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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1839 ~ Five Girls ask for Justice.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

The Bible book of Numbers takes its name from the second census held just before the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land of Canaan. The first census had been taken 38 years earlier when the first generation of Israelites were about to set out from Mount Sinai to take possession of Canaan, as listed in Numbers, Chapter 1. The purpose of that census was to count every man who was 20 years or older and suitable for going to war on Israel's behalf. The number of men counted for each of the 12 Israelite tribes is given in Chapter 1.

Now that Israel was again close to the border of Canaan and preparing to enter the land promised to them by God, God instructed Moses to conduct a second census in Numbers, Chapter 26. This new census was to determine how many men were available for Israel's army and how much land needed allotting to each of Israel's twelve tribes.

This second census should be seen as a record of God's faithfulness to the Israelites, in spite of the people's unfaithfulness to Him and His judgment on them to wander the bleak wilderness for 40 years while waiting to cross into Canaan. In spite of these events, the number of able-bodied male Israelites in the second census had remained almost the same to the number from the first census. This meant that the Israelites were in the same position to conquer Canaan as they'd been at the time of the first census. Israel's military strength had been preserved and God hadn't abandoned His people. And the promise to give them the land of Canaan also remained in place. God does everything that He says He will do; His word never fails.

The area of land that each tribe would inherit depended on the number of men in the tribe, with the larger tribes getting more land. However, the location of each tribe's land was to be chosen by casting lots, so that each tribe had an equal chance of getting the best land. Everything was appointed under God's sovereign control and He decided where each tribe would be located.

The Levites were counted separately to the other 11 tribes, as they weren't required to fight or receive any allocation of land. Instead, they were to receive cities, so that they wouldn't be distracted from their full-time jobs of looking after the Tabernacle of God. Christians today who are called to full-time service must avoid being caught up with the affairs of this world.

Some of the names in Chapter 26 are very familiar: Moses' parents are both listed; two of the men in Korah's rebellion are named; as well as Perez, an ancestor of King David (known as Israel's greatest king) and also King David's greater descendent or Son, who is Jesus Christ, the King of Kings.

Between these 2 censuses are 38 wasted years of aimless wandering in the desert due to disobedience and disbelief in God's protection, leadership and faithfulness. The Israelites missed God's plan for them, as well as God's blessing, by not trusting Him. This is a warning to Christian churches in our times. We Christians need to step out in faith and obedience as God calls us to, and move forward in God's plan for us and His Kingdom. As we do so, God will go ahead of us.

As the second census was being taken, a dispute arose between five daughters of Zelophehad and the census-takers. These women wanted to inherit their father's entitlement of land in the allocation process, but were prevented from doing so because they were women.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

The Lord is concerned about the rights of every individual; He's the defender of the weak, the orphans and widows. So when these daughters of Zelophehad found Moses and they asked him about the unfairness of their family being cut off from receiving any land, Moses took the matter to the Lord to ask Him what he should do about it. It was already apparent from the early books of the Old Testament that women didn't have the same equal rights with men when it came to matters of inheritance. Women in Israel usually didn't inherit property, nor in a sense did they need to. They were expected to marry and come under the protection and authority of their husband and in that way, share in his blessings.

The Lord was concerned with the placement of everyone in His 'promised land.' Canaan was to be the historic representation of the kingdom of God on earth; and men and women were to share equally in the blessings of that kingdom – just as they will share equally in the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven one day too. But what happened if a man had no sons?

In the case of Zelophehad's five daughters, the ground of their appeal was that without land, their family name would disappear, even though their father was not guilty of any rebellion against the Lord. However, Zelophedhad had died in the wilderness, along with the rest of his generation who were not allowed to enter the Promised Land. Therefore, said his daughters, his name shouldn't be blotted out but rather, they should be entitled to an inheritance by the allocation of land.

The Lord judged in the daughters' favour and He extended His ruling to cover all cases where there were no immediate heirs. In Numbers, Chapter 36, the subject of the inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad came up again. If these five women married into another tribe, their inheritance of land would be counted with the other tribe's inheritance. So to prevent this, the rule was made that these five women were only allowed to marry a man from their own tribe.

