Explore the Bible Lesson Preview
January 5, 2020
“God Commissions”
Background: Numbers 26:1-30:16
Lesson: Numbers 27:12-23

Motivation: In this study we'll see preparation for transition of leadership and a transition to the Promise Land.

I. Preparing a New Generation (26:1 – 27:11)

A. Transition from Disaster “After the plague” (26:1) HCSB, p. 265, 26:1-2 “The Hebrew Bible includes a half verse at 25:19, after the plague, as a transition. The Baal-peor incident reminded future Israelite generations of the dangers of intermarriage with those from idolatrous backgrounds who might lead the nation into judgment. This incident served as a case study in God's holiness and righteousness; He would allow no other gods to replace Him in the hearts and minds of His people. The rest of 26:1-2 is very similar to God's command in 1:1-2 mandating the first census.”

B. Transition to a New Generation “Take a Census” (26:2)

Before entering the land of promise, God’s people had to “report for duty.” This census began to organize the tribes for war as well as to provide a basis for the division of the land. When compared to the previous census in Numbers 1, the overall number of males of fighting age was similar. Five tribes had decreased (Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Ephraim and Naphtali); seven tribes had grown (Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, and Asher). HCSB, p. 265, 26:5-50

“More than 38 years had passed since the first census, but that first generation, which had seen the miraculous power of God in Egypt and in the wilderness, had rejected God by refusing to
enter the land, and had suffered the consequences. Yet a connection is made with the first generation through genealogical accounting for each of the 12 tribes – beginning with the descendants of **Reuben** – plus the Levites, in a manner not found in chapter 1. Both oral and written genealogies were maintained during this historical period to connect the past with the present, to trace particular lines of development, and to justify claims to inheritance or leadership. Recounting one’s genealogy was commonplace at the dedication of a newborn child or in the crowning of a king.

The tribes of Simeon (declined by 37,100; v. 12) and Naphtali (declined by 8,000; v. 48) had suffered the greatest losses in their militias during the wilderness era, and the tribe of Simeon would eventually dissipate into Judah within whose territory they were given an allotment. Manasseh (increased by 20,500; v. 29), Asher (increased by 11,900; v. 44), and Issachar (increased by 9,900; v. 23) reaped the most significant increases.

Anytime a change is on the horizon, it’s time for God’s people “to stand up and be counted.”

**C. Transition to a New Land (26:51-65)**

1. **Location - HCSB, p. 267, 26:53-56** “In 33:54 instructions are given for deciding the territorial location for each of the tribes in the midst of a warning about potential idolatry. In 34:1-29 the boundaries of the whole inheritance are outlined. The case of Zelophehad’s daughters adds the potential of women’s inheritance to the matter of tribal allocations (26:33; 27:1-11; 36:1-12). The allotment would take into consideration tribal populations and the amount of land within a given region (Jos 17:17-18).”

2. **Lot - HCSB, p. 267, 26:55** “**Divided by lot** refers to a second principle governing land allocation-providential probability as expressed through a game of chance. The Lord was presumed to oversee the casting of the lots, thereby bringing His decision to pass (Pr 16:33). The casting of lots was a common means of determining the will of God. It was used to choose between the two goats on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:8), to divide the spoils of war (Ob 11), and to settle political issues (1 Sm 10:21).”

**D. Transition to New Methods (27:1-11)**
Numbers Lesson 6: “God Commissions”

Written by David Self
Monday, 30 December 2019 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 02 January 2020 19:47

1. **Things Don’t Always Have to Remain the Same** – For centuries the Jewish people had assumed that only sons could inherit. Now five daughters are asking for change. Ralph Neighbor Jr. wrote a book entitled “The Seven Last Words of the church: We’ve Never Done It That Way Before.” Precedent and policy certainly have their place; however, if you do the same things with the same people in the same way, you typically keep getting the same results. Change is a door of opportunity to making things better.

2. **Things Won’t Change Unless You Ask** – Too often we assume that leaders recognize unfairness but want it to stay that way. Two remarkable events take place:

   a. Zelophehad’s daughters break with tradition and go to Moses.

   b. Moses ignores tradition and goes to God. (Matt. 15:1-9) The story is a reminder that we should always be willing to get a fresh word from God; our primary source of guidance is not tradition but is God Almighty.

