

## **Numbers 26:1-36:13**

### **Israel in the Wilderness - Second Generation**

For this entire section, **Israel** is **encamped** in the **plains of Moab**, at the **northern end** of the **Dead Sea**, on the **precipice** of the **Promised Land**. Here they prepared to **cross the Jordan** and enter the Land of Canaan. As they prepare, they will receive additional **law-giving instruction**, take a **census** and **fight** another **battle**. These chapters are very **focused** on **Israel's future life** in **Canaan**, and the **inheritance** of the **land**, whereas the last word of God through Moses in **36:9** is *"for each of the tribes of Israel shall hold on to its own inheritance."* In this way the **promise** made to **Abraham** that the **land of Canaan** would be **Israel's everlasting possession** in **Genesis 17:8** is **reaffirmed**. This **theme** will be strongly **emphasized** in the **book of Deuteronomy**.

#### **The Second Census – Numbers 26:1-65**

Chapter 26 records a **second census**, whereas the **first census** was **recorded** in **chapter 1**. This census deals with establishing the **relative size** of the **tribes** so that they may each be given an **appropriately sized holding** of the **land**.

**Numbers 26:52-56** - 52 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 53 "Among these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. 54 **"To the larger group you shall increase their inheritance, and to the smaller group you shall diminish their inheritance; each shall be given their inheritance according to those who were numbered of them.** 55 "But the land shall be divided by lot. They shall receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56 "According to the selection by lot, their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller groups." NASU

The **first census** was concerned to show that the **promise to Abraham** that His **offspring** would be as the **sand of the seashore**, and also to **count the number** of **fighting men** for **battle**. The **second census** however places **emphasis** on the **names** of the **clans** and the **size** of the **clans** for the **purpose** of **apportioning** out the **inheritance** of **land**. The **total number** of **Israelites** has changed **very little** between the censuses: **603,550 (first)** and **601,730 (second)**. The tribal totals vary somewhat more than the overall total, but the most **striking change** is the fall in **Simeon's** total from **59,300** to **22,200** and the increase in **Manasseh's** from **32,200** to **52,700**. A **very important note** here is that this **list of Israelites** is the **second generation** of **Israelites** of those who **left Egypt**, as the **entire first generation** had

**perished** according to **God's displeasure** (Numbers 14:26-35) with their **grumbling** in the **wilderness**.

**Numbers 26:63-65** - 63 These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. **64 But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the Lord had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." And not a man was left of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.** NASU

### **The daughters of Zelophehad - Numbers 27:1-11**

These daughters were **briefly mentioned** back in **26:33** which was odd because most of the **census** is taken up the **men's names** who are the one's who inherit the land. Traditionally, the father would provide a **dowry** for **daughters** when they were **married**, but his **land** and **other possessions** were **divided** among **his sons**. If he had **no sons**, his **estate** would pass to his **nearest male relative**, **27:9-10**. But because **Zelophehad's daughters** were **zealous** for the **land**, they **petition Moses** to **hear their case** to which **the Lord** responds **positively**.

**Numbers 27:6-11** - 6 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 7 "The daughters of Zelophehad are right in their statements. You shall surely give them a hereditary possession among their father's brothers, and you shall transfer the inheritance of their father to them. **8 "Further, you shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter.** 9 'If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10 'If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11 'If his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be a statutory ordinance to the sons of Israel, just as the Lord commanded Moses.'" NASU

Thus, **God** makes **new law** to address when a **man dies** with **no sons** that his **inheritance** can be **passed** to his **daughter(s)**. This also shows a **new kind** of zeal and **obedience** of this **new generation** who will be more devoted to the Lord.

### **Joshua commissioned as Moses' successor – Numbers 27:12-23**

Because **Moses** had **earlier sinned** at Meribah, **God** had **forbidden** him to **enter the land**. Like Aaron, Moses must climb a mountain to die. From it he will see the promised land. This command is fulfilled in Deuteronomy 34. As a result, he

needed to **appoint** another **leader** to **succeed Moses**. The Lord designates **Joshua** the **son of Nun** as his **successor**.

