



Numbers 26-31

Tape #7049
Numbers 26-31
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Numbers, twenty six, as we continue our study through the word.

And it came to pass after the plague, [That is the plague that came upon Israel as a result of their committing whoredom, and worshipping the gods of the Moabites, as the result of the counsel of Balaam to the king. "After the plague",] the Lord spoke to Moses and Eleazar [Now, up until this point, we have God speaking to Moses and Aaron. But Aaron has now died. Eleazar, his son, has taken over the position of the high priest, and is now there exercising this ministry, in place of his father. "So it came to pass, that God spoke to Moses and Eleazar,] telling them to take a census of the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and above (26:1),

Now this is the second census. When they began the wilderness journey, they took the first census. It is interesting to compare the first census with the second census, as far as the difference in numbers. We find that as the result of the forty years of wilderness experience, they had a zero population growth. Something that the ecologists are pressing for today. They had a zero population growth. There, was, tough going in the wilderness, and of course at various times, they were plagued by God, and then just the natural attrition, and the hardness of the life in the wilderness, it had a tremendous effect on them. So, this census was taken in the plains of Moab, by the Jordan, across from Jericho.

So they were still on the east side of the Jordan river, in the area of Moab, which today is Jordan. Near the Allenbry bridge, actually, if any of you have been over in that area and crossed the Allenbry bridge. They were just on the east side in Jordan, near the area of the Allenbry bridge, just across from Jericho.

So the first tribe to be numbered was Reuben, and there were forty three thousand, seven hundred and thirty. Now when they started out there was forty six thousand, five hundred. So Reuben's tribe had a minus twenty eight hundred, as a result of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. An interesting note in verse eleven, as it talks about the children of Korah, did not die. Now as we read the text, and Korah and all went down into the pit, it would seem that the families went to. But here we read that the children of Korah, did not die in the rebellion of their fathers.

Next the sons of Simeon, and of the tribe of Simeon, there were only twenty two thousand, two hundred. Now when they started in the wilderness, there were fifty nine thousand, three hundred. So there was actually a loss of thirty seven thousand, in the tribe of Simeon. That tribe suffered the most, as the result of the forty years of wilderness wandering. A minus of thirty seven thousand, in forty years. Tribe of Simeon.

Verse eighteen, the tribe of Gad, there were forty five thousand, five hundred, or forty thousand, five hundred, when they started in the wilderness there were forty six, forty five thousand, six hundred and fifty. So they had a minus five thousand, one hundred and fifty.

The tribe of Judah. At the end of the wilderness, they had seventy six thousand, five hundred, they started with seventy four thousand, six hundred. So the tribe of Judah actually increased by nineteen hundred.

The tribe of Issachar, verse twenty five, ended up with sixty four thousand, three hundred. They started out with fifty four thousand, four hundred. So they had an increase of nine thousand, nine hundred.

The tribe of Zebulun, ended up with sixty thousand, five hundred. So they broke out even. That's how many they had when they started.

The tribe of Manasseh ended with fifty two thousand, seven hundred. They started with thirty two thousand, two hundred. They had a tremendous increase of twenty thousand, five hundred.

The tribe of Ephraim, started out with thirty, they ended with thirty two thousand, five hundred. They started out with forty thousand, five hundred. They had a minus eight thousand.

The tribe of Benjamin, ended up with forty five thousand, six hundred. They had an increase of ten thousand, two hundred.

The tribe of Dan, started out with sixty two thousand, seven hundred. Ended up with sixty four thousand, four hundred. An increase of seventeen hundred.

Tribe of Asher, started out with fifty three, or they ended with fifty three thousand, four hundred, started with forty one thousand, five hundred. They had eleven thousand, nine hundred increase.

Then the tribe of Naphtali, started out with forty five thousand, four hundred. They ended with forty five. They started out with fifty three thousand, four hundred. Ended with forty five thousand, four hundred. So they had a minus eight thousand.

