

Having said this, Balaam then quickly states that the conquering nation will itself come to destruction, perishing forever. It is the closing note in the oracle. As he finished, Balaam left the scene of his utterance, as did Balak.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

450. What was the visible symbol of Balak's anger against Balaam, and what other sentiments might it have expressed?
451. Show the final tactic used by Balak as he attempts to influence the prophecy.
452. In what sense was Balaam doing a favor to the king when he refused to curse Israel?
453. Since Balak is only concerned about his own circumstances and his own day, why would these numerous futuristic prophecies interest him?
454. Describe the methods named by Balaam to explain by what contacts God made His revelations to the prophet.
455. Why would it have been impossible for Balaam to have guessed at the facts contained in his prophecies?
456. Identify the two symbols of Balaam by which he refers to the coming Messianic kingdom.
457. Name the countries and people included in Balaam's words and relate what is said of each of them. What historical details are available to us to confirm the words of these prophecies.
458. What primary lessons should Balak have learned from all of these messages? Did he take advantage of these insights?

II. IN MOAB (25:1-27:23)

A. GRAVE SINS WITH THE MOABITES (25:1-9)

TEXT

Chapter 25:1. And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people

began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. 4. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. 5. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

6. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up 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 belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. 9. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:1. While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab. 2. They called the people to sacrifice to their gods, and the people ate, and bowed down unto their gods. 3. In this way Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. 4. And the Lord said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them in the sun before the Lord, in order that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned from Israel." 5. And Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each one of you is to kill his men who have yoked themselves to Baal-Peor."

6. And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the very sight of Moses and of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, who were weeping in front of the door of the Tent of Meeting. 7. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the

priest, saw this, he arose and left the congregation, and took a spear in his hand. 8. and went after the man of Israel, into the chamber, and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman, through her belly. And the plague was stopped from the children of Israel. 9. But those who had died from the plague numbered twenty-four thousand.

COMMENTARY

The harsh life Israel has led for nearly forty years is now drawing to its close. They are stationed in the final encampment before launching on the last leg of their long trip—into the Promised Land itself. This camp is at Shittim (“the acacia trees”), which lies directly opposite Jericho, approximately equidistant on the east side of the river. Throughout their time in the wilderness, God had proved His faithfulness in every respect. We would expect the people to be living in a thrilling anticipation of the new life before them. The incidents related in the opening verses of chapter 25 must have occurred as the people relaxed their guard prior to their push. Living near the Moabites, they observe the immoral religious rituals of these people at first hand, and yield to the seductions of the Moabite women. They join in the sacrificial festival of Baal-peor, who is believed to be the same as Chemosh, the Moabites’ national god. Along with the lustful conduct, gluttony was practiced by the defectors, who have been living on manna for forty years.

God’s anger rose high over the conduct of His people. Their complaints, criticisms, faithlessness and gross misconduct lead us to marvel at His patience. A time must certainly come, however, when divine mercy is inappropriate. The Lord summoned Moses and instructed him to kill the guilty sinners, especially their chiefs, who should have led the resistance to such a misadventure rather than becoming a part of it. The penalty was severe in proportion to the seriousness of their dereliction of duty. Divine justice has always held a special responsibility for those in special positions, and to impress the people with the gravity of the situation, the bodies of the chiefs are impaled in the open camp after having been first put to

death. The properly appointed leaders of the people, their judges, are then commanded to put to death every man who had defected to the worship of Baal-peor.

