

Lesson 12 22nd July, 2018

Conquering and Possessing the Land

Lesson Scope: [Numbers 26-36](#)

References in brackets refer to the lesson scope unless otherwise noted

Lesson Focus

Israel was still encamped on the plains of Moab, preparing for entrance into the Promised Land. Thirty-eight years earlier, they had been at the border of Canaan only to be turned back because of unbelief. Now they were once again preparing to enter Canaan. There were, however, some final issues that needed to be addressed.

In this lesson scope, we see Israel being numbered again. Eleazar filled the vacancy left by Aaron, and Moses requested a replacement "shepherd" for Israel (27:15-17). God gave direction to establish Joshua as Moses' replacement. God also gave direction for the dividing of the land and for locating the cities of refuge. Before Moses died, he was responsible to lead in the destruction of the Midianites. These preparations were important for successfully occupying Canaan.

The Lord desires to give His people spiritual fullness and rest. He provides clear direction and sufficient strength for overcoming the enemy and possessing the land.

This lesson covers a larger-than-normal scope and may require more study to get a clear picture of the teachings you are to emphasize. Perhaps you can view this lesson as a challenge for you to conquer and possess the truths for yourself and others

Lesson Aim: To see the spiritual significance in Israel's preparation for conquering and possessing the Promised Land.

Theme Verse: [Ephesians 6:13](#). Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Lesson Text

Conquest

Numbers 27:18-21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom *is* the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; ¹⁹ And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. ²⁰ And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. ²¹ And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

Numbers 31:1-3 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ² Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people. ³ And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.

Numbers 31:7 And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

Numbers 31:54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, *for* a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

Numbers 32:20-23 And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war, ²¹ And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, ²² And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. ²³ But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

Numbers 33:51-53 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; ⁵² Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: ⁵³ And ye shall dispossess *the inhabit-*

ants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

Occupancy

Numbers 27:6-7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ⁷ The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

Numbers 28:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ² Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, *and* my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, *for* a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season.

Numbers 35:10-12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; ¹¹ Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. ¹² And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.

Questions for Study

Conquest

1. What was the spirit that was in Joshua?
2. Why might God have called Moses to lead against Midian, after Joshua was given charge?
3. What was the origin of the gold in 31:54?
4. How do we give the "gold of conquest" to God today?
5. What may be areas of conquest given specifically to us today?

Occupancy

6. What motivated the daughters of Zelophehad to make their request?
7. How did the cities of refuge point forward to the coming Messiah?
8. After conquest, is occupancy synonymous with repose? Explain.

Analyzing the Passage

Moses' willingness to faithfully fill the role of leader right up to the end is commendable. The value of an experienced leader in setting out the process for dividing the land, locating the cities of refuge, and commissioning Joshua can easily be understood. The success Joshua later

experienced as a leader can in part be traced back to this.

The request of Zelophehad's daughters was not motivated by greed. It was based on their desire to maintain their father's name and inheritance in Israel. God honored this request and used it to establish guidelines for similar cases in the future.

Israel's avenging themselves on the Midianites was a fitting closure to a disappointing failure. It closed the trespass of Baal-peor on a note of victory and prepared Israel for the challenges that lay ahead.

The cities of refuge were essential to a fair execution of justice in the case of manslayers. They demonstrate both justice and mercy. Almost all of the land of Israel was within thirty miles of one of these cities. These cities are a type of the refuge we have in Christ (Hebrews 6:18). The freedom that came with the death of the high priest (35:25, 28) pointed to the redemption of Old Testament saints by the death of the Messiah.

Principles and Applications

Conquest

1. Spirit filled leadership is essential for conquest (27:18). Moses set an example for all spiritual leaders when he requested, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exodus 33:15). We cannot conquer evil in our own strength. Proverbs 2:6 clearly shows that wisdom is not innate but comes from the Lord. Today, as always, a Spirit-filled flock needs Spirit-filled shepherds to constantly lead us to the Chief Shepherd.

2. Personal responsibility for armor is required for conquest (31:3). Moses' call to Israel was to "arm ... yourselves." The call in Ephesians 6 to put on the whole armor of God is personal. Only when we personally take God's armor can we keep rank with fellow spiritual brethren.

3. The warfare against evil demands faithfulness and zeal (31:1-3, 7). What Midian had done to Israel was not just "swept under the rug" and forgotten. The call was for complete, systematic destruction of this enemy that had led Israel into sin. Also, notice that the avenging was for the Lord (31:3), not just "personal" revenge by Israel. When we war against evil today, we do not fight to make ourselves look good, but to bring glory to our Saviour.

4. Gratitude and consecration must follow victories (31:54). Israel's

gratitude for victory was more than lip service. They gladly dedicated gold to make a lasting memorial. We should thank God for a faithful church that has made practical application to the Scriptures in the past, but we show our gratitude when we support church applications today and teach them to the next generation. Victories won in our personal lives call for thanksgiving and for increased dedication and loyalty to Christ. Whenever we are given a word of commendation or appreciation for our endeavors, we must give the glory to God.