Total. Six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty. They started out with six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty. So there was a total minus of one thousand eight hundred and twenty.

Now, why some of the tribes had such tremendous losses, we don't know. We can only speculate. Tribe of Simeon had the greatest decrease, during the whole wilderness experience. The tribe of Manasseh had the greatest increase, during the forty years experience. But we're not told why.

Now, they are told now to apportion the land to the larger tribes, they were to give a larger area. To the smaller tribes, a smaller area. The land was to be divided by lot. In other words they would cast lots as to which tribe got which portion of the land.

Now they numbered also, the tribe of Levi, but it did not go in the general census. But we read in the last of verse fifty eight...

Kohath begat Amram. And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt: and Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam (26:58-59).

So Moses was of the tribe of Kohath. This was the tribe that Korah came from and that's why Korah thought that being from the tribe of Kohath, he should be able to offer the sacrifices as well as Moses or Aaron.

Then of the tribe, or of the Levi, tribe of Levi, they started out with twenty two thousand, they ended with twenty three thousand. So there was an increase of one thousand. Which means that the total number of decrease, when you include the tribe of Levi, was only eight hundred and twenty. But, notice verse sixty four.

Among these that were numbered, by Moses and Aaron when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness, there was not a single man (26:64).

In other words the census was taken forty years earlier, and now in this second census, there wasn't a single man numbered, who was numbered in the first census. Because in the first census, they numbered only those over twenty. All of those who were twenty and above, in the first census, died before they were sixty years old. They were all wiped out. That whole generation who were numbered in the first census, twenty and above, were gone forty years later. Except Joshua, and Caleb. They were the only two that were numbered in that first census, that also were numbered in the second census. Now that's pretty heavy! To see the nation wiped out so thoroughly.

Chapter 27

Now we have the first women's movement. Equal rights movement. Nothing new, under the sun.

Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, of the tribe of Manasseh: And they stood before Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders of all the congregation, by the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, and they said, Our father died in the wilderness, but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin, and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family, because he had no sons? Therefore give us a possession among the brothers of our father (27:1-4).

Now he died without sons, and here the five daughters came and said, "Look, just because we're women we shouldn't be cut out of this, nor should our father's name die".

So Moses brought their case before the Lord (27:5).

This is interesting to me and I like it. Whenever an issue came up, of which God had not directly spoken, God had not given direct command, Moses would always take it to the Lord. God was in charge, and people realized that God was in charge. He was such a leader, as not to just make a decision, and say, "Well this is it...". He went to the Lord. He took the case to the Lord. How much better off we would be so many times, if we would just take those problem cases to the Lord. For I don't know an answer. "Let's go to the Lord. Let's get the Lord's mind on this. Let's get the Lord's word on this". It is so important that we learn, in every situation, to seek the wisdom of the Lord. "What does God say about this?" And so Moses brought their case before the Lord.

And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right: you shall surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers; and cause the inheritance of their father to pass onto them (27:6-7).

So these gals had a case that was right, their issues were correct. And God said, "Give them the inheritance among their father's brothers". Their uncles and all, just because they're girls, they're not to be cut out from the inheritance. Then he went on to give the law,

If the man dies, and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to the daughter. If he has no children, then it goes to his brother. If he has no brothers it goes to his uncles. And if he has no uncles, then it goes to the one closest to him in the family (27:8-11).

In other words, the inheritance stayed within the family.

Now the Lord said to Moses, [verse twelve] Go into the mount of Abarim, and see the land which I have give to the children of Israel. ["Go up and take a look now, Moses."] And when you have seen it, you will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered (27:12-13).

Now, the Lord didn't say you're gonna die. "You'll be gathered to your people." He was to be gathered together with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, as they were in that waiting area, for God to fulfill His promise of the Messiah, who would one day deliver them out of that captivity. So, "You'll be gathered to your people." The scripture seemed to indicate that they were there in a conscious state.

