

## In The Wilderness

### Numbers 30-31

- Israel is on the cusp of the Promised Land, and another generation has been raised up, so with this new generation God tells Moses to instruct them on exactly what they are to do pertaining to daily, weekly, monthly and yearly sacrifices and offerings. After dealing with the offerings and sacrifices The Lord is going to speak to them concerning making vows.

#### V1-16

- **V1-2** Moses begins by addressing the leaders of the tribes about the sanctity of words, **Leviticus 27** Moses had already touched on the subject of vows to the old generation, now he is speaking to this new generation and how the Lord wanted them to be a people of their word, that before they agreed to something they needed to think it through before answering
- In Numbers **23:19** Scripture says “**God is not a man that He should lie**”, **Titus 1:2** goes even further saying “**God cannot lie**” in the book of **James 5:12**, we’re told to emulate God by being a people of honesty and integrity, that when we commit to something we will follow through. Before they entered the promise land God wanted this established amongst the people, because a society not built on truth will ultimately crumble under a layer of lies.
- **V3-8** an unmarried women’s vow was not taken as binding unless her father approved of it, as well as a married woman’s unless her husband ratified it, because they were not seen as the head of the household, therefore those vows could be declared null in void. **V9** but if a widow or divorced woman with no male head of her household makes a vow, then she was required to fulfill it being bound by her vows.
- What’s interesting is God doesn’t explain what happens if she remarries again, the assumption is the new husband is bound by the vows she previously made. **V10-15** when a married woman makes a vow the only way its not binding if the Husband speaks out against it, but notice I he doesn’t say anything, his silence is taken as consent, therefore the vow is valid. **V16** when God says someone is in a position of authority where others are expected to submit, the principle here is the head will be accountable to God for the result.

### Chapter 31

#### V1-54

- **V1-2** the Lord’s last assignment to Moses was carrying out His punishment on the Midianites, this was for their role in Israel’s disobedient behavior at Baal Peor in **Ch 25**. In this shows God holds all accountable to the roles they play in blatant rebellious behavior against Him, for though Israel was held accountable for their wrong in getting entangled with the Midianite women and engaging in sexual immorality, the Midianites were just as wrong for following the scheming counsel of Balaam in entrapping Israel.

- In our society there is a statute of limitations on punishment for wrong doing, but that is not the case with God, as He tells Moses its now time to exact vengeance of Midian. You might feel uncomfortable with the idea of God exacting vengeance on people, but scripture is clear when man defies the Lord despite His constant attempts to reach him, there will be dyer consequences for their refusal to submit to His commands > **Deut 7:9-11**- God later tells Israel that He is a merciful God Who blesses those who love Him but will repay those who disobey Him to their face, causing them to know exactly why He is punishing them.
- **V3-6** Moses organizes the men to go into battle 1,000 men from each tribe, 12,000 in total, and even though this is a physical battle Israel was to always take the spiritual with them, as the priests accompany the warriors. **V7-11** Midian is defeated, their Kings killed, and takes captive the women, children, and livestock as spoil. In hindsight this doesn't seem like a smart move, considering these are the people who influenced them into idolatry, and sexual immorality, they should've learned from the last time and not to wanted any Midianite people around them bringing with them their false beliefs and idolatrous worship.
- They also burned the cities and strongholds, and with this found Balaam the false prophet who masterminded the strategy by which Israel would be seduced into sexual immorality and idolatry living in the midst of them. When we last left him **24:25** he had just prophesied that Israel was going to conquer their enemies and afterward seemingly had packed up his belongings and went home, we see he stayed, getting paid to counsel Midian on how to trick Israel into disobeying God and causing them to get chastened by God, so he became rich not from cursing Israel himself, but telling their enemies how to get them to sin against God.
- **V12-20** the people bring back the spoils of victory and Moses upon seeing this became angry with the military leaders who allowed Israel to bring back those same women who had ensnared them into sin earlier. Moses reminded them of what their actions had cost Israel over **24,000** died in the plague, so Moses commanded them to kill every male amongst the little ones, and the females who are not virgins and therefore haven't been connected to immorality and idolatry, and afterward cleanse yourselves outside the camp.
- **V21-24** also Moses told them to cleanse the spoil, as all the material spoil had to be either purified by fire or cleansed by water, only then would it be fit for use by God and the people. **V25-30** God gives the responsibility of dividing the wealth to Moses, Eleazar, and the leaders within the congregation, and they did it in three ways. **1<sup>st</sup>** the soldier who fought got half, **2<sup>nd</sup>** the people got half, those who didn't fight but stayed back and watched the stuff, **3<sup>rd</sup>** both the soldiers and the people gave a percentage of their half back to the Lord.
- **V31-54** the rest of the chapter deals with the distribution of the spoils between the soldiers, people, and the Lord, but I want to highlight what Israel said at the end of the chapter. **V48-54** the officers come to Moses and tell him not one soldier died in the battel against Midian, this after **24,000** people lost their lives because of sexual sin and not battle, but here not one Israelite lost their life even while facing the sword, this motivated them to bring an extra offering to the Lord, things they had taken for themselves personally, they give it to God.