

A hand holding a wooden staff with a large wooden arrowhead and a bundle of colorful feathers tied to it. The staff is dark brown wood, and the arrowhead is a lighter, reddish-brown wood. The feathers are yellow, blue, and green. The hand is light-skinned and is gripping the staff firmly. The background is white.

MOSES

AND THE
SLAUGHTER
OF THE
MIDIANITES

*Sermon
Transcript by
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Moses and the Slaughter of the Midianites

Adrian Ebens

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Father in Heaven, as we study another passage of scripture that has challenged many people down the centuries we pray for Your guidance. We pray that You would bless us as we spend this time together. Thank You for all those online. I pray a blessing upon them and their families, their children. We thank You in Jesus name. Amen.

I want to try in this presentation to look at... I'm going to mainly spend time in one story, but I want to reference a number of stories that give us an intrigue into the final movements before one of the prophets or one of God's people died. I'm thinking particularly of the life of Moses and the actions that took place in his life just before he died. In particular, the story of the Midianites and what was essentially a genocide of the Midianite people except for little girls that were not sexually experienced. All the others were slaughtered and wiped out. How do we respond to this story?

The next story is a story of David. David, before he died, instructed his son to destroy some people that had really got under his skin during his reign. He ordered essentially, he didn't say, "you know what to do," but [he did say] "do not let him come down to the grave in peace." What kind of words are these from someone who is a follower of God?

We have the story of Elijah, that just before he is translated to heaven, he calls fire down from heaven and burns up a hundred and two men, turns them to ash upon the ground – and then he is translated. How do we understand these stories?

Of course, John the Baptist, who right before he dies begins to question whether Jesus is even the Messiah. Why would he do this right before he dies?

All of these stories play into part of a framework which I understand to be the “ministration of death” (2 Corinthians 3:7). That, as a person is nearing the close of their earthly life, that everything in that person's soul, their whole understanding, has to be brought out in the mirror in order for it to be confessed. This is the only way I can make sense of some of these stories; otherwise we have to believe that some of the most murderous actions that took place are rewarded with a place in heaven. That's what the Crusader mentality is in terms of our conquest of evil and the destruction of wickedness.

There are other comments I could make, but let's go to Numbers 31 and I just want to read through this story. With some of the tools... those of you who've been working with us over the last number of years, you will know that we have a number of tools as we read these stories to be able to begin to put them together and make sense of them. The alternative is not very palatable. Last night I was looking around on Quora website and there was lots of discussion about Numbers 31 and why would God allow this, why would He command these things to take place.

So let's read and it says, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.” What a wonderful task to perform right before the closing of your history. A man that had cared for sheep for much of his life is now apparently ordered to butcher and genocide a whole nation.

Now who are the Midianites? Midian was the son of Keturah, who was the second or third wife of Abraham. So this is a family feud, the Midianites. These are all the children of one man: Abraham. The name Midian means strife. Interesting, and there was strife. These are all children of one man, Abraham, and now it says “avenge the children of Israel”.

Now notice how it says, “the LORD spoke unto Moses saying avenge.” Who is being avenged? The children of Israel are being avenged. If you read it, let's go to the Youngs Literal Translation, notice what it says in verse 2 here: “execute **the vengeance of the sons of Israel** against the Midianites.” So whose vengeance is it? **Israel's vengeance**. So what is God speaking to Moses? What is He speaking to him? The desires of who? **Of their hearts**. He is speaking to them the desires of their heart. God is speaking to Moses in a mirror – this is what's inside the heart of the Israelites.

Now why have we come to this situation? Well, let's just read a little bit further, then we'll give a little bit more background on this story. I'll go back to the King James. Now notice what Moses says. God has said “execute the vengeance of the Israelites upon the Midianites,” but this is what Moses says. “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.’” How does Moses frame what he hears?

Congregation: He should have said exactly what God said to him, but he has twisted it to say that it's actually what God wants. So you are avenging God. That makes Israel feel like they are defending.

So now Israel's vengeance has become God's vengeance. Just reading the words here. Very interesting, isn't it? Then it goes on in verse 4: “Of every tribe ... throughout all of tribes of Israel, shall you send to the war.” Did God use the word “war”?

If we believe in one gospel, in one Bible, I want to cut this in here at this particular point because Paul talks about taking ‘vengeance’ in Romans 12:19. What does it say? “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay,’ saith the Lord.” Now people can argue and say, “but this is God's command; this is the Lord's vengeance.” But the Bible says that it is Israel's vengeance; it's not God's vengeance, and it says you are not to take vengeance. Do we see a problem?

Congregation: If you were to use Romans 12:19 as your answer, then you have just created a contradiction.