In Luke's gospel, chapter sixteen, Jesus speaks of a certain rich man. Fared sumptuously every day. A poor man, named Lazarus was brought daily, laid at his gate, covered with sores. The dogs would lick his sores. He would eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The poor man died, carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and in hell, lifted up his eyes, being in torment. Seeing Abraham afar off, and Lazarus being comforted said, "Send Lazarus, that he might comfort me", so it was a conscious state. Abraham comforting those who were waiting for the Messiah to come and to preach to those souls that were in prison, and lead them from their captivity. "Gathered to your people."

For in the wilderness of Zin, for the strife [And this is why he's going to die, this is why he cannot lead them into the promised land. "For in the wilderness of Zin,] during the strife of the congregation, [When they came to Moses complaining about their lack of water.] you rebelled against my command to hallow me at the waters before their eyes: ["You did not represent me. You rebelled against my command." God's command to Moses was, "Speak to the rock and it will bring forth water". Moses went out and yelled at the people said, "You rebels! How long do I have to put up with you? Do I have to strike this rock and give you water?!" And he struck it twice. Water came forth, but Moses lost out. Because he failed to properly represent God. He did not hallow God before the people. He rebelled against the word of God, striking the rock, instead of speaking to it. He is forbidden the privilege of leading them into the promised land. He is to die there on mount Abarim.] so these are the waters of Meribah [Meribah is strife. Because the people were striving with Moses, over their lack of water.] in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin. Then Moses spoke to the Lord saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation (27:14-17),

Here God is called, Jehovah is called, "The God of the spirits of all flesh". Man basically is spirit. The body isn't the real you. The body is just a tent, in which you are living for awhile. The real you is spirit. The body is the gift of God, the instrument by which your spirit can express itself. But the real you is spirit. I come to know you through the medium of the body. We begin to think of each other in terms of body. But in

reality, the real me is spirit, the real you is spirit. Our bodies are necessary that we might communicate to each other. The bodies are not a permanent part of us. The spirit is permanent. Spirit returns to God who gives it, the body goes into the ground. The spirit returns to God who gave it. He is the God of the spirits of all men, all flesh.

Set a man out over the congregation, Who may go out before them, and go in before them, who may lead them out, and bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep that have no shepherd (27:16-17).

Moses realized the importance of a leader, a godly leader for the people. Otherwise, they'll be like sheep without a shepherd. Sheep without a shepherd are soon scattered. God rebuked the shepherds of Israel, at the time of the Babylonian captivity, and he said the reason why God's flock was scattered, was because the shepherds did not really care for the flock of God. They weren't fulfilling their obligation to God as true shepherds. And as the result of that, God said, "My flock has been scattered". The dispersion of the Jews, and the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities, because of the shepherds failing in really caring for the sheep. They cared for themselves, they fed for themselves, but did not care for the sheep. Thus the sheep were scattered.

The prophecy concerning Jesus in Zechariah, "Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered". Moses could see that without a strong leader and a godly leader, the children of Israel would soon be scattered. They need someone. They need someone to represent God before them, to go in before God, and then to come back out and represent God to them. And to lead them in and out. So Moses is besieging God for a replacement. "If I have to go, if I'm gonna die, then put a leader over them. A shepherd".

And the Lord said to Moses, Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him; [So Joshua was to be ordained by Moses, he's actually ordained by God, but his hand, Moses' hands were to be laid upon him.] Set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and inaugurate him in their sight (27:18-19).

In other words, pass on the mantle of leadership to Joshua, in the sight of all the people, so there'll be no dispute, really, concerning leadership. There'll be no power struggle, once Moses died.

And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all of the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgement of the Urim: at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, and all the congregation. [So Moses did as the Lord commanded. He took Joshua, set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation,] laid his hands on him, inaugurated him, just as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses (27:20-23).

So we see the new generation taking over. Aaron has died, his son Eleazar is in the position of the high priest. Moses is about to die. The power and authority is passed on to Joshua. Joshua and Eleazar are now to work together, even as Moses and Aaron worked together. Eleazar, being the high priest, wearing the Urim and the Thummin.

