

**June 8**

**Scriptures:** Read Numbers 33 & 34

**Key Verse:** “When you have crossed the Jordan... you shall drive out all the inhabitants... destroy all their engraved stones... molded images, and... high places.” (Numbers 33:51-52)

### **Overview**

The Lord commanded Moses to write down all the places Israel had set up camp from the time they left Egypt until they entered the Promised Land (attests to the Mosaic authorship, 33:2). There are forty places mentioned, which would mean the average stay at each encampment was one year. The Israelites had been forced to live like nomads even since the time they had rebelled against God (14:33). They had moved from place to place according to the grazing needs of their livestock, the need for water, safety, and the weather conditions.

Most of the new generation would not remember the earlier places of their parent’s wanderings. This list would show them exactly where they had traveled and make their punishment for sin all the more clear. However, it would also show them how God had blessed and sustained them throughout all those years (see Deut.2:7), just as God walks with and sustains His people today. There is no mention of the sins the people had committed at the various places, for the past was to be put behind them, as they were about to enter into a new stage of their history and were to look to the future.

God gave them specific commands for the future conquest of Canaan—a conquest that was by divine appointment and would be brought about by the power of God alone. When they entered the land, they were to completely destroy anything that had to do with the pagan religion of the Canaanites and drive them all out of the land. This was necessary for the spiritual welfare of Israel, for they were weak and had previously fallen easily into idolatry. God warned Israel that if they did not do this, the Canaanites would be a continuous source of Adversity and He would punish them in the same way he had planned for the Canaanites (33:55-56). History shows that Israel failed to heed these warnings and fell into terrible sin for which they were indeed punished, especially with the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. From these warnings, we learn that if the Lord’s people are to remain pure and holy before Him, they must first remove everything from their lives, which does not glorify and please Him.

Chapter 34 continues with further instructions for the future. God shared with Moses the specific borders of the Promised Land. They are given as evidence of His great gift to His people. Their southern border was to be along the land of Edom, from the southern tip of the Dead Sea up to the Mediterranean Sea; on the west, the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea; on the north, the area of the Mount Hermon range; and on the east, the Jordan valley from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea.

We also read here the names of the newly appointed tribal leaders who were to assist Joshua and Eleazar, the priest, in the dividing of the land as the Lord had directed (Josh.15). These were preparatory steps of faith, which showed a trust in God for the preparatory steps of faith, which

showed a trust in God for the successful possession of the land of Canaan. We can observe that among the names listed there is not one which had been mentioned among the first choosing of tribal leaders (ch.1), for all of them had died in the wilderness, nor are any of these a son of a former leader who had led the people in rebellion. Of the former generation, only two had remained faithful, and therefore God raised them to leadership positions: Joshua over all the people and Caleb over the important and large tribe of Judah.

Faithfulness has its rewards, but there is a price to pay for disobedience, and the Israelites paid dearly. Sadly, because of their sin, the full extent of the borders that God had described was never realized, except for a short period of time during the reigns of King David and Solomon.

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your promises to us. Grant that we may not fail in this New Covenant age to meet Your condition for the fulfillment of all Your promises to us.