There's a contradiction in scripture where it says do not take vengeance and then do it because I told you to do it. That makes the Bible inconsistent. Now how do we give place to wrath? How is it that we are to wreak vengeance on our enemies? How do we do it? Next verse. "Therefore if thine enemy hunger," [what?] "feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in doing so thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

Do you think that there's a mirror? Because when God speaks in a mirror there's always a double understanding. In Numbers 31 they are thinking in the flesh, avenge yourself in the flesh. Could it be that God is actually wanting to speak to them in Spirit, that this is how you will avenge yourselves: you will bless these people, you will love these people, you all do good to these people. But that's something that's really, really difficult. Because what feelings ... if someone, and this is the question that we need to deal with because, before any of us are going to be translated, we have to solve this issue, we have to solve it.

Most of my teenage life the question was put to me in this paradigm, in this way: "If someone came into your house with a gun and was going to kill your family, would you just stand there like a pathetic, weakling and just let them do it? Or would you stand up and fight?" Ever had that put to you? It's a confronting situation because you love your family and of course you stand up and deliver yourself.

Congregation: The question is, how do you fight?

The question is how do you fight? How do you fight, in a situation like that? That is the question. So when the Midianites... Balaam executed this skilfully laid plan and he told them exactly how to bring down the Israelites: to send women in to get them to break the commandment on not to commit adultery and fornication. He knew what he was doing and he went and invited the Israelites because they revered him as a prophet, and he

seduced them and brought them to the worship of their gods and the women started coming in.

Moses was busy preparing as they were ready to go into the land of Canaan. You can read this in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. He's ready to go in and then these ratbags come in and take away the protection from Israel and 24,000 of them are destroyed of Moses' family. How would you feel? You touch my family, I will kill you. This is human nature. This is what we are like. This is how we operate. You touch my tribe, you touch my family, but hang on, aren't the Midianites family? What do you do when one of your children kills another one of your children? What do you do? So this is where it gets complex.

Back to back to Numbers 31:6, "And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand." Now they had the instruments from the sanctuary, they were ready to go to war.

Verse 7, very interesting. Very interesting language. "And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males." Is that as commanded Moses? What did God command? It says in verse 8, "and they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; *namely* Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with a sword." And good riddance Balaam for what you did to my people. Put the sword through it.

Verse 9, "And the children of Israel took *all* the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle and all their flocks, and all their goods." Now there's a smell starting to come up. There's something really smelly about this now like, "oh I thought this was just for the honour God," but now there's something really urrr [terrible] about what's being described here. "They're the booty, the spoil of war, we will take it to ourselves!" [What the Israelites were maybe thinking]

Verse 10, "And they burnt all the cities wherein they dwelled, and all the goodly castles." Nice KJV language. Don't think they had castles back then. "With fire. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp of the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho. And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp."

This gets even more interesting. This is challenging to read. "And Moses was wroth." Do you want to have a look at what that wroth is? Let's have a look at that. Verse 14. Let's go to KJV +. Wroth. Let's have a look at this. "To crack off, that is, (figuratively) burst out in rage, be angry, displeas, fret self, (provoke to) wrath (come), be wroth." Moses has a 'meltdown', we could say. We could go for the option 'displeased'. Moses was displeased... but the language suggests something different by what he does next, what he says next.

Verse 15, "And Moses said unto them, 'Have you saved all the women alive? Behold, these cause the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague amongst the congregation the LORD. Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.'" That's a really confronting passage of Scripture.

Is this the God of Jesus Christ? Is this what He commands? Is this the wroth... the wroth has Moses in a rage! Do we blame Moses for being in a rage? Would we be any different? [Suppose] some of your family members were taken and destroyed in a plague and you knew that there was an intentional plot to destroy you and to take you down and to destroy your family. Would we be any different? This is the test for us.

So we want to read a little bit of the *Spirit of Prophecy*, but before we go to the *Spirit of Prophecy* let's just remind ourselves of some of the principles. What are some of the principles that we've learned along the way in terms of understanding this type of story? Well, let's go to Exodus 23:28 and what does it say? How would God deal with these nations? Verse 27, "I will send my fear before thee, and [King James uses the word] destroy [it's actually to cause to tremble or to terrorize] all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their back unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee." To drive them out. What happened to this? Why didn't God just drive them out?

What was the event that took place in the next chapter that prevented that from taking place? Exodus 24:7, and so it says, "And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people: and they said, 'All that the LORD hath said we will do.'" That's the problem. These people are operating in the Old Covenant. No hornets, no fear. They don't get to be filled with the Holy Spirit to cause a vibration and a frequency that causes fear to those who are in a state of evil. They might have cleansed Canaan as Jesus cleansed the temple – in the same way. When Jesus cleansed the temple [the hard-hearted fled], but those who were weak and lame and maimed and in whatever state, they flocked to Jesus. The same would have happened for the Israelites. And all those that were seeking power and position and performance would have fled for their lives in terror. That's how God wanted them to take the land of Canaan, but it wasn't to be for them.