At this point the account takes a turn which has been variously understood. Some (as *IB* and *ICC*) believe the incidents of verses 1-5 and 6-9 are totally unrelated and incomplete, as the products of various writers which have been illogically combined. *IB* says the accounts are "from JE and P respectively, . . . the first, featuring Moabite women, lacks an ending; the second, introducing Midianite women, has no beginning," (p. 263). The judgment is unfair and inaccurate. Both stories are complete in themselves. The first ends quite appropriately with the sentence pronounced upon the adulterous miscreants. It is by no means a strain upon the text to have introduced at this point the appearance of yet another influence—that of the Midianite woman—contributing to the evidence of deteriorating and blatant immorality among the Israelites. Even at the moment, the camp is under the pall of the sentence of the judges, and an aggressive Simeonite named Zimri introduces the daughter of a Midianite chief into the very central presence of Moses and the congregation, obviously for immoral purposes. The effrontery is revolting to good taste and common decency, but seems to be typical of the attitude of the camp's more gross people.

By contrast with the licentious members of the nation, many Israelites are participating in a period of mourning because of the provocation against the Lord. The plague, which soon would claim 24,000 lives (v. 9), visited those insensitive and disobedient ones who had flaunted the laws of God. The sin of Zimri is no more grave than those of the other Israelites—it is, however, more blatant and defiant and depicts a highly degenerative spiritual attitude. The quick action of Phinehas in slaying Zimri without waiting for a called assembly to stone the man is clearly defensible. The account makes it logical to infer that the sinning couple were slain in the very act of adultery, within the tent of their deed. Obviously the attitude of Zimri was known to the people generally, and word had been carried

to the young priest; his response was essential to the best welfare of the entire camp. The punishment enacted upon the two, as well as the fulfillment of the instructions previously given to the chiefs, stayed the plague after it had exacted a bitter toll. Rabbinical tradition must be the source of Paul's statement (I Cor. 10:8) that the deaths occurred on one day, since this book and no other in the Old Testament states the fact; and the Apostle also gives a figure of 23,000 which, according to the same rabbinical source, is the number of those who were victims of the plague itself, whereas the additional 1,000 were hanged (see *KD*, p. 206).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

459. Where is Shittim?
460. Using a reliable Bible dictionary or reference book, read up on the ritualistic orgies which accompanied the worship of Baal-peor. Show how the Israelites who participated in such practices were in violation of various units of the Ten Commandments.
461. Did the first overture in the incidents of this portion of Scripture originate with the Israelite men or with the Moabite women? Can you give any reason for your answer?
462. What part did gluttony play in the series of events?
463. Why was the punishment of the sinning people left in the hands of the chiefs?
464. For what purpose were their bodies put on public display?
465. How are the two incidents in this section substantially related? Why do some commentators attempt to separate them? Do you consider them complete units or only fragments? Why?
466. Since the Moabites are the neighboring people at this time, how does a Midianite woman become involved?
467. What factors make the sin of Zimri especially obnoxious?

468. Why were the people weeping at the time?
 469. Can you justify the quick and decisive actions of Phinehas?
 470. What relationship is there between the actions of Phinehas and the arrested plague?
 471. How can the figure given in verse 9 be reconciled to the Apostle Paul's words in I Cor. 10:8?

B. COMMENDATION OF PHINEHAS vv. 10-15

TEXT

Chapter 25:10. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 11. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: 13. And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. 14. Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites. 15. And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:10. Then the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, 11. "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my anger from the people of Israel in that he was zealous for my sake, so that I have not consumed the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12. Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him my promise of peace: 13. and it shall be to him, and to his descendants after him, the promise of a perpetual priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the people of Israel.' " 14. Now the name of the man of Israel who was killed with the Midianite woman was Zimri, the son of

Salu, a prince 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, who was the head of the people of a father's house in Midian.

COMMENTARY

Whatever the present-day reaction of self-appointed critics may be to the immediate and decisive actions of Phinehas, the Scriptures leave no doubt about the mind of God in the affair. His full endorsement and reassuring words of commendation mean far more than the piddling comments of those who would set their own criteria for Divine conduct. He not only approves of Phinehas' deed; He uses it as the basis for asserting the selection of the Aaronic lineage for the high priesthood through the grandson of the initial high priest. His zeal was spontaneous, and in rigid defense of the order God wished among His people. The Lord credits him with having turned away His wrath from the people—no small accomplishment.

