

## CbC to Jun 21

June 15 Su Reading A166 — Numbers 30 — Binding Vows

Audio: [Numbers 30 \(ESV\)](#)

**Making Promises** — Sometimes when a person is involved in a crisis, they promise God that they will do something good if God will deliver them out of their difficulty. The combination terms of “vow” and “pledge” are used 11 times in this chapter. In this context, a “vow” is a solemn promise made to God, and a “pledge” is the obligation to fulfill the promise. One strong emphasis in this chapter is the responsibility that one “*shall not break his word*” (v. 2). That describes personal integrity: What I say, I will do. What would your “report card” say about your performance in that category? Is your word good? God says that is very important. Another strong emphasis in this chapter is the responsibilities of the father of an unmarried daughter and the husband of a wife. A man is responsible to God for leadership over his children and his wife. As the God-appointed head of the family, he was given this serious position of being accountable to God. If he immediately rejected the vow and pledge of a daughter or wife, “*the LORD will forgive her*” (vv. 5, 8, 12), but if he accepts it by being silent “*from day to day*” (v. 14) and then cancels it after that, “*then he shall bear her iniquity*” (v. 15), i.e., if she doesn’t keep her promise, God holds him accountable. Making promises is not a way of escape, but it involves accepting obligations.

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June 16 M Reading A167 — Numbers 31 — Punishing Midian

Audio: [Numbers 31 \(ESV\)](#)

**Thorough Punishment** — The massacre of these Midianites, who were connected with Moab, was God’s punishment for their involvement in enticing Israel to follow Baal, when they “*caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD*” (v. 16). God would declare later that it was a capital offense to lead an Israelite to follow another god (Deut. 13:9-10). Their death was both a punishment and the removal of a threatening religious influence. We read earlier that God had used the young priest, Phinehas, to stop the plague by killing the Israelite, Zimri, along with the enticing Midianite woman, Cozbi (25:13). She was the daughter of Zur (25:15), one of the five Midianite kings killed in this short, punishing war (31:8). This was a devastating penalty for these people, but as the NT says, “*the wages of sin is death*” (Rom. 6:23). Physical evidence that this war was directed and empowered by God was that, when the 12,000 Israelite warriors returned, there was “*not a man missing*” (Num. 31:49).

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June 17 Tu Reading A168 — Numbers 32 — Transjordan Promised

Audio: [Numbers 32 \(ESV\)](#)

**Modified Plan** — Israel had not yet entered the land of Canaan, the land promised by God to Abraham and confirmed to Jacob. After Israel conquered much of the land east of the Jordan River, however, the tribes of Reuben and Gad decided that was good for them because it was good land for grazing, and they had much livestock. When they took their request before Moses, however, saying, “*do not take us across*” (v. 5), they received a strong, negative response. He seemed to take their request as their unwillingness to fight for the rest of the land. Later, they either clarified or modified their intention by saying, “*we will take up arms*” (v. 17). We read later that when Moses accepted their proposal, the half-tribe of Manasseh was included (v. 33), taking the northernmost portion of the east side of the Jordan River. The Promised Land was forming, even before crossing the river. Compromise seemed to have been involved, and both sides ended up being satisfied. That might provide a good model for us in attempting to reach a mutually agreeable solution to a potentially dividing controversy or conflict. We need to look for an acceptable plan in which both sides can be satisfied.

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June 18 W Reading A169 — Numbers 33 — Summary of Encampments

Audio: [Numbers 33 \(ESV\)](#)

**Removing Thorns** — Although some of these 41 named locations where Israel camped after leaving Egypt are described earlier, 17 of them are mentioned only in this chapter. The average stay was slightly less than a year (41 places in 40 years). At least they didn't have to make new friends in every place because they always camped by tribes and families. The location was new, but the culture was the same. Removing the existing culture and bringing in the new was supposed to happen after crossing the Jordan River into Canaan. They were to "*drive out all the inhabitants ... and destroy all their ... stones ... images and ... high places*" (v. 52). God wanted Israel to separate themselves entirely to Him, to remove sinful temptations so they could be holy. That is like Paul's instruction for us: "... *go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing*" (2 Cor. 6:17). Satan's substitutes and attractions *can* influence God's people. We are not to tolerate them in our presence, or they will "*be as barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you*" (v. 55).

