

Numbers Chapter 31

V: 1 Once again, a direct word from God.

V: 2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, then you can come home.

- The Midianites through the counsel of Balaam had caused the children of Israel to stumble, and to sin – many died as a result. The jig is up for the Midianites, they've sown, and now they are about to reap.
- Moses is told that after this he'll be gathered to his fathers.
- Going home is the prize! Moses is 120 years old, he's ready.

2 Corinthians 5:4 “For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be un-clothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

- One of the things that we don't read about Moses is his longing to just have a little more time with the children of Israel...oh can't I stay up just a little longer...?

Philippians 1:23 “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”

- Notice as well that it appears that Moses is in the battle, or facing battles in this world until he's called home to be with the Lord.

Proverbs 13:12 “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”

- Like Moses, we'll be doing battle with the flesh, with the worldly systems, against the enemy of our soul until the day we die. The key to winning any fight is simply to fight hard and never give up, never quit, never stop – keep fighting!

V: 3 “Arm some of yourselves unto the war...”

- Not all? God ordained this battle, which means He's already given them the victory; they just need to show up.

[Jonathan, son of king Saul was out snooping around the Philistine garrison:](#)

1 Samuel 14:6 “And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.”

[As king Asa was confronted with an army of one million Ethiopians – he prayed:](#)

2 Chronicles 14:11 “And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power:.”

- God had ordained the victory – they could have sent out little kids with sling shots and still have won!
- “... **avenge the Lord of Midian**”? Started out as “**avenge the children of Israel of Midian...**”

Zechariah 2:8 “For thus saith the Lord of hosts; after the glory hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.”

- Basically when anyone messes with Israel, they mess with God. Something that is still true today.

This goes right back to:

Genesis 12:3 “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee...”

V: 4-6 1,000 from each tribe, 12,000 in all.

1. Plus Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest. Phinehas was the one who stopped the plague amongst the children of Israel when he took a spear and killed the man and the Midianite women that had gone into his tent in front of the whole congregation.
 - Phinehas may have been sent to finish what he started.
2. The “holy instruments”: Possibly referring to the Urim & Thummin, not really sure which instruments are referred to here.
3. The trumpets to blow, referring to the silver trumpets.

Numbers 10:9 “And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.”

- Because of God’s promise, these trumpets become more important than their weapons of war.

2 Corinthians 10:4 “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”

V: 7-8 They were obedient, and they were victorious – it is good to note that connection.

- They killed all the males, those that would be able to rise up in war against them – in particular their leaders – and Balaam whose counsel stumbled the nation of Israel.
 1. Evi: “my desire”, “desirous”.
 2. Rekem: “versicolor”, “multicolor”, “variegation” (to make varied in appearance, as by adding different colors.
 3. Zur: “Rock” - the father of Cozbi; the Midianitish woman killed with Zimri in the camp of Israel.
 4. Hur: “white one”, “hole”, possibly a derivative of “Horus” an Egyptian god.
 5. Reba: “Lie down” “Four”.

V: 9-12 They took all the women and children as captives after killing all the men, they also took all their cattle as prey, and all the valuables & goods as the spoil, and burnt their cities.

- Then they brought all this back to Moses and Eleazar.

V: 13-16 As the army was coming back with the captives, the prey, and the spoil, Moses and Eleazar went out of the camp to meet them – so that the camp would not be defiled.

- God’s presence dwelt in the center of the camp.
- Moses was angry; have you forgotten? They possibly as if they should have known better.
- There doesn’t appear to be a specific rebuke for being disobedient as to disposing of the women; perhaps that they should simply have known better than to keep those that were sexually active alive.
- These women were involved in causing Israel to sin, and they were to be given no place in the camp, they were not to be tolerated.

Romans 13:14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

Ephesians 4:27 “Neither give place to the devil.”

V: 17-18 Kill all the male children, kill all of the women and girls that have had relations with a man – those girls that haven’t, the virgins keep alive.

- Why kill all the males, the boys? There are several possibilities, and it is somewhat speculative.

1. Quite possibly these boys would grow up one day to seek revenge upon the children of Israel.
2. Those women who had known a man had already been used to bring sin and death to Israel and could do so again – a very real threat.
3. This culture was so debased and perverted that they would one day reap the consequences of their own actions and God was graciously putting them out of their misery.
4. This is a picture of how we're to deal with our own sin – kill it or it will kill you.

V: 19-20 Cleansing, “purification”, and not defiling the camp.

- The rite of purification for one who touched a dead body: taking the ashes of a red heifer mixed with water.

Numbers 19:19 “And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.”

- We are washed in the same way, by the pure water of the word of God.

Jesus said:

John 15:3 “Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

- V: 19 They were also to purify the remaining captives.
- That is what we are called to as well – we are to take the Word of God to those who are captives in this world.

John 17:17 “Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth.”

V: 21-24 Continuing in the purification of all the stuff & people that will eventually enter into the camp.

- The things like the gold and silver are to be put through the fire, then sprinkled with the water of purification.
- Ever feel like you're going through the fire? It's a good thing, just being cleansed, being refined.

Psalms 66:12 “Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.”

- Everything else gets washed in water.

- As we look at this process, we see a distinction between the OT and the NT, between the covenant of the Law, and the covenant of blood.

John 1:17 “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

- The law said you must be clean first, then you can enter the camp.
- Jesus, in the New Testament said come as you are.

V: 25-27 Dividing up the spoil:

- Take the sum of the prey, both of man and beast. Figure out what you have taken.
- Divide the total into two parts.
 1. Between those who actually went out into war – the 1st part.
 2. And those who stayed behind – the 2nd part.
 - 50% divided up between 12,000 men.
 - 50% divided up between 589,730 men. (601,730 – 12,000)
 - Those that actually went to war got a great deal more than the rest.

V: 28-31 Levy a tribute / tax: on the spoils.

- Men of war 1 out of 500 or .002% - to Eleazar / priests.
- The rest of the nation, 1 out of 50 or .02% - to the Levites (non-priests)

V: 32-35 The count;

- 675,000 sheep.
- 72,000 cattle.
- 61,000 donkeys
- 32,000 women that had not known a man.

V: 36-41 Those that went to war received half of all of that and the Lord received .002% of each – which all works out mathematically.

- Of the 16,000 women / girls that were given to the warriors, God portion was 32 women.
- They were not sacrificed; according to the Law, they were either redeemed or dedicated.

V: 42-47 The rest of the nation's half, and the tax.

- Again the math works out at the rate of .02%, a higher tax rate.
- 10X higher, but who can complain when it was all freely given from God anyway.

V: 48-49 After everything was divided up, after they rendered unto God that which He required, the commanders approach Moses and tell him that they didn't lose a single man in battle.

Romans 8:31 "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

- This goes to show who really fought that battle.

V: 50-54 They brought an "oblation" – a free will offering, a thank offering – acknowledging God's hand not only in their victory, but in their survival individually.

Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

- Previously they had been told regarding purification that before any of this stuff came into the camp it was to be purified through fire.
- When God determined the tribute or the tax, he didn't require of the gold or the silver, it was left to the men of war and to the people.
- The captains of thousands and of hundreds brought the gold and silver as a free will thank offering, and expression of their gratitude to God for saving or preserving their lives.

Psalms 92:1 "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High."

Psalms 105:1 "O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name: make known His deeds among the people."

- God did not require gold or silver at part of the tribute.
- What did God require? God wanted the animals and the people, God wanted the "living sacrifices".
- God still requires the same thing – He's looking for living sacrifices.

Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Galatians 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”