

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

313. Name ten miracles, besides the one in Numbers 17, in which the power of God neutralizes, reverses, or accelerates some natural power.
314. Why would it be important that the twelve rods were placed in the Tabernacle during the time of the test?
315. Why was this test important, and why was it appropriate to the circumstances?
316. What was the probable service of the rods before they were brought for this test?
317. What was the ultimate destination of Aaron's rod?
318. Explain the reaction of the people to the sight of Aaron's rod.
319. Under what circumstances should they have been afraid?

G. LEVITICAL DUTIES AND THEIR EMOLUMENTS
(18:1-32)

TEXT

Chapter 18:1. And the Lord said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. 2. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. 3. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. 4. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. 5. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar; that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. 6. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a

gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7. Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

8. And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever. 9. This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. 10. In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. 11. And this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it. 12. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee. 13. And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the Lord, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it. 14. Everything devoted in Israel shall be thine. 15. Everything that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the Lord, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. 16. And those that are to be redeemed from a month old thou shalt redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. 17. But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savor unto the Lord. 18. And the flesh of them shall be thine, as

the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine. 19. All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

20. And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 22. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. 23. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. 24. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

25. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 26. Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe. 27. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress. 28. Thus ye also shall offer a heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof of the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest. 29. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it. 30. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshingfloor,

and as the increase of the winepress. 31. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households; for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. 32. And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 18:1. And the Lord said unto Aaron, "You and your sons, as well as your father's family with you, shall bear the guilt of the sanctuary; and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt of your priesthood. 2. But bring with you also your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father; in order that they may be joined with you to serve you, while you and your sons with you are before the Tent of the Testimony. 3. And they shall attend to your duty, and to the duty of all the Tent; but they shall not come near the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they, or you, should die. 4. And they shall be joined with you and attend to the duties of the Tent of Meeting, for all the service of the Tent; but no foreigner may come near you. 5. And you shall keep the duty of the sanctuary, and the duty of the altar so that there may be no more wrath upon the children of Israel. 6. And behold, I have taken your brothers from the Levites, from among the children of Israel. They are given to you as a gift for the Lord, to do the duty of the Tent of Meeting. 7. Therefore you and your sons with you shall keep your priesthood for everything related to the altar, and inside the veil; and you shall do the service. I have given your priesthood to you as a service of gift; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

8. And the Lord said to Aaron, "Behold, I have also given you charge of my heave offerings of all the sacred things of the children of Israel; I have given them to you as a share, and they are unto your sons as a perpetual portion. 9. This is to be yours of the most holy gifts, reserved from the fire: each offering of theirs, each meal offering of theirs, and each sin offering of theirs, and every guilt offering of theirs which they shall render

unto me shall be most holy for you and your sons. 10. In the most holy place you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you. 11. And this also is yours: the heave offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you by law forever: every one in your house who is clean shall eat of it. 12. All of the best of the oil, and all of the best of the wine, and of the wheat, of the first of them offered to the Lord: these have I given you. 13. The first ripe fruit of everything in the land, which they are to bring to the Lord: these shall be yours. Everyone in your house who is clean shall eat of it. 14. Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. 15. Everything coming forth first from the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the Lord, whether of men or of animals, shall be yours. However, the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. 16. And those which are to be redeemed are to be redeemed from one month old by your ordinary counting for five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. 17. But the firstborn of an ox, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you are not to redeem: they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and burn their fat for an offering of fire, as a sweet aroma to the Lord. 18. And their flesh shall be yours, just as the breast of the wave offering and the right thigh. 19. All the heave offerings of holy gifts, which the children of Israel offer to the Lord, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you forever by law. It is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord to you and to your children with you."

20. The Lord said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you own any portion among them: I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. 21. "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance for the service they perform, even the service of the Tent of Meeting. 22. Neither must the children of Israel come near the Tent of Meeting from now on lest they bear sin and die. 23. Only the Levites shall do the

service of the Tent of Meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be an everlasting regulation throughout your generations that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. 24. But I have given the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a gift to the Lord, to the Levites as an inheritance. Therefore, I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.' "

25. Then the Lord said to Moses, 26. "Furthermore, you shall speak to the Levites and tell them, 'When you take the tithes which I have given you from the children of Israel as an inheritance, you shall offer from it a gift for the Lord, a tithe of the tithe. 27. And your offering shall be reckoned to you as though it were grain from the threshing floor, or as the completeness of the winepress.' 28. In this way you also shall present an offering to the Lord from your tithes, which you receive from the children of Israel; and from it you shall give the Lord's offering to Aaron the priest. 29. From all that is given you, you shall lay aside all that is due as a gift to the Lord, from everything the very best, even the sacred portion of it. 30. Therefore you shall say to them, 'When you have laid aside the best of it, it shall be counted to the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor and of the winepress. 31. And you may eat it anywhere, you and your households, since it is your reward for your service in the Tent of Meeting. 32. And you shall bear no sin because of it when you have offered the best from it; nor shall you pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest you die.' "

COMMENTARY

The duties of the priests and the duties of the Levites are now put in clear relationship to each other. The priests attend unto all affairs of the sanctuary and of the altar of sacrifice. The Levites supply what assistance may be required, but they are under severe warning not to come directly into contact with the vessels or the altar, under threat of death (v. 3). To Aaron and the Kohathites comes the weighty assignment of fulfilling the detailed requirements of the expiation of all types of sins in the

various sacrifices and offerings. The inherited office would remain as long as the very covenant itself, making it unnecessary for the members of any other tribe to endanger his life by approaching the sanctuary. The "stranger" of v. 4 would not only include anyone of foreign birth, but also any proselyte or other Israelite not of the tribe of Levi; it is a prohibition to be universally applied, exempting only the authorized priests and Levites. Compliance would prevent such calamities as that of Korah's.

Two gifts are mentioned in verses 6, 7: the Levites are given as servants to the Levites; the priestly office is given unto the descendants of Aaron. The two gifts combine to render effectual service for an entire nation. The services are not to be considered a burden, a problem, or as the mere accident of inheritance, but a sacred privilege.

Various sacrifices, when completed, became, in part or in whole, food for the male members of the priestly family. The general regulation is set forth in v. 8, which is followed by specific details regarding the individual processes. All of the remaining portion of meat offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings may be eaten, but only "in the most holy place," a term almost certainly used of the court of the tabernacle in this context. In addition, all wave offerings, all offerings of the first fruits, everything dedicated to the Lord, and all the firstborn, or their substitutes, came to the priests in lieu of an inheritance of land to the tribe of Levi. The priest's family might partake with him of the wave offering. The total agreement is termed "a covenant of salt," or a binding, inviolable agreement. This idiomatic expression was derived from an ancient custom of sealing a bond by sharing the same food; the parties involved would, from that time forward say, "There is salt between us," and they were bound to mutual respect and defense, even to death.

Both the priests and the Levites were entirely supported by the revenue from their service of the Tabernacle. Besides the food they received from allotted portions of the sacrifices, they were assigned the tithes from the people. These were exacted

upon all produce from the fields, as well as the increase of the flocks and herds. Carefully observing all the instructions which God had given them in the process of implementing the total sacrificial system, the priests and Levites obviated the necessity of the people's personal participation. This was for their own protection, since they would have been dealing with holy things, and an abuse or a careless act could well have been fatal. In this sense, the Levites bore the iniquity of the people.

When the Promised Land was later divided among the tribes, no proportionate land grant was given the Levites. Instead, 48 cities with their suburbs were designated as Levitical cities (see chapter 35). Six of these served as cities of refuge; all of them were distributed among the tribal lands, and with each went a two-thousand cubit suburban area surrounding the city proper. Here the Levites might cultivate the land or graze their herds, but by no means could they all live on such a small allotment; the tithes and sacrificial concessions would be essential to their very existence. Paul uses this principle to point out the appropriateness of having those who proclaim the gospel live by the revenue gained through its proclamation. The picture, in both instances, is not that of a staid, complacent professional; the man is first and always a servant of God and a servant of men, whose recompense is totally unwarranted unless he is a faithful servant in both relationships.

The effective program of God with reference to the people's giving depended upon their faithful stewardship, especially in tithing their increase. Mal. 3:8-10 makes it clear that this was not always done. Consequently, the Levites were sometimes deprived, and even poor. Even so, whatever their situation might be the Levites were required to tithe their incomes through heave offerings. And these, like the offerings of the people, were not to be the left-overs, but the very best of all they received, v. 32. In so doing, they recognized that everything they were given had come from the Lord. They could do nothing less, conscientiously, than this.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

320. What clear line of demarkation does God draw between the duties of the priests and the duties of the Levites?
321. Propose some reasons which would explain why God would commit such duties through inheritance rather than by any other method.
322. How is the term 'stranger' to be understood here? Why is this an unusual use of the word?
323. Which of the offerings of Israel became the priests' food? Why should they be eaten only "in the most holy place"?
324. Explain the term, "a covenant of salt".
325. What would be the most grave danger if someone other than a priest or a Levite were to perform the functions of the sacrifice?
326. Why were the descendants of Levi given no land inheritance in the Promised Land? What were they given instead?
327. What precedent is set for the Christian system in the paying of tithes to support the priesthood?
328. Show what improper attitudes might be adopted by the servants of God, and how they might endanger both them and the people.
329. For what reasons would God require the Levites themselves the tithe?

H. LAWS OF THE RED HEIFER AND UNCLEANNESS
(19:1-22)

TEXT

Chapter 19:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 2. This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke. 3. And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth

without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face: 4. And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times. 5. And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: 6. And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. 7. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. 8. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. 9. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin. 10. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

11. He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. 12. He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. 13. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him. 14. This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. 15. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. 16. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. 17. And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a

vessel: 18. And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: 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. 20. But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean. 21. And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even. 22. And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 19:1. Then the Lord said unto Moses, and Aaron, 2. "This is the regulation of the Law which the Lord has commanded, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer, without defect, on which no yoke has ever been put; 3. and you shall give her to Eleazar the priest, in order that he may bring her outside the camp. And she shall be slaughtered in his presence. 4. Then Eleazar the priest shall take some of her blood upon his finger and sprinkle of her blood toward the front of the Tent of Meeting seven times. 5. After this, the heifer shall be burned in his sight: her skin, her flesh, her blood, with her refuse shall she be burned. 6. And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet material and throw it into the midst of the burning heifer. 7. Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, after which he shall come into the camp; and he shall be unclean until the evening. 8. The one who burns the heifer shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until the evening. 9. And a man who is clean shall

collect the ashes of the heifer and put them outside the camp in a clean place; they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification offering. 10. And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the evening. And this shall be a law forever to the children of Israel, as well as to the foreigner who sojourns among them.

11. " 'Anyone who touches the corpse of any man shall be unclean for seven days. 12. If he purifies himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall not be clean. 13. Whoever touches a dead body of any man who has died but does not cleanse himself defiles the tabernacle of the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Since the water of sprinkling was not thrown upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness still is upon him. 14. " 'This is the Law: when a man dies in a tent, all who come into the tent, and every one who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days. 15. And every open vessel which has no lid fastened upon it is unclean. 16. Any one who touches one who is killed with a sword in the open field, or a corpse, or a man's bone, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. 17. For the unclean persons they shall take some ashes of the burnt offering and running water shall be added in a container; 18. then a clean person shall take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, upon all the vessels, upon the people who were there, and upon that one who touched a bone, or one killed, or a corpse, or a grave; 19. and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; in this manner on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean at evening. 20. " 'But the man who shall be unclean and shall not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the congregation because he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord, since he has not had the water of sprinkling thrown upon him; he is unclean. 21. And it shall be a perpetual regulation for them that he who sprinkles the water of sprinkling shall wash his clothes; and he

who touches the water of sprinkling shall be unclean until evening; and anything the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.' "

COMMENTARY

Attitudes toward death have been many and varied in all ages, and they have run the gamut of human emotions. Perhaps the predominant attitude has been a combination of fear and frustration. Along with the varying sentiments held toward death itself are the attitudes toward the dead. From the most ancient days have come the beliefs that the living would be contaminated by contact with any corpse. Nobody knows where the belief arose, since it is, with notable exceptions, found in various records throughout the world.

If the living man was looked upon as the creation of God in whom lived His very breath, the corpse quickly suggested the departure of this breath, or spirit. It was nothing but the clay from which man had been originally made (see Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:7; 3:19). God had not yet revealed the marvelous full promises of eternal life in heaven; these remained for full disclosure through His Son and the Spirit-inspired writers of the New Testament. But death was formidable, and Sheol, the abode of the dead, mysterious. The fact of death was viewed as the result of man's sin since the time of Adam (Gen. 2:17). When a man died, he was a symbol of sin, and his body a source of defilement to the living.

Carefully detailed instructions now are given by the Lord to provide for the purification of one who had come into contact with a dead body. Of the sacrifice of the red heifer, *PC* comments, "This offering was obviously intended, apart from its symbolic significance, to be studiously simple and cheap. In contradiction to the many and costly and ever-repeated sacrifices of the Sinaitic legislation, this was a single individual, a female, and of the most ordinary colour of cattle, and a young heifer is of less value than any other beast of its kind," p. 240.

The stipulations are clear the red heifer must be unblemished, and one which had never been used for work under the yoke. Delivered to Eleazar, son of Aaron, the heifer then was killed outside the encampment. A small sample of her blood—such as would adhere to the priest's finger—was then brought toward the front of the Tent of Meeting to be sprinkled there seven times, after which the animal was burned up in its entirety. Wood from the cedar, along with hyssop and scarlet were thrown into the fire. Both the priest and the one presiding over the burning of the heifer bathed themselves and their clothing, remaining unclean until the evening. During this time, one who was clean took the heifer's ashes and preserved them for the purifying water. This liquid was used to remove uncleanness from death, as well as to cleanse a leprous man or house (see Lev. 14:4f., 49-52).

Uncleanness from coming in contact with a dead body lasted for seven days. During this time the unclean person was required to offer himself on the third and seventh days for cleansing with the purification water. Failure to comply with this regulation would result in his being cut off from his people. Such a one became as much as dead, even to his immediate family, and forfeited all of the rights and privileges extended to the chosen people. The threat is great enough to impress all with the severity of the offense.

Beyond actually coming into contact with a corpse, the Israelite might be rendered unclean by entering the place of habitation in which death had occurred, or by touching any uncovered vessel within the dwelling. His uncleanness was of the same days' duration, and required the same manner of expurgation. Outside the dwelling, contamination might result from touching the corpse of one killed out of doors by the sword, or touching any remains of the corpse, or even the grave in which such a body had been placed.

The mode of purification remained the same in all above instances. Verse 17 specifies the use of "living" water—water from a flowing source, such as a river—as the basic ingredient.

The water was to be administered by means of a twig of hyssop, at the hands of one who was clean. The water was administered to the contaminated man, the dwelling which had been made unclean, and all furnishings on the two days specified. Two facts emphasize the importance of the entire provision: it is termed "a perpetual statute", a phrase reserved for matters of the most solemn importance; and, the penalty is repeated for the sake of underscoring the significance. Of the circumstance and the remedy, *PC* says, "But the whole design of this ordinance, down to its minutest detail, was to stamp upon physical death a far-reaching power of defiling and separating from God, which extended even to the very means Divinely appointed as a remedy," (p. 242).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

330. Where and when did the belief arise that the living would be contaminated by contact with the dead?
331. Show how the attitude and instructions here, as well as the Biblical teachings regarding man, make this account stand in contrast with pagan superstitions.
332. What reasons have been suggested for the selection of a red heifer in this offering?
333. For what special purposes was the purifying water to be used in conjunction with death and the dead?
334. Explain what it would mean to an Israelite to be "cut off from among his people."
335. How might an individual become contaminated without actually coming into contact with a dead body?
336. What is "hyssop" and how was it to be used in the purification ceremony?
337. Can you see in this law some suggestion of an explanation for the conduct of the priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan, (Luke 10:30-32)?
338. What lesson was being impressed upon the people's minds through the law of purification from uncleanness by the dead?

II. KADESH TO HESHBON (20:1-21:35)

A. DEATH OF MIRIAM v. 1

TEXT

Chapter 20:1. Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 20:1. Then the children of Israel, the entire congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed at Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there.

COMMENTARY

Now the period of wandering has ended. Presumably, all those who had lived under the sentence of death outside of the Promised Land are either dead or will die within this, the fortieth year since leaving Egypt. Moses stresses the fact that it is the entire congregation which assembles at Kadesh. They may have touched in at this spot many times during the years of wandering, but now they are brought together for a clear purpose: the time has arrived to begin the last phase of their journey and to enter Canaan. Their last great decision had been reached here—that they would not follow Joshua and Caleb in claiming the Promised Land immediately after the spies had returned from their mission. A totally different attitude now seems to pervade the crowd with reference to coming into their assigned inheritance. But is far more than a simple brief trip due north, as geography would indicate. They face a long journey, through hostile country; they will be ungrateful, just as their fathers had been, for God's provisions; they will murmur when they are in trouble or in short supply of food or water; they will be brought into conflict with many armies among the countries they visit; they will yield to strong temptations in immorality and suffer the bitter consequences. Yet there is a great

difference: at least a vast majority will rise to the occasion and their influence will dominate the nation. They will recognize the leading hand of the Lord and follow more willingly. They will be granted victory on the battlefield and physical necessities in the camp. It is a major turning point in their tempestuous history.

The very first incident related upon their return to Kadesh is the brief, almost casual, note of the death of Miriam. If this seems curt or indifferent, let the following facts be noted: Miriam had been far from exemplary on occasion; in the entire Bible, the deaths of very few women are noted at all; when the death of anyone is mentioned, it is ordinarily little more than a simple statement of the fact; her death appears to have been from natural causes, since there is no reason to associate the fact with any misconduct, past or present; the thrust of the account demands that we move forward, and undue or excessive details now would interrupt the flow of Moses' account; and, finally, neither of her brothers was ultimately to enter Canaan, and all were excluded by their various offenses. Aaron would expire in the fifth month of the same year, while Moses' death occurred almost at the close of the year. *RCP* adds that while Moses and Aaron died "by the mouth of God," the phrase is not used here (p. 155).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

339. Identify the Wilderness of Zin, establishing its borders on all sides. Distinguish this wilderness from the Wilderness of Sin.
340. Can you give any reasonable explanation of the fact that so little is said of the wandering period?
341. Why did the Israelites not simply march north from Kadesh into the Promised Land?
342. Mention of Miriam's death seems almost casual. Why is it given so little attention? Discuss your answer.
343. What evidence is there that we have now entered the fortieth year since the Exodus?
344. Compute Miriam's age at the time of her death.

B. SIN OF MOSES AT MERIBAH vv. 2-13

TEXT

Chapter 20:2. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. 3. And the people chode with Moses and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! 4. And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? 5. And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. 6. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them.

7. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 8. Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. 9. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. 10. And Moses took Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? 11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

12. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. 13. This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 20:2. Now there was no water for the congregation;

and they came together against Moses and against Aaron. 3. And the people argued with Moses, saying, "We wish we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! 4. Why have you brought the congregation up into this wilderness? So that we and our cattle should die here? 5. It is no place for seed, or for figs, or for vines, or for pomegranates; and there is no water to drink." 6. Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the congregation to the door of the Tent of Meeting, and they fell upon their faces;

7. and the glory of the Lord appeared to them, and the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 8. "Take the rod and gather the congregation together, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock in front of their eyes; and it shall give forth water. You will bring forth water for them from the rock; in this manner you will give the congregation and their animals a drink." 9. So Moses took the rod from the presence of the Lord as he commanded him. 10. Then Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together in front of the rock and said unto them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water from this rock for you?" 11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with the rod he struck the rock twice: and water came forth abundantly so that the congregation and their animals drank.

12. And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." 13. These are the waters of Meribah, where the children of Israel contended with the Lord, and he was sanctified by them.

COMMENTARY

Kadesh has not been identified with certainty, and it is thought to designate either a large district of desert land in the wilderness of Zin, or a smaller area about a large natural spring. Nothing was said of a shortage of water when the Israelites first camped here. The present cause may have derived from the season or from an unusually dry period. In saying there was "no

water", Moses may have intended only that whatever supply they had was inadequate to serve the needs of so large a multitude. Since water is essential both to the people and their large herds and flocks, a great quantity would be required regularly. When their requirements are not met, they revert to the manners of their fathers, assembling to protest against Moses and Aaron, (Ex. 17).

Whether the older Israelites had died en masse toward the end of the wandering period or their deaths were spread throughout that time, the surviving ones expressed their preference to join the dead rather than endure the discomforts of being waterless. Certainly the situation would be far from comfortable; but a review of the history of the nation would show that God had never abandoned them in any time of need. This is a time for faithtesting, and they are unprepared. Their charge that they have been brought into an "evil place," (v. 4), reflects only their momentary circumstance. They had not, for the most part, seen any of the bondage in Egypt; and on the other hand, their lives had been spent in the time of wandering. Hardships could not have been new and strange to them.

The evaluation of Kadesh is correct: it is not a place for an agricultural people, and it is far from ideal for their animals. While the Israelites are not at this time agricultural, they, like the Egyptians, may have come to depend largely upon the produce of the land—a fact of which their fathers had loudly complained, (Num. 11:5), when they grew tired of the manna.

Moses and Aaron react properly at first, going before the Lord on their faces to determine His will and His course of action. Without Him they are powerless and at the mercy of the people. But they stand ready to do whatever may be required of them. Their wait was not long when the glory of Jehovah came unto them, and His words have a familiar ring. They are to take the rod (almost certainly that which had been used as a sign before Pharaoh, and at the parting of the waters of the Red Sea), approach "the rock" (otherwise unidentified, but surely a prominent landmark at the camp site), and produce the water so desperately needed.

Initially it appears that Moses will do exactly as the Lord has asked. He gathers the assembly and, after rebuking them by labelling them rebels, addresses himself to the problem. And what was his sin? Some have pointed to the fact that Moses used the plural "we" in reference to the miracle soon to be performed, thus seeming to equate his part in the miracle with the Lord's; or, to say the least, sharing somewhat in it. Others point to the fact that Moses struck the rock twice, whether motivated by anger, righteousness, or impatience; still others remind us that he was told only to speak to the rock, and should not have touched it at all. Any one of these might have been enough, but if we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, God Himself refers to Moses' failure to glorify His name (v. 12), thus singling out the greatest offense.

We should not be surprised that water gushed forth from the rock in spite of Moses' error. God did not intend that the people should suffer, and He sent an abundant supply to care for them and their beasts. His rebuke is properly spoken to Moses and Aaron, and doubtless His verdict was given in private, for their ears alone: they would not be privileged to lead their people in the final triumphant step into the Promised Land. It was a most bitter sentence, but it underscores the grievous nature of the offense. A special weight of responsibility rests upon the shoulders of those entrusted with places of authority and leadership (cf. James 3:1). Since their actions influence many others directly, they must be most careful at all times. The error of Moses was public. Had God ignored it, or had Moses gone unpunished, the people could rightly accuse Him of biased treatment. This God is incapable of doing. His judgments are impersonal, altogether fair and constant.

The name "Meribah" is used of this place, as it had been used in the early days of Israel's exodus (see Ex. 17:7). The similarity between the two locations rests upon their need for water, their bitter complaints, and satisfaction through divine assistance. Otherwise, the narratives are most dissimilar, and cannot be confused. Even in these unusual circumstances, God was "sanctified in them", that is, as PC says, "He revealed there

his holiness and power, and put to silence their evil murmurings against Him. He was sanctified in them all the more abundantly because Moses and Aaron failed to sanctify him in the eyes of the people; but what they failed to do he brought to pass without their agency," (p. 254).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

345. Since the Israelites must have continually relied upon God's providence in the past for the great quantity of water they needed, why should they suddenly show this strong doubt?
346. Why should the people blame Moses and Aaron for their problem?
347. What type of country surrounds Kadesh?
348. Do you believe God deliberately delayed bringing water to the Israelites? If so, for what purposes?
349. How could the people understand this area to be an "evil place"?
350. Compare the list of the foods they now miss with those given when the nation had first removed from Egypt. Explain the differences.
351. Some have suggested that Moses used Aaron's budded rod in the incident here. Why is this unlikely?
352. What explanations have been given for Moses' sin at "the rock"? Which do you accept, and why?
353. Explain why God sent water forth from the rock in spite of this fact.
354. Does it seem fair to you that Moses should be prohibited from leading the people into the Promised Land on the basis of this single act of error? Defend your answer.
355. What similarities can you find between the two incidents involving "Meribah"?
356. What do you learn of God's justice from the incident?

C. PASSAGE REFUSED THROUGH EDMOM vv. 14-21

TEXT

Chapter 20:14. And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: 15. How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers: 16. And when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border. 17. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. 18. And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. 19. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet. 20. And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. 21. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 20:14. Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, "Thus says your brother Israel, 'You know all the difficulty which has come upon us: 15. how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time. Egypt treated us badly, as well as our fathers. 16. When we cried to the Lord, He heard our voice, sent an angel, and brought us out of Egypt; and, lo, we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. 17. Let us pass through your country, I pray you. We will not pass through the fields nor through the vineyards, nor will we drink of the water of your wells. We will go by the King's Highway; we will not turn to the

right or to the left until we have passed through your country.' ” 18. But Edom replied to him, “You shall not pass through me lest I come out with the sword against you.” 19. And the children of Israel said to him, “We will go by the highway. And if I or my cattle drink any of your water, I will pay for it. I will do no damage; just let me pass through on foot only.” 20. But he said, “You shall not pass through.” And Edom came out against him with many people and a strong force. 21. In this way Edom refused to allow Israel passage through his border; so Israel turned him away.

COMMENTARY

When the Israelites refused to enter the land of Canaan the first time they came to the region of Kadesh, they were turned away from Kadesh by the warring Amalekites and Canaanites (14:45). This may be the reason they now choose not to enter Canaan from the south—the direct route—choosing instead the long march around the south of the Dead Sea and an approach from east of the Jordan. Because Moses does not consult the Lord in the decision, it is safe to assume that he had already been informed that the march would follow such a route.

Even without the detour required around the borders of Edom, going from Kadesh to Jericho via the southern route involved prolonging the trip extensively, through much more formidable territory. But it was a wiser choice than a confrontation with their previous enemies. Such a route required the permission of the king of Edom, through whose territory the large troupe must pass. The Edomites knew of the general circumstances (v. 14), since news of their origin and travels must certainly have spread throughout all adjacent lands. When Moses recites the history briefly, it is a polite prelude to a fair proposal. He asks permission for his people to pass through Edom without imposing hardship of any kind upon the residents. The population of Edom was never large, and the country had little tillable land. The Israelites might have consumed their resources in a relatively short time. Reassurance that the people would take nothing from field, vineyard, or

even the wells should have allayed any fears. It was a strong promise, and perhaps the Edomite king thought enforcement of the pledge, however sincerely given, was impossible.

Not wishing to incur the wrath of the king, nor to engage his forces in battle, Moses is compelled to agree to a detour. Even the pledge to stay on the trade route, and to reimburse the Edomites for any items consumed, even for any water, is fruitless. The adamant stand of the king might well account in part for later feelings of antipathy between the two peoples. The march turns again, and an additional 200 miles is imposed upon them.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

357. What reasons possibly explain why the Israelites did not move directly north from Kadesh into the land of Canaan?
358. Consult a good map, and estimate the additional distance the tribes were required to travel when they were refused permission to pass through Edom.
359. How might the Edomites have heard the story of the history of Israel's servitude and delivery from Egypt?
360. Why was the proposed trip through Edom a potentially disastrous event for the Edomites? What safeguards did Moses offer?
361. Of what was the king of Edom actually afraid?
362. Trace the genealogical lines of the Israelites and the Edomites to find their relationship.

D. DEATH OF AARON vv. 22-29

TEXT

Chapter 20:22. And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor. 23. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, 24. Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land

which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. 25. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor: 26. And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. 27. And Moses did as the Lord commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. 29. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 20:22. And they traveled from Kadesh, and the children of Israel, the entire congregation, came to Mount Hor. 23. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, near the border of the land of Edom, 24. "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: he shall not enter into the land I have given the children of Israel, because you rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. 25. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son and bring them up to Mount Hor. 26. Strip Aaron of his garments, and put them on Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and he shall die there." 27. And Moses did as the Lord commanded; and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. And Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the children of Israel mourned for thirty days.

COMMENTARY

About one day's journey northeast of Kadesh is a tall, easily recognizable peak often thought to be this Mount Hor. Positive identification has not been made, although Jebel Harun is near

Petra, well inside the borders of Edom. The essential portion of the country lies north of this point, and it is through this area the Israelites were not permitted to march. Here God chooses to call Aaron to the peak of the "mountain on top of a mountain," to be the scene of his death. The second of the famous children of Amram and Jochebed is soon to die in the fortieth year of the wandering.

The death of Aaron, like that of Moses, comes before the Israelites enter the land of Promise; and it is for the same reason: the disobedience at Meribah. They have shared the crime, and they share the punishment. Although the death of Moses is delayed, it still deprived him of what must have been the strongest yearning of his life—entrance into the new Land. Aaron's life was plagued by some rather glaring sins, such as the construction of the golden calf (Ex. 32:1ff.); his self-exaltation and sedition against Moses, along with Miriam's harsh criticisms (12:1-11); and this last, the presumptuous wrong at Meribah. Any of these might have excluded him from Canaan, but God quite apparently considers the final offense to be the worst.

God gave special instructions to be carried out in conjunction with Aaron's death and his successor. The death would come on top of Hor, and the priestly robes, stripped from his body, should be placed upon Eleazar his third son, as God's next man chosen for the office of the high priest. The first sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, were victims of their own disobedience, and died in offering strange fire before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-2). Besides Eleazar, there was a younger son, Ithamar. Together they had served with Aaron after the death of their brothers (3:4); but only one could occupy the high priesthood, and Eleazar is chosen.

Among all the beautiful Hebrew expressions, none is more expressive than the phrase, given at death, "he was gathered unto his people." Far more than merely euphemistic, the thought had been used of the patriarchs (Gen. 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:33, and elsewhere), and suggests a continuity of fellowship beyond the grave, and more than an elementary concept of the pleasantness of reunion with those we have known and loved in

this life. It is one of the clearest assertions of this doctrine in the Old Testament.

God's instructions were carefully followed. With the people watching, the two men carry out their roles.

Mourning was always a symbolic rite among the Hebrews, and might last for an extended period of time—not usually less than a week if the deceased were of any prominence. The entire nation mourned for Aaron for thirty days, indicating that he was a man of no little respect.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

363. Identify Mount Hor. Distinguish this from the other mountain of the same name.
364. Why was Aaron not permitted to enter the land of Canaan?
365. Which of his sins was responsible for this exclusion? Why?
366. Why was Aaron's firstborn son not selected to succeed his father to the high priesthood?
367. Detail the instructions God gave to be carried out at the death of Aaron.
368. Show the symbolism and the deeper meanings of the term, to be "gathered unto one's people".
369. How long had the Israelites mourned for these people: Jacob? Joseph? Miriam? Aaron?
370. What actions were involved in this mourning?

E. VICTORY AT HORMAH 21:1-3

TEXT

Chapter 21:1. And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners. 2. And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. 3. And the Lord hearkened to the

voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:1. When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the Negev, heard that Israel came by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners. 2. And Israel made a vow to the Lord and said, "If you will indeed deliver these people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." 3. And the Lord listened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities; and he called the name of the place Hormah.

COMMENTARY

The Israelites had come approximately sixty miles from the region of the Canaanites since leaving Kadesh. The raid of Arad's king was quite apparently caused by false information, since Israel had headed away from this area. Perhaps they thought this was a guise, and that Israel would return to attack them. The term translated "by the way of the spies" is probably incorrect. Most of the more recent translations use the term "Atharim", which must be a local place name. The Canaanites held the territory of what would later be the southern portion of the land of Judah, to the wilderness of Zin. The Israelites had passed through this section en route to Mount Hor. The offensive action of the Canaanites is aimed at taking the lead away from the Israelites by beating them to the attack. Their adventure is at least temporarily successful when they gain prisoners from their foray.

