

# CHAPTER 33

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 33

This chapter gives an account of the journeys of the people of Israel, from their first coming out of Egypt, to their arrival in the plains of Moab by Jordan, and the names of the various stations where they rested are given, (<sup><0330></sup>Numbers 33:1-49) and they are ordered, when they passed over Jordan, to drive out the Canaanites, destroy their idols, and divide the land among their families in their several tribes, (<sup><0330></sup>Numbers 33:50-54) or otherwise it is threatened the Canaanites should be troublesome and vexatious to them, even those that remained; and it might be expected God would do to the Israelites as he thought to do to those nations, (<sup><0335></sup>Numbers 33:55,56).

**Ver. 1.** *These are the journeys of the children of Israel,* etc.] Which are related in this chapter following:

*which went forth out of the land of Egypt:* whither their fathers went and stayed, and were kept in hard bondage, but in due time were delivered from it, and came out from thence:

*with their armies;* in great numbers, and in an orderly manner, in rank and file, and like so many squadrons, (see <sup><0370></sup>Exodus 7:4), under the hand of Moses and Aaron: who were sent to the king of Egypt to require their dismissal, and who were the instruments under God of their deliverance, and were the leaders of them; as of them out of Egypt, so through the wilderness, in their, several journeys here recorded.

**Ver. 2.** *And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the Lord,* etc.] Which may be understood, either that their journeys were by the commandment of the Lord; so Aben Ezra takes the connection to be, and which is undoubtedly true, and which is expressed plainly elsewhere; for so it was, that when the cloud abode on the tabernacle they rested, and had their stations, and continued as long as the cloud tarried on it, and when that was taken up, then they marched; and thus at the commandment of the Lord they rested, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed, see (<sup><0377></sup>Numbers 9:17-23) or

that Moses wrote the account of their journeys, and several stations, at the commandment of the Lord, that it might be on record, and be read in future ages, and appear to be a fact, that they were led about in a wilderness, in places which were unknown to others, and had no names but what they gave them:

*and these are their journeys according to their goings out*; from place to place; some of the ancients, as Jerom<sup>f476</sup> particularly, and some modern writers, have allegorized these journeys of the children of Israel, and have fancied that there is something in the signification of the names of the places they came to, and abode in, suitable to the cases and circumstances of the people of God in their passage through this world; but though the travels of the children of Israel in the wilderness may in general be an emblem of the case and condition of the people of God in this world, and there are many things in them, and which they met with, and befell them, that may be accommodated to them; yet the particulars will never hold good of individual saints, since they are not all led exactly in the same path of difficulties and troubles, but each have something peculiar to themselves; and it will be difficult to apply these things to the church of God in general, in the several stages and periods of time, and which I do not know that any have attempted; and yet, if there is anything pointed out by the travels, one would think it should be that.

**Ver. 3.** *And they departed from Rameses*, etc.] A city in Egypt, where the children of Israel, a little before their departure, seem to have been gathered together in a body, in order to march out all together, as they did. This place the Targum of Jonathan calls Pelusium. Dr. Shaw<sup>f477</sup> thinks it might be Cairo, from whence they set forward; (see <sup><0123></sup>Exodus 12:37) and it was

*in the first month*; in the month Nisan, as the same Targum, or Abib, which was appointed the first month on this account, and answers to part of our March and April:

*on the fifteenth of the first month, on the morrow after the passover*; that was kept on the fourteenth, when the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, and slew all the firstborn in Egypt, which made way for their departure the next morning; the Egyptians being urgent upon them to be gone:

*the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians*; openly and publicly, with great courage and boldness, without any fear of their enemies; who seeing them march out, had no power to stop them, or to move their lips at them, nay, were willing to be rid of them; (see <sup><107></sup>Exodus 11:7 12:33).

**Ver. 4.** *For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them*, etc.] Which contributed much to the more easy and safe deliverance of the children of Israel; for their hearts were heavy with sorrow, and their hands were full, and they had other work to do, namely, to bury their dead, than to molest Israel; and besides, they knew it was for detaining them this stroke came upon them:

*upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments*; they were moved at the presence, and by the power of God, and fell and were dashed to pieces, as the idols of the same land were in later times, (see <sup><301></sup>Isaiah 19:1) and this still the more intimidated and frightened the Egyptians, that they dared not attempt to hinder the departure of the Israelites from them. The Targum of Jonathan says, the Word of the Lord did this; and adds, their molten idols became soft, their strong idols were mutilated, their earthen idols were diminished, their wooden idols became ashes, and those of beasts died.

