

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 16%

Weekly Readings will cover: Numbers 30 through Numbers 36

Sunday: Numbers 30

Monday: Numbers 31

Tuesday: Numbers 32

Wednesday: Numbers 33

Thursday: Numbers 34

Friday: Numbers 35

Saturday: Numbers 36

Current # of email addresses in the group: 584

Sorry for getting this out later than usual. I had it completed and forgot to send it out on Friday and was reminded by an email this morning.

This week we will finish the book of Numbers! This is our fifth book (Genesis, Job, Exodus, Leviticus & now Numbers). Other than one day, I did not have additional deep dive comments to add to the UCG reading program. I hope you have enjoyed reading this book and we will start Deuteronomy next week.

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

### **3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 29**

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 176 - SUNDAY: June 11<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 30

Daily Deep Dive:

We will first start with the UCG reading plan for today's chapter: "Vows and sworn oaths were not to be entered into lightly. They were to be kept. But there were certain circumstances in which they could be overruled. In ancient Israel, an unmarried woman was under the protection and supervision of her father. If she entered into some agreement or vow, this might have put her father, the one responsible

for her, under an obligation that he was either unable or unwilling to fulfill. So it was up to him whether or not to overrule her or allow her vow to stand. The same law applied to married women, except that the one who decided whether or not to allow the agreement to stand was, of course, the husband. If the wife was already bound by some prior vow at the time of marriage, her new husband had the opportunity to overrule it as soon as he became aware of it. But if he let it stand beyond that, it would remain in force. In the case of a widow or divorced woman, her vow would automatically stand as it could not obligate a husband or father.

In the New Testament dispensation we make a vow or covenant with Christ. The Father calls and grants us repentance and faith. We agree to bury the old man of sin. God gives us His Spirit and we are no longer our own. Ours is an *eternal* vow or covenant. And, just as in the Old Testament, it is not to be entered into by the immature. Just the same, marriage is a solemn vow made to God and spouse. But as for swearing oaths in general, Christ has instructed that we not do so (Matthew 5:33-37). Rather, just giving our word should be enough and should serve just as well." [END]

Verse 4 – There is another principle here that is worth focusing on for a minute and that is, that when something occurs in life, or when something comes to our attention (covering a variety of topics, situations, etc...) that we should deal with it in a timely manner. There are situations in life when someone becomes aware of something, and then later it somehow becomes advantageous or suits an agenda to make that situation into a big deal, when it wasn't necessarily a big deal to the individual in the first place. There is an appropriate amount of time that one should handle or react to a situation and if they choose not to, the time/moment is gone and it shouldn't later be used to suit us.

## Day 177 - MONDAY: June 12<sup>th</sup>

### Numbers 31

#### Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading programs brings out a number of interesting points to ponder as we begin today's reading: "As the last task to perform before Moses' death, God commands him to take vengeance on the Midianites because they, with the Moabites, deliberately set out to destroy the Israelites through their idolatrous religious practices. Furthermore, making a stark example of the Midianites in destroying them would serve as a deterrent to future apostasy. Incredibly, not a single Israelite dies in the war, moving their leaders to make a special offering. The officers over thousands, etc., come to Moses to make a voluntary offering to God to cover everything, an atonement offering (verses 48-50). God is with Israel in this righteous battle—signified by the fact that Phinehas also goes to war with the Ark of the Covenant and the two silver trumpets. It is God who gives them the victory.

Interestingly, verse 8 mentions that one of the men who was slain in the war was Zur. This Zur was apparently one of the instigators of the plot to bring false worship to Israel. Indeed, it was his daughter, Cozbi, that Zimri had brazenly paraded before the congregation of Israel before they were both slain by Phinehas (Numbers 25:14-15). In verse 9, we see the women of Midian taken captive in the wake of the battle. Moses, however, is incensed at this, as these are the same women who led Israel astray with the Moabites—and he commands that all but the virgins among them be put to death (verses 14-18). Besides their idolatrous practices, it is also possible that the promiscuous Midianites had sexually transmissible diseases that God wanted to keep out of Israel as well.

Verse 16 is the verse that actually explains what happened in the incident of Baal Peor. We learn that it was the "counsel of Balaam" that the Midianite women followed when they caused the children of Israel

to sin against God, resulting in the plague that cost 24,000 lives. Without this explanation, readers of chapters 22-24 might give Balaam the benefit of the doubt, assuming him to have been a prophet who was following God's will. But note this: Balaam did not "die the death of the righteous," as he had so eloquently prayed (Numbers 23:10). Rather, he died by the edge of the sword—being justly put to death along with the Midianites by the Israelites at God's command (verse 8).

