

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Numbers 33-36

I. Looking Back: Lessons from the Past (33:1-49)

- A. From exodus to the edge of the promise land (Not a non-stop flight)
- B. Three lessons (for them and us)
 - 1. God's mighty hand to rescue his people (33:3-4).
 - 2. The people must be faithful, trusting the Lord (33:5-39; Application 1 Cor. 10:1-12).
 - 3. Hope for the future based on God's faithfulness (33:48-49; Application 1 Cor. 10:13-14)

II. Looking Ahead: Instructions for Inheriting the Land

- A. Israel will be God's People Living in His Place and in His Presence.
- B. *People*: They must remain faithful; a distinct as a holy nation/people of God (33:50-56)
 - 1. Why did God redeem them (Ex. 4:23, 19:6. See Gen. 15:15 re idolatry in the land)
 - 2. In the New Covenant, the church is to be a kingdom of priests and serve the Lord.
- C. *Place*: They will be in God's promised land (34:1-19).
 - 1. God lays out the borders of their inheritance.
 - 2. Do you often think of your inheritance as real, reserved for you and all God's people? How does it affect your daily life?
- D. *Presence*: Living in His holy presence (35:1-34)
 - 1. The Levites will be dispersed throughout the land to teach God's ways and to distinguish between the clean/unclean and holy/profane *because God is among them* (Num. 35:1-8, 18:20-25; Lev. 10:10-11)
 - 2. Since the God of life dwells among his people, they must deal with murder and manslaughter properly (Num. 35:9-34, see esp. vv. 33-34)

*"Canaan is more than the promised land: it is the holy land sanctified by the presence of God living among his people (34; cf. Lev. 26:11-12). It is therefore of the utmost importance to keep this land pure, especially from the most potent pollution of shed blood."*¹

III. A Faithful People Believing God's Promises (Num. 36:1-12)

- A. A specific situation serves to show the faithful, trusting generation is here (Num. 27 & 36)
- B. This ending sets up for the sequel (i.e., Deuteronomy)

¹ Wenham, Gordon J. 1981. [*Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*](#). Vol. 4. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.