The pledge made to Phinehas established an eternal priesthood for himself and his descendants irrevocably. The lineage remained in this position until the time of the Herodians, with the brief exception of a temporary interruption during the days of Eli (see I Sam. 1-3; 14:3).

Both Zimri and Cozbi were individuals of prominent families and high stations in life. They may have felt, therefore, that they were above condemnation or criticism. This fact would have made many of the people reluctant to report their odious conduct, for fear of reprisal from the other members of the families. When such an attitude permeates those of noble position, and their conduct is either tolerated or unrebuked, we may well expect such results as are found in this incident. But God is no respecter of persons, and it was unthinkable that He should let the guilty pair escape unpunished. The arm of His vindication reached out through Phinehas.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

472. How does God's evaluation of the act of Phinehas differ

from that of the self-appointed critics’?

473. How could the act of a single man turn away the wrath of God from an entire nation?
474. Explain the use of the word “jealousy” in reference to the attitude of God toward Israel (see also Ex. 20:5).
475. Precisely what did God promise to Phinehas in recognition of his act?
476. How long did this promise actually last?
477. Does God expect more of those who hold important stations in life than from the common people? Defend your answer.

C. JEHOVAH DENOUNCES THE MIDIANITES vv. 16-18

TEXT

Chapter 25:16. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 17. Vex the Midianites, and smite them: 18. For they vex with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor’s sake.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:16. And the Lord said unto Moses, 17. “Vex the Midianites and strike them. 18. They have harassed you with their wives, with which they have enticed you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the prince of Midian and their sister, who was slain on the day of the plague because of Peor.”

COMMENTARY

Quite properly, *PC* reminds the reader that, while the account of defection begins with the Moabites, it concludes with the Midianites because the sin of the women of the latter nation were studied and deliberate. The women of Moab, on the other hand, were but indulging in their personal passions. It is

further suggested that the Moabites were not acting upon advice of Balaam, as were the Midianites, in a "plot to entangle the Israelites in heathen rites and heathen sins which would alienate them from the favour of God," (p. 344).

The text quite certainly suggests that the Midianite women had acted deliberately and craftily. Later Scripture (31:16) names this motive and incriminates Balaam. When God instructs Moses to "Vex" the Midianites, the command is made very emphatic by repetition. The account will proceed quickly to the military census, taken as an initial step in preparation for moving against the Midianites in battle (see 31:5). It is a logical inference that the actions of Zimri and Cozbi were not isolated, but may have been common among the Israelites as they were lured by the women of Midian. We see the culmination, then, of the invidious plot of these enemies of God's people.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

478. Explain why God sentences Midian to a sad end, but says nothing comparable to Moab.
479. How severe is the punishment expressed for Midian? How is the severity emphasized?
480. Explain what part Balaam played in the actions of the Midianite women.
481. What immediate steps are taken to prepare for the actions of vengeance against the Midianites?

D. THE SECOND CENSUS (26:1-51)

TEXT

Chapter 26:1. And it came to pass after the plague, that the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2. Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel. 3. And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, 4. Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as the

Lord commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

5. Reuben, the eldest son of Israel; the children of Reuben; Hanoch, of whom cometh 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: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty. 8. And the sons of Pallu; Eliab. 9. And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the Lord: 10. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. 11. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.

12. The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites: 13. Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14. These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.

15. The children of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites: of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites: 16. Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites: 17. Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18. These are the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred.

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 after their families were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites. 21. And the sons of Pharez 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 that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

23. Of the sons of Issachar after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites: 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 that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.

26. Of the sons of Zebulun after their families: 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 that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred.

28. The sons of Joseph after their families were Manasseh and Ephraim. 29. Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites. 30. These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites: 31. And of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites: 32. And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and of Hopher, the family of the Hopherites.

33. And Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 34. These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand seven hundred.

35. These are the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Becher, 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 that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph after their families.