These are called light, or in Hebrew, lights and perfections. By some way, and we don't know how, they used the Urim and the Thummin to inquire at the will of God. And God directed them through this Urim and the Thummin. But again, just how it worked, we do not know. We do know that they did seek to the priest to get an answer from God, who would inquire of the Lord with the Urim and the Thummin. Now it has been suggested, that it was a little pouch, carried by the priest, in which there was a white stone and a black stone. And when they would pray and ask God a yes or no question, the priest would reach in the pouch and pull out a stone. If it was the white stone, the answer was yes, if it was the black stone, the answer was no. Possibly, we don't know. It was the way though, by which they sought, and did ascertain the will of God. "Shall we move?" They would inquire of the Lord, they'd have a yes or no answer. And so "Shall we stop?", and it was the way by which they inquired. Somehow through this, God communicated to them His purpose, and His will.

Chapter 28

Now in chapter twenty eight, we find the offerings that they were to offer to the Lord. And every

day of the year, without fail. Every day of the year, they were to offer to the Lord...

Two male lambs of the first year without blemish, every day, as a regular burnt offering. One of the lambs would be offered in the morning, and the other lamb at evening (28:3-4);

This was every single day of the year. Two lambs of the first year, one to be offered in the morning, one to be offered in the evening. They were to be offered with these little fine flour and grain offerings, mixed with some oil, so the little bread cakes; and, the regular burnt offering, that was ordained at mount Sinai, for the sweet aroma, in an offering made by fire to the Lord. Then there was to be the drink offering poured out unto the ground, for the Lord. Then on the Sabbath day, they were to offer two more lambs. So they were offered every day, these two lambs, they were always plus, whatever offerings.

The Sabbath day there would be two other lambs of the first year without blemish, and twice the number of cakes: This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the regular burnt offering, with the drink offering. Then at the beginning of every month [And of course they had the lunar months, so their months began with the moon, the lunar months. "And at the beginning of your months",] you shall present a burnt offering to the Lord; two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs; [First of the month.] And this also with one kid of the goats as a sin offering [Beside those two lambs that they offered every day.] Now on the fourteenth day [verse sixteen] of the first month the day of Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the month is the feast of unleavened bread: to be eaten for seven days. And on the first day you shall have an holy convocation: you're not to do any work: And you're to offer two bulls, one ram, seven lambs in their first year, and make sure they are without blemish (28:9-19):

Emphasized here, because this Passover lamb is a type of Jesus Christ. So Peter said, "We have been redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, from our empty lives, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was slain as a lamb, without spot or without blemish. The Passover lamb had to be without blemish. "Make sure it is without blemish!" Why? Because it is a type of Jesus Christ. Blemish is sin. He was without sin. "God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God, through Him". Then the grain offering...

They were also to offer one goat as a sin offering to make atonement (28:22).

These are beside the burnt offering of the morning and the evening, which were every day. And this was to be done for seven days. These offerings.

On the feast of weeks [Seven Sabbaths, or seven weeks after the Passover. Then the next day, the fiftieth day, was the feast of weeks.] A holy convocation: you're not to do any work. During this time you're to present two young bulls, one ram, seven lambs in their first year; [With the grain offering.] And a kid of the goats to make atonement. Make sure they are without blemish. Ye shall present them with the drink offerings, with your burnt offerings (28:25-31).

Chapter 29

Then in the seventh month, [Which would be equivalent to October in our calendar.] on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation; you're not to do any work: it's the day of the blowing of the trumpets (29:1).

Now on the first day of the month, then they would have all of these first day of the month offerings, that you have in verse eleven.

You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma unto the Lord; one young bull, one young ram, seven lambs that are without blemish, a kid of the goats: Beside the burnt offerings of the new moon (29:2-6).

So that would be another two bulls, one ram, and seven lambs, plus the two lambs that you have daily. So you see how, boy some of these days these boys were beginning to really add up. Because if you have a holiday come on a new moon day, plus a regular, it really begins to add up the number of offerings. The animals that were offered on those days.

