

Numbers 25 -27 • A Threat From Within

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

You might remember that when we last were in the Book of Numbers, the nation of Israel, we found, is very near to coming to that place of crossing the Jordan and approaching Jericho, which is going to be the very first city that they're going to reach as they go into the land that God has promised them.

But they're not there yet. They haven't actually come into the place of promise quite yet. They're still moving their way through some of those lands on the other side of the Jordan. And you'll remember last week we talked about how they got very close to Moab. And the king of Moab became very frightened with Israel moving through.

Even though Israel was told not to do anything against Moab, the king of Moab got all afraid and decided to hire a man by the name of Balaam to put a curse on Israel. So he promised him a lot of money and brought him to Moab and had him get up on various different hilltops so he could see Israel below and pronounce a curse on them. And you'll remember that God intervened, and every time Balaam opened his mouth, out came a blessing upon the nation of Israel.

So God foiled the attempts of the king of Moab. But you'll recall that there was more than just Moab involved in this process. I don't know if you remember seeing this at the very beginning of our study last time. I'm going to put this on the screen for you because it's from Numbers chapter 22, so you had to go back a few chapters. And this is how that chapter kind of started. It said,

Numbers 22:4-5 (ESV)

And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." So Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor...

And Moab said to the elders of Midian, (Now, Midian is a completely different people. They're the Midianites. So the king of Moab, I don't know if he wrote a letter, I don't know if he sent some people over to talk to them, I'm not sure exactly how, but he basically communicated to the elders of Midian, saying, regarding the Israelites) *"This horde... that is around us, (They're going to*

consume us, they're going to lick us up) *as... (an) ox licks up the grass of the field.*” So (And that's why it goes on to say that) *Balak* (who is) *the son of Zippor*, (Who is the) *...king of Moab at that time*, (Then sent to) *...messengers to Balaam the son of Beor...* (In order to come and put a curse on the nation of Israel)

But I wanted to make the point here that Moab contacted Midian. And the reason that's important is because as we get into our study tonight, we're going to find the Moabites, in concert with the Midianites, are going to do a work together to try to cause problems for Israel. And they are going to succeed.

Look in chapter 25, beginning in verse 1, and it says, “*While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore* (which means to commit sexual immorality) *with the daughters of Moab.*” (ESV)

Your Bible might have a different word for that, but it basically refers to engaging in sexual immorality, and we'll talk about what else it involves. But I want to stop you there just for a moment because Balaam has really no sooner finished his final prophetic statement that he gave over the nation of Israel, when suddenly at the foot of the very mountain where he had been prophesying, the Israelites suddenly begin to engage in sexual immorality.

And you're like, what is up with that? I mean, God has just spoken these incredible blessings over Israel through this man, Balaam. And yet here we find that it's, and you'll notice it says, “*...with the daughters of Moab.*” It says in verse 1 that the men of Israel are beginning to engage in sexual activity.

We're going to find out that the daughters of Midian are also involved as we get into this chapter a little bit further. But when we talk about sexual immorality, again, it's more than just some gals batting their eyelashes at guys and drawing them into sexually immoral relationships.

Look at verse 2, and that tells you what more is going on. It says, “*These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate* (meaning they ate food that was part of the sacrificial process to these pagan deities) *and* (look at this) *bowed down to their gods.*”

All right, so what's going on here? The nation of Israel is not just being drawn into sexual immorality; they're being drawn into the worship of these pagan gods. It just so happens that the worship of these pagan gods involved sexual immorality, and they often did.

What a great way to draw people into worship—into pagan worship—to use something that God intended for pleasure between a husband and a wife, and to say, it's okay to be illicit and do this with anybody involved in these worship

practices because you're worshiping the god, so it's okay. It's basically putting a religious stamp of approval on sexual immorality.

And it says here in verse 3, *“So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. (And we'll explain what that means in a bit.) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.”*

All right, stop there for a minute. Let me give you a little background. Baal was the Canaanite fertility god, and the Baal of Peor simply means the way he was worshiped in that particular area because, remember, pagan gods were very specific to locales.