38. The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites: 39. Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40. And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites: and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41. These are the sons of Benjamin after their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred.

42. These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan after their families. 43. All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred.

44. Of the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Berites. 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 Sarah. 47. These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them; who were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

48. Of the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, 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 they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and four hundred. 51. These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:1. Then it happened after the plague that the Lord spoke to Moses and to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2. "Count all the assembly of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and up, according to 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 at Jericho, saying, 4. "Count the people from twenty years old and up, just as the Lord has commanded Moses." Now the sons of Israel who had come forth from the land of Egypt were:

5. Reuben, the oldest son of Israel; the children of Reuben: Hanokh, the family of the Hamochites; 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, and those who were counted of them were 43,730. 8. And the sons of Pallu: Eliab. 9. And the sons of Eliab: Nemuel and Dathan and Abiram. This is the Dathan and Abiram who were called by 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 along with Korah when that company died; and at that time the fire devoured 250 men; and they became a symbol. 11. But the sons of Korah did not die.

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

15. The sons of Gad according to their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of Shunites; 16. of Ozni, the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; 17. of Arod, 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 counted of them, 40,500.

19. The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; but 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 Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Perezites; of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites. 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 counted of them, 76,500.

23. The sons of Issachar according to their families: of Tola, the family of the Talaites; of Puvah, the family of the Punites; 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 counted of them, 64,300.

26. The sons of Zebulun according to their families: of Sered, the family of the Seredites; 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 counted of them, 60,500.

28. The sons of Joseph according to their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. 29. The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir became the father of Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. 30. These are the sons of Gilead: of Iezer, the family of the Iezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites; 31. and of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; 32. and of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; and of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites.

33. Now Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but only 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 counted of them were 52,700.

35. These are the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthelaites; of Becher, the family of the Becherites; 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 counted of them, 32,500. These are the sons of Joseph according to their families.

38. The sons of Benjamin according to their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the

Ashbelites; of Ahiham, the family of the Ahihamites; 39. of Shephupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40. And the sons of Bela were Ard 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 counted of them were 45,600.

42. These are the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham, 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 counted of them, were 64,400.

44. The sons of Asher according to their families: of Imnah, the family of the Imnites: of Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the family of the Berites. 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 counted of them 53,400.

48. The sons of Naphtali according to their families: of Jahzeel, 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 counted of them were 45,400. 51. These are those who were counted of the sons of Israel, 601,730.

COMMENTARY

The census taken just before Israel made final preparations to enter into Canaan served two purposes: they were mustered for battle against the Midianites, and they are counted in preparation for the proper division of tribal inheritances in the new land. Only 12,000 men were actually involved in the battle with Midian (31:5); the entire nation was involved in the land division.

As might be expected, some of the tribes suffered decreases

during the arduous travels in the wilderness, whereas others increased. The seven which increased were Judah (up by 1,900); Issachar (9,900); Zebulun (e, 100); Joseph's sons (total increase of 2,500, although Ephraim had lost 8,000); Benjamin (10,200); Dan (700); and Asher (11,900). The five suffering losses were Gad (down by 6,150); Ephraim (as mentioned, 8,000); Naphtali, (8,000); Simeon (a phenomenal drop of 37,100); and, Reuben, (2,770). The grand total of 601,730 counted represents a slight loss of 1,820—a remarkable fact in considering that all of those over twenty years of age at the time of the exodus are now dead, and that they had endured such a rigorous life in the rugged terrain through which they had come. It is evident that the hand of God had led and blessed them in a marvelous way.

The original manner of counting, including the same formula used in the first census, is preserved. The order is alike excepting for the reversal of positions between Ephraim and Manasseh. Since Aaron is now dead, his son Eleazar works together with Moses in this endeavor.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

482. Where was the final census of Israel taken?
483. For what two purposes did the Lord order the census?
484. Compile parallel lists of the first and second countings of the people of Israel, showing the gain or loss of each tribe.
485. Outline the standard formula used to report the count for all the tribes and families.

E. INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAND ALLOTMENT vv. 52-56

TEXT

Chapter 26:52. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 53. Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. 54. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less

inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. 55. Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. 56. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:52. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Among these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the census of names. 54. To the larger number you shall give the larger inheritance; to the smaller number you shall give the smaller inheritance; each shall have his inheritance according to those who were counted of him. 55. But the land shall be divided by lot. They shall receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56. According to their selection by lot, their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller.

COMMENTARY

Two factors figure in the division of the land to the tribes: the size of each tribe is to be considered; the actual area specified for each will be established by casting lots. *IC* summarily pronounces the principles "clear but contradictory"; *ICC* reports "the meaning is not quite clear how these two in themselves irreconcilable principles are both to be respected in the division is not said"; *PC* reports the second order (division by lot) "can only be reconciled with the preceding order by assuming that the lot was to determine the situation of the territory, the actual boundaries being left to the discretion of the rulers." Only *KD*, of the sources cited, makes a genuine attempt to reconcile the methods: "In vv. 53, 54, the command is given to distribute the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes ('unto these'), according to the number of the names (chap. i. 2-18), i. e., of the persons counted by name in each of their families. To a numerous tribe they were to make the inheritance great; to the littleness, i. e., to the tribes and

families that contained only a few persons, they were to make it small . . . In vv. 55, 56, it is still further commanded that the distribution should take place by lot The meaning of these words can only be, that every tribe was to receive a province of its own for an inheritance, which should be called by its name for ever. The other regulation in v. 56, '*according to the measure of the lot shall its inheritance* (the inheritance of every tribe) *be divided between the numerous and the small* (tribe),' is no doubt to be understood as signifying, that in the division of the tribe territories, according to the comparative sizes of the different tribes, they were to adhere to that portion of land which fell to every tribe in the casting of the lots. The magnitude and limits of the possessions of the different tribes could not be determined by the lot according to the magnitude of the tribes themselves: all that could possibly be determined was the situation to be occupied by the tribe The lot was to determine the portion of every tribe, not merely to prevent all occasion for dissatisfaction and complaining, but in order that every tribe might receive with gratitude the possession that fell to its lot as the inheritance assigned it by God, the result of the lot being regarded by almost all nations as determined by God Himself (cf. Prov. xvi. 33, xviii, 18)," (pp. 210, 211).

Because the precise boundaries used in the actual division of the tribal inheritances cannot be established, we can make but a general observation: the inheritances did not follow a rigid formula by which the most populous tribes received the greatest areas from largest to smallest; however, there is a general relationship between the two factors. Manasseh and Ephraim together, as sons of Joseph, constituted by far the largest descendants of any single son of Jacob, and received easily the greatest area of land. Judah, next largest tribe, received the second largest portion. This is an especially significant fact because of the prominent role Judah was destined to play in the unfolding history of God's people. The land itself was well situated and productive. Excepting for the Jeshimon, it was totally habitable. It was an ideal portion within which the longest-faithful portion of the people could live to greatest

advantage for the longest period of time. Such a fact cannot be overlooked when one considers the guiding hand of God in the lot distribution. The exact extent of other territories pales into unimportance, then, after this established fact: and further inquiry about the significance of the size of any particular portion is almost without meaning. Perhaps the most important point of all is that God guided the distribution of all the portions so that every tribe had as much as it needed, and more than it ever used to fullest advantage either materially or spiritually.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

486. Look up data on the various methods used to determine decisions by means of casting lots.
487. Why would it be important for the land to be divided in relationship to the sizes of the various tribes?
488. Reconcile the two methods given in this portion of Scripture: how could they both be used in the land distribution?
489. To what extent did the actual land distribution relate to the size of the individual tribes?
490. What important facts emerge when we look at the ultimate results of the land allotment?

