

מִסְעֵי

Masei

(journeys)

Bemidbar [Numbers] 33:1-36:13

The Journeys of Israel

Bemidbar [Numbers] 33:1-2

1 These are the journeys of the children of Israel, when they went forth out of the land of Egypt by their hosts under the hand of Moshe and Aharon.

2 And Moshe wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of YHWH; and these are their journeys according to their goings out.

We see here that YHWH commanded Moshe to keep a careful record of when the Nation of Israel set out from camp and when they camped. From the way that these verses are worded, it seems that Moshe did this very thing. When they set out from a place, he recorded, "And they journeyed from" Then, when they got to where they were going, again he recorded, "and camped at" Moshe did this each time.

Basically, what we have recorded in this chapter is a running record of the journeys and encampments of the nation of Israel as YHWH led them in the wilderness. In all, there are listed forty-two encampments in the wilderness. This reminds us very much of other passages in Scripture that speak of forty-two months. Scripture speaks of a future time of being under persecution (a type of wilderness) for forty-two months.

Gilyana [Revelation] 11:2

And the court which is outside the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it has been given to the nations; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Here Yochanan is given instructions to measure the temple and then he is told that Jerusalem, the holy city, shall be trampled by non-Israelites for forty-two months.

Gilyana [Revelation] 13:5

and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months.

In this passage we are told that the beast which rises up out of the sea will be given his authority for only a period of forty-two months, or three and one half years. During that time

he will make war with those who call upon the name of YHWH and believe upon Yeshua as Mashiach.

The forty-two encampments of Israel in the wilderness can be divided as follows:

- 1 – 14 encampments were before the incident with the spies;
- 15 – 34 encampments were the wanderings;
- 35 – 42 encampments were in the fortieth year of their wanderings.

It should be noted that in verse 18 “Kadesh” is called “Ritmah”, where the incident of the spies took place.

What the above list shows to us is that there were only 20 encampments during their 37 years of wilderness wanderings, indicating that they actually had some extended periods of rest while their punishment ran its course.

Even though this generation had sinned and their punishment was that they would be excluded from entering His Land, they were still His people. He still led them throughout their journeys by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. In much the same way, the northern kingdom of Israel and their descendants have always been His people, even though many of them did not serve Him directly. He has led them throughout the ages by His Spirit in much the same way that He did in the first exodus with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire.

YHWH’s Instructions for Entering His Land

Bemidbar [Numbers] 33:50-53

50 And YHWH spoke to Moshe in the plains of Mo’av by the Yarden (Jordan) at Yericho (Jericho), saying,

51 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘When you pass over the Yarden into the land of Cana’an,

52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured (stones), and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places;

53 and you shall occupy the land, and dwell therein; for to you have I given the land to occupy it.”

These instructions from YHWH are very straightforward. They would be difficult to misunderstand. He expects those assigned to enter His Land and occupy it, to cleanse it of all those things that are against His Torah. In particular, He mentions those things are dealing with false worship. All such things that are not specifically commanded in Torah are to be destroyed and removed from His Land.

It would seem wise to us, that we should likewise get rid of all those things in our lives today that are somehow tied with false worship. If we do not, we can fully expect to suffer the consequences of such actions, as having a part of our lives, things that pertain to false worship.

The penalty for not doing this is removal from His Land as we see above and below in verse 56.

How the Land is to be Divided

Bemidbar [Numbers] 33:54

54 "And you shall divide the land by lot according to your families; to the more you shall give the more division, and to the fewer you shall give the less division; whatsoever the lot falls to any man, that shall be his; according to the tribes of your fathers shall you divide."

Basically, the larger the tribe, the larger piece of Land they were to occupy. YHWH is very fair and equitable in parceling out His land to His people for them to steward it for Him.

The Penalty for Not Following YHWH's Instructions

Bemidbar [Numbers] 33:55-56

55 "But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then shall those that you let remain of them be as pricks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you in the land wherein you dwell.

56 And it shall come to pass, that, as I thought to do to them, so will I do to you."

If Israel fails to completely obey YHWH's instructions in driving out all of the current inhabitants from His Land, then those they fail to drive out will become a problem to Israel. Worse still, YHWH will then do to Israel as He commanded to be done to those who were to be driven out of the Land. He would drive Israel out of His Land for failure to keep His Commandments (Torah); for they would be no better than those already in His Land, in that were not listening to His Voice and keeping His Torah.

When one looks upon the current situation in Israel, one wonders if this passage comes to mind to those currently living in the Land. It seems rather obvious that this is exactly what is taking place. May our brother Yehudah come to realize that he should heed only His Voice and obey His Torah. Amein? Amein!

Sometime in the near future, Ephrayim will go back to the Land. When he does, he needs to understand these passages so that he will be able to stay in and occupy the Land promised to our fathers. For if he does not, then he should only be expected to be removed from the land.

The Boundaries of the Land

Bemidbar [Numbers] 34:1-2

1 And YHWH spoke unto Moshe, saying,

2 "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'When you come into the land of Cana'an (this is the land that shall fall to you for a division, even the land of Cana'an according to the boundaries).'"