So just what lesson can we learn from Balaam? Notice this from the article on him in *The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*: "2 Peter 2:15, Jude 1:11 and Revelation 2:14 warn the NT people of God against allowing a smooth-talking pagan to capitalize on his knowledge in the form of religiosity and twist it to his own deadly end. A veneer of piety disguises the shallow convictions which can be bought for a price (Numbers 22:17) and superficial repentance (v. 34) which is short-lived. 2 Peter 2:15-16 views Balaam as a man of prophetic talent but with a desire to use the gifts of God to further his own ends. So, Peter warned of the danger of 'empty' words because they act as a cover for evil desires. The Christian must appreciate that such emptiness of heart will be exposed on judgment day (Jude 1:11). For the apostle John writing to the compromising church in Pergamum the worse sin is not actually that of self-deception, because that in the end will be exposed. Rather, Balaam's leading of Balak [and thus Israel] into further spiritual adultery is far worse. And so, the worst of judgments is saved for those who knowingly deceive others. Like Balaam their sin eventually catches up with them (see Numbers 31:8, Joshua 13:22)" (Paul D. Gardner, ed., 1995)." [END]

Verse 20 – Things that could not be purified through fire, were purified through washing.

If you are struggling at all with this chapter, you may find reading verses 26 – 54 easier to read in either the NLT or ERV.

## Day 178 - TUESDAY: June 13<sup>th</sup>

### Numbers 32

#### Daily Deep Dive:

Here are the insights from the UCG reading plan: “The tribes of Reuben and Gad had a lot of cattle. The land of the Amorites had just been conquered (Numbers 21). And, with much good pastureland for grazing, these tribes decided that it would be a good place to settle down and make a home. So they let their desire for settlement be known to Moses. But Moses, all too familiar with Israel's past rebellions, was angered—and rightfully so. After all, there were still battles to be fought in the Promised Land, across the Jordan. Moses was concerned that their actions would discourage the other tribes if they bailed out now. And refusal to enter the Promised Land was the very sin for which God had punished Israel with its decades of wandering. Moses brings up the past, in effect asking, "Do you want to go through 40 more years in the wilderness?... Your fathers who spied out the Promised Land came back and discouraged everyone, causing about three million people to die in the wilderness. Do you want to do the same thing?" (compare verses 8, 13). "You are doing the same thing your fathers did, and you too will bring the wrath of God on us," Moses basically told them (compare verse 14).

The Reubenites and Gadites reassured Moses that they would fight alongside the other tribes to subdue the land of Canaan. But they requested that they be allowed to construct settlements for their children and cattle on the east side of the Jordan River, explaining that the men of fighting age would then leave them there while they went to help secure the land across the Jordan for all the rest of Israel. They would only return when the Israelite conquest of Canaan was complete and everyone had received his inheritance (verses 18-22). Moses agreed that this would be acceptable as long as they didn't back out of the agreement (verse 23). He wasn't going with them, so he had to pass

the decision on to Eleazar and Joshua, who would lead Israel across the Jordan (verse 28).

It isn't until the end of the chapter that we learn that half of the tribe of Manasseh would also have its inheritance east of the Jordan. Yet there were still some Amorites whom the Manassites had to dispossess at this point (verse 39). In the end, as we will later see, about 40,000 men of war from the two and a half eastern tribes do accompany Joshua into the Promised Land (Joshua 4:12-13).” [END]

Verse 23 – We started this week’s reading looking at how when someone made an oath, God expected them to fulfill it and if they didn’t, it was sin. Moses is reminding them here that if they do not keep their word, they will have sinned against God and be punished accordingly.

### Day 179 - WEDNESDAY: June 14<sup>th</sup>

#### Numbers 33

#### Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states the following: “This chapter contains a listing of the travels of the children of Israel, covering their 40 years in the wilderness, starting with the Exodus from Egypt. Some of the sites mentioned here, such as many of those in verses 5-18, are mentioned in Exodus and elsewhere in Numbers. Some are only given here, such as most of those mentioned in verses 19-29. But the list is not meant to be comprehensive, as there were other encampments that are *not* recorded here that *are* mentioned in Exodus and elsewhere in Numbers. God commanded Moses to draw up this account (verse 2). Since these were only temporary encampments for a traveling people, archaeologists have identified only a few of the actual locations with a reasonable degree of success.