There was a god for the special—I mean, if pagans were around today, they would have a god for Ontario, and they'd have a god for Payette, and they'd have a god for Fruitland and Vale, and it would be the Baal of Ontario perhaps, or the Baal of Fruitland, or something like that. Very, very local.

And again, the worship of this fertility god involved all kinds of perverse sexual acts with people. And so what is going on here? We see that what's happening is Balaam couldn't curse Israel. How are we going to bring these people down? How are we going to cause problems for the nation of Israel?

Their God seems to be so for them. Everything that Balaam said in those last chapters we studied, last time we were in Numbers, we saw that God was on Israel's side, and it was so very apparent. So how are we going to do this?

After everything that Balaam prophesied over the nation of Israel, if I was Balak, I would have said, man, these guys are bulletproof. I mean, they are the original Teflon nation. Nothing sticks to these guys. Nothing is going to get through. Nothing is going to be a problem to these people. What can we possibly do?

I believe it was Balaam who suggested something, an option. And that option was to weaken the people of Israel on the inside so that God's wrath might break out against them. And that's exactly what appears to have happened.

Keep reading with me in verse 4: *“And the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before the LORD, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.”⁵ And Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor.””*

Now, okay, what's going on here? What Moses is basically being told by the Lord is that for those who engaged in this kind of sexual perversity and

immorality with these pagan worship practices that these women are drawing the men into, they are to be executed.

These people who are found to be involved in this pagan, ritualistic idolatry are to be executed. And when he talks about hanging them in the sun, that refers to the practice of, after they have been executed, literally impaling them in a place where everyone can see. They're literally hung on a stick so as to be a deterrent. When people walk by, it's like, yeah, that's what happens, and so forth.

And look at this next section, verse 6. Here's where the Midianites are also seen to be involved here. *“And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family (and that means into his family tent), in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting.”*

Now, remember, the people are weeping because of this immorality that has broken out in the nation. And there have already been people who have died. They've already lost some of their number because of this situation. And along comes this man, this Israelite man, and he's got this Midianite woman.

Picture this in your mind: Moses and all of the other elders and other people are literally sitting at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, which is the place where they worship God. And this man walks right past them in full view with this Midianite woman and takes her into his family tent because he's going to have relations with her.

But he walks; he's not skulking around or slinking or trying to be stealth about it at all. He just is, I don't care. He just walks in full view in front of everybody. And this is a brazen act of defiance and a brazen act of rebellion.

“When Phinehas (verse 7 tells us) the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand (oh, oh.)⁸ and went after the man of Israel into the chamber (meaning into that inner area of the tent where they were having relations) and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped.⁹ Nevertheless, (look at this) those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.”

Wow! Twenty-four thousand. That's almost the population of two Ontarios who died in the plague that came upon the people because of this situation. But notice Phineas, the son of Eleazar. He sees this woman and this man walking brazenly past the congregation as they're weeping before the Lord. And he follows them into the tent and literally does this, shook, with a spear, killing them both, and it says, *“...Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped.”* Because of that single act.

And look what it goes on to say in verse 10. Check this out: *“And the LORD said to Moses,¹¹ ‘Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath...’”*

Do you know that? Do you know that's that concept of turning back the wrath of God? We have a New Testament word for that. If it's in your Bible, if you have a Bible, it's called *propitiation*, and the word *propitiation* means to turn aside the wrath, to turn aside wrath. Okay. And this is exactly what God is saying about what Phinehas did. He turned back my wrath.

Look at how he explains it. He says, *“...from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy.¹² Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace,¹³ and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, (why?) because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel.’”*

In other words, Phinehas was passionate about the honor of God, and in this way, he represented the true heart of God because his passion was for the heart and the righteousness of God. So the Lord promised to honor the family of Phinehas for generations to come, saying that he will have a perpetual priesthood.