**Numbers 27:15-20** - 15 Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 16 "May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep which have no shepherd." **18 So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight.** NASU

Joshua will not have the **direct communication** with **God** that **Moses** had (**12:8**). Instead, he will have to be **instructed by Eleazar** the **high priest**, who will use the **Urim** and **Thummim** to determine **God's will**. The Urim and Thummim were a sort of **sacred lot** and were part of the **high priest's equipment** used in **discerning God's will** (Ex 28:30, Lev 8:8, 1 Sam 14-41-42). They were the only **legitimate means** of directly seeking a **"yes" or "no"** answer **from the Lord**, apart from **God's speaking directly** to people. Then Joshua stands before Eleazar the high priest and **Moses lays his hands** on him, **publicly declaring Joshua** to be his **successor**.

**Numbers 27:20-23** - 20 "You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him. 21 "Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation." **22 Moses did just as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him,** just as the Lord had spoken through Moses. NASU

### **Calendar of public sacrifices - Numbers 28:1-29:40**

Even though **Moses** is nearing the **end of his life** and **ministry to Israel**, yet he will provide more **law-giving instruction** to **prepare Israel** for **entering the land**. This will include a **calendar of public sacrifices** and **Feast Days** that are to be **repeated** on an **annual basis**, for when you are **in the land**. They must be **careful to worship** the Lord as **He has prescribed**.

**Numbers 28:1-2** - 1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **2 "Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be careful to present My**

**offering, My food for My offerings by fire, of a soothing aroma to Me, at their appointed time.'** NASU

The **ESV Study Bible** gives a helpful description of these **public sacrifices and Feast Days**. *“These are the sacrifices offered in the tabernacle on a daily basis by the priests on behalf of the nation. Twice a day lambs are offered as a burnt offering (see [Leviticus 1](#)): one in the morning and another in the evening. On holy days, extra sacrifices are added. These chapters explain just what is required on which day. They are summarized in the [chart](#). To see how many sacrifices the priests would have to offer, one must add together all the offerings that are required for each reason. For example, on a Sabbath falling on the first day of a month, the priests would have to offer: two lambs (the daily offering) plus two lambs (the Sabbath offering) plus two bulls, one ram, seven lambs, and one goat (1st-day-of-the-month offering). Most of the sacrifices were burnt offerings (see [Leviticus 1](#)), but all the goats are sin offerings (see [Leviticus 4](#)). In addition to the animals being sacrificed, a grain offering of flour and oil, and a drink offering of wine had to be made. The size of the grain offering and drink offering varied with the animal being offered. Here the same quantities are prescribed as in [Num. 15:4–10](#): a lamb must be accompanied by about half a gallon (1.9 liters) of flour, a quart (0.95 liters) of oil, and a quart (0.95 liters) of wine. At least double quantities are needed for a bull. These regulations make several points. First, they show the importance of the sacrificial system in Israel (cf. note on [15:1–16](#)). In the limited time before his death, Moses explains what sacrifices must be offered in public worship on behalf of the whole nation. These are over and above the private sacrifices that a layperson may want to bring for personal reasons. Second, they are a strong assurance to Joshua that the nation will indeed inherit the land and become a prosperous agricultural community, able to provide for this lavish and expensive worship. It has been calculated that, over the course of a year, these sacrifices involved a total of 113 bulls, 1,086 lambs, over a ton of flour, and 1,000 bottles of oil and wine! Finally, this list of sacrifices underlines the importance of the sabbatical principle. Every seventh day is a Sabbath and marked by a doubling of the daily sacrifice, while the seventh month is marked by a huge number of extra sacrifices, especially during the Feast of Booths, which is clearly marked out as the biggest celebration of the year.”* **End quote.** See here the **elaborate system of worship** that the people were to **incorporate** into their **daily, monthly and annual life** so as to **worship God** in the way that **He has prescribed**. See the **helpful chart** below of **public sacrifices and Feast Days**.