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June 19 Th Reading A170 — Numbers 34 — The Borders Defined

**Audio:** [Numbers 34 \(ESV\)](#)

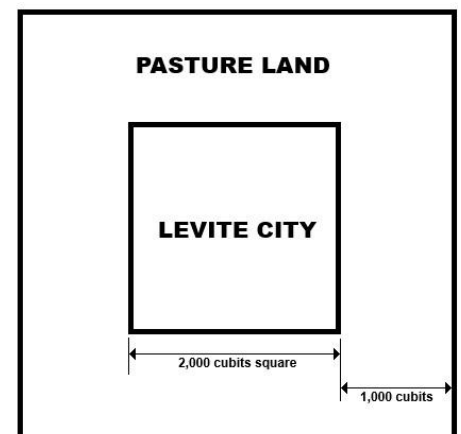
**These Are the Names** — Abraham had been promised "*all the land of Canaan*" (Gen. 17:8), but the overall boundaries had not been defined until in today's reading. The land chosen by Reuben and Gad on the east side of the Jordan River was not included in God's original promise, but it was granted by Moses (Num. 32:33). Two geographical points should be made here: the "*Sea of Chinnereth*" (v. 11) was also known as the Sea of Galilee, and "*Mount Hor*" (v. 7) on the northern border of the Promised Land was a different mountain than the "*Mount Hor*" on which Aaron died (20:27-28), far south of the Promised Land. One very significant part of today's reading is how the committee for dividing up the land among the tribes was chosen. Can you imagine how selfishness would be a major factor in the functioning of such a committee? Each tribal leader would want to be striving for advantage over the other tribes. God had a good solution: He was the one who would choose those leaders. God told Moses, "*These are the names of the men who shall divide the land...*" (34:17). God knew their hearts. Of these 10 tribal chiefs, only Caleb is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. They were not famous, but they were divinely chosen to perform a very important task, and we read of no later controversy in how they performed their job.

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June 20 F Reading A171 — Numbers 35-36 — Murder and Marriage

**Audio:** [Numbers 35-36 \(ESV\)](#)

**Temporary and Permanent Lands** — Moses had granted the property on the east side of the Jordan River to the 2 ½ tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, but in today's reading, God confirmed that decision by telling Moses, "*You shall give three cities beyond the Jordan, and three cities in the land of Canaan, to be cities of refuge*" (35:14). There is some confusion about the size of the 48 cities given to the Levites throughout all the tribes. That the pastureland around the city is clearly stated to extend outward for 1,000 cubits (500 yards or 457 meters), the 2,000-cubit measurement is only said to be "*outside the city*" on each side (v. 5). My interpretation is shown in the diagram below. Most of chapter 35 has to do with rules to differentiate between taking a life with intent to kill (vv. 16-21) and doing it "*without enmity*" (vv. 22-29). The six cities of refuge were temporary places of safety for one who killed another, until guilt was determined by legal judges. Even if one were judged as having killed someone unintentionally, he had to remain in that city of refuge until the high priest died. So, this apparently innocent man would likely be deprived of living on his own property for many years. Chapter 36 ends the book with another property problem, that of land given to the five daughters of Zelophehad. Rather than marrying outside their own tribe and



losing their property to their husband's tribe, God commanded that they marry within their tribe, which they did. Whether we rent or own the place we live, this is only our temporary home. One day we will gather in heaven, a place of indescribable beauty that will be our permanent home, a place of residence paid for by the precious blood of Jesus.

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June 21 Sa Reading A172 — Deuteronomy 1 — Moses' Farewell

**Audio:** [Deut. 1 \(ESV\)](#)

**Learning from Others' Failures** — Deuteronomy is the last book of the Law of Moses, also called the Torah and the Pentateuch. It was his farewell speech to the people of Israel. He had led them for 40 years through miraculous situations as God directed and empowered him. Joshua would lead them across the Jordan River and begin to guide them in conquering the land of Canaan that God had promised them. You may have noticed that twice in the first three verses, it says that "*Moses spoke to ... Israel*," which is a shift from the emphasis of Exodus through Numbers that "*God spoke to Moses*." In Deuteronomy, Moses was not giving Israel new laws as much as he was reviewing, explaining, and challenging them with the existing laws from God. It is somewhat like what your pastor does each week in your worship service. He reminds you of something you probably remember from God's Word but need to hear it again and be challenged to see its insights and the need for obedience to it. Hear the heart of Moses as he urges the people in this book to follow God in a way that their parents had failed to do.