Verse 14: *“The name of the slain man of Israel, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu (How would you like to have your name in the Bible for all time and eternity as a guy who committed that kind of an act? And he was), chief of a father’s house belonging to the Simeonites. (In other words, the tribe of Simeon.)¹⁵ And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, who was the tribal head of a father’s house in Midian.*

¹⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,¹⁷ ‘Harass the Midianites (which means to pursue them) and strike them down,¹⁸ for they have harassed you with their wiles, with which they beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the chief of Midian, their sister, who was killed on the day of the plague on account of Peor.’”

So you can see as we've dealt with this chapter, this was a combined effort again of the Moabites and the Midianites to bring down the nation of Israel from within. And by the way, this was all Balaam's idea. Now we don't find that out until much later in the book. I'm going to, we're going to do a little jump ahead. Okay. Let me put this on the screen from Numbers chapter 31. When you jump ahead kind of toward the end of the book, it says,

Numbers 31:16 (ESV)

Behold, these, ON BALAAM'S ADVICE cause the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD.

Behold, these, ON BALAAM'S ADVICE cause the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD.

It says it right there, that this was all due to Balaam's advice. And so you see, Balaam, who was a man of greed, was thwarted from getting his money by cursing the nation of Israel, so he found another way to get paid, and that was to give the king of Moab and the king of Midian advice on how to bring them down, or at least how to hurt Israel.

And the reason this is an important story for you and I to see here in the scripture is because it gives us insights into the methodology of the enemy. And you need to understand that we see some very interesting sort of situations here about how the enemy might work in our lives.

Here are the Israelites. They're literally on the threshold of the Promised Land, and they're about to go into that land and fight many battles. And there will be many city-states that will rise up against them and try to keep them from their inheritance that the Lord has given them in the land. And there's going to be a lot of battles and a lot of fighting and a lot of things that are just ahead of them.

And yet the most dangerous threat ended up not being these hostile armies that they're about to face, but rather the ever-present temptation to simply compromise with the sin of the people right there in their neighborhood.

And the enemy is still using these tactics today to bring people, Christians, down. Sure, there's a lot of battles that we face out there. There are issues, and that's not to be minimized in any way. You and I fight battles, no question about it. And there is an enemy of our soul with whom we have to contend. And we do that in the spirit and in prayer, so forth and so on.

However, the biggest issue, probably the most dangerous threat that we face on an ongoing basis as Christians, is that ever-present danger to compromise who we are in Christ. As the world continually throws those things in front of us, which are opportunities to compromise, and it all looks so good, and it looks so pleasurable, just like these Midianite Moabite women came dancing down the hill, waving their veils and batting their eyelashes and drawing people into this pagan worship and the sexual idolatry and perversity that went along with it.

It's fun. Right? Don't ever let anybody tell you sin isn't fun because it is. It's a kick. And the Bible says sin is enjoyable for a season. And when you're in the springtime of your sin, it's a hoot. When you're in the summer, it's the best. But eventually, any season of sin begins to work its way through those seasons, and you eventually get into that autumn season of your sin, when you're still involved but it's beginning to lose a little of its luster.

As things get cold and the colors of your sin begin to fall off the branches of the trees, and then you enter into the winter season of your sin. And it's worse than the winter we just went through. And that's why the Bible tells us sin is enjoyable for a season, but it's going to come to an end.

And it's really easy for the world to draw you and I into that kind of compromise because it's fun. It's very pleasurable. But it comes back to bite in the worst way, and it always results in some form of death. We've talked about that before. The Bible says the wages of sin is death.

Even though as a Christian you cannot be touched by eternal death because Christ has consumed that for you on the cross, there will still be some form of dying, some aspect of death that will take place. Could be the death of a relationship, or death of a job opportunity, or any number of other possibilities, but there will be something that will die.

And you and I need to understand from this passage how the enemy works, and we need to be prepared for it. What is the area of weakness? See, this is an interesting sort of a thing. Balaam got them right where they were the weakest. What he suggested to the Moabites and the Midianites was exactly what — I mean, it was just like fine-tuned — for the nation of Israel. They were so primed and cocked to be idolatrous.