After covering their journeys, God tells Moses to say to the children of Israel, "When you cross the Jordan River into the land of Canaan, you must drive out all the people living there. You must destroy all their carved and molten images and demolish all their pagan shrines" (verses 51-52, New Living Translation). The reason is to cleanse the land for the inheritance of the tribes of Israel so that they can worship the true God without interference from pagan influences and practices. God warns them: "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" (verse 55, NLT). God knows the land of Canaan is full of the symbols and representations of idolatrous worship—pictures, graven images, standing images, stone images, carved images, molten images—and false religious worship practices carried out on altars in groves or high places. These things will pollute those who come into contact with them. Jeremiah will later put it this way: "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jeremiah 10:2, King James Version). If the children of Israel pollute themselves with the trappings of false worship, God warns that they, too, will be driven out of the Promised Land (Numbers 33:56).

As subsequent events will play out, however, Israel will not completely eradicate the pagan inhabitants of Canaan—and, sadly, will ultimately embrace idolatry, be overthrown, and be removed from the Promised Land just as God now warns them." [END]

I don't have anything to add to this chapter.

Day 180 - THURSDAY: June 15<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 34

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states the following: "Eleazar the priest and Joshua are given the responsibility of dividing up the inheritance of the land. Eleazar is chosen because he was the high priest and had the

breastplate with the Urim and Thummim. Joshua is selected because he would soon be successor to Moses (verse 17). The boundaries of the entire area are described. East of the Jordan River, Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh have already received their inheritance (verse 14; Numbers 32). The other half of Manasseh will have its inheritance in Canaan. It should be noted that the land is not actually divided up in Numbers 34. That actually occurs in Joshua 14-19, after the land is surveyed.

Some of the more modern names will help in defining the territory described here. The Salt Sea (Numbers 34:3) is, of course, the Dead Sea. The Great Sea (verse 6), from the perspective of the Promised Land, is the Mediterranean. The Sea of Chinnereth (verse 11) is better known by us as the Sea of Galilee. The River or Brook of Egypt (verse 5) is probably the Wadi al-Arish, in the western Sinai Peninsula, not too far from the present Israeli-Egyptian border. Some have argued that no other river than the Nile could properly be called the River of Egypt. However, this cannot be true since the Israelites had to *leave* Egypt and *go* to the Promised Land. If the boundary of the Promised Land were the Nile, then the Israelites would have been in the Promised Land while they were yet in Goshen! Finally, "Mount Hor," located in the north (verse 7), cannot be the same Mount Hor upon which Aaron died in the south. According to the *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary*: "The Hebrew words...*Hor-ha-hor*, properly signify 'the mountain of the mountain'—'the high double mountain,' which, from the situation, can mean nothing else than the mountain Amana (Song 4:8), a member of the great Lebanon range" (note on Numbers 34:7-9).

Don't worry if you cannot trace the borders accurately. Some of the names are lost to us today. Notice that the Levites did not receive a land territory for their inheritance as all the other tribes did. Their locations are described in the next chapter." [END]

I again have nothing to add to this chapter.

Day 181 - FRIDAY: June 16<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 35

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Why are the Levites in a category all to themselves? The answer is that they are not to make their living off the land, but, rather, from their service to God and the rest of the nation. And this requires an element of faith—that God will inspire the other tribes to fulfill their responsibility in supplying the Levites' needs. Each of the tribes of Israel is to provide cities for the Levites' living quarters, as well as surrounding countryside for their animals. The Levites, of whom there were 23,000 males, are assigned to 48 cities, each about the size of a football stadium surrounded by around 750 acres of "common-land." That may sound large by today's standards, but the entire land area for all the Levites amounted to approximately 36,000 acres out of a total of more than five million acres for all Israel.

God instructs Moses to appoint six of the Levite cities to be cities of refuge. When someone is murdered, members of the victimized family may choose an "avenger of blood"—a single individual—from among themselves to execute the murderer. The city of refuge provides asylum for anyone who fears the dead person's relatives will seek revenge before there can be a fair trial—as well as for those cleared of murder in a trial and found guilty of accidental death, or manslaughter. The congregation is to judge between these two situations, whether the crime was strictly accidental or if it was murder (Numbers 35:24). If deemed murder, the offender is put to death. If manslaughter, the killer is delivered to one of the six cities of refuge, there to remain until the death of the high priest—at which time he may leave a free man. But if he leaves the city of refuge before that, the avenger of blood will be allowed to kill him and remain guiltless. It may sound harsh to us today to think that someone who killed another person by accident

could himself be legally killed by the victim's relative. Yet in practical fact it demonstrates the high value God places on human life and that God holds everyone responsible for his or her actions. We all have a serious responsibility to be sure that our actions never harm or injure others, because under God's legal system a person's carelessness could bring a severe—and possibly fatal—penalty.

