



KINGDOM PREPARATION

PART 2

Forty Daily Devotions
from Numbers 18-36
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

We will be reading from the last 19 chapters of Numbers over the next 40 days. As we draw closer to the end of this book, we will see Israel as they draw closer to finally entering the Promised Land. This second half of Numbers, like the first, contains some interesting stories of some very interesting people. Like the stories in the first half of this book, the stories related in the closing half are a mixture of victories and defeats. In the closing chapter of the book, we will bid a sad farewell to Moses and Aaron, and we will see Joshua and Eleazar introduced as the new spiritual leaders of God's people.

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Numbers 18:1-16	01/13/23
2	Numbers 18:17-32	01/14/23
3	Numbers 19:1-22	01/15/23
4	Numbers 20:1-13	01/16/23
5	Numbers 20:14-29	01/17/23
6	Numbers 21:1-16	01/18/23
7	Numbers 21:17-35	01/19/23
8	Numbers 22:1-20	01/20/23
9	Numbers 22:21-41	01/21/23
10	Numbers 23:1-15	01/22/23
11	Numbers 23:16-30	01/23/23
12	Numbers 24:1-25	01/24/23
13	Numbers 25:1-18	01/25/23
14	Numbers 26:1-18	01/26/23
15	Numbers 26:19-32	01/27/23
16	Numbers 26:33-47	01/28/23
17	Numbers 26:48-65	01/29/23
18	Numbers 27:1-23	01/30/23
19	Numbers 28:1-15	01/31/23
20	Numbers 28:16-31	02/01/23

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Numbers 29:1-11	02/02/23
22	Numbers 29:12-25	02/03/23
23	Numbers 29:26-40	02/04/23
24	Numbers 30:1-16	02/05/23
25	Numbers 31:1-11	02/06/23
26	Numbers 31:12-24	02/07/23
27	Numbers 31:25-40	02/08/23
28	Numbers 31:41-54	02/09/23
29	Numbers 32:1-15	02/10/23
30	Numbers 32:16-27	02/11/23
31	Numbers 32:28-42	02/12/23
32	Numbers 33:1-14	02/13/23
33	Numbers 33:15-39	02/14/23
34	Numbers 33:40-56	02/15/23
35	Numbers 34:1-15	02/16/23
36	Numbers 34:16-29	02/17/23
37	Numbers 35:1-8	02/18/23
38	Numbers 35:9-21	02/19/23
39	Numbers 35:22-34	02/20/23
40	Numbers 36:1-13	02/21/23

Day 1: Numbers 18:1-16

“Then the LORD said to Aaron: ‘You and your sons and your father’s house with you shall bear the iniquity related to the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity associated with your priesthood.’” (Numbers 18:1)

An Awesome Responsibility

The information contained in today’s Scripture reading follows the dreadful rebellion recorded earlier in chapters 16 & 17 and instructs the priests on how to avoid similar tragedies in the future. God reviewed with Aaron the awesome responsibility that came with being a spiritual leader among His people by reminding him that he, and the priests, would be accountable for any “iniquity” (inappropriate actions by unauthorized individuals) against the sanctuary (the offering areas and the inner buildings of the tabernacle). Even the Levites were limited in their access to certain areas of the tabernacle. Not all the Levites were priests, but those who were not, all served as assistants to the priests. The Levites’ responsibilities mirrored those of the priests but did not include the handling of the tabernacle furnishings and their utensils or the offering of the sacrifices at the altar. Verse 5 of today’s reading clearly states that God intended that only Aaron and his sons would “attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar” and then explains why these restrictions should be honored by adding, “that there be no more wrath on the children of Israel.”

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation includes many lessons about prevention. **Pray** that we would be content with the role that God has designed for us in His church. **Avoid** being envious of the calling of others by being involved in the calling that God has placed on your own life.

Day 2: Numbers 18:17-32

“For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, ‘Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.’” (Numbers 18:24)

Some Awesome Rewards

Today’s Scriptures indicate that God was quick to remind Aaron and the priests that those who accepted awesome responsibilities *for* God could expect awesome rewards *from* God! Though the tribe of Levi was to receive no physical inheritance of land, their material needs would be met through the tithes and offerings of the people. In return for their dedicated service, the priests and the Levites would receive, from Him, a portion of the offerings that were presented in the worship services. I emphasize “from Him” because yesterday we read where God told Aaron that “I have given them as a portion to you and your sons,” (v. 8) and then repeated the same to him again in verse 11 but adds the word “daughters” the second time. Today we read where God reminded him of that fact again in verses 19, 21, and 24. After saying all of this to Aaron (v. 1) God spoke to Moses (v. 25) and told him to remind the priests and Levites that they were to tithe on that which they received from the tithes of the people. The words of verse 30 reminded those anointed and appointed men that they were to give “the best of it” to the Lord. The final verses of this chapter state that, after honoring God with the *best* of it, the priests and Levites were free to live on the *rest* of it!

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation includes many lessons about provision. **Notice** that God did not limit His words to Moses and Aaron to just the spiritual responsibilities of the priests but included specific instructions as to the material rewards that were to come to them because of their sacrifice and services.

Day 3: Numbers 19:1-22

“But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD...” (Numbers 19:20)

The Laws of Purification

Because of the importance that the teachings found in Numbers 19 play in our **Kingdom Preparation**, in a past devotional I suggested that “all of them” be considered as the focus verses for that day! Contact with the dead was considered a contaminating experience because of physical death’s association with spiritual death (Genesis 2:17 and Romans 6:23). Therefore, God gave some careful instructions for the spiritual purification of those who encountered dead bodies. Although the cleansing efforts described here were to become a ceremonial necessity, they were prescribed to remind us of our continual need to be cleansed from sin. As such, the offerings discussed here are not presented as a remedy for sin but a reminder that sin can continue to bring contamination to God’s people. Notice that these offerings are to be made “outside the camp” (v. 3). Through this, God is reminding us that there is no place “within the camp” for the devastation that sin can bring to His people. These offerings were made to the Lord and for the people. Verse 9 mentions “the water of purification.” Since water is so closely associated with God’s Word, we understand that we must be constantly in the Word if we are to be the kind of servants God desires us to be. The blood is a reminder that our deliverance (salvation) is found only in the Sacrifice of His Son, and the water is a reminder of our daily cleansing (for service) that can only be found in God’s Word.

Prayer Emphasis: Read Hebrews 10:4 and be reminded that it was impossible for the offering of animal sacrifices to take away our sins. Then **read** Ephesians 5:26 to see our need for daily washing in the Word! **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that we need to be constantly cleansed by spending time in daily Bible reading.

Day 4: Numbers 20:1-13

“Now there was no water for the congregation...” (Numbers 20:2)

“No Water!”