These are some of the principles that we are operating in. So when someone is operating in the Old Covenant, this is what happens. I want to read you this statement in the *Spirit of Prophecy*. Tina shared this with me and we need to pay careful attention to this. 14MR, page 147, paragraph 2, it says: "Man is worshiping the reflection of his own image. He is setting his own practices and the peculiar tendencies of his nature where God's law should be. This is the world picture. What is the representation in the

church?” Man is worshipping the reflection of his own image **and** he is setting his own practice and the peculiar tendencies of his nature where God's law should be. What was our inheritance? What did we inherit from Satan?

What justice system did we inherit from him [Satan]? CTR 11.4, “The condemning power of Satan would lead him to institute a theory of justice inconsistent with mercy. He claims to be officiating as the voice and power of God, claims that his decisions are justice, are pure and without fault. Thus he takes his position on the judgement seat and declares that his counsels are infallible. Here his merciless justice comes in, a counterfeit of justice, abhorrent to God.”

This is the justice system that we have all inherited. Did Moses operate in this justice system? Exodus 32:32. Let me show you. Here it is. In this most beautiful, beautiful demonstration of the love of God by Moses we still see the false justice system. “Yet now, if that wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou has written.” A beautiful demonstration of love in a bad framework, because he's saying, ‘if you cannot forgive this sin, if your justice is such that this sin cannot be forgiven, if you need a sacrifice, if you need to kill someone, then kill me.’

If that's what it takes to forgive them, take me – that I know is tremendously precious to you and you are tremendously precious to me – take me and sacrifice me. Within a false justice system framework, that's a beautiful thing to say. It's similar to Abraham who took his son, his only son, and offered him for a burnt offering, because the human mind, our concept of justice, demands punishment; it demands the death of the transgressor unless there can be found some atonement. This is how our mind operates.

So when we come to the story of the Israelites which began in Numbers 25, we see that in Verse 1, right on the borders of Canaan (and this is important for us; it's good to read over ‘Apostasy at the Jordan’, Chapter 41 of *Patriarchs and Prophets*). It says, “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they

called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods.” Has Adventism been called to the sacrifice of false gods? Right on the borders, yes, it has. “And the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.” Have we bowed down to their gods? Yes, we have.

“And Israel joined himself under Baalpeor:” Have we joined ourselves to Baalpeor? Yes, we have. “And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.’”

Why did God have to do this? Because of the justice system of man. Because man is worshiping his own image and that image demands death. When there is a violation that takes place, in order for the people to believe that God can forgive them, somebody has to die – otherwise the rest of the people are not able to believe that God will forgive them. That's why this had to take place, because there was no other way in our justice system operating back then for these people to believe that God could forgive them. They were excommunicated from heaven because of their actions and they knew it in their own minds.

Congregation: In this case it wasn't just enough to kill them, but they actually had to hang up the heads too.

They had to hang up their heads because this was the tradition; this is how they did things, and it had to be seen that retribution had been meted out. This is the serpent upon the pole, so these leaders in this apostasy were hung up like a serpent on a pole for all to see. And when the people looked on this, they were healed of the belief that they couldn't be forgiven. Do you see? The same story, just in a different garment.

God had to walk this path with Israel, but what of those who did this to them? Because not all of Israel died, but how many the Israelites were involved in this apostasy? Wasn't the majority of Israel involved?

Congregation: It says Israel... [as in all of Israel]

It says Israel, doesn't it? The people. So some may not have been directly involved in sexual immorality, but others were enjoying it; they went to the party, they got involved, but they didn't do excessive sinfulness. But they were still joined to Baalpeor. How then are they going to get atonement for themselves? How will they get atonement? By taking vengeance on the Midianites. In destroying and offering up the Midianites as a sacrifice they find atonement. They turn away the fierce anger of the Lord which they imagine He has against them.

But what is the anger of the Lord? What does the Bible tell us that the anger of the Lord is? To let man have what He desires (while God grieves that it has come to this). That's God's anger. But man imagines that God is fiercely angry and He's going to break off in a rage against the Israelites. So the only way to appease God was to offer up the Midianites as a sacrifice, and then they could believe that God could forgive them. So God had to surrender the Midianites to the wrath of the Israelites in order for the Israelites to believe they could be forgiven.

I want you to notice something. It's not just a hapless, oh well God just gives them up. This is not how God works. We need to go to the *Spirit of Prophecy* and we need to read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 456.

Congregation: Was it not the leadership that went to the false worship of Moab?

The leadership, yes; the princes, yes, they went, absolutely.

Patriarchs and Prophets, page 456. "God had sent judgments upon Israel for yielding to the enticements of the Midianites; but the tempters were not to escape the wrath of divine justice." Divine justice. Interesting, isn't it? How do we read 'this is divine justice'? "The Amalekites, who had attacked Israel at Rephidim, falling upon those who were faint and weary behind the hosts, were not punished till long after; but the Midianites who seduced them into sin were speedily made to feel God's judgments, as being the more dangerous enemies. 'Avenge the children of Israel of the

Midianites', was the command of God to Moses; 'afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.' This mandate was immediately obeyed." Interesting language.