And we find that throughout the course of their history as well. It didn't go away. It didn't go away until after Babylon. The nation of Israel struggled and struggled for hundreds and hundreds of years until they were finally swept away by the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar came. He uprooted the entire nation. He killed many of them, destroyed Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, took them to Babylon.

They were there for 70 years. The nation of Israel was never idolatrous after that point. Idolatry was gone. God finally found a way to wipe it out. But it took hundreds of years of repetitious difficulty and then finally exile.

That's not to say Israel didn't enter into their own issues after that point. By the time Jesus got there, they were steeped in legalism, but not idolatry. That was gone. There were other nations that were still very much involved in idolatry — not Israel.

Chapter 26. Let's go on. We come now here as we get into chapter 26 to the second census. You'll remember that the book of Numbers gets its name because essentially it numbers the people of Israel, and we have these two censuses. I don't know what the plural of census is, okay? Somebody can look it up for me, but anyway, there's these two censuses.

It sounds really dumb, doesn't it? I don't think it's censi—that's somebody you bow to before they chop your head off. These kind of appear as bookends at the beginning and then toward the end of the book of Numbers. Basically, the reason they're numbered twice is because they're numbered before people began to die throughout that 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and then they're numbered after that generation has fallen in the wilderness, and their children have now grown up and are ready to enter into the land.

And so it says in verse 1: *“After the plague, the LORD said to Moses and to Eleazar the son of Aaron, the priest, ² “Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers’ houses, all in Israel who are able to go to war.”* (And again, that means only the men are counted. Sorry, they didn't count the women and their children, just the men) ³ *And Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, ⁴ “Take a census of the people, from twenty years old and upward,” as the LORD commanded Moses. The people of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt were:”*

And then it begins. Verse 5. First of all, *“Reuben, the firstborn of Israel; the sons of Reuben: of Hanoch, the clan of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the clan of the Palluites (kind of fun to say); ⁶ of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the clan of the Carmites. ⁷ These are the clans of the Reubenites, and those listed (again, this is the men) were 43,730 (basically able to go to war). ⁸ And (it says) the sons of Pallu: Eliab. ⁹ The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from 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 250 men, and they became a warning. ¹¹ But the sons of Korah did not die.”*

That's interesting, isn't it? It means here that the children of Korah did not suffer the fate of their father. Okay, in case it might have seemed that way when we read about that story. Then we have,

“¹² The sons of Simeon according to their clans: of Nemuel, the clan of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the clan of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the clan of the Jachinites; ¹³ of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites; of Shaul, the clan of the Shaulites. ¹⁴ These are the clans of the Simeonites, 22,200.

¹⁵ The sons of Gad according to their clans: of Zephon, the clan of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the clan of the Haggites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; ¹⁶ of Ozni, the clan of the Oznites; of Eri, the clan of the Erites; ¹⁷ of Arod, the clan of the Arodites; of Areli, the clan of the Arelites. ¹⁸ These are the clans of the sons of Gad as they were listed, 40,500.

Then we have, *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 clans were: of Shelah, the clan of the Shelanites; of Perez, the clan of the Perezites; of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites. ²¹ And the sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the clan of the Hamulites. ²² These are the clans of Judah as they were listed, 76,500...*

You notice how there's a lot of the sons of Judah. That's why they were given so much land in Israel, so much land that it actually became, by the time Jesus came along, that the land that was called the tribe of Judah was then renamed Judea. And that was the land that encompassed Jerusalem and that essentially became the land that was the southern kingdom of Judah and later Judea. So that's why you kind of get a little bit of a history there of how that works.

Then we have, *²³ The sons of Issachar...* I'm not going to read all these names. Skip down to verse 25. We see that they were 64,300.

²⁶ The sons of Zebulun... Skip down to verse 27, were 60,500. A lot of them.

