

Life-Study of Numbers Summaries - Messages 42—46

Concerning Vows

In the church life today, we have the two matters of fulfilling God's requirements and of making a vow to Him. According to church history, **all those who were used by God to fulfill His New Testament ministry were volunteers**. The extent to which the Lord will use us depends on our vow. The higher our vow is, the more the Lord will use us.

Overcoming the Midianites

In Numbers 31, we see that there was the need for the children of Israel to overcome the troublesome Midianites. In typology, **the Midianites signify the filthiness of the lust of the flesh, which is related to the devil Satan and the world**. We need to realize that as we are pursuing the Lord's interests, there is an enemy—the filthiness of the lust of the flesh signified by the Midianites—right behind us.

Moses' strategy in fighting against the Midianites required that the children of Israel be in **one accord with no dissenting opinions**. In Numbers 31, no one, not even the women, expressed an opinion. The people acted according to Moses' strategy. This indicates that they were in one accord. We also need to be in one accord for the Lord's move in His recovery today. **In order to be in one accord for the Lord's move, we should not express our opinion but come back to the Word**.

In verses 13-24, we see that both the captives and the spoil had to be purged and purified. All the matters concerning the purging and purifying of the captives and the spoil show us that **everything related to God must be clean, having been purged, purified, or washed**. We must keep this principle in touching things which are related to God. Whatever has been defiled, contaminated, by death must be purged or purified or washed.

The Prearrangement of the Distribution of the Good Land

In Numbers 32:1—5 the request of the tribes of Reuben and Gad is seen. This request was not wrong, but neither was it right. Their desire was to receive what God had promised, according to their choice as the best, not according to God's choice as the best. **In spiritual matters it is terrible to do things according to our choice**. We should try not to act according to our choice. It is much better for us to leave matters in the hand of the Lord and let Him do according to His choice. **Both in the church life and in the Lord's work, we need to resist the temptation to have our self-choice for the purpose of taking care of our own welfare**.

Whenever we have our own choice, we will owe something for our choice and will be under some kind of obligation. In serving the Lord, we need to learn never to be obligated in this way. We need to learn not to have our own choice and thereby not be obligated to God and to His people. If in the Lord's recovery our standing is that we will not have our own choice but leave the choice to the Lord, there will not be any problems among us. However, **if we have our own choice, there will eventually be problems and suffering**. Let us learn not to follow Reuben and Gad, but to follow the other tribes who allowed the Lord to make the choice for them.

The Prearrangement of the Distribution of the Good Land

After driving out the devilish inhabitants of the land, the children of Israel were to destroy all the idols and high places, the places where the idols were worshipped. The principle is the same concerning our enjoyment of Christ today. **Christ has been given to us as our portion for our enjoyment, yet we must cooperate with God's ordination to drive out everything in us which is other than God and Christ**. We must destroy any idols that may be in us and not leave any ground within us for the worship of idols. Without dealing with the idols in us, we cannot have the genuine enjoyment of Christ.

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