"One thousand..." And it talks about those that were chosen and those that were slain and then it says this down the next paragraph, "Such was the end of them that devised mischief against God's people. Says the psalmist: 'The heathen are sunk down in the **pit that they made.**'" That's interesting language, they sunk down in the pit which they had made. I want you to notice carefully, "'in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.' Psalm 9:15. 'For the Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness.'" She puts, "When men", then she quotes again, "'gathered themselves together against the soul of the righteous,' the Lord 'shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off.'"

And I want you to notice the next little word – what is it? "Cut them off..." what? "'Cut them off **in** their own wickedness.'" It doesn't say "**for** their own wickedness," it says "**in** their own wickedness." Is there a difference? Their own wickedness comes back upon them. Sounds like natural consequences of the decisions that they have made. God allows sin to punish sin. He allows the sin of the Israelites to punish the sin of the Midianites. He allows a natural course to take place and this is how God's judgments work. This is what Exodus 20:5 tells us, "I the LORD thy God" and it says "am" but it should be translated "become a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

So God brought to the minds of the Israelites – to their internal thought process – their murderous designs towards the Midianites. He confronted them with it to see how they would react. Either way God's judgments would be satisfied. Whether the Israelites confessed their own sinfulness and then they were filled with the Spirit which then drove out the Midianites, or that the Israelites refused to allow the Spirit of God to come

into them and they've thought in the flesh and destroyed the Midianites. Either way, justice was done, as Israel understood it, in order that they could believe they could be forgiven; and the Midianites received the consequences of their own choice process. God is not mocked. As a man sows, so shall he also reap.

It's very important language, very important language. The *Spirit of Prophecy* gives us the context. It doesn't say God killed them **for** their wickedness, He said He took them **"in** their wickedness." I think that's an important distinction that we should make on this particular story.

Congregation: While Israel believes that God is a God of punitive justice... You read that "he hung them up before the Lord," that is the heads, correct? That was in Numbers 25:4 and it says there in the KJV, it says "and hang them up before the Lord against the sun," but in the Young's Literal Translation it says "hang them up before Jehovah--over-against the sun", so is that an irrelevant statement that "it is hung up before the sun" or is in the eyes of Israel, God the Sun, like the same principles as the Sun God? Because I remember in Ezekiel it says that they were worshipping towards the Sun and the principles of the Sun are, of course, the principles of Satan's Kingdom. I thought it was interesting the way that's written there.

They were not unmindful of Ra, the Sun God. It's possible.

Another element of this that I found interesting was in verse 16... because God speaks to Moses and we look at verse 16 it says, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 'Vex the Midianites, and smite them: for they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.'"

Now God says to vex them and to smite them. How does Christ smite His enemies? Isaiah 11:4 it says, "But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He

slay the wicked.” Now that's an Old Testament passage, so when God says “vex the Midianites and smite them”, could there be an alternative reading to this?

Is there a spiritual understanding to this? How to vex them? But, of course, God knew they would interpret it in the flesh. He knew they would take the fleshly understanding of this. How can He give us His flesh and His blood to drink? That's crazy. He must mean, ‘kill them.’ That's what He means. So the Bible does provide a different understanding of these stories.

I want to read you another passage. We want to because anyone who's going to read this story who is opposed to what we're saying is going to read this, so we will read it for them and save them the trouble. *Selected Messages Book 2*, page 333 and in the previous paragraph, Balaam had sold the children of Israel for a reward, so that's the story it's talking about. Then it says, “The Lord is regarded as cruel by many in requiring His people to make war with other nations. They say that it is contrary to His benevolent character. But He who made the world, and formed man to dwell upon the earth, has unlimited control over all the works of His hands, and it is His right to do as He pleases...” So don't you cavil against what He says and what He pleases with the works of His hand. “Man has no right to say to his Maker, ‘Why doest Thou thus?’”

So the person who is saying that God is cruel and then, believing that God is cruel, is then saying “why doest Thou thus?” This is who she is talking to. Are we operating in this capacity in our understanding of this passage? No, we don't believe God is cruel. We believe that God operates according to His principles. He has a reason for everything He does. We believe this. We accept this. There are reasons why this happened, and we don't consider God cruel for confronting Israel with their sinfulness by putting them in the mirror and allowing sin to punish sin. That's not cruel. Because Midian was taken in the works of their own hands. This is what came upon them by their own decision and their own process. It was a case of natural

consequences for what they had done. They know what the response would be so this is nothing untoward.

But people interpret this passage... when we say that God is not the one that is represented in these commands, but man is represented as a mirror for reflecting back to him; they quote this quote and slap it on our foreheads and say this applies to you. I'm sorry, it doesn't. Because this is referring to those who consider God cruel for what they consider are God's actions in the destruction and the genocide of the Midianites.