**Calendar of Public Sacrifices Chart ESV  
Study Bible**

Occasion	Bulls	Rams	Lambs	Goats
<a href="#">Every day (28:3–8)</a>			2	
<a href="#">Sabbath (28:9–10)</a>			2	
<a href="#">1st day of month (28:11–15)</a>	2	1	7	1
<a href="#">Unleavened Bread: each day (28:17–25)</a>	2	1	7	1
<a href="#">Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) (28:26–31)</a>	2	1	7	1
<a href="#">1st day of 7th month (29:1–6)</a>	1	1	7	1
<a href="#">Day of Atonement (29:7–11)</a>	1	1	7	1
<a href="#">Feast of Booths (29:12–38):</a>				
1st day	13	2	14	1
2nd day	12	2	14	1
3rd day	11	2	14	1
4th day	10	2	14	1
5th day	9	2	14	1
6th day	8	2	14	1
7th day	7	2	14	1
8th day	1	1	7	1

**The obligations of vows - Numbers 30:1-16**

It was common for Israelites to **make vows** unto **God**. There are many **examples** in the **Bible** like **Hannah** in **1 Samuel**.

**1 Samuel 1:9-11** - 9 Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. 10 She, greatly distressed, prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. **11 She made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life,** and a razor shall never come on his head."

NASU

Of course, **God answered** her **prayer**, and she **fulfilled her vow** when she offered her son **Samuel** to the **Lord** to serve at the **Tabernacle**. Because people often made **vows**, and **God** did not take this **lightly**, people needed to be careful to fulfill the vow. In a **crisis** people often **make a vow**. The danger is that, when the crisis is over, the vow may not be fulfilled. The Bible gives warnings about not fulfilling a **vow**.

**Deuteronomy 23:21-23 - 21 "When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the Lord your God will surely require it of you. 22 "However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you. 23 "You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God, what you have promised. NASU**

Therefore, it was **important** to have **laws** that would require the **careful observance of vows**. The *ESV Study Bible* notes: *"These laws are concerned with defining those few circumstances in which a person may be excused from fulfilling a vow. Basically, a man is always obliged to fulfill his vow (Num 30:2), but a woman may be excused if her father or husband (the leader of the family, who is assumed to have the authority to nullify such a vow) objects to her vow as soon as he hears about it (v 5, 8, 12, 14). But if the man, as the head of the family, hears of his daughter's vow or his wife's vow and does not object to it, then it stands and the woman is obliged to fulfill it (v 4, 7, 11, 13). The placement of this law here may seem surprising, but there are several reasons why it should come here. Vows are mentioned in 29:39, and they are often involved in the offering of a sacrifice. Also, war often prompts vows, and Israel is about to start its military campaign in Canaan. In addition, the conquest of Canaan depends on God keeping his promised word to Israel, and Israel must be equally strict in carrying out her promises to God."* **End quote.** See here the **Lord** has **governed** the **careful observance of vows** so that people may live with **integrity toward God** when making **promises to Him**. This would be the **principal passage** in the entire Old Testament concerning **vows**.

### **Retribution on Midian - Numbers 31:1-54**

Numbers 31 records a **battle** between **Israel** and the **Moabite Midianites** who had earlier caused the **Israelites to sin against God** when **Balaam** had instructed them to **seduce the Israelite males** by their **women** into **worshipping Baal at Peor**. **God** therefore **commands Moses** to **avenge Israel** by going to **war with Midian** to annihilate them. **Persuading Israelites to worship other gods** is a **capital offense**, according to Deuteronomy 13, and the Lord's anger **burned against** these Midianites. **Israel** will be the **means of God** in destroying them. This will be **Moses' last military action** and it will help **prepare Israel** for the **conquest of Canaan**.