Furthermore, God made some concessions to human weakness in the legal system He gave to the Israelites—realizing that they were a carnally motivated people (compare Matthew 19:8). These, in fact, can serve to demonstrate God's wisdom. Consider the appointment of an avenger of blood. Human nature, God knew quite well, demanded revenge. Without rules governing the exacting of it in situations such as that just described, family or tribal warfare could have broken out like the Hatfields and McCoys of American history, with no end to the bloodshed that defiles the land (Numbers 35:33). God said, "You must not defile the land where you are going to live, for I [will] live there myself. I am the Lord, who lives among the people of Israel" (verse 34, NLT)." [END]

Verses 4 & 5 – Regarding the difference in verses 4 & 5 between a thousand cubits and two thousand cubits, here is what Adam Clarke's commentary states, and the conclusions align also with John Gill's commentary: "Commentators have been much puzzled with the accounts in these two verses. In Num 35:4 the measure is said to be 1,000 cubits from the wall; in Num 35:5 the measure is said to be 2,000 from without the city. It is likely these two measures mean the same thing; at least so it was understood by the Septuagint and Coptic, who have *δισχιλιους πηχεις*, 2,000 cubits, in the fourth, as well as in the fifth verse; but this reading of the Septuagint and Coptic is not acknowledged by any other of the ancient versions, nor by any of the MSS. collated by Kennicott and De Rossi. We must seek therefore for some other method of reconciling this apparently contradictory

account. Sundry modes have been proposed by commentators, which appear to me, in general, to require full as much explanation as the text itself. Maimonides is the only one intelligible on the subject. "The suburbs," says he, "of the cities are expressed in the law to be 3,000 cubits on every side from the wall of the city and outwards. The first thousand cubits are the suburbs, and the 2,000, which they measured without the suburbs, were for fields and vineyards." The whole, therefore, of the city, suburbs, fields, and vineyards, may be represented by the diagram." [END]

Verse 6 – The word translated as "Manslayer" in the NKJV is the same word translated as "murder" in Exodus 20:13 ("You shall not murder"). This same Hebrew word continues to be used throughout this chapter. However, verse 11 tells us that this "murder" is not on purpose, it's accidental. The Hebrew word for "accidental" is the same Hebrew word we've seen used for "inadvertent/ignorant sin" (compare Leviticus 4:2, 22, 27, 5:15, 18, 22:14).

Verse 12 – The Hebrew word translated here as "avenger" is the same that is commonly translated as "redeem/redeemer/kinsman redeemer".

Verse 18 – The Hebrew word translated as "weapon" in this verse is the same word translated as "implement" in verse 16.

Verse 21 – It says here "he is a murder". Again, this is the same Hebrew word as verse 6. The point is about whether there is the intention to harm versus an accident that results in death.

Verse 25 – Ellicott's commentary states the following: "Although the death which had been occasioned was accidental, not intentional, nevertheless the shedding of blood demanded expiation. The manslayer was, therefore, required to remain an exile from his own

home until the death of the high priest who had been anointed with the holy oil. As the high priest, by reason of the anointing with the holy oil, became qualified to act as the representative of the nation, and in that capacity acted as their mediator on the great day of atonement, so the death of the high priest assumed a symbolical or representative character, and became a type of that of the great High Priest who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, and who by His death made a propitiation for the sins of the world. Thus, as by the death of the Jewish high priest a typical atonement was made for the sin of the Israelitish manslayer, and he was restored thereupon to “the land of his possession” amongst his brethren...” [END]

Verse 30 – This is a principle repeated throughout the Bible: One witness is not enough. It’s too easy for one person to miss see, miss understand, etc..., or even have their own agenda. A matter is established by multiple witnesses.

Verse 31 – How often in our world can the wealthy buy themselves out of their sins, mistakes, etc... God didn’t allow the wealthy to buy themselves out of the punishment of murder.

Verse 32 – God is consistent. Even if it’s accidental, that person also couldn’t buy themselves out of the law. The law was the law. You can’t buy your way to something different.

Day 182 - SATURDAY: June 17<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 36

Daily Deep Dive:

For our last chapter of the week, the UCG reading plan states: “The daughters of Zelophehad, himself a grandson of Gilead of the tribe of Manasseh, had made an unusual appeal back in chapter 27—to inherit their father's land since he had left no surviving sons. And God gave Moses the judgment that the daughters were to receive the

inheritance. But there was a complicating factor in this matter, which the Gileadite leaders among Manasseh brought before Moses. It had been good that the brotherless daughters of their tribe had been granted an inheritance. But what happens when they marry men from other tribes? Couldn't this gradually drain away the inheritance of Manasseh? And couldn't the same thing happen in other tribes? So God gives Moses another judgment. Women heirs among the ancient Israelites are permitted to marry only within their own tribe. "Thus no inheritance shall change hands from one tribe to another" (Numbers 36:9)." [END]

I don't have anything to add to this chapter. That brings us to the end of the week.