F. CENSUS OF THE LEVITES vv. 57-65

TEXT

Chapter 26:57. And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 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, the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begat Amram. 59. And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram, Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their

sister. 60. And unto Aaron was born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61. And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the Lord. 62. And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

63. These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho. 64. But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, 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. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26: 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. 58. These are the families of Levi: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korahites. And Kohath became the father of Amram. 59. And 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 their sister, Miriam. 60. And to Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61. But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord. 62. And those who were counted of them were 23,000 every male from one month of age and up, for they were not counted among the sons of Israel, since no inheritance was given them among the sons of Israel.

63. These are those who were counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who counted the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. 64. But among those there was not a

man of those who were counted by Moses and Aaron the priest who counted the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, 65. for the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And not a man was left of them, excepting Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

COMMENTARY

We have here an incomplete listing of the Levitical families. The purpose of the abbreviated passage seems to be concentrated on establishing the descent of Moses, Aaron and Miriam rather than all the families of Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The counting was complete, of course, when originally done, and shows that the Levites had increased by one thousand. Once more, their numbering began with sons at one month of age.

No general land allotment was awarded later to the Levites. Instead, they received forty-eight cities distributed throughout the land (see 35:1-8 and Joshua 21), in order that they might serve all of the people.

The genealogical chart here is much abbreviated, since Jochebed could not have been the daughter of Levi himself. The word "daughter" is properly understood to mean she was a direct female descendant; the number of generations intervening would be irrelevant. Jochebed here becomes one of a select few women who figure prominently in any Biblical genealogy. No doubt the most prominent names to be found in such lists would be those of Rahab and Ruth, listed in Matthew's chart of Jesus Christ's ancestors (1:5). Matthew also gives Tamar, who bore Phares and Zara to Judah (1:3); he alludes to "her that had been the wife of Urias" (Bathsheba, 1:6) as well. But the appearance of any feminine name in genealogical listings among the Jews was rare enough to be notable, and places Jochebed in perspective as the great woman she must have been.

Our attention is called appropriately to the fact that among all those counted in the second census, "there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered," with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, since all those above twenty

years of age at the time of the first census were now dead, (cf. 14:23, 28-30).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

491. Are there good reasons for omitting many names of the sons of Levi and their descendants?
492. What difference was there in the total number of Levites since the first census?
493. Why is it impossible that Jochebed might have been the daughter of Levi?
494. How are we to understand the use of the word "daughter" here?
495. Why are there so few names of women given in the genealogical lists of the Israelites? Find as many examples as you can.
496. How many Israelites were counted in the second census who had been tallied in the first? Who were they?

G. THE PLEA OF ZELOPHEHAD'S DAUGHTERS, AND GOD'S ANSWER (27:1-11)

TEXT

Chapter 27:1. Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. 2. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 3. Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons. 4. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. 5. And Moses brought their cause before the Lord.

6. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 7. The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. 8. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. 9. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. 10. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. 11. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the Lord commanded Moses.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:1. Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these are the names of the daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. 2. And they stood before Moses and Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the assembly, at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting, saying, 3. "Our father died in the wilderness, although he was not in the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin, and had no sons. 4. Why should the name of our father be lost to his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among the brothers of our father. 5. And Moses brought their case before the Lord.

6. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 7. "The daughters of Zelophehad speak properly. You shall surely give them a possession as an inheritance among the brothers of their father, and you shall transfer their father's inheritance to them. 8. "Also, you shall speak to the children of Israel and say, 'If a man dies having no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. 9. 'And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10. "And 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 his nearest relative in his own family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be a law of judgment to the children of Israel, just as the Lord commanded Moses.' "

COMMENTARY

A very real problem presents itself in the situation before us. Zelophehad died without male issue, which would have ended the chain of inheritance to his family. What should be done? Ought the situation end here, and the land be divided otherwise among near relatives? Was there some method by which the family name and inheritance could be preserved? Only God could give an adequate answer, so He is consulted via Moses. The five daughters of Zelophehad petition to have the land given them rather than have it lost to the family, and God honors their request.

