

## Numbers 25-27

Good evening and thank you again for joining us. Would you turn in your Bibles to Numbers 25 please?

Last week we studied the unfaithful prophet Balaam, and how he tried to curse Israel at Balak's request, but each time God made Balaam bless Israel.

Tonight we pick up the scene as we study chapters 25-27

The title of tonight's message is GETTING READY

Before we begin let's ask for the Lord's blessing.

PRAY

The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible. And the Bible says something interesting about Balaam and Israel. **Revelation 2:14**

**“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.”**

God wouldn't allow Balaam to curse Israel, so Balaam told Balak what to do so that God Himself would curse Israel. Apparently at Balaam's suggestion, Balak seduced the Israelites with the beautiful women of Moab. The nation committed adultery, and was led into idolatry. And that's what we see here in Numbers 25.

**1 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove,[fn] and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.**

Remember this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Israel, the 1<sup>st</sup> generation has passed away.

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.”

5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor.” It’s not shocking that God hates sin. I’m not troubled or surprised when I read of the death penalty for such flagrant rebellion and disregard for God’s command. What does shock me is the grace of God that is shown to me, a sinner!

We use the wrong benchmark-we measure sin based on degree of evil. But we should be measuring all sin by God’s holy perfection in righteousness.

6 And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. This man decides to parade his sin by showing off the Midianite harlot. This was a bold and brazen act of rebellion.

7 Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose 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 body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. ” This is the only time in the Old Testament this particular word for tent appears, which has caused some theologians to believe the man took the woman into the Tabernacle - into God’s tent, where they were engaged in

intercourse. Aarons grandson, kills them both while they were engaged in intercourse.

9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand. God also sent a plague as a result of Israel's harlotry and idolatry.

10 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 11 "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. Phinehas was passionate about the things God was passionate about, and God praised his bold action.

12 Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; 13 and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.' "Because of his willingness to take a stand for God, the High Priesthood of Aaron will pass through Phinehas.

14 Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader 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; he was head of the people of a father's house in Midian.

16 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 17 "Harass the Midianites, and attack them; 18 for they harassed you with their schemes by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a leader of Midian, their sister, who was killed in the day of the plague because of Peor."

Now in chapter 26 we see the second census of Israel

1 And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: Notice, it's

no longer Moses and Aaron the priest. Remember Aaron has died and his son, Eleazar, has taken his place

2 “Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by 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, across from Jericho, saying: 4 “Take a census of the people from twenty years old and above, just as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt.” 38 years earlier, at the beginning of the Book of Numbers, while Israel still camped at Mount Sinai, God commanded them to take a census.

The first census was primarily for military organization. If they were to enter into and take possession of the Promised Land, they had to know how many troops they had, and how they were to be organized.

The purpose of this second census is the same as the first-military organization.

And the applicability to you and is clear. God is not a God of chaos, or haphazardness or sloppiness. Organization is important, its necessary, and the work of God can suffer from a lack of organization. But no matter how good the organization is, it can never replace bold trust in God.

The first tribe that’s counted is Reuben - Jacob’s oldest son.

5 Reuben was the firstborn of Israel. The children of Reuben were: of Hanoch, 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: those who were numbered of them were forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty. Verse 7 tells us there were

43,730 men, 20 years old and older, in the tribe of Reuben. The first census counted 46,500 men - a loss of 2770 men - or 6%

8-11

8 And the son of Pallu was Eliab.

9 The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, representatives of 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 together with Korah when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign. 11 Nevertheless the children of Korah did not die. We studied the rebellion of Korah back in Numbers 16. In verses 12-14 we see something interesting regarding the census of Simeon.

12 The sons of Simeon according to their families were: of Nemuel,[fn] the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin,[fn] the family of the Jachinites; 13 of Zerah,[fn] the family of the Zarhites; of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14 These are the families of the Simeonites: twenty-two thousand two hundred. In the census in Numbers 1 Simeon had 59,300. Yet here it's only 22,200 Simeon loses 37,100 men – 63% of the tribe. The closest any other tribe comes to these losses is Ephraim, which lost 20% of the men. It makes you wonder why Simeon suffered such heavy losses...

Remember verse 14 of chapter 24 14 Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites.

Because this perpetrator was a leader among the Simeonites perhaps many in the tribe were guilty of this sin and punished with the plague.

Verses 15-18 lists the tribe of Gad.

15 The sons of Gad according to their families were: of Zephon,[fn] the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites; 16 of Ozni,[fn] the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; 17 of Arod,[fn] 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 numbered of them: forty thousand five hundred. They lost 11%.

19-22

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 according to their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Parzites; of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites. 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 numbered of them: seventy-six thousand five hundred. Judah increased to 76,500 – up 43% over 38 years.

23 The sons of Issachar according to their families were: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puah,[fn] the family of the Punites;[fn] 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 numbered of them: sixty-four thousand three hundred. Issachar increased 18%.

