

Lesson 13 - 24 July 2011

The Conquest and Occupancy of the Land

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

Lesson Focus

Israel was still encamped on the plains of Moab, preparing for entrance into the Promised Land. Forty 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 Israel is numbered again: leadership transfers from Moses and Aaron to Joshua and Eleazar, and Aaron and Moses die. God also gave direction for the dividing of the land and for locating the cities of refuge. These preparations were important for successfully occupying Canaan.

This lesson contains many principles for ongoing success in the Christian life. These principles facilitate stability and endurance. This lesson also shows that much of the preparation for conquering and occupying the land was done under Moses' direction. This can be used to show how the preparations we make for our children can go a long way in aiding their success.

The Lord desires to lead His people into spiritual fullness and rest. He provides detailed direction the enemy and dwelling in the land.

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

Theme Verse: [1 Corinthians 16:13](#). Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong

Lesson Text:

Conquest

Numbers 27:18

¹⁸ 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;

Numbers 31:1-3

¹ 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 31:54

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

²⁰ 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

⁵¹ 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 inhabitants* of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

Occupancy

Numbers 27:6-7

⁶ 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

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ² Command the children of Is-

rael, 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

¹⁰ 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. Why did God tell Moses to put some of his honor upon Joshua?
2. Why did God command Israel to war against Midian if they had already purged the sin from the congregation?
3. What was the danger in the two-and-one-half tribes settling on the east side of Jordan?
4. What are some areas in our lives that need special attention if we want to be ready for conquest?
5. In what ways can we aid our brethren and help preserve their spiritual life?

Occupancy

6. What motivated the daughters of Zelophehad to make their request?
7. Why was it necessary to have cities of refuge?
8. What preparations must we make to maintain spiritual victory?

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 be easily 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 selfish. 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 also 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. These cities were a type of the refuge we have in Christ (Hebrews 6:18).

Principles and Applications

Conquest

1. God-appointed leadership is essential for spiritual conquest (Numbers 27:20). The time of the judges amply demonstrate the lack of unity and the unfaithfulness that result when God's people lack leadership. God-appointed leaders help to keep God's people moving together. They take the initiative in seeking God's direction on how to face current issues (Numbers 27:21). Godly leaders will be alert to issues that need to be brought to the attention of God's people. They will build on the strengths of those gone before and seek to bring God's people to a common understanding and application of God's Word.

2. Spiritual armor is essential for victory (Numbers 31:3). Moses told the people to arm themselves and go against Midian. It was important to defeat Midian and bring a proper conclusion to the sin of Baal-peor. If we want to experience victory and spiritual success in the future, we cannot have unresolved issues in our past. As we deal with the issues we face as God's people, it arms us to face the battles ahead.

3. Gratitude and consecration must follow victories (Numbers 31:54). Israel's gratitude for victory was more than lip service. They dedicated gold to make a lasting memorial. It is not enough to thank God for a faithful church that has made practical application to the Scriptures in the past. We need to support the practical applications the church makes today and teach them to our children. Victories won in our personal lives call for thanksgiving and for increased dedication and loyalty to God. Whenever we are given a word of commendation or appreciation for our Christian testimony, we must give the glory to God.

4. The aid and spiritual preservation of our brethren must take priority, in our lives (Numbers 32:20-23). We must take into consideration the effect our choices will have on our brethren. Just because some can handle the pressures their choices bring does not mean everyone can. Our choices in lifestyle, financial risk, and social involvements all leave an example others might follow. God still has brethren who can lead and provide a safe

example for others to follow. Each of us must be willing to take responsibility for the best interest of our brethren.

5. The carnal, sinful practices of the land must be rooted out for successful occupancy (Numbers 33:52). As God's people, we must constantly be on guard against the influences of "the inhabitants of the land." We must continue to require a high moral standard as the world plunges ever more deeply into sensual immorality. Divorce and remarriage, worldly sensual living and casual worship practices are part of the sinful practices of our land. They cannot be accepted among God's people or in our personal lives.

