

Adult Bible Class  
The Book of Numbers  
Lesson #17, Chapters 33 to 36

### Numbers Chapters 33

The Israelites are camped across the Jordan River a few miles from Jericho. They are near the end of their journey, about to enter the Promised Land. The land of Canaan in Scripture is a picture of victorious Christian living and heaven.

As we near the end of the book of Numbers we come to chapter 33, a review of the journeys of the Israelites from Egypt to their current location on the banks of the Jordan River:

#### Remembering Israel's Journey

**Numbers 33:1 (NLT)** This is the route the Israelites followed as they marched out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. 2 At the Lord's direction, Moses kept a written record of their progress. These are the stages of their march, identified by the different places where they stopped along the way.

God commanded Moses to write the first five books of the Bible. Four of these books tell us the story of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land. Paul tells us:

**1 Corinthians 10:1** I don't want you to forget. . .about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud. . .all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. **2** In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses. **3** All of them ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. **5** Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

**6** These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, **7** or worship idols as some of them did . . . **8** And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did . . . **9** Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did . . . **10** And don't grumble as some of them did . . . **11** These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.

The lessons that we have been studying over the past months about the Israelites' journeys have much to say to us as Christians. We look to their mistakes and failures, and we are warned not to behave as they did.

In this chapter, Moses gives a summary of their journeys. The reading, if you are not familiar with the names of the places that they traveled, might get a little tedious - but some of the names you will recognize:

**Numbers 33:3** They set out from the city of Rameses in early spring—on the fifteenth day of the first month—on the morning after the first Passover celebration. The people of Israel left defiantly [KJV; with an high hand], in full view of all the Egyptians. **4** Meanwhile, the Egyptians were burying all

their firstborn sons, whom the Lord had killed the night before. The Lord had defeated the gods of Egypt that night with great acts of judgment!

The Israelites were able to leave Egyptian bondage because of the Lord's thorough destruction of Egypt's religion. The ten plagues attacked every god that the Egyptians worshiped, proving them to be powerless.

Furthermore, the Egyptians were busy burying their firstborn sons. They were totally weakened, and therefore Israel could just walk out of Egypt.

**Numbers 33:5** After leaving Rameses, the Israelites set up camp at Succoth.

**6** Then they left Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness.

**7** They left Etham and turned back toward Pi-hahiroth, opposite Baal-zephon, and camped near Migdol.

**8** They left Pi-hahiroth and crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness beyond.

This chapter is only a place by place review of their travels. Yet we know the marvelous story of how God parted the waters, and the Israelites walked across on dry ground. We know how God caused the waters to pile up on either side of them, and after they were across the walls of water came crashing down on the Egyptians, and Pharaoh's entire army and all of his chariots were destroyed by water.

For us as Christians, there are many stories and testimonies that are not completely told. One could say, "*I got baptized many years ago*" - or one could give their full story.

The chapter that we are reading today is an abbreviated list of the journeys of Israel. It is not the full story of what happened at each location. It is easy to judge this chapter as being uninteresting, but if we know the stories, what great things are represented by each name!

Then they traveled for three days into the Etham wilderness and camped at Marah.

Three days is a long time to go without a water source. The people cried out for water but found only undrinkable water. God showed Moses a piece of wood and commanded him to throw it into the water which made it pure. The bitter water became sweet. It was at Marah that God promised His people, "*If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you*" (Exodus 15:26).

**9** They left Marah and camped at Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees.

Though God may allow trials to come our way to test our faithfulness to Him, yet He also provides times of refreshing. After Israel's test at Marah, God gave them a beautiful oasis in the desert.

**10** They left Elim and camped beside the Red Sea.

**Numbers 33:11** They left the Red Sea and camped in the wilderness of Sin.

**12** They left the wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah.

**13** They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

**14** They left Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

The water problem again - and the Israelites complained. It was at Rephidim that God commanded Moses to strike a certain rock and water would gush forth, enough for the whole community. It was also at Rephidim that the people were attacked by the Amalekites. Scripture says, *“As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage. Moses’ arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset. As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle”* (Exodus 17:11-13).

