circumcision didn't take place until the boy was 8 days old. Circumcision was that moment when a boy child OFFICIALLY becomes a member of Israel.....meaning that that young boy now operated under the covenant of Abraham. He became an Israelite upon his circumcision. Until his circumcision he was not officially a member of Israel. The 2nd reason for the 1-month requirement in order to be included in the census is that a child had to be one month old in order to be redeemed. So only a Redeemed person (a Levite) could be substituted for another Redeemed person (an Israelite firstborn).

In Jewish law an infant less than 30 days old is not considered a person. I'm not saying he's not considered human. It's just that at 30 days there is a status change, in which an infant gains more value. This is undoubtedly came about due to the high rate of infant mortality in that era, which of course is different now, but by strict Jewish Law the usual rites of mourning are

suspended if a baby less than 1 month old dies. This law had other effects as well. If someone accidentally killed an infant of less than 1 month of age the compensation due the parents would be very small. But once that child reached 1 month of age the compensation jumped drastically because that child had reached the status of a "person".

I told you at the start of chapter 3 that the events of this chapter took place in two distinct locations: everything in the first 13 verses took place at Mt. Sinai; but what follows, beginning in verse 14, takes place "in the Sinai Desert" after they had moved away from Mt. Sinai.

Now, let me give you an interesting little factoid. Unless one looks closely and knows Hebrew, it is easy to assume that the method of counting the Levites (other than the age difference of who was to be counted) was about the same as was done with the general census of all the Israelites; but that is not the case. In fact, the census wasn't even conducted by humans.

Let's re-read some of chapter 3.

RE-READ NUMBERS 3:14 - end

In verses 15 and 16 where it talks about Moses dealing with the Levite census most bible translations say that, "Moses numbered (or counted) them at the command, or the word, of God", but this misses the mark. The Hebrew word typically translated numbered or counted is **paqad**; and it has a wide range of meaning. In this context probably a better modern English word than **number** or **count** would be "record". Further in Hebrew the word usually translated as "word" or "command" of God in this verse, is **'al pi**. And more precisely it means (from a modern English language standpoint) "oracle". In other words the results of the census were divinely related to Moses, directly from God....it was an oracle from God, a very special announcement made for a monumental purpose. Neither Moses nor Aaron, nor the Levite tribal chieftains, nor any human for that matter, was involved in the counting of the Levites. This was much too important of a matter because redemption was at the heart of it. Instead Yehoveh Himself conducted the census and Moses was simply told the results by means of an "oracle" from Yehoveh, and then what God said was written down (recorded).

I could spend an hour talking about all the principles of redemption that are touched upon in these verses; the same principles that were manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of Yeshua. But I'll just mention just one, for now, and I hope this goes deep into your soul. It would do no good for leaders and elders of all the churches and synagogues of the world to conduct a census in order to determine how many people are actually redeemed (or in evangelical Christian-eze, saved). The Holy Scriptures makes it clear that the Lord, and the Lord alone, makes that determination. The census of saved people that will be performed in an instant before the Rapture of Believers will not be done according to church or synagogue records as determined by the calculation of men; it will be done by God Himself. That Baptism Certificate, or your name on a church or synagogue membership role, or that you were voted or appointed an Elder or a Deacon; or even if you are a Pastor or Rabbi with a Certificate of Ordination.....all of these are nice and meaningful things in man's religious activities; but they count for exactly **nothing** when God takes His final census. Because it is so important and eternal in its consequences the census of those who are redeemed (and by default who are

not) will not be left in the hands of a Pope, or a Bishop, or a Pastor, or a Rabbi, or a Church board or a synagogue committee, or any man for that matter. Our Lord will ensure that not ONE Believer is going to be accidentally overlooked and left behind. Yet as joyful and reassuring as that prospect is, also realize that not one who should NOT be included will be allowed to accidentally slip on in. God will make that determination based on His intimate and perfect knowledge of each individual's heart, and whether that individual has fully accepted the saving provision God has made for mankind, Yeshua Our Savior. All the special religious status and honors and titles that men confer upon men won't matter. Our attendance record, how nice we are, saying all the right things and sincerely believing doctrines that sound godly but aren't, and the many things that impress men, will not be part of the determination. Just as here in Leviticus where Yehoveh did the counting of the Levites Himself, only God will take the census of Believers and record them in His Heavenly Book of Life because only God can see the heart and the soul for what it really is.

Well in the next few verses we get a slew of genealogy because the Levites were going to be divided up according to their clan, and then assigned different duties as regarded the priesthood (which could come only from Aaron's clan) and for duties as regarded the Tabernacle. These duties would only be temporary, however, as once they reached the Promised Land after 40 years in the Wilderness, the duties got shuffled around a bit because circumstances changed rather significantly as they shifted from being wanderers to a settled people. So much of what we read here technically applies ONLY to the time of the 40 years of wandering.

