

Thursday Bible Class

Moab & Midian

Numbers 25

Firstly let's review these two peoples. The Moabites were descendants of Lot. They were herdsmen, and possessed a defined territory or homeland, that was located near the land termed the Promised Land that was given to the Israelites.

Interestingly, this Moabite homeland God pronounced would be theirs, because they displaced a race of Giants who previously dwelt there. Deuteronomy 2 v 9/10: *And the Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims;*

History also shows how Moab, by turns was an enemy, even an oppressor of the Israelites, but also a close friend and prophesied to be a place of safety to the Israelites. See Isaiah 16:4: *Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a **covert** to them from the face of the spoiler: ...*

Note the mirrored opposites, in how they are said to be. Again an interesting set of opposites is manifested in Ruth and Eglon. The Midianites also had a land, though theirs was afar off in the Arabian peninsula they also were herdsmen and also traders. As such they appear to be of a more nomadic existence. Their dealings with Israel are intermittent. They haven't the same prophecies as the Moabites. However the presence of both these peoples in Numbers 25 is a matter of our consideration. This highlights a few key points of Bible Scripture

dealing with responsibilities, gender roles, consequences , standards and loyalty. At the beginning of the chapter whoredom is committed between the men of Israel and the daughters of Moab. This was required to be dealt with by the hanging of those men of Israel who were guilty as a testimony of the ungodly behaviour and a condemnation of such. Even while this was being done an Israelitish man and a Midianitish woman openly carried on with the bad behaviour blatantly defiling themselves regardless of God's clear rebuke and determination in the matter. Phineas incensed by what they were doing thrust them through with a javelin/dart affixing them into the ground.

God praised him for this action. For a comparison they were similar in this last state as a butterfly stuck with a pin on a display board for public perusal.. Not a nice sight but a clear reminder of how sees all and given moments are held up as Good or Bad examples. None of the 25000 hanged men are named neither the Moabite women. This might be because they were part of a large picture event masterminded by said woman chief perhaps was the Midianitish princess Cosbi. I suggest this as the last words of condemnation are against the wives of the Midianites. It maybe that she thought since our men can't do the job we will. However I also suggest that a contributing cause was down to the men lamenting their own failures. This contrasts with Ruth and Eglon. He was the Oppressive king whom Ehud the Benjaminite judge slew with a dagger in his left hand. Left is also known as sinister in Latin. His death was by being stabbed through. Benjamin means son of my right hand.so the son of the right hand wrought God's justice on an oppressor.

Ruth conversely declared Your people is my people your God my God... after Naomi asked her to go back to her heritage. Naomi's husband and two sons having died and she planned to return to Israel. Clearly Ruth understood her opportunity but elected to renounce her birth nation and associate as a foreigner in Israel. Women who regarded God's gender roles as he wished it to be.

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