**Ver. 5.** *And the children of Israel removed from Rameses*, etc.] Or Pelusium, as the same Targum again:

*and pitched in Succoth*: where, as the same paraphrase says, they were covered with the clouds of glory, suggesting that to be the reason of its name; but that was rather because of the booths or tents the Israelites erected, pitched, and dwelt in, during their abode there: this, according to Bunting <sup>f478</sup>, was eight miles from Rameses; according to whose computation, for want of a better guide, the distances of the several stations from each other will be given.

**Ver. 6.** *And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham*, etc.] Which was eight miles from Succoth:

*which is in the edge of the wilderness*; of the name, (see <sup><230></sup>Exodus 13:20) but Dr. Shaw <sup>f479</sup> makes this particular portion of the wilderness to be fifty miles from Cairo or Rameses.

**Ver. 7.** *And they removed from Etham, and turned again to Pihahiroth*, etc.] Which was sixteen miles from Etham. This turning, Aben Ezra says,

respects the cloud, or Israel; and indeed it may respect both, for, as the cloud turned, Israel turned, being directed by it; and this does not mean that they had been at Pihahiroth before, and now returned to it again; but that they by direction turned out of the straight way in which they were to go to Pihahiroth; for the word “again” may as well, or better, be left out, (see Gill on “<sup>[141]</sup>Exodus 14:2”):

*which is before Baalzephon*; the name of an idol, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, supposed to be placed here, to watch and guard the passage, as Zephon signifies:

*and they pitched before Migdol*: which was either the name of a city, the same with Migdol, (<sup>[141]</sup>Jeremiah 44:1) or it was a tower, as the word signifies, placed here on the borders of the land, for the defence of it.

**Ver. 8.** *And they departed from before Pihahiroth*, etc.] Being forced by Pharaoh’s army pressing upon them:

*and passed through the midst of the sea*; from shore to shore, as on dry land:

*into the wilderness*: that part of it which lay on the other side, for still it was the wilderness of Etham they went into, as follows:

*and went three days’ journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah*; so called from the bitterness of the waters there, and which is computed to be forty miles from Pihahiroth.

**Ver. 9.** *And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim*, etc.] Which was eight miles from Marah:

*and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and three score and ten palm trees, and they pitched there*; being a convenient place of water for them,

**Ver. 10.** *And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.*] This encampment, is omitted in the book of Exodus, (see <sup>[141]</sup>Exodus 16:1) this part or arm of the Red sea, whither they came, was six miles from Elim.

**Ver. 11.** *And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin.*] Sixteen miles from the Red sea, where they were last; (see <sup>[141]</sup>Exodus 16:1).

**Ver. 12.** *And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, etc.]*

According to the account in Exodus, this was after they had the manna given them, (see <sup><0270></sup>Exodus 17:1)

*and encamped at Dophkah;* twelve miles from the wilderness of Sin; and of this, and the next encampment, no mention is made in Exodus.

**Ver. 13.** *And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush.]* The strong fort, as the Targum of Jonathan calls it; this was twelve miles from Dophkah: according to the Jewish chronology <sup>f480</sup>, this Alush is the wilderness of Sin, where the Israelites came on the fifteenth day of the seventh month from their going out of Egypt; and they say, that in Alush the sabbath was given them, and that there they kept the first sabbath, as it is said,

*and the people rested on the seventh day,* (<sup><0263></sup>Exodus 16:30).

**Ver. 14.** *And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, etc.]*

Eight miles from Alush:

*where was no water for the people to drink;* and they murmured, and a rock here was smitten by Moses at the command of God, and waters gushed out sufficient for them and their flocks, (<sup><0270></sup>Exodus 17:1-16).

**Ver. 15.** *And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.]* Eight miles from Rephidim; and from a mount of this name here were given the decalogue, with all other statutes and ordinances, judicial and ceremonial, and orders and directions for building the tabernacle, and making all the vessels appertaining to it, and which were all made during their stay here.

**Ver. 16.** *And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibrothhattaavah.]* Eight miles from the desert of Sinai; here the people lusted after flesh, and murmured, which, though given them, a pestilence came and destroyed many of them, and here they were buried, whence the place was so called, which signifies the “graves of lust”, i.e. of those that lusted: no mention is made of Taberah, either because it was the same with Kibroth, or near it; or, as Aben Ezra on (<sup><0282></sup>Deuteronomy 9:22) says, they encamped there but one day, and so is not mentioned in the journeys, though it was one of the three they journeyed from Mount Sinai to Kibrothhattaavah, (see <sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:1-3,34,35).

**Ver. 17.** *And they departed from Kibrothhattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.*] Eight miles from Kibrothhattaavah, where Miriam was smote with leprosy, (<sup><0420></sup>Numbers 12:1-16).