The vow of the Israelites is simple. If Jehovah will grant them victory, they will pronounce a kind of anathema upon the cities of the Canaanites. It was a means of designating them for total destruction, with no booty to be divided among the conquerors. The purpose, as *PC* affirms, would be to remove them "from the sphere of private hatred, revenge, and cupidity,

and place (them) upon a higher level" (p. 270). The pledge is passed to the location, "Hormah", or, the "place of the ban." It is not altogether clear whether the term was intended for a single location, or for all the Canaanite cities in the general area of the attack. Carrying out the pledge necessarily must be deferred, since the Israelites have not intended to enter Canaan from the south. Fulfillment of the vow is mentioned in Joshua 12:14, although nothing unusual is said to have occurred at the time.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

371. Why should the Canaanites go so far from their territory to attack Israel, when the Israelites were not immediately threatening them?
372. What territory is included in 'Arad'?
373. Give the terms of Israel's vow unto the Lord.
374. Give the meaning of 'Hormah', and tell why it fits the occasion.
375. In what way was the promise to destroy Arad any different from the instructions of God regarding other pagan cities?
376. When was the destruction of Hormah carried out?

F. INCIDENT OF THE BRASS SERPENT vv. 4-9

TEXT

Chapter 21:4. And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. 5. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loathed this light bread. 6. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people. and much people of Israel died.

7. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have

sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:4. From Mount Hor they traveled by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the heart of the people was very much disturbed because of the route. 5. And the people spoke against God and against Moses. "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, nor is there any water; and we detest this miserable bread." 6. Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people; and they bit the people, and many of the people of Israel died.

7. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that He take the serpents away from us." And Moses prayed for the people. 8. Then the Lord said unto Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9. So Moses made a brass serpent and put it upon a pole. And it happened that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the brass serpent, he lived.

COMMENTARY

The journey of the Israelites now takes them through the long, narrow geological fault, known as the Arabah, which extends through the entire Jordan valley, and for a total of approximately 3,000 miles. Its northern extremity reaches north of Syria; its southern terminus is found deep within the African continent. Of variable width and depth, it includes the

country of Edom. However, the western portion of the valley was all but desolate and uninhabited, and it is through this side the Israelites march. Their course will take them all the way to the northeastern tip of the Red Sea, which is the Gulf of Aqabah at this point. It is rugged country all the way.

The trials of travel, as well as the great length added to their trip because of the stubbornness of the Edomites, doubtless incites this latest complaint of the people, and they take up the common refrain so often sung in the past: how much they had rather give up the present circumstance to return to their former state in Egypt. Their special criticism is turned upon the manna and a lack of water. Nowhere is it suggested that the people were actually without at least their barest necessities. The manna fell daily, and water had always been provided as needed.

Of the sending of the serpents, the Midrash has said, quoting the supposed words of the Lord: "Let the serpent, who was punished for speaking slander (Genesis 3), come and exact punishment from those who speak slander. Let the serpent, to whom all foods taste alike, come and exact punishment from these ungrateful people for whom one food (manna) could have a variety of tastes," *RCP*, p. 161.

PC enters an unusual thought in reference to the serpents' identity, claiming that, rather than being poisonous vipers, the term "burning" or "fiery" refers to an unusual coloration—a brilliant and metallic lustre. The modifying word *saraph* seems to indicate such brilliance in two other uses (Ezekiel 1:7 and Isaiah 6:2); but, in reference to the serpents, such a position seems illogical. The snake bites cause death among the Israelites, and the bronze image is erected to prevent such death, which would hardly be sensible if the bite were harmless. When *PC* points out that certain "very deadly snakes in Australia . . . are known as "copper snakes", the point is irrelevant, since they are on the wrong continent. No such serpents have been positively identified in the Arabah.

With the camp in an uproar at this latest turn of events, the

people once more turn to Moses; but this time it is in air of desperation and concern. They confess, "We have sinned," and identify their sin as critical talk about the Lord. They ask for Moses' direct intercession in their behalf. It is the first time they have asked for such a favor; on all other occasions of Moses' intervention, it was his own unsolicited action. Their hope is clear; that the serpents may be removed.

It is doubtful that either Moses or the people quite expected the answer which the Lord gave. They would have been shocked at the erection of the image of a serpent for two reasons: God Himself had instructed them to make no graven image of any creature in the Decalogue; and, there would seem to be no connection whatever between a brass image and the relief they sought. Clearly, however, the remedy God suggests is a test, however elementary, of their faith. He who had prohibited image-making for the sake of idolatrous practices has ordered this action for quite another purpose, to show His great power even over the simple creatures of the dust. An unusual kind of faith would be required of the people of Israel if they were to be healed. They must look upon the bronze standard in the center of the camp. The command cannot be rationalized. It is purely a test of obedient faith, such as is common in the Word of God. Man responds to a command of God, not because he understands fully the relationship between carrying out the command and receiving the pardoning favor of God, but because he believes God means exactly what He says; He will punish the disobedient and show His favor unto the obedient. To look upon the serpent is enough. Anyone believing this will be cured of the poisonous bite.

How could anyone of that day, Moses included, have known the glorious symbolism which our Lord would make of this circumstance? Although an application of the lifted serpent in the wilderness to the redeeming cross of Calvary would hardly have occurred to the Christian without Jesus' own words (John 3:14), His application is clear. Those whose shallow faith would not permit so much as a glimpse at the lifted serpent would suffer the consequences of their doubts, whereas those who

believed Moses' instructions and, in faith were to look at the standard erected by God's words would be cured. It is the exact relationship of Jesus Christ to the world. There is no salvation to that one who will not turn to the Son of God in obedient faith to seek His cleansing power. So the most detested of all creatures became a sign of the innocent Lamb of God, despised of the world, but offering Himself in behalf even of those who hated Him.

Later history shows that this brazen serpent had been kept by the people, and became an object of worship. In Hezekiah's day the practice of offering incense before the standard was ended when the good king ordered it to be broken in pieces (II Kings 18:4). Typically, the people had turned a glorious historical symbol into an object of disgraceful paganistic practice.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

377. Describe the Arabah.
378. List the factors which contributed to the complaints of the people.
379. Why would such complaints be unjustified?
380. What is the meaning of the term "fiery serpents"?
381. Discuss the possibility that Moses was referring to a specially colored snake, rather than to a venomous type.
382. If Moses is referring to the color of the serpents, explain how the people died from their bite.
383. What was the primary motive of the people in appealing to Moses to intercede for them unto the Lord?
384. What is unusual about the fact of having a serpent serve as a means of saving the people from death?
385. What relationship is there between looking at a snake's image and being cured of a poisonous bite?
386. Show how Jesus used the figure of the brazen serpent in His teaching.
387. What was the ultimate end of the brazen serpent?

G. BYPASSING MOAB vv. 10-20

TEXT

Chapter 21:10. And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth. 11. And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-abarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising. 12. And from thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared. 13. From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14. Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, 15. And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab. 16. And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

17. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: 18. The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah: 19. And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth: 20. And from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:10. And the children of Israel moved forward and camped in Oboth. 11. And they moved forward from Oboth, and camped at Iyeabarim, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, toward the sunrise. 12. From that place they left and camped in the wady of Zered. 13. From that place they left and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness extending from the boundary of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14. Therefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord,

Waheb in Suphah,
 And the wadies of the Arnon,
 15. And the slope of the valleys
 Which extends to the dwelling of Ar,
 And lies at the boundary of Moab.

16. And from there they continued to Beer: that is the well of which the Lord spoke to Moses, "Gather the people together and I will give them water.

17. Then Israel sang this song,
 Spring up, O well; sing to it:
 18. The well which the princes dug,
 Which the nobles excavated,
 With the scepter and with their staves.

And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah, 19. and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth, 20. and from Bamoth to the valley which is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which overlooks the desert.

COMMENTARY

Two stations, later mentioned (33:41-43), are omitted at this point; but there is no significance to the omission other than to make the account somewhat more brief. The stations, Zalmonah and Phunon, are not identified, and nothing of consequence occurred at either place. Oboth itself has not been located positively, although it is tentatively set by George Adam Smith on a high plateau in eastern Edom. By the time this point had been reached, Israel had completed its long, and to them unnecessary, journey around the circumference of Edom. Israel had been severely warned not to make war upon the descendants of Esau (Deut. 2:4-6), and to repay them for any provisions procured from the residents of the land. Traveling on the eastern edge of Edom was much less difficult than the former marches had been, since the mountains are almost a continuous plateau. The Edomites, by now convinced that the Israelites have no military intentions, are content to let the huge parade go by unharmed. Ije-abarim, like Oboth, has not been

certainly identified. It means, literally, "the ruins on the other side," (of the Jordan, that is). In 33:44, Ije-abarim is located on the border of Moab. Since the march took the tribes well to the east, it is likely that this encampment was near the edge of the Arabian Desert. Later the general name "Abarim" was applied to the region east of the Jordan, comparable to the area designated as "Perea" in the New Testament (such usage is to be found in Jeremiah 22:20). At the time of Moses, the name applied to the range of mountains opposite Jericho.

The so-called "valley of Zered" is commonly thought to be mistakenly used here for the Wady Kerek, which would have been crossed earlier. The next camp, established on the other side of the Arnon, must have been well to the east since the valley of the Arnon is very precipitous as the river approaches the Dead Sea, at which point it would have been impassable to the company of Israel. The Arnon itself usually formed the border between Moab and the land of the Amorites; although it was not always so, this must have been the case at the time of Moses. In the context, the phrase "on the other side of the Arnon" seems to indicate the south side of the river in the land of Moab. From such a site it would be logical to establish the point from which the territory of the Amorites could be entered. An embassy was sent to Sihon from the spot.

Concerning the fragmentary song and historical extract introduced at this point, nothing more is known. The book, *Book of the Wars of Jehovah*, has not been found. Apparently it was composed by anonymous national poets who commemorated various incidents and victories mentioned by Moses. PC asserts that such a poem demonstrates the genuineness of the fragment, as well as the original, since such a fragmentary, isolated and archaic bit obviates forgery (see p. 280). In its original form, the book may have been a compilation of odes celebrating the glorious acts of the Lord. The portion in v. 14 has neither subject nor verb, indicating its familiarity at the time it was incorporated into the text.

The positive, victorious tone of the poem leaves no doubt about the great hand of God in the affairs of His chosen people.

It anticipates the victory over Sihon, and signals the fact that the people will no longer need to depend upon some miraculous act to provide their water: they have but to dig wells. One cannot miss the marvelous contrast in attitude, shifting from very recent bitter complaint to joyous, triumphant praise. Beer Elim, mentioned in Isaiah 15:8, seems to be the spot of the encampment when the great victory song was composed and sung. It is located in the extreme northeastern sector of Moab, at the edge of the desert. The next move, to Mattanah, brings them into a less barren area. Nahaliel, "the brook of God," may designate a small tributary of the Arnon, on the route Israel followed north from that river. Bamoth, "heights", seems to indicate a site where Baal was worshiped; the full name, in this case, would be Bamoth-Baal, as in 22:41 and Joshua 13:7. The name, then, might have designated its mountainous elevation; or it could be understood to a "high place" which served as a central point for Baalism.

The text presents a problem here in the original: "And from Bamoth . . . the valley which in the field . . . Moab . . . the top . . . Pisgah." *PC* suggests a full reading: "And from the heights to the valley that is in the field of Moab, viz., the top of Pisgah," (p. 281). The field would appear to be an area north of the Arnon which is barren plateau. However, since Bamoth is a common name found elsewhere in Moab, as well as in areas where Baalism was strong, the identification is uncertain.

Passing then through the valley, which is unnamed but probably was little less than a glen rather than a wady, the troupe came to "the top of Pisgah." Pisgah is applied to a series of peaks along the plateau of northwestern Moab, overlooking the Dead Sea, and offering a commanding view of the land of Canaan. The same term also apparently includes the single peak of Mt. Nebo, and the two peaks have often been considered identical. It is said to overlook the Jeshimon, or "valley". The Jeshimon is usually associated with the area where David took refuge from Saul, the eastern section of the hills of Judea. Here it is applied to the area opposite, just east of the Dead Sea. Since the word is often used as a common noun as well as a

proper noun, there is no real confusion of terms. The people's camp will be established here until after the eastern lands have fallen to God's people, and they prepare to cross Jordan after the death of Moses.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

388. What reasons can you give that so many of the places mentioned here, and in similar passages regarding the travels of the Israelites, are difficult or impossible to identify today?
389. Examine a topographical map of the region of Edom and its environs. Why would it have been more simpler to cross the northern portion of the Arabah? Why would the Edomites not be afraid to have the Israelites cross the southern point of the country? For what reasons would the Israelites travel along the extreme eastern edge of Edom as they headed north?
390. Show how the term "Abarim" is commonly used.
391. Why is the reference to crossing the Zered probably a mistaken notation?
392. For what primary reasons would the Israelites avoid crossing the Arnon in the vicinity of the Red Sea?
393. What do you know of the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah*? When and by whom was it probably written? What is its essential purpose? How does its piecemeal nature indicate its authenticity?
394. What great change in life style is indicated in the portion of the poem recorded?
395. Explain the problem in the original text at v. 20. What is the probable meaning?
396. Explain the confusion regarding the name "Pisgah".
397. What region is usually designated by the "Jeshimon"? What more is meant here?
398. How long did the Israelites maintain their encampment here?

H. VICTORY OVER SIHON AND OG vv. 21-35

TEXT

Chapter 21:21. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22. Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king's high way, until we be past thy borders. 23. And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 24. And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon to Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. 25. And Israel took all these cities; and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon. 27. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared: 28. For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon. 29. Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites. 30. We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which reacheth unto Medeba.

31. Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. 32. And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.

33. And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. 34. And the Lord said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. 35. So they smote him, and his sons, and all his

people, until there was none left alive; and they possessed his land.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:21. And Israel sent messengers to Sihon, King of the Amorites, saying, 22. "Let me pass through your land; we will not turn aside into the fields or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well; we will go along by the King's Highway, until we have passed your borders." 23. But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his territory. He gathered all his men together and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. 24. And Israel slew him with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land from Arnon to Jabbok, as far as the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. 25. And Israel took all these cities, and Israel settled in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its villages. 26. Now Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon. 27. Therefore those who speak in similes say,

"Come to Heshbon; let it be built;
Let the city of Sihon be established.

28. "For a fire went out of Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon:
It consumed Ar of Moab,
And the lords of the high places of Arnon.

29. "Woe unto you, Moab!
You are undone, O people of Chemosh!
He made his sons fugitives,
And his daughters captives
To Sihon, king of the Amorites.

30. "So their posterity vanished from Heshbon,
As far as Dibon, and we laid waste
Until the fire spread to Medeba."

31. In this manner Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

32. And Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took its villages and drove out the Amorites who were there.

33. Then they turned and went by the way of Bashan. And Og, the king of Bashan, went out against them, he and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. 34. And the Lord said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him; I have delivered him into your hand, and all his people, and his land. You shall do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon." 35. So they slew him, his sons, and all his people until there was not a single survivor; and they took possession of his land.

COMMENTARY

Having passed through the territory controlled by the Edomites and the Moabites, the people of Israel now turn their attention to the next northern neighbors, the Amorites. Unlike the other two nations, the Amorites were not Hebrews, but Canaanites (see Gen. 10:16). The same request made before to Edom and Moab, is addressed to Sihon, and with the same results. It is rejected. To emphasize his refusal, Sihon organized his people into an army and attacked Israel. The encounter occurred at Jahaz, a site as yet unidentified, but probably was found well to the east of Israel's camp.

With the conquest of Sihon, the Israelites gained control over a large land, reaching northward to the Jabbok. This river is found about twenty-five miles north of the Dead Sea, and forty-five miles north of the Arnon. North of the Jabbok lived the Ammonites; they may well have prevented the expansion of the Amorites' territory. The primary city of the Amorites, Heshbon, had been the capital since Sihon had earlier defeated Moab. It is located about midway between the Arnon and the Jabbok, and eighteen miles east of point where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. The immediate area is a plateau of about 3000 feet elevation. Heshbon and her "daughters", the small surrounding villages, are listed in Josh. 13:17.

Victory at Heshbon gave rise to the quoted proverbs. These would have been sung by their composers, who may have been

professional balladeers. With a succession of favorable events to celebrate, their works are joyous to the Israelites and taunting to their enemies.

The first portion is sometimes thought to have been a work of satirical nature, composed by an Israelite who now challenges the Amorites to recapture their recently-lost capital of Heshbon as they had previously taken it from Moab. The second portion, v. 29, attacks the worshipers of Chemosh, who was Moab's chief god. Certain coins found at Areopolis show Chemosh a god of war armed and flanked by fiery torches. Singing of his defeat in this manner comprised an especially ironic thought. Not only was Chemosh a war god, his direct worship involved human sacrifice via the flame. In the song, Chemosh is powerless to resist Sihon who, in turn, has been soundly defeated by Israel. The third section of the poem details the consequences of Sihon's defeat. The text is obscure in the *KJV*; the *RSV* seems justified in following the *LXX*. Heshbon has been utterly destroyed, together with some of the chief cities nearby, Dibon and Medeba.

Jazer was taken next, along with its surrounding villages, which ended the resistance of the Amorites. All of the residents of the city were expelled, and it became an important city in the land of Gad under Joab.

The land of Bashan, lying well to the north of Jazer, is a broad, fertile territory lying to the east of the Sea of Galilee, and extending from Mt. Hermon to a point south and east of the Yarmuk. Edrei, the capital, lay in this corner of the land. The people were Amorites (see Josh. 2:10), but had a separate existence from those governed by Sihon. They lived in heavily fortified cities which had been considered invincible by direct assault. Apparently Og's forces left the capital for some reason and were beaten in the field. Perhaps, as *PC* offers, they were victims of their own overconfidence. Speaking as He often did, God told Moses "I have delivered him into thy hand . . . ;" He speaks of the *fait accompli* before the battle is engaged. Israel will take army, people and land, and they shall know the same end as did Sihon. And so it happened.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

399. Trace the origin of the Amorites.
400. Why should Sihon, ruler of a rather small nation, attack such a large group as the Israelites?
401. Describe the country in which the Amorites lived.
402. Show the irony in the first simile-ballad, as it relates to the Amorites, and to Moab.
403. How does the second ballad reflect upon the god Chemosh?
404. What was the ultimate fate of Jazer?
405. Show what territory was included in the land of Bashan at this time.
406. What possible explanation might there be for Og's abandoning his fortified cities in order to attack Israel in the field?

Part Four: On The Plains of Moab (22:1—36:13)

I. THE STORY OF BALAAM (22:1-24:25)

A. SUMMONS OF BALAK (22:1-6)

TEXT

Chapter 22:1. And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho.

2. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. 4. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian. Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. 5. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: 6. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou curest is cursed.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:1. Then the people of Israel set out, and they camped in the plains of Moab on the far side of the Jordan by Jericho.

2. And Balak, the son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3. And Moab was very frightened by the people, because they were numerous; and Moab was overcome by fear because of the children of Israel. 4. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up everything around us, just as the ox licks up the grass of the field." Balak, the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. 5. So he sent messengers to Balaam, son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the

River in the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, "Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the earth, and they are camping opposite me. 6. "Come now and curse this people for me, for they are too strong for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land; for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

COMMENTARY

When the Israelites bypassed Moab on their journey toward Canaan, it must have relieved the Moabites greatly. Now, after they have delivered stunning defeats to the Amorites of Sihon and Og, and have taken residence in the near vicinity of Moab, fear enters the heart of Balak the king. Gilead and Bashan have fallen, and Moab would be a logical next step. Since the Israelites are a threat to more than the Moabites alone, and since they are so numerous, Balak appeals to Midian for help. More closely related to the Israelites than were the Moabites or the Ammonites, the Midianites lived to the east of Moab. They derived their livelihood from their herds and from the caravan trade, (Gen. 36:35), and were nomadic in life style. Although the threat to Moab was more immediate than that to Midian, it was real enough to give substance to Balak's appeal.

When the account introduces Balaam into the history of Israel, we are brought face to face with one of the most mysterious and intriguing people in all the Word of God. A native of Pethor, on the bank of the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, he was quite evidently a widely known soothsayer whose counsel was sought now by Balak. He appears suddenly upon the scene in the history of Israel, playing a role of no little importance. Like Melchisedec and Cyrus, he is one of a select few whom God chose from outside the Israelite nation for His good purposes. Everything we know of him is developed in this one circumstance, and in the later notice of his death (31:8, 16). His fame was evidently widespread, since his coming to Moab involved a trip of well over four hundred miles, if Pethor is properly identified as Pitru, near Carchemish.

Opinions regarding Balaam have generally divided into two camps. Some have considered him a wizard and false prophet, an idolator who was compelled to bless Israel against his personal will. Others have thought him a genuine prophet whose downfall was occasioned by greed and ambition. As a matter of fact, there may be some truth in both positions since he seems to undergo a shift of character as the account unfolds. His name suggests that he belonged to a family in which the magical arts was inherited; hence, he is properly thought of as a wizard. Furthermore, he is never spoken of by the common term for a prophet (*nabhi*). The term used for him in Joshua 13:22 is translated properly as "soothsayer", a term never used of a prophet of God. On the other hand, Balaam has a specific knowledge of Jehovah, and his words, at least at the outset, are exactly what Jehovah called upon him to speak. In the presence of Balak and his messengers, he would call upon the Name (22:8ff.). At some earlier time at least, he had used auguries in his work, (24:1), but when he speaks for Jehovah, these means are unnecessary. It is in his favor that he rejected the request of Balak consistently to condemn Israel; but his downfall came when he betrayed his own conscience. The consistent answer to the full character of this enigmatic man remains in large part a matter of conjecture.

Although it had been forty years since Israel departed from Egypt, Balak quite properly looks upon them as much more than a disorganized, nomadic people. He may remember the accounts of their miraculous delivery from the oppressing nation, as well as the record of divine provision of their needs in a bitter territory; more recently, the ease with which they have won victories over the northern neighbors has caused Balak to show due concern. Even though they had circumvented his land, they are now a greater threat, having cut off Moab from any assistance from the North: and Midian, to whom he makes his request, is a small, almost insignificant people. The king seems backed into a corner. His move to call Balaam is an act of desperation.

What people had Balaam cursed, and which had he blessed?

We have no way of answering. Had he, indeed, by some prior power granted of the Lord been called upon to act in His behalf toward another nation? We can only guess. It may be that Balak is indulging in flattery as he expresses his confidence in Balaam, or that he relies upon his own superstitious nature by trusting in one who has come from a family noted for their auguries. Whatever the actual situation may be, the messengers are charged to bring him back with them to curse Israel.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

407. If the Israelites had intended to attack Moab, why had they not done so before they marched around the land?
408. Upon what basis does Balak appeal to Midian for help against the Israelites?
409. How were the Midianites related to the Israelites, if at all? the Moabites?
410. Using a good Bible encyclopedia or other sources, tell of the many possible methods Balaam might have used in his conjuring.
411. How might Balaam have known anything about Jehovah?
412. What later facts are known about Balaam?
413. Why should Balak have sent so far away for a soothsayer?
414. How did he know of Balaam?
415. Discuss fully the varying opinions of Bible scholars about Balaam.
416. Why are the Israelites now a much greater threat than when they marched around Moab?

B. GOD'S PROHIBITION vv. 7-14

TEXT

Chapter 22:7. And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak. 8. And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me: and

the princes of Moab abode with Balaam. 9. And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee? 10. And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, 11. Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. 12. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed. 13. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. 14. And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:7. And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian left with the fees of their divining in their hand; and they came to Balaam and gave him Balak's words. 8. And he said unto them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring back word to you according to the Lord's message to me"; and the princes of Moab lodged with Balaam. 9. And God came to Balaam and said "Who are these men with you?" 10. And Balaam said to God, "Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent unto me, saying, 11. 'Behold, a people has come from Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Come now and curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out.' " 12. And God said unto Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." 13. So Balaam rose up in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your own land; the Lord has refused to let me go with you." 14. So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

COMMENTARY

Balaam's rejection of the messengers of Balak has been variously interpreted. *IB* jumps quickly to his defense, calling him " . . . a man of the deepest integrity . . . wholly committed

to be the mouthpiece of God," (p. 250). *KD*, on the other hand, properly shows that had Balaam been a true prophet he "would at once have sent the messengers away and refused their request, as he must then have known that God would not curse His chosen people," (p. 166). *RCP* suggests cryptically that "The Holy Spirit rested on Balaam only at night. So too with all other prophets of Gentile nations," (p. 164). The word of the Lord did, in fact, come to Balaam during the night.

Whatever the "rewards of divination" may have been, certain facts are obvious: Balak no doubt was willing to pay a high price for the soothsayer's services; here is one of the distinguishing factors between the prophet of God and false prophets—such rewards were almost without exception refused by God's men, and the few exceptions allowed him only an insignificant amount which was not to be thought of as payment for services, but a provision for the livelihood of the prophet (see II Sam. 4:10; I Sam. 9:8; I Kings 14:3; II Kings 8:8ff.); charging fees for their services was a practice strictly forbidden to the prophesying priests and prophets (see Micah 3:5, 11; Amos 7:12-15; Ezek. 13:19); Balaam doubtless would have kept the offered reward unless he was instructed by the Lord not to do so.

God did not need to ask Balaam the identity of his visitors for His own sake. The probable reason for this question is to call Balaam's attention to the type of men and their proposal, both of which he is entertaining. Their request is in direct contrast with what he knows to be the will of God; it should have been unnecessary for him to await further word. That he has delayed his answer is evidence that the temptation was strong.

The response of Balaam leaves us to infer that he hopes now to influence God and perhaps even to change His course of action. He is open about his answer to the degree that he does not misrepresent the essential facts of the situation. He certainly could not have fooled the Lord about this.

God replies in simple, unequivocal terms: His people are not

to be cursed, and Balaam must dispatch his guests without concession of any kind. It is done, and they return to Balak empty handed.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

417. Show what motives Balaam might have had in dismissing the men sent by Balak.
418. Under what conditions might a prophet of God accept any payment when he rendered a service in God's name? When could he not?
419. Why did God ask Balaam about the messengers and their mission?
420. What had been indicated by Balaam's asking the men to remain overnight?
421. On what basis might Balaam have hoped that God would allow him to go to Balak?

C. BALAAM YIELDS TO BALAK vv. 15-41

TEXT

Chapter 22:15. And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honorable than they. 16. And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, let no thing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: 17. For I will promote thee unto very great honor, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. 18. And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. 19. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more. 20. And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. 21. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

22. And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the

angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him, Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. 23. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. 24. But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side, 25. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. 26. And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. 28. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? 29. And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me; I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now I would kill thee. 30. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. 31. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in his way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. 32. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: 33. And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. 34. And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displeases thee, I will get the princes of Balak.

36. And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast. 37. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee?

wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honor? 38. And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak. 39. And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth. 40. And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him. 41. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:15. Once more Balak sent princes, more and more honorable than they. 16. And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak, the son of Zippor: 'Let nothing prevent you from coming to me: 17. for I will promote you to a very high position, and I will do whatever you say to me; come and curse this people for me, I beg you.' " 18. But Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Even if Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do more or less. 19. Please, now, stay here tonight also so that I may know what more the Lord will say to me." 20. And God came to Balaam at night and said unto him, "If the men come to call you, rise up, go with them. But say only what I tell you; that is what you are to do." 21. So Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab.

22. But God's anger burned because he went; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way as his adversary. Now Balaam was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23. And the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the path, with his sword drawn in his hand; and the donkey turned aside out of the road, and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her back to the road. 24. Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on each side. 25. And when the donkey saw the the angel of the Lord, she pushed against the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot

against the wall; so he struck her again. 26. Then the angel of the Lord went on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. 27. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger burned, and he struck the donkey with a rod. 28. Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times?" 29. And Balaam said, "Because you mocked me, I wish I had a sword in my hand? then I would kill you." 33. And the donkey replied to Balaam. "Am I not your donkey, upon which you have ridden all your life until today? Have I ever been disposed to do this way to you?" And he said, "No." 31. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the path, with drawn sword in hand; and he bowed his head, and fell on his face. 32. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to confront you because your actions are against me; 33. and the donkey saw me, and turned aside before me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you now and let her live." 34. Then Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned, because I did not know you stood in the path against me; therefore, if it displeases you now, I will go back again." 35. And the angel of the Lord said, to Balaam, "Go with the men; but you shall only speak the words which I speak unto you." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

36. Now when Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, on the boundary of Arnon, at the farthest border. 37. And Balak said unto Balaam, "Did I not send and call for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I unable to honor you?" 38. Balaam said to Balak, "Lo, I have come to you! Do I have any power to speak to you at all? The message God puts in my mouth is what I must speak." 39. Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzzoth. 40. And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep and sent to Balaam and the princes who were with him. 41. And on the

next day Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal; and from that point he could see the greatest number of the people.

COMMENTARY

We may assume that Balak, unwilling to believe that Balaam would refuse his request entirely, has supposed the refusal is based upon his not offering a sufficient reward. He therefore sends a second set of messengers, of a higher station than the first, with a virtual "blank check" offer to do whatever Balaam may ask if he will curse Israel. To Balak, it is simply the second stage in the common Oriental process of haggling for a price. The use of flattery is as much a part of this process as is the increase of the price; and his using the "more honorable" princes is to the same purpose. To what honor could Balak have promoted Balaam? The offer is not specific, but it might have been the customary "unto one-half of my kingdom" such monarchs were wont to offer; or he might have had in mind a special place of well-paid service in the practice of his auguries. In any event, the request has not changed: he wants the Israelites cursed.

The reply of Balaam seems convincing enough. He will abide by the instructions of God, regardless of the offer. If his words were sincerely spoken, it is exceedingly difficult to understand the incidents which follow. His later actions are better understood if we adopt the analysis of *KD*: "His thirst for honour and wealth was not so overcome by the revelations of the true God, that he could bring himself to give up his soothsaying, and serve the living God with an undivided heart. Thus it came to pass, that through the appeal addressed to him by Balak, he was brought into a situation in which, although he did not venture to attempt anything in opposition to the will of Jehovah, his heart was never thoroughly changed; so that, whilst he refused the honours and rewards that were promised by Balak, and pronounced blessings upon Israel in the strength of the Spirit of God that came upon him, he was overcome immediately afterwards by the might of the sin of his own

unbroken heart, fell back into the old heathen spirit, and advised the Midianities to entice the Israelites to join in the licentious worship of Baal Peor (chapt. xxxi. 16)," pp. 162, 163.

For the second time, Balaam extends the hospitality of his home to the king's legates. But what more could he expect God to say which had not already been said? Must God repeat His instructions again and again to confirm the details? Unless Balaam had been susceptible to coveting the reward, on the remote hope that God had changed His will, he would have needed no further word whatever. But on matters of this kind, it is totally inconceivable that God should have changed the message in any details whatever. To insure that His will is known to Balaam, He appears during the night. The instructions, while superficially different in allowing Balaam to go with the king's messengers, yet retains the firm instructions that the seer is to speak nothing more nor less than he is told by Jehovah—hardly what the man had wanted.

It is inferred (*RCP* p. 167), that there is great significance in the fact that Balaam saddled his animal himself: he arose in great haste, eager to set forth on the journey, and still hoping for some consideration which would favor his own will. *PC* hypothesizes that Balaam was permitted to go with the men in order that he might eventually be punished for his covetousness and his longing to disobey God, (p. 292).

God's use of the ass in the manner which follows should not surprise us unduly, however unnatural it might seem at first glance, we must confess its effectiveness. If the event is unique, this fact alone in no way mitigates against the account itself. The angel, invisible to Balaam, is observed by the ass. The seer's eyes had been momentarily rendered incapable of seeing God's messenger (see v. 31). Something of Balaam's haste in the trip is indicated by his anger in beating the animal (v. 23). He would brook no delay; but the Lord had other plans. The impatience of Balaam is indicated again when he attempts to ride through the blocked path, much against the wish of the ass, whose

reaction results in crushing the foot of Balaam against the vineyard wall beside the road. In a final move to resist the angel, the ass balks, falling to the road. It is the final indignity, and God speaks through the mouth of the steed; Balaam engages it in conversation. This is not as strange as it might seem at first thought, since Balaam, as a prophet, had heard God speak in various means in the past; he may have used such a method himself, by some sort of trickery, to impress his clientele; and, being bitterly angry at the moment, he might have responded without any deep thought whatever to the astonishing circumstances (see *PC*, p. 293).