We're not going to get bogged down in this long list of family names today; however, there are a few pertinent things to be taken from it. First and foremost note that the Priests and Levites were to station themselves **between** the Wilderness Tabernacle and the 12 tribes of Israel acting like a fence or a protective barrier between Holy Ground and the people of Israel (or anyone else for that matter). This further defines the role of a mediator or an intercessor or even as God's appointed servant. That is its not just a matter of carrying messages from people to God (as in intercessory prayer), and from God to people (as in being a teacher or pronouncing the Gospel); it's about protecting God from having His holiness threatened, and it's also about protecting people from being destroyed by God for trespassing....whether intentionally or accidentally..... upon His holiness. Add that to the mix when trying to comprehend the role of Jesus, and to some degree to our responsibilities as His disciples. It's one that is rarely thought of or discussed, but it is probably one of the most important roles that every modern day Believer carries upon his or her shoulders.

Appropriately we see that it is the immediate sons of the founder of the tribe of Levi.....Levi, son of Jacob..... who are listed first; they are Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. There is one name left off of this list, though, that is quite important, but it is not recorded because the name belongs to a woman: Jochobed. Jochobed was the sister of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. But we are more aware of Jochobed as Moses and Aaron's mother. What is interesting is that Amram (Moses and Aaron's father) was a **son** of Kohath. What that means is that Amram married his father's sister, his Aunt Jochobed..... and therefore Kohath formed the biological line of BOTH parents of Moses and Aaron. Of course, Amram and Jochobed were married while Israel was still in Egypt. This situation could NOT have happened AFTER Mt. Sinai

because the Law given to Moses on the subject of marriage would not have permitted this type of close familial intermarriage.

Starting in verse 22 we begin to see the makeup of the Levites according to the census of them, as taken by God, and then recorded by Moses. The family line of Gershon was further divided into two lines, representing his two sons Libni and Shimei. The total number of descendants of Gershon, son of Levi, amounted to 7,500 males 1 month old and older. They were assigned to camp at the rear of the Tent of Meeting, to the west, the 3rd most prestigious camping spot. Their Tabernacle duties consisted of caring for certain parts of the Tabernacle structure; though when we read this passage in English it sounds like it's repeating itself because most renderings say something to the effect of "the Tabernacle, the tent, it's covering and the screen....". What's the difference between the Tabernacle and the tent; aren't they the same thing?

In fact these words are referring the various layers of cloth and skins that together form the tent sanctuary. So more accurately the word **Tabernacle** is referring to the cloth inner lining, the word **tent** is referring to the middle layer of goat's hair, and the word **covering** points to the outer covering of tanned Ram skins and also possibly to the waterproof top- covering probably made out of porpoise skins. Plus, by the word **screen** it is indicating the outer entrance into the tent, the veil that hung in the entryway from the courtyard into the Holy Place (this is not the inner veil, the parokhet, that separates the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies). The Gershonites are also responsible for the altar of burnt offering and the cords that hang the outer curtain from its pole.

The line of Kohath (another son of Levi) was divided into 4 lines, or clans, each representing the 4 sons of Kohath, one of them being the line from which Moses and Aaron came (the Amram-ites). The combined number of males from this family group was 8,300. They were to camp to the south side of the Tabernacle.....the 2nd most prestigious place to camp. Their duties were to care for the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Shewbread, the Menorah, the Golden Altar of Incense, and all the various ritual utensils like the fire pan, the golden pitchers, the bowls used to catch the blood of the animal sacrifices, and so on. Notice that these duties were the **highest** duties of the non-priests...that group that the Bible typically calls just "the Levites". The Kohathites cared for the things INSIDE the tent. The first group we discussed, that of Gershon, cared for things that were either barriers between the inside and outside of the tent or the things that were located fully outside the tent (such as the Altar of Burnt Offering). Things inside the tent were generally considered more sacred and prestigious than things placed outside the tent.

Let me remind you because it can get confusing: once God set up the priesthood (and event that occurred at Mt. Sinai), He divided the tribe of Levi into two main divisions: Priests and non-priests. The Priests performed the rituals and did the teaching of the Law, and they were called "Priests", or in Hebrew, cohanim. The non-priests (the remainder of the tribe of Levi) went by the title of "the Levites"; this was those who did the blue collar work around the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Biologically and genealogically speaking the Priests and the Levites were all part of the tribe of Levi; but God elevated the descendants of Aaron, the Priests, into a higher status than the remainder of the tribe of Levi. So from this point forward in the Bible, 9 out of 10

times that the Scripture refers to Levites it is ONLY referring to those Levite blue collar workers and NOT the Priests. And ALWAYS when Scripture refers to Priests it in no way includes those blue-collar worker Levites. We will see the phrase "Levite Priests" quite often, but don't be confused. The purpose for this is to remind the reader that the priesthood comes from the tribe of Levi and ONLY the tribe of Levi; no other tribe can participate in the priesthood. Sadly most Christian commentators make Levites and Priests to be but two words for the same thing and so we get a very inaccurate picture of what went on around the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