Over the years, many Christian women have worked in the Lord's ministries alongside their husbands to enable a much greater harvest for the kingdom. But a number of single women have also done amazing things through the guidance and help of God's Holy Spirit. One such person was Ida Scudder, who was born in India in 1870 to an American medical missionary family. From the age of six, Ida had the job of sharing out pieces of bread to starving Indian children during a famine in the land. Each child received so little to ward off their hunger pains but the little was better than them having nothing to eat at all.

With her father in poor health, Ida's family returned to America. Ida loved the comforts of America where there was always plenty of food to go around. This made Ida decide that she would never return to India; she wanted to live an easy life in the land of plenty. Ida grew up and went to a women's Christian college. When her class was about to graduate, the group members spoke of future plans: thoughts of getting married and settling down. Ida too had dreams of a secure life with her own 'Mr Right' in America.

But bad news came from her parents, who had returned to their work in South India. Ida's mother was now quite ill and her father needed her to come and care for her.

"You're going to become a missionary just like the rest of your family," teased one of the many other graduates. Ida's anger flared. "Oh, no I won't! I will never be a missionary. As soon as she's better, I'll be heading right home to America."

Once back in India, 21-year-old Ida helped her parents in their mission work. The letters from her college friends arrived, telling their news of boyfriends and parties. Ida felt so homesick for America. She was feeling sorry for herself one evening when she heard some footsteps outside on the veranda. When Ida went out, a young Hindu man stood there.

"My wife is having our first baby and something is wrong," he blurted out. "I was told you could help."

"I'm no doctor, but my father is. He'll help your wife."

The young man's face fell in sadness. "Our religion does not permit a man to even look at my wife's face." Ida implored him, "But without my father's help, she may die!" In disbelief, Ida watched the man's sad eyes drop to the floor as he turned to leave, whispering, "All is lost."

That night, another Hindu man came to Ida with the same request. He refused her father's help for the same reason. A Muslim also came, seeking help for his pregnant wife. When Ida gave him the same explanation, he replied, "If you cannot help me, then it is better that my wife die, rather than be seen by a strange man." With that, he bowed and left.

Ida spent a sleepless night praying for guidance. She felt she met God that night, and He was calling her to abandon her plans and follow Him. The next morning, Ida learned that all three women had died during the night. These senseless deaths occurred all because there was no female doctor. As a little girl, Ida hadn't had enough bread to feed the starving children, and now she knew there was a way to help such hurting women.

So Ida prayed out aloud, "God, if You want me to stay in India, I will spend the rest of my life trying to help these women." Once Ida chose to follow God's call, Ida never looked back. She returned to America to attend medical college and in 1900, Doctor Ida Scudder returned to India, ready to begin her work. She found on her return that her father was very sick and steadily growing worse. She told her father that she couldn't work on her own and hoped that he would stay there to help her. But her father thought that he would take a long time to recover any strength. So Ida set up a small clinic in the mission house and very soon, poor women came to be treated by her. It wasn't long before Ida became well known and needed a larger place for her clinic.

A hospital was built by 1902. Most of the patients were women who wouldn't have otherwise received any medical treatment at all. Ida found that for some in need of medical attention, the superstitions the people believed in were keeping them from coming to the hospital in time. She thought of a way to resolve this problem and so Ida made trips with an ox and wagon full of medical supplies, travelling to remote villages to treat the people where they lived. She would always pray with those that she visited, and ask them if they had any questions about Jesus or Christianity.

Ida set her mind to train Indian women as nurses and doctors so that they could help themselves. Though no one at first believed the women would be able to pass the final doctor's exam, Ida pressed on. When the scores were finally given out, all 14 of her students had passed! Ida's dreams of teaching the Indian women to help themselves were becoming a reality.

Ida also helped start a Christian medical college and hospital, which is today known around the world for its excellent research, healthcare and disease prevention. There, Bible classes are held in nine different languages and chaplains pray with patients. Dr Ida Scudder, who once promised never to work in India, left a legacy after she died that continues to touch millions of lives each year. Ida passed into the presence of her Lord in 1960, at the age of 89.

How we should praise God for such an example of a dedicated life lived for Him helping those in great need! In Proverbs 16, Verse 3, it says: "Commit your work to the Lord and then it will succeed."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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