**Numbers 31:7-11 - 7 So they made war against Midian, just as the Lord had commanded Moses, and they killed every male. 8 They killed the**

**kings of Midian along with the rest of their slain:** Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; **they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword.** 9 The sons of Israel captured the women of Midian and their little ones; and all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods they plundered. 10 Then they burned all their cities where they lived and all their camps with fire. NASU

Take note here that the **prophet Balaam** was **killed**, ironically **fighting against Israel** in **battle**. Now because Israel was sent to **avenge themselves** because of the **great sin** with which they were **seduced** by the Midianite women to worship the **Baal of Peor**, provoking the wrath of God against them, Moses was angry that they did not **kill the women** who had **sinned** in the matter and **all the males** as to wipe out these **Midianites** as a people.

**Numbers 31:13-16** - 13 Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp. **14 Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. 15 And Moses said to them, "Have you spared all the women? 16 "Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the Lord.** 17 "Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man intimately. 18 "But all the girls who have not known man intimately, spare for yourselves. NASU

See here in **ancient near eastern war**, many times **armies** were **careful to wipe out** an **enemy** so **completely** that they would **never** be a **problem again**, which is what happens here. But this is the **Lord's command**, as He has **judged** these **evil Canaanites** and the **land** is now **vomiting** them **out**, and the **means God** is using is the **nation** of **Israel**. But take note here that **God** is only **concerned** with **killing** the women who have **sinned sexually** with **Israel**, (so they won't seduce the men again in the future), and with **all the males**, in order that their **race** may **not continue**. There is **much** to **learn** here as they will soon be on **divine mission** to **annihilate** the **Canaanites** in the **Conquest** of the **Promised Land**. This is indeed a **holy vengeance** and **Israel** is to be careful that if they have been **defiled** in **any way**, they must **cleans**e themselves and any **spoils** of **war**.

**Numbers 31:19-24** - 19 "And you, **camp outside the camp seven days; whoever has killed any person and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves, you and your captives, on the third day and on the seventh day. 20 "You shall purify for yourselves every garment and every article of**

**leather and all the work of goats' hair, and all articles of wood."** 21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone to battle, "This is the statute of the law which the Lord has commanded Moses: 22 only the gold and the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin and the lead, 23 everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean, but it shall be purified with water for impurity. But whatever cannot stand the fire you shall pass through the water. **24 "And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may enter the camp."** NASU

As they divide the **spoils of war**, they were to be **careful** to **set aside** a **portion** for the **priests** and **Levites**. From their share of the **spoils** the soldiers had to give one-**five-hundredth** to the **priests**, and from their share the people had to give **one-fiftieth** to the **Levites**. Thus **one-tenth** of **one percent** of the **total spoil** went to the **priests** and **one percent** went to the **Levites**. Lest we think this was some sort of **small-scale** conquest, consider the **numbers** of **spoil** named here.

**Numbers 31:32-35** - 32 Now the booty that remained from the spoil which the men of war had plundered was **675,000 sheep, 33 and 72,000 cattle, 34 and 61,000 donkeys, 35 and of human beings, of the women who had not known man intimately, all the persons were 32,000.** NASU

One last **very important note**, consider that when **Israel** went to **battle** against these **many tens of thousands** of **Moabite Midianites** in obedience to God to avenge themselves from the sin of Peor, not **one single Israelite** soldier was **killed, 31:49**. Surely God **intervened supernaturally** to give them this **perfect success**. In response they gave an **offering** to the **Lord** which was **"all the gold of the offering which they offered up to the Lord, from the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, was 16,750 shekels.**

**Numbers 31:48-54** - 48 Then the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, approached Moses, 49 and they said to Moses, **"Your servants have taken a census of men of war who are in our charge, and no man of us is missing.** 50 "So we have brought as an offering to the Lord what each man found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord." 51 Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all kinds of wrought articles. **52 All the gold of the offering which they offered up to the Lord, from the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, was 16,750 shekels.** 53 The men of war had taken booty, every man for himself. 54 So Moses and



Eleazar the priest took the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it to the tent of meeting as a memorial for the sons of Israel before the Lord. NASU

There is much to consider here in what seems to us in our **modern day** a very **barbaric** kind of **warfare** and **conquest**. But let us be **very careful** to **question** the **justice of God** in His **commanded warfare** for **Israel**. It is fine to study to learn and understand so long as we are careful to realize that we have a very limited view of all that is happening from Gods perspective. If we find ourselves **standing in judgment of God**, let us remember that **the Lord always does** what is in accord with **perfect Justice** and **Righteousness** (He cannot do otherwise), and that the **whole human race** has **forfeited** their **right to live** and **God does not owe** anyone mercy.