On the tenth day of the seventh month the day of atonement; you shall present a burnt offering to the Lord as a sweet aroma; one young bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year; be sure they are without blemish. For the grain offerings, also one kid of the goats as a sin offering; and their regular burnt offering,

with the grain offerings. On the fifteenth day of the seventh month your feast of tabernacles; on your first day [of the fifteenth day, actually] of the [The feast of tabernacles began on the fifteenth day, it went for seven days. So on the first day of the,] feast, they were to offer fifteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year; they shall be without blemish (29:10-13):

So really thirteen bulls, two rams, fourteen rams. Pretty good number of offerings! Plus the kid of the goats, plus of course the two lambs that they offered daily.

On the second day twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs (29:17).

So they, it stayed the same day after day, except the bulls were reduced day by day until you get to the seventh day of the feast, you offered then the seven bulls, but then also the two rams, fourteen lambs, and the goat, plus the daily sacrifices.

On the eighth day you're to have a sacred assembly: you're not to do any work: Ye shall present the burnt offering, with one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish: the goat for the sin offering; But these are all [verse thirty nine] beside your vowed offerings, your free will offerings, as your burnt offerings, and your grain offerings, and as your drink offerings, and as your peace offerings (29:35-39).

We do have recorded in the scripture, some of these feast days, when as many as twenty five thousand animals were sacrificed to the Lord. So it was quite a thing, the number of sacrifices. Now this last feast of the tabernacles, on the eighth day, which was a special assembly, a holy convocation, it was on this holiday that we read in John seven, where Jesus, on the last day, the great day of the feast (the feast of the tabernacles) stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink". So that was in October, and it would've been, uh seven, fifteen plus eight, so you'd have October the twenty third that Jesus made that great invitation to the assembled multitudes there on the temple mount.

Now we deal with laws concerning vows.

Chapter 30

If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement: he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth (30:1-2).

Now a man would take an oath, he would take a vow, he would swear to do something. And often they would swear by different things. "I swear by the altar of God. I swear by the sacrifice on the altar of God. I swear by God. I swear by the bible, my mother's honor." You take a vow before the Lord.

Now always, it seems to me that a person would take a vow, in order to induce God to do something for them. "Lord if you do this for me, this is what I'm gonna do for you". And you take the vow that "Lord, you come through on this area, and this is what I will do". So often the vows were inducements to God, to work on your behalf. Now God said, "If you make a vow, if you take this vow, then keep it".

Now Jesus, on the Sermon on the Mount said, "Don't swear at all. Don't swear by heaven, it's God's throne. Don't swear by the earth, it's God's footstool." You don't have to take a vow, you don't have to take an oath. "Let your yes be a yes, and your no be a no". On all that is high and holy, I will do it!" "Nah", Jesus said, "It's not necessary. Just say, I'll do it".

Now, they really, in the new testament, by the time Jesus came along, had really messed up these things on the vows. Through the Talmud and the Mishna, they had so interpreted these things, that they really made them rather meaningless. In the Talmud, they had interpreted, in the Mishna, they had interpreted that if you swore by the altar, it's not binding, you don't have to keep it. But if you swear by the sacrifice that is on the altar, you've had it man. You have to keep it. That's a binding oath.

So Jesus said, "What is really greater, the gift on the altar, or the altar that sanctifies the gift?" And He was showing them how that Mishna was not a true interpretation of God's law. In fact Jesus had rebuked the Pharisees, because they had replaced the law of God with their traditions. And He said, "You've made the law of God of no effect, by your traditions.", and He said also, "That you're now teaching for doctrines, the traditions of man."

Now this is true of the church, when they begin to put their dogmas or their traditions ahead of scripture. They are making the scripture of no effect. Because their traditions begin to supercede the

scripture, and it is taught for church dogma. This is the traditions of the church. It becomes church dogma, and in many places, it's contrary to the scriptures. But they make the scriptures of no effect and they teach for doctrine, the traditions of man. Same thing. It happened in the days of Jesus, concerning the Jewish religion, has happened today in Christianity.

