
Day 45 – February 14

Establishment of a Nation (1525 – 1400 BCE)

Joshua Named as Successor

Two-and-a-half Tribes East of the Jordan

Preparations for Conquest and Settlement

Readings: *Numbers 27:15-23; Numbers 32:1-42; Deuteronomy 4:41-43*

Reflections:

- Joshua is named as Moses successor. He is a man of faith and has the Spirit. The leadership role is described as one that pastors or shepherds the people and stands before the Priest. Note that he will not stand before the Lord as Moses did but will have to go through the Priest and use the holy dice (Urim). Moses was unique in being the model of a friend of God.
- The practice of laying on of hands for commissioning is modeled here again and will carry on into the story of the Jesus movement.
- The story of tribes settling east of the Jordan shows a few things:
 - God is more into the substance of the kingdom than of living according to the letter of the law. They were technically not in the Promised Land, just as close as you could get without being in it. The issue was having the security of land and maintaining community with the other tribes;
 - Even though they did not need to fight for themselves, they still needed to own the mission of the entire family. Here we see the deeper principle of unity within community;
 - Once this grace is opened up and another half tribe decides to do the same. It shows the way grace is freeing. As one person lives in grace it helps others find grace too.
- Cities of refuge are places of grace. These were tangible places where people who were wrongly judged could retreat so that they would not be killed. We all can ask ourselves, “Do we each have city of refuge in our heart for those whom we might be tempted to wrongly judge?” Will we decide not to judge people but let God make that call? Sometimes we need that for ourselves too.

- Moses' organization of the nation is vital. He gives them very clear instructions on what to do and what not to do. He clearly maps out their spaces and who is going to settle where. He organizes the leaders. He makes sure all the Levites are cared for and the tribes are cared for by the Levites.
- Two things to note:
 - The Levites operate the cities of refuge. They steward God's grace to the larger family;
 - The Israelites cannot compromise with the culture they are displacing. It must be complete. The disturbing part about this is that it will look like extermination in some cases. This does fit within the paradigm of law and judgment as the over arching themes and shows again the stark contrast with the coming of Jesus. Thank God for Jesus!