

LIFE'S WILDERNESS SHORTAGES AND GOD
Part XII: Heeding God's Directives In Facing New Assignments
(Numbers 33:50-56)

I. Introduction

- A. When we are called to branch out into a new venture or assignment in life, we often face "unknowns" and sense the need for wisdom to minimize our mistakes and achieve success in the process.
- B. A general guideline exists from the Lord that we can follow in stepping out into such "unknown" territory, a guideline given through Moses in Numbers 33:50-56 that prepared the people of Israel to adjust from life in the wilderness to conquering, settling and living well in the Promised Land (as follows):

II. Heeding God's Directives In Facing New Assignments, Numbers 33:50-56.

- A. The people of Israel were to **deal righteously with others in the new assignment**, Numbers 33:50-56:
 - 1. God called Moses to lead Israel to drive out all of its wicked inhabitants from the Promised Land, Num. 33:50-52a. God's righteousness demanded these wicked Canaanites be destroyed for their sin.
 - 2. However, were Israel to fail to heed this command, God would cause the Canaanites to make Israel's life miserable, and lead her in the end to be driven from that land, Numbers 33:55-56.
- B. The people of Israel were to **guard their own hearts from evil in the new assignment**, Numbers 33:52b.
 - 1. In defeating the land's evil inhabitants, Israel was to destroy the Canaanite idol images and places of worship lest Israel *herself* be influenced by these things to sin and be judged, Numbers 33:52b, 55-56.
 - 2. Accordingly, the people of God were to guard their **own** hearts from evil, something Paul required of both of the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28a and of Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:16a.
- C. The people of Israel were to **assume responsibility over their new assignment**, Numbers 33:53:
 - 1. In the destruction of the land's inhabitants, God expected the people of Israel to take possession of the land and settle in it as its **caretakers**, Numbers 33:53.
 - 2. Thus, they were to assume a **responsible oversight** of what God was giving them, something we must do when God commits a new assignment to us! (cf. 1 Peter 5:2a,b)
- D. The people of Israel were to **follow God's daily leading in their new assignment**, Numbers 33:54a:
 - 1. Once the Promised Land was rid of its evil inhabitants, it was to be divided up for inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel by the practice of the taking of lots, Numbers 33:54a.
 - 2. Proverbs 16:33 reveals that in that era, the dispensation of the Law, God used the taking of lots as His way circumstantially to indicate His will in everyday matters, cf. also Acts 1:24-26.
 - 3. Accordingly, the people of Israel were to apply this circumstantial means of discerning God's leading once they arrived in the Promised Land so they might know God's will on daily matters.
- E. The people of Israel were to **meet human needs through their new assignment**, Numbers 33:54b:
 - 1. When the land was thus divided for inheritance by lot, larger portions were to be granted to tribes with larger populations and smaller lots to the tribes composed of fewer people, Numbers 33:54b.
 - 2. Accordingly, Israel was to function in the land with a focus on meeting actual human need in their midst and so fulfill the spirit of God's Law that governed them, cf. Matt. 22:36-40; Lev. 19:18b.
- F. The people of Israel were to **heed human establishment order in their new assignment**, Num. 33:54c:
 - 1. Though the people were to receive their inheritances on an **INDIVIDUAL** basis, **THEIR** lots were to be doled out **WITHIN** the **BOUNDARIES** of their respective **TRIBAL** allotments, Numbers 33:54c.
 - 2. From this directive, we see God wanted the people of Israel to function in the new land **within the human establishments** in which they found themselves; their lineage, marital unions, family ties, national or international identifications were all thus to be respected.

Lesson: *God's guidelines for Israel on functioning WELL in her NEW ASSIGNMENT of the Promised Land were: (1) to maintain righteous dealings with others, be it God, neighbors, etc.; (2) to guard their own hearts from evil; (3) to assume responsible oversight for the assignment given to them by the Lord; (4) to heed God's daily leading in the new assignment; (5) to focus on meeting human needs in the assignment and (6) to heed human establishment order in that new assignment.*

Application: *May we heed these guidelines for blessing as we enter God's new assignments in our lives.*