The appearance of the angel of God is made possible at this time when the eyes of Balaam are opened. Balaam does not need to ask his identity or, in fact, his mission. He has come, not to rebuke the seer for his cruelty to a dumb animal, but to chastise him for his perversity. Balaam is by no means flattered to learn that the ass has been more responsive to the manifestation of God's influence than has he. Now he learns that God is not displeased that he should go with the men of Balak. His intentions and his hope for evil gain are at the seat of his problem. Ideally, his conscience should have been awakened by the episode. Perhaps he struggled within himself whether or not to continue his trip; or, he may have so hoped to profit from his visit to Balak that his reaction was but momentary. With the stern warning of the angel that he is to speak nothing excepting what he is told, he is sent on his way.

When Balaam arrived in Moab, Balak might logically assume that he had come for one reason—to do as he was bidden. Balak hurried to meet his distinguished guest as soon as he reached the northern border at the River Arnon. He issued a mild rebuke that Balaam had not come at the first summons, but was pleased that he had come at all. Immediately Balaam repeated what he had been told to say: he would say nothing except the words God put in his mouth. Then together they proceeded to Kirjath-huzoth, where the king had large herds of animals slaughtered as a sacrifice in honor of Balaam and the honorable men, in anticipation of a favorable verdict from the seer. The

following day he was brought to look out upon all the people he had been asked to curse.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

422. Can you give any reason that Balak had not sent his most important princes to ask for Balaam's service the first time he made the contact?
423. Why might he expect Balaam to change his mind upon the second contact?
424. How does Balak's offer this time differ from the first?
425. The answer Balaam gives seems quite convincing. Compare it with his words to the first messengers.
426. Was it wrong for Balaam to extend an over-night invitation to the princes? why or why not?
427. Has God changed his mind about the message He will have delivered to Balak?
428. God appeared to Balaam during the night, and instructed him to return to Moab with his guests. Later He sent His angel to intervene on the trip. How can you reconcile these facts?
429. Why did Balaam not see the angel which appeared in the road.
430. How does the man show his impatience to resume his journey?
431. Explain how the ass was able to talk, and what was the gist of what it said?
432. Of what actions was Balaam guilty in bringing the Lord to confront him?
433. Balak's actions prove he was eager to meet Balaam and hear his prophecies. What did he do?
434. How resolute was the seer in claiming that he could speak nothing excepting what God revealed to him? Give proof.
435. Suggest the primary reason Balak might have wanted Balaam to see the multitude of the people in Moab.

D. THE FIRST BLESSING OF BALAAM (23:1-12)

TEXT

Chapter 23:1. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams. 2. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. 3. And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the Lord will come to meet me; and whatsoever he showeth me I will tell thee. And he went to a high place. 4. And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. 5. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. 6. And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab. 7. And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the Mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. 8. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? 9. For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. 10. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! 11. And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether. 12. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth? 13. And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: curse me them from thence.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 23:1. And Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars for me here, and supply me with seven bulls and seven rams." 2.

And Balak did as Balaam asked; and Balak and Balaam sacrificed upon each altar one bullock and one ram. 3. And Balaam said to Balak, "Stand beside your burnt offering, and I will go. Perhaps the Lord will come to meet me; and whatever he shows me, I will tell you." And he went to a steep place. 4. And God met Balaam. And Balaam said to him, "I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered upon each altar a bull and a ram." 5. And the Lord put a message in Balaam's mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and this is what you shall speak." 6. And He returned to him, and behold, he stood by his burnt offering, he and all the princes of Moab. 7. And he began his message, and said, "Balak has brought me from Aram: the king of Moab from the eastern mountains. Come, curse Jacob for me, and come, denounce Israel. 8. How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord has not defied? 9. For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him; lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. 10. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!" 11. And Balak said unto Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have done nothing but bless them." 12. And he answered, "Must I not be careful to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth?"

COMMENTARY

The first action of Balaam now is to order the construction of seven altars, upon each of which a bullock and a ram is sacrificed. Numerologists would have the number of great significance, based upon an ancient and almost universal belief to this effect. Among the Hebrews, it typified the seven days of creation, and was applied to those matters which pleased God. Such may have been the thought as Balaam specified the circumstances under which he would deliver his message. Since he has given the orders, it seems correct to assume that the sacrifices were given in the name of Jehovah. Balak made certain that the precise instructions were carried out: indeed,

he, not Balaam, seems to have presided at the sacrifices since the subject of the verb "offered" seems originally to have been singular, and Balak requests the king to stand beside the offering while he consults the Lord for His words.

Just what did Balaam now expect the Lord to tell him? Is there any reasonable ground upon which he might hope the situation will turn to his own advantage? We can hardly imagine what rationalizations he might have permitted in his mind; but he pledges to relate only what the Lord tells him. Is he playing both ends against the middle, ready now to convey God's message with an eye to some future moment when he will disregard the message if Balak makes it really worth while and the reward is sufficiently large? It would be an interesting ploy. The "high place" is literally a "bald height". Pagan prophets were wont to choose such sites among the barren mountain peaks, where they followed their auguries.

Immediately God informed Balaam of the words to be given Balak. They have not changed. When he spoke to the king, Balaam at first reviewed the situation, beginning with the request made of his services. He had been asked to curse Jacob (the Israelites), a request God disallowed altogether. These people had been especially blessed, and Balak had asked the impossible. When Balaam returned, he delivered the prophecies exactly as he received them. His words were a glowing tribute to the people the Lord loved and chose as His own; they could neither be cursed nor defied; they were unique among all the nations; they were special recipients of God's blessings and favor; they had become a vast multitude under His care; and, the prophet himself hoped for a fate as great as theirs.

Upon hearing these words, Balak is distraught. They are far from his expectations, and quite a bitter disappointment. He protests vigorously, blaming Balaam, who reaffirms that he can do nothing other than what God has ordered him to do. Acting upon the concept that the gods had limited and prescribed areas of jurisdiction and power, Balak requests that the same ritual be performed at another place—in a more favored spot, where all the Israelites are not visible.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

436. Explain the reason for erecting and sacrificing upon seven altars.
437. Why should Balak, rather than Balaam, have presided at the rituals of the sacrifices themselves?
438. How might Balaam have expected to turn the persistent words of the Lord to his own advantage?
439. Research references to the "high places" of pagan worship. Learn where they were located, and what elements of "worship" were involved.
440. Analyze God's words to Balaam, showing the elements of his personal history, those of the request of Balak, the message Balaam was to deliver, and the divine promises to Israel.
441. What advantage did Balak seek in ordering Balaam to another place, and why did he expect anything to be different in the second location?

E. BALAAM'S SECOND BLESSING vv. 13-24

TEXT

Chapter 23:13. And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me to another place, from whence thou mayest see them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence.

14. And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. 15. And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet the Lord yonder. 16. And the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus. 17. And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the Lord spoken? 18. And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: 19. God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he

should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? 20. Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. 21. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. 22. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn. 23. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! 24. Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 23:13. And Balak said to him, "Come, please, to another place, from which you may see them. You shall see only the nearest of them, not all of them: then curse them for me there."

14. And he took him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and build seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar. 15. And he said unto Balak, "Stand here beside your burnt offering, while I meet the Lord yonder." 16. And the Lord met Balaam and put a message in his mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and speak to him so." 17. And he came to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, along with the princes of Moab. And Balak said to him, "What has the Lord said?" 18. And Balam began his speech, and said, "Rise up, Balak, and hear; listen to me, you son of Zippor: 19. God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should repent. Has he spoken, and will he not perform it? or has he foretold, and will he not make it good? 20. Behold, I received a command to bless: he has blessed, and I cannot reverse it. 21. He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord their God is with them, and the trumpeting of a king is in their midst. 22. God is bringing out of Egypt; he has, as it were, the strength of a wild

ox. 23. Surely there is no enchantment in Jacob, nor any divination in Israel: in due time it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, What has God wrought! 24. Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he has eaten of the prey, and drunk the blood of the slain."

COMMENTARY

The field of Zophim ("the watchers"), to which Balaam is now brought, permits a broad view of the surrounding country side, including the camp of the Israelites. The peak of Pisgah, from which Moses will later be allowed to inspect the Promised Land, rises sharply above the surrounding terrain. The exact meaning of the two phrases which refer to the sight before Balaam is not clear. The first seems to suggest that he is able to see the entire company, while the second says he sees only a portion of the camp. A reconciliation of the thoughts is probably found in the possibility that, while the outermost reaches of the camp of Israel are visible from the spot from which Balaam looks, some areas are not within sight, being obscured by projections of the mountain at a lower level, or by intervening peaks.

For the second time seven altars are erected and seven sacrifices offered. Just as had done the first time, Balaam leaves Balak beside the spot as he consults the Lord about the message for Balak. When the answer comes, it is by far the most complete and definitive of which we have record. There would be no way for Balaam to misconstrue God's words without deliberately lying. When Balaam returns to Balak, he quickly responds to the king's inquiry by taking up his "parable", or "oracle".

The premise upon which Balaam bases all he is now to tell Balak is the unchanging nature of God and the immutability of His will. He is no mere man, whose whimsies and fickle desires result in inconstant conduct. His decrees are unalterable, and they are to be executed precisely as they are given. Any terms

used to express such attributes are anthropomorphic, but the impact is only strengthened by use of this figure. The second oracle goes beyond the first in that it is more than a refusal to curse Israel; it is a strong declaration of blessing upon the nation.

Eight emphatic points are established in the poem: 1) God's blessing is irreversibly upon Israel; 2) the nation is found less iniquitous than others (certainly not perfect, and not without sin among the individual citizens, but relative to other nations, the people are not without virtue); 3) God is with them as their King, which is an occasion for their shouting; 4) the hand of God has already brought about some wonderful works, such as their delivery from slavery in Egypt, with a strength like that of the wild ox (the term "unicorn" is an unfortunate and inaccurate translation from the Septuagint here—the animal intended resembles a large bison); 5) no manner or number of auguries, enchantments, or other divination can prevail against the chosen people of God; 6) future generations will marvel at all the great and glorious things He has accomplished through His people; 7) the people will be much feared, as a hunting lion; and, 8) they will not stop their exploits until their enemies are fully subjugated. Balak could find nothing hopeful in this!

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

442. Using a good Bible gazette, review the area of Mt. Pisgah. Where might the Israelites have been encamped?
443. Why did Balak and Balaam go through the time-consuming process of building seven more altars and offering fourteen more animals?
444. Upon what firm basis are all of Balaam's words premised?
445. How is the figure of anthropomorphism used in the passage?
446. List the eight points emphasized in the message Balaam delivered.
447. Explain the appearance of the word "unicorn" in the text. What is actually intended?

448. What portions of the prophecy referred to the past, and what to the future of Israel?

F. THE THIRD BLESSING vv. 25-30

TEXT

Chapter 23:25. And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. 26. But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?

And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence. 28. And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon. 29. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. 30. And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 23:25. And Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them nor bless them at all!" 26. But Balaam replied, "Did I not tell you, 'All that the Lord says, I must do?'"

27. And Balak said to Balaam, "Come now; I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God for you to curse them for me there. 28. So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the desert." 29. And Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars here for me, and provide me with seven bulls and seven rams." 30. And Balak did as Balaam had asked, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

COMMENTARY

Substantially, Balak's first reaction to the previous words of Balaam are, "If you can't say something bad about these people, don't say anything at all!" He has had no grounds for reassurance from anything yet spoken, and we can only be amazed that he should want to try again to gain a favorable

word from Balaam unless he had some reason to believe that the prophet was still susceptible to bribery, or that yet another change of location would bring a change of message. If this is true, Balaam may have given some slight hint, ever so subtle or even subconscious, which Balak detected.

Although the exact peak indicated here cannot be positively identified, it is in the Abarim range, which includes Pisgah. Nearby was the village of Beth-Peor, in which vicinity Moses would later be buried (Deut. 34:6). The area was across the Jordan from Jericho. From the site Balaam could see the entire camp of Israel spread out before him (24:2). Jeshimon, "the waste", is primarily the plains area at the east and northeast section of the Dead Sea—a barren, rarely-inhabited region which extended to the southern end of the Jordan valley.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

439. How could Balak possibly hope now that Balaam would say anything different from what he had prophesied previously?
440. Do you believe Balaam was sincere and honest when he said he could not say anything other than what God revealed for him? Defend your answer.
441. Locate and describe the place to which Balaam was led for the third round of sacrifices and prophecies.
442. Identify "Jeshimon", and describe the terrain.

G. THE PROPHECY OF BALAAM (24:1-9)

TEXT

Chapter 24:1. And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him. 3. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: 4. He

hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! 6. As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lignaloës which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. 7. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. 8. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. 9. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 24:1. And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go to seek omens, as he had at other times, but he looked intently toward the wilderness. 2. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him, 3. and he took up his speech and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Peor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, 4. the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes opened; 5. How fair are your tents, O Jacob, and your Tabernacles, O Israel! 6. Like valleys that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes which the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters. 7. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, moistening his seed abundantly; and his kings shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. 8. God brought him out of Egypt: he has, as it were, the strength of a wild ox. He shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones in pieces, and shall pierce them through with his arrows. 9. He rested, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed be he who blesses you, and cursed be he who curses you."

COMMENTARY

Now persuaded fully that God will not cure Israel, Balaam conducts himself differently. In the previous sacrifices he had resorted to auguries, which would have been omens or signs observed in the world of nature and interpreted for the situation at hand. The custom was soundly denounced to Israel (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10), but was a very common practice among the heathen. As he looks out upon the spreading camp of God's people, he can no longer feign any type of cooperation with Balak, and is well prepared for the revelation which God's Spirit will bring him.

The message of God is specified as Balaam's "parable", or "utterance". While the term alone does not exclusively specify a message of divine origin, the circumstances would establish this fact. In stating that his eyes are now open, he speaks of one of the major manners by which God's communications were delivered—a heightened vision. He would be permitted to see what was hidden from normal human eyes, and for the purpose of relaying God's will to Balak. The message of God directly followed.

Essentially, the communication reinforced the previous prophecy. Once more Balaam pronounced a totally favorable word about Israel. The tents of Jacob would be like widespreading valleys, resembling riverside gardens of exotic trees. The aloe, for example, which grew no nearer than the Far East, would have been known only through importation of its rare fragrance; the cedars, on the other hand, were indigenous to northern Palestine and Lebanon, and were extensively used in building and decorative work. The two trees are mentioned together not because they are of a common source, but because they are symbolic of living and valuable blessings.

Together with the beautiful trees comes the figure of an abundance of water, carried to the irrigation field in buckets via long poles, or to the household for daily use. The thought suggests an abundance of this lifegiving element to a people who would deeply appreciate the fact, having for so long been

transients in a barren, near-waterless land.

Like the names "Pharoah" and "Abimelech", "Agag" is not the name of a single individual, but the title applied to the kings of the Amalekites. The present prophecy was uttered in an area where these kings would have been well known. But the king of Israel would attain a stature high above that of Agag—a thought usually understood to refer to more than any one Israelite king, and conceivably a prophecy of the Messiah. At the peak of the Kingdom of Israel, all of the land promised to Abraham—the territory lying between the Arabian Desert and the Mediterranean, and stretching from the Wilderness of Paran to the great bend of the Euphrates north of Syria—a total of about 60,000 square miles—was under the dominion of David and Solomon. Neither Agag nor Balak nor any of the other kings encountered by the followers of Moses ever attained to such a kingdom. And all possible comparisons fade into insignificance when the passage is viewed symbolically with its Messianic import. The exaltation of His kingdom was twofold: it brought man into a saved relationship with God, and elevated him into an eternal state of bliss. Nothing remotely comparable could be found in any earthly kingdom of any age; hence, the words spoken through Balaam stand without possible contradiction.

The words continued, expressing divine leadership and delivery from Egypt, followed by a constant strengthening and continuing victories to His favored people. Enemies were, by inference, weaker, since Israel's strength is compared to that of the wild ox; they were to be devoured as by a conquering lion. The broken bones and arrow-piercing wounds suggest total mastery and defeat of the national enemies. Following his victories, the lion lies complacent at his lair, unafraid of any about him. None dare antagonize him, since his power is unmatched and fearsome. The very choice blessings of God must come upon all who show this nation favor, but divine vengeance falls upon any who subject it to oppression and shame. All this constitutes a remarkable oracle. Its message must be heeded, or the consequences are formidable.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

443. What is different about Balaam's conduct as he approaches this third prophecy?
444. How is it possible that the Spirit of God could come upon a man who was not of the people of Israel?
445. Explain the term "parable" or "oracle" as used of Balaam's message.
446. Show the points on which the prophecies of Balaam were fulfilled literally in later years.
447. Why is the kingdom in Israel's future compared to that of Agag's?
448. Discuss the two aspects of the prophesied kingdom.
449. Show the validity of comparing this kingdom to a hunting, relaxing lion.

H. FINAL BLESSING, AND PROPHECY vv. 10-25

TEXT

Chapter 24:10. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. 11. Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor. 12. And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, 13. If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak? 14. And now, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

15. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: 16. He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the

Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 17. I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. 18. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. 19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

20. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. 21. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. 22. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. 23. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this! 24. And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever. 25. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 24:10. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them fully these three times. 11. Therefore, flee to your place; I said, 'I will certainly honor you, but the Lord has held you back from honor.' " 12. And Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not speak to your messengers, whom you sent to me, 13. 'If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the Lord, to do either good or bad by my own will; what the Lord speaks, that will I speak?' 14. And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the latter days."

15. And he began his speech, saying, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Peor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened. 16.

the oracle of him who hears the word of God, and knows the wisdom of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, and having his eyes uncovered. 17. I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the corners of Moab, and break down the children of Sheth. 18. And Edom shall be dispossessed, Seir also, his enemies, shall be captured; and Israel shall act bravely. 19. Out of Jacob shall come a ruler, and he shall destroy him that remains in the city." 20. And when he looked upon Amalek, he continued his message, "Amalek was the first of the nations, but in the end he shall come to destruction." 21. And he looked at the Kenites and continued his speech, "Your dwelling place is strong, and your nest is set in a rock; 22. nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted. Where shall Asshur carry you away?" 23. And he continued his message, saying, "Alas, who shall live when God does this? 24. But ships shall come from Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur and Eber, and he also shall come to destruction." 25. Then Balaam arose and went back to his place; and Balak also went his way.

COMMENTARY

Infuriated, Balak now claps his hands together as a token of his rage (see Job 27:23), an action which might also express horror or contempt (see Lam. 2:15). Once more his attempt to gain a favorable prophecy from Balaam has brought forth exactly the opposite: the anticipated cursing has issued forth as a blessing upon the sojourners visible before them in the valley of the Abarim. Perhaps in desperation the king now blames Jehovah for preventing Balaam's elevation. Strong irony marks the statement, and it is not wasted on the prophet. But what honor could the king offer comparable to the good will of the One in whom he spoke?

It was necessary for Balaam to refer again to his original preface: he could speak nothing excepting those matters God told him to say. For whatever motives he may have acted previously, Balaam had at least been consistent in affirming the

point. A fact which Balak could not have recognized at the time is that Balaam's refusal to pronounce a malediction upon Israel was a great favor to the king. Had he done so, the circumstances would not have changed, but Balak, believing Balaam's curse to be effective, would have plunged into a most foolish confrontation with God's people. However unfavorable the prophet's words were at the moment, they were exactly what the king needed to hear, and God's will was strongly pronounced in Moab.

Now Balaam speaks most forcefully by the Spirit of the Lord. He launches into a magnificent unconditional prophecy which looks well into the future and establishes Israel's unquestioned superiority over the familiar nations of the day. The entire text of this prophecy is futuristic, exalting God's people and foretelling the downfall of their enemies. It is an altogether glorious word—for Israel: and, it is as accurate as it is glorious. As a preface to the actual message, he relates the manner in which the revelation has come: his "eye is opened"; also, he hears the words of God . . . sees the vision of the Almighty . . . ,” and has "his eyes uncovered." All these expressions suggest modes with which the Bible student is familiar. The process of divine inspiration heightens the vision of the prophet to enable him to see what the ordinary senses cannot detect, and his ears are attuned to a wave-length denied ordinary hearing. By no means could Balaam have guessed at the facts he spoke: they are far too complex, and extend well into the distant future. God used him as the vehicle through whom His design would be traced in the unfolding future.

Signifying that the message in bulk is to be understood as futuristic is the repeated thought that the events are seen, "but not now," and beheld, "but not nigh." Two symbols are used to express the kingdom of which Balaam speaks: the star and the scepter. The star signified more than royalty alone in later Hebrew thought: it came to have a Messianic connotation, and fits beautifully with the sign given the Eastern magi at Christ's birth (Matt. 2:2-10). The scepter is an even more obvious symbol. In the oracle it is assigned to Israel, thus forecasting a

kingdom which would not exist for approximately four hundred years.

The first named victim of the coming star and scepter is Moab, also called the "children of Sheth." Moab is to be caught in an assault from both sides, or "corners." The thought may mean the land is to be struck at both temples of the head, like a man suffering a fatal wound. It is a blow from which there can be no recovery. In the parallel thought, the "children of Sheth" may mean the "children of pride," an identification not unfamiliar in reference to Moab (see Isaiah 16:6).

The second sentence is pronounced against Edom, symbolized by Seir, a name referring both to the country itself and to the extensive mountain plateau forming the eastern side of the central valley of the land. The Edomites will be dispossessed. Although God ordered Israel to take no action against Edom when they were denied passage through the land (20:21), and to leave them alone in their territory (Deut. 2:4, 5), the future would see this relationship bitterly strained. Ultimately, David would take the land (II Sam. 8:14), but the conquest was only temporary. Trouble flared between the nations on numerous occasions until at last, about 129 B.C., the Edomites were decisively defeated by John Hyrcanus. They were compelled to undergo circumcision, were brought into league with the Judeans, and, by a series of political intrigues ruled the land through the Herodian family. At this apparent zenith in their history, the Edomites, now known as the Idumeans, drop completely from the pages of the record at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. As a companion to Moses' words, we must consider the prophecy of Isaiah (34:5, 6 and 63:1)—Edom was the only neighboring nation to whom God promised no mercy whatsoever.

The second section of the prophecy is related to the Amalekites. When Amalek is called "the first of the nations," the thought certainly cannot refer to political stature, since the Amalekites never were a prominent people. The commonly proposed theory that Amalek is "first" because the tribe moved

against the Israelites shortly after they left Egypt (Ex. 17:8, ff.), cannot be acceptable; it is a strained thought. Much more satisfactory is the hypothesis that the Amalikites were extremely boastful, and that this reputation was a Bedouin trait (see *PC* p. 317). Of Amalek, the testimony is damning. He will perish forever. Made successively subservient by Saul and David, they were finally exterminated in the day of Hezekiah (see I Chron. 4:43).

The third people who receive attention in Balaam's prophecy, the Kenites, another of the tribes inhabiting the land of Canaan from the time of Abraham (Gen. 15:19). They originally held a portion of the Negeb, although some of their number settled far to the north (see Judges 4:17; 5:24). They are not to be confused with the descendants of Hobab, who were friendly to Israel. These people, of the lineage of Cain, were connected with the Amalekites; and, we may infer their hostility toward Israel. Their fate is dire: they will be deported to Assyria. Taken from their apparently inaccessible "nest in a rock", they will be destroyed.

In a final summation Balaam strongly affirms the prevailing will of God on earth over the strongest nations, even such rampaging people as the Assyrians. They, like the smaller nations whose fates have already been foretold, must fall to the ships from Chittim, or Cyprus, which seems only to be an intermediate port on the route of the conquerors, not their origin. It is hypothesized that the prophecy refers to the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great, in which case Asshur becomes a symbol of that conquered people.

Eber, also subjected to affliction in the prophecy, cannot refer to the Hebrews, as the *LXX* has suggested. Almost certainly *IB* is correct in the position that the word itself, which means "the region beyond", is another symbolic reference to the country beyond the Euphrates. It may then be a redundant reference to Assyria, which seems unlikely because of the manner in which two names are coordinated; or, it may be used of another country in a similar location, such as Babylon.

Having said this, Balaam then quickly states that the conquering nation will itself come to destruction, perishing forever. It is the closing note in the oracle. As he finished, Balaam left the scene of his utterance, as did Balak.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

450. What was the visible symbol of Balak's anger against Balaam, and what other sentiments might it have expressed?
451. Show the final tactic used by Balak as he attempts to influence the prophecy.
452. In what sense was Balaam doing a favor to the king when he refused to curse Israel?
453. Since Balak is only concerned about his own circumstances and his own day, why would these numerous futuristic prophecies interest him?
454. Describe the methods named by Balaam to explain by what contacts God made His revelations to the prophet.
455. Why would it have been impossible for Balaam to have guessed at the facts contained in his prophecies?
456. Identify the two symbols of Balaam by which he refers to the coming Messianic kingdom.
457. Name the countries and people included in Balaam's words and relate what is said of each of them. What historical details are available to us to confirm the words of these prophecies.
458. What primary lessons should Balak have learned from all of these messages? Did he take advantage of these insights?

II. IN MOAB (25:1–27:23)

A. GRAVE SINS WITH THE MOABITES (25:1-9)

TEXT

Chapter 25:1. And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people

began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. 4. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. 5. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

6. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; 8. And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. 9. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:1. While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab. 2. They called the people to sacrifice to their gods, and the people ate, and bowed down unto their gods. 3. In this way Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. 4. And the Lord said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them in the sun before the Lord, in order that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned from Israel." 5. And Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each one of you is to kill his men who have yoked themselves to Baal-Peor."

6. And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the very sight of Moses and of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, who were weeping in front of the door of the Tent of Meeting. 7. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the

priest, saw this, he arose and left the congregation, and took a spear in his hand. 8. and went after the man of Israel, into the chamber, and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman, through her belly. And the plague was stopped from the children of Israel. 9. But those who had died from the plague numbered twenty-four thousand.

COMMENTARY

The harsh life Israel has led for nearly forty years is now drawing to its close. They are stationed in the final encampment before launching on the last leg of their long trip—into the Promised Land itself. This camp is at Shittim (“the acacia trees”), which lies directly opposite Jericho, approximately equidistant on the east side of the river. Throughout their time in the wilderness, God had proved His faithfulness in every respect. We would expect the people to be living in a thrilling anticipation of the new life before them. The incidents related in the opening verses of chapter 25 must have occurred as the people relaxed their guard prior to their push. Living near the Moabites, they observe the immoral religious rituals of these people at first hand, and yield to the seductions of the Moabite women. They join in the sacrificial festival of Baal-peor, who is believed to be the same as Chemosh, the Moabites’ national god. Along with the lustful conduct, gluttony was practiced by the defectors, who have been living on manna for forty years.

God’s anger rose high over the conduct of His people. Their complaints, criticisms, faithlessness and gross misconduct lead us to marvel at His patience. A time must certainly come, however, when divine mercy is inappropriate. The Lord summoned Moses and instructed him to kill the guilty sinners, especially their chiefs, who should have led the resistance to such a misadventure rather than becoming a part of it. The penalty was severe in proportion to the seriousness of their dereliction of duty. Divine justice has always held a special responsibility for those in special positions, and to impress the people with the gravity of the situation, the bodies of the chiefs are impaled in the open camp after having been first put to

death. The properly appointed leaders of the people, their judges, are then commanded to put to death every man who had defected to the worship of Baal-peor.

At this point the account takes a turn which has been variously understood. Some (as *IB* and *ICC*) believe the incidents of verses 1-5 and 6-9 are totally unrelated and incomplete, as the products of various writers which have been illogically combined. *IB* says the accounts are "from JE and P respectively, . . . the first, featuring Moabite women, lacks an ending; the second, introducing Midianite women, has no beginning," (p. 263). The judgment is unfair and inaccurate. Both stories are complete in themselves. The first ends quite appropriately with the sentence pronounced upon the adulterous miscreants. It is by no means a strain upon the text to have introduced at this point the appearance of yet another influence—that of the Midianite woman—contributing to the evidence of deteriorating and blatant immorality among the Israelites. Even at the moment, the camp is under the pall of the sentence of the judges, and an aggressive Simeonite named Zimri introduces the daughter of a Midianite chief into the very central presence of Moses and the congregation, obviously for immoral purposes. The effrontery is revolting to good taste and common decency, but seems to be typical of the attitude of the camp's more gross people.

By contrast with the licentious members of the nation, many Israelites are participating in a period of mourning because of the provocation against the Lord. The plague, which soon would claim 24,000 lives (v. 9), visited those insensitive and disobedient ones who had flaunted the laws of God. The sin of Zimri is no more grave than those of the other Israelites—it is, however, more blatant and defiant and depicts a highly degenerative spiritual attitude. The quick action of Phinehas in slaying Zimri without waiting for a called assembly to stone the man is clearly defensible. The account makes it logical to infer that the sinning couple were slain in the very act of adultery, within the tent of their deed. Obviously the attitude of Zimri was known to the people generally, and word had been carried

to the young priest; his response was essential to the best welfare of the entire camp. The punishment enacted upon the two, as well as the fulfillment of the instructions previously given to the chiefs, stayed the plague after it had exacted a bitter toll. Rabbinical tradition must be the source of Paul's statement (1 Cor. 10:8) that the deaths occurred on one day, since this book and no other in the Old Testament states the fact; and the Apostle also gives a figure of 23,000 which, according to the same rabbinical source, is the number of those who were victims of the plague itself, whereas the additional 1,000 were hanged (see *KD*, p. 206).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

459. Where is Shittim?
460. Using a reliable Bible dictionary or reference book, read up on the ritualistic orgies which accompanied the worship of Baal-peor. Show how the Israelites who participated in such practices were in violation of various units of the Ten Commandments.
461. Did the first overture in the incidents of this portion of Scripture originate with the Israelite men or with the Moabite women? Can you give any reason for your answer?
462. What part did gluttony play in the series of events?
463. Why was the punishment of the sinning people left in the hands of the chiefs?
464. For what purpose were their bodies put on public display?
465. How are the two incidents in this section substantially related? Why do some commentators attempt to separate them? Do you consider them complete units or only fragments? Why?
466. Since the Moabites are the neighboring people at this time, how does a Midianite woman become involved?
467. What factors make the sin of Zimri especially obnoxious?

468. Why were the people weeping at the time?
469. Can you justify the quick and decisive actions of Phinehas?
470. What relationship is there between the actions of Phinehas and the arrested plague?
471. How can the figure given in verse 9 be reconciled to the Apostle Paul's words in I Cor. 10:8?

B. COMMENDATION OF PHINEHAS vv. 10-15

TEXT

Chapter 25:10. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 11. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: 13. And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. 14. Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites. 15. And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:10. Then the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 11. "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my anger from the people of Israel in that he was zealous for my sake, so that I have not consumed the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12. Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him my promise of peace: 13. and it shall be to him, and to his descendants after him, the promise of a perpetual priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the people of Israel.' " 14. Now the name of the man of Israel who was killed with the Midianite woman was Zimri, the son of

Salu, a prince of a father's house among the Simeonites. 15. And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur, who was the head of the people of a father's house in Midian.

COMMENTARY

Whatever the present-day reaction of self-appointed critics may be to the immediate and decisive actions of Phinehas, the Scriptures leave no doubt about the mind of God in the affair. His full endorsement and reassuring words of commendation mean far more than the piddling comments of those who would set their own criteria for Divine conduct. He not only approves of Phinehas' deed; He uses it as the basis for asserting the selection of the Aaronic lineage for the high priesthood through the grandson of the initial high priest. His zeal was spontaneous, and in rigid defense of the order God wished among His people. The Lord credits him with having turned away His wrath from the people—no small accomplishment.