Verses 3 through 12 then describe the boundaries of His Land, starting on the south (vs. 3-5), then the west (vs. 6), then moving to the north (vs. 7-9), and then finally the boundary on the east (vs. 10-12).

The Land Assigned

Bemidbar [Numbers] 34:13

And Moshe commanded the children of Israel, saying, "This is the land which you shall occupy by lot, which YHWH has commanded to assign to the nine tribes, and to the half-tribe."

If we will recall, two of the tribes, Reuven and Gad, along with half of the tribe of Menasheh (Manasseh), asked to have the land that they would occupy, assigned to them on the east side of the Yarden. This request was granted according to their desire and request, if they would continue to go out in battle and help their brethren drive out the rest of the occupants of His Land.

That is why here in this verse we find only nine and one half tribes mentioned. They would be the ones that actually occupied the Land described within the boundaries in verses 1-12 above.

The phrase underlined above is a single word in the Hebrew text; i.e., תִּתְּנֶנְהוּ לָוִי. This word is in the imperfect second masculine plural form. This basically means, that they were to begin the process of dividing and occupying the Land, but that they would not complete the task assigned to them. The completion of the task falls to that generation that will enter into the Land and occupy it during the Millennial Kingdom (YHWH willing, our generation).

Those Charged with Dividing the Land

Bemidbar [Numbers] 34:16-18

16 And YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying,

17 "These are the names of the men that shall divide the land to you; Eleazar the kohen, and Yehoshua (Joshua) the son of Nun.

18 And you shall take one leader [nasi] from every tribe, to divide the land for occupancy."

Those that were to oversee the dividing and assigning of the Land were the political and the religious leaders; i.e., the kohen gadol and the nasi or elected official, like a president. Eleazar was the kohen gadol, the religious leader of the nation. Yehoshua was the political leader of the Nation. These two men were to oversee the drawing of the lots and the assignments given to the tribes to make sure that everything was done properly and according to His commandment (Torah).

The verses that follow (verses 19 – 29) are a listing of each of the leaders (nasi) from each tribe. There is language here that is instructional to those who will notice it.

Of the two tribes, Yehudah (Judah) and Benyamiyn (Benjamin), Scripture uses the phrase, “the tribe of ...”, whereas each of the other tribes uses the phrase, “the tribe of the sons of...” to describe which leader from which tribe is to be a part of the assigning process. Even the Scriptures speaking about the tribes of Reuven and Gad use this language back in verse 14. What this indicates to us is that the tribes would see a future division of two tribes and ten tribes and this gives us a hint at what was to come.

In verse 18 we find something quite interesting.

וְנָשִׂיא אֶחָד מִמִּטֵּה תִקְחוּ לְנַחֵל אֶת הָאָרֶץ :

Please take special note of the repeated words נְשִׂיא אֶחָד - *nasi echad*. When YHWH repeats words like this He does so for emphasis. He wants to make sure that we see this so we do not miss it.

An alternate reading of this sentence might be as follows:

"And (you shall take) one leader, one leader from each tribe you shall take to divide the land for occupancy."

Why was this so important that YHWH wanted to draw our attention to it? The word that is translated as *tribe* - מִמִּטֵּה is in fact in the singular form, with the mem (מ) prefix which means *from*. Without the doubling of the phrase, it could be taken to mean that there was only one leader to be taken from the Nation (the singular form meaning the tribes as one unit). Also, if the word *tribe* was in the plural form, it could also be taken to mean only one leader from the twelve tribes as a whole.

The phrasing of this passage catches our attention to teach us that there are to be twelve leaders, one from each and every tribe that is to be involved in the dividing process of the Land.

Ownership of The Land

Psalms 24:1

1 The Land is YHWH's, and the fullness thereof; the earth, and they that dwell therein.

What YHWH is teaching us in this verse is that everything belongs to Him. This is true by virtue of the fact that He created it all. What is of particular interest to us, is that He is the owner of a particular piece of real estate known as the Land of Israel.

This Truth can never change!

What changes is who He allows to live in His Land at any given time.

What He actually desires is for His bride/wife, Israel, to live in His Land. But up until now, she has not really been willing to keep His marriage covenant, the Torah. So, He has removed her from His Land to discipline her, to teach her that she needs to be serious about keeping His covenant. Only recently (1948) has He allowed a portion of His bride/wife to return to the Land. The rest of His bride/wife is to follow soon.

There are some words in our Parasha that are of particular interest to us today regarding our living in His Land. The first word of interest is the word *nachal* – נחל. We have already seen this word in the imperfect second masculine plural form – תִּתְנַחֲלוּ as mentioned above.

The general meaning of the Hebrew word *nachal* - נחל (Strong's #5157) is *to occupy*.

This is the preferred translation in our Parasha as it actually conveys a more accurate meaning of the concept being taught and spoken of in this passage.

This word is often translated as “inherit” or some form of that English word depending upon the form of the word *nachal* as found in the text. The problem with this translation, is that in our culture today, this concept implies that the one who *inherits*, owns what was inherited and has a right to do with it as he so desires.

This is not a Scriptural understanding of this word.