6. Conquest is realized when we seize the opportunities and appropriate the resources God has given (Numbers 33:51-53). Supporting mid-week Bible study and Sunday evening services, as well as reading our Bible and other good Christian literature, is part of appropriating the resources available to us. A willingness to change our plans and to sacrifice a little comfort and relaxation is necessary to benefit from the opportunities that come our way.

Occupancy

7. Each person must assume responsibility for preserving his heritage (Numbers 27:7). The daughters of Zelophehad could have said there was nothing they could do to preserve their father's name, since women were not involved in the division of the land. However, they did what they could. Parents need to pass on the Scriptural teachings and traditions of the church to their children. We also must accept what is being passed on to us, and put it to practice in our lives. We cannot expect God or His people to do our [personal] part in preserving our heritage.

8. Worship and sacrifice must be a regular part of our spiritual journey. (Numbers 28:2). We must take time to worship. Personal devotions, family worship, and church attendance are a part of worship. Lifting our hearts in praise and thanksgiving throughout the day is also a part of worship. A sacrificial spirit is shown by a willingness to accept direction and by repentance for failures (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 occupancy to be realized and maintained Numbers (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 simply 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. God-appointed leadership is essential for spiritual conquest (Numbers 27:20).
2. Spiritual armor is essential for victory (Numbers 31:3).
3. Gratitude and consecration must follow victories (Numbers 31:54).
4. The aid and spiritual preservation of our brethren must take priority in our lives (Numbers 32:20-23).
5. The carnal, sinful practices of the land must be rooted out for successful occupancy (Numbers 33:52).
6. Conquest is realized when we seize the opportunities and appropriate the resources God has given (Numbers 33:51-53).
7. Each person must assume responsibility for preserving his heritage (Numbers 27:7).
8. Worship and sacrifice must be a regular part of our spiritual journey (Numbers 28:2).
9. Mercy and judgment must be exercised for occupancy to be realized and maintained (Numbers 35:10-12).

Answers to Questions

1. Why did God tell Moses to put some of his honor upon Joshua?

To successfully conquer the Promised Land, Israel would have to successfully unite behind Joshua's leadership and give him honor and respect. Giving honor is a Scriptural way of supporting a leader (1 Timothy 5:17). Moses' giving honor to Joshua encouraged the people to do the same.

2. Why did God command Israel to war against Midian if they had already purged the sin from the congregation?

This was part of clearing up a past failure in preparation for a future victory. The level of victory we experience in the future depends on how we deal with present and past failures. We must do what we can to avoid repeated temptation.

3. What was the danger in the two-and-one-half tribes settling on the east side of Jordan?

There was the danger that, because they were settled, they would not go to war with their brethren and so would discourage the congregation from conquering the Promised Land.

4. What are some areas in our lives that need special attention if we want to be ready for conquest?

Our attitudes toward our brethren and our leaders must be guarded. We must maintain a repentant attitude toward sin and a constant awareness of our human weakness. We must be willing to endure hardness for the cause of Christ and be faithful in the responsibilities life brings our way.

5. In what ways can we aid our brethren and help preserve their spiritual life?

We can avoid doing things that would offend their conscience (1 Corinthians 8:13). We should enter into their struggles by praying for them and encouraging them.

6. What motivated the daughters of Zelophehad to make their request? They were concerned that their father's name not die out in Israel. This request showed respect for their father and a vision for the future.

7. Why was it necessary to have cities of refuge? The taking of human life, even by accident, could not be overlooked (Genesis 9:6). The cities of refuge provided safety for the innocent manslayer.

8. What preparations must we make to maintain spiritual victory?

We must maintain appreciation for the lines the church has drawn even if we do not understand them. We must take personal responsibility to be what we should be and to encourage others in the same. We need to be willing to help each other and share in each others' Christian walk.

Summarizing the Lesson

No matter where we are in life's journey, we need to make preparation for future conquest. May we never forget that tomorrow's victory depends to a large degree on today's preparation. Let us make diligent preparations today so that we, and those following us, may experience enduring victories.

Research Guide

1. A Bible handbook will show where the two-and-one-half tribes settled in relation to the rest of Israel, as well as the location of the cities of refuge.

2. A thorough study of the cities of refuge, including the meaning of their names, is inspirational.