**Ver. 18.** *And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched at Rithmah.*] Eight miles from Hazeroth: Rethem, from whence this place seems to have had its name, is generally rendered by “juniper”, (<sup><1190></sup>1 Kings 19:4,5) and the Targum of Jonathan here adds, where the juniper trees grew; and, perhaps, it is the same with the valley of Retheme, of which some travellers <sup>f481</sup> thus write, “this valley”, called in the Hebrew Retheme, and commonly Ritma, derives its name from a yellow flower, with which the valley is covered; we found here, on the left hand, two cisterns of excellent water; and water being to be had here, might be the reason of the Israelites pitching in this place. Some learned men <sup>f482</sup> think it is the same with Kadeshbarnea, from whence the spies were sent, that being the next remove from Hazeroth, as this was; (see <sup><0421></sup>Numbers 12:16 13:26 32:8 <sup><0824></sup>Deuteronomy 2:14 <sup><0640></sup>Joshua 14:7), with which agrees the remark of Jarchi, that this place was so called, because of the evil tongue of the spies, as it is said, (<sup><3008></sup>Psalms 120:3,4) “what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper”; alluding to the signification of Rithmah; perhaps this is the same place, which by Josephus <sup>f483</sup> is called Dathema, and so in the Apocrypha:

“Then the heathen that were at Galaad assembled themselves together against the Israelites that were in their quarters, to destroy them; but they fled to the fortress of Dathema.” (1 Maccabees 5:9)

**Ver. 19-29.** *And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmonparez.*] Six miles from Rithmah, and then from Rimmon to Libnah, which was six miles also; and from thence to Rissah, which was six miles more; and from Rissah to, Kehelathah, which was the same number of miles; and from thence to Shapher, which was six miles also; and then they came to Haradah, which was four miles from thence; the next remove was to Makheloth, which was four miles and a half from the last place; then they went to Tahath, which was four miles more; and from thence to Tarah, which also was four miles; the next place they came to was Mithcah, four miles from Tarah; and then to Hashmonah, which was eight miles more.

**Ver. 30-31.** *And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.*] Thirty two miles from Hashmonah. In (<sup><0506></sup>Deuteronomy 10:6)

it is called Mosera; and according to the account there, they came hither from the following place, Benejaakan; probably they went first thither from Hashmonah, and then from Mosera or Moserot, and so to Benejaakan again, going backwards and forwards, so Jarchi; the distance of the two places was twenty four miles; for the further reconciliation this, (see Gill on <sup><500></sup>Deuteronomy 10:6") and the Samaritan version there.

**Ver. 32-37.** *And they removed from Benejaakan, and encamped at Horhagidgad.*] In the Targum Jonathan called Gudgod, as it is Gudgodah in (<sup><500></sup>Deuteronomy 10:7), where the remove to this place is said to be from Mosera; it was twenty miles from Benejaaken; from thence they went to Jotbathah, twenty four miles from Horhagidgad; and from thence to Ebronah, twenty miles more; and so to Eziongeber, of which (see <sup><100></sup>1 Kings 9:26) which was twenty eight miles from Ebrorah; and their next remove was to the wilderness of Zin, which was Kadesh, forty eight miles from Eziongeber; and from Kadesh they went to Mount Hor, forty eight miles more: which was

*in the edge of the land of Edom;* as Kadesh also was; (see <sup><000></sup>Numbers 20:16,23).

**Ver. 38.** *And Aaron the priest went up into Mount Hor, at the commandment of the Lord,* etc.] Delivered to Moses:

*and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt;* not being suffered to go with them into the land of Canaan, because of his sin of unbelief at Kadesh, the last place from whence they came: in Mount Hor he died,

*on the first day of the fifth month;* the month Ab, answering to part of July and part of August; so that he lived but four months after his sister Miriam; (see <sup><000></sup>Numbers 20:1,25-29).

**Ver. 39.** *And Aaron was one hundred and twenty three years old when he died in Mount Hor.*] He was eighty three when he stood before Pharaoh, (<sup><000></sup>Exodus 7:7), and forty years he had been with Israel since, which make this number; he was three years older than Moses.

**Ver. 40-44.** *And King Arad the Canaanite,* etc.] Or the king of Arad the Canaanite:

*which dwelt in the land of Canaan, he heard of the coming of the children of Israel*; towards the land of Canaan, in order to possess it, and he came out and fought with them, and was vanquished; (see <sup><0200></sup>Numbers 21:1-3), this was when Israel was at Mount Hor; from whence they departed to Zalmonah, twenty eight miles from the mount; and from thence to Punon, which was twenty more; and so to Oboth, which was twenty four miles from Punon: and thence

*to Ijeabarim, in the border of Moab*, which was sixteen miles, (see <sup><0209></sup>Numbers 21:9-11).