There are a lot of things that go on within the church that have no scriptural basis at all. They are things that are taught for doctrine, but they are nothing more than church dogma, which is really nothing more than the perpetuation of the traditions of man, and that's how church dogma is formed. If a thing becomes traditional. If it is practiced as a tradition, then it is ultimately incorporated into doctrine.

Thus we have the tradition of the immaculate conception of Mary. Not the immaculate conception of Jesus, through Mary, but the immaculate conception of Mary. Tradition of the church that has become dogma. Then they elevated her once more, and that is the ascension of Mary. She was not buried, she ascended directly into heaven, was church tradition. It has now become church dogma. The intercession of Mary, traditions, it has become church dogma. There is a move on within the Catholic church, now, to establish, there has been a tradition established in the church of Mary, in Rome, which is down by the railroad depot. The church of Mary in Rome, has established the tradition of the co-redemptive work of Mary. That in spirit, she hung on the cross with Jesus, and it is by her hanging on the cross that we are saved. The co-redemptress, the co-redemptive work of Mary, and the church is getting ready to present this. It has been a tradition, and they're getting ready to present this to the Vatican council, to make it church dogma. If you go by the church of Mary, near the railroad depot, in Rome, outside the church, you will see the cross, Jesus hanging on one side, Mary hanging on the other side. And the co-redemptive work of Mary is the next dogma that they're hoping to put within the church, to make it then the doctrine within the church. That Mary also died for our sins. That she was a co-redemptress, with Jesus.

So the taking of vows, they really messed this thing up by the time that Jesus came around. And He sought to correct it. The bible tells us that it's really better not to take a vow, than to vow and not break it. Really, vows are totally unnecessary. I do not really believe that a person should go around taking vows to God. "Vow to do this, vow to do that", because you see the moment you vow that you're gonna do something for God, you're really sort of trusting in your flesh. You are usually trying to induce God to do something good for you.

But whatever God does for you He doesn't do on the basis of your good work. But what ever God gives to you comes to you on the basis of His grace, His love, His mercy, and His unmerited favor. I don't have to merit the blessings of God. In fact, I cannot merit the blessings of God. And if I vow to receive from God, then it is I'm seeking to get from God, on the basis of my works, or my righteousness, or my fulfillment of my vow. I'm looking at that as the basis of my receiving from God. Better that I come to God on the basis of His grace and love for me, rather than trying to come to God on the basis of my works that I hope to do, for Him.

Now if a woman vows a vow unto the Lord, and binds herself into some agreement, while she is living in her father's house (30:3);

That is, my daughter at home, if I heard her make some kind of a vow to the Lord. As her father, I could break that. I could say, "I disallow that vow", and she's not then to be held responsible. But, if I heard her make the vow and I didn't say anything, if I didn't break that vow, then she would be responsible to keep the vow. But the father could overrule his father's vow. Or if my wife would make a vow, then I also had the power to overrule the vow that my wife would make. However, if I heard her make the vow, and I did not overrule it, then it became binding and she had to keep it. So the father or the husband had the power to disannul the vows that were made, by the children, the young daughters, or by his wife. If you were a widow, or a divorcee, and you made a vow, then it becomes a binding vow. She will have to keep it. So verse thirteen...

Every vow, every binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void (30:13).

He has the power to disannul the vow that his wife might make.

Chapter 31

Now, in chapter thirty one...

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Take vengeance for the children of Israel on the Midianites: afterward you'll be gathered to your people (31:1).

Now, Balaam was from Midian. Balaam was called by Balak, the king of Moab to curse the people of God. We dealt with that last week. Now the time has come when God wants vengeance upon the Midianites for the evil that they brought against the children of God, for the work of Balaam. "And so Moses, this is your last task. You're to take vengeance for the children of Israel against the Midianites: and then you will be gathered to your people."

