

A Sum, An Offering, and A Memorial

The Setting

- The children of Israel were just at the brink of the Promised Land. They could see it over the river. They had just laid hands on a new leader (Numbers 27). But - before they went in, God wanted them to do one more thing – He wanted them to destroy the Midianites.

Numbers 31:1-4 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian. Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war. 7 And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males. 11 And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts.*

- They went out and fought against the Midianites, and the Lord worked mightily for them. God had blessed, and they came back with great spoil.

Numbers 31:32-35 *And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand (675,000) sheep, And threescore and twelve thousand (72,000) beeves, And threescore and one thousand (61,000) asses, And thirty and two thousand persons in all...*

- After accounting for the spoil they had taken, God gave instructions for dividing of the spoil.

Numbers 31:25-30 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation: And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation: And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep: Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for an heave offering of the LORD. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD.*

- First, they were to give a portion to the Lord (an offering for His working and deliverance):
 - 675 sheep
 - 61 donkeys
 - 72 cows/oxen
 - 32 captives for the work of the Lord
 - They were to also give ½ to the congregation.
 - Then they were to give ½ to the men who went to war.
- After going their ways, instead of spending the substance on themselves, the officers got together, and they came back to speak with Moses. Here's what they said:

***Numbers 31:48-54** And the officers which were over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses: And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels. And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. (For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.) And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, for a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.*

- They got to thinking, “God has been so good to us. He’s taken care of us. He’s preserved us. How then can we not give Him more than we already have been asked to give? We don’t want to stop at what we’ve already given, what we’ve been asked to give. We want to give more. We want to give again.”

The Numbers

- **132 men** - There were only 12 captains of thousands and 120 captains of hundreds.
- **7,780 ounces** - These 132 men brought 7,780 ounces of gold to give to the Lord (conservative estimate).
- **\$716,994** - In today's economy by weight, this offering would have been \$716,994.
- **\$5,431.00** – In today's economy, these men would have given \$5,431 per man to this offering.

The Application

- As we prepare our hearts for our May 20th bldg. offering, let's consider three things from this passage: Let us consider why these men gave, how they gave, and the result of their giving.

1. **Why they gave - they took a _____ of God's goodness.**

Numbers 31:48-49 *And the officers which were over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses: And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us.*

- When we take a sum of God's goodness in our lives, we cannot help but give of ourselves back to Him.
 - God has been good to our church.
 - God has been good to our families.
 - God has been good In our bldg process. – He's brought us so far!
- What could happen if we give according to the sum of the Lord's blessings?
- God has been good to us. He's been faithful. Let's give again. Let's sacrifice again.

2. How they gave - they gave more than was _____ or _____.

Numbers 31:50-53 *We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels. And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. (For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.)*

- Maybe this is what the Lord is calling us to do this year – to give more than is asked or expected.
- I know it's Pastor Meyers' desire – that we'd give and sacrifice a little more this year than last.

3. The Result of their giving? Their gift was used as a _____ for future generations

Numbers 31:54 *And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, for a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.*

- This building is not about us – though many of us will enjoy it.
- This building is about us leaving a legacy, a memorial, a headquarters for our children and our grandchildren.
- Our giving on May 20th will be part of this memorial that we leave to generations to come of all the Lord has done.