**15** They left Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

Two months after Israel left Egypt they arrived at Mount Sinai. The Israelites camped there for about a year. It was at Mount Sinai that God gave the Ten Commandments (the Covenant) as well as all the laws of Israel. Scripture says, *“Then Moses went down to the people and repeated all the instructions and regulations the Lord had given him. All the people answered with one voice, “We will do everything the Lord has commanded.” Then Moses carefully wrote down all the Lord’s instructions”* (Exodus 24:3-4a).

Sounds good, but right after that, Moses went up into the mountain again to get the instructions for the Tabernacle and the plan for worship - but the people became impatient, waiting on Moses to return. They made a golden calf and called it their god. They offered sacrifices to it and indulged in pagan revelry.

God was so angry with them that He was going to destroy them all and start all over again with Moses, but Moses interceded for them and God spared most of them. This incident was so bad that it took awhile to get past it.

Before leaving Mount Sinai, God commanded that Israel number its fighting men age twenty and over (Numbers 1). The total was 603, 550.

**16** They left the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah.

It was at Kibroth-hattaavah that the people complained about a lack of meat to eat. God had provided them daily manna for over a year, but the “foreign rabble,” and then the people in general began to complain and demanded meat. God both provided them meat - and taught them a lesson at the same time. Scripture says, *“Now the Lord sent a wind that brought quail from the sea and let them fall all around the camp. . .So the people went out and caught quail all that day and throughout the night and all the next day, too. . .They spread the quail all around the*

*camp to dry. But while they were gorging themselves on the meat—while it was still in their mouths—the anger of the Lord blazed against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague. So that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah (which means “graves of gluttony”) because there they buried the people who had craved meat from Egypt” (Numbers 11:31-34).*

**Numbers 33:17** They left Kibroth-hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

At Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses, and Miriam was stricken with leprosy. The camp was delayed seven days.

**18** They left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

Many Bible scholars feel that Rithmah is the same as Kadesh-Barnea, a name that we recognize well. Israel sent out the twelve spies from Kadesh, and ten of them returned with a bad report, causing the the people to disbelieve God’s promises. The name *Kadesh* brings to mind lack of faith, lack of obedience, more complaining, and judgment. It was after the incident at Kadesh that God said that the Israelites twenty years old and older would die in the wilderness. The younger generation and their children would be the ones to enter the Promised Land.

After this Israel wanders to complete forty years.

**19** They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-perez.

**20** They left Rimmon-perez and camped at Libnah.

**21** They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

**22** They left Rissah and camped at Khelathah.

**23** They left Khelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

**24** They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

**25** They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

**26** They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

**27** They left Tahath and camped at Terah.

**28** They left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

**29** They left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

**30** They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

**31** They left Moseroth and camped at Bene-jaakan.

**32** They left Bene-jaakan and camped at Hor-haggidgad.

**33** They left Hor-haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

**34** They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

**Numbers 33:35** They left Abironah and camped at Ezion-geber.

**36** They left Ezion-geber and camped at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

It was here that Miriam died and was buried. Here, the people once again complained about lack of water. God commanded Moses to speak to the rock, but Moses in frustration and anger hit the rock twice. Water still came forth for the people, but Moses was told that he would not enter the Promised Land because of his disobedience. Scripture says, *But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!"* (Numbers 20:12)

It was also here that the king of Edom refused to let Israel pass through, and Israel had to turn around and go the long way around to get to the Promised Land.

**37** They left Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the border of Edom. **38** While they were at the foot of Mount Hor, Aaron the priest was directed by the Lord to go up the mountain, and there he died. This happened in midsummer, on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after Israel's departure from Egypt. **39** Aaron was 123 years old when he died there on Mount Hor.

**40** At that time the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev in the land of Canaan, heard that the people of Israel were approaching his land.

**41** Meanwhile, the Israelites left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

It was after they left Mount Hor that the people complained yet again, and God sent poisonous snakes to bite them. When they cried out to the Lord, God instructed Moses to fashion a bronze serpent and attach it to a pole and hold it up so the people could see it. The people were to look on it to be healed (Numbers 21:4-9). Jesus spoke about the bronze serpent in John chapter 3.