Today’s verses remind us again of how important the “water” (The Word) is to God’s people. The response of the people to the lack of water is a strong indication of how important God’s Word is to the very existence of His people. When “there was no water for the congregation,” the people feared for their very lives. When there was no adequate supply of water, the people became fearful and began to question their ability to survive in the wilderness. God gave Moses some specific instructions on how He planned to supply this much-needed water (v. 8), but later, in verse 10, we see Moses and Aaron making a very presumptuous statement when they asked, “Must *we* bring water for you out of this rock?” God’s command to Moses and Aaron was that they were to “speak” to the rock that had been previously smitten so that He might “bring water” forth for the people. However well-intentioned God’s servants might have been, they were acting well beyond their personal authority when they assumed that they could make a provision that could only be found in Christ, the “Smitten Rock,” Who alone has the power to provide the spiritual needs of God’s people.

Prayer Emphasis: **Recognize** your personal responsibility to find spiritual refreshment by “speaking” with the Lord in the ways that He has commanded us. **Commit** time to daily prayer and Bible reading, and you will find all you need to continue in your journey toward God’s perfect will for your life.

Day 5: Numbers 20:14-29

“Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells...” (Numbers 20:17)

A Change of Course

Moses desired to take the people on a straight course to the Promised Land by going through the land of Edom. He appealed to Edom as a “brother” (v. 14) because the Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob’s own brother (Genesis 36:6-8). It is obvious that Edom was aware of the people of Israel and the place from which they had come because Moses told him, “You know all the hardship that has befallen us” (v. 14). However, the descendants of Esau still carried the grudge that Esau once held against Jacob long after Esau had reconciled to his brother. As a result, they refused to allow Israel to pass through their land even after Moses promised to compensate them for any water the people drank or used for the watering of their flocks. Verse 20 tells a very sad story when it reminds us that Edom not only said, “You shall not pass through” but also “came out against them (Israel) with many men and with a strong hand.” Because of a long-standing and already forgiven grudge, God’s people were “turned away” (v. 21) from a shorter and safer route and had to take another course toward the Promised Land. One of the most valuable lessons contained in our own **Kingdom Preparation** is found in our learning to forgive and forget the problems of the past.

Prayer Emphasis: Practice forgiveness. **Refuse** to hold grudges and deny anyone the kind of Christian fellowship that is necessary for their spiritual walk. **Learn** that **Kingdom Preparation** can either be helped or hindered by our willingness or unwillingness to forgive and forget!

Day 6: Numbers 21:1-16

“Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.” (Numbers 21:4)

Dealing with Discouragement

Today’s focus verse reminds us that the path to **Kingdom Preparation** is not without problems. After “the king of Arad...heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim...he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners” (v. 1). This was an action that this king and his people would regret. It resulted in God delivering these people into the hands of Israel and allowing their cities to be “utterly destroyed” to the point that “the name of that place was called Hormah” (v.3). “Hormah” literally means “utter destruction.” It is important to note that, even in victory, spiritual warfare can bring *discouragement* (v. 4) to God’s people and that discouragement can lead to *division* (v. 5). This division led to *discussions* that were less than admirable (v. 5) and *devastation* from the Lord in the form of fiery serpents (v. 6). **Kingdom Preparation** causes us to see that discouragement can lead to our personal walk being hindered. Immediately after God’s people confessed their error by stating “we have sinned” (v. 7) God sent *deliverance* to His people by commanding Moses to, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole” and by healing all that had been bitten by the serpent of discouragement as they looked to God for relief (vs. 8-9).

Prayer Emphasis: Remember it was the willingness to look in faith upon the serpent on the pole that delivered the people and not the actual serpent itself. **Kingdom Preparation** provides for deliverance from all distractions and discouragement through obedience to God’s commands.

Day 7: Numbers 21:17-35

“So Israel took all these cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its villages.” (Numbers 21:25)

The Defeat of Sihon and Og

Yesterday’s Scripture included a reference to the “Book of the Wars of the LORD” (v. 14). This is the only reference to this book in the Bible, but it demands at least some mention and explanation. Most scholars believe this book was a historical record of Israel’s various wars and victories over their enemies. All that is left for us of this book are the brief words recorded for us here in Numbers. As was the case with the Edomites, Moses sought permission to pass through the land of the Amorites (vs. 22-22) only to have his diplomatic actions once again rejected (v. 23). When “Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory...and gathered all his people together and went out against Israel” (v. 23) he met with the same kind of defeat that Edom met when they attempted to wage war against God’s armies. Such was also the case with “Og” who was the “king of Bashan” (v. 33). **Kingdom Preparation** reveals that the path that God leads His people to follow may not always be the path of least resistance. However, when we faithfully follow His leadership, He sees to it that no one can stand before us or stop us from accomplishing His will.

Prayer Emphasis: Seek to **avoid** unnecessary battles but be willing to fight when others demand that you be obedient to them rather than to God. **Refuse** to allow opposition to keep you from accomplishing God’s perfect plan for your life. **Give** all the credit for every spiritual victory to God!

Day 8: Numbers 22:1-20

“Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: ‘Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me!’” (Numbers 22:5)

Meet Balaam

After this first mention of Balaam, He will be mentioned an additional 51 times in Numbers and another 10 times throughout the remainder of the Bible, including three mentions in the New Testament. When Balak of Moab saw what the armies of Israel had done to the Amorites, he and his people became “sick with dread because of the children of Israel” (v. 3). Balak “sent messengers to Balaam” (v. 5) asking him to “please come at once” and to “curse” the people of Israel for him (v. 6). Balaam was from Pethor where there was a group of seers and prophets whom people believed had the ability to pronounce blessings or curses upon people (v. 6). Balaam was what was referred to as “a prophet for hire” in those days, and verse seven mentions “the diviner’s fee” that they took when they went to meet with him. When we read verse eight, we can see that Balaam certainly knew how to sound religious when he advised his clients to, “Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me.” Prophets such as Balaam had a very universal approach to religious things and kept themselves aware of all religions and their “gods.” However, he was about to meet with *The* God and not just *a* god, so things were going to prove to be different than he anticipated in that he was only going to be allowed to do exactly what God told him to do (v. 20)!

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation includes lessons on how to determine whether a person is considered a true or false prophet. **Be prepared** to meet people who speak about God without fully adhering to His Word. **Learn** to distinguish between God’s commands and the advice of men.