3. **God is the Champion of the “little guy” “What Zelophehad’s daughters say is correct.**” (7) These daughters were faced with generational as well as gender bias. (Gal. 3:26-29) Yet God is the defender of widows and orphans (Deut. 10:18; James 1:27), of the poor (Prov. 19:17) and of sinners (Rom. 5:8). In God’s kingdom, there are no “little people.” He rewards our dependence upon Him.

II. **Facing Death** (27:12-14)

> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go up this mountain of the Abarim range and see the land that I have given the Israelites. After you have seen it, you will also be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was.

When the community quarreled in the Wilderness of Zin, both of you rebelled against My command to show My holiness in their sight at the waters.” Those were the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.
A. Great Leaders Are Transitory “you will also be gathered to your people. . .” (13) All leaders are temporary. Moses had three careers, each lasting forty years. Now his life has come to an end. No matter how great a leader or how long his/her tenure, that leader will pass, another will take his/her place and God’s work will continue. (Heb. 7:23-25)

Believer’s Study Bible, p. 233

27:12
‘Abarim’ was a mountain range northeast of the Dead Sea (33:47). Pisgah (21:20; 23:14) may have been the name of a ridge in that range of which Nebo (Deut. 3:27; 34:1) was the highest peak. Jebel en-Neba, 2700 feet above sea level, and Ras es Saighah, slightly lower (both possible sites of Mt. Nebo), afford superb views of Canaan. Moses’ punishment is a reminder that even the greatest Christian leaders are not above the requirement of obedience to God.”

B. Great Leaders Must be Trustworthy - God said, “you rebelled against My command to show My holiness…” (14) After all Moses had accomplished, his punishment may seem harsh for a single act of disobedience. However, leadership has a price. “Much will be required of everyone who has been given much.” (Luke 12:48). A senior position of leadership is not a place to abuse trust but to promote trust by accountability, honesty, and genuine integrity. A leader must seek to be the most obedient of all. (Heb. 5:8)

III. Looking to the Future (27:15-17)

“So Moses appealed to the Lord, “May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the community who will go out before them and come back in before them, and who will bring them out and bring them in, so that the Lord’s community won’t be like sheep without a shepherd.”

(27:15-17)

Explore the Bible Commentary (Winter, 2012), p. 122: “Moses prayed for the Lord to provide a leader who would oversee and direct them in all their affairs so that the people of the Lord would not be like sheep which have no shepherd.”
pherd
is one of the three terms used in the Bible to describe the role of the pastor. The other two terms are elder and overseer (bishop) (Acts 20:17, 28). The Hebrew word for shepherd speaks of one who nourishes, guides, and protects a flock. As a shepherd the pastor serves as under shepherd to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd of God's flock. The example of Christ giving His life for the sheep excludes self-promotion among fellow shepherds or exploitation of the sheep.

Oversee
(1 Tim. 3:1) translates a Greek word meaning ‘inspector’ or ‘watchman.’ It implies visiting the flock of God so as to give proper oversight.

Elder
translates Hebrew and English words meaning 'an older person who presides over God’s people.' It implies the maturity needed to be an effective leader." (I Pet. 5:1-9; Ps. 23)

The community of faith has never been a democracy, it is always a theocracy; each believer submits to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In both the Old and New Testaments God used people to provide leadership. When the leaders are bad, God's people suffer (I Kings 16:30-17:1); when the leaders are great, the people prosper (II Samuel 7:16). God's people are responsible for praying for God's leaders. (I Tim. 2:1-10)

IV. God Provides

“The Lord replied to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. 19 Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole community, and commission him in their sight. 20 Confer some of your authority on him so that the entire Israelite community will obey him. 21 He will stand before Eleazar who will consult the Lord for him with the decision of the Urim. He and all the Israelites with him, even the entire community, will go out and come back in at his command.”

Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua, had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire community, 23 laid his hands on him, and commissioned him, as the Lord had spoken through Moses. ”

(27:18-23)
A. Great Leaders Have God-given Traits

1. Spirit-filled “a man who has the Spirit in him” (18) (Eph. 5:18)

2. Servant-hearted “lay your hand on him” Joshua was Moses’ servant (Num. 11:28) and his trusted helper. (Heb. 3:1-6)

3. Submitted “Confer some of your authority on him” (20) This may indicate a gradual transition of authority while Moses still lived or a sharing of leadership with Eleazar.