In other nations in the ancient world, women seldom had any rights of inheritance: but it would not be so among God's people, if there were no male heir. Presumably, the women married and, upon so doing, they lost their original family identity; their children inherited from the father's household. But in this instance, with no brothers to preserve their father's name and estate, the daughters accept both the inheritance and the responsibilities which accompany the inheritance; clearly, the first-born son of the oldest will establish the primary line of lineage. The law would secure the ancient principle: land is not to be permanently given up by that family to which it has been allocated.

Would the decision have been different if Zelophehad had been involved in the extraordinary sins and rebellious conduct for which severe punishment had been meted out? We have only inferences to draw from silence, but the fact is that there is no record of an inheritance which was ever denied to the child of a rebellious father on this basis alone. God's judgment upon the offending Israelites had already been pronounced and exacted: they would die outside of the Promised Land. The situation and

decision anticipate the immediate future, when Israel will actually occupy the land toward which they have been led.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

497. Why should there have been any question whether or not Zelophehad's daughters might inherit their father's land?
498. Is it important that Zelophehad had not been among those who had rebelled against the Lord?
499. Show what the consequences would have been if the inheritance had not been passed through the daughters.
500. In what manner was Zelophehad's name to have been preserved?
501. Why is it relevant to settle this question even before the Israelites had entered into the land of Canaan?
502. Can you think of any nation or circumstances where the details of inheritance resemble those given in God's instructions to Moses?

H. MOSES TO VIEW THE LAND OF PROMISE vv. 12-14

TEXT

Chapter 27:12. The Lord said to Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. 14. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:12. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go up to this mountain Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. 13. And when you have seen it, you shall also be gathered unto your people, as Aaron your brother was; 14. for you rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin,

in the strife of the assembly, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is, the waters of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin."

COMMENTARY

The Abarim, "those on the other side," are mountains east of the Jordan near the northern tip of the Dead Sea. Moses was led here for the purpose of examining the land into which the people, but not he, would enter. The peak from which Moses looked is referred to as Pisgah or Nebo (21:20, and Deut. 34:1ff.). From any of several such peaks in the area—and the exact identification of the individual peak is impossible—a commanding view may be had of the Jordan valley to the north, of the depression and environment of the Dead Sea to the south, and across the Jordan into the Judean hills.

Because of his part in the sin at Kadesh (here called a rebellion), Moses will not be permitted to cross the Jordan. He had been previously informed of this judgment (20:12); it is here reaffirmed. God's authority and integrity must stand, therefore the punishment could not have been rescinded. Whereas we might wish some concession to have been made to Moses because of his greatness, or his usually adamant resistance to evil and to the enemies of God, or his splendid and heart-warming intercessory prayers for the people, the view is quite different from God's perspective: as leader of the people he had a primary obligation to adhere rigidly to the divine instructions under all circumstances, and punishment must be sure, fair and consistent upon the occasion of his disobedience. God could do nothing other than that which He did and be fair.

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

503. Identify "Abarim." Why was this an ideal point from which Moses could view the Promised Land?
504. In what sense could Moses' actions at Meribah be called a rebellion?
505. Explain why God did not revoke the punishment He had previously announced for Moses.

506. Is it fair that a special weight should be attached to the sin of Moses?

I. JOSHUA APPOINTED TO SUCCEED MOSES vv. 15-23

TEXT

Chapter 27:15. And Moses spoke unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17. Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in: that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

18. And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; 19. And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. 20. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. 22. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: 23. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:15. Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 16. "May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17. who may go out before them and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; in this way the congregation of the Lord will not be as sheep which have no shepherd."

