

In The Wilderness

Numbers 33:1-56

- Finally Israel is at the end of its forty year journey in the wilderness, and beginning to ready itself for the transition of possessing the Promise Land. But before they do God is going to recount all of the details that have taken place for them to get to where they are today. Why does He do this? Because later on after they've been in the Promise Land for a decade or two and are tempted to forget all that God has done for them, believing the lie that it wasn't that big of a deal how God brought them out of Egypt and into the Promise Land.
- This record here that we are reading about will remind them of the hard and difficult journey, where over two million people didn't make it to the Promise Land because of sin and disobedience, and hopefully cause them to rejoice in the Lord Who despite their rebellion and stubbornness remained faithful and fulfilled that in which He promised to do. For unlike us who have pictures and videos to remember and relive moments that have taken place decades or years ago, Israel only had God's Word to remind them of what has taken place.

V1-56

- God has divided this chapter into two sections where He has Israel > **1. looking back**- from where he's taken them, and **2. Looking forward**- to where they're going. In doing this we are going to see some very important points that pertain to how our Lord deals with us His people today. **V1-4 the first point** is found in these first few verses as we see that there is always a **starting point in our journey**, and God let's them know that it was the first month which is "**Nisan**" and on the **fifteenth day**, the **day after the Passover**.
- **A second point** is The Lord describes **their attitude** as they left Egypt, "**with boldness**" though they were slaves they walked out of Egypt like **conquerors**, and not as **escapees**. The reason being Moses writes is because of the plagues God had brought upon Egypt that humbled them and rebuked them for their worship of false gods and defiance toward the true and Living God. So in humbling Egypt it uplifted and encouraged Israel to start their journey in confidence that what God had promised to do for them He would deliver.
- **V5-15** recounts their journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai, this journey took them more than a year, but most of the time was not spent traveling but in receiving the Law there. **V16-49** takes them from Mount Sinai to the shores of the Jordan River, this had taken them thirty eight years to get to and not because that was the distance of the trip, but because of the time it would take for the generation of unbelief to die in the wilderness.
- God lists over thirty places in which Israel camped, and during this time a lot of activity took place, some good but most of it bad, which is why there was very little geographic progress that took place then. So although they were moving often they weren't getting any closer to their desired destination, until those who doubted the Lord are taken away.

- **Another point** > is there can be a lot of activity in our lives as well, but that doesn't mean that we are getting any closer to God's destination for us, we might seem to be meeting our wants and goals but that may not be where God desires for us. Case in point the first generation covered a lot of territory, won a lot of battles, but they were traveling in circles, all because they didn't whole heartedly surrender to God and missed the Promise Land. This was the end of Israel **looking back**, now The Lord will have them begin to **Look ahead**.
- **V50-53** they are commanded to conquer the inhabitants of Canaan, this goes back to what the Lord said all the way back to when He spoke to Abraham > Gen 15:13-16 where God prophesied that Israel would be taken captive into Egypt, but it wasn't because of their disobedience solely, but also because God was being patient to wait until the Canaanites had gotten to the point of no return in their ungodliness and unbelief toward Him.
- Another point > sometimes it's not just us God is dealing with that determines His actions toward you, but also the hearts of others and His patience to wait until they are ready for whatever it is He has planned for them as well, it's beyond our comprehension how the Lord is working > **Is 55:8-9**- amazing!
- Now that their sin is beyond repenting as a people and a nation, God sends Israel as His instrument of judgment against them, this explains why Israel was told to not only defeat the Canaanites militarily, but to erase the remains of their idolatrous culture with their corrupt and demonic worship practices.
- **V54-56** in possessing the Land Israel is told how to divide the land amongst themselves as well, so this conquest is two fold > **1st** judgment against the Canaanites, **2nd** Inheritance for God's people. Now it makes perfect sense why God tells Israel not to leave any of them alive, because the Lord doesn't give His people, His reward, to share with Satan's followers.
- Were told as believers to never marry unbelievers, or to go into business with them and make certain agreements with them why? The inheritances of God was never meant to share amongst those who hate The Lord, because when we do they will become irritants in our eyes and thorns in your sides, and sure enough that happened to Israel because they didn't fully listen to God counsel, and drive out the Canaanites allowing them to live amongst them, which resulted in marrying them and worshipping their false idols.
- A commentator wrote it is of no use for the church to succeed in the eyes of man, as Israel succeeded when they occupied the land and became a legitimate nation, instead of an enslaved people, if it merely allows the corrupt practices and attitudes of the world to take root. If this happens then the church should expect to be eventually driven out from its place of success just as the ungodly was before them since they only imitated their actions.

- In closing three points > **1. Our Father always remembers where we've been and where He's taken us**, every stop and every place that we've pitched our tent God knows and has recorded it > **Ps 56:8, Math 10:30, Math 12:36**- every **tear, hair**, and every **word**, of ours God knows.
- **2. Our Father has mercy on all of our sins**- every place that Israel had been was recorded but not every deed, as their past sins have been forgiven as they entered the Promise Land. That doesn't mean there wasn't consequences as we see them and God has given us enough to know why certain things happened, but what they deserved was death, and yet what they received was grace and mercy, just like you and I > **Ps 103:12, 1Jn 1:9**.
- **3. Our Father will take us where He's promised**- no matter how difficult the journey, and the obstacles we face, whatever God has promised to us He will accomplish for us > **Philip 1:6**- because when you think about it what was more difficult then you, and God overcame you in order to win you over to Him.