

The Journey to the Promised Land Begins

Numbers 10

Numbers 10:1-10 – *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² “Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. ³ When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁴ But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. ⁵ When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey. ⁶ When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys. ⁷ And when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not sound the advance. ⁸ The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations.*

⁹ *“When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. ¹⁰ Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God.”*

Background Notes (for verses 1-10)

The two silver trumpets were most likely long, straight silver tubes, flared at the end. They probably looked a lot like the long plastic horns that fans blow at football games! These were not the *shofar* (ram’s horn trumpets) that were used when the walls of Jericho fell. These silver trumpets were used for summoning and signaling the children of Israel for various purposes.

The silver trumpets were used for five purposes, and different trumpet calls were used for each of these five purposes:

1. To summon the people to assemble at the tabernacle (v3, 7).
2. To assemble the leaders only (v4).
3. To signal the people when to move out for travel (v5-7).
4. To sound an alarm in time of war (v9).
5. To announce certain special days, such as Feast Days (v10).

Notice that these trumpets were not only to be used in the wilderness travels, but when they came into the Promised Land as well (v9). The phrase “your land” is significant. Whose land? **Israel’s land! God gave this land to the Jewish people** under the covenant He made with Abraham (Genesis 12), and **that land deal has never been revoked!**

Doctrinal Point (for verses 1-10)

Divine guidance does not eliminate human leadership.

God had already given His cloud to guide His people through the wilderness. It was a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The people followed the cloud, whenever and wherever the cloud moved. Why, then, were the trumpets needed to signal that the people were to move out in their travels? Wasn't the cloud enough to lead them? Answer: divine guidance doesn't eliminate human leadership!

Notice that the priests blew the trumpets (v8). The priests were the spiritual leaders of congregation. Today God guides His people in many ways, but He definitely speaks through spiritual leaders. The two silver trumpets may represent the testimony of God's Word. Remember, the number "two" is the number of "testimony" in the Bible. The sound of the trumpet was the command of the Lord. As the priests used the clear sound of the trumpets to guide God's people, so spiritual leaders today use the clear testimony of God's Word to guide God's people. In fact, this is the primary way in which God leads His people today. Spiritual leaders guide the body of Christ with a clear testimony of God's Word. Divine guidance doesn't eliminate human leadership.

Practical Application (for verses 1-10)

Communicate in no uncertain terms, if you are a spiritual leader.

It's hard to mistake a trumpet blast, isn't it? God didn't tell Moses to make two golden harps, or two silver oboes. No - two silver trumpets, because trumpets give a clear sound that can carry a great distance. When the priests blew the trumpets, the people knew exactly what directives were being communicated, and there was no excuse not to follow directions. Spiritual leaders today need to communicate clearly and in no uncertain terms, so that God's people know exactly what God's Word says, what He expects of His people, and what direction God wants His people to take. This is true in preaching and teaching, it's true in church discipline, and it's also true in the area of guidance and vision for a church or ministry. Are you a spiritual leader? There's a lesson here for you in Numbers 11. If you're a spiritual leader, you need to communicate in no uncertain terms!

Numbers 10:11-38 - “Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. ¹² And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. ¹³ So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses. ¹⁴ The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first according to their armies; over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. ¹⁵ Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. ¹⁶ And over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon. ¹⁷ Then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle. ¹⁸ And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies; over their army was Elizur the son of Shedeur. ¹⁹ Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. ²⁰ And over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel. ²¹ Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. (The tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.) ²² And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set out according to their armies; over their army was Elishama the son of Ammihud. ²³ Over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. ²⁴ And over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideon. ²⁵ Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies; over their army was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. ²⁶ Over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher was Pagiel the son of Ocran. ²⁷ And over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan. ²⁸ Thus was the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their journey. ²⁹ Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, “We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, ‘I will give it to you.’ Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel.” ³⁰ And he said to him, “I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives.” ³¹ So Moses said, “Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes. ³² And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you.” ³³ So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days’ journey, to search out a resting place for them. ³⁴ And the cloud of the LORD was above them by day when they went out from the camp. ³⁵ So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: “Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You.” ³⁶ And when it rested, he said: “Return, O LORD, to the many thousands of Israel.”

Background Notes (for verses 11-36)

When we compare (v11) with Exodus 40:17, we see that the children of Israel left Mount Sinai about two months after the Tabernacle was set up in the wilderness. They had camped at Mount Sinai for about eleven months. Then the cloud lifted, and led them toward the Promised Land, and the cloud settled in the Wilderness of Paran, south of the land of Canaan (v12). This area included Kadesh Barnea, where the spies were sent out (Numbers 13).

The Ark of the Covenant went in front of God's people as they traveled (v33). The Ark, with its mercy seat and the blood of the atoning sacrifice, is a wonderful *type* (spiritual picture) of Christ. As the people followed the Ark through the wilderness, so we must follow the Lord Jesus as we travel through this world.

Doctrinal Point (for verses 11-36)

Divine guidance does not exclude human help.

Moses asked his brother-in-law, Hobab, to come along as a scout (v29). At first Hobab said "No," because he wanted to go back home. But after Moses gave him a "motivational talk," it seems that Hobab stayed, because in the book of Judges we read of Hobab's descendants as being part of Israel. (See Judges 1:16 and 4:11.)

Some Christians feel that Moses showed a lack of faith by wanting Hobab to come along as a scout. After all, God had promised to guide the children of Israel, so why would Hobab be needed? Well, I think that Moses was using common sense here. Hobab's knowledge of the wilderness would be very helpful.

Divine guidance doesn't exclude human help - in fact, God often guides us in this way! He can send the right help at the right time to lead us in the right direction! God sent Melchizedek at just the right time to help Abraham to make the right decision. God sent Barnabas to the apostle Paul at just the right time to give him help and guidance. This may be true in our lives as well. When the Lord was guiding us into starting our website (growingchristians.org), He sent along a couple of my Bible college students who knew how to design websites. They came at just the right time, and they had just the right knowledge and expertise. Without their help, our website might still be just an idea!

Divine guidance doesn't exclude human help.

Practical Application (for verses 11-36)

Let's pray before and after our travels!

The closing verses of Numbers 10 are two prayers of Moses. He prayed a prayer for victory every time the Ark set out when they traveled, and he prayed a prayer for blessing every time the Ark came to rest, when they stopped to camp. This is a good pattern for us. We should pray both **before and after** our travels!

Many of us pray before our travels, right? We pray for safety on the road or in the air, and we pray for success in whatever we plan to do. But how many of us pray **after** our travels, thanking the Lord for His presence, and praying for His continued blessing? We need to follow this biblical pattern. **Let's pray before and after our travels!**