Day 9: Numbers 22:21-41

“Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.” (Numbers 22:31)

A Donkey and an Angel

Today’s verses include one of the most interesting and discussed stories in the Bible. Even non-Christians and non-churched people are familiar with the story of Balaam and his talking donkey. In yesterday’s verses, we saw that after first commanding Balaam not to work for Balak, the Lord then offered to put Balaam to work for Him. Eventually, Balaam, who told Balak there was not enough money in the world to get him to work against God was soon representing God before the Moabites! God must have known about the duplicity of Balaam’s heart, because even after refusing to go with the men to Balak, the Bible states that “he went, and the Angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him” (v. 22). It is obvious that the donkey could see this Angel even if Balaam could not! Balaam tried to get the donkey to move forward three times, and even though Balaam became physically abusive, the donkey refused to move forward against the Angel of the LORD. After the third time Balaam struck the poor beast, the LORD allowed the donkey to speak and ask Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” (v. 28). I am not sure what is more impressive, the fact that the donkey could *speak* or the fact that the donkey could *count*! Balaam entered into a conversation with the donkey and soon found that beast making a donkey out of him! Eventually the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes and allowed him to see what had been so obvious to the donkey and to see that the actions of his disobedient donkey spared his life!

Prayer Emphasis: Allow circumstances to cause you to reconsider a plan that has gone awry. When God’s blessings are not evident, it may mean that we are not making His plan imminent! **Be willing** to reconsider any plan of your own making and always allow God to have complete “veto power” in your life.

Day 10: Numbers 23:1-15

“Then the LORD put a word in Balaam’s mouth, and said, ‘Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak.’” (Numbers 23:5)

Balaam’s First Prophecy

We know the words that Balaam returned to speak to king Balak were probably not the first prophecy he ever uttered, but we can probably assume that it was the first *real* prophecy he had ever spoken! After putting Balak and his people through a lot of religious hoops (the building of seven altars and the offering of seven bulls and seven rams upon them) Balaam directed his clients to remain there at the altars while he went forward to see if God would meet with him and speak to him. God did speak to Balaam and sent him back to Balak with a Word from Heaven. However, Balaam’s prophecy spoke nothing of cursing God’s people but only pronounced “bountiful” blessings upon them. Balak could hardly believe his ears! His prophet for hire brought him to “the high places of Baal” (22:41) and put him through a lot of expense in building altars and providing sacrifices only to then turn and take God’s side against him! It was obvious that Balaam was caught in the middle, but he could only speak what God told him to say.

Prayer Emphasis: Never expect the unsaved to receive God’s commands without question. **Kingdom Preparation** enables us to give a reason for what we believe and to deliver the message that God desires to send to the unbelieving world through us.

Day 11: Numbers 23:16-30

“Then the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, ‘Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak.’” (Numbers 23:16)

Balaam’s Second Prophecy

The closing verses of yesterday’s reading saw Balak requesting Balaam to relocate their altars to the top of Pisgah (vs. 13-14). From there, Balaam would be able to see the outer part of the camp of Israel while Balak repeated the same offerings he offered at the last location. Once again, Balaam went to a solitary place to speak with the LORD (v. 15). Once Balaam separated himself from Balak and his altars, “then the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth” and directed him to return and “Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak” (v. 16). The words of this second prophecy are found in verses 18-24. The message that God sent to Balak at that time still serves as a strong reminder to us today. Balak was to understand that God had promised to bless Israel, and He had no intention of reversing that promise (vs. 18-20). God also had Balaam remind Balak that God brought Israel out of Egypt and that He was with them and strengthening them (vs. 21-22). The words God gave to Balaam closed with a somber warning that there was no power that could stand against Israel. However, Balak refused to relent in his efforts to see Israel fail. After hearing Balaam’s prophecy, Balak sought a compromise by asking that Balaam take a neutral position on Israel and “neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all” (v. 25).

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to honor Balak’s strategy by taking a neutral position when it comes to God’s Word or people. Adopt the attitude of Balaam that says, “All that the LORD speaks, that I must do!” (v. 26).

Day 12: Numbers 24:1-25

“And Balaam raised his eyes, and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.” (Numbers 24:2)

Balaam’s Third and Fourth Prophecies

The closing verses of yesterday’s reading finds Balak suggesting to Balaam that they needed to again “change churches”! After moving from the “high places of Baal” (22:41) to the “top of Pisgah” (23:14), the king now suggested they move to yet “another place...the top of Peor” (vs. 27-28). Once again, seven altars were built and, as before, seven bulls and seven rams were sacrificed (v. 29). Balak, like so many people today, simply could not learn that a relationship with God cannot be built upon religious effort alone. By this time, Balaam had become completely convinced that God had no intention of doing anything but blessing Israel. From this new location, he could again observe the camp of Israel. While he watched them below, “the Spirit of God came upon him” (v. 2) and he uttered his third and fourth prophecies. A review of these two prophecies (vs. 3-9 & 15-24) clearly shows that Balaam’s eyes were being opened to all the facets of God’s wonderful relationship with Israel. The first prophecy concluded with a repeating of God’s promise of blessing and cursing that was first given to Abram back in Genesis 12:3, while the fourth prophecy includes mention of the coming of God’s Son as the ultimate ruler of all mankind (v. 19). After these final two prophecies, Balaam and Balak parted ways, and Balak is not mentioned again in the book of Numbers.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that we are no nearer to God when on the highest mountain than we are when we are in the lowest valley. **Abandon** the idea that God can be approached through religious effort and **seek** to have the kind of personal relationship that He desires to have with you.

Day 13: Numbers 25:1-18

“And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.” (Numbers 25:9)

A Supposed “Contradiction” Explained

Today’s chapter includes the story of a very dark time in Israel’s history where Israel became involved in physical and spiritual sin through harlotry and idolatry. We are told that God’s wrath against these evil actions was displayed in several ways, including a plague that killed 24,000 people. The fact that this incident is important for our learning is indicated by its further mention in Deuteronomy 4:3-4; Hosea 9:10; and Psalm 106:26-29. This plague was mentioned once more in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 10:8. In comparing the record of 1 Corinthians 10:8 against the record of Numbers 25:9, opponents of God’s Word have argued that the Bible contradicts itself because the story in Numbers records the fact that 24,000 people died while the New Testament record states that only 23,000 died. However, a close comparison of the two accounts provides a very simple explanation. While Numbers states that 24,000 people died as a result of the plague, 1 Corinthians states that 23,000 of the people died in just “one day.” On another note, Phinehas, who was first mentioned in Exodus 6:25, is next mentioned in this story, and he becomes a very prominent priest in the history of Israel from this point forward.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that only the Bible can explain the Bible! **Refuse** to accept the idea that our Bible is inconsistent and that it is, as some argue, “full of contradictions.” **Kingdom Preparation** demands that we **accept** God’s Word as infallible and worthy of being the ultimate spiritual authority in our lives.