The pledge made to Phinehas established an eternal priesthood for himself and his descendants irrevocably. The lineage remained in this position until the time of the Herodians, with the brief exception of a temporary interruption during the days of Eli (see I Sam. 1-3; 14:3).

Both Zimri and Cozbi were individuals of prominent families and high stations in life. They may have felt, therefore, that they were above condemnation or criticism. This fact would have made many of the people reluctant to report their odious conduct, for fear of reprisal from the other members of the families. When such an attitude permeates those of noble position, and their conduct is either tolerated or unrebuked, we may well expect such results as are found in this incident. But God is no respecter of persons, and it was unthinkable that He should let the guilty pair escape unpunished. The arm of His vindication reached out through Phinehas.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

472. How does God's evaluation of the act of Phinehas differ

from that of the self-appointed critics’?

473. How could the act of a single man turn away the wrath of God from an entire nation?
474. Explain the use of the word “jealousy” in reference to the attitude of God toward Israel (see also Ex. 20:5).
475. Precisely what did God promise to Phinehas in recognition of his act?
476. How long did this promise actually last?
477. Does God expect more of those who hold important stations in life than from the common people? Defend your answer.

C. JEHOVAH DENOUNCES THE MIDIANITES vv. 16-18

TEXT

Chapter 25:16. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 17. Vex the Midianites, and smite them: 18. For they vex with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor’s sake.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:16. And the Lord said unto Moses, 17. “Vex the Midianites and strike them. 18. They have harassed you with their wives, with which they have enticed you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the prince of Midian and their sister, who was slain on the day of the plague because of Peor.”

COMMENTARY

Quite properly, *PC* reminds the reader that, while the account of defection begins with the Moabites, it concludes with the Midianites because the sin of the women of the latter nation were studied and deliberate. The women of Moab, on the other hand, were but indulging in their personal passions. It is

further suggested that the Moabites were not acting upon advice of Balaam, as were the Midianites, in a "plot to entangle the Israelites in heathen rites and heathen sins which would alienate them from the favour of God," (p. 344).

The text quite certainly suggests that the Midianite women had acted deliberately and craftily. Later Scripture (31:16) names this motive and incriminates Balaam. When God instructs Moses to "Vex" the Midianites, the command is made very emphatic by repetition. The account will proceed quickly to the military census, taken as an initial step in preparation for moving against the Midianites in battle (see 31:5). It is a logical inference that the actions of Zimri and Cozbi were not isolated, but may have been common among the Israelites as they were lured by the women of Midian. We see the culmination, then, of the invidious plot of these enemies of God's people.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

478. Explain why God sentences Midian to a sad end, but says nothing comparable to Moab.
479. How severe is the punishment expressed for Midian? How is the severity emphasized?
480. Explain what part Balaam played in the actions of the Midianite women.
481. What immediate steps are taken to prepare for the actions of vengeance against the Midianites?

D. THE SECOND CENSUS (26:1-51)

TEXT

Chapter 26:1. And it came to pass after the plague, that the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2. Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel. 3. And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 4. Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as the

Lord commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

5. Reuben, the eldest son of Israel; the children of Reuben; Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites: 6. Of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 7. These are the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty. 8. And the sons of Pallu; Eliab. 9. And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the Lord: 10. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. 11. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.

12. The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites: 13. Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14. These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.

15. The children of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites: of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites: 16. Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites: 17. Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18. These are the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred.

19. The sons of Judah were Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 20. And the sons of Judah after their families were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites. 21. And the sons of Pharez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Hamul, the family of the

Hamulites. 22. These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

23. Of the sons of Issachar after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites: 24. Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites: of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. 25. These are the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.

26. Of the sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 27. These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred.

28. The sons of Joseph after their families were Manasseh and Ephraim. 29. Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites. 30. These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites: 31. And of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites: 32. And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaïtes: and of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites.

33. And Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 34. These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand seven hundred.

35. These are the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Becher, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. 36. And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. 37. These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph after their families.

38. The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites: 39. Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40. And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites: and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41. These are the sons of Benjamin after their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred.

42. These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan after their families. 43. All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred.

44. Of the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Berites. 45. Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46. And the name of the daughter of Asher was Sarah. 47. These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them; who were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

48. Of the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites: 49. Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50. These are the families of Naphtali according to their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and four hundred. 51. These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:1. Then it happened after the plague that the Lord spoke to Moses and to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2. "Count all the assembly of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and up, according to their fathers'

houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." 3. So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, 4. "Count the people from twenty years old and up, just as the Lord has commanded Moses." Now the sons of Israel who had come forth from the land of Egypt were:

5. Reuben, the oldest son of Israel; the children of Reuben: Hanokh, the family of the Hamochites; of Pallu, the family of the Palluites; 6. of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 7. These are the families of the Reubenites, and those who were counted of them were 43,730. 8. And the sons of Pallu: Eliab. 9. And the sons of Eliab: Nemuel and Dathan and Abiram. This is the Dathan and Abiram who were called by the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the Lord. 10. And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah when that company died; and at that time the fire devoured 250 men; and they became a symbol. 11. But the sons of Korah did not die.

12. The sons of Simeon, according to their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; 13. of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites; of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14. These are the families of the Simeonites, 22,200.

15. The sons of Gad according to their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of Shunites; 16. of Ozni, the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; 17. of Arod, the family of the Arodites; of Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18. These are the families of the sons of Gad according to those who were counted of them, 40,500.

19. The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 20. And the sons of Judah according to their families were: of Shelah, the family of Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Perezites; of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites. 21. And the sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the

family of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. 22. These are the families of Judah according to those who were counted of them, 76,500.

23. The sons of Issachar according to their families: of Tola, the family of the Talaites; of Puvah, the family of the Punites; 24. of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. 25. These are the families of Issachar according to those who were counted of them, 64,300.

26. The sons of Zebulun according to their families: of Sered, the family of the Seredites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 27. These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those who were counted of them, 60,500.

28. The sons of Joseph according to their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. 29. The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir became the father of Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. 30. These are the sons of Gilead: of Iezer, the family of the Iezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites; 31. and of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; 32. and of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaïtes; and of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites.

33. Now Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but only daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. 34. These are the families of Manasseh; and those who were counted of them were 52,700.

35. These are the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthelaïtes; of Becher, the family of the Becherites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. 36. And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. 37. These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those who were counted of them, 32,500. These are the sons of Joseph according to their families.

38. The sons of Benjamin according to their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaïtes; of Ashbel, the family of the

Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; 39. of Shephupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40. And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41. These are the sons of Benjamin according to their families; and those who were counted of them were 45,600.

42. These are the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan according to their families. 43. All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those who were counted of them, were 64,400.

44. The sons of Asher according to their families: of Imnah, the family of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the family of the Berites. 45. Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46. And the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah. 47. These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those who were counted of them 53,400.

48. The sons of Naphtali according to their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; 49. of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50. These are the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were counted of them were 45,400. 51. These are those who were counted of the sons of Israel, 601,730.

COMMENTARY

The census taken just before Israel made final preparations to enter into Canaan served two purposes: they were mustered for battle against the Midianites, and they are counted in preparation for the proper division of tribal inheritances in the new land. Only 12,000 men were actually involved in the battle with Midian (31:5); the entire nation was involved in the land division.

As might be expected, some of the tribes suffered decreases

during the arduous travels in the wilderness, whereas others increased. The seven which increased were Judah (up by 1,900); Issachar (9,900); Zebulun (e, 100); Joseph's sons (total increase of 2,500, although Ephraim had lost 8,000); Benjamin (10,200); Dan (700); and Asher (11,900). The five suffering losses were Gad (down by 6,150); Ephraim (as mentioned, 8,000); Naphtali, (8,000); Simeon (a phenomenal drop of 37,100); and, Reuben, (2,770). The grand total of 601,730 counted represents a slight loss of 1,820—a remarkable fact in considering that all of those over twenty years of age at the time of the exodus are now dead, and that they had endured such a rigorous life in the rugged terrain through which they had come. It is evident that the hand of God had led and blessed them in a marvelous way.

The original manner of counting, including the same formula used in the first census, is preserved. The order is alike excepting for the reversal of positions between Ephraim and Manasseh. Since Aaron is now dead, his son Eleazar works together with Moses in this endeavor.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

482. Where was the final census of Israel taken?
483. For what two purposes did the Lord order the census?
484. Compile parallel lists of the first and second countings of the people of Israel, showing the gain or loss of each tribe.
485. Outline the standard formula used to report the count for all the tribes and families.

E. INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAND ALLOTMENT vv. 52-56

TEXT

Chapter 26:52. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 53. Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. 54. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less

inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. 55. Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. 56. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:52. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Among these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the census of names. 54. To the larger number you shall give the larger inheritance; to the smaller number you shall give the smaller inheritance; each shall have his inheritance according to those who were counted of him. 55. But the land shall be divided by lot. They shall receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56. According to their selection by lot, their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller.

COMMENTARY

Two factors figure in the division of the land to the tribes: the size of each tribe is to be considered; the actual area specified for each will be established by casting lots. *IC* summarily pronounces the principles "clear but contradictory"; *ICC* reports "the meaning is not quite clear how these two in themselves irreconcilable principles are both to be respected in the division is not said"; *PC* reports the second order (division by lot) "can only be reconciled with the preceding order by assuming that the lot was to determine the situation of the territory, the actual boundaries being left to the discretion of the rulers." Only *KD*, of the sources cited, makes a genuine attempt to reconcile the methods: "In vv. 53, 54, the command is given to distribute the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes ('unto these'), according to the number of the names (chap. i. 2-18), i. e., of the persons counted by name in each of their families. To a numerous tribe they were to make the inheritance great; to the littleness, i. e., to the tribes and

families that contained only a few persons, they were to make it small . . . In vv. 55, 56, it is still further commanded that the distribution should take place by lot The meaning of these words can only be, that every tribe was to receive a province of its own for an inheritance, which should be called by its name for ever. The other regulation in v. 56, '*according to the measure of the lot shall its inheritance* (the inheritance of every tribe) *be divided between the numerous and the small* (tribe),' is no doubt to be understood as signifying, that in the division of the tribe territories, according to the comparative sizes of the different tribes, they were to adhere to that portion of land which fell to every tribe in the casting of the lots. The magnitude and limits of the possessions of the different tribes could not be determined by the lot according to the magnitude of the tribes themselves: all that could possibly be determined was the situation to be occupied by the tribe The lot was to determine the portion of every tribe, not merely to prevent all occasion for dissatisfaction and complaining, but in order that every tribe might receive with gratitude the possession that fell to its lot as the inheritance assigned it by God, the result of the lot being regarded by almost all nations as determined by God Himself (cf. Prov. xvi. 33, xviii, 18)," (pp. 210, 211).

Because the precise boundaries used in the actual division of the tribal inheritances cannot be established, we can make but a general observation: the inheritances did not follow a rigid formula by which the most populous tribes received the greatest areas from largest to smallest; however, there is a general relationship between the two factors. Manasseh and Ephraim together, as sons of Joseph, constituted by far the largest descendants of any single son of Jacob, and received easily the greatest area of land. Judah, next largest tribe, received the second largest portion. This is an especially significant fact because of the prominent role Judah was destined to play in the unfolding history of God's people. The land itself was well situated and productive. Excepting for the Jeshimon, it was totally habitable. It was an ideal portion within which the longest-faithful portion of the people could live to greatest

advantage for the longest period of time. Such a fact cannot be overlooked when one considers the guiding hand of God in the lot distribution. The exact extent of other territories pales into unimportance, then, after this established fact: and further inquiry about the significance of the size of any particular portion is almost without meaning. Perhaps the most important point of all is that God guided the distribution of all the portions so that every tribe had as much as it needed, and more than it ever used to fullest advantage either materially or spiritually.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

486. Look up data on the various methods used to determine decisions by means of casting lots.
487. Why would it be important for the land to be divided in relationship to the sizes of the various tribes?
488. Reconcile the two methods given in this portion of Scripture: how could they both be used in the land distribution?
489. To what extent did the actual land distribution relate to the size of the individual tribes?
490. What important facts emerge when we look at the ultimate results of the land allotment?

F. CENSUS OF THE LEVITES vv. 57-65

TEXT

Chapter 26:57. And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58. These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begat Amram. 59. And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram, Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their

sister. 60. And unto Aaron was born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61. And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the Lord. 62. And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

63. These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. 64. But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. 65. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26: 57. And these are those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58. These are the families of Levi: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korahites. And Kohath became the father of Amram. 59. And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron, and Moses, and their sister, Miriam. 60. And to Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61. But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord. 62. And those who were counted of them were 23,000 every male from one month of age and up, for they were not counted among the sons of Israel, since no inheritance was given them among the sons of Israel.

63. These are those who were counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who counted the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. 64. But among those there was not a

man of those who were counted by Moses and Aaron the priest who counted the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, 65. for the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And not a man was left of them, excepting Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

COMMENTARY

We have here an incomplete listing of the Levitical families. The purpose of the abbreviated passage seems to be concentrated on establishing the descent of Moses, Aaron and Miriam rather than all the families of Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The counting was complete, of course, when originally done, and shows that the Levites had increased by one thousand. Once more, their numbering began with sons at one month of age.

No general land allotment was awarded later to the Levites. Instead, they received forty-eight cities distributed throughout the land (see 35:1-8 and Joshua 21), in order that they might serve all of the people.

The genealogical chart here is much abbreviated, since Jochebed could not have been the daughter of Levi himself. The word "daughter" is properly understood to mean she was a direct female descendant; the number of generations intervening would be irrelevant. Jochebed here becomes one of a select few women who figure prominently in any Biblical genealogy. No doubt the most prominent names to be found in such lists would be those of Rahab and Ruth, listed in Matthew's chart of Jesus Christ's ancestors (1:5). Matthew also gives Tamar, who bore Phares and Zara to Judah (1:3); he alludes to "her that had been the wife of Urias" (Bathsheba, 1:6) as well. But the appearance of any feminine name in genealogical listings among the Jews was rare enough to be notable, and places Jochebed in perspective as the great woman she must have been.

Our attention is called appropriately to the fact that among all those counted in the second census, "there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered," with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, since all those above twenty

years of age at the time of the first census were now dead, (cf. 14:23, 28-30).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

491. Are there good reasons for omitting many names of the sons of Levi and their descendants?
492. What difference was there in the total number of Levites since the first census?
493. Why is it impossible that Jochebed might have been the daughter of Levi?
494. How are we to understand the use of the word "daughter" here?
495. Why are there so few names of women given in the genealogical lists of the Israelites? Find as many examples as you can.
496. How many Israelites were counted in the second census who had been tallied in the first? Who were they?

G. THE PLEA OF ZELOPHEHAD'S DAUGHTERS, AND GOD'S ANSWER (27:1-11)

TEXT

Chapter 27:1. Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. 2. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 3. Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons. 4. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. 5. And Moses brought their cause before the Lord.

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. 8. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. 9. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. 10. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. 11. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the Lord commanded Moses.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:1. Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these are the names of the daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. 2. And they stood before Moses and Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the assembly, at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting, saying, 3. "Our father died in the wilderness, although he was not in the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin, and had no sons. 4. Why should the name of our father be lost to his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among the brothers of our father. 5. And Moses brought their case before the Lord.

6. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 7. "The daughters of Zelophehad speak properly. You shall surely give them a possession as an inheritance among the brothers of their father, and you shall transfer their father's inheritance to them. 8. "Also, you shall speak to the children of Israel and say, 'If a man dies having no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. 9. 'And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10. "And if he has no

brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11. 'And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be a law of judgment to the children of Israel, just as the Lord commanded Moses.' "

COMMENTARY

A very real problem presents itself in the situation before us. Zelophehad died without male issue, which would have ended the chain of inheritance to his family. What should be done? Ought the situation end here, and the land be divided otherwise among near relatives? Was there some method by which the family name and inheritance could be preserved? Only God could give an adequate answer, so He is consulted via Moses. The five daughters of Zelophehad petition to have the land given them rather than have it lost to the family, and God honors their request.

In other nations in the ancient world, women seldom had any rights of inheritance: but it would not be so among God's people, if there were no male heir. Presumably, the women married and, upon so doing, they lost their original family identity; their children inherited from the father's household. But in this instance, with no brothers to preserve their father's name and estate, the daughters accept both the inheritance and the responsibilities which accompany the inheritance; clearly, the first-born son of the oldest will establish the primary line of lineage. The law would secure the ancient principle: land is not to be permanently given up by that family to which it has been allocated.

Would the decision have been different if Zelophehad had been involved in the extraordinary sins and rebellious conduct for which severe punishment had been meted out? We have only inferences to draw from silence, but the fact is that there is no record of an inheritance which was ever denied to the child of a rebellious father on this basis alone. God's judgment upon the offending Israelites had already been pronounced and exacted: they would die outside of the Promised Land. The situation and

decision anticipate the immediate future, when Israel will actually occupy the land toward which they have been led.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

497. Why should there have been any question whether or not Zelophehad's daughters might inherit their father's land?
498. Is it important that Zelophehad had not been among those who had rebelled against the Lord?
499. Show what the consequences would have been if the inheritance had not been passed through the daughters.
500. In what manner was Zelophehad's name to have been preserved?
501. Why is it relevant to settle this question even before the Israelites had entered into the land of Canaan?
502. Can you think of any nation or circumstances where the details of inheritance resemble those given in God's instructions to Moses?

H. MOSES TO VIEW THE LAND OF PROMISE vv. 12-14

TEXT

Chapter 27:12. The Lord said to Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. 14. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:12. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go up to this mountain Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13. And when you have seen it, you shall also be gathered unto your people, as Aaron your brother was; 14. for you rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin,

in the strife of the assembly, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is, the waters of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin."

COMMENTARY

The Abarim, "those on the other side," are mountains east of the Jordan near the northern tip of the Dead Sea. Moses was led here for the purpose of examining the land into which the people, but not he, would enter. The peak from which Moses looked is referred to as Pisgah or Nebo (21:20, and Deut. 34:1ff.). From any of several such peaks in the area—and the exact identification of the individual peak is impossible—a commanding view may be had of the Jordan valley to the north, of the depression and environment of the Dead Sea to the south, and across the Jordan into the Judean hills.

Because of his part in the sin at Kadesh (here called a rebellion), Moses will not be permitted to cross the Jordan. He had been previously informed of this judgment (20:12); it is here reaffirmed. God's authority and integrity must stand, therefore the punishment could not have been rescinded. Whereas we might wish some concession to have been made to Moses because of his greatness, or his usually adamant resistance to evil and to the enemies of God, or his splendid and heart-warming intercessory prayers for the people, the view is quite different from God's perspective: as leader of the people he had a primary obligation to adhere rigidly to the divine instructions under all circumstances, and punishment must be sure, fair and consistent upon the occasion of his disobedience. God could do nothing other than that which He did and be fair.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

503. Identify "Abarim." Why was this an ideal point from which Moses could view the Promised Land?
504. In what sense could Moses' actions at Meribah be called a rebellion?
505. Explain why God did not revoke the punishment He had previously announced for Moses.

506. Is it fair that a special weight should be attached to the sin of Moses?

I. JOSHUA APPOINTED TO SUCCEED MOSES vv. 15-23

TEXT

Chapter 27:15. And Moses spoke unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17. Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in: that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

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; 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 honor 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. 22. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: 23. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:15. Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 16. "May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17. who may go out before them and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; in this way the congregation of the Lord will not be as sheep which have no shepherd."

18. So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him;

19. and have him stand before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and charge him in their sight. 20. And you shall invest him with some of your authority, so that all the congregation of Israel may be obedient unto him. 21. Furthermore, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall seek counsel for him according to the judgment of Urim before the Lord. Upon his word they shall go out, and upon his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation." 22. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the assembly. 23. Then he placed his hands upon him and gave him the charge, as the Lord commanded through Moses.

COMMENTARY

In what we must consider a typical action, Moses shows more concern for the children of Israel than for his own welfare. He knows that his time on earth is very limited, and that he cannot lead his people across the Jordan. He knows also that they must not be left without competent leadership; so, without so much as a word to gainsay the verdict of God, he makes the simple request that a man be appointed by God as his successor. This is no small request. Moses has established such an imposing image of capable leadership that any man must suffer by comparison. It is also in Moses' favor that he does not ask for the privilege of naming this man, or that he does not claim the position for his descendants by right of birth alone. God only can capably fill the position, and Moses will not interfere; it is a lesson God had to teach Samuel by direct revelation (see I Sam. 16:6ff.). The next leader of Israel must handle the rigorous demands of daily business; he must be a military man to lead in driving out the Canaanites; he must be a man of great spiritual depth and intensity to stabilize a fickle people; he must be a patient man to endure their gainsaying and criticism; he must be a respectable man whose word they can believe and follow; he must be a man of moral integrity to set a proper example and to administer justice to those whose lives

would seriously defy the righteous standards of God; he must be a meek man whose head will not be turned by the honor given him in his position; he must be courageous to resist the taunts and opposition of the enemy, as well as the indifference and grumbling of his own people. In short, he must be a man very much like Moses himself. Moses certainly would not have said it, but the circumstances and the facts require it.

God does not hesitate in rendering His decision: the man is Joshua. The son of Nun was a man filled with God's own Spirit (v. 18), who had proved himself again and again under a variety of extreme circumstances. The choice is logical, and fully justified by history. Caleb, who might also have been considered for the position, is much less well known to us through the pages of Scripture, which may indicate lesser ability in some area, or lesser strength of character. But the choice cannot be criticized.

The laying on of hands in Scripture indicates the transfer of power inherent in an office being assumed. For his special work, Joshua will need a special dispensation of God's grace. While Moses could not and did not transfer all of his traits or powers to Joshua, he is to command the respect and obedience of the people as Moses had. The ceremony doubtless was done publicly to let everyone know of the transfer.

An essential difference between Moses and Joshua emerges when Joshua is told to stand before Eleazar in order to seek counsel in his work. Moses was of the priestly line himself, and stood above all priests, not excluding Aaron himself. Joshua's leadership is civil and military, and he is under the religious heads of the nation just as any other individual was. Joshua was not a lawgiver: he was under the Law and its primary executives, the priests.

In serious national matters Eleazar himself was obligated to approach the Lord in behalf of Joshua via the Urim. While there is much we do not know of the Urim and the companion Thummim, they were uniquely worn and used by the high priest to determine the counsel of Jehovah for His people in

matters of grave nature. These “lights and perfections” were stones of various kinds, set in the breastplate when the high priest entered into the divine Presence for the specific purpose of gaining God’s decision when it was required, (see Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

507. Show how Moses’ conduct at this time reflects his great stature of spirit.
508. Why should the place of leadership of the people not be left to ancestral descent? to the choice of the people? to Moses himself?
509. List the singular qualifications which Joshua possessed for the office to which God chose him.
510. What special duties would fall to Moses’ successor? With what we have already learned of Joshua, which of these duties seem appropriate to him?
511. What significance is attached to the “laying on of hands” here?
512. Why was this done publicly?
513. Is there significance in asking Joshua to come before Eleazar? Explain your answer.
514. Explain the Urim and Thummim. How do they relate to Joshua?

III. REVIEW AND ADDITIONS TO THE LAW (28:1—30:16)

A. THE DAILY OFFERINGS vv. 1-8

TEXT

Chapter 28:1. 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 savor unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. 3. And thou shalt say unto them, This is the

offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. 4. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even; 5. And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil. 6. It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. 7. And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering. 8. And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:1. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 2. "Command the children of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be careful to present my offering, the provision of my sacrifices made with fire as a sweet aroma to me, when it is the proper time.' 3. And you shall say to them, 'This is the fire offering which you shall offer to the Lord: two lambs, yearlings without defect, day by day as a continual burnt offering. 4. You shall offer the one lamb in the morning and the other lamb at evening; 5. also, a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil. 6. It is a continual burnt offering which was ordained at Mount Sinai as a sweet aroma, a sacrifice made by fire to the Lord.' And its drink offering shall be one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in the holy place you shall pour out the strong drink to the Lord for a drink offering. 8. You shall offer the other lamb at evening: just as the meal offering of the morning, and as its drink offering, you shall offer it, a sacrifice by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.' "

COMMENTARY

In summarizing the purpose of the two chapters next before

us, *KD* suggests: "When Israel was prepared for the conquest of the promised land by the fresh numbering and mustering of its men, and by the appointment of Joshua as commander, its relation to the Lord was regulated by a law which determined the sacrifices through which it was to maintain its fellowship with its God from day to day and serve Him as His people," (p. 216). The offerings and sacrifices detailed were periodical and public, beginning appropriately with the daily morning and evening burnt offerings which had been instituted at Sinai when the altar was dedicated. Other sacrifices follow in logical order: the Sabbath offerings, the New Moon offerings, offerings for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for the Feast of Weeks, for the Feast of Trumpets, for the Day of Atonement and for the Feast of the Tabernacles.

The importance of these offerings is seen in their significance. The daily burnt-offering is designed to sanctify the life, both body and soul and spirit, to God Himself. The sacrifices on the feast days were to reinforce this sanctification. The sacrifices of the daily ritual were doubled on the Sabbath; on the other feast days it was increased by a burnt offering of oxen, rams, and yearling lambs, always preceded by a sin offering. Both the Sabbath and the feast days were thus elevated high above ordinary days.

When *KJ* translates *Shecar* as "strong wine," it is exceptional. The usual meaning exempts wine and includes other intoxicants (see Lev. 10:9). But the matter is by no means certain, since the Targums give its meaning as "old wine" since the drink offering in every other instance listed was to be of wine. *PC* proposes that the difficulty of obtaining wine in the wilderness might well account for this exceptional provision, so that any fermented drink might be used in the daily ritual. All sources agree that the provision was temporary only, and that nothing but wine was used after the settlement in Canaan.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

515. What primary purpose was served by all of the sacrifices and offerings of the Israelites?

516. Show the significance of each separate type of offering.
517. How and why were the daily offerings different from those of special days?
518. Discuss the use of "strong wine" in the drink offering.

B. OFFERINGS ON THE SABBATH vv. 9, 10

TEXT

Chapter 28:9. And on the sabbath day the two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: 10. This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:9. "On the Sabbath day two lambs, yearlings without defects, and two-tenths of a measure of flour for a meal offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering. 10. This is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, in addition to the continual burnt offering and its drink offering."

COMMENTARY

On the sabbath, provisions for the offerings were doubled. The inference of the instructions in verses 9 and 10 is that the two lambs offered are in addition to the daily quota, and that they would follow the daily offering. The order appears here for the first time. The literal meaning of the instructions in verse 10 is, "the sabbath burnt offering for its sabbath." The importance of the seventh day was underscored.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

519. Why should the offerings given on the Sabbath be different in any way from those of the daily offerings?
520. Compute the total number of lambs which would be offered during one year, combining the daily and Sabbath offerings.

C. OFFERINGS FOR THE NEW MOON vv. 11-15

TEXT

Chapter 28:11. And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; 12. And three tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; 13. And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meat offering unto one lamb; for a burnt offering of a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord. 14. And their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of a hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of a hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year. 15. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the Lord shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:11. "At the beginning of each of your months you shall offer a burnt offering to the Lord: two young bulls, one ram, seven yearling lambs without defect, 12. and three-tenths of a measure of flour as a meal offering, mixed with oil, for one bull; and two tenths of a measure of flour as a meal offering mixed with oil, for one ram: 13. and one-tenth of a measure of flour, mixed with oil, as a meal offering for every lamb, as a burnt offering of a sweet aroma, an offering by fire to the Lord. 14. And their drink offerings shall be one-half hin of wine for a bull, and one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth hin for a lamb: this is the burnt offering of each month throughout the months of the year. 15. Also one male goat for a sin offering to the Lord; it shall be offered besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering."

COMMENTARY

The new moon inaugurated each month, and the event was

celebrated by another special offering. Rather than the lambs alone, which had been specified for the previous offerings, on this occasion the animals were bulls and rams, in addition to seven supplementary lambs. Then was added a shaggy goat, as at Lev. 4:23, although in fact the goat may have been first in the sequence of the offering (see Ex. 29:10-14). As instituted, the new moon was not a feast day; however, practices associated with such days began to attach to the new moon: it was a time used for presenting yearly thank-offerings (I Sam. 20:6, 29); common trading was stopped (Amos 8:5); the people came to the prophets for teaching (II Kings 4:23); and, the prophets themselves speak of the time as festive (Isaiah 1:13; Hosea 2:13; Ezekiel 46:1).

The true purpose of the day was to bring in remembrance before God those sins committed during the month for which pardon had not been received, and to renew their life-covenant with the Lord through the burnt offering. Blowing the silver trumpets proclaimed the congregation of the people (see 10:10) to bring the prayers of the people unto the Lord through the sacrifices, and to invoke His merciful pardon and a renewal of His grace. Thus the people were regularly and often reminded that their very lives were spared by such grace, and that to take such kindness for granted would be a mark of impiety and ingratitude.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

521. Examine the Hebrew calendar in a good Bible dictionary and see how the months and the new moons coincided.
522. Compute the number of animals which would be used in the monthly sacrifices over a period of one year, using twelve months as a basis.
523. What practices became attached to the offerings of the new moon? Were they commanded?
524. Exactly what was the Lord proposing to accomplish through the establishment of the monthly offerings?

D. OFFERINGS FOR THE PASSOVER
AND UNLEAVENED BREAD vv. 16-25

TEXT

Chapter 28:16. And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the Lord. 17. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. 18. In the first day shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein: 19. But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish. 20. And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram; 21. A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 22. And one goat for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you. 23. Ye shall offer these beside the burnt offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. 24. After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering. 25. And on the seventh day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:16. "And on the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of the Lord. 17. And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. 18. There shall be a holy convocation on the first day; you shall do no hard work on it. 19. And you shall offer a sacrifice by fire for a burnt offering to the Lord: two young bulls, and one ram; and seven lambs one year old, having no defects. 20. And their meal offering shall be of flour mixed with oil: three tenths of a measure for a bull, and two-tenths of a measure for a ram; 21. one-tenth of a measure you shall offer for a lamb, for each of the seven lambs; 22. and one goat for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you. 23. You shall offer

these in addition to the burnt offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. 24. And this is the procedure for the daily offering throughout the seven days, the provision of the sacrifice by fire, of a sweet aroma to the Lord: it shall be offered with its drink offering, in addition to the continual offering. 25. And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work."

COMMENTARY

The Feast of the Passover was the first of the three great annual feasts in Israel, commemorating that great occasion when the Lord visited death upon the oppressing Egyptians' homes while sparing Israel's firstborn (see Ex. 11:1-12:14). Historically, it was by far the most significant feast in the calendar, bringing back rich memories to those who had participated, and recalling a sacred past to those who had not. The people needed no other evidence of God's favor, although there were many such incidents; but the circumstances of Jehovah's visit upon a slave people in bringing them triumphantly out of a land of slavery and oppression called the attention of the world to their high estate. This general had caused terror in the heart of Balak, and he prefaced his plea to Balaam by alluding to Israel's recent escape, (Num. 22:11), and the full account was still being cited when the Israelites approached Jericho forty years later when Rahab referred to the hand of God in the nation's destiny, (Joshua 2:9). So, two weeks after each year began, the memorable event was celebrated. In the proper sense, the observance was not a feast, but the conclusion of a fast, ending in the holy evening meal.

Continuing directly from the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread obtained for seven days. Because the Israelites left Egypt in haste, it was not sensible to wait for a leavening agent to produce the favored light bread; consequently, all leavening was removed from the house. For the following seven days, Israel continued to eat unleavened bread, since there would have been no time to "set" the bread while on the move from Egypt.

The sacrifices for the seven days of this feast were the same as those for each new moon, from the 15th until the 21st days of Abib. There was no special sacrifice on the Passover itself.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

525. Name the three great feasts which the Israelites observed annually.
526. Give the essential meaning of the "passover".
527. Why should the Passover hold such fascinating significance for Israel?
528. What relationship was there between the historical Passover and the use of unleavened bread?
529. Why did the Israelites use unleavened bread while eating the Passover lamb?
530. Give the significance of the seven-day period for the feast of Unleavened Bread.