²⁸ The sons of Joseph... Now basically, remember, there was technically no tribe of Joseph. They were split into two tribes given to his sons because Joseph, remember, got a double portion. And we have the clans of Manasseh and Ephraim, the two sons of Joseph, born in Egypt.

And there were quite a few. This goes through all of the sons. Goes all the way down to verse 34. These were the clans of Manasseh, and those listed were 52,000. And then you've got beginning in verse 35 all of Ephraim listed down to verse 37: 32,500. And these are the sons of Joseph, all right? Manasseh and Ephraim.

Then we come to, *“...Benjamin according to their clans:...”* Skip down to verse 41, their total fighting men: 45,600.

Beginning in verse 42, we've got the sons of Dan, or the tribe of Dan. You can see there in verse 43: 64,400.

⁴⁴ The sons of (the tribe of) Asher... Verse 47: 53,400. *⁴⁸ The sons of Naphtali according to their clans:..* Verse 50: 45,400. *⁵¹ This was the list of the people of Israel, 601,730.*

Remember, that's just men who are fighting age. And see, that's why we don't know exactly how many people were there. Because we're guessing on the rest. We're guessing people, men outside of the fighting age. We're guessing how many women. We're guessing how many children. And that's why we come up with somewhere between two and a half and three million people. But again, it's a guess based on family sizes. There is some guesswork. And that's why there's about a 500,000 buffer there.

Verse 52: *“The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁵³ “Among these the land shall be divided for inheritance according to the number of names. ⁵⁴ To a large tribe you shall give a large inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a small inheritance (well, that makes a lot of sense); every tribe shall be given its inheritance in proportion to its list (meaning its numbers). ⁵⁵ But the land shall be divided by lot. According to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. ⁵⁶ Their inheritance shall be divided according to lot between the larger and the smaller.””*

In other words, the location of their inheritance came by lot. The size of the inheritance was in direct proportion to their census numbers. And again, that's another reason why the census numbers were counted.

Verse 57: *“This was the list of the Levites according to their clans: of Gershon, the clan of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the clan of the Kohathites; of Merari, the clan of the Merarites. ⁵⁸ These are the clans of Levi: the clan of the Libnites, the clan of the Hebronites, the clan of the Mahlites, the clan of the Mushites, the clan of the Korahites. And Kohath was the father of Amram. ⁵⁹ The name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. And she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister. ⁶⁰ And to Aaron were born Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ⁶¹ But (you’ll remember) Nadab and Abihu died when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD. ⁶² And those listed were 23,000, every male from a month old and upward. (Now, we’re not talking about fighting men, we’re talking about Levites. Those in service of the Lord) For they were not listed among the people of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the people of Israel.*

⁶³ These were those listed by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who listed the people of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. ⁶⁴ But among these there was not one of those listed by Moses and Aaron the priest, who had listed the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. (Why?) ⁶⁵ For the LORD had said of them, “They shall die in the wilderness.” Not one of them was left, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.”

In other words, after all the men were recounted, and the numbers were compared to the census that had been counted before, every single adult male that had been counted had perished along with their generation of unbelief.

And this note just reminds us here that among the original group of men, only Caleb and Joshua survived to see the promised land. Because you'll remember when the people were freaking out and saying, we can't go, we can't go, we can't go. These people are too strong for us. It was Joshua and Caleb who said we can, because God is able to make us victorious.

And God said, because they maintained a heart of faith, they will be allowed to see the land. And what's interesting about Caleb too—I love Caleb, what a great character—Caleb was about 40 years old at the time when he went into the land. So he had to wait between age 40 and age 80 to go into the land.

Those are a man's ending years. I mean, you consider a man roughly middle-aged at about 40, right? Just depending. And so he had to wait till he was 80, but what was interesting is that not only had God allowed him to go into the land at the age of 80, but He said that not a single bit of his strength had waned from when he was 40.

He said, I'm just as strong and just as vibrant and able as when I was 40 years old because God has sustained me. And he went in and cleared the land. He was an incredible guy, but a man of faith, a man.