5. God's people willingly sacrifice to help each other gain and maintain spiritual rest and fullness (32:20-23). The two and a half tribes that settled on the east side of the Jordan on lands that were already conquered were willing to cross the Jordan to help conquer the land west of the Jordan for their brethren. God made it clear that if they failed in this sacrifice, it was sin against Him (32:23). We cannot only look out for ourselves. We are our brother's keeper. As God's children, we care for the "stranger that is within [our] gates" as well as our relatives and good friends. We plead for God's mercies for the erring and beseech blessings on all His children. Failure to seek the good of others will bar us from heaven.

6. Possessing the land of blessing requires dealing decisively with evil (33:51-53). "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). When evil is decisively dealt with, there is a distancing from evil that brings rest. We must look diligently in our own hearts for roots of bitterness, seeds of jealousy, or any expression of the old nature. We must label sin what it is and apply the blood for cleansing and forgiveness.

7. Conquest is realized when we seize the opportunities and resources God has provided (33:51-53). Supporting prayer meeting and Sunday evening services, as well as reading our Bible and sound Christian literature, is part of appropriating the resources available to us. "O what peace we often forfeit, / O what needless pain we bear, / All because we do not carry / Everything to God in prayer." If we fail in conquest, it is because we fail to utilize all the resources God provides.

Occupancy

8. Worship and sacrifice must be a regular part of our spiritual journey (28:2). We take time to worship. Personal devotions, family worship, and church attendance are part of worship. Lifting our hearts in praise and thanksgiving throughout the day is also a part of worship. A sacrifi-

cial spirit is shown by a willingness to accept direction and by repentance for failure (Psalm 51:17). A sacrificial spirit is also shown by a willingness to give of our time and resources to the Lord's work.

9. Mercy and judgment must be exercised for spiritual fullness and rest (35:10-12). To experience Christian victory, we must be willing to deal with sin in the church and in our lives. Along with dealing with sin, there must be a way for the offender to be restored to the people of God. The goal of disciplining is not to cut the offender off (2 Corinthians 2:6-7). As God's people deal with sin and then extend mercy to the repentant, they can experience the ongoing blessings of victorious Christian living.

Important Teachings

1. Spirit-filled leadership is essential for conquest (27:18).
2. Personal responsibility for armor is required for conquest (31:3).
3. The warfare against evil demands faithfulness and zeal (31:1-3, 7).
4. Gratitude and consecration must follow victories (31:54).
5. God's people willingly sacrifice to help each other gain and maintain spiritual rest and fullness (32:20-23).
6. Possessing the land of blessing requires dealing decisively with evil (33:51-53).
7. Conquest is realized when we seize the opportunities and resources God has provided (33:51-53).
8. Worship and sacrifice must be a regular part of our spiritual journey (28:2).
9. Mercy and judgment must be exercised for spiritual fullness and rest (35:10-12).

Answers to Questions

1. What was the spirit that was in Joshua?

Joshua possessed the Spirit of God, the same spirit that was in Joseph (Genesis 41:38). It was the spirit that kept Joshua in the tabernacle (Exodus 33:11). It was a spirit of faith.

2. Why might God have called Moses to lead against Midian, after Joshua was given charge?

While we may not know exactly why, we do know it was God's plan. Perhaps it was an example for future leadership transfers that older

leaders are not to shirk responsibilities by transferring unresolved problems to the next generation. Perhaps it is a lesson to all of us not to seek early retirement but to continue to labor for God as long as we are able. "Be thou faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10).

3. What was the origin of the gold in 31.54? It was gold they had taken in conquest.

4. How do we give the 'gold of conquest' to God today?

As we live lives that are separated from the world, we give all the glory to Christ and maintain a heart of compassion for those still in the bondage of the world. As we are graciously given children, we seek to give them back to God. As the Lord blesses us with financial blessings, we seek to share where we can, even our last "mites." As our Father forgives us, so we freely forgive our fellow men.

5. What may be areas of conquest given specifically to us today?

We are all given the charge of ruling our own spirit. We are called to deny self daily. We may face temptations to be angry, to worry, to surmise others' motives, to look down on or to despise others, to resist being told what to do, to be careless or lazy in our spiritual lives, or to take pleasure in the things we would not do but yet enjoy thinking about.

6. What motivated the daughters of Zelophehad to make their request?

Their request was not motivated by greed. They desired to maintain their father's name and inheritance in Israel. They wanted to share in the blessings of God's people.

7. How did the cities of refuge point forward to the coming Messiah?

They were the only cities that the guilty could flee to for refuge. At the death of the high priest, those confined to these cities could go free just as the spirits of the Old Testament saints could be free at the death of the Messiah, the Great High Priest.

8. After conquest, is occupancy synonymous with repose? Explain.

When Christ comes into our lives, the devil must flee and there is peace; however, Satan is quick to come back to seek to destroy what Christ has done. This requires a vigilance that is scarcely synonymous with repose. While we rest in Christ, Hebrews tells us that "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). We enter into repose when we have finished our course and run with patience the race set before us.

Summarizing the Lesson

I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.

Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on heaven's tableland,
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

—*Johnson Oatman, Jr.*

Research Guide

1. Read Joshua 1.
2. Research information regarding the cities of refuge.