E. OFFERINGS FOR THE FIRST FRUITS vv. 26-31

TEXT

Chapter 28:26. Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord, after your weeks be out, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: 27. But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year; 28. And their meat offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram, 29. A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs; 30. And one kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you. 31. Ye shall offer them beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish,) and their drink offerings.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:26. "Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new meal offering to the Lord, during your feast of

weeks, you shall have a holy convocation: you shall do no hard work. 27. And you shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet aroma to the Lord: two young bulls, one ram, seven yearling lambs; 28. and their meal offering of flour mixed with oil, three-tenths of a measure for one bull, two-tenths of a measure for one ram, 29. one-tenth of a measure for one lamb, for each of the seven lambs; 30. and one male goat, to make an atonement for you. 31. You shall offer them in addition to the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and you shall present them with their drink offerings; they shall be without defect."

COMMENTARY

The feast described in this section is variously called the Feast of Weeks, the Harvest Feast, the Feast of the First Fruits, and, later, Pentecost. The same offerings were designated as for the previous two feasts. Two special provisions are stipulated: there is to be a congregation, or holy convocation of the people; and, the people are to avoid hard work.

The date of the feast was seven weeks after the Passover, on the fiftieth day. From this fact was derived the last name, Pentecost. In the growing season, this placed the Feast at the time of the wheat harvest. The people were asked to express their gratitude to God in a freewill offering at the time, as they began to harvest their grain (Deut. 16:10); the offering was to reflect the blessings they had first received from God, with each individual male appearing before the Lord with such a gift as he was able (Deut. 16:17).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

531. By what other names is the Feast of Weeks known?
532. Explain how each of the different names for this feast has its own significance.
533. At what time of year was the Feast of Weeks to be observed?
534. What product was being harvested at this time?

535. What determined the value or amount of the freewill offering given at the feast?

F. OFFERINGS FOR THE FEAST OF THE TRUMPETS
(29:1-6)

TEXT

Chapter 29:1. And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you. 2. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 3. and their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a lamb, 4. And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 5. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you: 6. Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savor, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:1. "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work: it is a day to you for blowing the horn. 2. And you shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet aroma to the Lord: one young bull, one ram, and seven yearling lambs without defect. 3. And their meal offering shall be of flour mixed with oil, three-tenths of a measure for a bull, and two-tenths of a measure for a ram, and one-tenth of a measure for one lamb, 4. and one-tenth of a measure for each lamb through the seven lambs: 5. one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you. 6. besides the burnt offering of the month and its grain offering, and the daily burnt offering, and its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their provisions, for a sweet aroma, a sacrifice made with fire to the Lord."

COMMENTARY

The Israelites used two calendars to govern the year. The religious year began with the month Abib, and was the month in which the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread occurred. The civil year began in the seventh month of the seventh year, the month of Tishri, and included the Feast of the Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of the Tabernacles. The Feast of the Trumpets announced the beginning of the civil year, and received its name from the traditional practice of sounding the Shopharim, or rams' horns, which were blown on numerous occasions. The horns themselves were used in commemoration of the delivery of Isaac on Mt. Moriah when the ram was offered in his stead (Gen. 22:13).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

536. Explain the chronological relationship of the two calendars of the Israelite people.
537. What feasts occurred in the first month of the civil year?
538. Which feasts occurred in the first month of the religious year?
539. Identify the "shopharim", and tell for what they were used.
540. Of what were the "shopharim" symbolic?

G. OFFERINGS FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

vv. 7-11

TEXT

Chapter 29:7. And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month a holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: 8. But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord for a sweet savor; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish. 9. And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and

two tenth deals to one ram, 10. A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: 11. One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:7. "And on the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall humble yourselves: you shall do no work. 8. And you shall offer a burnt offering to the Lord for a sweet aroma: one young bull, one ram, and seven yearling lambs, without defect: 9. And their grain offering, flour mixed with oil, three-tenths of a measure for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, 10. one-tenth of a measure each for the seven lambs; 11. one male goat for a sin offering, in addition to the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

COMMENTARY

Special offerings were required on the Day of Atonement, as specified in Lev. 16:2-28. Additionally, the offering duplicated that of the first day of the month, and the people were required to fast and abstain from work, as on the sabbath day.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

541. Read up on the Day of Atonement, and list the events which were unique to this feast.
542. How did the nation learn on this day whether their offerings, and the intercession of the High Priest, were accepted by the Lord?

H. OFFERINGS FOR THE FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES vv. 12-40

TEXT

Chapter 29:12. And on the fifteenth day of the seventh

month ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: 13. And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish: 14. And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams. 15. And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs: 16. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

17. And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: 18. And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 19. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering thereof, and their drink offering.

20. And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 21. And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 22. And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

23. And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 24. Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 25. And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

26. And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot: 27. And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number,

after the manner: 28. And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

29. And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 30. And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 31. And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

32. And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish: 33. And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 34. And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

35. On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein: 36. But ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish: 37. Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner: 38. And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering. 39. These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, beside your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings. 40. And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that the Lord commanded Moses.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:12. "And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work, and you shall keep a feast unto the Lord for seven days:

13. you shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice with fire, of a sweet aroma to the Lord: thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen yearling lambs without defect. 14. And their grain offering shall be of flour mixed with oil, three-tenths of a measure for each bull of the thirteen bulls; two-tenths of a measure for each ram of the two rams, 15. and one-tenth of a measure for each lamb of the fourteen lambs, 16. and one male goat for a sin offering; in addition to the continual burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

17. "Then on the second day: twelve bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without defect; 18. and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; 19. and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offering.

20. "And on the third day: eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without defect; 21. and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, their number according to the ordinance; 22. and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering.

23. "And on the fourth day: ten bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without defect: 24. their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; 25. and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offering.

26. "Then on the fifth day: nine bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without defect; 27. and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, and for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance: 28. and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering.

29. "And on the sixth day: eight bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without defect: 30. and their grain offering and their drink offering for the bulls, for the rams, and for the

lambs, according to their number by the ordinance; 31. and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offerings.

32. "And on the seventh day: seven bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without defect; 33. and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, according to their number by the ordinance: 34. and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offering.

35. "On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work. 36. But you shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire, as a sweet aroma to the Lord: one bull, one ram, seven yearling lambs without defect; 37. their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram and for the lambs, according to their number by the ordinance; 38. and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering. 39. "You shall present these to the Lord at your appointed times, besides your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your grain offerings and for your drink offerings and for your peace offerings. 40. And Moses told the children of Israel according to everything the Lord had commanded Moses.

COMMENTARY

The unusual Feast of the Tabernacles began at sunset on the fourteenth of Tishri, and required the later Israelites to commemorate the period in the wilderness by forsaking their homes to live in temporary booths. The offerings began with thirteen bulls on the first day of the feast, and the number decreased by one daily. *PC* attributes to this fact a significance of diminishing joy in the feast into ordinary joys of daily life. In total, during the entire feast five times as many bulls and twice as many rams and lambs were offered as in the spring festival. On the eighth day the sacrifice reverted to the number offered on the first and tenth days of the month. The feast ended at sunset of this day.

Coming as it did at the end of the harvest of fall fruits, the festival was to reflect the happiness gained through divine blessings in the increase of the fields.

Altogether, the sacrifices commanded at these feasts totalled 1071 lambs, 113 Bulls, 37 rams, 30 goats, 112-bushels of flour, about 370 gallons of oil, and about 340 gallons of wine. Besides these, any individuals or families could offer spontaneous or votive offerings unto the Lord.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

543. How was the Feast of the Tabernacles celebrated, and what did it commemorate?
544. What reason is suggested for the diminishing number of bulls sacrificed on consecutive days?
545. Give the total number of various animals, and the quantities of other commodities offered during the special feasts of the Jews.
546. Were their offerings limited to this number?

I. LAW ON WOMEN'S VOWS (30:1-16)

TEXT

Chapter 30:1. And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. 2. If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. 3. If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; 4. And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. 5. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth, not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, she shall stand; and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her. 6. And if she had at all a husband, when she vowed, or uttered aught

out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; 7. And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it; then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 8. But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it, then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect; and the Lord shall forgive her. 9. But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her. 10. And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; 11. And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 12. But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the Lord shall forgive her. 13. Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. 14. But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her; he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them. 15. But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity. 16. These are the statutes, which the Lord commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 30:1. Then moſes ſpoke to the heads of the tribes of the ſons of Iſrael, ſaying, "This is the word which the Lord has commanded: 2. If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath, binding his ſoul with an obligation, he ſhall not break his word; he ſhall act according to everything that proceeds from his mouth. 3. If a woman alſo makes a vow to the Lord, and binds herſelf by a promiſe while ſhe is young in her father's

house, 4. and if her father hears her vow and the pledge by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand, and every obligation by which she has obligated herself shall stand: 5. But if her father should dissuade her on the day he hears her vow, none of her vows nor her obligations to which she has pledged herself shall stand, and the Lord will forgive her because her father has not allowed her to make the vows. 6. "However, if she should marry while under her vows, or if she has spoken impetuously, and so bound herself, 7. and if her husband hears of it but says nothing to her on the day he hears it, then her vows are binding, and the obligations to which she has bound herself shall stand. 8. But if on the day her husband hears of it he forbids her, then he shall nullify the vow she is under and the impetuous words of her lips, by which she has bound herself; and the Lord will forgive her. 9. "But the vow of a widow, or of a divorcee—everything by which she has bound herself—shall stand against her. 10. However, if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by a bond with an oath, 11. and her husband heard it and did not speak out or annulled her vow, then all her vows shall stand, and every obligation which she bound upon herself shall stand, 12. But if her husband annulled them on the day he heard them, then anything which has proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or concerning an obligation upon herself shall not stand: her husband has annulled them, and the Lord will forgive her. 13. "Every vow and every binding oath which would humble her, her husband may confirm, or her husband may annul. 14. But if her husband indeed does not say anything from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all her obligations, because he has held his peace on the day he heard them: 15. but if he annuls them after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt." 16. These are the laws which the Lord commanded Moses between a man and his wife, between a father and his daughter while she is still young in her father's house.

COMMENTARY

In summary, the laws in verses 1-16 treat with vows made by women—the only portion in Scripture which does so exclusively—under varying circumstances of life. As with any man, the widowed or divorced woman is unconditionally bound by any vow her heart leads her to make (v. 10). If she is unmarried, and lives in her father's house, her vow is subject to his approval, (v. 4-6). The concurrence of her husband is required of any married woman (vv. 7-9, 11-15).

Two types of vows are treated, the *nedher* and the *issar*. The latter is a vow of abstinence (v. 13); the former is a generic term covering a wide spectrum of vows. The *nedher* ordinarily pledges something given to God; the *issar* is typified by the Nazirite vow and its specific terms of abstinence. Men were bound unconditionally by any vow openly expressed, even as intentions. The seriousness of giving voice to a promise could not be overestimated. On the other hand, should an unmarried young lady or a wife so express herself, the consent or approval of the father or husband involved was necessary before her pledge became binding. If he refused, the words were invalid. The young lady in this instance is assumed to be without personal property and dependent upon her father, although the law does not say precisely this.

The regulation applying to the married woman bound the betrothed lady as well, since there was virtually no difference in the legal status of the two under Jewish law. Both she and all that she had belonged to the husband, and he had full rights to allow or disallow any vow she might wish to make. Should she make a vow before her betrothal which her father had not disallowed, her betrothed husband still had the power to renounce her vow rather than suffer any loss through the pledge.

In the instance of divorced or widowed women, any vow had full force, since no man was involved. No explanatory or qualifying terms are mentioned because there were none: and the point is not discussed at all.

The final situation involved the vow of a woman whose husband, upon learning of the vow, permits it to obtain, even if by his silence. Should he later change his mind, the guilt and punishment which should come upon her, if the vow is broken, become his instead. Under this circumstance, he was required to offer a sin-offering or accept the punishment for the sin (see Lev. 5:4, ff., and Lev. 5:1). As given, all the provisions are simple and unambiguous.

We should notice that nothing whatever is said about the vows' contents themselves. A vow was not to be broken if it were foolish, or impractical, or even wrong; it simply was not to be made in the first place if such an eventuality were possible. The point at issue was elementary: nobody was to take a promise lightly, nor was any man to give his word to any solemn pledge without carefully considering the consequences as far as they could be foreseen. *PC* lists these conditions which any proper vow should meet: it "must not contradict any commandment of God, nor infringe any right of other men. It must lie within the proper province of a man's own free will; it must concern such things as he can really control. This was what gave the vow its virtue and significance," (p. 396). The same source, when considering the essential evil of a broken vow, concludes properly that truth must exist for the sake of truth alone. It is sacred in God's eyes. The evil, the author concludes, "has been in forcing the oath on all men irrespective of their disposition. No forced oath will make the liar really truthful; and no forced oath can make the truthful man anything more than truthful. Administering oaths to a man of veracity is like holding a candle to make the sun shine. As has been truly said, the compelled oath makes the ignorant and superstitious to think that there are two kinds of truth, and that it is harmless to say, free from an oath, what it would be very wicked to say under it," (p. 396).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

547. Distinguish between the terms *nedher* and *issar*, showing what is or is not included in each.

548. What differences does the Scripture make between the circumstances under which a man or a woman might make binding vows.
549. Give the circumstances under which a woman's vow was not binding.
550. How does the law of vows relate to a betrothed woman?
551. At what time might it be assumed that an unmarried woman might make a vow without the consent of her father?
552. When was a married woman's vow valid, even if her husband did not speak his word of approval?
553. What two kinds of women might make binding vows without consulting any men?
554. Discuss fully the principle which underlies the law of vows. How does it establish a firm foundation for truth?
555. What four conditions should every vow meet to be proper?
556. What would cause a forced vow to lose its validity?
557. Discuss why it would be superfluous to ask an honest man to take a vow.

IV. THE LAST EVENTS IN TRANS-JORDAN (31:1—33:42)

A. ATTACK UPON THE MIDIANITES vv. 1-12

TEXT

Chapter 31:1. 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. 4. Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war. 5. So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand

armed for war. 6. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand. 7. And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses: and they slew all the males. 8. And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain: namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword. 9. And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. 10. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire. 11. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts. 12. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 31:1. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, "Execute the full vengeance of the Children of Israel upon the Midianites; afterward, you shall be gathered unto your people." 3. And Moses spoke unto the people, saying, "Arm men from among you for the conflict, and let them go forth against Midian and avenge the Lord on Midian. 4. You shall send to the war one thousand men from each tribe, throughout all the tribes of Israel." 5. So twelve thousand armed men were brought out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, for the battle. 6. And Moses sent them to the battle, a thousand from each tribe, they and Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest, to the battle, with the holy instruments and the trumpets and his hand to blow. 7. And they fought against Midian as the Lord had commanded Moses: and they killed all the males. 8. And they killed the kings of Midian, besides the others who were slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they also killed Balaam, the son of Peor, with

the sword. 9. And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captive, along with their little ones; and all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods. 10. Then they burned all the cities where they lived, as well as their camps, with fire. 11. And they took all the loot, and all the prey, both of man and beast. 12. And they brought the captives and the prey and the loot to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the congregation of the children of Israel, to the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by the Jordan opposite Jericho.

COMMENTARY

God had earlier commanded the attack upon the Midianites (25:17), citing their prostitution of Israel at Peor (25:18). We have no way of determining exactly how long this interval had been, but in the meanwhile the census had been taken to establish the basis for Israel's army. When the attack was finally made, it seems to have been quite unexpected, and the victory was total. One thousand men from each of the tribes constituted the attacking army, and they were accompanied by Phinehas, the son of the high priest, who took with him certain "holy instruments", whose identity is not known, along with the trumpets.

In the battle, all males—apparently the adults—were killed, along with the five "kings" or chiefs of Midian. Along with these five prominent men is mentioned the fact that Balaam, son of Beor, was a victim of the same attack. It would seem that Balaam had remained in the area, had attached himself unto the Midianites, and counseled the Midianites to tempt Israel into idolatry (v. 16). His death may have been the result of judicial execution rather than from the battle itself (see *PC* p. 400).

Following the overwhelming victory comes the matter of dividing the spoils of conquest. The women are taken prisoners, along with all children. The "cattle", here meaning beasts of burden, and their domesticated flocks are confiscated, along with all of their goods. The cities were burned next. Since the Midianites were a nomadic people, it is very possible that these cities had originally belonged either to the Moabites or the

Amorites, and that they had been captured by Sihon. The *KJ* word "castle" is not justified in the text; the term means simply "camps". The booty now was brought before Moses and Eleazar, as well as the congregation, in their camp in Moab for disposition. Since the battle had been ordered by the Lord, the warriors were not to look upon the occasion as one of personal exploitation of the victims. God Himself must guide this next important step.

Why was the annihilation of so great a number of the Midianites ordered? Not because they were the only idolatrous people with whom Israel came into contact; nor were the Israelites to become international moral policemen to enforce Divine laws of conduct. The reason, simply put, is that Midian "had made an unprovoked, crafty, and successful attack upon God's people, and had brought thousands of them to a shameful death. The motive which prompted the attack upon them was not horror of their sins, nor fear of their contamination, but vengeance; Midian was smitten avowedly 'to avenge the children of Israel' (v. 2) who had fallen through Baal-Peor, and at the same time 'to avenge the Lord' (v. 3), who had been obliged to slay his own people," (*PC*, p. 403.) A final word is appropriate. We would be logically in error to apply twentieth-century, or even Christian, moral standards to the actions commanded at Moses' time. The treatment of the Midianite women and children was, by the standards of his day, most merciful, and is a step toward that ethic God would have all men reach through His Son—to stir a national conscience against atrocities and, ultimately and ideally, to eliminate war altogether. If men fail to reach this goal, it is due not to a failure in God's plan or a lowering of His goals, but to the continuing rebellious and inhumane attitudes and acts of His rebellious creature.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

558. What was the basic reason for God's ordering the attack upon the Midianites?
559. Why had He not done similarly to the Moabites or the Amorites?

560. Who accompanied the army, and with what implements?
561. Tell who was killed in the ensuing battle.
562. Who were spared initially?
563. Why had the cities probably not been built originally by the Midianites?
564. Discuss the ethical question of the annihilation of the Midianites. Why is it a fallacy to apply contemporary standards of the actions here?

B. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THEIR DISPOSAL vv. 13-20

TEXT

Chapter 31:13. And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp. 14. And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle. 15. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? 16. Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the Counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. 17. Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. 18. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves. 19. And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day. 20. And purify all your raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats' hair, and all things made of wood.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 31:13. And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp. 14. And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds,

who had come from the battle. 15. And Moses said to them, "Have you spared all the women alive? 16. "Behold, these caused the childrn of Israel to revolt against the Lord through the counsel of Balaam, in the matter of Peor; and there was a plague of the Lord among the congregation. 17. "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man by lying with him. 18. "But all the girls who have not lain with a man you are to keep alive unto yourselves. 19. "Stay outside of the camp seven days, anyone who has killed another person, and anyone who has touched a corpse; purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day. 20. "And you shall purify every garment and every item of leather and all work of goats' hair, and all things made of wood."

COMMENTARY

The anger of Moses, Eleazar and other leaders of the people is not difficult to understand. When they learned that the very most involved members of the Midianite tribe who had earlier corrupted Israel had been spared, their reaction was spontaneously to disapprove. These were the very women who induced the people of God to sin flagrantly, both in committing whoredom and in subscribing to orgaistic religious rituals before the pagan gods. To spare them would be an affront to the very God who had ordered the extermination of the offending tribe. Moses' decision is immediate, and his orders are to the point. He first rebukes those who were responsible for the situation, then he gives the reason for his displeasure. Then they are told what they must do: kill every male child and every woman who has had intercourse with a man. Only virgins, of whatever age, are to be spared. The male children are to be exterminated in order to bring Midian to extinction. The women who have had sexual experience are to be killed to prevent further seduction of the Israelites; and, as we may now conclude from present knowledge of the ravages of sexually-oriented diseases, to prevent a further infestation of God's people in a manner all too familiar from the past.

Why, then, were the virgins spared? Unlike many of their contemporary nations, the Hebrews were not slave traders. They were permitted servants, with numerous laws in the Mosaic code to govern the practice. But in this instance it seems correct to assume that many of the Midianites married into the nation of Israel, since any children born to such a union would have been considered Israelites; and they are not yet living under the circumstances which would have prohibited the marriages. Nevertheless, both soldiers and captives were required to remain outside the camp for one week. During the time, they are to follow exactly the strictures of 19:11ff., in order that they might be ceremonially clean when they reentered the camp. Even their clothing and anything made of skin, goats' hair or wool, must likewise be made clean. The directions specify that only those who have actually killed another, or have touched a corpse, are involved. Even the captives themselves are to undergo the ritual cleansing before they may be admitted into the assembly of Israel.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

565. Give the causes for the anger of Moses and Eleazar when Israel's warriors returned from their battle with the Midianites.
566. Relate Moses' instructions as to how the captives were to be treated. What was to happen to the different kinds of prisoners?
567. Why was it reasonable to spare only the virgins among the Midianites?
568. What eventually became of those Midianite women?
569. For what reason and for what length of time were some of the soldiers not permitted to return to camp?
570. Compare the treatment given these captives by Israel with that normally given to prisoners of war in other contemporary societies.
571. Suggest any reasons you can for requiring the Israelites to purify even the garments and other such items before bringing them into camp.

C. PURIFICATION OF THE SOLDIERS
AND THE BOOTY vv. 21-24

TEXT

Chapter 31:21. And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord commanded Moses; 22. Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, 23. Everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water. 24. And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 31:21. Then Eleazar the priest said to the warriors who had gone to the battle, "This is the statute of the Law which the Lord commanded Moses: 22. only the gold and silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin and the lead, 23. everything which can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean. But whatever does not pass through the fire you shall pass through the water. 24. "And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean; afterwards you may enter the camp."

COMMENTARY

In recognizing that "this is the earliest instance of the high priest declaring to the people what the law of God as delivered to Moses was, and then applying and enlarging that law to meet the present circumstances," (*PC*, p. 400), we should also recognize the circumstances under which such a declaration was made. As the account moves inexorably toward the time of the death of Moses, more responsibility has already been shared with Joshua, and it is only reasonable that such a sharing should occur in another area in which Moses has carried a singular responsibility—a responsibility which will be an inherent part of

the duties of the succeeding high priests. This fact alone is hardly sufficient to prove that the passage is a later interpolation.

All those metals which can be purified by fire are to undergo this method of treatment; materials which would not survive this process are to be washed thoroughly with water. The metals named here: gold, silver, bronze, tin, iron and lead were well known to ancient people; all of them were refined, and all could be purified by the fires; so it was ordered. The process of washing would have included all skins, clothing, and woven fabrics of any kind. Even aside from the fact that the order is given for ceremonial purposes, no better precautionary measures could have been taken to insure curtailment of any transmissible diseases. In a day when men did not know anything of this fact, and of the part which either clothing or materials of any other kind could play in spreading unwanted germs and infestations, it was a part of God's divine protection of His people to order such a cleansing. Their own clothing must be washed on the final day of the quarantine, as the final act of compliance; following this, life might be resumed in its normal course.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

572. Why were the metal items and all other articles of booty to be subjected to the ritual of cleansing?
573. Explain the part of Eleazar in presenting the instructions to Israel.
574. Why did Moses himself not deliver the instructions?
575. Find other instances where the Israelites were required to make similar compliances with God's orders.

D. DIVISION OF THE BOOTY vv. 25-54

TEXT

Chapter 31:25. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 26. Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the

congregation: 27. And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation. 28. And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep: 29. Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for a heave offering of the Lord. 30. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and given them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord. 31. And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses. 32. And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep, 33. And threescore and twelve thousand beeves, 34. And threescore and one thousand asses, 35. And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him. 36. And the half, which was the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep: 37. And the Lord's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen. 38. And the beeves were thirty and six thousand; of which the Lord's tribute was threescore and twelve. 39. And the asses were thirty thousand and five hundred; of which the Lord's tribute was threescore and one. 40. And the persons were sixteen thousand; of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two persons. 41. And Moses gave the tribute, which was the Lord's heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the Lord commanded Moses. 42. And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred, 43. (now the half that pertained unto the congregation was three thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep, 44. And thirty and six thousand beeves, 45. And thirty thousand asses and five hundred, 46. And sixteen thousand persons,) 47. Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of men and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which

kept the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord: as the Lord commanded Moses.

48. And the officers which were over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses: 49. And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. 50. We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord. 51. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels. 52. And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the Lord, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. 53. (For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.) 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.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 31:25. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "You and Eleazar the priest, and the heads of the fathers' households of the congregation shall take a count of the loot which was taken, of both man and animal; 27. and divide the loot between the warriors who went out into battle and all the congregation. 28. "And you shall levy a tax for the Lord from the warriors who went out to battle, one in five hundred of the people and of the cattle, and of the donkeys and of the sheep; 29. take it from their half and give it to Eleazar the priest, as an offering to the Lord. 30. "And from the half belonging to the children of Israel you shall take one of each fifty of the people, of the cattle, of the donkeys and of the sheep, from all the animals, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the Tabernacle of the Lord." 31. So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses. 32. And the booty which

remained from the loot which the warriors had taken was 675,000 sheep, 33. and 72,000 cattle, 34. and 61,000 donkeys; 35. and of people, of the women who had not lain with a man, the total number of women was 32,000. 36. And the half which was the allotment of those who went to war was the following: the number of sheep was 337,500, 37. and the Lord's tax of the sheep was 675, 38. and the number of cattle was 36,000, from which the Lord's tax was 72. 39. And there were 30,500 donkeys, from which the Lord's tax was 61. 40. And there were 16,000 people, from whom the Lord's levy was 32 people. 41. And Moses gave the tax which was the Lord's offering to Eleazar the priest, as the Lord had commanded Moses. 42. And from the half belonging to the children of Israel, which Moses received from the men who had gone to war 43. (now the congregation's half was 337,500 sheep, 44. and 36,000 cattle, 45. and 30,500 donkeys; 46. and there were 16,000 people), 47. and from the half belonging to the children of Israel, Moses took one chosen from every fifty, of both man and animals, and gave them to the Levites who kept charge of the Tabernacle of the Lord, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

48. Then the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, came to Moses. 49. And they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a census of the warriors who are under our command, and not one man is missing. 50. "So we have brought as an offering to the Lord what each man found, items of gold, jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and belts, to make atonement for our souls before the Lord." 51. Then Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all kinds of wrought jewelry. 52. And all the gold of the offering which they offered up to the Lord from the captains of the hundreds was 16,750 shekels. 53. (Now the warriors had taken loot, every man for himself.) 54. Now Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it to the Tent of Meeting as a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord.

COMMENTARY

Everything taken in war against the Midianites was first divided into two equal portions. These were shared alike by those who had gone to battle and those who had not. David would later base his distribution of loot from war upon this principle (see I Sam. 30:24ff.): it is implicit in Joshua's words to the people when the two and one-half tribes settled east of the Jordan (Josh. 22:8).

When the equal division was completed, the booty was assessed for a tribute unto the Lord. One-fifth of one percent of that which was designated for the warriors was to be given Eleazar for a heave offering unto the Lord. The same portion was taken from those given the congregation, and these portions were taken for the Levites. Although the total portions taken were identical, the proportions differed greatly: .2% of the soldiers' booty, but 2% of the booty of the people. This would recognize the active service of the warriors. If the number of animals taken seems large, let the later reference of Judges 6:3-5 be considered, where the Midianites' herds and flocks are compared to grasshoppers in multitude, and their camels are said to have been "without number."

The soldiers were obviously pleased with their rewards (v. 49); and an even more intriguing item is the note that not one man was missing from their ranks. This latter fact has been attributed to the protection of God, to the lack of resistance from the Midianites, and to the full obedience and sound faith of the participants. The passage does not assign a cause.

A number of items of jewelry appear in the detailing of the booty. We should not wonder that a nomadic people possessed such items, since this was a custom of antiquity among the Bedouins, whose jewelry represented the total of their wealth, apart from their flocks. The Israelites themselves had produced a sufficient quantity to more than provide for the necessities of construction of the Tabernacle. All of the gold so taken was given to the Lord, and was doubtless used to support the tabernacle services.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

576. Compare the amount of booty allocated to the soldiers with that shared by the people.
577. On what basis were the soldiers allowed the greater shares?
578. What explanations have been offered for the fact that not one of the Israelite soldiers was lost in this battle? Defend the one you accept.
579. Is it reasonable to believe that a nomadic people could have as much gold as Israel took from the Midianites? Explain your answer.

E. REQUEST OF GAD AND REUBEN (32:1-5)

TEXT

Chapter 32:1. Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle. 2. The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, 3. Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon, 4. Even the country which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle: 5. Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 32:1. Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had an exceedingly large number of livestock. So when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that it was a suitable place for livestock, 2. the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, 3. Ataroth, Dobon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam,

Nebo and Beon, 4. the land which the Lord conquered before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock; and your servants have livestock. 5. And they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession; do not take us across the Jordan."

COMMENTARY

We may infer that the herds of Gad and Reuben had, by some means, grown more rapidly than had those of the other tribes, and their request must be based upon this situation. The land of Jazer, or Jaazer, is situated just east of the Jordan in the vicinity of Heshbon. Gilead is the common name for the greater portion of the territory beyond the Jordan, sometimes even including the land of Bashan which is east of the Sea of Galilee. In its most restrictive sense the term Gilead refers to the area from the northern tip of the Dead Sea to the Yarmuk River and the Sea of Galilee. The area is mountainous, but there are also occasional plateaus and plains, with large areas offering pasture land and tillable fields. It must certainly have looked most desirable to these shepherding people, after considering the relatively barren land through which they had come.

The nine settlements mentioned in v. 3 are all in the southern section of the eastern land; they were later divided with four going to Gad and five to Reuben. It is possible that the flocks and herds of the entire nation were grazing well within the area the cities described. At this time the tribes had not received their allocations. When Gad and Reuben asked for portions on the east of Jordan, the request would seem out of order. Whether they coveted the finest pasture land, or wanted to escape having to assist in driving the pagan tribes out of the land across the Jordan, or whether they had some other motive altogether is not told; Moses understood their reason to be the second of these. History would later show their choice, if not their faith, to have been faulty.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

580. What reasons could the two tribes have had for wanting

to settle east of the Jordan?

581. Give the areas specified, and describe them, as Gad and Reuben made their requests.
582. Follow the decay and downfall of the eastern tribes in later time, especially after the division of the Kingdom of Israel. Can this be traced in any way to their choice of territory?

F. REBUKE BY MOSES vv. 6-15

TEXT

Chapter 32:6. And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? 7. And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them? 8. Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. 9. For when they went up into the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the Lord had given them. 10. And the Lord's anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, 11. Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: 12. Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun; for they have wholly followed the Lord. 13. And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed. 14. And behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel. 15. For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 32:6. But Moses said to the sons of Gad and the

sons of Reuben, "Shall your brothers go to war while you yourselves sit here? 7. And why do you now discourage the children of Israel from crossing into the land which the Lord has given them? 8. This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. 9. For when they went up to the wady of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the children of Israel so that they did not go into the land which the Lord had given them. 10. So the Lord's anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying, 11. 'Indeed, none of the men who came up from Egypt, twenty years old and up, shall see the land which I pledged to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob because they have not fully followed me. 12. excepting Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have fully followed the Lord.' 13. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel, and he made them wander forty years in the wilderness, until the entire generation of those who had sinned in the sight of the Lord were destroyed. 14. And behold, you are risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel. 15. For if you turn away from following Him, He will once more abandon them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all these people."