YHWH is the Owner of the Land. As such He assigns it to those who are commanded to occupy the Land. They are to do this in stewardship. What He actually expects of those who are commanded to *occupy* the Land is obedience to His Torah. If this does not happen, then their stewardship is removed and others are assigned (commanded) to occupy the Land.

The Scripture quotations in this Parasha have been rendered with this understanding.

Assigned

The second word of interest to us in our study is the word *assigned*, which is the Hebrew word *natan* נתן. This is Strong's #5414 and it means *to give* or *to assign*.

Since, it is YHWH that is the actual Owner of the Land, translating *natan* as *assign* would actually convey a more accurate understanding of these passages.

Basically, what we have throughout this Parasha is that YHWH is commanding us to go and *occupy* the Land. For obeying this commandment, He will *assign* to us a particular piece that we are to steward.

Luqa [Luke] 16:10

“He that is faithful in small things is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in small things is unrighteous also in much.”

Yeshua gets right to the heart of the matter here. He is teaching His talmidim that to be a good steward is to be righteous. Furthermore, to be a poor steward is to be unrighteous.

Yeshua is equating good stewardship with righteousness. Good stewardship in small things is rewarded from YHWH by His giving greater responsibility to the one who is faithful in the small things (is a good steward). What greater responsibility is there than living in His Land and taking care of it in a way that is pleasing to Him?

And how can we be a good steward if we do not listen to and obey His Voice (commandments)? It is not possible to be a good steward and disobey His commandments!

Special Cities

Chapter 35 (verses 1-8) outlines the cities of the Levites. Since the tribe of Levi was not to be assigned any land to occupy, they were to be given certain cities to occupy and dwell in, in exchange for their service to YHWH as His kohenim (priests).

Then in the rest of the chapter (35:9-34) we find outlined the cities of refuge; cities in which, if someone accidentally kills a fellow kingdom believer, then he may flee to one of these cities for safety. That refuge is to last until the reigning kohen gadol dies of old age. Then the one who accidentally killed another, is free to return to the Land assigned to him to occupy.

A Special Situation of Occupancy

Bemidbar [Numbers] 36:1-4

1 And the heads of the fathers' (houses) of the family of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Menasheh, of the families of the sons of Yoseph, came near, and spoke before Moshe, and before the princes, the heads of the fathers' (houses) of the children of Israel;

2 and they said, “YHWH commanded adoni to assign the land for occupancy by lot to the children of Israel; and adoni was commanded by YHWH to give the occupancy of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters.

3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the (other) tribes of the children of Israel, then will their occupancy be taken away from the occupancy of our fathers, and will be added to the occupancy of the tribe where to they shall belong; so will it be taken away from the lot of our occupancy.

4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then will their occupancy be added to the occupancy of the tribe where to they shall belong; so will their occupancy be taken away from the occupancy of the tribe of our fathers.”

Back in Bemidbar (Numbers) chapter 27 we find that the daughters of Zelophehad were to be assigned Land to occupy along with the other men of that tribe. This was because Zelophehad had no sons.

As the time for the assigning of the Land nears, they see a potential problem. What happens to the Land assignment if these daughters marry outside their tribe?

YHWH’s Response

Bemidbar [Numbers] 36:5-9

5 And Moshe commanded the children of Israel according to the word of YHWH, saying, “The tribe of the sons of Yoseph speak correctly.

6 This is the thing which YHWH commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, ‘Let them be married to whom they think best; only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married.

7 So shall no inheritance of the children of Israel move from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall cling everyone to the occupancy of the tribe of his fathers.

8 And every daughter, that occupies an occupancy in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may occupy every man the occupancy of his fathers.

9 So shall no occupancy move from one tribe to another tribe; for the tribes of the children of Israel shall cling everyone to his own occupancy.”

YHWH states that what the sons of Yoseph are speaking and concerned about is correct. Once a portion of the Land is assigned to a tribe, that assignment cannot be transferred outside of that tribe.

A special commandment of Torah is given to safeguard against this happening. If a daughter comes to occupy Land passed down from her father because he has no son, then she is to marry inside that tribe to insure that the Land assignment stays in that tribe. If she chooses to marry outside of her tribe, which she is free to do, she automatically loses the right to occupy the Land of her father.

In verses 10-12 we learn that these daughters of Zelophahad did exactly what was commanded of them from YHWH. May each and every one of us do likewise; i.e., obey His Voice.

These are the Commandments

Bemidbar [Numbers] 36:13

13 These are the commandments and the ordinances which YHWH commanded by Moshe unto the children of Israel in the plains of Mo'av by the Yarden at Yericho.

And so closes the book of Bemidbar.

ABBA YHWH, purify us that we may be pure, cleanse us that we may be clean, and fill us with Your Spirit in these days, that we might know Your truth and walk in the fullness of it! In the name of Yeshua our Mashiach we pray. Amein.

חֲזַק! חֲזַק! וְנִתְחַזַּק!
Chazak! Chazak! V'nitchazeik!

Be strong, be strong, and may you be strengthened.

אָמֵן אָמֵן

Amein, Amein!

Shabbat Shalom

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