### **The settlement in Transjordan - Numbers 32:1-42**

Here the **tribes of Rueben and Gad** request to stay in the land on the **east side** of the **Jordan**, for they had **many livestock** and saw that the **land was good** for **raising livestock**. **Moses is shocked** by the request.

**Numbers 32:5-15** - 5 They said, **"If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession; do not take us across the Jordan."** 6 But Moses said to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, **"Shall your brothers go to war while you yourselves sit here? 7 "Now why are you discouraging the sons of Israel from crossing over into the land which the Lord has given them? 8 "This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. 9 "For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the sons of Israel so that they did not go into the land which the Lord had given them. 10 "So the Lord's anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying, 11 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the Lord fully.'** **13 "So the Lord's anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the Lord was destroyed. 14 "Now behold, you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of the Lord against Israel. 15 "For if you turn**

away from following Him, He will once more abandon them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people." NASU

See here Moses, thinking that **they won't cross the Jordan and conquer the land with the brothers**, is a **great sin** against the **Lord**. The men of **Rueben and Gad** answer him.

**Numbers 32:5-15** - 16 Then they came near to him and said, "We will build here sheepfolds for our livestock and cities for our little ones; **17 but we ourselves will be armed ready to go before the sons of Israel, until we have brought them to their place, while our little ones live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 "We will not return to our homes until every one of the sons of Israel has possessed his inheritance.**

19 "For we will not have an inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan toward the east." NASU

So the proposal seems good to Moses and he gives approval, but also a stern warning.

**Numbers 32:20-24** - **20 So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves before the Lord for the war, 21 and all of you armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until He has driven His enemies out from before Him, 22 and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you shall return and be free of obligation toward the Lord and toward Israel, and this land shall be yours for a possession before the Lord. 23 "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out. 24 "Build yourselves cities for your little ones, and sheepfolds for your sheep, and do what you have promised." NASU**

This became **Moses command** to the **leaders** of the people, and the **sworn commitment** of the **tribes of Rueben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.**

**Numbers 32:28-33** - 28 So **Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' households of the tribes of the sons of Israel.** 29 Moses said to them, "If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, everyone who is armed for battle, will cross with you over the Jordan in the presence of the Lord, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; 30 but if they will not cross over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan." **31 The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, "As the Lord has said to**

your servants, so we will do. 32 "We ourselves will cross over armed in the presence of the Lord into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us across the Jordan." 33 So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan, the land with its cities with their territories, the cities of the surrounding land. NASU

### Summary of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan - Numbers 33:1-56

Here now is a **very important** and **profound** piece of **historical narrative** describing with **much detail** a **summary** of **Israel's Journey** from **Egypt** to **Canaan**. This is **Moses' testimony** of what **God has done** for **Israel** in delivering them from **slavery** under **Pharaoh**, and bringing them to the **edge** of the **Promised Land** of **Canaan**.

**Numbers 33:1-2** - 1 These **are the journeys of the sons of Israel, by which they came out from the land of Egypt by their armies, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron.** 2 **Moses recorded their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the Lord,** and these are their journeys according to their starting places. NASU

Here we see how by **God's sovereign** hand that Israel **triumphed** over her **enemies** as they were **led by God** through the **wilderness**. Here they had received the **Law** at **Sinai**, as God provided for the **great number** of **people** in the desert for decades. Many **tests of faith** attended their **journey** and indeed **God was not pleased** with the **first generation** who **perished** in the journey. Nevertheless, God brought them **faithfully to Canaan** in fulfilment of **His promise** to **Abraham** that His children would possess this land **Genesis 17:8**.