COMMENTARY

The anxieties and fears shown by Moses are readily understandable. Above all other things, he most wanted to prevent another fiasco like that at Kadesh-Barnea. There the disobedient people incurred the righteous wrath of God, and their stubbornness had cost the lives of virtually the entire group, besides the forty years of time lost in the wilderness. The suggestion from Gad and Reuben at this juncture conceivably could produce a rift among God's people again, and who could predict the possible consequences? Moses' conclusion that the two tribes hoped to avoid having to participate in the military campaign in the west is logical. He further concluded that such action would disturb the essential unity of the tribes. Almost exactly the same charge would later be leveled against the two

tribes by Deborah (Judges 5:16, 17), and with sound reason. For one-sixth of the group to stand back now and disengage themselves arbitrarily from Israel's advance into the Promised Land would have dulled the glory of the moment of triumph to say the least; at most, it could have served as a disquieting and discouraging element of such magnitude as to cause the remainder of the people to refuse to advance any farther. Thus the situation of Kadesh-Barnea could easily have been repeated.

Are the words of Moses unnecessarily harsh? His response to the circumstantial request is immediate; he has not asked for an explanation: and he does not consult the Lord first before voicing his own objections: this hardly seemed necessary. But he was not omniscient, and regardless of the manner in which the issue came to its settlement, his forthright zeal to protect God's people had been evidenced. Moses was not being stubborn or inconsiderate or illogical; he was taking a positive stand for right as he understood it. That he later qualified his stand is irrelevant, excepting to show the great stature of the man who, when all the facts are introduced into the picture, was willing to modify his position when he was satisfied that the principle for which he contended would not fall. Beyond doubt those who made the suggestion among the two tribes were young men whose minds had little or no recollection of the analogous circumstance to which Moses compared this one. He speaks from wisdom and experience. Nothing in the incident can be understood as a reflection upon his integrity, his character, or his intelligence. He simply does not want disastrous history to repeat itself if he can prevent it.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

583. What did Moses fear as possible results if Gad and Reuben were permitted to settle east of the Jordan?
584. What possible motives might they have had?
585. To what historical situation and incident did he compare the choice before them?
586. Defend the propriety of Moses' words.

587. What is there in the incident which makes you think more highly of Moses?
588. What later historical events seem to suggest that Moses' fears were not entirely ungrounded?

G. THE TRIBES' PLEDGE vv. 16-19

TEXT

Chapter 32:16. And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: 17. But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. 18. We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance: 19. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 32:16. Then they came near him and said, "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, 17. but we ourselves will go armed and ready before the children of Israel until we have brought them unto their place, while our little ones live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18. We will not return to our houses until the each of the Children of Israel had taken his inheritance. 19. For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan toward the east."

COMMENTARY

The answer given Moses by Gad and Reuben made it apparent that their intentions in settling east of the Jordan are not those he had feared. They were more than willing to assist their brothers to whatever degree it was necessary in clearing out the western lands; they desired only to be allowed this

productive portion for themselves, and that they first be allowed to make shelters for their animals and "cities", or camps, for their families. These camps would have been fortified villages in which the women, children and the aged could enjoy a degree of protection.

To make their willingness completely clear, the two tribes offer not only to go with the other ten, but to arm themselves and precede the others until the conquest is complete. Only then will they return to their homes and families. We encounter some difficulty in understanding just what the two spokesmen meant in affirming "our inheritance is fallen to us on this side of Jordan eastward," v. 19. The allotment has not yet been made, (see 33:16ff.), and we have been given no decree from any source that any of the tribes would be permitted to settle here. The statement is best understood to designate the tribal preference, rather than an official allocation, as if to say, "With your permission and the Lord's, we should like this area to be considered our allotment." Apparently none of the other tribes had any objections, to say nothing of any resentment, of the plan and request, which must have been an important factor in resolving the question.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

589. Show how the Gadites and Reubenites demonstrated their desire to maintain their strong ties with the other tribes.
590. What conditions did they lay down as preliminary to moving forward to clear out the land?
591. Looking ahead, how long was it to be before these men would return to their families, and who gave them permission to do so?
592. Explain how the territory they sought could be called their "inheritance".

H. LAND GIVEN TO GAD, REUBEN, AND ONE-HALF OF MANASSEH v. 20-33

TEXT

Chapter 32:20. 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. 24. Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth. 25. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth. 26. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead: 27. But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the Lord to battle, as my lord saith. 28. So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. 29. And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the Lord, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession: 30. But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. 31. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do. 32. We will pass over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours. 33. And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 32:20. So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will go armed before the Lord 21. and all of your armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until he has driven his enemies out from before him, 22. then later you shall return and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. 23. But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out. 24. Build cities for yourselves, and for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; then do what you have promised." 25. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben said to Moses, "Your servants will do just as my lord commands. 26. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks and all our cattle shall be there in the cities of Gilead; 27. but your servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the Lord to battle, just as my lord says."

28. So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' households of the tribes of the children of Israel. 29. And Moses said unto them, "If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you across the Jordan, each man armed for battle, before the Lord, and the land shall be overcome before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; 30. but if they will not cross over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. 31. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, "As the Lord has said unto your servants, that is just what we will do. 32. We will pass over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan, in order that the possession of our inheritance may be ours on this side of the Jordan. 33. And Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to one-half of the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the land with its cities and their environs, the cities in the surrounding country.

COMMENTARY

The offer of service is quite acceptable to Moses. If the

tribes will keep their word to go "before the Lord" and fight until the land of Canaan is cleared, they may have their request, and their inheritance east of Jordan will be granted. Should they renege in any manner, however, and fail to do exactly as they have promised, their sins would be brought graphically to their attention, and they shall regret their folly. If a pledge made by an individual Israelite was considered inviolate, we may well attach supreme importance to such a promise made by this large segment of the nation. Failure under these circumstances could bring disaster upon the total nation.

We are told now (v. 33) of the inheritance of the one-half tribe of Manasseh, without having been told of the division of the tribe; they were not named at all in the negotiations. Whether there had been division within the tribe; whether Gad and Reuben were more prominent as spokesmen in the discussions; or, whether it was advisable to split the number because this tribe had multiplied so rapidly, we are not told. The answer may well be found later (vv. 39-42).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

593. Suggest what punishment the Lord might have brought upon the men of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh if they failed to honor their pledge.
594. Why does the half-tribe of Manasseh now join with the others in the pledge?
595. What reasons may be given for the division of Manasseh's tribe?

I. CITIES BUILT OR TAKEN IN THE LAND

vv. 34-42

TEXT

Chapter 32:34. And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, 35. And Atroth, Shopan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah, 36. And Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities; and folds for sheep. 37. And the children of Reuben built

Hesbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim, 38. And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded. 39. And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it. 40. And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein. 41. And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havorth-jair. 42. And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 32:34. And the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, and Atroth-shophan and Jazer and Jogbehah, 36. and Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran as fortified cities, and sheepfolds for sheep. 37. And the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kiriathaim, 38. and Nebo and Baal-meon (their names were changed) and Sibmah, and they gave other names to the cities they built. 39. And the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were there in it. 40. So Moses gave Gilead to Machir, the son of Manasseh, and he lived in it. 41. And Jair, the son of Manasseh, went in and took their villages, and called them Havvoth-jair. 42. And Nobah went in and took Kenath and its villages, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

COMMENTARY

The text must not be made to mean that the named cities were first constructed by the Israelites; rather, they were rebuilt or restored, in order to provide the necessary security for the families who would remain there. All of the cities are located between the Arnon and the Jabbok rivers. The general territory was very unstable in later days, with much of the area fluctuating between the Gadites, Reubenites, Ammonites, and Moabites. The boundaries are often very difficult to ascertain.

The incident related in verse 39 is followed by Manasseh's

settlement of Gilead. The descendants of Machir, son of Manasseh, were especially prominent in taking this territory, and apparently this was the reason Moses awarded them the land. "Gilead" here is used to apply to the land north of the Yarmuk—the area more often known as Bashan—indicating a broad use of the term.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

596. In what sense are the Israelites said to have built the cities in Gilead?
597. Using a good Bible encyclopedia, determine the widest and most narrow sense in which "Gilead" is used.
598. How does this passage of the text help show the probable reason for awarding of a portion of the eastern territory to half of the tribe of Manasseh?

V. REVIEW OF THE ROUTE FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN (33:1-49)

A. EGYPT TO SINAI (33:1-15)

TEXT

Chapter 33:1. These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2. And Moses wrote their going out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord: and these are their journeys according to their goings out. 3. And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptains. 4. For the Egyptians buried all their first born, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments. 5. And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth. 6. And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. 7. And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon:

and they pitched before Migdol. 8. And they departed from before Pi-Hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and sent three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. 9. And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there. 10. And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea. 11. And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. 12. And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. 13. And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. 14. And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink. 15. And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:1. These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt, with their armies, under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2. And Moses wrote their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the Lord, and these are their journeys according to their starting places. 3. And they left Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the passover the children of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians, 4. while the Egyptians were burying all their first-born whom the Lord had struck down among them; and God executed judgment upon their gods as well. 5. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses, and camped in Succoth. 6. And they journeyed from Succoth, and camped in Etham, which is at the edge of the wilderness. 7. And they journeyed from Etham, and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which faces Baal-zephon and they camped before Migdol. 8. And they journeyed from before Pi-hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness; and they went three days' journey into the wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah. 9. And they journeyed from Marah and came to Elim; and in Elim

there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they camped there. 10. And they journeyed from Elim and camped by the Sea of Reeds. 11. And they journeyed from the Sea of Reeds and camped in the wilderness of Sin. 12. And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, and camped at Dophkah. 13. And they journeyed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. 14. And they journeyed from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink. 15. And they journeyed from Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

COMMENTARY

At the word of the Lord, Moses set down the progressive list of "journeys", actually, stations, at which the Israelites encamped from the time of leaving Egypt until they reached Canaan. Forty-one names appear in the list, if we include the final mention of Moab. Eleven names appear en route to Sinai, twenty-one on the way to Kadesh, and the final eight on the way to Moab. Many of the places are, understandably, unidentifiable. There can be no way of placing them, since they were never permanent settlements. Many familiar names appear on the list, such as Succoth, the wilderness of Sin and of Sinai, Ezion-geber, Kadesh, Mt. Hor, and the locations in Moab. Many others are totally strange; making it impossible to trace the journey with more than spotty accuracy.

Two dates are mentioned in the process of this listing: Israel left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month; the death of Aaron is noted on the first day, fifth month, in the fortieth year after the exodus. To what purpose is this detailing? The primary lesson gained certainly is in the demonstration of the leading hand of God in the entire period. Most of the details used to embellish the listed "stations" are to be found in the introductory portion, i. e., verses 3-8. As was so often done by the Old Testament chroniclers and prophets, the people are reminded of the significance of their history, especially the devastating death of the Egyptian first-born. Of special interest is the fact that the account calls our attention to the burial of

the Egyptian dead. Funerary rites were especially important in Egypt, and the concentration of these people upon the rites afforded Israel an excellent period during which to move away on their journey. We are also reminded that the mighty works of the Lord were performed as judgment upon the gods of Egypt. The contrasting picture is obvious: the gods of Egypt had been directly assaulted in the plagues, and their powers to protect the people were bluntly refuted when the firstborn were slain. Israel would point to this fact repeatedly in the future.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

599. Why is it impossible to identify many of the "journeys" listed in this chapter?
600. What does the term mean here?
601. How does this section demonstrate the continuing leading hand of God?
602. How did the Egyptian custom of taking care to bury their dead work in favor of the Israelites?
603. Consult a good Bible encyclopedia, and learn how the plagues God sent upon Egypt were direct blows against that nation's gods.
604. What conclusions would we have expected the Egyptians to reach concerning their gods at the death of their firstborn?

B. SINAI TO MT. HOR vv. 16-37

TEXT

Chapter 33:16. And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah; 17. And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth. 18. And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah. 19. And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez. 20. And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah. 21. And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah. 22. And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah. 23.

And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher. 24. And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah. 25. And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth. 26. And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath. 27. and departed from Tahath and pitched at Tarah. 28. And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah. 29. And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah. 30. And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth. 31. And they departed from Moseroth and pitched in Bene-jaakan. 32. And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad. 33. And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah. 34. And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah. 35. And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber. 36. And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh. 37. And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:16. And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah. 17. And they journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and camped at Hazeroth. 18. And they journeyed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. 19. And they journeyed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-perez. 19. And they journeyed from Rimmon-perez and camped at Libnah. 21. And they journeyed from Libnah and camped at Rissah. 22. And they journeyed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. 23. And they journeyed from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher. 24. And they journeyed from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. 25. And they journeyed from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. 26. And they journeyed from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. 27. And they journeyed from Tahath and camped at Terah. 28. And they journeyed from Terah and camped at Mithkah. 29. And they journeyed from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. 30. And they journeyed from Hashmonah and camped at

Moseroth. 31. And they journeyed from Moseroth and camped at Bene-jaakan. 32. And they journeyed from Bene-jaakan and camped at Hor-haggidgad. 33. And they journeyed from Hor-haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah. 34. And they journeyed from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. 35. And they journeyed from Abronah and camped at Ezion-geber. 36. And they journeyed from Ezion-geber and camped in the wilderness of Zin, that is, Kadesh. 37. And they journeyed from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom.

COMMENTARY

Of all the place-names in this section, thirteen are not given anywhere else in the Old Testament. It is impossible to say whether or not Gray is correct in assigning these places to the total area wandering, as well as that between Sinai and Kadesh (see p. 296, *IB*). In this event, there would have been no attempt to mention the places chronologically, but simply as a composite list from the final two portions of the total journey from Egypt to Canaan. The list is, indeed, longer than necessary for the brief trip from Sinai to Kadesh; and the list covering the final 38½ years is proportionately much too small. Either Moses has listed every point at which the people encamped during the second leg, but has scantily summarized the third; or the stops in the one period were very brief, while in the other they were prolonged.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

605. Why are so many of the places mentioned here not to be found anywhere else in the Old Testament?
606. What alternative is there to accepting Moses' arrangement of the place names in chronological order? What evidences would seem to indicate this arrangement by geography rather than chronology?

C. MT. HOR TO THE JORDAN vv. 38-49

TEXT

Chapter 33:38. And Aaron the priest went up into mount

Hor at the commandment of the Lord, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month. 39. And Aaron was a hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor. 40. And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. 41. And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah, 42. And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon. 43. And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth. 44. And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab. 45. And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad. 46. And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim. 47. And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. 48. And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. 49. And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:38. Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor upon the command of the Lord, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. 39. Now Aaron was one hundred twenty-three years of age when he died on Mount Hor. 40. And the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev in the land of Canaan, learned of the coming of the children of Israel. 41. Then they journeyed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah. 42. And they journeyed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon. 43. And they journeyed from Punon and camped at Oboth. 44. And they journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iyeabarim, near the border of Moab. 45. And they journeyed from Iyim and camped at Dibon-gad. 46. And they journeyed from Dibon-gad and camped at Almon-diblathaim. 47. And they journeyed from Almon-diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before

Nebo. 48. And they journeyed from the mountains of Abarim and camped in the plains of Moab near the Jordan, opposite Jericho. 49. And they camped by the Jordan, from Beth-jeshimoth as far as Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

COMMENTARY

The death of Aaron was a notable event in the history of Israel. Although he had not always been just what God wanted him to be, as when he participated in the affair of the golden calf (Ex. 32) and joined Miriam in seditious talk against Moses, we should see the man in his proper perspective, not remembering these incidents only, but knowing him as the spokesman for Moses before Pharaoh; as the conscientious high priest who faithfully performed his duties before a murmuring, complaining people; as the brother and intimate companion of Moses who must often have served as counselor, confidante and commiserator with the great man of God in whose shadow Aaron was required to live.

Since Aaron's death occurred "in the fortieth year," it is clear that God intended for the entire time taken up by the travels, from Egypt to Canaan, to be included in the forty years specified as punishment for the rebellion at Kadesh. In actual time, one and one-half years had been taken in the period from the exodus to Kadesh, and additional time was required to march around Edom, through Moab into the Abarim, and to overcome the eastern tribes of Gilead. Three years older than Moses, he had been 83 years of age when he stood before Pharaoh (Ex. 7:7).

Arad the Canaanite is mentioned here because he had previously opposed Israel, at their coming to the southern edge of Canaan (21:1-3), imposing a defeat upon them and taking a number of captives. He made no move against Israel in this situation, however. The people left the area soon, and all conflict was avoided.

From the scene of Aaron's death, the Israelites began their march around Edom, since the latter people had refused passage

through their land (20:14-21), coming to Zalmonah at the southeastern extremity of Edom. They then worked their way in a generally northward direction to the eastern side of Moab, removing later to the area of the Abarim and the northern plains of Moab at Abel-shittim. From this point they took their time to cross the Jordan. There can be no doubt that the Israelites made camp at many unnamed locations—camping perhaps for a few days or for extended periods of time. To reconstruct their travels completely and accurately, even if all the unnamed stations were also supplied, would be impossible. We have quite enough information, however, to show us that God's words to the people were accurately fulfilled.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

607. Evaluate the life of Aaron as a man, as a spokesman for Moses, as a priest, and as a leader of the people, showing his strengths and weaknesses.
608. Cite a half-dozen instances in which Aaron had stood firm for the cause and the word of the Lord.
609. Why does the Bible tell us of the wrongdoings of Aaron?
610. What do we conclude from the fact that Aaron died "in the fortieth year"? Reconstruct a chronology of the period from Egypt to Abel-shittim, showing how the forty years are accounted for in the divisions of the trip.
611. Consult a reliable map of the area of the wandering, and trace the travels of Israel in regard to the known places where they encamped.
612. Is it possible that we are not given the names of every location where the Israelites stopped during their journeys?
613. If there are omissions in this list, how much would we be helped if the list were complete?

VI. FINAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING
THE SETTLEMENT OF CANAAN (33:50-36:13)

A. ON CLEARING THE LAND (33:50-56)

TEXT

Chapter 33:50. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 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. 54. And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families; and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth: according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. 55. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. 56. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 33:50. Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab near the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, 51. "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52. then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their carved stones, and destroy all their molten images, and devastate all their high places. 53. You shall take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land unto you to possess it. 54. And you shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you shall give the greater inheritance; and to the smaller you shall give the smaller

inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, it shall be his. You shall inherit according to the families of your fathers. 55. But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you allow to remain will become as thorns in your eyes and as pins in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land in which you live. 56. And it shall happen that as I plan to do to them, I shall do to you.

COMMENTARY

Here quite briefly, but in details which are certainly adequate, the children of Israel are told precisely what to do when they enter into the land of Canaan: first, they are to drive out all the inhabitants; second, every evidence of their pagan worship, idols, symbols, stones, and sites of desecration, are to be totally destroyed; third, they are to possess and settle in the entire land outlined unto them; and, finally, they are to determine by lot the area to which each tribe is to be assigned, with the division generally awarding larger territories to larger tribes, and smaller territories to smaller tribes. As a corollary, God informs His people of the dire consequences of anything less than total obedience: any of the residents who are left in the land will become a source of irritation and spiritual disruption; and, the Lord will bring upon Israel the same fate as should have come upon the Canaanites.

Two matters are established in God's proclamation that the people of Canaan are to be driven from the land in order that Israel might occupy it. God is at the same time pronouncing judgment upon a polytheistic, decadent and immoral people; and, He is making provision to establish a nation whose laws and conduct He may approve. All of this is an essential link in the chain of promise-fulfillment made to Abraham, Issac and Jacob, and his words to Moses are tantamount to saying, "This is your land, just as I have promised. It shall be the land of your people as long as they are worthy of it. But should they become like the other nations, in idolatry and in conduct, they shall forfeit any claims whatsoever, and shall suffer the same end as

those who held it before their coming."

Itemized as those factors which are especially offensive to the Lord are the "pictures", or, more accurately, their carved stone images; the "molten images", or images which have been cast or engraved of metal; and the "high places" or sites upon which idolatrous rites occurred, often in elevated areas. They were all to be totally demolished. No vestige of these offensive elements were to be left, lest they pollute the thoughts and corrupt the practices of Israel. It would be impossible to misunderstand the meaning of these instructions. They would either be fully carried out, or the very pledge of long standing with the patriarchs was no longer valid. Holding the land was directly associated with religious purity—a factor which should never be forgotten. Failure to apprehend this principle will result in a failure to understand the dozens of associated prophecies which God would later speak through His appointed messengers. It is unfortunate that many otherwise devout and learned students of the Word of God have not given this premise to all their exegesis of the prophetic treatment of Israel, both past, present and future.

Only the unbeliever or the self-appointed expert can question the right of the Creator to declare a portion of His creation for the use of those whom He has chosen. Israel will become stewards of Canaan simply because the previous occupants were poor landlords, worshiping the created rather than the Creator. While Israel retains a faithful stewardship, the land will belong to successive generations.

As in 26:53-56, division of the land by lot is commanded now, along with the provision that the sizes of the tribes are to be factors in allocation of the portions. We may well remember that the size of the allotment alone in some instances is an indecisive factor. Although the territory given Simeon was great, much of it was wasteland (the Negev area); and although the portion awarded Dan by lot was relatively small, it was a most productive and desirable location for shepherding or agriculture. It is not possible, however, to establish a rigid formula relating these factors unexceptionally to the division of

the land.

During his final address to the nation, Joshua alluded to the curse God promised upon Israel if she were disobedient to his laws and plans (Josh.23:13), and the figure is implicit in Judges 2:3, although it is not completely expressed. Little imagination is required to feel the impact of the thought, since anyone who has had sharp grit in an eye, or a thorn in his flesh can appreciate its meaning; and the experiences are virtually universal. Just so, God's blessings become curses to an ungrateful and disobedient people regardless of time or place.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

614. Outline the commandments and conditions laid out by the Lord to Israel regarding their duties in occupying the land of Canaan.
615. How can we justify God's command to exterminate or drive out the people who were already living in the land?
616. What specific items were to be demolished, and why?
617. By what basic principle would their happiness or punishment in the land be determined?
618. Show how God was honoring His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at this time.
619. Can we reconcile the two instructions about dividing the land by lot and awarding the larger portions to the larger tribes?
620. What other considerations come to mind when we attempt this reconciliation?
621. Under what later circumstances were the figures of punishment against Israel used?

B. BORDERS OF CANAAN ESTABLISHED (34:1-15)

TEXT

Chapter 34:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan: (this is the land that shall fall

unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:) 3. Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward: 4. And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akkrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon: 5. And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea. 6. And as for the western border, ye shall have even the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border. 7. And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor: 8. From mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad:

9. And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border. 10. And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham: 11. And the coast shall go down from Shapham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward: 12. And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about. 13. And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the Lord commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe: 14. For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance; and half of the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance: 15. The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan near Jericho eastward, toward the sunrising.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 34:1. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 2.

"Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, 'When you enter the land of Canaan, this is the land which shall fall to you as an inheritance: the land of Canaan and its borders. 3. The southern section shall be from the wilderness of Zin alongside the border of Edom, and your south border shall be from the tip of the Dead Sea eastward. 4. There your border shall turn from the south to the slopes of Akrabbim and continue to Zin; its limits shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall reach Hazaraddar, and continue on to Azmon. 5. And the border shall turn from Azmon to the wady of Egypt, and its boundary shall be at the Sea. 6. As for the western border, you shall have the Great Sea as its border: this shall be your west border. 7. And this shall be your north border: you shall draw the boundary line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor: 8. from Mount Hor you shall mark out your border to the entrance of Hamath, and the limit of the border shall be at Zedad.

9. Then the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and its limit shall be at Hazer-enan. This shall be your north border. 10. "For your eastern border, you shall also draw a line from Hazer-enan to Shepham, 11. and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down and reach the eastward projection of the Sea of Chinnereth. 12. And the border shall go down to the Jordan, and its limit shall be at the Salt Sea: this shall be your land with its surrounding borders.' " 13. So Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, "This is the land which you shall inherit by lot, which the Lord commanded to give to the nine and one-half tribes; 14. for the tribe of the children of Reuben, according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of Gad, according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance; and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. 15. The two and one-half tribes have received their inheritance on this side of the Jordan, east of Jericho, toward the sunrise.

COMMENTARY

Since two and one-half tribes have already received their

inheritances east of the Jordan, they are not involved in the description of the borders of Canaan. This term is properly applied only to that land west of the Jordan. The remaining nine and one-half tribes are to be bounded within the area set forth in the description before us.

The southern boundary was established from the southern tip of the Dead Sea in a southwesterly direction to Kadesh, generally following the western border of Edom. From Kadesh, it turned northwest at nearly a right angle toward the "river of Egypt," the Wady el-Arish, which was to be commonly cited as a boundary between Egypt and Canaan later (see II Chron. 7:8; Isaiah 27:12). The line met the Mediterranean coast at a point almost directly west of the spot from which it left the Dead Sea.

On the west, the Israelites were to view the Great Sea, or the Mediterranean, as their boundary. The Hebrew word for "west" (*yam*) is the same as that for "sea", and this secondary use is no doubt traceable to the identity of the two in bounding Canaan. Strangely, the Israelites never held the coastal plains along the Mediterranean. The southern portion, the Philistine Plain, was held by the Philistines; the central plains area, the Plain of Sharon, was in the hands of the Canaanites; the northern portion, the Phoenician Plain, was never taken from those people. Even at the peak of the Kingdom during the reigns of David and Solomon, the coastal territories were not fully occupied by Israel. Nevertheless both the word and the concept were perpetuated, even in the language of the people.

Along the northern border, we are not told from what point the line was to leave the Sea. The Mount Hor here mentioned is not to be confused with the peak of the same name where Aaron died, since the two are not less than 120 miles apart. Since the location of each is subject to question, however, an exact figure cannot be given. The one in 33:7 must have been in Lebanon, and it was probably recognizable from the Sea at the point of the border's origin. The "entrance of Hammath" cannot be precisely located today. Perhaps it is that point at which the Orontes River leaves its upper valley, in the Lebanon

mountains, and enters the plains in the vicinity of Hamath. If this is true, the northern boundary of the land was far beyond the ordinary holdings, lying more than one hundred miles north and east of the Sea of Galilee. Identification of the other points mentioned is at best tenuous, with the "fountain of the court", or Hazar-enan offering the most likely identifiable spot as the area of Banias where the source of the Jordan rises.

On the east, the boundary is vague from Hazar-enan to the sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). Those points mentioned, Shepham, and Riblah are unknown. Ain may be the traditional place at which the various sources of the Jordan converge, south of Mount Hermon. The Jordan itself is then named as the final unit of the boundary, along with the Salt Sea.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

622. Why are the boundaries not given for the two and one-half tribes which settled east of the Jordan?
623. Make a list of the points given in the itemized boundaries which can be identified today.
624. Why are so many of the points unidentifiable?
625. Why did the Israelites never occupy the coastal plains along the Great Sea?
626. Draw a map of the land included in these boundaries, showing the locations of the known places named, and, where possible, the suggested locations of those places not positively identifiable today.

C. ALLOTMENTS ASSIGNED TO TRIBAL LEADERS

vv. 16-29

TEXT

Chapter 34:16. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 17. These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. 18. And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance. 19. And the names of the men are these: of the

tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 20. And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud. 21. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. 22. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli. 23. The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod. 24. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan. 25. And the princes of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. 26. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan. 27. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. 28. And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. 29. These are they whom the Lord commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 34:16. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 17. These are the names of the men who shall assign the land to you by lot as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. 18. And you shall take one leader from each tribe to assign the land for inheritance. 19. And these are the names of the men: of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 20. And from the tribe of the children of Simeon, Samuel the son of Ammihud. 21. From the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. 22. And from the tribe of the children of Dan a leader, Bukki the son of Jogli. 23. From the children of Joseph: of the tribe of the children of Manasseh a leader, Hanniel the son of Ephod. 24. And from the tribe of the children of Ephraim a leader, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan. 25. And from the tribe of the children of Zebulun a leader, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. 26. And from the tribe of the children of Issachar a leader, Paltiel the son of Azzan. 27. And from the tribe of the children of Asher a leader, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. 28. And from the tribe of the children of Naphtali a leader, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. 29. These are the ones whom the Lord commanded to assign the inheritance to the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

COMMENTARY

Overseeing the process of casting lots for the inheritances are the two men most responsible for the two essential of primary responsibility among the people—religious and civil. Whereas we have been accustomed to hearing of Aaron and Moses in these capacities, the mantles have fallen upon their successors, Eleazar and Joshua. To assist them, one man of significance is to be chosen from each of the tribes sharing in the lot. Precise borders may have been left as negotiable points among these men, who must have been men of greatest integrity and trustworthiness. They are named in the order in which their lots progress from south to north generally in the new land. Of these men we know nothing more.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

627. Why are Eleazar and Joshua chosen to guide the distribution of the land by lot?
628. What characteristics would you expect to have found in the men selected to represent each tribe in this process?

D. CITIES RESERVED FOR THE LEVITES (35:1-8)

TEXT

Chapter 35:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites, of the inheritance of their possession, cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. 3. And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. 4. And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. 5. And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side, two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst: this

shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. 6. And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. 7. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. 8. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 35:1. And the Lord spake to Moses in the plains of Moab near the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, 2. "Command that the children of Israel give to the Levites, from the inheritance of their possession, cities in which to dwell; and you shall also give the Levites open ground around the cities. 3. And the cities shall be theirs to live in; and the open ground shall be for their livestock, and for their herds and all their animals. 4. And the open ground of the cities which you shall give to the Levites shall extend outward from the city wall one thousand cubits all around. 5. You shall also measure from outside the city on the east two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west two thousand cubits, and on the north two thousand cubits, with the city in the center: this shall be the open ground of the cities. 6. And the cities you shall give the Levites shall be six cities of refuge, which you shall give for the man-killer to flee unto; in addition to them, you shall give forty-two other cities. 7. All the cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be forty-eight cities, along with their open ground. 8. Regarding the cities which you shall give from the possessions of the children of Israel, you shall take more from the larger, and less from the smaller; but each one shall give some of his cities to the Levites in proportion to his inheritance which he inherits.

COMMENTARY

No single land inheritance was awarded to the Levites, in

the fashion of the areas allocated to the other tribes. Instead, forty-eight cities together with their stipulated "suburbs" were to be designated Levitical cities. This does not mean that only Levites occupied the cities, but that they were to hold as many residences within the towns as necessary; and their pasturage requirements were to be met through use of the land immediately surrounding the city walls. The arrangement accomplishes several good ends. The Levites are removed from total dependence upon the tithes the offerings of the people; in the event of the failure of the other tribes to fulfill their lawful obligations unto the priests, the priests will not be without any sources of livelihood, since they will be able to maintain their own herds and flocks. The plan disperses the priests among the people, where they will be convenient and available for their services to the congregation. They are not to be an isolated, detached and uninvolved group; they will be able to participate in the day-by-day events of their communities, and become one with those they serve. They will have regular duties themselves to perform in caring for their animals—a responsibility not without its practical values.

The "suburbs" awarded the Levites were open grounds for tilling and for pasturing their animals. The measure of the first one thousand cubits (about 1500 feet), may be set up for cultivation and the second thousand cubits for grazing the animals. This is certainly the most simple method of explaining the manner in which the suburbs were established. *KD*, however, accepts the proposal by Michaelis that the city is to be viewed as a square with pasturage stretching one thousand cubits outward in every direction, so that the length of the extreme border of the environs would be two thousand cubits longer than the dimension of its parallel side. The total area in this latter arrangement would have been considerably smaller; but we cannot be certain which method was actually used.

Six of the Levitical cities were to be appointed as cities of refuge, to which any manslayer should flee until proper disposition might be made of his homicide. The general regulations governing the flight of the manslayer, his confine-

ment to the city of refuge until his trial, and the course to be followed in the event of his being found innocent or guilty are now to be given, enlarging upon the previous suggestion found in Exodus 21:13ff. With the matter of judgment of the manslayer in the hands of the congregation, (v. 24), any of the cities of Israel might have been selected theoretically; but it is especially appropriate that the cities should be those in which there was a concentration of Levites. Such a fact should augur well toward a careful administration of justice under the Law.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

629. How many cities were awarded the Levites?
630. How were these cities distributed among the tribes?
631. Who lived in the cities?
632. Describe the manner in which the extent of the "suburbs" may have been laid out.
633. To what uses did the Levites put the "suburbs"?
634. List the advantages of distributing the Levites in this manner.
635. What was the purpose of the "cities of refuge"?
636. Into whose hands was the judgment of the manslayer delivered?
637. What favorable results might we have expected from having the Levites living in the cities of refuge?