**42** Then they left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

**43** They left Punon and camped at Oboth.

**44** They left Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim on the border of Moab.

**45** They left Iye-abarim and camped at Dibon-gad.

**46** They left Dibon-gad and camped at Almon-diblathaim.

**47** They left Almon-diblathaim and camped in the mountains east of the river, near Mount Nebo.

**48** They left the mountains east of the river and camped on the plains of Moab beside the Jordan River, across from Jericho. **49** Along the Jordan River they camped from Beth-jeshimoth as far as the meadows of Acacia on the plains of Moab.

While camped here, Balak sent for Balaam to curse the Israelites. God confounded Balaam and only allowed blessing instead of cursing. However, Balaam taught the Moabite and Midianite women to seduce the men of Israel and worship their idol gods (Baal). This terrible time brought the anger of God to the people and a plague killed 24,000 of them (Numbers 25). Phinehas the priest diverted the wrath of God when he was zealous for the Lord.

After this, the fighting men of Israel (age 20 and older) were again numbered to prepare them for taking the Promised Land (Numbers 26). The total was 601,730 - a little less than the first census in Numbers 1 which totaled 603,550.

**Numbers 33:50** While they were camped near the Jordan River on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho, the Lord said to Moses, **51** "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel: When you cross the Jordan River into the land of Canaan, **52** you must drive out all the people living there. You must destroy all their carved and molten images and demolish all their pagan shrines. **53** Take possession of the land and settle in it, because I have given it to you to occupy. **54** You must distribute the land among the clans by sacred lot and in proportion to their size. A larger portion of land will be allotted to each of the larger clans, and a smaller portion will be allotted to each of the smaller clans. The decision of the sacred lot is final. In this way, the portions of land will be divided among your ancestral tribes. **55** But if you fail to drive out the people who live in the land, those who remain will be like splinters in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will harass you in the land where you live. **56** And I will do to you what I had planned to do to them."

The distribution of the land was to be by sacred lot. God had control of the casting of lots in dividing the land. However, as we read in our last lesson, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh saw and coveted the land on the east side of the Jordan River. They asked Moses for that land, promising to help their brethren fight for the land across Jordan. They were granted the land they requested, and they fulfilled their promise to help fight.

## Numbers Chapter 34

### Boundaries of the Land

**Numbers 34:1 (NLT)** Then the Lord said to Moses, **2** "Give these instructions to the Israelites: When you come into the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your special possession, these will be the boundaries. **3** The southern portion of your country will extend from the wilderness of Zin, along the edge of Edom. The southern boundary will begin on the east at the Dead Sea. **4** It will then run south past Scorpion Pass in the direction of Zin. Its southernmost point will be Kadesh-barnea, from which it will go to Hazar-addar, and on to Azmon. **5** From Azmon the boundary will turn toward the Brook of Egypt and end at the Mediterranean Sea.

**6** "Your western boundary will be the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

**7** "Your northern boundary will begin at the Mediterranean Sea and run east to Mount Hor, **8** then to Lebo-hamath, and on through Zedad **9** and Ziphron to Hazar-enan. This will be your northern boundary.

**10** "The eastern boundary will start at Hazar-enan and run south to Shepham, **11** then down to Riblah on the east side of Ain. From there the boundary will run down along the eastern edge of the Sea of Galilee, **12** and then along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea. These are the boundaries of your land."

**13** Then Moses told the Israelites, "This territory is the homeland you are to divide among yourselves by sacred lot. The Lord has commanded that the land be divided among the nine and a half remaining tribes. **14** The families of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have already received their grants of land **15** on the east side of the Jordan River, across from Jericho toward the sunrise."