There was more than just their shoes that didn't wear out, you guys. We talk today about knees wearing out and hips wearing out. Got to get a new hip because my hip wore out. I got a new one here, and I got a new knee, and put in a new shoulder and stuff like that. Well, not only did their shoes not wear out during 40 years in the wilderness, Caleb didn't wear out. That's really cool. God is able, right? Because he was a man of faith.

Numbers 27.

“¹ Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, from the clans of Manasseh...” Those, of course, again, come from the line of Joseph. *“...The names of his daughters were: Mahlah, Noah, (See, I didn't know Noah was a unisex name. But here we have a girl named Noah. See, it's one of those names like Aaron, right? You can do Aaron for a boy and Aaron for a girl, although that one's spelled differently) Hogla, Milka, and Tirzah.”* A bunch of beauties, no doubt.

² And they stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest and before the chiefs and all the congregation, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, saying, ³ “Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin. And he had no sons (only girls). ⁴ Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father's brothers.” (Well)

“⁵ Moses brought their case before the LORD. ⁶And the LORD said to Moses, ⁷ “The daughters of Zelophehad are right. You shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father’s brothers and transfer the inheritance of their father to them.”

When we get to the end of the Book of Numbers, we're going to find that there's going to be yet another issue with these daughters that is going to arise concerning what would happen.

Do you hear what's happening? This man had no sons, and so his daughters basically come and they say, hey, our father died in the wilderness, but he had no sons, only us girls. So why should our father's name die out among the people of Israel? Why don't we get our father's inheritance? And so Moses took it to the Lord.

The Lord said, Absolutely give them their father's inheritance, which is very cool. At a time in history when women were worth just a little bit more than a possession, God honors these women in this way to say, Let them do this.

Later on, we're going to find out that the question is going to come up: Wait a second. What if one of these women marries a man from another tribe and they take the land with them in marriage, and that tribal allotment, which was meant to go to this tribe, ends up getting transferred to another tribe? We'll see how they deal with that when we get to chapter 36.

What's interesting here is the way the Lord makes provision for these women when they really have no other resources to lean on in the sense of land, other than marriage, of course.

From a legal point of view, the case of these daughters is interesting because it shows how many of the laws actually came into being in the Bible. When a problem came up that had never been seen before, they took it to Moses, and Moses would be like, okay, never dealt with that one before. He'd bring it to the Lord, and the Lord would speak to Moses, giving direction, and then the Lord's response would become the precedent that they would use ongoing in future cases that might bear some kind of similarity.

But anyway, it's also interesting here because it helps us to understand some of what the rules were regarding inheritance in biblical times. Remember, according to Hebrew law up to this point, a woman had no share in the family estate. Up to this point, a woman had no share. When a man died, his inheritance, or everything he had, his estate rather, passed on to his sons, with his firstborn son getting a double portion and then doling it out to the other boys who came after that.

But the daughters were treated completely differently. A daughter would be given in marriage, and her father would give her a dowry to go along with her. That dowry would include all kinds of things, depending on what he could afford—clothing, sometimes money, possessions, furniture. Really well-to-do fathers would actually bequeath land to their daughters, but that wasn't part of Jewish law necessarily.

Essentially, after a father married off his daughter, he was kind of released from any financial responsibility for the woman because he'd given her a dowry, and now she was the responsibility of her husband. She and her husband's family would take the land that he had been given, and they would carry on.

The system that we're looking at here was a way of keeping the land within the family and so forth. But here, this man Zelophehad had no sons to receive his land. So his daughters come, and they challenge the accepted practice and plead for their case. Their plea was accepted, saying that they should be given land. It's very interesting to see how this came about.

In light of all this, there needs to be some further instruction given.

Look at verse 8 and following. It says, *“And you shall speak to the people of Israel, saying, ‘If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. ⁹And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. ¹⁰And if he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father’s brothers. ¹¹And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the nearest kinsman of his clan, and he shall possess it. And it shall be for the people of Israel a statute and rule, as the LORD commanded Moses.’”*

But notice how that new statute and rule reads. It says, if he has no sons, first it goes to his daughters. That was a precedent that was established here in the book of Numbers going forward. Kind of cool.