Day 14: Numbers 26:1-18

“And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: ‘Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers’ houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel.’” (Numbers 26:1-2)

A Second Census

In our focus verses, we see God commanding that a second census be taken. This census was to follow the same guidelines as the one taken earlier. However, an important fact is to be noted about this second census, and the remaining chapters that we will read as we complete the book of Numbers. This census will now be of the “second generation” in preparation for their ultimate conquest of the nations of Canaan. Each tribe now consisted of several “families,” and each was counted to provide a new total for that tribe. Today’s verses record the “families” that sprung from Reuben, Simeon, and Gad (vs. 5-18). It is interesting to note that special mention is given to the family of Pallu (vs. 8-11). The record indicates that Eliab was the son of Pallu and Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram were the sons of Eliab. God specifically states that Dathan and Abiram who are mentioned here were “representatives of the congregation who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD” (v. 9). Their mention is a beautiful picture of God’s divine grace. Even though God opened the earth and swallowed their ancestors because of their rebellion, their “children” or lineage “did not die” with them (v. 11).

Prayer Emphasis: Always **look** for God’s grace in every story in the Bible. **Seek** God’s grace and favor in your every endeavor for Him. **Believe** that it is still God’s desire to deal with His people based on grace. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that without God’s grace, no one will successfully find God’s perfect plan for their life.

Day 15: Numbers 26:19-32

“The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.” (Numbers 26:19)

The Second Census Continues

Today’s Scripture reading reveals the details of the second census results for the tribes of Judah (vs. 19-22), Issachar (vs. 23-25), and Zebulun (vs. 26-27), and introduces the families that grew from Joseph through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh (vs. 28-32). The families of Judah listed in the census were all from his one surviving son, Shelah, and his two illegitimate sons Perez and Zerah. We are told that his two sons “Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan” (v. 19). (We read their story back in Genesis 38:6-10.) Both young men died because of their disobedience to the LORD. The Genesis account tells us that “Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.” After Er’s death, Judah commanded Onan to honor the custom of taking a dead brother’s wife in marriage and creating heirs to the deceased sibling. Onan was deceitful in his obligation to generate heirs to his brother and, as a result of his own disobedience, he “displeased the Lord; therefore He killed him also.” God, no doubt, wanted these men, and the lessons that their lives represented, to be remembered in the historical records of His people.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation includes many lessons that are learned from the successes and failures of others. **Seek** to be an example of obedience to those who will follow you. **Pray** daily for the faith and wisdom to be a fully obedient follower of Christ.

Day 16: Numbers 26:33-47

“Now Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.” (Numbers 26:33)

An Unusual Situation

Today’s Scripture reading begins with the introduction of an unusual situation. At the beginning of the census results for Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, and Asher, we find the story of “Zelophehad the son of Hopher” who “had no sons” but only daughters (v. 33). In chapter 27, we will see that this situation resulted in God speaking to Moses to establish a law that would allow for a man’s inheritance to pass to his daughters if he had no son. Zelophehad and his father, Hopher, were among those who first came out from Egypt, and consequently each of them had his part in the land. The names of this man’s daughters are listed as Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Since one of his daughter’s was named “Noah,” we get a pretty good idea that this man greatly desired to have a son! It is remarkable to think that, of all the families that came out of Egypt and travelled through the wilderness, only one would have only daughters born to them. Many scholars have suggested that this prolific birth of boys was due to supernatural providence and the need for men to fill out the armies of Israel, to strengthen and increase their number, and to replace the men who were going to die before the inheritance of Canaan. In any case, the situation mentioned here confirms that God is aware of all His children and is interested in their personal well-being. Whatever the case, as we will see when we discuss the events of chapter 27, God was not without a plan for these orphaned daughters. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that life’s situations never catch God by surprise!

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that God has a plan for your life and that He is always acting in your best interest. **Expect** God to bring good out of every situation and **look** for His hand in every circumstance. **Encourage** someone who may be experiencing difficult times right now.

Day 17: Numbers 26:48-65

“These are those who were numbered of the children of Israel: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.” (Numbers 26:51)

The Final Census Data

After the listing of the families that descended from Naphtali, the census data revealed that, excluding the families who descended from Levi, those men who were over the age of 20 and able to go to war numbered 601,730. This number compared very closely with the result from the first census. Even though the generation before this one was to die in the wilderness, God made the younger generation prosperous and fruitful so that they could march in full strength across the Jordan River and into Canaan. Verses 52-56 contain some information relating to the way that the land was to be allotted to the different tribes, with the larger tribes receiving the larger parcels of land. From what we read in verses 57-63, a second census was also taken of the families that descended from Levi. We are reminded that this tribe was not included in the national census because this family was not to receive an inheritance of land. Verses 64-65 close out the chapter with a reminder that, except for Joshua and Caleb, “not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai” was included in this new census.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation teaches us that God is interested in the perpetuity of His people. **Thank** God for His faithfulness today and **speak** of it to someone at your next opportunity.

Day 18: Numbers 27:1-23

“The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father’s brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them.” (Numbers 27:7)

A New Law is Established

As the time to allocate the land to the different families drew near, the daughters of Zelophehad approached Moses and the other leaders of the congregation explaining that their “father died in the wilderness, but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the LORD, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons” (v. 3). Some of what they said about their father is very clear and easily understood. It is clear that this man had not joined in the rebellion of Korah and died along with the others who did so. It is not clear, though, what the phrase, “but he died in his own sin” means. Some have tried to speculate on this and have even suggested that Zelophehad might have died because of a situation like that of the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath Day (15:32-36). Whatever the case might have been, the LORD ruled on their behalf and instructed Moses to allow their father’s inheritance to pass on to them (v. 7). If a man had no children, then his inheritance was to pass to his brothers (v. 9). If a man had no brothers, then his inheritance was to be equally divided among his uncles (v. 10). If the man had no uncles, then his inheritance was to be passed to his closest relative. This was to become “a statute of judgment” to the children of Israel “just as the LORD commanded Moses” (v. 11). God then allowed Moses to “see the land” from Mount Abarim prior to his death (vs. 12-13).

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation teaches us that God is never without a plan and that He is always considerate of the needs of His people. **Thank** God for some provision He has made for you and your family. **Remind** others of the faithfulness of God and **encourage** them to always trust Him.

Day 19: Numbers 28:1-15

“*Command the children of Israel, and say to them, “My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.”*” (Numbers 28:2)

“Appointed Time”

As the time to cross the Jordan River into Canaan drew near, it was necessary for Moses to review the instructions concerning the various offerings with the surviving generation of Israelites. Instructions for the daily burnt offerings, Sabbath Day offerings, and the special offerings that were to be offered on the first day of the month are found in today’s verses. These instructions reveal the importance of *propriety* in worship while our focus verse reveals something about the importance of *promptness* in worship. The word that is translated “appointed time” in the NKJV is translated “due season,” “set times,” “proper time,” and even “right times” in other translations. In the beginning, God gave us what we needed to obey His command concerning timeliness! The first time this word is found in the Bible is in Genesis 1:14 where “God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.’” So, before God created man, He was careful to provide what man would need to be obedient to Him in the matter of “appointed” times! In Genesis, we also find that God told Abram that Sarah would bear a child at a “set time” and at His “appointed time” (Genesis 17:21 & 18:14). This word that demanded timeliness in our offerings to God is found more often in Numbers than any other book in the Bible. Excluding Exodus and Leviticus, this word is found more often in Numbers than all the other books of the Old Testament combined!