Congregation: Actually, we don't think God's actions are arbitrary. People who think that God just commands destruction, that's arbitrary.

That's arbitrary. So we just needed to address this particular quote. There is no injustice in His character. He is the ruler of the world and a large portion of His subjects have rebelled against His authority and have trampled upon His law and, when you trample upon God's law and you place yourself outside of his protection, you will die. That's justice. That's fair. But it's not God who is doing this with His hand. God is not mocked. He will allow these things to take place, and He will allow these things and it causes Him tremendous grief. It comes at great cost to Him personally to see His children butchered in this way. But He's willing to do it. He has the courage of character to allow men to receive the consequences of their own choices, and I fully support Him in this.

So it says [continuing 2SM 333], "He has bestowed upon them liberal blessings, and surrounded them with everything needful, yet they have bowed to images of wood and stone, silver and gold, which their own hands have made. They teach their children that these are the Gods that give them life and health, and make their lands fruitful, and give them riches and honor. They scorn the God of Israel. They despise His people, because their works are righteous. 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works' (Psalm 14:1). God has born with them until they filled up the measure of their iniquity, and then He has brought upon them swift destruction."

How does He bring upon them swift destruction? He lets the Angels that are holding back the winds, He lets them go. “Oh well, that's proof that God did it. God is the one that killed them.” Then your Bible is contradicting itself, because God says avenge not yourselves but give place to wrath. And how do you do that? Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.

Jesus showed us how to wreak vengeance and war on our enemies, and that was to resist not evil but to love those who persecute us, and to do good for them. This is how God wages his war against sin and sinfulness.

So we see that He has used His people as instruments of wrath. God's wrath is what? We've read this in *Acts of our Gentle God*, chapter 13. **God's wrath is to allow circumstances to play themselves out.** This is God's wrath. In His wrath in allowing the Israelites to carry out their rebellion and reflecting back to them their own wrath, the wrath of Israel, God brings His purposes to pass; but it is not God who killed the Midianites. All things have worked in a way to bring things as they ought to be.

I just needed to address that passage because people will misquote it and miss-state it, as other statements that are misquoted to say [these] statements [are against us] that are [actually] aimed at universalist positions. We're not saying that all men will be saved. We're not saying that because God is so loving all men are going to go to heaven. That's nonsense.

Congregation: Actually this show us how hard it is for men to be saved. This process that God has to go through [with us].

Yes, this process that we go through. And this is the point in terms of Moses coming to the end of his career. We see the same challenge that he faced at the end of his life as he faced at the beginning of leaving Egypt, and that was when his family was attacked, he reached for the sword. And that's the issue that was brought out in the life of Moses just before he died. The commands, because God said... we have to come back [to Numbers 31].

Let's read this carefully in Numbers 31. What did God actually say? “Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites.” How does Moses interpret these

words? Moses says, “arm some of yourselves.” This is what he said to Joshua back with the Amalekites in the beginning, “arm yourselves.” This is the interpretation of what he understands. Can we blame him for this? No, we wouldn't do any different. We would have had no capacity to know any different from this. We would have done exactly the same. “Arm some of yourselves unto war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.”

Congregation: I guess this is the difficulty isn't it? The fact that the loss of life that occurs. A lot of people having trouble with this. The fact that God will give instruction which He knows His children will misunderstand and young children are going to lose their life, and he knows it. And it's put on Him as though He's the one instigating it. He knew that ultimately that they would interpret it that way. It makes it very difficult to understand why would God give such an instruction if He knows these people are going to follow and thereby bring a child to an end.

This is why the mirror principle is so important, because God only commands that which is in the heart of man – in order to cause sin to abound. That's why. There's no other way to explain this satisfactorily unless you want to believe that God commands the genocide of little children. Apart from the fact that, when Moses says, the young women that have not known a man, keep for yourselves. Keep those beautiful young women from Midian and keep them for yourselves. Use them for your own sexual pleasure. Is this what the God of Israel says?

Congregation: That's that part that I can't understand, Adrian. That's the bit that makes no sense. The very problem occurred when the Midianite women came into the camp, and then you end up with allowing them to come into the camp! That makes no sense at all.

It doesn't make any sense and, of course, Moses, in reasoning the process through, is trying to give the best solution. He knows that anyone that's already “experienced,” they need to be gone because it's going to take

Israel down. It's the justice system of man. This is how man deals with these situations. When he [man] has said, "all that the Lord has said, we will do."

Congregation: We know when countries go to war, women and children... we have standards of warring. It's not according to God's standards. There is a standard that man has. We can't kill the women and the children.

Congregation: Yeah but it gets done, doesn't it? And then it gets justified.

When you... the worship of the god, Shiva, and when they dropped those atom bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Children were wiped out. No one spared them. As it as it was said by Oppenheimer, one of the architects, he said, he appealed to the god Shiva. He said in tears, 'you know we didn't want to do this but in order to save the many, we had to kill the few.' It's a sacrificial principle. It's expedient that a few die that the many don't perish. This is human justice. This is human understanding.