18. So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him;

19. and have him stand before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and charge him in their sight. 20. And you shall invest him with some of your authority, so that all the congregation of Israel may be obedient unto him. 21. Furthermore, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall seek counsel for him according to the judgment of Urim before the Lord. Upon his word they shall go out, and upon his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation." 22. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the assembly. 23. Then he placed his hands upon him and gave him the charge, as the Lord commanded through Moses.

COMMENTARY

In what we must consider a typical action, Moses shows more concern for the children of Israel than for his own welfare. He knows that his time on earth is very limited, and that he cannot lead his people across the Jordan. He knows also that they must not be left without competent leadership; so, without so much as a word to gainsay the verdict of God, he makes the simple request that a man be appointed by God as his successor. This is no small request. Moses has established such an imposing image of capable leadership that any man must suffer by comparison. It is also in Moses' favor that he does not ask for the privilege of naming this man, or that he does not claim the position for his descendants by right of birth alone. God only can capably fill the position, and Moses will not interfere; it is a lesson God had to teach Samuel by direct revelation (see I Sam. 16:6ff.). The next leader of Israel must handle the rigorous demands of daily business; he must be a military man to lead in driving out the Canaanites; he must be a man of great spiritual depth and intensity to stabilize a fickle people; he must be a patient man to endure their gainsaying and criticism; he must be a respectable man whose word they can believe and follow; he must be a man of moral integrity to set a proper example and to administer justice to those whose lives

would seriously defy the righteous standards of God; he must be a meek man whose head will not be turned by the honor given him in his position; he must be courageous to resist the taunts and opposition of the enemy, as well as the indifference and grumbling of his own people. In short, he must be a man very much like Moses himself. Moses certainly would not have said it, but the circumstances and the facts require it.

God does not hesitate in rendering His decision: the man is Joshua. The son of Nun was a man filled with God's own Spirit (v. 18), who had proved himself again and again under a variety of extreme circumstances. The choice is logical, and fully justified by history. Caleb, who might also have been considered for the position, is much less well known to us through the pages of Scripture, which may indicate lesser ability in some area, or lesser strength of character. But the choice cannot be criticized.

The laying on of hands in Scripture indicates the transfer of power inherent in an office being assumed. For his special work, Joshua will need a special dispensation of God's grace. While Moses could not and did not transfer all of his traits or powers to Joshua, he is to command the respect and obedience of the people as Moses had. The ceremony doubtless was done publicly to let everyone know of the transfer.

An essential difference between Moses and Joshua emerges when Joshua is told to stand before Eleazar in order to seek counsel in his work. Moses was of the priestly line himself, and stood above all priests, not excluding Aaron himself. Joshua's leadership is civil and military, and he is under the religious heads of the nation just as any other individual was. Joshua was not a lawgiver: he was under the Law and its primary executives, the priests.

In serious national matters Eleazar himself was obligated to approach the Lord in behalf of Joshua via the Urim. While there is much we do not know of the Urim and the companion Thummim, they were uniquely worn and used by the high priest to determine the counsel of Jehovah for His people in

matters of grave nature. These “lights and perfections” were stones of various kinds, set in the breastplate when the high priest entered into the divine Presence for the specific purpose of gaining God’s decision when it was required, (see Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8).

QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH ITEMS

507. Show how Moses’ conduct at this time reflects his great stature of spirit.
508. Why should the place of leadership of the people not be left to ancestral descent? to the choice of the people? to Moses himself?
509. List the singular qualifications which Joshua possessed for the office to which God chose him.
510. What special duties would fall to Moses’ successor? With what we have already learned of Joshua, which of these duties seem appropriate to him?
511. What significance is attached to the “laying on of hands” here?
512. Why was this done publicly?
513. Is there significance in asking Joshua to come before Eleazar? Explain your answer.
514. Explain the Urim and Thummim. How do they relate to Joshua?

III. REVIEW AND ADDITIONS TO THE LAW

(28:1—30:16)

A. THE DAILY OFFERINGS vv. 1-8

TEXT

Chapter 28:1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savor unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. 3. And thou shalt say unto them, This is the