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation teaches us to do the right things at the right time! **Allow** God’s schedule to be a priority in your life. **Obey** Christ’s command to “Seek first the Kingdom of God!”

Day 20: Numbers 28:16-31

“*“On the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the LORD.”*” (Numbers 28:16)

The Passover and the Feast of Weeks

In today’s verses we see the new generation of Israelites learning that **Kingdom Preparation** includes maintaining certain traditions regarding the memorial Holy Days. The people were given specific instructions regarding the proper preparation for the Passover and the Feast of Weeks. The first day of Passover week was a Sabbath, so the instructions regarding the celebration of Passover include some review of the laws regarding that special day of the week. The people were reminded that the Sabbath was a day in which they were to cease from their work and to assemble themselves together as a congregation. As you read about these two Holy Days, pay attention to the detailed instructions regarding the different offerings that were to be brought to God. Some of the offerings were the “regular” offerings (v. 24) and some offerings were made above, or “besides” those regular offerings (vs. 23-24). Today’s Scripture indicates that there were regular daily and weekly offerings that were presented to God along with certain special emphasis offerings that were made at regular times throughout the year.

Prayer Emphasis: Participate in special emphasis offerings whenever possible. **Pray** about the special mission offerings that we collect over the year and **ask** God what He would have you to give to help meet those needs. **Praise** God for the opportunity to give over and above the required tithe. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that we have not really “given” a gift until we have first paid our regular tithes.

Day 21: Numbers 29:1-11

““And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets.”” (Numbers 29:1)

The Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement

If you recall, we first read about the blowing of trumpets back in Numbers 10. On that day, we learned that the trumpets were blown to let people know when it was time to assemble and when it was time to march. In either case, the sound of the trumpet was something to which they were to respond. The “trumpets” that we read about today were somewhat different from the trumpets mentioned in Numbers 10. These “trumpets” were probably made from a ram’s horn and were used in celebrations as well as in warfare. The Feast of Trumpets fell on the first day of the seventh month, a month which stood out in the religious year as the Sabbatical month and ushered in the last three annual feasts, namely, Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles. These feasts, which became known as “The High Holy Days,” marked the conclusion of the religious year and typified the consummation of the plan of redemption. The Day of Atonement was the tenth day of the seventh month. This was a day set aside for national confession of sins as well as a time of celebration for God’s promise of forgiveness and restoration.

Prayer Emphasis: **Enjoy** your salvation daily. **Allow** the traditional Christian “Holidays” (Holy Days) to remind you to **celebrate** all that God has done and is doing in your life. **Share** a testimony of God’s goodness with someone that you see today.

Day 22: Numbers 29:12-25

““On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days.”” (Numbers 29:12)

The Feast of Tabernacles (Part One)

The Feast of Tabernacles was the third of the three great annual feasts (the other two were Passover and Pentecost). It began on a Sabbath and lasted for eight days (the 15th-17th days of the seventh month). Since it was held at the end of the yearly harvests, it was closely associated with thanksgiving to God for His bountiful blessings. Today’s verses cover the offerings that were associated with the first four days of the feast. Even though the term “Feast of Tabernacles” is not used in these verses, this feast is clearly called by that name in Leviticus 23:34. That same chapter in Leviticus reveals that the people were to live in “booths” during the time of this festival (Leviticus 23:42). The word that is translated “booth” here is most often translated “tabernacle” in the Bible. The first time this word is found in Scripture is in Genesis 33:17 where we read that Jacob built “booths” for his cattle when he stopped to rest from his travels as he fled from Esau. Jacob named that place “Succoth” which is the word used here for booths. Succoth also became the first place that Israel camped after fleeing from Egypt (Exodus 12:37). This period of “camping” was to serve as a strong reminder to Israel of their time spent “camping” their way to Canaan and the many blessings and provisions that they experienced along the way.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation teaches us that we can learn much about God by remembering His mighty feats of the past. **Recall** some of the ways God has blessed you and spend some time thanking Him for His blessings today. **Call** someone and **remind** them of a time when God used them as a special blessing to you in some past time or experience.

Day 23: Numbers 29:26-40

““These you shall present to the LORD at your appointed feasts (besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as your drink offerings and your peace offerings.”” (Numbers 29:39)

The Feast of Tabernacles (Part Two)

Two important facts about the Feast of Tabernacles are found in Leviticus 23. First, the feast was to begin and end on a Sabbath Day, and it was to be a time of rejoicing (Leviticus 23:39-40). Second, the feast was also to be a time for remembering (Leviticus 23:43). God specifically wanted the people to be reminded of their long walk to Canaan and what it was like to live as strangers having no home of their own. Today's verses in Numbers cover the offerings associated with the fifth through eighth days of this very special event. Our focus verse includes the word “besides” once again and clearly indicates that the offerings that were made at these special times of the year were made in addition to “vowed” or regular “freewill” offerings. A careful look at this chapter will reveal that the number of bulls to be offered was reduced by one each day until the 13 bulls that were offered on day one was reduced to seven bulls on day seven. This total of seven bulls on the seventh day could hardly be coincidental as it points to the perfect sacrifice that was to ultimately be made when God's Son died on the cross for the sins of all mankind.

Prayer Emphasis: **Learn** to praise God continually for what He has done for you in the past. **Look forward** in faith and **praise** God for that which we know He is going to do for us in the future.

Day 24: Numbers 30:1-16

“If a man makes 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.” (Numbers 30:2)

The Law Concerning Vows

In Old Testament times and lands, the practice of making promises or vows to a deity was common. Vows could be positive promises to do something by performing some duty (as in the case of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:11), or as in the case of the Nazarites that we read about in Numbers 6:2-8, they might be negative promises to abstain from something. Two different Hebrew words were used to refer to vows with one signifying a positive vow and the other signifying a negative one. Since many, if not most, vows were made in moments of crisis (i.e., Jacob while fleeing from a deceived Esau in Genesis 28:22 or the earlier mentioned case of Hannah in 1 Samuel 10:11, or even the recently mentioned vow that the Israelites made after their loss in battle to the king of Arad in Numbers 21:1-2), there was the temptation to neglect the vow once the crisis passed. However, God wanted Moses to remind this new generation of Israelites that a vow to Yahweh was binding. It was a sin to neglect one's promises to God. Because of that, there are frequent admonitions like this one in the Scriptures urging God's people not to forget their vows to the Lord. This chapter was not included in God's final instructions to His people to specify what kind of vows could be made, or when, but to teach them how important it was that their vows to God be kept!

Prayer Emphasis: **Ask** God to help you be faithful to the promises you make to Him. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that faithfulness is a very important part of our discovering and experiencing God's best plans for our lives. **Remind** yourself of some of the promises you made to God in times of crisis and see if you are still honoring those vows today.