The 3rd son of Levi was Merari. The line of Merari became divided into two clans because he had two sons. The total amount of males from the line of Merari was 6,200. They were instructed to camp on the LEAST prestigious side of the Tabernacle, the north. They were to care for and transport the planks that formed the framework of the sacred tent, and all the poles and sockets and ropes used to form the cloth wall that surrounded the outer courtyard.

The most prestigious camping place went to Moses and Aaron and Aaron's sons.....the priests. They camped to the east, or front, of the Tabernacle. They didn't assemble or disassemble the Tabernacle; they didn't transport any part of it or its furnishings; that was the job of the Levites. And as it makes clear in verse 38, the priests' purpose was to "attend to the duties of the sanctuary".....that is, perform the rituals. And this duty was done not on their OWN behalf, but on behalf of all the Israelites. It was for the sake of all the Israelite tribes that the Levites and the Priests did what they did.

The end of verse 38 emphasizes, yet again, that any non-authorized person who came too near the Tabernacle or attempted to perform a priestly function was to be killed. One wonders why this is mentioned so many times. Did God think these Israelite people stupid? Well besides the fact that Yehoveh is making it so very clear that nearness to Him brings **danger** as well as blessing (something few but the most daring Missionaries in the modern church seem to grasp), I have no doubt that in this era this is a warning **primarily** to the firstborns of Israel. Remember we are at a point in time whereby the special status of all Israeli firstborns is in process of being removed from them and turned over to the Levites. These Israeli firstborns had, for centuries, been the ones with the unique honor and duty to perform priest-like functions for their own families. You can bet that while some firstborns were relieved not to have to do it anymore, others had their pride pricked and were not at all happy about this change. And they surely had no intention of giving it all up so easily and so wanted to continue to involve themselves in the rituals and ceremonies God had decreed to Moses. God's answer: don't even think about it. Come near and die.

By the way notice that NO count of the males that formed the priestly families is given. ONLY the total number of the 3 non-priest families is used. For those whose Bibles have not already included an assumed correction, the earliest Hebrew manuscripts we have indicate that the number of each of those 3 non-priest families when added together (22,300) is not the same as the total number usually given (22,000). It is generally acknowledged that this was due to a rather common scribal error somewhere along the line. The problem is that the number 3 in Hebrew is very similar to the number 6. Three is sheen-lamed-sheen, while 6 is just sheen-sheen.

At this point yet another kind of census is ordered; the first census of the tribes of Israel counted only males starting at age 20. A new count is to take place that counts the Israelite FIRSTBORN males starting at age 1 month; that is this new count uses the same criteria that was used to count Levites. And what is discovered is that there are 273 more Israelite firstborns than there are Levite males to substitute for them. Interestingly even the firstborn cattle of the Israelites (in Hebrew, *behemah*, which means domestic field animals used for food; this included goats, sheep, and cows) were to be redeemed by means of being replaced by animals belonging to the Levites. In case it's not clear: the Levites that were being used for redemption consisted of ALL Levite males, not just Levite firstborn. But among the secular Israelites (the 12 tribes) it was ONLY the firstborn who were being redeemed, not all Israelite males. Understand? One regular Levite male of any birth order redeemed one FIRSTBORN Israelite male.

So what to do about the problem that there were not enough Levite males to redeem every Israelite firstborn? A redemption price was set and that price was 5 shekels. At this point in history a shekel was NOT a coin like it is now (and was during Jesus' time). Rather a shekel at that time was just a unit of weight.....like an ounce or a gram.

The 273 Israelite firstborns that were to be redeemed with money were chosen by lot. And those who were chosen had to come up with 5 shekels of silver each and present it to Moses, who then gave it to Aaron. So 22,000 Israelite firstborns were redeemed in a one-to-one swap with 22,000 Levite males; and the remaining 273 Israelite males were redeemed with 5 shekels of silver each, which was given to the priesthood. In this way every Israelite firstborn was redeemed and thus no longer automatically devoted to the service of the Lord.

The transfer was complete. The Levites now belonged to God in place of the Israelite firstborns and the Israelite firstborns lost their special status to the Levites. Let me comment that this was, for the most part, a *spiritual status* that the firstborns lost and the Levites gained. Other typical firstborn traditions and customs about family authority and wealth and leadership, etc., still fully applied.