4. Supported “…will go out and come back at his command.” (21) Great leadership requires great followship. New Testament leaders have similar qualifications. (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim 3:7)

B. Great leaders are God Anointed “laid hands on him” (27:23) HCSB, p.268, 27:22-23 “The formal transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua begins with a statement about Moses faithfully following the Lord's instruction. The ceremony involved the oversight of the high priest Eleazar in the ritual ceremony, accompanied by the laying on of hands in symbolic transfer of blessing and authority. The parallel passage in Dt. 31:1-8, 14-29 highlights the placing of the book of the law next to the ark of the covenant. This emphasized the need for faithfulness to the Lord's commands by the Israelites.”

V. Reminding About Ritual Obligations (28:1 – 30:16)

A. Sacrifice for God (28:1-29:40) God’s people must be willing to engage in sacrificial worship to show their devotion to God. This section repeats some earlier information and details the minimum tributes of worship from the most frequent to the least.
1. **Daily Worship** (28:1-8) Jesus’ example was an early morning quiet time focused on prayer. (Mark 1:35)

2. **Weekly Worship** (28:9-10) In the New Testament where believers gathered on Sunday, we are encouraged to avoid absenteeism. (Heb. 10:25)

3. **Monthly Worship** (28:11-15) Special emphasis requires special attention.

4. **Seasonal Worship** (28:16-29:38) *Believer’s Study Bible*, p. 234: **28:16** “Five yearly feasts are described: Passover and Unleavened Bread (28:16-25), Weeks (28:26-31), Trumpets (29:1-6), Day of Atonement (29:7-11), and Tabernacles (29:12-38). See chart, ‘The Feasts of the Lord’ in Exodus. There had only been two Passovers at this time. The third would be celebrated after entering Canaan (cf. Jos. 5:2, 3).”

5. **Spontaneous Worship** (29:39) “in addition to your vow and freewill offerings.”

**B. Commitments to God** (30:1-16) Throughout scripture God encourages his people to make public commitments (vows) to Him. We are most familiar with wedding vows and commitments to Christ for salvation. However, a relevant, Biblical community of Believers should have commitments involving evangelism, worship, service, discipleship and stewardship. We should not be ashamed of making public, lasting commitments to our Lord.

*Believer’s Study Bible*, p. 236:

**30:2**

“This chapter on vows elaborates on the voluntary and spontaneous worship of the Lord mentioned in 29:39 (cf. Acts 18:18; 21:23), and supplements instructions on vows given elsewhere (Lev. 27:28, 29; Num. 6:1-21; Deut. 23:21-23). This passage concerns vows made by women. The vow of Hannah is an example (1 Sam. 1:9-11). Vows could be positive, promising to give something to the Lord, or negative, promising to abstain from something. Three significant implications of this chapter are that:

1. Vows to the Lord were not to be taken lightly, and so were not to be made rashly.
(Judges 11:28-39)

2. Women as well as men were involved in individual worship in Israel.

3. A woman in Israel was under the spiritual authority of her father while at home (vv. 3-5) or her husband if she had one (vv. 6-8, 10-15; cf. I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-31). The husband could nullify the vow of his betrothed wife at the time it was made. If he accepted her vow, it remained in force. This could be done even before their marriage was consummated. This is further confirmation of God’s providential care within the spiritual guidelines He established for the home, i.e., the responsibility of the husband and trust of the wife (cf. Gen. 2:15-17).

Application

1. Leadership is always temporary; authority comes from the Lord.

2. Disobedience requires judgement.

3. God can provide a preferable future if we follow His commands.

Item 14: Handout: Priests of Israel

Biblical Illustrator p. 79 “Eleazar: High Priest of Israel”
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Notes: **You may access David’s Lesson Preview in MP3 format at: www.hfbcbiblestudy.org

Dates: 2020: 1/1 – New Year’s Day – offices closed; 1/6-9 – Daniel Fast; 1/15 – Midlink preview;
1/17-19
LIFT Weekend;
1/22
– Midlink 1 thru 2/26;
1/26
– Fitness EXPO;
1/31
– Midnight Madness;
2/7
– Night to Shine;
2/9
– First Camp;
2/14-15
– Superstart Preteen Conf.;
2/16
– MIYCO;
2/21
– Marriage Matters;
2/23
– Parent Commitment;
2/29
– Senior Adult Rodeo Hoedown;
3/7
– Men’s Conf. Iron Sharpens Iron;
3/7-19
– RUSHMORE.