



Just a short time before God had ordered Moses to command the people to “vex” the nation of Midian. This was because of the evil work of Balaam the false prophet who had taught the kings of Midian and Moab how to seduce and corrupt the gullible men of Israel, and bring about their downfall. This strategy backfired however, because of the faith, the golden faith of a few stalwart believers, who trusted in the Word of God. Phineas the grandson of Aaron the High Priest put an end to that caper, by thrusting a spear right through the body of the sinner in chief - the son of the prince of Simeon, as well as his Midianite lover. Still, the threat of the vicious nation of Midian who were deceitful and greedy lustful people remained. Numbers 25: 17-18 *Vex the Midianites, and smite them: For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor...*

God did not give the green light for Israel to immediately take revenge against this hostile act. Instead the nation were summoned

to hear and learn by the giving of various laws and teachings which we have been looking at chapters 26 -30. This process would have taken days if not weeks.

It is a common tendency to react immediately to hostile threats, to give as good as we get, to respond with more force, to escalate a matter. But this is not God's way. A clear and thoughtful approach is the way of the disciple of the Law of God.

The Midianites should have known better to have provoked the God of Israel. Not only were they close neighbours but Moses was son in law to Reuel, (also known as Raguel, and also Jethro,) who was a Midianite – from the Kenites a branch of the Midianite family. Hobab was the son of Jethro, and Moses invited him to join with Israel and teach them the way of the wilderness see Numbers 10:29. This interaction and influence should have been a good thing. But not it seems.

Later a few generations time, we recall how Gideon fought against the Midianites – just 300 men against 135000. They won. Here in this chapter 31, we see a similar ration. Midian were a large tribe, well settled, and established, with great resources. But Israel who just lived in tents, just had their flocks and herds. But they had the God of Israel on there side. God had said to Abraham... Fear not I am thy shield and exceeding great reward. Of the nation God said in Exodus 32:34: *Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee:*

In the book of Numbers, the angel of the Lord is mentioned 11 times. God was active for His people, and He was their shield and great reward as well. So Moses was commanded to chose just 1000 men of each of the twelve tribes – excluding Levi of course as the Priests and Levites fought every day already with the Word of God as their Sword of the Spirit. Apart from the leader.

It was no coincidence that Phineas the grandson of Aaron was chosen, the same man who commenced the war against these

aggressive neighbours by thrusting the spear through the corrupt culprits. This was the first battle of the nation sanctioned and commanded by God as they waited to enter into the land of promise. There at their head was the High Priest Designate. It reminds us of the Great War to come Revelation 19:11 -14: 11 *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*

The battle was swift and sure. We read they slew all the males. It appears that the Midianite tribe they battled with along with the Moabites were not the complete tribe who may well have lived further away, as 200 years later, Gideon had to fight the same tribe again. So it seems that the nation had not been wiped out. Still it was a decisive victory, and 5 kings were taken and slain. I was just about to look up the names, and Bro Derek has just posted his comments which I have read. The meanings of the names of the five kings slain do tell a story. Covetousness – or Evi – was the root cause of their hostility to Isarel in the first place. Rekem – ‘glamorous’ – or also ‘multicoloured’ – denotes a character which is like a chameleon, and changes depending on the situation – hypocritical, and worldly wise. The Zur and Hur – ‘Rock’ and ‘Splendour’, maybe names given by hopeful mothers but proved to be false foundations for the nation. Reba also means ‘to tie firmly’ a ‘connection’ or ‘link’. The link or connection between all these five kings as vassals or kings in servitude to Sihon king of the Amorites was greed, and covetousness, but it was provoked by one man also taken – Balaam the son of Bosor the false prophet of the day. Brother Derek has already reminded us of how, once again, this typifies the work of the Great Army of God under the leadership of Christ who will abolish all false religions, who

have provided false foundations and have connections and links with hypocritical apostasy.

In the aftermath of the battle the nation of Isarel took great spoil in abundance, and we are given lists of the huge bounty they were able to take back home. But it appears that they had also preserved women and children for their own use as slaves. This was a disappointing and backward step. Had not Isarel been rescued from slavery? Did they not recall how their parents felt under the scourge of the Egyptians whips? Taking captive slaves was not prohibited under the law, but the law was given because of the hardness of their hearts, as the Lord Jesus later explained. There was nothing gracious or dignified by this. But more importantly, the nation were importing into their midst the very influences that had led them astray in the first place! Would they ever learn? Do we??

The remedy was harsh, decisive and immediate. All were to be slain except female captives who were virgins. This was later enshrined in the law see Deuteronomy 20:13,14: *And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.*

Further details are given in the next chapter: 21:10-13: *When you go forth to war against your enemies, and the Lord God has delivered them into your hands, and you take them captive, and see among them a beautiful woman, and you desire her, that you would have her to wife; ...* then there were specific conditions...

*Then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head, and trim her nails; and she shall discard the clothing she wore when captured, and shall remain in your house, and lament her parents a full month: and after that you can go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.*

There was to be no allowance, no possibility of outside influences or former customs corrupting the Household of God. The Gentile was then in this way included in the Hope of Israel. It is of course designed to teach, that to be part of the Israel After The Spirit, with Christ as the Head, we have no right. We are outside of that Hope. Only when we have surrendered all resistance, allow ourselves to be captivated by the Principles of Truth, the Pure Doctrine, can we be allowed to enter the camp. But that process means a putting off the former way of life, and not looking back, only then can we be saved from the race of 'midianites' that we naturally belong to, who are destined for complete eradication under the condemnation of death.

Brother Terry