E. REGULATIONS REGARDING THE CITIES OF REFUGE vv. 9-15

TEXT

Chapter 35:9. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 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. 13. And of these cities which ye shall give, six cities shall ye have for refuge. 14. Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge. 15. These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 35:9. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 10. "Speak unto the children of Israel and tell them, 'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11. you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, in order that the man-killer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee unto them.' 12. And the cities shall be as a refuge unto you from the avenger, so that the man-killer may not die until he appears before the congregation in judgment. 13. And the cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge. 14. You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan: they are to be cities of refuge. 15. These six cities shall be for refuge for the children of Israel, and for the alien and for the traveler among them, so that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee unto them."

COMMENTARY

The first thing to be noticed in the appointment of the six cities of refuge is that they were not intended to protect that individual who had committed deliberate, willful murder. Only where some reasonable doubt existed in reference to the circumstances might that man expect to be permitted sanctuary; otherwise, the sentence of the law was clear and emphatic: he must be stoned to death.

The perspective of the account is clearly that of Israel's being yet on the east side of the Jordan: the cities were not even to be selected until they lived in Canaan. At that time, three cities on each side of the river should be appointed. In the event of any homicide in which the killer believed himself not

to have been guilty of murder, he was obliged to scurry rapidly to the nearest city of refuge. Hence, the location of the six cities was to be a matter of careful concern. As the manslayer fled to the sanctuary, the "avenger of blood", or the male next of kin to the deceased was obliged to make pursuit and, if he overtook the manslayer, he might put him to death without guilt of blood upon his hands.

The import of this law has been much discussed. The emerging value of the law is its emphasis upon the value of human life—even a careless act which results in the death of another is no light matter, and preventable homicide imposes a punishment upon that one who is careless, negligent or unconcerned about another human being. The law was to be enforced not upon the Israelites only, but upon any strangers, and even sojourners in their land. By this method all people who came within the scope of the law's force came under the instruction of those who saw its value and the rationale for the law itself. The basic concept was a gigantic stride forward from any law to be found in pagan contemporary society. The inherent value of each individual's life, and the awesome nature of divine justice are well established.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

638. What were the cities of refuge specifically *not* designed to do?
639. Why should any distinction be made among the manners by which homicide was committed?
640. Describe the conduct expected of the manslayer and of the avenger of blood?
641. Who was the avenger of blood?
642. Why would the avenger of blood be permitted to slay the manslayer outside the city of refuge, or before he reached the city?
643. Show what primary principles were established by this law.

644. For what reasons were strangers and sojourners included under the law?
645. How does this law compare with attitudes and laws of other countries relative to treatment of killers?

F. LAWS OF HOMICIDE vv. 16-34

TEXT

Chapter 35:16. And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17. And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18. Or if he smite him with a hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19. The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him. 20. But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, then he die; 21. Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him. 22. But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, 23. Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm: 24. Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: 25. And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. 26. But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; 27. And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: 28. Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high

priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession. 29. So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30. Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. 31. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall surely be put to death. 32. And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. 33. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. 34. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 35:16. But if he struck him down with an iron instrument, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17. And if he struck him down with a stone in his hand, so that he might have died, and if he did die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18. Or if he struck him down with a wooden instrument in his hand, so that he might have died, and he did die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19. The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; he shall be put to death when he meets him. 20. Or if he shoved him in hatred, or threw something at him from ambush so that he died, 21. or if in he struck him down with his hand maliciously so that he died, the one who struck him down shall surely be put to death: he is a murderer; the blood avenger shall put the murderer to death when he meets him. 22. But if he shoved him suddenly and without malice, or threw something at him, not being in ambush, 23. or hit him with a stone object capable of killing him, but without seeing him, and was not hostile toward him, and had not sought to harm him, 24. then

the congregation shall judge between the killer and the blood avenger according to these regulations. 25. And the congregation shall deliver the man-killer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of refuge to which he had fled; and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. 26. But if the man-killer goes at any time outside the border of the city of his refuge to which he has fled; 27. and if the avenger of blood finds him outside the border of the city of his refuge, the blood avenger may kill the man-killer and not be guilty of his blood: 28. because he should have remained inside his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. However, after the death of the high priest the man-killer shall return to the land of his possession. 29. So these things shall be for a regulatory law to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30. If anyone kills another person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but the testimony of one witness alone shall not cause him to be put to death. 31. Furthermore, you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death; he shall surely be put to death. 32. And you shall not take a ransom for one who has fled to his city of refuge to permit him to return to live in his land before the death of the high priest. 33. In this way you shall not pollute the land where you are: for blood pollutes the land, and no land can be cleansed of the blood which has been shed upon it excepting by the blood of the one who shed it. 34. And you shall not defile the land which you shall inhabit, in which I dwell: for I am the Lord, dwelling among the Children of Israel.

COMMENTARY

As in other areas of the Law, the provisions defining murder and distinguishing it from accidental homicide; the different tests for determining guilt and innocence; the various punishments determined by the seriousness of the offense—all of these are vast improvements over any other ancient statutes. In essence, there are three differences, as shown in ICC; (1) the Law “insists that life is to be forfeited only in case of wilful

murder," in contrast to primitive measures which did not make such a distinction; (2) the Law "tacitly insists that the life of the actual murderer only can become forfeit"; in primitive cultures the family often might be compelled to share the punishment of the offense of one of its members; and, (3) the Law "forbids the acceptance of a money equivalent for a forfeited life," (p. 471). Additionally, clear points are set forth upon which to form a fair judgment in reference to guilt because of motive. The motivation, if any, behind any homicide was subjected to three areas of inquiry: first, the weapon itself: was it lethal in nature, or not? Implements of iron, large stones, or weapons of wood which were large enough to administer a death blow must first be established as the cause of death, if murder were suspected. Then, had there been enmity between the two? Witnesses would be adduced to confirm or deny this possibility. Feelings strong enough to lead to deliberate murder would be difficult to conceal. Those knowing of such feelings would become prime sources of testimony if murder were suspected. The third factor adduced would be the circumstances of the death: had the murderer plotted the assault? "Laying in wait" need not necessarily mean an ambush, but rather seeking an opportune time or place for the foul deed. Thrusting in hatred suggests an explosion of temper, but it is to be inferred that the circumstances are more than a mere accident; in such a circumstance, the judgment was in the hands of the congregation. Motive, weapon, and occasion, then, were the prime factors to be reviewed in any charge of murder.

The duty of the "revenger of blood" was clear: to pursue the manslayer and, if he be overtaken before reaching a city of refuge, to slay him; no guilt of blood would then be upon his hands. Additionally, he was to make certain that the slayer did not leave the city of refuge at all before he had been pronounced guilty or innocent of murder. Obviously, if he were guilty of murder, the punishment was stoning to death by the congregation. If he were innocent of murder, he was yet required to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the current high priest. To go outside the city was to invite death at

the hands of the "revenger of blood". Even under circumstances of accidental homicide, the guilty man, and the entire nation, were to learn that taking a life was no trivial matter. Courtesy, caution, and preventive measure may be learned from the law: man should do all he possibly can to avoid placing himself in a situation where, even by the remotest accident, he might endanger the life of another.

Because a great responsibility lay with the "congregation", we should recognize the concept behind the word. Ordinarily, *eydab* signified the entire nation assembled together. We cannot believe the trial of a murderer would have been the occasion for such an assembly, especially after they were scattered about in the new land; and the law is tailored to that situation. The force of the word may suggest that any individual of the congregation, or of the assembled ones who answered the call to assemble, might bear testimony if he had reason to do so, or that any one might participate in the decision, once having heard the testimony of all witnesses. If the accused were found innocent, he was provided safe escort back to the city of refuge from the scene of the trial. If he were guilty, all participated in his execution by stoning.

That the manslayer was forced to dwell in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest presents some interesting points. Several restrictions automatically accompany such a sentence. The man, and his family as well, would be required to uproot themselves from their previous residence and live within the city. The man himself dare not go outside the walls. Perhaps a radical change in his life style might be necessary, since he would not possibly be able to pursue either an agricultural or shepherding career within the walls of the city. Unless other members of his family visited him, he would be unable to see father, mother, brothers or sisters until the time of his release. Yet, he had escaped the sentence of death, and the inconveniences of his new life were much to be preferred over the sentence of death. The reason for specifying that the innocent manslayer was to be set free when the high priest died is not given. The proper understanding may be that presented in *PC*:

"The stress . . . which is laid upon the fact of his (the high priest's) decease, cf. v. 28, and the solemn notice of his having been anointed with the holy oil, seem to point unmistakably to something in his official and consecrated character which made it right that the rigour of the law should die with him. What the Jubile was to the debtor who had lost his property, that the death of the high priest was to the homicide who had lost his liberty," (p. 448).

A most significant factor in the general set of laws regarding manslaughter is the stipulation that more than one witness must be heard in testimony against the killer. It is a most reasonable safeguard, requiring none of our defense. If one were a witness of the assault and another of evidence of enmity, the testimonies might condemn the manslayer by their harmony; but no man could be condemned on the word of one other person alone.

The next provisions are equally grave and reasonable. The murderer could offer nothing whatever in place of his life if he were convicted of his crime. Having disregarded the sanctity and the right of another man to his life, the killer could not offer anything other than his own. No amount of money, no servile pledge, no measure of repentance—none were acceptable. The principle had held since the day of Noah: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man," (Gen. 9:6).

Again impressing upon the people the gravity of taking another's life even by accident is the legal provision that the manslayer found innocent of murder may not purchase his freedom by any means. Only the death of the high priest is effectual in procuring his release from the city or refuge. An act with a most serious consequence could only be seen in its true perspective if the consequences were inviolate.

One of the continuing marks of human decadence, especially in the abuse of positions of power, is the callous attitude of indifference to shedding the blood of the innocent. To anyone with a memory of the meaning of Buchenvald, Auschwitz,

Dachau, or other symbols of Hitler's blood-purge of the Jews in the time of World War II; or to those familiar with the political purges in Communist Russia or Red China, it is hardly necessary to point out the fact that men have furthered their own political or social philosophies by wholesale murder of the innocent within their lands. Surely the technique was not invented in our twentieth century, but, to our shame, our generation certainly has not eliminated the atrocious practice. The shedding of innocent blood, whether in individual or mass quantities, is a polluting, profaning crime for which an entire people may be defiled. In a most climactic way, the Lord implores Israel not to pollute their land because He Himself wants to live there! The serious child of God knows that the Divine Presence is more than a wish, more than a myth—it is a glorious fact.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

646. In what three areas can you note a significant difference between the laws of homicide among the Israelites as compared with those laws from other cultures?
647. Why is it necessary to establish motivation behind any charge of murder?
648. Show the importance of the size and substance of the weapon in such a charge.
649. How do the circumstances under which a homicide occurs help to determine whether or not it might be murder?
650. To what facts might witnesses be brought to testify?
651. Exactly what does "laying in wait" mean?
652. Who was the "revenger of blood", and what was his primary obligation?
653. What was the action of the avenger of blood if the manslayer were found guilty of murder by the congregation?
654. What were his duties if the manslayer were found innocent of murder?

655. Define the obligations of the congregation in the accusation and prosecution, as well as execution of a murderer.
656. Discuss some of the lessons the Israelites, as well as other people who might become familiar with their laws, should have learned from these regulations regarding homicide.
657. What is the usual meaning of "congregation" as it is used of the Israelites?
658. How can it be demonstrated that these homicidal laws were designed for implementation after Israel settled in Canaan?
659. How long was the manslayer required to remain in the city of refuge if he were found innocent of murder?
660. What was accomplished by requiring the innocent man to remain away from his home for this period of time?
661. Suggest some of the inconveniences he and his family might have to undergo.
662. What significance do you find in the death of the high priest as it related to the manslayer?
663. Why should the witness of one man alone not be sufficient to establish the guilt of a man accused of murder?
664. To what various facts might the witnesses bear record?
665. What significance to you attach to the fact that the manslayer was unable to purchase his exemption from residence in the city of refuge by recompense of any kind?
666. What lesson attaches to the firm requirement that the murderer could not escape by any method from the sentence of death for his crime?
667. Does this provision contribute in any way to the concept of the intrinsic value of human life?
668. For how long had the principle of "life-for-life" been

- known among men? What were the circumstances of its beginning?
669. Have we a real basis for revoking this law of God?
670. What does history show has happened when human life was held in low esteem?
671. Why are the innocent most likely to suffer under these circumstances?
672. Cite historical instances of the debauches of political and social theorists whose power enabled them to enforce their discriminatory philosophies. Cite both contemporary and ancient examples.
673. For what supreme reason did God ask Israel to refrain from polluting her land?
674. Might He express the same thought today?

G. THE MARRIAGE OF HEIRESESSES (36:1-13)

TEXT

Chapter 36:1. And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel: 2. And they said, The Lord commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters. 3. And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance. 4. And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribes whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers. 5. And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the

Lord, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well. 6. This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry. 7. So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8. And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. 9. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance. 10. Even as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad: 11. For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons: 12. And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. 13. These are the commandments and the judgments, which the Lord commanded, by the hand of Moses, unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 36:1. And the heads of the fathers' households of the family of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the children of Joseph, approached unto Moses and the leaders, the heads of the fathers' households of the children of Israel, 2. and said, "The Lord commanded my lord to give the land by lot as an inheritance, and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters. 3. But if they marry any of the sons of other tribes of the children of Israel, their inheritance shall be taken from the inheritance of our fathers and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they then belong; in this way it shall be withdrawn from

the lot of the inheritance. 4. And when the jubilee of the children of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they then belong; in this way their inheritance shall be withdrawn from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers." 5. So Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord, saying, "The tribe of the children of Joseph has spoken correctly. 6. This is what the Lord commanded regarding the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, 'Let them marry whomever they choose; only let them marry within the family of the tribe of their father.' 7. Thus no inheritance of the children of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe; the children of Israel shall individually hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8. And every daughter who comes into the possession of an inheritance of any of the tribes of the children of Israel shall become the wife of one of the families of the tribe of her father, so that the children of Israel may each maintain his own inheritance." 10. So the daughters of Zelophehad did just as the Lord had commanded Moses: 11. Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, married their uncles' sons. 12. They married into the families of the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained with the tribe of the family of their father. 13. These are the commandments and the laws which the Lord commanded unto the children of Israel through the hand of Moses in the plain of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho.

COMMENTARY

In the previously introduced question about the laws of inheritance as they applied to the daughters of a man without sons, the legislation was aimed at preserving land holdings within the family and the tribe of the father. One circumstance had not been considered at that time: supposing the marriage of an inheriting daughter to a man of another tribe; did the land she had received from her father go with her as a possession of the tribe of her husband? The consequences of such a possibility are endless and, theoretically, very confusing. The

matter of the Jubilee year is introduced since in that year all land was re-settled and all titles cleared for permanent ownership. Titles not challenged were considered settled; and the claims of the children of a legitimate heiress could not be called into question. Hence, parcels of land might readily and in some quantity escape the family and tribe for which they were intended, despite the obvious fact that an essential principle of ownership was being violated.

In answer to the problem, the simple answer is announced: the women who inherited land were forbidden to marry outside their tribes. The instance before us would mean that Zelophehad's daughters must marry men of Manasseh. Any further complications were avoided when they actually married "their father's brothers' sons," (v. 11). The complications of marriage outside the family would be similar to those of marriage outside the tribe; hence, the solution of Zelophehad's daughters was an ideal one.

A single brief sentence summarizes much of the content and intent of *Numbers*: to present the commandments and judgments given by the Lord through Moses to Israel during their last days in Moab opposite Jericho. The many interesting and informative facts of history contained in the book are of secondary importance when compared with the words spoken of God for the common welfare. On the same principle, the details of history reflect the degree to which men have followed or disregarded such words; and the men are themselves justified or condemned upon the basis. Knowing now the general regulations which are intended to govern their lives in the land which God has prepared for them, the Israelites are but briefly removed from that day when they will cross the Jordan and inhabit the land of "milk and honey".

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

675. Review the situation with Zelophehad's daughters, and the verdict rendered at that time.

- 676. What complications would arise if any of the daughters were to marry outside the tribe of Manasseh?
- 677. How does the entire situation relate to the year of Jubilee?
- 678. What simple regulation was pronounced for the problem?
- 679. Why was it important that the marriages be consummated within family groups?
- 680. What advantage was there in settling such issues as this before the land of Canaan was actually taken?

ABBREVIATIONS FOR REFERENCES USED IN THE TEXT

<u>Book</u>	<u>Abbreviation</u>
<i>American Standard Version</i>	AS
<i>The Interpreter's Bible</i>	IB
<i>The International Critical Commentary</i>	ICC
<i>Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament</i>	ILOT
<i>Keil & Delitzsch, Commentaries on the Old Testament</i>	KD
<i>King James Version</i>	KJV
<i>New American Standard Bible</i>	NASB
<i>Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary</i>	PBD
<i>The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary</i>	PHC
<i>The Pulpit Commentary</i>	PC
<i>Rashi Commentaries on the Pentateuch</i>	RCP

GLOSSARY to the Book of NUMBERS

- Aaron**—"luminous" (?). First son of Amram and Jochebed, brother of Moses and Miriam. Selected by God to be spokesman for Moses, Aaron worked closely with his brother throughout the time of the exodus and subsequent history. He was made the first high priest by the Lord, although his character was weak and he fell into the sin of jealousy toward his brother. Death came to him at age 123 years on the top of Mt. Hor, at which time his robes were stripped from him and put upon his son and successor, Eleazar. The people mourned for him for thirty days.
- Abarim**—"a region on the other side". Site of one of the final encampments of the Israelites east of the Jordan. From one of the peaks of the mountains in this area, the Israelites viewed the Promised Land, as did Moses.
- Abel-shittim**—"meadow of the acacia trees." A plain in the land of Moab. Here the Israelites spent their last few days before crossing into Canaan.
- Abidan**—"father is judge." A prince selected from the tribe of Benjamin as their representative at the census in the wilderness. He also offered a sacrifice as one of the leaders of Israel when the tabernacle was dedicated.
- Abihail**—"father is strength." The head of the house of Merari; father of Zuriel.
- Abihu**—"the father is he." The second son of Aaron who, with his father, brother, and seventy elders, ascended Sinai part-way with Moses. Later killed along with his brother Nadab when they offered strange fire to Jehovah.
- Abiram**—"father of exaltation." One of the conspirators against Moses, along with Dathan and Korah, his brothers. He was struck dead by the Lord, who opened the earth to swallow them.
- Agag**—"violent, war-like," (?). A royal title given to the Amalekite princes. Its use is similar to that of 'Pharaoh' or 'Caesar', in that it is applied to the current ruler at the time of writing.

GLOSSARY

- Ahiezer**—"helping brother," (?). Head of the tribe of Dan in the wilderness.
- Ahihud**—"brother of Majesty." Head of the tribe of Asher who assisted Moses in the division of the land of Canaan.
- Ahiman**—"my brother is a gift." One of the three giant sons of Anak whom the Israelite spies saw at Mount Hermon.
- Ahiram**—"exalted brother." A son of Benjamin. Not listed in Genesis, he is the third of five sons in Numbers.(26:38, 39).
- Ain**—"fountain." A spring, or flowing water, located west of Riblah on the eastern border of the Promised Land. Perhaps to be identified with the source of the Orontes river.
- Akrabbim**—"scorpions, or curves." The "ascent of the scorpions," a pass rising between the southwestern corner of the Dead Sea and the Wilderness of Zin; the boundary between Judah and Edom.
- Almon-diblathaim**—"Almon of the two cakes of figs." One of the final camps of Israel—the eighth after Ezion-geber—situated between Dibon-gad and the mountains of Abarim.
- Alush**—"wild place, or lion's lair," (?). One of the campsites of Israel between Dophkah and Rephidim.
- Amalekites**—"laborious, war-like" (?). Descendants of Esau, the Amalekites were nomadic marauders living principally in the Negeb. They, together with the Canaanites, defeated Israel at Hormah.
- Ammiel**—"God is my kinsman." Son of Gemalli, and Dan's spy among those sent into Canaan by Moses.
- Ammihud**—"my kinsman is glorious." 1. An Ephraimite and father of Elishama. 2. A Simeonite and father of Shemuel. 3. A Naphtalite whose son, Pedahel, assisted in dividing the Promised Land.
- Aminadab**—"my kinsman is generous." 1. Aaron's father-in-law; a Levite. 2. A prince of Judah.

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- Ammishaddai**—"my kinsman is the Almighty." A Danite, whose son was captain of the tribe of Dan.
- Ammonites**—"son of my relative." Descendants of Ben-Ammi, the son of Lot by his second daughter. Related to the Moabites, with whom they often joined against a common foe.
- Amorites**—"highlanders". Descendants of Canaan, these people, under king Sihon, took a large area from Moab and held it during the time of the Israelites' wanderings.
- Amram**—"exalted people." A Levite and father of Moses, Aaron and Miriam.
- Anak**—"long necked; giant." Descended from Arba, and the father of the Anakim. Three of their chiefs occupied Hebron at the time of the spies' visit.
- Ar**—"city". A city or district in Moab; at one time the capital. Located on the Arnon River.
- Arad**—"wild ass; fugitive" (?). A city in the Negeb, about seventeen miles south of Hebron.
- Ard**—"descender, or ruler." Son of Bela, descendant of Benjamin.
- Areli**—"valiant". A son of Gad and founder of the Arelites.
- Arnon**—"roaring stream." River rising in Arabia which flows into the Dead Sea through a high gorge from the east. During the time of the wilderness wandering, it formed the boundary between the Moabites and the Amorites.
- Arod**—"descendant". A son of Gad and head of the Arodites during Moses' day. (26:17).
- Aroer**—"poor, naked, helpless." 1. A town on a branch of the brook Jabbok, captured from Sihon. 2. A town on the north bank of the Arnon, held by the Reubenites.
- Ashbel**—"man of Baal." Second son of Benjamin, and father of the Ashbelites.
- Asher**—"happy". The second son of Zilpah, by Jacob; and the tribe descended from him.

GLOSSARY

- Asriel**—"God binds together." Son of Gilead, and grandson of Manasseh.
- Asshur**—"level plain." Apparently Assyria in Balaam's prophecy. Asshur was a descendant of Ham, and builder of Nineveh. (24:22, 24).
- Ataroth**—"crowns". A city fortified by Gad, although in the original territory of Manasseh. (32:35).
- Atroth-shopan**—"crowns of nakedness". Either the full name of the city Atroth, or, if the names are intended to be separate in 32:35, it is the listing of separate cities taken by Gad.
- Azmon**—"strong". A city on the southern border of Judah. (34:4, 5).
- Azzan**—"strong". The father of Paltiel, prince of the tribe of Issachar. (34:26).
- Baal-Meon**—"Baal of Meon". An old city near the border of Moab, assigned to Reuben. (32:38). (Also called Beon in 32:3).
- Baal-peor**—"Baal of Peor". A Moabite god, probably Chemosh, worshipped on the top of Mount Peor. It was this god which the Israelites were enticed to worship by the Moabite women in Numbers 25:1-9.
- Baal-Zephon**—"lord of the north". An encampment of the Israelites before crossing the Red Sea. (33:7). Exact location is unknown.
- Balaam**—"devouring", or "devourer". Son of Peor, and a prophet used, when willing, to declare the counsel of Jehovah to Balak, king of Moab. Ultimately he yielded to selfish ambition, attempting both to speak for the Lord and to please Balak with his words. Although he uttered one of the great prophecies of the Messiah as the Star of Jacob and the scepter of Israel smiting her enemies, including Moab, he remained affiliated with the Moabites and eventually died in battle against Israel.

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Balak—"devastator". King of Moab who hired Balaam to curse the Israelites. When Balaam's words were anything but reassuring, the Israelites were brought to cohabit with the Moabite women in lustful idolatry. Consequently, a great judgment came upon the people of God.

Bamoth-Baal—"the high places of Baal". A place north of the Arnon River to which Balak took Balaam. Later a part of Reuben's territory. (21:19; 22:41).

Bashan—"smooth, fertile land". A plateau area east of the Sea of Galilee, north of Gilead, and extending to Mount Hermon, extremely fertile and rich. It was taken by the Israelites before crossing the Jordan, and was assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (21:33-35).

Bashan Havoth Jair—"encampments of Jair in Bashan". Several unwallled towns, perhaps as many as 60, taken by Jair of the tribe of Manasseh. (32:41).

Becher—"first born", or "young camel". Son of Benjamin whose descendants are not registered among the families of Israel, perhaps because they were too few to form a tribe. (26:38).

Beer—"a well". One of the encampments of the Israelites in the wilderness. (21:16).

Bela—"destruction". Oldest son of Benjamin, and head of the Belaites. (26:38).

Bene Jaakan—"sons of intelligence". An encampment of Israel in the wilderness, shortly before Aaron's death. (33:31, 32).

Benjamin—"son of my right hand". Youngest son of Jacob; one of the tribes of Israel, immediately north of Judea.

Beon—"lord of On", or "house of On". Also: Baal-Meon. A town built by Reuben. (32:3).

Beor—"shepherd". The father of Balaam. (22:5, *et passim*).

Beriah—"gift" (?), "unfortunate" (?). A son of Asher and father of the Beriites. (26:44).

GLOSSARY

- Beth-Haran**—"house of the high place". A fortified city built by Gad in Gilead. (32:36).
- Beth Jeshimoth**—"house of desolations". A city of Moab near the place where the Jordan enters the Dead Sea. (33:49).
- Beth Nimrah**—"house of the leopard". A fenced city in Gad. (32:3, 36).
- Bukki**—"mouth of Jah". A prince of Dan who helped divide the land under Joshua. (34:22).
- Caleb**—"dog", "impetuous". Son of Jephunneh of the tribe of Judah, appointed as one of the twelve spies sent into Canaan; and, with Joshua, one of the two who urged immediate occupation of the Promised Land. For his faithfulness, he was permitted to enter into Canaan, and received Hebron, with its surrounding hills.
- Canaan**—"low," "flat". Early name of Palestine, the land taken by the Israelites. The name is derived from the son of Ham and grandson of Noah who settled here.
- Canaanites**—"lowlanders". Generally, any of the pagan inhabitants in Palestine prior to, and together with the tribes of Israel. Specifically, the Tribe of the Canaanites occupied the Jordan Valley, portions of the valley of Jezreel and of the plain of Sharon.
- Carmi**—"fruitful". One of the sons of Reuben, and father of the Carmites. (26:6).
- Chemosh**—"fire", "hearth". The primary god of Moab. (21:29).
- Chinnereth**—"harp", "circuit". Early name for the Sea of Galilee. (34:11).
- Chislon**—"strong". Father of Elidad, Benjamite prince who assisted in division of the land of Promise. (34:21).
- Chittim**—"terrible", "giants". Descendants of Javan; this name was given to the Island of Cyprus and the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean. (24:24).

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- Cozbi**—"deceitful". A Midianite woman through whom the fiery plague came upon Israel in the wilderness. She was killed by Aaron's grandson, Phinehas. (25:16-18).
- Dan**—"judge". Fifth son of Jacob, and one of the twelve tribes. One of the largest of the tribes, (62,700), they were assigned rear guard duty during the Exodus.
- Dathan**—"fountain". Great-grandson of Reuben, he and his brothers, Abiram and Korah, led a rebellion against Moses, and both they and their families were swallowed up by the earth. (16:2-15; 16:31-35).
- Deuel**—"God knows". Father of Eliasaph, one of the princes, of the tribe of Gad.
- Dibon**—meaning unknown. Station of one of the encampments of Israel; in the high plain of Moab east of the Dead Sea. At first held by Sihon of the Amorites, it was taken by Israel, and became a city of Gad.
- Dophkah**—"cattle driving" (?). Encampment of the Israelites between the Red Sea and Sinai. (33:12).
- Eber**—"a shoot". Perhaps a patronymic designation of the descendants of Eber; or, perhaps referring to those "beyond the river".
- Ebronah**—"beach", "bank", "coast". Encampment of Israel just before arrival at Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Akaba. (33:34).
- Edom**—"red". Also called Seir, this territory consisted of a 100-mile long valley directly south of the Dead Sea reaching to the Gulf of Akaba. The king of this land refused permission to Israel to pass through his territory, necessitating a much longer march toward Canaan. (20:14-21).
- Edrei**—"strong". An important city of Og, king of Bashan, taken by the Israelites. The city and the territory came to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (21:33).

GLOSSARY

Egypt—form and meaning uncertain. Land settled by the second son of Ham, who gave his name to the country. Here the Israelites were enslaved for 400 years; from this land they were led of God to Sinai, thence to the Land of Promise ultimately. From the land, the Israelites brought elements of a polytheistic religion, soon seen in the erection of the golden calf at Sinai. The Hebrews both hated and respected this land. They often formed unprofitable alliances with the Egyptians; they often feared the military prowess of this people. At the same time, they could not forget that Egypt had provided their forefathers with food when they otherwise might have succumbed to the severe famine in the time of Joseph. The Israelites remembered with favor the delicacies they had enjoyed in Egypt (see 11:5, 6); but they would be chronically infected with religious adulteries from the same source.

Egypt, River of—the wadi of Mitsrayim. Probably the Wady el-Arish, which formed the border between Canaan and Egypt; certainly not the Nile. It was the southern boundary of Judah. (34:5).

Eldad—"God has loved". This man, along with Medad, remained in the camp when Moses and 70 elders were summoned to the Tabernacle to receive the gift of prophecy; they received the gift at their tents, and prophesied there. Despite Joshua's objection, Moses commended the two. (11:24-29).

Elealeh—"God ascends". A town associated with Heshbon. Located approximately one mile north of this city, it belonged to Reuben after the military exploits of Israel east of the Jordan. (32:3, 37).

Eleazar—"God has helped". Third son of Aaron, he was designated chief priest and was given several special tasks before the Lord, (3:32; 19:3, 4; 16:36-39). At Aaron's death, he was appointed chief priest, and he assisted in taking the second census, as well as in dividing the booty from conquest of the Midianites. He also assigned the 2½

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tribes to the land east of the Jordan and helped Joshua divide the Promised Land among the tribes.(34:17).

Elim—"terebinths". Second place of encampment after crossing the Red Sea. A fine oasis with a dozen springs and 70 palm trees was found here. (33:9, 10).

Elishama—"God has heard". Grandfather of Joshua; prince of Ephraim when the wilderness wanderings began. (1:10, 2:18, *et passim*).

Elizaphan—"God has concealed". Son of Uzziel, chief among the Kohathites when the census was taken. (3:30).

Elizur—"God is a rock". Son of Shedeur and prince of Reuben who helped in the census. (1:5, *et passim*).

Elon—"oak, strong". Second of Zebulun's three sons. (26:26).

Enan—"fountain". Father of Ahira, of Naphtali, who aided in the census at Sinai. (1:15; *et passim*).

Ephod—"oracular". The father of Hanniel, prince of Manasseh. (34:23).

Ephraim—"double fruit". The younger of Joseph's two sons. He received the right hand of Jacob in blessing, despite Joseph's protest. The Ephraimites marched and camped on the west side of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Joshua was of this tribe. (2:18-24; 13:8).

Er—"watchful". First son of Judah by Shua, the Canaanite. Named in the genealogy of Judah,(26:19).

Eran—"watcher". Ephraim's grandson, by Shuthelah. (26:36).

Eri—"my watcher". Fifth son of Gad, and father of the Erites. (26:16).

Eshcol—"cluster". Valley near Hebron from which the Israelite spies brought back a large cluster of grapes. (13:23, 24).

Etham—meaning unknown. A wilderness area through which Israel wandered after leaving Succoth; perhaps on both sides of the north end of the Dead Sea. (33:6-8, see Ex. 13:20).