### Leaders to Divide the Land

**16** And the Lord said to Moses, **17** "Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun are the men designated to divide the grants of land among the people. **18** Enlist one leader from each tribe to help them with the task. **19** These are the tribes and the names of the leaders:

<b>Tribe</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Judah	Caleb son of Jephunneh
<b>20</b> Simeon	Shemuel son of Ammihud
<b>21</b> Benjamin	Elidad son of Kislou
<b>22</b> Dan	ukki son of Jogli
<b>23</b> Manasseh son of Joseph	Hanniel son of Ephod
<b>24</b> Ephraim son of Joseph	Kemuel son of Shiphtan
<b>25</b> Zebulun	Elizaphan son of Parnach
<b>26</b> Issachar	Paltiel son of Azzan
<b>27</b> Asher	Ahihud son of Shelomi
<b>28</b> Naphtali	Pedahel son of Ammihud

We easily see the parallel between the kingdom of heaven and the Promised Land. The kingdom of heaven is *now* for the Spirit filled believer as well as the promised rest that comes after death. That is why Canaan is a picture of both victorious Christian living and heaven.

Israel was commanded to drive out the inhabitants of the land - those wicked nations that were being judged by God and removed from the land. This was the great duty of Israel given to them by God - to remove the wicked inhabitants of the land and replace them with themselves - those who worshipped the one true God.

However, we know that Israel did not completely remove them, and this became a problem because these idol worshipers influenced them to sin. The lesson for us is that we must make it a way of life to remove sin from our lives and worship God in holiness and truth. When we refuse to remove evil influences, they will affect us and have an influence on us. The New Testament admonishes us:

**Hebrews 3:12 (NLT)** Be careful then. . . Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. **13** You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. **14** For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

Chapter 33 was a list of the journeys of Israel. The events of *our lives* can be listed in order, but what stories can be told if we will take the time to fill in the gaps! If God has worked in our lives, we should tell the story and give Him the glory. Otherwise, our lives are a tedious list of events that have no meaning.

God has a "sacred lot" in our lives - His will for us. We can either do as the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh did (demand our will with God's approval) or we can allow God to put us exactly where He wants us, seeking His will for us. Those who seek God's will and purpose for their lives and then walk therein are the happiest and most fulfilled people. There is no greater joy than to do what God wants us to do.

## **Numbers Chapters 35 and 36**

### **Towns for the Levites**

**Numbers 35:1 (NLT)** While Israel was camped beside the Jordan on the plains of Moab across from Jericho, the Lord said to Moses, **2** Command the people of Israel to give to the Levites from their

property certain towns to live in, along with the surrounding pasturelands. **3** These towns will be for the Levites to live in, and the surrounding lands will provide pasture for their cattle, flocks, and other livestock. **4** The pastureland assigned to the Levites around these towns will extend 1,500 feet from the town walls in every direction. **5** Measure off 3,000 feet outside the town walls in every direction—east, south, west, north—with the town at the center. This area will serve as the larger pastureland for the towns.

**6** "Six of the towns you give the Levites will be cities of refuge, where a person who has accidentally killed someone can flee for safety. In addition, give them forty-two other towns. **7** In all, forty-eight towns with the surrounding pastureland will be given to the Levites. **8** These towns will come from the property of the people of Israel. The larger tribes will give more towns to the Levites, while the smaller tribes will give fewer. Each tribe will give property in proportion to the size of its land."

The Levites were to serve the priests in the Tabernacle. They were substitutes for Israel's own firstborn sons, and they were God's gift to the people. We have previously studied:

**Numbers 1:49** "Do not include the tribe of Levi in the registration; do not count them with the rest of the Israelites. **50** Put the Levites in charge of the Tabernacle of the Covenant, along with all its furnishings and equipment. . .

**Numbers 18:6** I myself have chosen your fellow Levites from among the Israelites to be your special assistants. They are a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord for service in the Tabernacle. **7** But you [Aaron] and your sons, the priests, must personally handle all the priestly rituals associated with the altar and with everything behind the inner curtain . . . **22** "From now on, no Israelites except priests or Levites may approach the Tabernacle. If they come too near, they will be judged guilty and will die.

The Israelites were commanded to give the Levites 48 towns from all over Israel for them to live in, and they received the tithes and offerings of the people for support. There would be some kind of system for them to travel to the Tabernacle for duty when it was time to serve. They were to be a part of the community, not separated from it. This tells us that the Levites were not an elite group, separated from the common people, but they were to live and work among them and have an influence on them. Deut. 33:10 tells us that they are to be teachers in Israel.