Day 25: Numbers 31:1-11

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people.’” (Numbers 31:1-2)

Vengeance Against the Midianites

The first time the word that is translated “vengeance” in our focus verses today is found in the Bible is when God promised to take vengeance on anyone who tried to slay Cain after he killed his brother, Abel (Genesis 4:15). As you read these verses, you will see that God commanded Moses to send an army of only 12,000 (1,000 from each of the 12 tribes) against the mighty king of Midian (v. 4). The purpose for having such a small army go to battle against this enemy was to ensure that the Midianites knew they had been defeated by God and not man! God even had Phinehas, a priest, lead the people in battle rather than a military commander. It is also interesting to note that Phinehas led this battle rather than Eleazar, the high priest. Just as Phinehas answered God’s call to put an end to Balaam’s plan to seduce the Israelites, he now served as the spiritual leader of Israel’s hand-picked commandoes as they became the instruments of God’s divine judgment against the Midianites. One reason for Phinehas being sent to lead in this warfare rather than the high priest was that the high priest was forbidden to come into close contact with a dead body (Leviticus 21:10-12). Since this battle led to the death of all the soldiers of the Midianite army, including their five kings and Balaam, the probability of contamination was high.

Prayer Emphasis: Allow God to receive all the glory for our spiritual victories. **Trust** Him to accomplish more with less than we can with all our human strength combined. **Kingdom Preparation** demands we realize that the strength required for all spiritual victories must come from the Lord.

Day 26: Numbers 31:12-24

“Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.” (Numbers 31:16)

The Reason Behind God’s Wrath Against Midian

Yesterday we saw Phinehas and his small army of Israelites defeating the five kings of Midian and their advisor, Balaam. Those verses closed with the children of Israel taking the women and little children of Midian captive. Today’s verses find God’s army returning to their camp with captives and other spoils of war. When the Midianite captives and goods were presented to Moses, Eleazar, and the congregation, Moses became angry with the officers and leaders of the soldiers and questioned the wisdom of their keeping the women of Midian alive. The explanation for Moses’ anger, as well as the explanation for God’s severe wrath against the Midianites, is found in verse 16. These were the very women who earlier seduced the men of Israel into committing harlotry and idolatry (25:1-3). Because of that, Moses commanded his warriors to kill every male child of the captives, along with every woman who was not a virgin (v. 17). The lives of the young virgins were spared because they had obviously played no part in leading Israel into sin (v. 18). It is interesting that, even after coming into contact with dead bodies as a result of war, the laws of purification for those who had become unclean due to their close association with corpses had to be strictly followed.

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to question God’s commands or judgments. **Learn to obey** God fully and without reservation. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that God’s ways are beyond our human understanding.

Day 27: Numbers 31:25-40

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Count up the plunder that was taken—of man and beast—you and Eleazar the priest and the chief fathers of the congregation; and divide the plunder into two parts, between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation.’” (Numbers 31:25-27)

Dividing the Spoils

God’s command to Moses was to “count up the plunder that was taken, of man and beast...and divide the plunder in two parts.” These two equal shares were then to be divided “between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all of the congregation.” This custom for dividing the spoils was later observed by David when he informed his soldiers that, “As his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike” (1 Samuel 30:24). Of their portion, those who went to war were to give one of every 500 of their captive people, herds, and flocks to the priests while the congregation was directed to give one of every 50 of their captive people and animals to the Levites. The total amount of the spoils was 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys, and 32,000 virgins. The gift the priests received from the warriors’ half was 675 sheep, 72 cattle, 61 donkeys and 32 virgins. The gift from the congregation to the Levites was 6,750 sheep, 720 cattle, 610 donkeys, and 320 virgins. It is interesting to note how specific the Holy Spirit is about what, where, and when the people were to give. He never seemed to be bashful about teaching the people that **Kingdom Preparation** included many lessons on generosity toward God and others.

Prayer Emphasis: Choose to be a faithful and generous giver to God and others. **Remember** all that we have comes from God and He is the source of all our blessings. **Do** something kind for someone today and then **thank** God for providing you with an opportunity to meet a need.

Day 28: Numbers 31:41-54

“... Your servants have taken a count of the men of war who are under our command, and not a man of us is missing.” (Numbers 31:49)

Zero Casualties!

After dealing with the spoils of war, the officers over the different divisions of the army took a roll call and learned that, despite overwhelming odds, not one of their people had fallen in battle! When you consider that they went against the five kings of Midian with only 12,000 soldiers, this realization must have come as quite a surprise to these leaders. As a result, the officers were so grateful for this amazing blessing that they brought a special, freewill offering of gold and precious stones to the LORD. No doubt, they saw this as a sign of God’s divine grace and protection and wanted to show their appreciation to Him. The only part of the offering of which the measurement was revealed was the gold. The gold that was offered weighed 16,750 shekels (about 420 pounds). Just that portion of their thanksgiving gift would be valued at several million dollars in today’s economy! After receiving these gifts, Moses and Eleazar the priest brought the gold into the tabernacle as a memorial of God’s great faithfulness to His people (v. 54). The word that is translated “memorial” here is also translated “remembrance” and “record” in other places in the Bible. It is certain that no one wanted anyone to ever forget about this glorious victory that God had provided for His people!

Prayer Emphasis: Express appreciation to God and give Him all the honor and glory for your spiritual victories. **Give** an offering of praise to God for some specific blessing today.

Day 29: Numbers 32:1-15

“For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people.” (Numbers 32:15)

“This’ll Do!”

I have some wonderful Christian friends who bought a home in the mountains and, after looking at so many homes, they looked at one more and said, “This’ll Do!” As a result, they named their new vacation home, “This’ll Do!” Eventually, they bought a vacation home at the coast as well and named that one, “This’ll Do, Too!” Something similar might have been the case with the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Because they had large herds and flocks, they desired to remain on the side of the Jordan River where the land was very suitable for grazing. Moses’ initial reaction to their request was less than positive! He reminded these people of their ancestors and their earlier decision to listen to the negative report of the majority of the spies and become obedient to their fears rather than their faith. The situation with their ancestors had angered God to the point that He caused them to die in the wilderness. It is obvious that Moses was concerned that this request was going to bring discouragement to the hearts of the remaining tribes. Today’s focus verse includes a harsh warning against turning away from God’s will for our lives.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation includes many lessons that can be learned from those who have lived and served before us. **Avoid** repeating the sins of the past and seek to be a source of encouragement to your fellow Christians.