GLOSSARY

- Ethiopia**—meaning unknown. Land from which Moses' wife had come (12:1, 2); named for Cush, son of Ham.
- Evi**—"desire". One of the five kings of Midian slain in battle against Israel on the plains of Moab. (31:8).
- Ezion-geber**—"backbone of a mighty one". City on the Gulf of Akaba, near Elath. Israel stopped here last on the way to Kadesh. (33:35, 36).
- Gad**—"fortune". Seventh son of Jacob. The tribe of the Gadites shrank more than 5,000 between the two censuses. They chose to occupy land east of the Jordan, and were granted the central portion, between Reuben to the south and the half-tribe of Manasseh to the north.
- Gaddi**—"belonging to fortune". Chosen from the tribe of Manasseh as one of the twelve spies. (13:11).
- Gaddiel**—"Gad brings a fortune". Representative from Zebulun as one of the twelve spies. (13:10).
- Gamaliel**—"reward of God". Chief of the tribe of Manasseh who helped Moses in the census. (1:10, *et passim*).
- Gemalli**—"camel owner", or "rider". Father of Ammiel, ruler of the tribe of Dan; one of twelve spies sent into Canaan. (13:12).
- Gershon**—"a stranger in that place". First son of Levi. During the wanderings, the family were assigned to care for the Tent itself. (3:17, 18, 21, 23-25, *et passim*).
- Geuel**—"God of salvation". A prince of Gad, also sent out with the twelve spies to Canaan. (13:15).
- Gideoni**—"one who cuts down". Prince of Benjamin who assisted in the census at Sinai. (7:60).
- Gilead**—"strong, rocky". Region in the Trans-Jordan country from about the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee to the northern end of the Dead Sea. At that time, it was very fertile, and much to be desired. Most of the area was claimed by Gad; the southern portion formed part of Reuben's claim. (32:1).

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- Guni**—"protected". A family of the tribe of Naphtali. (26:48).
- Haggi**—"festive". Son of Gad, and ancestor of the Haggites. (26:15).
- Hamath**—"fortification". City in upper Syria, on the Orontes river. Specified as the northern limit of Israel. (34:8).
- Hamul**—"pity". Grandson of Judah, and son of Perez. (26:21).
- Hanniel**—"God is gracious". Son of Ephod, prince of Manasseh, appointed to aid in dividing the land. (34:23).
- Hanoch**—"dedicated". First son of Reuben; head of the Hanochites. (26:5).
- Haradah**—"terror". An encampment of Israel in the wilderness after leaving Mount Shepher. Location is unknown. (33:24).
- Hashmonah**—"fruitfulness". Camping station in the wilderness; location unknown. (33:29, 30).
- Havoth-jair**—"villages of Jair". A group of villages taken by Jair, son of Manasseh. The term signifies a village of tents. (32:41).
- Hazar-addar**—"house of honor". Site on the southern border of Judah, west of Kadesh-barnea. (34:4).
- Hazar-enan**—"court of the fountains". Spot where the northern and eastern boundaries of the Promised Land intersect, approximately 60 miles east by northeast of Damascus. (34:9, 10).
- Hazeroth**—"courts, or villages". One of the stations on the journey from Mt. Sinai—approximately lying 45 miles distant from the peak. The people remained here for some time recuperating from the plague at Kibroth-hattaavah; here Miriam and Aaron rebelled against Moses. (11:35; 12).
- Hebron**—"league, confederacy". One of the world's most ancient cities, Hebron lies about 20 miles south and somewhat west of Jerusalem, at an altitude of nearly 3000 feet. The spies brought a huge cluster of grapes from the valley of Eshcol, near this city. (13:22-24).

GLOSSARY

- Helek**—meaning uncertain. Second son of Gilead, of the tribe of Manasseh, and head of a family. (26:30).
- Helon**—"valorous". A leading man of the tribe of Zebulun at the census. (1:9).
- Hepher**—"pit, well". The father of Zelophehad, whose daughters sought a ruling on the inheritance and their tribal properties; of the tribe of Manasseh. (26:32; 27:1-8, 36:1-9).
- Heshbon**—"reckoning". Capital of the territory of the Amorites; taken by Israel (21:21-31), and held as part of Reuben's land.
- Hezron**—"blooming". (a) Son of Reuben, and father of the Hezronites. (26:6). (b) Descendant of Judah, through Perez. (26:21).
- Hittites**—"people of Heth". Descendants of Ham, through Canaan and Heth. Listed along with the Jebusites, and Amorites as mountain-dwellers in the south of the land of Canaan, they were a powerful but peaceable people whose very existence was in dispute among Bible critics until archeological discoveries in 1871 fully substantiated the record of Scripture. (13:29).
- Hobab**—"beloved". Brother of Zipporah, and hence a brother-in-law to Moses. Moses urged him to guide the people through the wilderness. At first declining, Hobab later agreed. (10:29).
- Hoglah**—"magpie". One of the five daughters of Zelophehad, involved in the problem of familial inheritance of land. (26:33; 27:1-11; 36:1-12).
- Hor**—"mountain". (a) Mountain where Aaron died, and from which the Israelites marched south toward the Red Sea (20:22-29; 31:4; 33:37-41). (b) Unidentified peak named as a landmark in the border of northern Israel, between the Mediterranean and the entrance of Hamath (34:7, 8).

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- Hor-hagidgad**—"hollow, or cavern of Gilgad". One of the camps of Israel in the wilderness. (33:32, 33).
- Hori**—"cave-dweller". Father of Shaphat, one of the spies. Of the tribe of Simeon. (13:5).
- Hormah**—"A devoted place". Scene of defeat of the rebellious Israelites, administered by the Amelkites. Situated midway between Gaza and Beer-sheba. (14:45; 21:1-3).
- Hoshea**—"salvation". Early name of Joshua; changed my Moses. (13:8, 16).
- Hupham**—Son of Benjamin and father of the Huphamites. (26:39).
- Hur**—"whiteness". One of five Midianite kings killed in battle against Israel at the time of Balaam's death. (31:1-8).
- Hushim**—Sons of Dan, called Shuham in 26:42.
- Igal**—"God redeems". One of the twelve spies sent into Canaan. (13:7).
- Ije-abarim**—"ruins of Abarim". An unidentified station of the Israelites in the vicinity of Moab. (33:44).
- Imnah**—"right hand, or good fortune". Head of a family of Asher. (26:44).
- Israel**—"prince of God". In Numbers, the name generally refers to the nation descended from Jacob—the twelve tribes under Moses. (1:2, 3, 45, 54; 10:12; 13:21; 14:2, *et passim*).
- Issachar**—One of the tribes of Israel. Between the first and second censuses, the tribe increased by nearly 10,000 warriors. (1:28, 29, cf. 26:25).
- Ithamar**—Youngest of Aaron's four sons. He was treasurer of the tabernacle offerings and superintendent of the Gershonites and Merarites. (4:28, 33).
- Izhar**—"the shining one". Son of Kohath. (3:19).
- Jaakan**—A camp during the wanderings (33:31, 32). The site of Aaron's burial (Deut. 10:6, 7).

GLOSSARY

- Jaazer, Jazer**—"helpful". Fertile land taken from the Amorites under Moses. (21:32; 32:1-5).
- Jabbok**—"flowing". The largest river flowing into the Jordan from the east. It formed the border between the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, about midway between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. (21:21-25).
- Jabesh-Gilead**—"dry". Most important city in the area of the Gileadites; given to the half tribe of Manasseh. (32:33).
- Jachin**—"he will set up". Fourth son of Simeon and founder of the Jachanites.(26:12).
- Jahaz**—Stronghold north of the Arnon river, conquered by Israel, and given as a portion of the inheritance of Reuben. (21:21-25).
- Jahleel**—Son of Zebulun, and father of the Jahleel clan.(26:26).
- Jahzeel**—"God divides, or apportions". Son of Naphtali; descendants are named in 26:48.
- Jair**—"he enlightens". A leading warrior in the conquest of Gilead, Jair was the son of Manasseh. (32:40, 41).
- Jamin**—"right hand". A son of Simeon; later a tribe. (26:12).
- Jashub**—"he returns". A son and later a tribe descended from Issachar. (26:24).
- Jazer**—meaning unknown. Prominent city in Gilead, built by the Gadites. (21:31, 32).
- Jebusites**—meaning unknown. Of doubtful origin, the Jebusites occupied the area in and around Jerusalem. A mountain tribe, they seem also to have been small in number. (13:29).
- Jeezer**—meaning unknown. Head of a family of the tribe of Manasseh. (26:30).
- Jehoshua**—"the Lord is deliverance". Usual Hebrew form of "Joshua". (13:16).
- Jemuel**—meaning unknown. Son of Simeon, called "Nemuel" in 26:12.

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Jephunnah—"it will be prepared". The father of Caleb, of the tribe of Judah. (13:6).

Jeshimon—"waste, desert". Barren land or desert in the southeastern portion of Judah, between Hebron and the Dead Sea. (21:20; 23:28).

Jesui—"the Lord is satisfied". Otherwise, Ishvi. Son of Asher, and head of a tribe. (26:44).

Jezer—"form, purpose". Son of Naphtali and head of a tribe. (26:49).

Jimna—"good fortune". Son of Asher (26:44).

Jochebed—"Jehovah is glory". Mother of Moses, Aaron and Miriam, and sister of Kohath. (26:59).

Jogbehah—"lofty". City in Gilead given to Gad. (32:35).

Jogli—"led into exile". Father of Bukki, a chief among the Danites. (34:22).

Jordan—"flowing downward". The great river of Palestine, flowing from the environs of Mount Hermon in Syria to its ultimate receptacle, the Dead Sea. Crossing this river would symbolize Israel's entrance into the Promised Land. (13:29, *et passim*).

Joseph—"he will add". Eleventh, and favored son of Jacob; his name was not given to one of the twelve tribes, but the inheritance was passed through two of his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. (1:10, *et passim*).

Joshua—"Jehovah is deliverer". Son of Nun, and the man selected to succeed Moses as leader of the Israelites. (11:28, *et passim*).

Jotbathah—meaning unknown. An unidentified camp of the Israelites in the desert. (33:33, 34).

Judah—"praise". The fourth son of Jacob by Leah. The tribe was given a favored area in the Promised Land. (1:7 *et passim*).

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- Kadesh, Kadesh-Barnea**—"holy". A region immediately south of the Promised Land in which Israel remained as the twelve spies were sent into that Land. The death of Miriam was the first of several incidents here (20:1; 13:26; 20:14; *et passim*).
- Khelathah**—"gathering, assembly". Unidentified camp of Israel during their wanderings. (33:22, 23).
- Kemuel**—"God's mount". A prince of the tribe of Ephraim, consulted in the division of Canaan. (34:24).
- Kenath**—"possession". An Amorite city conquered by Nobah, along with surrounding villages of the area. (32:42).
- Kenezite**—"belonging to the side or flank". A tribe which descended from Esau, but who may have become quickly absorbed into the tribe of Judah. Caleb was of the Kenezites, through Jephunneh. (32:12).
- Kenite**—"smith". A nomadic tribe among the tribes of Canaan; perhaps dispersed among the Amalekites. (24:21, 22).
- Kibroth-hattaavah**—"graves of lust". Camp of Israel one day after leaving Sinai. Here the people lusted for flesh, and a great quantity of quails came upon them. This was followed by a plague and widespread death. (11:34; 33:16).
- Kirjathaim**—"two cities". A city in the hills of Moab, formerly held by Sihon and given to Reuben. (32:37).
- Kohath**—"assembly". The second son of Levi, and ancestor of Moses and Aaron. One of the three divisions of the Levites, they were given special duties over the ark, the table, the candlestick and the vessels of the sanctuary, along with the screen and the service. (3:17ff, *et passim*).
- Korah**—"baldness". Along with Dathan and Abiram, Korah rebelled against the authority of Moses in the wilderness. Along with them and all their families, he was swallowed up by the earth in punishment. (16:11-32; 26:9; 27:3).
- Lael**—"belonging to God". A Levite of the family of Gershon. (3:24).

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Levi—"joined unto". Third son of Leah and Jacob, from whom the priestly tribe descended, and whose name they bore. (1:49 *et passim*).

Libnah—"whiteness, transparent". The fifth camp of Israel after leaving Sinai. (33:20, 21).

Libni—"white, distinguished". Son of Gershon, and head of the Libnites. (3:18, 21; 26:58).

Machi—meaning uncertain. One of the twelve spies; of the tribe of Gad. (13:15).

Machir—"salesman". Son of Manasseh to whom Moses pledged the territory of Gilead. (26:29; 32:39, 40).

Mahli—"sickness or weakness". Son of Merari of the Levites. (3:20).

Makeloth—"assemblies". Camp of the Israelites of uncertain location. (33:25, 26).

Malchiel—"God is king". Son of Beriah and grandson of Asher. (26:45).

Manasseh—"causing to forget". Tribe descended from the first son of Joseph. They were given a share of the land east of the Jordan. (27:1).

Marah—"bitter". The first camp of Israel after crossing the Red Sea; Moses healed the brackish waters of the area. (33:8ff).

Mattannah—"gift". An unidentified station of the Israelites in the wilderness. (21:18ff).

Medad—"affectionate". An elder who remained in the camp apart from the other elders, but upon whom, along with Eldad, the spirit of prophecy fell. (11:26,27).

Medeba—"gently flowing waters". A city conquered by the Israelites at the same time they took Heshbon and Dibon. (21:30).

Merari—"bitter". The third son of Levi. This family of priests cared for the curtains, covers, hangings and other similar items of the tabernacle. (3:17, 20, 25, 26, 33, 36, 37, *et passim*).

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- Meribah**—"strife, contention". Site of the rock where Moses brought forth water presumptuously. Located in Rephidim near Kadesh-Barnea. (20:13, 24; 27:14).
- Michael**—"who is like God?" Father of Sethur, who was sent as Asher's representative among the spies. (13:13).
- Midian**—"contention". Land east of Edom whose people were at first friendly toward the Israelites in the desert, but who later were numbered with the Moabites in warfare. (22:4, *et passim*).
- Milcah**—"counsel". One of the daughters of Zelophehad. (26:33; 27:1; 36:11).
- Miriam**—"fat, thick". Sister of Moses and Aaron. She opposed Moses at Hazeroth, was smitten with leprosy, and was cured upon Aaron's intercession. She died and was buried at Kadesh. (12:1-5; 10-15; 20:1).
- Mithcah**—"sweetness". One of the wilderness camps of Israel. (33:28ff.)
- Moab**—"water of a father". Land east of the Dead Sea and north of Edom through which the Israelites passed. Worshipers of Chemosh and the Baalim, the inhabitants lured Israel into grave sin, resulting in a war in which Moab was defeated. (21:11, *et passim*).
- Moseroth**—"bonds". Camp of the Israelites in the desert; it was here that Aaron died and was buried. (33:30, 31).
- Moses**—"drawn out". The great leader and prophet of Israel. This book chronicles many of the most important events in the life of Moses: he is directed to take the census of his people (1:2ff); he encounters the murmuring of his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam about his Ethiopian wife, with the consequent punishment to Miriam (12:1-15); the twelve spies are sent into Canaan, but the children of Israel refuse to march forward into the land (13:1-14:9); Moses utters one of his great intercessory prayers (14:13-19); Korah,

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Dathan, and Abiram lead a rebellion of the people, and suffer the consequences (16:1-35); acting rashly, Moses strikes the rock at Meribah, and is told that his disobedience will prevent his entering into Canaan (20:2-13); Miriam dies (20:1), as does Aaron (20:24-29); Israel defeats Sihon and Og in great battles (ch. 21); the people sin flagrantly with Baal-Peor (ch. 25); the second census (26:1-63); Joshua is appointed to succeed Moses (27:18-23); the Midianites are slaughtered (ch. 31); Reuben, Gad, and one-half of Manasseh are conditionally allowed to settle east of the Jordan (ch. 32); all the journeys of the people are listed (ch. 33); the borders of Canaan are established (34:1-12); the Levitical cities are set forth as cities of refuge (ch. 35). Throughout all the forty years of this period of Moses' life, he is the unquestioned leader of Israel. Rebellions from within his own family, as well as among the priests, are quickly and effectively put down. The Lord speaks to him directly and frequently, as evidenced by the repeated phrase, "The Lord spake unto Moses," (1:1; 2:1; 3:1, *et passim*).

Perhaps the climax of all this book is reached, however, with Moses' rash action at Meribah. At one and the same time it demonstrates the humanness of this giant of a man, and the indiscriminating character of the judgment of our great God.

Mushi—perhaps "withdrawn". One of the sons of Merari. (3:20).

Naaman—"pleasantness". A son of Bela, grandson of Benjamin. (26:38, 40).

Nadab—"noble". Aaron's firstborn son (3:2). Suffered the death penalty, along with his brother Abihu, for offering 'strange fire'—an unauthorized sacrifice—before the Lord. (26:61).

Nahaliel—"torrent valley of God". One of the camps of Israel between the Arnon and Jericho; probably a tributary of the Arnon. (21:19).

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- Nahshon**—"oracle". Of the tribe of Judah, Nahshon was a brother-in-law of Aaron, and an ancestor of David. (1:7).
- Naphtali**—"mighty wrestlings". The tribe descended from Jacob's fifth son. They numbered 53,400 in the first census; but they had decreased to 45,400 at the time of the second (1:43, 2:30; 26:48ff). The encamped on the north side of the tabernacle under the standard of Dan, together with Asher (2:25ff). When on the march, Naphtali brought up the rear (2:31).
- Nebo**—"height". One of several cities assigned to Reuben, along with Heshbon and Elealeh (32:3).
- Nebo**—"height". High mountain in Moab near the northeastern tip of the Dead Sea, from which Moses viewed the Promised Land, and later, died (33:47).
- Nemuel**—"God is spreading". 1. Brother of Dathan and Abiram, and of the tribe of Reuben (26:9). 2. Son of Simeon (26:12).
- Nethanael**—"God has given". One of the princes of the tribe of Issachar (1:8; 2:5; 7:18, 23; 10:15).
- Noah**—"movement". One of the daughters of Zelophehad (26:33; 27:1; 36:11).
- Nobah**—"prominent". 1. A Manassite who conquered Kenath, an Amorite city in the Transjordan (32:42). 2. Name given to Kenath after it was conquered by Nobah of Manasseh (31:20).
- Nophah**—"height". City in the kingdom of Sihon, near Medeba (21:30).
- Nun**—"fish". Father of Joshua (11:28, *et passim*).
- Oboth**—"waterbags". The third wilderness encampment of Israel after leaving Mt. Hor; near the border of Moab (21:11; 33:43, 44).
- Ocran**—"trouble". Father of Pagiel, prince of the tribe of Asher (1:13; 2:27, *et passim*).

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- Og**—"long-necked, or giant". The king of Bashan, which boasted 60 cities. Conquered by Moses and the army of Israel after the defeat of Sihon and the Amorites. The battle was fought at Edrei. (21:33).
- Onan**—"vigorous". Son of Judah by Tamar; mentioned only in the genealogy of Numbers 26 (v. 19).
- Oshea**—"God saves". Another form of 'Joshua'—his original name was Hoshea (13:8, 16).
- Ozni**—"the Lord hears". One of the sons of Gad (26:16).
- Pagiel**—"God meets". A prince of the tribe of Asher; son of Ocran. He led the tribe during their journeying with Israel. (1:13; 2:27; 7:72; 10:26; 14, 22, 25).
- Pallu**—"distinguished". Son of Reuben; perhaps to be identified with Peleth of 16:1. (See also 26:5, 8).
- Palti**—"the Lord delivers". From the tribe of Benjamin, the spy sent to search out the land of Canaan by Moses. (13:9).
- Paltiel**—"God's deliverance". A prince of Issachar. (34:26).
- Paran**—"full of caverns". A wilderness area southwest of the Dead Sea, consisting of a high limestone plateau. Much of the wandering of Israel during the forty years occurred in this area, which stretches broadly between Mt. Sinai and Canaan. (10:12; 13:21, *et passim*).
- Parnach**—"gifted". The father of Elizaphan, prince of Zebulun. (34:25).
- Pedahel**—"whom God redeems". A prince of Naphtali who aided in apportioning the land of Canaan. (34:17, 28).
- Pedahzur**—"the rock delivers". Father of Gamaliel and head of the tribe of Manasseh when the exodus began. (1:10; 2:20, *et passim*).
- Peleth**—"swiftness". The father of On, and one of those who rebelled against Moses and Aaron. (16:1).

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- Peor**—"opening". 1. A high mountain in the land of Moab, to which Balaam was sent by Balak in order to curse Israel; located about seven miles from Heshbon (23:28). 2. The name of Moab's god whose worship required gross immorality; participation in this exercise brought a grave plague upon the Israelites. (25:1-18).
- Pethor**—"extension". Home of Balaam, on the Euphrates river. (22:5).
- Pharez**—"breaking forth". Same as Perez; the older son of Judah by Tamar, and ancestor of the Pharzites. (26:20, 21).
- Phinehas**—"oracle". Grandson of Aaron and son of Eleazar, he led the attack against Zimri, who had brought evil into the camp through a Midianite woman: both were killed, ending the licentiousness at Shittim (25:6-18). He went against the Midianites (31:6), and was promised that his descendants would hold a place of service among the priests. (25:11-13).
- Pi-hahiroth**—"the place of the meadows" (?). An unidentified place on the Israelites' journey toward the Red Sea. Probably about ten miles from the site of modern Suez, along the old shore line of the Sea.
- Pisgah**—"the peak". Another name for Nebo. From this peak, whose name always bears the article in Hebrew, Moses viewed the Promised Land; here he died.
- Pua**—"utterance". The second son of Issachar, and father of the Punites, who were counted in the census by Moses and Eleazar.
- Punon**—"ore-pit". Second camp of the Israelites after leaving Mount Hor; east of Edom, between Selah and Zoar.
- Raguel**—"Jah is a friend". Another form of Reuel, Moses' father-in-law; also called Jethro. (10:29).
- Rameses**—"son of the sun". City of Egypt, of uncertain location; built by Hebrew labor (Ex. 1:11). Named as one of the cities from which the Israelites fled Egypt. (33:3, 5).

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Raphu—"feared", or, "one healed". Father of Palti, who was selected as a spy from the tribe of Benjamin. (13:9).

Reba—"sprout", or "one-fourth". One of five chieftains of the Midianites slain in battle with the Israelites under Moses: (31:8).

Red Sea—"sea of rushes or seaweeds", or, simply *yam* "the sea". An arm of the Indian Ocean extending approximately 1,350 miles in a northwesterly direction, separating the continents of Africa and Asia. At its widest, it is 250 miles across; near its northern extremity the Sea is divided into the Sea of Aqaba, which lied almost due north-south beneath the Dead Sea and the Land of Edom; and the Gulf of Suez, which separates the peninsula of Sinai from Egypt. Strangely, not one river empties into its waters, which are derived from the Indian Ocean. In the northern portion of the Gulf of Suez, lush bulrushes have grown. The term 'red' is of uncertain origin with reference to the Sea. Some have speculated the term to have originated because of the presence of red coral, or of zoophytes in the waters; others associate the color with mountains on the western coast.

Rehob—"broad". The term may be applied to a road or a plain; it was the northernmost penetration of the Promised Land by the twelve spies (13:21).

Rekem—"friendship". One of the five kings or chieftains of Moab killed in battle with the Israelites under Moses (31:8).

Rephidim—"rests". A station where the Israelites encountered and defeated Amalek; here they anticipated finding water, but the streams were dry. God miraculously supplied the element, as Moses struck a rock as instructed by the Lord. The location is near Horeb, in a fertile valley.

Reuben—"behold, a son". The first son of Jacob, and father of the Reubenites. 46,500 men were counted in the first census; they had decreased to 43,730 men of war at the second counting. The Reubenites requested, and received

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permission to stake their claim to land east of the Jordan, and were granted the southernmost portion, which lay east of the northern half of the Dead Sea, above the Arnon River.

Riblah—"bare place". Site mentioned in 34:11 as located on the eastern boundary of Israel. Such a location is not known; there are variants which would allow this as a reference to Harbel, in the vicinity of Mt. Hermon.

Rimmon-parez—"twin pomegranates" (?). A camp of Israel in the wilderness; unidentified; fourth stop after leaving Sinai. (33:19).

Rissah—"dew". The sixth camp of Israel after leaving Sinai, (33:21, 22).

Rithmah—"broom". The third Israelite camp after leaving Sinai; may be the same as Kadesh. (13:26).

Salu—"miserable, unfortunate". A prince and head of a house of the tribe of Simeon; father of Zimri, slain by Phinehas and the Midianite woman he had brought into the camp. (25:14).

Sarah—"princess". Daughter of Asher. (26:46).

Seir—"rough, wooded". Mountain, and also a hilly region south of the Dead Sea in Edom. (24:18).

Sered—"escape". The first son of Zebulun. (26:26).

Sethur—"hidden". Son of Michael, of the tribe of Asher; chosen as the spy from that tribe. (13:13).

Shammua—"famous". Son of Zacchur, of the tribe of Reuben; chosen as their spy. (13:4).

Shaphat—"judge". Son of Hori, of the tribe of Simeon; chosen as that tribe's spy. (13:5).

Shapher—"fair". A mountain near one of the camping sites of Israel. (33:23).

Shaul—"asked". A son of Simeon, sometimes also referred to as

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- “the son of a Canaanitish woman.” (26:13).
- Shebam**—“balsam”. Once a Moabite city, later taken by the Reubenites. Near the capital city of Heshbon. (32:3).
- Shechem**—“shoulder”. Son of Gilead, son of Manasseh; ancestor of the Shechemites. (26:31).
- Shedeur**—“day-break”. Father of Elizur, chief of the tribe of Reuben. (1:5; 2:10; 7:30).
- Shelah**—“peace”. Ancestor of the Shelanites (26:20), of the tribe of Judah by Shua the Canaanite’s daughter.
- Shelomi**—“Jah is peace”. The father of Ahihud, a chieftain of the Asherites, who was appointed to help divide the land of Canaan. (34:27).
- Shelumiel**—“God is peace”. Son of Zurishaddai, of the tribe of Simeon; appointed to help Moses in the census. (1:6ff).
- Shemida**—“fame of knowing”. A son of Gilead, of the tribe of Manasseh. (26:32).
- Shemuel**—“name of God”. A chieftain of the Simeonites, appointed to help divide the land of Canaan. (34:20).
- Shephan**—“fruitful”. Named as a point on the eastern boundary of Israel; perhaps a city in the hill country. (34:10).
- Sheshai**—“free, noble”. One of the sons of Anak—a clan living in Hebron at the time Israel came into the land. (13:22).
- Sheth**—“appointed”. An unidentified tribe, probably Moabites, named in the parable of Balaam. (24:17).
- Shibmah**—“balsam”. A Moabite city taken by the Reubenites, near Kirjathaim. (32:38).
- Shillem**—“recompense”. Fourth son of Naphtali, and ancestor of the Shillemites. (26:49).
- Shimei**—“fame”. A son of Gershon, son of Levi. (3:18).
- Shimron**—“watch”. The fourth son of Issachar, and ancestor of the Shimronites. (26:24).
- Shiphtan**—“judge”. Father of Kemuel, a prince of the Ephraimites appointed to divide the land of Canaan. (34:24).

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- Shittim**—"the acacias". The final camping place of Israel before crossing the Jordan. Here the people fell to the evil counsel of Balaam, committing great sins with the Moabites, and incurred divine wrath and retribution. (25:1ff).
- Shophan**—"nakedness". Or, Atroth-Shophan. A city in the territory of Gad. (32:35).
- Shuham**—"pit". Son of Dan, and ancestor of the Shuhamites. (26:42ff).
- Shupham**—"serpent". Gentilic form of a name given one of the families of Benjamin, whose original form is not known, (26:39).
- Shuni**—"fortunate". The third son of Gad. (26:15).
- Shuthelah**—"setting of Telah". A son of Ephraim. (26:35, 36).
- Sihon**—"bold". A king of the Amorites against whom Israel fought successfully. King of Heshbon, his defeat was essential to the advance and occupation of the Israelites east of the Jordan, (21:21, *et passim*).
- Simeon**—"hearing". Second son of Jacob by Leah; his descendants numbered 59,000 in the census. (1:6, *et passim*).
- Sin**—"loamy, clay". Desert area between Elim and Sinai, east of the Gulf of Suez. (33:11, 12).
- Sinai**—"pointed, or peaked". Both a desert and a mountain, the south-central portion of the peninsula between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba. The same area is also often called 'Horeb', without any apparent distinction between the terms. Three peaks rise in parallel pillars from the valley to the north; the central one has been called *Jebel Musa* ('the mountain of Moses'), and is traditionally that one the great prophet ascended to receive the tablets of the Law. (1:1, *et passim*).
- Sodi**—"Jah decides". A Zebulonite, father of Gaddiel, who was one of the twelve spies sent into Canaan. (13:10).

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- Succoth**—"booths". The first camp of the Israelites after leaving Rameses. (33:5, 6).
- Susi**—"horsemen". Father of Gaddi, and one of the spies who was sent into Canaan; of the tribe of Manasseh. (13:11).
- Taberah**—"burning". An unidentified camping place of the Israelites, three days' journey north of Sinai, where the people murmured and were punished. (11:3).
- Tahan**—"graciousness". A son of Ephraim. (26:35).
- Tahath**—"below, humility". One of the stations of the Israelites in the wilderness. (33:26, 27).
- Talmai**—"spirited". One of the sons of Anak in Hebron. (13:22).
- Tarah**—"turning". A station of the Israelites after leaving Sinai. (33:27, 28).
- Tirzah**—"delight". Zelophehad's youngest daughter. (26:33ff).
- Tola**—"worm; crimson". One of the sons of Issachar. (26:23).
- Uzziel**—"God is my strength". One of the descendants of Levi through Kohath (3:19, 27, 30).
- Vophsi**—"rich". Father of Nahbi, spy from the tribe of Naphtali. (13:14).
- Zacchur**—"ventriloquist". (?). One of the spies sent into the land of Canaan; he was a Reubenite, and the father of Shammuah. (13:4).
- Zalmonah**—"gloomy". The third station of the Israelites from Ezion-geber; near the southern area of the Salt Sea. (33:41, 42).
- Zared**—"willow bush". A valley and brook forming the boundary between Moab and Edom at the southeastern tip of the Salt Sea. (21:12).
- Zebulun**—"dwelling". The tenth son of Jacob, and Leah's sixth. He moved with Judah when marching, and was first in the marching order (1:9, *et passim*).
- Zedad**—"sloping place". A place in northern Canaan, named as a

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point of identification for the border, near Hamath. (34:8).

Zelophehad—meaning unknown. Grandson of Gilead, and son of Manasseh. He died without sons, and his land was allocated to his daughters. (26:33ff).

Zephon—"dark" (?). A son of Gad. (26:15).

Zerah—"sprout". Younger of the twin sons of Judah and Tamar; ancestor of the Zerahites. (26:20).

Zimri—"celebrated", or "wild sheep". A prince of the Simeonites who was killed, along with the Midianite woman, Cozbi, by Phinehas, son of Aaron. (25:14).

Zin—"low land". A wilderness identified with the wilderness of Kadesh; the two names appear to be interchangeable. The spies were sent northward from this area, which is south of Judah, and southwest of the Salt Sea, (13:21, *et passim*).

Ziphron—"beautiful top". A place in northern Palestine. (34:9).

Zippor—"sparrow, bird". The father of Balak, Moabite king, who procured Balaam to curse Israel. (22:2ff).

Zoan—"Imigration". Capital of Egypt, located on the eastern side of the Nile delta. The only certainly fixed site in Egypt which is positively identified with the Israelites in that country. (13:22).

Zophim—"field of watchers". A spot on top of Mt. Pisgah to which Balak brought Balaam. (23:14).

Zuar—"little one". Father of Nethanel, who was the head of the tribe of Issachar. (1:8, *et passim*).

Zur—"rock". A chief among the Midianites, and father of the woman slain with Zimri. (25:14; 31:8).

Zuriel—"my God is a rock". Son of Abihail, a Merarite, and the head of the families of Merari. (3:35).

Zurishaddai—"my rock is the Almighty". The father of Shelumiel, head of the tribe of Simeon. (1:6, *et passim*).