The Levite had no parcel of land deeded in his name. He was provided for, yes, but he had no inheritance in this world. This is a description of the Christian ministry, both those that are called to preach the word and those that are called to help in the church. Our goal in life is not to be attached to this world but to serve Jesus Christ and see His kingdom flourish. While we have no inheritance in this world, we are to have an impact on this world.

### **Cities of Refuge**

**Numbers 35:9 (NLT)** The Lord said to Moses, **10** "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel.

"When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, **11** designate cities of refuge to which people can flee if they have killed someone accidentally. **12** These cities will be places of protection from a dead person's relatives who want to avenge the death. The slayer must not be put to death before being tried by the community.

In this century and in this country, we are used to law and order. Persons are not supposed to “take the law into their own hands,” but matters are to be decided by trial, judge, and jury. However, in the time and setting of the book of Numbers, many nations still lacked judicial systems. Law and order was still in the hands of the common people in many cases.

The ancient custom was that the next of kin was to take vengeance for the murder of a relative. This person was the “goel,” or redeemer, or kinsman. He was the avenger of blood. While this could have a righteous quality to it, we can easily see that because of the sin nature of man this could turn out very badly (Hatfields and McCoys). Therefore, God, in this passage, is turning Israel toward law and order. God does not take away the rights of the *goel*, but he limits what he can do and he institutes trial for the accused. God kept what was good about the “avenger of blood” and limited it to prevent abuse.

**Numbers 35:13** Designate six cities of refuge for yourselves, 14 three on the east side of the Jordan River and three on the west in the land of Canaan. 15 These cities are for the protection of Israelites, foreigners living among you, and traveling merchants. Anyone who accidentally kills someone may flee there for safety.

**16** “But if someone strikes and kills another person with a piece of iron, it is murder, and the murderer must be executed. **17** Or if someone with a stone in his hand strikes and kills another person, it is murder, and the murderer must be put to death. **18** Or if someone strikes and kills another person with a wooden object, it is murder, and the murderer must be put to death. **19** The victim’s nearest relative is responsible for putting the murderer to death. When they meet, the avenger must put the murderer to death. **20** So if someone hates another person and waits in ambush, then pushes him or throws something at him and he dies, it is murder. **21** Or if someone hates another person and hits him with a fist and he dies, it is murder. In such cases, the avenger must put the murderer to death when they meet.

**22** “But suppose someone pushes another person without having shown previous hostility, or throws something that unintentionally hits another person, **23** or accidentally drops a huge stone on someone, though they were not enemies, and the person dies. **24** If this should happen, the community must follow these regulations in making a judgment between the slayer and the avenger, the victim’s nearest relative: **25** The community must protect the slayer from the avenger and must escort the slayer back to live in the city of refuge to which he fled. There he must remain until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the sacred oil.

**26** “But if the slayer ever leaves the limits of the city of refuge, 27 and the avenger finds him outside the city and kills him, it will not be considered murder. **28** The slayer should have stayed inside the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest, the slayer may return to his own property. **29** These are legal requirements for you to observe from generation to generation, wherever you may live.

The cities of refuge provided sanctuary for those who killed someone accidentally. However, they were not places for willful murderers to flee and laugh at the sword of justice. The refugees were sheltered only until they received a trial to determine guilt. If indeed the person was proven to be guilty of intentional murder, he was handed over to the *goel*, the avenger of blood, to be killed. If he was proven to have killed accidentally, then the city of refuge was to be his sanctuary until the death of the High Priest who was currently in office. He was not free to leave and go home - accidental death is often caused by carelessness, and

there was a price to pay for that. However, as long as he stayed in the city of refuge, he was safe.

The law of the cities of refuge is a beautiful type of our Christian experience. We are all sinners - deserving of death. We are subject to the avenger of blood. There is no peace for the sinner. He is on the run, always looking over his shoulder.

The Bible gives no place for willful sin in either the Old or New Testaments. Those who sin willfully and deliberately are in big trouble. However, we are all sinners and in need of God's mercy and refuge. When we come to God, we enter that city of refuge where we are safe. Because of the death of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, and because of His plan of salvation we are set free, and the avenger of blood has no right to us.

The cities of refuge were situated all over Israel. No one had far to flee to get to one. There were no geographical hindrances like rivers or mountains in the way. Roads to the cities of refuge were to be kept in good repair. Signposts were to show the way.