Day 30: Numbers 32:16-27

“But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.” (Numbers 32:23)

A Stern Warning

As the children of Israel stood on the threshold of their entrance into the land of Canaan, two of the tribes (Gad and Reuben) requested that they be allowed to remain on their current side of the river so they could take advantage of that area’s rich grazing lands. Moses clearly declared it to be his opinion that their not participating in the conquest of the land might lead to discouragement on the part of the remainder of the people and, perhaps, discipline from the hand of God. The descendants of these two tribes quickly offered to build pens for their herds and flocks, and homes for their families. Then they would have their qualified men cross the river with their fellow Israelites and participate in the conquest. Their statement to Moses was clear. “We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance.” Moses quickly warned them that “if” they armed themselves for war, and “if” all their armed men crossed over Jordan and remained there until God had driven His enemies from before Him, “then” they could return to their families and flocks and be “blameless” before the LORD (vs. 20-22). But there was a third “if.” Moses said, “if” you do not do as you have promised to do, then “you have sinned against the LORD.” **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that sins of omission can be more offensive to God than sins of commission. In other words, it can be just as wrong not to do the right thing as it is to do a wrong thing.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember the words of James 4:17, “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” **Ask** God to help you keep your commitments and promises to Him and to **avoid** sins of omission whenever possible.

Day 31: Numbers 32:28-42

“And Moses said to them: ‘If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.’” (Numbers 32:29-30)

“If,” “And,” “Then,” and “But”

After hearing the pledge of the descendants of Gad and Reuben to cross over the Jordan and remain there until the conquest was complete, Moses told Eleazar, Joshua, and the leaders of the tribes to issue a conditional promise to the Gadites and the Reubenites. In today’s focus verse, Moses says, “If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.” Even after hearing these four very definite conditions, the requesting tribes were ready to stick to their commitment and assured their leadership that they had every intention of keeping their promise to stay in Canaan until the job was completed and every tribe had received its inheritance. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that we should not expect to dwell in “green pastures” if we are not faithful in our commitments to God.

Prayer Emphasis: Be careful to **note** the conditions that are contained in many of God’s promises. **Expect** God to keep His promises to us, but also **realize** that He expects us to keep our commitments to Him.

Day 32: Numbers 33:1-14

“These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.” (Numbers 33:1)

A Review

A large part of chapter 33 is a review of Israel’s journeys from Egypt to the Promised Land. Since Aaron’s death is recorded in chapter 20, his mention here is an indicator that God’s Word is not speaking of the present people or time. This review begins in Egypt and on the day that Israel marched away from that land to leave their former captives to deal with the burying of their firstborn. The review then records Israel’s first campsite (Succoth) and today’s reading takes us all the way to Rephidim “where there was no water for the people to drink” (v. 14). As we read this list of “campsites” we are reminded of what John said as he closed his Gospel record by stating: “And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one...the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25). There are at least two places, Dophkah and Alush, (vs. 12-13) mentioned in today’s verses that are not mentioned in any other place in the Bible, and there is no narrative whatsoever as to any of the events that transpired while Israel was there or even how long they camped in those places. While we can rest assured that we have enough of the story to accomplish what God has called us to do, we can also be assured that there is much more to learn about Israel’s adventures when we finally gather as a family around the throne of God.

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to being as obedient as you can to that which you already know. **Kingdom Preparation** helps us see that we will never know all the details until we reach Heaven but that we are not without what we need to accomplish God’s will here on earth.

Day 33: Numbers 33:15-39

“They departed from Rephidim and camped in the Wilderness of Sinai... They went from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah.” (Numbers 33:15 & 29)

From Rephidim to Hashmonah

Leaving Rephidim, Israel moved forward and camped next in the Wilderness of Sinai. In the wilderness, there was usually sufficient grass for herds and flocks, but not adequate food for such a large group as that which fled from Egypt and marched toward Canaan. As such, we continually saw God providing food and water for His people in miraculous ways. As we were reminded in the last verse of yesterday’s reading, Rephidim was the place most noted, at least in these verses, for the fact that there was not sufficient water for the people to drink. As such, we see the first encampment in today’s listing and are reminded of a very important time of lack in the lives of God’s people. Our verses include the mention of an encampment known as Hashmonah (v. 29). Although we know nothing about this place which is only mentioned here in Numbers 33, we can learn something from it by examining the meaning of its name. Hashmonah finds its origin in a Hebrew word used in only one place in the Psalms where it is translated “prince” and deals with royalty. Therefore, the listing of campsites in today’s reading begins with Rephidim, a place of lack for even the most basic human needs, and ends at Hashmonah, a place associated with royalty. Note that Israel camped at both places while following the divine direction of God.

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to being a faithful follower of the Lord whether you are called to “camp” in a place of lack or abundance. **Praise** Him in every situation and circumstance and you will always have what you need to experience joy in your Christian walk.

Day 34: Numbers 33:40-56

“...the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho...” (Numbers 33:50)

Some Final Instructions (Part One)

The last part of today’s verses record Moses’ final address to the Israelites recorded in Numbers. This address contained some very specific instructions regarding God’s expectations concerning the conquest of Canaan. Note that the crossing of Jordan was not presented as an optional event. God said, “*When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land*” (vs. 51-52). The conquest was to include several warlike strategies. First, they were to “drive out all the inhabitants.” Second, they were to “destroy all their molded images.” Third, they were to “demolish all their high places.” Fourth, they were to “dispossess them of the land” (v. 53). Fifth, they then were to “dwell in it” (v. 53). Finally, they were to “divide the land by lot” to the individual family units that descended from their individual tribes (v. 54). God warned the people that failure to drive the current inhabitants from the land would result in their being a constant irritant in their eyes and a chronic pain in their sides. In other words, failure to be obedient to God in these conquest instructions would result in the people of Israel living in a very uncomfortable environment and experiencing a strained relationship with their neighbors.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation teaches the importance of complete obedience! **Ask** God to instill a desire to obey in your own heart and pledge to **pursue** obedience in every area of your Christian walk. **Be** very intentional about the way you live and develop your personal “battle plan” for accomplishing God’s best plan for your own life.

Day 35: Numbers 34:1-15

“Command the children of Israel, and say to them: “When you come into the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance—the land of Canaan to its boundaries.”” (Numbers 34:2)

Some Final Instructions (Part Two)

God had not finished with His instructions to the Israelites. I think it is important to note that God told Moses to “command” the people to observe certain boundaries when they marched in and throughout Canaan to conquer it. Phase One of God’s plan involved Israel’s duties upon crossing Jordan and beginning their conquest, while Phase Two involved a very detailed description of exactly what land was to be conquered. God told Moses to provide the people with a precise description of what was to be considered as “the land.” If you have walked with the Lord for some time, you have learned that He is very specific when He is instructing us in the ways of righteousness. The phrase, “the children of Israel” (v. 2) indicates *who* God is now commanding. His following instructions clearly spelled out *what* He wanted them to do and *where* He wanted them to do it! Everything God is saying to His people now provides a strong indication that He is soon going to tell them exactly when the conquest is to begin! **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that God is very much into details and we should listen very carefully to all He has to say to us! When we have the who, what, where, and when from God, all that remains is that we be obedient to His commands.

