

# Destruction of the Midianites

by Chuck Smith

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*Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the destruction of the Midianites and the importance of spiritual growth and commitment to God.*

**Duration:** 25:04

**Scripture:** Numbers 31:9

**Topics:** "Midianites", "Spiritual Vigilance", "Pursuing God's Purpose"

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## Description

Chuck Smith discusses the destruction of the Midianites as recorded in Numbers 31, emphasizing the severe consequences of sin and disobedience among the Israelites. He highlights Moses' anger towards the officers for sparing the Midianite women, who had led Israel into sin through Balaam's counsel. The sermon reflects on the importance of spiritual vigilance and the dangers of complacency in faith, urging believers to pursue a deeper relationship with God rather than settling for mediocrity. Smith also draws parallels between the Israelites' journey and the Christian walk, encouraging listeners to press on towards spiritual growth and fulfillment of God's purpose in their lives.

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## Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you  
With His Spirit and His love  
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul  
Oh, let Him have the things that mold you  
And His Spirit like a dove  
Will descend upon your life and make you whole  
Welcome to The Word for Today  
Featuring the Bible teaching of Pastor Chuck Smith  
Of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California  
Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse study  
Through the entire Bible  
And on today's edition of The Word for Today  
We'll continue to focus our attention on  
The destruction of the Midianites  
As we pick up in Numbers Chapter 31, verse 9  
And now with today's lesson  
Here's Pastor Chuck Smith  
And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captive  
And their little ones  
And they took the spoil and all their cattle  
And all their flocks and all their goods  
They also burned with fire all of the cities where they dwelt  
And all their forts  
And they took all the spoil of all of the booty  
Both of man and beast  
So it was really quite a tremendous slaughter  
These 12,000 men went in and wiped out these Midianite cities  
And they brought the captives and the booty and the spoil to Moses  
And to Eliezer the priest  
And to the congregation of the children of Israel  
To the camp on the plains of Moab  
by Jordan across from Jericho  
And Moses and Eliezer the priest  
And all the leaders of the congregation went to meet them  
outside the camp  
But Moses was angry with the officers of the army  
With the captains over the thousands  
And the captains over the hundreds  
Who had come from battle  
And he said, have you kept all of the women alive?

He was angry because they brought all these women back He said, look These women caused the children of Israel Through the council of Balaam Now here's where we You know, in the earlier part We didn't see Balaam's implication in his advice to the king But here we're told Balaam's advice to the king These women through the council of Balaam Caused the children of Israel to trespass against the Lord In the incident of Peor And there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord Now, therefore, kill every male among the babies And kill every woman Who has known man intimately And so a continuous slaughter Killed all the little baby boys And they killed all of the women Who had ever had intimate relations with a man But he said, keep alive for yourselves all of the young girls Who have not known a man intimately And as for you, remain outside the camp for seven days Whoever has killed any person Whoever has touched any slain Purify yourselves and your captives And on the third day and on the seventh day Now, why did Moses order the baby boys to be killed?

I don't know To us it seems rather harsh and rather cruel Rather severe And it's just something that is there And I have no real explanation for it There are a lot of things in the Bible For which I have no real explanation And it's just there, I accept it And I am certain that there was a good reason for it And I imagine that we'll find out someday But you can speculate But that's all it is, is speculation So they were to purify They had done all the slaughtering They killed all these people So now they have to purify themselves Before they can come back into camp And every garment Everything that's made of leather Woven from goat's hair Everything that is made of wood You're to wash it The gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin and the lead Are to be put in the fire Because

they can endure the fire They were to be cleansed by the fire Purified through the fire And purified with the water of purification But that which cannot endure the fire Just put it through the water of purification Wash your clothes And on the seventh day be clean And afterward you can come back into the camp And the Lord spoke to Moses saying Count up the plunder that was taken Both of man and beast You and Eliezer the priest The chief fathers And they divide the plunder into two parts Between those who took part in the war Who went out to battle And all of the congregation So they took all of the plunder Divided it in half The one half of the plunder Went to the congregation of Israel The other half went to these 12,000 men Now obviously the 12,000 fellows Got a much larger personal

share Of the plunder Because you remember there's over 600,000 adult males in Israel And so only 12,000 went to war And thus the 12,000 get One half of the plunder And the other Rest of the congregation gets the other half But And then they were to levy a tax For the Lord On the men of war who went to battle One for every 500 persons Of cattle, donkeys, and sheep Take it from their half And give it to the priest So of the plunder The half that the 12,000 got One out of every 500 went to the Lord Of the donkeys, of the sheep, of the cattle And of the persons From the children of Israel's half The other half of the plunder The tax was to be one in 50 Of the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, the sheep, and the livestock Now here is the plunder, the booty 675,000 sheep I mean this was no