Likewise, there are churches of Jesus Christ, places of refuge for the soul, situated in many places far and wide. Refuge awaits those that will run to one of them. Levites (Christian servants) are there to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The cities of refuge were designed to help the person who committed accidental murder. They were not designed to coddle the purposeful murderer. Human life is sacred, and God makes these points at the end of the chapter:

**Numbers 35:30** "All murderers must be put to death, but only if evidence is presented by more than one witness. No one may be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. **31** Also, you must never accept a ransom payment for the life of someone judged guilty of murder and subject to execution; murderers must always be put to death. **32** And never accept a ransom payment from someone who has fled to a city of refuge, allowing a slayer to return to his property before the death of the high priest. **33** This will ensure that the land where you live will not be polluted, for murder pollutes the land. And no sacrifice except the execution of the murderer can purify the land from murder. **34** You must not defile the land where you live, for I live there myself. I am the Lord, who lives among the people of Israel."

We can agree that murder defiles the person who committed the crime. But God says that murder pollutes the land - it defiles the whole community. Murder is criminal beyond all other offenses because it is the defacement of the image of God in man. The true reason for inflicting punishment on evil doers is not to reform, but it is the vindication of righteousness.

Likewise, as sinners we are all deserving of death. To appease God's righteousness and the law of God, we all deserve to die. But Paul said:

**Romans 8:3** The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. **4** He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

Jesus died on the cross for us, and this shows His great love for us. In addition, what Jesus did on the cross satisfied the legal requirement of payment for

our sin. In God's sight, we are legally right with God when we have followed His plan of salvation. Not only that, fellowship with God is restored and we can have a close relationship with Jesus. God's righteousness was protected when Jesus died on the cross.

In the Law of Moses, God worked with the people despite their customs that were not strictly according to His will, (for example, God had laws concerning divorce, polygamy, slavery, and here in our story, the avenger of blood). This lets us know that God is kind and patient and works with humanity to bring people to Himself. We could all learn a lesson from God's patient way of dealing with people.

Though God tolerated the "avenger of blood," he limited the custom and reformed it. In the story of the cities of refuge we can see a type or picture of what Jesus did for us. It is a beautiful story of God's mercy and justice working together. Within the city of refuge there is no condemnation. Yet, the *willful* sinner could not find shelter from the wrath of God there.

## **Numbers Chapter 36 - the Final Chapter of Numbers**

The final chapter of Numbers answers yet one more question concerning the inheritance of ancestral land when daughters inherit.

### **Women Who Inherit Property**

**Numbers 36 (NLT)** Then the heads of the clans of Gilead—descendants of Makir, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph—came to Moses and the family leaders of Israel with a petition. **2** They said, "Sir, the Lord instructed you to divide the land by sacred lot among the people of Israel. You were told by the Lord to give the grant of land owned by our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. **3** But if they marry men from another tribe, their grants of land will go with them to the tribe into which they marry. In this way, the total area of our tribal land will be reduced. **4** Then when the Year of Jubilee comes, their portion of land will be added to that of the new tribe, causing it to be lost forever to our ancestral tribe."

**5** So Moses gave the Israelites this command from the Lord: "The claim of the men of the tribe of Joseph is legitimate. **6** This is what the Lord commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad: Let them marry anyone they like, as long as it is within their own ancestral tribe. **7** None of the territorial land may pass from tribe to tribe, for all the land given to each tribe must remain within the tribe to which it was first allotted. **8** The daughters throughout the tribes of Israel who are in line to inherit property must marry within their tribe, so that all the Israelites will keep their ancestral property. **9** No grant of land may pass from one tribe to another; each tribe of Israel must keep its allotted portion of land."

**10** The daughters of Zelophehad did as the Lord commanded Moses. **11** Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah all married cousins on their father's side. **12** They married into the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. Thus, their inheritance of land remained within their ancestral tribe.

**13** These are the commands and regulations that the Lord gave to the people of Israel through Moses while they were camped on the plains of Moab beside the Jordan River, across from Jericho.

This concludes the Book of Numbers.