**Ver. 45.** *And they departed from Ijim, and pitched in Dibongad.*] Sixteen miles from Ijim; the remove from whence is said to be to the valley of Zared, (<sup><0212></sup>Numbers 21:12) in which Dibongad was, so called perhaps because rebuilt by Gad afterwards.

**Ver. 46.** *And they removed from Dibongad, and encamped in Almondiblathaim.*] Sixteen miles from Dibon, perhaps the same with Diblath, (<sup><2164></sup>Ezekiel 6:14), according to the account in (<sup><0216></sup>Numbers 21:16), etc. they went from hence to Beer, a place where they found a well, which gave it this name; and several other removes are mentioned there, which are not here, and which, perhaps, were small removes, and not properly stations.

**Ver. 47.** *And they removed from Almondiblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim*, etc.] Sixteen miles from Almondiblathaim; these were so called from passages near them over the river Jordan: and this station was pitched

*before Nebo*; one of those mountains, whither Moses went up and died.

**Ver. 48.** *And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab*, etc.] Sixteen miles from Abarim, where all those things were transacted, which make the history of Balak and Balaam, (<sup><0221></sup>Numbers 22:1-25:18) and where the Israelites now were by Jordan near Jericho; not on that side Jordan where Jericho stood, but on the other; Jericho, according to Eusebius, was ten miles from Bethjesimoth, where Israel now were, as follows.

**Ver. 49.** *And they pitched by Jordan from Bethjesimoth, [even] unto Abelshittim, in the plains of Moab.*] Their camp reached twelve miles, as the Jews commonly say, which we may suppose was the distance of these



two places, which were both in the plains of Moab; and the Jerusalem Targum is express for it, for mentioning Israel's encampment from Bethjesimoth to Abelshittim, it asks, how far is that? twelve miles: the latter is sometimes called Shittim, from the shittim wood which grew there, (<sup>(-0270)</sup>Numbers 25:1) and here it has the addition of Abel to it, to signify mourning, from the mourning of the children of Israel on account of the plague, in which 24,000 persons died, (<sup>(-0270)</sup>Numbers 25:1,6,9).

**Ver. 50.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho*, etc.] (See Gill on "<sup>(-0338)</sup>Numbers 33:48"), (See Gill on "<sup>(-0270)</sup>Numbers 22:1"),

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 51.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] What was to be said, being what concerned the whole body of the people:

*when ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan*; near to which they now were, and Moses was about to leave them; and therefore it was the more necessary to give them some instructions and directions what they should do, when they were come into it.

**Ver. 52.** *Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you*, etc.] Not at once, but gradually; and the sense is, that they should use their utmost endeavours wholly to extirpate them:

*and destroy all their pictures*; their idolatrous ones; the pictures of their gods, or the statues and figured stones of them: the Targum of Jonathan interprets it,

“all the temples of their worship;”

and the Jerusalem Targum,

“all their idols;”

so called, as Jarchi notes, because they covered the floor with a pavement of marble stones, to worship upon them by the stretching out of their hands and feet, according to (<sup>(-0300)</sup>Leviticus 26:1),

*and destroy all their molten images*; of gold, silver, etc.

*and quite pluck down all their high places*; their temples, groves, and altars built upon them.

**Ver. 53.** *And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein*, etc.] Turn them out of their cities, towns, and houses, and inhabit them:

*for I have given you the land to possess it*; who had a right to dispose of it, and a better title they needed not desire than the Lord could and did make them.

**Ver. 54.** *And ye shall divide the land by lot*, etc.] What is said in this verse is the same with (<sup>005</sup>Numbers 26:53-56), where it has been explained; (See Gill on "<sup>005</sup>Numbers 26:53-56"),

**Ver. 55.** *But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you*, etc.] Should be remiss and careless about it, and indifferent to it, and not make use of the proper means to get rid of them, but, on the contrary, make covenants with them, and intermarry among them; or, however, become friendly to them, and suffer them to dwell among them:

*then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them*; sparing their lives, and permitting them to dwell among them:

*shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides*; which figurative expressions show that they should be very troublesome and distressing to them, even in their most tender and nearest concerns, and dearest relations, and which are explained and more properly expressed as follows:

*and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell*; among other things by their wicked conversation, and by drawing them into sin through their ill examples, and so bring the displeasure of God upon them, and punishment for their evil doings.

**Ver. 56.** *Moreover, it shall come to pass*, etc.] This being the case, they suffering the Canaanites to dwell among them, and they mingling with them, learning their works, and serving their gods: that

*I shall do unto you as I thought I should do unto them*; deliver them up into the hands of their enemies, who should carry them captive into other lands.