The Americans didn't want hundreds and thousands of their young boys to die, so they wiped out 200,000 Japanese with one bang. That's human justice. In a human system that makes perfect sense, doesn't it? Apart from the cost of war and the attrition and everything that's involved. No! Bang, just kill them and then it's done. They will bow down and worship.

Congregation: From God's point of view, the Japanese, they refused to surrender, and so it's all natural consequence.

Natural consequence, because they refused to surrender. Satan hardened the Japanese and their resolve to resist so that they would die, because He wanted to kill them all. We are reminded that the Spirit of Prophecy tells us that "if Satan could, he would wipe out every son and daughter of Adam." He doesn't play favourites. He only keeps people alive long enough to use them and then when he's done with them, he bumps them off. He destroys them. That's how Satan operates.

So we see in the closing scenes of Moses's life, we look in the mirror, we see ourselves. We see our justice system. We see a man operating

according to natural justice, and it challenges us. God reveals this to us so that when we read the law, when we read the Torah, we can see ourselves. This is what humanity does when it's placed in this situation. This is how it deals with it. It genocides people; it wipes them out because they are a threat to my family.

This is where we contrast [ourselves with God]. When Lucifer was beginning to spread his lies – and you try and comprehend and understand this – God knew exactly what Lucifer was doing. Why didn't He isolate Lucifer and separate him from the rest of the angels? Why did it get to the point where all of the angels were influenced by what Satan was thinking? Why did He let that predator stay within His family? Why didn't He kill him? Because it's not God. It's not how He operates. It's not His character.

Congregation: That's ultimately going to be that difficulty, isn't it? No matter how you come at this so-called argument (and I don't like using that term), but so matter have you come at this subject, ultimately, if you come to the conclusion that there comes a time when God says it's no point anymore, then you have to ask the question, ultimately, then why not just wipe them out in the beginning?

Why do at the end, after the death and destruction and misery of billions of people? Why couldn't you just have done that in the beginning if that's your character?

Congregation: If you're going to destroy anyway, do it in the beginning and just start again.

Do it in the beginning. Just march Satan out and blow his head off because that's what he deserves. Because he's now become the serpent. He's now become the devil and he's affecting our family. But Lucifer was God's son. He was beloved of the Father. That's the difficulty. And how is it that, amongst the family of God, that two nations [Israelites and Midianites] of the one father [Abraham] can get to the point where they would kill each other like this. They've come from one family – one family! – and they can

kill each other's little children. All the males amongst them, all the boys, all the baby boys, kill them. They said these are their cousins...

The Torah shows us human nature. It shows us what we are like. It shows us – this is what's in your nature and this is what I'm going to rescue you from. This is what I'm confronted with when we're dealing with... [For example] you're operating on an online environment, and in an online environment where people can try and come in and they start spreading things that are contrary to what we believe, these impulses arise. We don't have to use swords; we can just use the "I'm removing this person from this group. You're gone. We don't want you anymore." Does God do that? How do we deal with that? But then we'll let this person run amok and put all their filth and nonsense in the group and start to seduce people... And what if people get lost and they start to give up the beliefs that we hold? Are you going to just stand there and do nothing? This is the challenge isn't it.

What about people that are operating online, operating within the group, and you've got someone there that's just a complete ignoramus. They are so stupid. They keep saying the most dumb things. Just get rid of them!

Congregation: You're expressing a mirror there. I'm just putting it out there. Just so it doesn't get clipped off and implied that you're ...

Of course. Thank you. It's going to get clipped off anyway. Because you take all those clips of my nature, and people can point to all those things within my nature, and all the *Melanchthons*¹ amongst you can hang me up high and cut my head off – because I'm not like that [not like Pastor Adrian, not like the Israelites] .

Congregation: Adrian, given that we have an Unfriend button which is a polite way of destroying someone. If we didn't have that and instead there was a trigger in our hand, the question obviously is, would we pull it? And I was thinking about, because we're speaking of Israel, it's like, what would

¹ Companion to Martin Luther that was softer in tone and approach to Luther

have happened if the brothers of Joseph had have continued to be able to thrive on a hatred for him? Would it only have been Simeon [and Levi] who would have expressed his disdain for his brother in wanting to kill him? Because they all hated him [Joseph]. They all hated him. They were all very happy to put him down a hole, but at this point in time their character had not developed to the point where they were comfortable with taking his life. But how much longer would it have taken before they all would have gone, 'yeah just get rid of him?'

Exactly, and we are going to go back to that story. That issue of someone in their family that is a troubler of Israel. They need to get sacrificial atonement. They need to get rid of him and then peace will come into the family... because of this foolish dreamer [there was trouble in Israel]. It caused them tremendous trauma and they caused their father [tremendous trauma too]. To have to walk past their father's tent and listen to him sobbing, day after day, and you being reminded of how you've deceived him – and you sit there in your silence saying nothing. How can you live with yourself? You have to become iron and brass.