So Moses spoke to the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves for the war, go out against the Midianites to take the vengeance for the Lord on Midian. There is to be a thousand from each tribe, [So twelve thousand men are to be sent to war against the Midianites. So they recruited from the divisions of Israel. They took volunteers. A thousand from each tribe. Twelve thousand, armed for war.] then Moses sent them to the war, one thousand from each tribe, and he sent them to the war with Phinehas the son of Eleazar, [So Phinehas was the one, you remember who stopped the plague by taking the javelin and thrusting through the man with the Moabitish woman he had taken into his tent, and Phinehas is now put at the head of the army.] the priest with the holy articles, and the signal trumpets in his hand (31:2-6).

The holy articles was probably the Urim and the Thummin, by which they sought God how to progress in the battle, and the battle trumpets, and the blowing of the trumpets to call them in to battle, and to direct the battle.

So they warred against the Midianites, just as the Lord commanded Moses; and they killed all of the males. They killed the kings of Midian, the rest of those that were killed namely, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, [And also notice, verse eight,] Balaam the son of Beor, they also killed with the sword (31:8).

He had prayed, "Let me die the death of the righteous. Let my end be as Jacob's. But it was not to be. He died the death of the wicked, because of the wicked advice that he gave to the king of Moab. He was killed with the sword, with the judgement of God, against the Midianites.

And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captive,, and their little ones, and they took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. They also burned with fire, all of the cities wherein they dwelt, and all their forts. And they took all the spoil of all of the booty both of man and beast (31:9-11).

So it was really quite a tremendous slaughter. These twelve thousand went in and wiped out these Midianite cities.

And they brought the captives and the booty, and the spoil, to Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the children of Israel, to the camp in the plains of Moab, by Jordan across from Jericho. And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the congregation went to meet them outside the camp. But Moses was angry with the officers of the army, with the captains over the thousands, and the captains over the hundreds, who had come from battle. And he said, Have you kept all of the women alive (31:12-15)?

He was angry because they'd brought all these women back.

He said, Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, [Now here's where we, you know in the earlier part, we didn't see Balaam's implication and his advice to the king. But here, we're told Balaam's advice to the king. "These women, through the counsel of Balaam,] caused the children of Israel to trespass against the Lord, in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Now therefore kill every male among the babies, and kill every woman who has known man intimately (31:16-17).

So they continued slaughtering, killed all the little baby boys, and they killed all of the women who had ever had intimate relations with a man.

But [he said] keep alive for yourselves, all the young girls who have not known a man intimately. And as for you remain outside the camp for seven days: whoever has killed any person, and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves and your captives, and on the third day, and on the seventh day (31:18-

20).

Now, why did Moses order the baby boys to be killed? I don't know. To us it seems rather harsh, and rather cruel, rather severe. It's just something that is there, and I have no real explanation for it. There are a lot of things in the bible for which I have no real explanation. It's just there, I accept it, and I'm certain that there was a good reason for it, and I imagine that we'll find out some day. But, you can speculate, but that's all it is, is speculation.

So they were to purify. They had been, they had done all the slaughtering, they had killed all these people. So now they have to purify themselves, before they can come back into camp.

And every garment, everything that's made from leather, and woven from goat's hair, everything that is made of wood, you're to wash it. The gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead, are to be put in the fire, because they can endure the fire. They were to be cleansed by the fire, purified through the fire. And purified through the water of purification. But that which cannot endure the fire, just put it through the water of purification. Wash your clothes: and on the seventh day be clean, and afterward you can come back into the camp. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Count up the plunder that was taken, both of man and beast, you and Eleazar the priest, the chief fathers. They divide the plunder into two parts. Between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation (31:20-27):

So they took all of the plunder and divided it in half. The one half of the plunder went to the congregation of Israel, the other half went to these twelve thousand men. Now, obviously the twelve thousand fellows got a much larger personal share of the plunder. Because you remember there's over six hundred thousand adult males in Israel, and so only twelve thousand went to war. Thus the twelve thousand get one half of the plunder. And the other, rest of the congregation, gets the other half. But...