Prayer Emphasis: **Strive** to listen intently to the Lord’s commands and then seek to be as obedient as humanly possible to His desires. **Read** your Bible daily and seek God’s direction for your life.

Day 36: Numbers 34:16-29

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “These are the names of the men who shall divide the land among you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun.”” (Numbers 34:16-17)

Final Instructions (Part Three)

The phrase, “the LORD spoke to Moses” indicates that He is still providing some final instructions to Israel through His servant. He now instructs Moses as to who is to be responsible for overseeing the distribution of the land. His two designated servants were to be “Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun.” These two men were specifically appointed by God and then they were told exactly which leaders of the tribes were to assist them. When I first read these names, I thought back to God’s earlier instructions concerning the sending of spies to view out the land (13:1-2). In that incident, God simply told Moses to “send men to spy out the land every one a leader among them.” However, God did not specify exactly who those “leaders” were. Only two of the 12 spies that were chosen by either Moses or the people returned with a positive report. Ten of the spies were so negative that the people refused to cross the Jordan River and conquer the land. In this case, God was very specific when it came to those who were to help Eleazar and Joshua in the land division. It is not surprising that Caleb, the only spy other than Joshua who returned from the earlier mission with a positive report, is included in this new list of leaders. Of all the names mentioned here, only Caleb is otherwise known in the Bible. Although we know very little about these men, it is obvious that God knew something about them, and He was confident that they would be faithful in the work He assigned to them.

Prayer Emphasis: **Thank** God for some of the lesser-known people in the Bible who faithfully served God in their times. **Realize** that there are many people who “work behind the scenes” today and seek out a way to **express** your love and appreciation to them.

Day 37: Numbers 35:1-8

“Command the children of Israel that they give the Levites cities to dwell in from the inheritance of their possession, and you shall also give the Levites common land around the cities.” (Numbers 35:2)

Final Instructions – Cities for the Levites

You will recall that the tribe of Levi did not receive a physical inheritance (allotment of land) because their inheritance was the Lord and the ministry of the tabernacle (18:20-21). At that time God clearly told Aaron, the leader of the Levites, “I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.” I am sure Aaron considered that to be a great inheritance then, and he is now going to see just how wise it was to trust God in that matter. Now, as the time for the actual distribution drew near, God unveiled His plan for the Levites to have cities throughout all the lands that were allotted to the tribes. This strategic move allowed God’s designated spiritual leaders to be as available as possible to all the people. You will see that God was just as clear about the dimensions of these cities as He was about the borders of the land in general. We should never forget that God knows our hearts and knows that we can all become very selfish and greedy when it comes to the division of material things! There were to be 48 cities allotted to the Levites with six of those cities being set aside as “Cities of Refuge.” Verse eight indicates that there would be more Levite cities in the larger lands than in the smaller. This well thought out provision would grant equal access to worship leaders to all the people.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to help you to rid your life of selfishness and greed. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us to **trust** God enough to give away some of what He has so freely given to us.

Day 38: Numbers 35:9-21

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: “When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, ”’” (Numbers 35:9-10)

Final Instructions – Cities of Refuge

One can only imagine the urgency with which Moses communicated these final instructions to the new generation of Israelites as they prepared to finally cross the Jordan River and inhabit the Promised Land. Every message from God was important, but this message concerning the “Cities of Refuge” had to have been delivered with an extra sense of urgency. These cities were to be strategically placed among the cities allotted to the Levites with the geographic locations allowing any Israelite who had caused the accidental death of another to quickly flee there for safety until a trial could be held. Three cities were to be located on their current side of the river and three more were to be in Canaan. These cities afforded a haven for “the stranger” and “the sojourner” as well (v. 15). Verse 16 clearly indicates that these cities were not provided for the protection of those who were guilty of murder. Those who murdered were to be sentenced to death. There were two key earmarks of intentional murder. Notice the words “hatred” (v. 20) and “enmity” (v. 21). Both words would indicate motive and premeditation. In those cases, the avenger of blood (a designated family member of the deceased) was free to put the murderer to death. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us to honor God’s system for dealing with civil crimes.

Prayer Emphasis: Make every effort to **avoid** “hatred” and “enmity” and **refuse** to allow such emotions to control your thoughts, words, or actions. **Pray** for special wisdom when someone has sinned against you and **ask** God to teach you how to act in an appropriate, Scriptural manner.

Day 39: Numbers 35:22-34

““However, if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait... while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments.”” (Numbers 35:22-24)

Final Instructions – Accidental Deaths

If a person killed another person without premeditation or by accident, they could flee to a city of refuge and remain safe there until the matter of their personal guilt could be settled in a hearing. If it were determined that the person was guilty of manslaughter and not murder, the accused would be allowed to live safely within the selected city of refuge until the current high priest died. If the accused person chose to leave the city of refuge prior to that time, he did so at his own risk and his sanctuary was abandoned. This restrictive confinement indicated that even those guilty of manslaughter were not left to go free and to live without penalty. In homicide cases, there needed to be witnesses to the act of murder for a guilty verdict to be reached. One witness was not sufficient to establish guilt. If the verdict of the hearing was that the person seeking safety was guilty of murder, then the person was to be put to death. The cities of refuge were designed to prevent private revenge and to establish a fair and impartial criminal justice system among the people.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation provides us with tools for dealing with even the most unforeseen situations. **Allow** God’s Word to rule in your heart and **refuse** to allow vengeance or anger to displace it.

Day 40: Numbers 36:1-13

“This is what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, “Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within the family of their father’s tribe.” So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.” (Numbers 36:6-7)

Remember the Daughters of Zelophehad?

Earlier Moses had decreed that the inheritance of a man who died without sons could be granted to his surviving daughters. This decision was made at the request of the daughters of Zelophehad, a descendant of Manasseh (27:1-11). Just how much time passed between then and now is uncertain, but obviously enough time had passed for the situation that is now addressed to have arisen. The question now presented to Moses concerned the situation where a daughter who received an inheritance from her father later married a man from one of the other tribes. The concern was not totally selfish in nature because it dealt with the issue of mingling the inheritances of the tribes after God had been so specific concerning the honoring of specific established borders. The decision seemed simple and was based on common sense! The words “Moses commanded” (v. 5), may seem to indicate that this was a decision that Moses made. However, the “according to the Word of the LORD” that follows clearly indicates that this decision was not based on human wisdom alone. The Book of Numbers closes with the statement that everything within it was given, by commandment, to Moses by Almighty God! Our concluding comment on this wonderful book can only be that **Kingdom Preparation** can be based on nothing less than God’s inspired, infallible Word!

Prayer Emphasis: Thank you for walking through Numbers with us. It is our desire that you will discover God’s perfect plan for your life. Contact us at gary@seminolebc.com if we can serve you in any way.