Verse 12: *“The LORD said to Moses, “Go up into this mountain of Abarim and see the land that I have given to the people of Israel. ¹³When you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people (which is a euphemism for dying), as your brother Aaron was, ¹⁴because you rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin when the congregation quarreled, failing to uphold me as holy at the waters before their eyes.” (And it says parenthetically) (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.)”*

You'll remember that story where Moses just got frustrated with the people and misrepresented the Lord. And God said, because of that, because you misrepresented me, you will not be able to enter into the land. You'll only be able to see it from afar.

And this is what Moses is being told now, you're going to go up on this mountaintop. You'll be able to see the promised land. I'll let you, I'll let you view it from there, but you will not set foot in that land.

“¹⁵ Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, ¹⁶ “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation ¹⁷ who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in (that speaks of a shepherd, doesn't it?), that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.” ¹⁸ So the LORD said to Moses, (I'm way ahead of you, buddy) “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. ¹⁹ Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. ²⁰ You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey. ²¹ And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. (Remember, that was the means of determining the will of God. And his word) At his word (rather) they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation.” ²² And Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and made him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole congregation, ²³ and he laid his hands on him and commissioned him as the LORD directed through Moses.”

Now, don't be afraid, Moses actually isn't going to die until he preaches his last message, and that is encompassed in the book of Deuteronomy. So we got to go through all of the book of Deuteronomy before Moses actually dies. But Deuteronomy is his swan song, which we'll get to here before long.

But I want to just close with some of these interesting thoughts about the man Joshua. It is absolutely no mistake, people, that the man who brings them into the land of promise is the exact same Hebrew name as our Savior. The man who, by his Greek pronunciation, the name is pronounced Jesus.

And it is no, it is, it's no coincidence that these men bear the same name because of what they do and because of the type or the symbol that Joshua is for us of understanding the role that Jesus plays in our life. Joshua is the man who brought the nation of Israel into the promises of God, right?

Remember, Moses represents what? The law. The law cannot bring us into the promises of God. Okay. In other words, legalism will not bring you into the full promises of God. Only the Savior, the one who saves us from our sin, that man Jesus, who is pictured in the man Joshua, is able to bring us into the promises of God and allow us to walk in victory. No matter what we may face there in that land.

Joshua is the picture. He's the picture of our Savior, the picture of the man who brings us in. Because you see, the promised land is a picture of the Christian life, right? The promised land, we have all these beautiful pictures.

Egypt is a picture of bondage to sin. And we are released from our bondage to sin. We go through that baptism of the Red Sea. We enter into that time of learning, which is really the time of learning the law, for that period of time that Israel spent in the wilderness.

We all have to go through that time, those early days of learning and understanding and knowing. But eventually we come to the place of being ready to enter into the promises of God and begin to walk out those promises. And there's wonderful, glorious promises that we have.

But remember, the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The law cannot bring you into the promised land, only Jesus can bring you there. And because He is the Lord's salvation.

And this is that beautiful picture of what it means to walk the Christian life. That's what you and I are doing. We're walking the Christian life. What is the Christian life full of? Trials, battles. I mean, good grief. The nation of Israel no sooner got across the Jordan, here's Jericho, this huge walled city, and they had to face enemies all along the way. And many of those enemies were in their own hearts. They no sooner conquered Jericho and came to Ai, remember? And they fell against the people of Ai because their hearts were wrong. There was greed in the camp.

We find out another instance where what happened on the inside is what caused their downfall. But what do they do? There's a time of repentance. There's a time of getting rid of sin. And then we get back into the battle.

It's a picture. It's a picture. Joshua, the whole Book of Joshua, is a picture of our Christian life and the battles that we deal with. That is one of the reasons why Moses is told, you cannot bring these people into the land. Moses, you are a man of the law, and the law cannot bring people into God's promises, but Yeshua can. (Numbers 20:12)