So what was the status of all FUTURE Israelite firstborns from this time forward? Well the Hebrews felt that it was STILL necessary to redeem each Hebrew Firstborn. It was less a matter that God still automatically owned all the firstborns but rather that it was done in commemoration of the Exodus when Yehoveh struck dead all the Firstborns of Egypt, but saved all the Firstborns of Israel.

So the idea was that when a firstborn son was born the parents dedicated that child to God in gratitude. Then, after 30 days, they redeemed that firstborn son BACK by going to the priesthood and paying the redemption price. When a firstborn was born, after 30 days a ceremony was held and the father took his son to the Tabernacle and he paid the Priesthood a sum of 5 shekels of silver to redeem his son. By doing this the firstborn son was no longer devoted in service to God; he was redeemed FROM God, the price of redemption being 5 shekels. Let me stress: this concerned ONLY the firstborn. If a man had several sons it was ONLY the first one born that he redeemed, not the others, because the others were not dedicated to God, thereby essentially becoming God's holy property.

Theoretically if that redemption did NOT occur, that firstborn son was obligated to lifetime service to God, or to the priesthood, or both. In reality there was very little that firstborn could have done for the priesthood, because it was the Levite's task to be of service to the Priests. And anyone who was not a Levite, but undertook a Levite's task, was to be executed.

Now, there were some parents who determined that they DID want their firstborn son to be in service to God; and so they intentionally did NOT redeem him. We'll see this particularly in the Nazarite vow whereby a child is offered into service to God before he's even born. We see this in the Bible with Sampson for example.

By the way, John the Baptist was also NOT redeemed even though he was a firstborn. Why? Perhaps for the reason few might expect; John was not a Jew in the strictest sense, he was a Levite!! His father was a priest and his mother Elisheva (Elizabeth) was of the line of Aaron. John the Baptist was not eligible for redemption. Rather just like the all the male members of the tribe of Levi, beginning in the Book of Numbers, he is permanently in service to God and cannot be redeemed from that position.

In fact even Jesus was redeemed *from* God by means of a price paid by his earthly father Joseph. We'll find this story in Luke chapter 2. Go there now with me, so we can see this entire principle we're learning about in Numbers, take place with Yeshua as the focus, some 1300 years after the practice was first begun.

READ LUKE 2: 21 - 35

Here is a story we are all pretty familiar with but likely really didn't fully understand. What we're witnessing is just a standard, every day, firstborn redemption of a Jewish baby boy (firstborn). In this case, it is Yeshua.

The Hebrew title of this entire process is called *pidyon-haben*. As part of the law of *pidyon-haben* notice that it was not until Yeshua's circumcision on the 8th day that He was given His name. The reason for this delay is that names held great significance and until Jesus was 8 days old, and had a circumcision ceremony, He was not put under the provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant. On the 8th day He received His Hebrew name because He officially became an Israelite.

Next it says that the redemption was after the time of purification according to the Law (meaning the Torah), when Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem. The purification this is being discussed is NOT about Jesus, it's about Mary; and this, too, is contained in the law of *pidyon-haben*. When a woman bore a child, if it was a boy, she was ritually unclean for a period of 40 days. So we know that it was AFTER 40 days that this scene in Luke took place because she could NOT have come to the Temple in an unclean condition.

Further the sacrifice that is spoken of (two turtledoves or two pigeons) again concerns Mary, not the baby Yeshua. This is the sacrifice necessary to complete her ritual purification after childbirth. Going to the Temple was somewhat of an ordeal, and when several things could be

accomplished in one trip that's what usually happened. So Mary was purified and Jesus was redeemed apparently in the same visit. This passage does NOT mention the amount given for Jesus' redemption but it would have been the standard amount of 5 shekels because it didn't matter whether the family was rich or poor, the cost of redemption was the same for every Hebrew firstborn.

Now, it is believed by some that Jesus had an older brother who was James who would necessarily have been born to a different wife of Joseph. That James was related to Jesus is fairly well established; but to think that James was Joseph's firstborn seems to get blown out of the water by the events of this passage of Luke, for here we see Yeshua getting redeemed from His firstborn status. The one caveat to that is that Joseph was NOT the biological father of Yeshua (and he well knew that), so possibly Joseph was ordered by the Lord (or took it upon himself to do it) to take Yeshua to the Temple for the firstborn ritual of redemption on behalf of the Heavenly Father.

Thus regardless of the circumstances was even our Savior redeemed from Yehoveh.....though of course, He was actually God incarnate. It only goes to demonstrate the inscrutable irony we have to deal with in that Jesus was 100% man, and so was under the provisions of the Torah as was any other man; and yet He was 100% God and so WAS the Torah, and therefore unlike any being the world had ever known.

Next week we'll start Numbers chapter 4.