**Genesis 17:6-8** - 6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. 7 **"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.** 8 **"I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."** NASU

Here as they are **settled** on the **edge** of **Canaan**, they receive the **command** of the **Lord** through **Moses** to **conquer the Land**.

**Numbers 33:50-56** - 50 Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, 51 "Speak to the sons of Israel and

say to them, **'When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places; 53 and you shall take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. 54 'You shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you shall give more inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. 55 'But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live. 56 'And as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you.'**" NASU

See here even as they are to receive this **amazing blessing** from **God**, yet it will not be apart from the **obedience of faith** that **God** will require of them. It also comes with a **stern warning** not to **disregard the Lord's command, 33:55**.

### The boundaries of Canaan - Numbers 34:1-29

Here the Lord gives a **very specific description** of the **borders** of the land.



He also gives the **names of chiefs** of the **tribes** who are to be the **distributors** of the **land**, and are charged to **divide** the **inheritance** to the **tribes**.

### **Cities for the Levites - Numbers 35:1-8**

You might recall that **one purpose** of the **second census** was for **determining** the **size** of the **tribes** so as to give them an **appropriately sized territory**. But the **Levites** were **expressly excluded** from **inheriting land**, so here Moses will give them **specific territory** as a **lasting possession** for the Levites.

**Numbers 35:1-3** - 35 Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, **2 "Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession cities to live in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities.** 3 "The cities shall be theirs to live in; and their pasture lands shall be for their cattle and for their herds and for all their beasts. NASU

The **inheritance** included **pasture lands** surrounding the **cities** for their **livestock** and **farming**. They are giving **48 cities** and their **surrounding territory**. Among the Levitical cities are **six cities of refuge**, whose **function** is described in **35:9-34**.

**Numbers 35:9-15** - 9 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, **11 then you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that the manslayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee there.** 12 'The cities shall be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so **that the manslayer will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial.** 13 'The cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge. 14 'You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan; they are to be cities of refuge. 15 'These six cities shall be for refuge for the sons of Israel, and for the alien and for the sojourner among them; that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there. NASU

The **ESV Study Bible** notes; *"You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell" 35:34. Canaan is the holy land, not because Israel lives there but because God dwells there. He is the preeminently holy one, and sin and death are in absolute opposition to him. If the land is made unclean by violent death, drastic measures have to be taken to make atonement; otherwise the Lord will forsake the land and Israel will be exiled. The cities of refuge and the laws associated with them show how cases of homicide are to be handled, in order to prevent the nation's being forsaken. The Israelite system of justice involved the injured party seeking relief in court from the aggressor. In the case of homicide,*

*the male relative closest to the murder victim was expected to exact retribution. This is the situation envisaged in 35:11-15. In hot anger, the avenger may hunt down the killer and execute him. But the “manslayer” should run to the nearest city of refuge to stand trial “before the congregation,” that is, the whole populace (or its representatives). The judges will then decide whether the killer deserves to be executed for his crime. The criteria are set out in 35:16-24. End quote.* See here how the **Lord provides more laws and instruction to uphold justice in the land. Intentional homicide warrants the death penalty, while some accidental homicide may not.** Nevertheless, God is **concerned** that the people **learn to live with justice** in the land as they **love their neighbor as themselves.**

**Number 35:30-34** - 30 'If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 31 'Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32 'You shall not take ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to live in the land before the death of the priest.

**33 'So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 34 'You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.'**" NASU

### **Zelophehad's daughters marry - Numbers 36:1-13**

Here the **inheritance** that was given to the **daughters of Zelophehad** realizes a **problem of succession** if they marry **outside their tribe.**

**Numbers 36:3** - 3 "But if they marry one of the sons of the other tribes of the sons of Israel, **their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of our fathers and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong;** thus it will be **withdrawn from our allotted inheritance.** 4

"When the jubilee of the sons of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; so their **inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.**" NASU

Here we see how **important tribal allotment of land** is, and that it remain in the **tribe** as a **lasting possession.** It is a **promise** that the **tribes** will always live in their **God-given land.** In the words of **Genesis 17:8**, **“I will give to you and to your offspring ... all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.”**