little battle This was no little, you know, skirmish on the border They brought back 675,000 sheep 72,000 cattle 61,000 donkeys And 32,000 persons in all of women Who had not known a man intimately So you begin now to figure what the total population was If there were 32,000 women who were virgins You can imagine what the total population of the Midianites must have been That were wiped out And of course looking at the size of the livestock that was brought back 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle And 61,000 donkeys That's quite a bit of booty And the half of the portion for those who had gone out to war They received 337,500 sheep So divide that by 12 And you find out how many sheep each fellow got The Lord's tribute of the sheep was 675 Of the cattle, the soldiers got 36,000 The Lord's tribute

was 72 There were 30,500 donkeys The Lord's tribute was 61 And the persons, there were 16,000 in the one half Of which the Lord's tribute was 32, one in every 500 So he gave that to Elijah the priest as the Lord commanded Moses And then from the children of Israel They made also the one in 50 drawn from man and beast and gave it to the Levites Then we read the officers Who were over the thousands of the army and the captains The thousands of the captains and the hundreds came near to Moses And they said to Moses Your servants have taken account of the men of war Who are under our command And not a man of us is missing What's new?

Remember in the last skirmish in Lebanon Where the Israelis shot down 89 Syrian jets and lost none Here 12,000 men went out to war They numbered when the war was over and not one was missing Not even a missing in action Every single one of them came back Now these fellows recognized and of course remember The slaughter was tremendous of their 32,000 virgins that they brought back as captives Therefore we have brought an offering recognizing that God was with us We had divine protection That God delivered them into our hands We have brought an offering for the Lord What every man found of the ornaments of gold and armlets and bracelets and signet rings and earrings And the necklaces to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from them All of the fashioned jewelry, ornaments And all of the gold of the offering that they offered to the Lord From the captains of the thousands and captains of hundreds Was 16,750 shekels So that the shekel is a weight And there were 16,750 shekels The men of war had taken the spoil every man for himself And Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the captains of the thousands and hundreds Brought it into the tabernacle of meeting as a memorial for the children of Israel Before the Lord So God's great victory over the Midianites and his preservation of his people Now the children of Reuben That is the tribe of Reuben The children from the tribe of Gad Had a very great multitude of livestock And when they saw the land of Jezer and the land of Gilead That indeed the region was a place for livestock They came to Moses and to Eleazar And the leaders of the congregation And they said if we have found favor in your sight, verse 5 Let this land be given to your servants as a possession And do not take us over the Jordan And Moses said to the children of Gad, the children of Reuben Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here?

Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land Which the Lord has given them?

This is what your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol they saw the land They discouraged the heart of the children of Israel So that they did not go into the land which the Lord had given them So the Lord's anger was aroused on that day and he swore an oath saying Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt from 20 years old and above Shall see the land which I swore to give to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob Because they have not followed me Except for Caleb and for Joshua For these two have wholly followed the Lord So here's the situation, they've come now to the border of the promised land They have been wandering for 40 years as the result of their disobedience God had brought them to the border of the land

once before They had come to the place of the entering into the land And were ready to go in and take the land that God had promised to give them But the ten spies that brought back that evil report Discouraging the hearts of the people by telling them that it really wasn't a good land at all Telling them that the cities were huge fortified cities That the people that lived in them were giants, we were like grasshoppers in their sight And they can step on us and crush us, you know, we can't do it And their report struck fear in the heart of the people And of course the sister to fear is unbelief Fear always opens the door to unbelief

When I begin to look at the obstacles instead of to God I begin to fear and with the fear comes unbelief  
And the people began to cry and say why did we ever

follow Moses Why did we ever leave Egypt, let's get someone to lead us back to Egypt And the anger of  
the Lord was kindled against Israel and God declared That they would wander for 40 years until that whole  
generation Who at that time were 20 years old and above, that whole generation died And then your  
children which you said would be a prey to them They will be the ones that will be able to go in and take  
the land So now that 40 years is over That generation has died Moses is about the last one waiting now to  
die When the men, the elders of Reuben and Gad came to Moses and Eliezer And they said hey, we don't  
want to go over and possess that land We're satisfied here We like this land, look we're cattlemen, we've  
got a bunch of cattle And this is great cattle country And we just are