And then they were to levy a tax for the Lord on the men of war who went to battle: one for every five hundred persons, of cattle, donkeys, and sheep: Take it from their half, and give it to the priest, [So of the plunder, the half that the twelve thousand got, one out of every five hundred, went to the Lord. Of the donkeys, and of the sheep, of the cattle, and of the persons.] From the children of Israel's half [The other half of the plunder.] the tax was to be one in fifty, of the persons, the cattle, the sheep, and the livestock (31:28-30). Now here is the booty, six hundred and seventy five thousand sheep, [I mean this was no little battle. This was no little skirmish on the border. They brought back six hundred and seventy five thousand sheep.] seventy two thousand cattle, sixty one thousand donkeys, and thirty two thousand persons in all, of women who had not known a man intimately (31:28-35).

So, you begin now to figure what the total population was. If there were thirty two thousand women who were virgins, you can imagine what the total population of the Midianites must have been that were wiped out! And of course looking at the size of the livestock that was brought back. Six hundred and seventy five thousand sheep, seventy two thousand cattle, and sixty one thousand donkeys. That's quite a bit of booty!

And the half of the portion for those who had gone out to war, they received three hundred and thirty seven thousand, five hundred sheep: [So divide that by twelve, and you find out how many sheep each fellow got. Twelve thousand into that.] The Lord's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and seventy five. Of the cattle, the soldiers got thirty six thousand, the Lord's tribute was seventy two. There were thirty thousand five hundred donkeys: the Lord's tribute was sixty one. And the persons, there was sixteen thousand, into one half; of which the Lord's tribute was thirty two. [One in every five hundred.] So he gave that to Eleazar the priest, as the Lord commanded Moses. And then from the children of Israel; they made also the one in fifty drawn from man and beast and gave it to the Levites. Then [we read] the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the captains the thousands of the captains, of the hundreds, came near to Moses: And they said to Moses, Your servants have taken account of the men of war who are under our command, and not a man of us is missing (31:36-49).

What's new! Remember in the last skirmish in Lebanon, where the Israelis shot down eighty nine Syrian jets, and lost none. Here twelve thousand men went out to war, they numbered when the war was over, not one was missing. Not even a missing in action. Every single one of them came back! Now, these fellows recognize, and of course remember, this slaughter was tremendous if there are thirty two thousand

virgins that they brought back as captives. They killed, you know, how many men, is just a, is no doubt, thirty two thousand young men who had not yet, plus the older men and all that. Huge slaughter! Not losing one!

Therefore we have brought an offering [Recognizing that “God was with us. We had divine protection. That God delivered them into our hands. We have brought an offering”], for the Lord, what every man found of the ornaments of gold, and armlets, and bracelets and signet rings, and earrings, and the necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord. So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from them, all of the fashioned [jewelry] ornaments, and all of the gold of the offering that they offered to the Lord, from the captains of the thousands, and captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. [So, this shekel is a weight, and there were sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels.] The men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself. And Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the captains of thousands, and hundreds, brought it into the tabernacle of meeting, as a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord (31:50-54).

So God’s great victory over the Midianites and His preservation of His people.

Next week we finish the book of Numbers. So we’re moving right along, as soon as we finish Deuteronomy, we will have been through one seventh of the bible. Moving along.

May the Lord be with you, watch over and keep you, and just lavishly bless you. Continue to grow in your knowledge and understanding of Him. May the Spirit of God just move upon your heart and life this week, drawing you closer to the Lord, and a greater commitment unto Him. That you might experience the nearness and the fellowship of God, day by day. That you might have the wisdom of God imparted to you in your time of need. That you might have the power of God to stand against the temptations. That you might live this week, a life of victory, through Jesus Christ, more than conqueror through Him, who loves you and who will keep you by His grace. God be with you and God bless you. In Jesus’ name.