Congregation: And you become a brotherhood in evil because you are binding that sin amongst you to keep it hidden.

Yes, you become bandits. So please, this is the core issue in Numbers 31. It really speaks directly to us. It has direct implications for us within our group. Because of the potential for false teaching and false understanding to come in, and how do we deal with that? How do we deal with those issues? How do we deal with people that don't believe like we believe? How do we take vengeance? How do we get vengeance on those that seek to come in and destroy us for what we believe?

Congregation: This other way of vengeance, this Godly vengeance, this resisting not evil with love and doing good for them, it's hard for us even to visualize how that works.

How does this work? How do we do this? Well we have to look at Jesus, don't we? Have to look at the pattern man as to how we do this. But as I'm reading these stories and I see how Moses is dealing with these things, and then I look at myself and the emotions that come up within my heart when people that are dear to us no longer walk with us, and they consider us the enemy, and they consider us children of the devil; and the pain that that creates. I see that I'm just like Moses. Just like him. I would do exactly the same as him, but for the grace of God.

And some say, "Oh, Adrian, you would?" [To those I say] are you even awake to what's inside your own heart? This is the point of corporate repentance. That this is what we are. This is what is in our natures. As I was praying to God last night and this morning, I still believe You can deliver me from this Egypt. This Egypt of false justice. This Egypt of desiring sacrificial atonement and destroying those who want to destroy my family and my people. You did it for Moses; you can do it for me. You can give me that new heart. You can take this heart of stone that I feel is bashing away inside my head; and you can give me a heart of flesh, so that I can love my enemies. And I can do good to those that persecute me and seek to destroy those that are close to me.

Congregation: It seems that a lot of the stories in the Old Testament like this one just really show the foolishness of the way that we deal with these issues. Our nature is to want to eliminate that person who is being nasty to us or whatever. But it doesn't bring the peace that you're seeking. (It doesn't bring the peace). It then brings more turmoil within yourself. The only way is Jesus' way of doing it to get peace. It's the only way. (It's the only way, but we are not like this) But, no, we aren't. It's within all of us that when we've had people slight us or hurt us, well we just want to get rid of them. (We don't want to talk to them anymore). Like at some level of consciousness, you just want to remove them out of your life and so you take that to the nth degree where you want them dead. Really that's logical. It's the logic conclusion of that way of thinking.

Exactly. Some do it very directly and confrontationally. Others are passive in their aggression, really devious; and they're always sticking the knife in your 5th rib without you even knowing what's going on. Just leave you wondering, you know, with weird stuff and your head spinning around saying, 'why did they say that?'

Then there's the narcissists and the gaslighters and all those that are seeking revenge for something that has happened in the past, because 'you violated me and I will get my revenge.' This is what all of us are dealing with, and the place where this happens more than probably anywhere else is in the marriage relationship... where the war goes on. You did this to me and I will undercut you. I will take the opportunity to cut you down in front of other people. Very gently, very subtly, and that is the great tragedy of this.

The passion that you hear in my voice is my sorrow that I am like this. And so, I went to Exodus 6 this morning and I said, "Father, You said that You were going to take me out of Egypt. You said that You were going to change me. You said that You were going to do these things. I lay down in Your arms and I believe that You are going to do it. I'm so sorry that I am what I am and that I've caused You this grief all these years. I have been worshiping my own image and I've been putting it on to You. Like Satan, my forefather, I have worked mischief by the law. I've used a justice system to cut down those who would seek to harm me and my family, and I want to be free of these things."

In this time leading up to Pentecost, I choose to believe. I choose to believe that God can make me a new creature in Christ Jesus. You can't be made a new creature until you know who Christ Jesus is. 1. the Son of the Living God; 2.-that He is wholly harmless and undefiled, He has never harmed any person. If you do not know these things you can never leave Egypt. You will stay in the furnace and you'll be burnt completely out and there'll be nothing left.

I'm tremendously challenged by this. Even with issues that we deal with at the present time in terms of the growth of our message and people that are coming in, and people that are coming in that don't have an understanding. They didn't come in in the beginning of the message and they don't understand some things and then they assert themselves in ways that go, "look you have no understanding", and the temptation comes up again: "Who do you think you are? Like, where were you in the beginning of this movement?" All the natural justice processes try to kick in, and all the defensive mechanisms, and all the protectiveness. I can feel the temptation to all those things and I can look at Saul, and Ruben will talk about Saul this afternoon, and I could see if time were to go on and the power was available to me, I would be just like Saul.