satisfied here Now Moses was afraid that their turning back at this point And not going in to take the land  
would bring discouragement to the rest of the tribes And he knew that if they did not go in at this point  
They could never survive another 40 years of just wandering and roaming And so Moses was alarmed  
And he really began to chide them for this decision Spiritually these people are like so many who are  
satisfied with their current spiritual development God is challenging you to go on in to a full commitment In  
to that life that God would have you to know and to experience That rich full life in the spirit But there are  
so many people who say hey man I'm satisfied, I've got all I want And they're not going on in their  
Christian walk They're not progressing There are many people

whose spiritual state is hit a plateau And they haven't developed spiritually for years They're still at the  
same level that they were 10-15 years ago There's been no spiritual development Really not to go forward  
in your Christian walk is to go backward Because God wants us to be going forward Paul the Apostle  
speaking of his own experience said I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended by  
Jesus Christ Neither do I count myself complete But for getting those things which are behind and  
reaching forth To those things which are before I press towards the mark For the prize of the high calling  
of God which is in Christ Jesus Now what was true of Paul should be true of each one of us I'm certain that  
all of us can declare I have not yet apprehended that for which I was

apprehended by Jesus Christ In other words God isn't through with me yet God still has more for me to do  
When God apprehended my life and called me unto himself He had in his mind a purpose and a plan for  
me That I was to fulfill for the kingdom's sake God knew exactly what he had in mind I had no idea But  
God knew exactly what he had in mind for me And for my service to him within the kingdom Now I have  
not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended I haven't yet completed that purpose and that plan  
that God has for my life I believe that had I completed it I would not be here God would take me home So I  
have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended Yet I'm pressing towards the mark I'm  
pressing on I want more of God I want more of God's work in my life I want more of

God's spirit in the control of my life So we come to the place, each of us Where we determine hey I'm  
satisfied here Or I want to go on and I want all that God has for me These people were satisfied with what  
they had already accomplished With the territory that they had already taken Hey this is great cattle  
country, we're cattlemen We're satisfied to stay here And there are too many Christians that are in that  
same category Hey this is great, I love it, it's good And they've hit a place of stagnation As far as their  
spiritual development goes Dangerous place to be It is interesting to note That when later the enemies  
came against the land The first tribes to fall were those on the other side of Jordan Because they didn't  
have the natural defenses of the Jordan River They were the first

to go into captivity And we remember at the time of Jesus When he got into a little ship with his disciples And they went to the other side of the sea To the country of who?

The Gadarenes, or those from the tribe of Gad And when they came over to the other side of the sea To the area of the Gadarenes There met them these two men Who were possessed by demons Who lived in caves near the city of Gadara Men who were so fierce That no one could approach them They could not be bound with chains They were sitting there among the rocks cutting themselves And weeping and screaming And when they came running at Jesus And the disciples Jesus commanded the spirits to come out And the men were delivered But we remember that the evil spirits went into a herd of swine That were nearby Now, the keeping, the raising of pigs Was an unlawful thing for an Israelite But these people had gotten so far from the Lord They were engaged in illegal traffic And when the demons went into the swine They ran down that steep bank in the Sea of Galilee So that the men of the city, the men of Gad Came to Jesus and they said Hey, would you mind leaving?

We don't want your kind of stuff around here Dangerous To not go on and possess all that God has for you All that God desires for you Dangerous Finding contentment in spiritual mediocrity I don't want to come short of any work that God is desiring to do in my life Nor do I want to come short of any work that God desires to do through my life Press in and take all that God has for you And they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details Simply call 1-800-272-WORD And phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Box 8000 Costa Mesa, California 92628 And be sure to include the call letters of this station with your correspondence And now, on behalf of The Word for Today We'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry With your prayers and financial support And be sure to join us again next time As Pastor Chuck Smith continues his verse-by-verse study Through the book of Numbers That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck Smith May the Lord be with you and watch over and keep you in His love As you continue to grow in your knowledge and understanding of Him May the Spirit of God just move upon your heart and life this week Drawing you closer to the Lord and in a greater commitment unto Him That you might experience the nearness and the fellowship of God day by day That you might have the wisdom of God imparted to you in your time of need That you might have the power of God to stand against the temptations That you might live this week a life of victory through Jesus Christ More than conquer through Him who loves you And who will keep you by His grace God be with you and God bless you In Jesus' name He tells the story of how God transformed the lives of ten men to reach the world Read the testimonies of Greg Laurie, Raul Reis, Mike McIntosh, John Corson, Skip Heitzik and others And see for yourself that if God can use these guys to spread the gospel worldwide Then God can use you too To read a sneak preview of the book online Visit [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org) Or call The Word for Today at 800-272-WORD I want to encourage you to check it out This just might be the book to change the life of a loved one Or even you Visit [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org) This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today In Costa Mesa, California

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