26 The sons of Zebulun according to their families were: 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 who were numbered of them: sixty thousand five hundred. Zebulum had a population gain of 5%.

28-34

28 The sons of Joseph according to their families, by Manasseh and Ephraim, were: 29 The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begot Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. 30 These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer,[fn] the family of the Jeezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites; 31 of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; 32 of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites.

33 Now Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but 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 numbered of them were fifty-two thousand seven hundred. In chapter 1 Manasseh had only 32,200 soldiers. Over 38 years in the wilderness this tribe added 20,500 people – a big increase of 64%.

35 These are the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites; of Becher,[fn] 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 who were numbered of them: thirty-two thousand five hundred.

These are the sons of Joseph according to their families. Verse 35 totals up the sons of Ephraim as 32,500 - sadly, a loss of 20%.

Let's read verses 38-51 and we'll finish out the 2<sup>nd</sup> census.

38 The sons of Benjamin according to their families were: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; 39 of Shupham,[fn] the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham,[fn] the family of the Huphamites. 40 And the sons of Bela were Ard[fn] 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 numbered of them were forty-five thousand six hundred.

42 These are the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham,[fn] 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 numbered of them, were sixty-four thousand four hundred.

44 The sons of Asher according to their families were: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites; of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. 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 numbered of them: fifty-three thousand four hundred.

48 The sons of Naphtali according to their families were: of Jahzeel,[fn] 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 numbered of them were forty-five thousand four hundred.

51 These are those who were numbered of the children of Israel: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty. The total number 38 years earlier was 603,550. That means over the four

decades they wandered through the wilderness, Israel's national population shrunk slightly – 3/10ths of a percent.

It's interesting, that the first census taken after Israel enters the land – in the days of David, 2 Samuel 24 – numbered 1.3 million men 20 years old and older. When the nation obeyed the Lord they more than doubled in number

Now we're about to transition to the census of the Levites, those who didn't get land, lets read verses 52-57

52 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 53 "To these the land shall be divided as an inheritance, according to the number of names. 54 To a large tribe you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. 55 But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56 According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller." 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. If you recall, these were the three families of the Levites. It was their responsibility to carry the Tabernacle. Gershon carried the fabric - Kohath the furniture – and Merari the frame.

Now we're given a little postscript, a little PS after the fact of the names of Moses' parents. 58-59

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, and the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram. 59 The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram

she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. This is where we learn of Moses' parents names.

60 To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

61 And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered profane fire before the LORD. We studied this in Leviticus 10

62 Now those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel.

When Israel occupies the land, rather than have its own territory the tribe of Levi will live in cities within the boundaries of other tribes. Levi's unique inheritance was the Lord, and the service of the Tabernacle.

63 These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho. 64 But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest 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." So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. Caleb and Joshua were the two spies who had faith, and God blessed them with the unique privilege of being the only two men of their generation to enter the land flowing with milk and honey.

So as the nation prepares to enter the promised land, God gives inheritance laws here in chapter 27.

1-5

1 Then came the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the

families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these were the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 And they stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, by the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, saying: 3 “Our father died in the wilderness; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the LORD, in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father’s brothers.”

5 So Moses brought their case before the LORD. In most ancient cultures only men could own land, but here 5 orphaned daughters want their father’s parcel when they get into the Land of Promise. They take their case before Moses – and to his credit, Moses takes it before the Lord. Moses could’ve assumed what the answer was, but he didn’t. He went to God.

6-11

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 7 “The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father’s brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. 8 And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. 9 If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10 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 the relative closest to him in his family, and he shall possess it.’” And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the LORD commanded Moses. The remarkable thing about these

laws is that they were all made in faith of coming into the promised of land in the Canaan.

These were women of faith, concerned about dividing up land they didn't yet possess, but would possess by faith.

12 Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. 14 For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.) Notice, God how God describes death- being "gathered to your people" - in other words, there's life beyond the grave.

Moses was first told he would die without entering the Promised Land in Numbers 20 as a result of his lack of faith and misrepresenting God.

Now in Deuteronomy 34 we'll see Moses climb to the top of the mountain, able to see the Promised Land but not able enter it, and there he would die.

The end of the road for Moses is almost upon him. He knows his time is short. What's the focus of Moses' attention?

15 Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: 16 "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." What a beautiful insight into the heart of Moses. He's brought Israel as far as God will allow. But Moses still cares about Israel's future. He

asks God to raise up a new leader - a man to shepherd the people.

It's amazing, this was the nation that had caused Moses so much grief! Buy his heart longed to see them blessed.

One final insight here. Most leaders prefer to select their own successor, but Moses asked God to make the choice.

18 And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. Joshua has several qualities that will make him a good leader. He was a man of faith. He'd been mentored by Moses. But the most important quality is mentioned in verse 18-he was filled with the Spirit.

20 And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21 He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation." The baton is passed to Joshua and Eleazar.

22 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

God is continuing to prepare the nation to enter the promised land. Next week, we'll see Gods instructions regarding the sacrifices.

This is all about preparation....