God help me. God deliver me from this. Thank God for the Torah and the prophets that show us what we are like. That show us what we can become. We won't take the time to go and look at the story of David, but you see the same thing. David, he had Shimei, when he was leaving Jerusalem and Shimei was there throwing stones at David, calling "you bloody man, you are getting everything that you deserve." That's what he said, and Joab and Abishai said, "I'll go and fix that dog;" and he [David] said, "don't touch him." But when Solomon was made king, he [David] said, "don't let Shimei go down to the grave without blood." Revenge. It was still there on his deathbed.

Congregation: The first sentiment, it was so noble.

What happened to that nobleness? In the night seasons, at 4:00 o'clock in the morning, he's remembering those stones that were being thrown at him and his mind is turning around and thinking, "why did I let that guy get away with that?"

Congregation: Because his guilt was great. His self-condemnation, he kept that suppressed. When that was gone ...

The old man came out. And Joab who slew Abner and gave him a tough time, he said deal with him. In Solomon you can read it. When Solomon came to power, bang, bang, they were killed, wiped out. Man's justice system, all in the name of God. This is what we're dealing with. This is what Elijah was dealing with.

This is the beautiful thing; as we see in the closing scenes of the life of Moses, we see the genocide, almost genocide, except for the little girls, almost genocide of the Midianites – and then Moses dies and then he is shortly after taken to heaven. Because he's confronted with his own justice system and the Spirit of God that is able to speak to him and tell him and all Moses has to do is repent and plead for that new heart – and it's given to him.

Congregation: But what did he have to see in the vision that he saw from the mount? He saw that everything that he had done was, as it were, worthless.

Everything he saw, everything worthless. As he was on Mount Nebo, he saw: “everything I've done is stained with my false understanding of the character of God.”

And Elijah, before he's translated, he burns up those men. He was told God is not in the fire. He was told God is not in the thunder, not in the earthquake, not in the wind. But when he was challenged, what happened? It came out.

So this is the test for us, brothers and sisters, and I want you to - as much as you're able - listen very carefully. In the days ahead, you're going to see things come out in your character that will almost destroy you. And I tremble when I say this. I don't want to deny my Lord. I don't want to be like the disciples. It said all the disciples forsook him and fled. That's what it says. “Oh not me Lord, though all men will forsake you, I'm not going to forsake you.” Have we learned nothing?

The days just ahead of us are going to reveal elements in our characters but I want you to remember this, that God is ever merciful and that He does not condemn us and He only reveals these things in us to give us the opportunity so that we can say, “Father forgive me, forgive me for what I've done”; or the other alternative is to call for the rocks and the mountains to fall on you because you have judged yourself unworthy of eternal life. You have determined to hang on to your false justice system and wreak death upon yourself.

There is no superhuman prophet. There is no one in Bible history that can say, “I have done a good job”. None of us. Everything that we have done... we are unprofitable servants because of this false justice system that is still part of us. I feel it in my life and I am yearning, I'm groaning and yearning for a deeper experience.

So this is the appeal once again for the corporate repentance. How much suffering is our false just system cause the Son of God? How much agony does He go through? Not just for people in the world, but with us, with our irritations and our frustrations and our annoyances. We have a much greater work to do; and I repeat this once again: if we think we know anything because of what we know about the character of God, we know nothing as we ought to know.

When we do the work of repentance and we spend that time – and I'm praying to all of us to come into this experience – that when we look at the life of Moses that we see ourselves, when we look at the life of Elijah we see ourselves, when we look at John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets. That when he was come into a difficult situation, he began to doubt and he lost his faith almost in the Messiah. Could this be us? “All these things were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor 10:11). This could be our situation. Someone in a dark dungeon cell thinking, “why am I forsaken? Why have I been left? Maybe this was all a lie; maybe this was all wrong...” And you are tempted to give up your faith.

Remember this presentation is my prayer. And so I want to just kneel and pray. Leave any comments that you want in the description there and please pray about these things. Let us kneel before our Father.

Father in Heaven, Lord, we feel unworthy to come into Your presence. We come through the blood of Christ. Our false justice system. We hear the words, "ye are of your father the devil. You seek not the things of God but the things of men. You think that you worship Me but you worship yourself in your false justice system, in your irritation and your annoyance about what other people do."

Lord Jesus, deliver us. We remember Your covenant that You made Father, with Your Son, to deliver Your people and that You will give us a new heart. You will write Your Torah on our hearts so that we can be wholly harmless and undefiled; and when men seek to threaten us and to harm us, we can turn to You and say Father give us Your Spirit. Let us wreak vengeance on our enemies by loving them and doing good to them and being kind to them and taking the cross and carrying it when it hurts and it causes us pain. We can't do this. We cannot do this in ourselves, but you can do this in us and through us and I believe this with all my heart. I thank you in Jesus name. Amen.

Moses

and the Slaughter of the Midianites

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.'
Numbers 31:3

This is a tough story to read. It challenges our senses, if we let it.

And Moses said unto them, 'Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.' Numbers 31:15-18

This begs the question. Does this represent God's justice and vengeance? This presentation seeks to align this story with the command of Jesus to love your enemies and do good to them.