

Read the Whole Bible with Pastor

Monday (April 17) – Numbers 25

Since Balaam couldn't curse Israel and make money, he instead suggested to the Midianites and Moabites that they seduce Israel through idolatry and adultery (see Numbers 31:16). The Moabite and Midianite women seduced the Israelite men and got them to worship the Canaanite fertility god Baal. Part of worshipping Baal included fornication. The worship of Baal seemed a lot more fun and pleasurable than the very formal and organized religion of the true God in the tabernacle. Christians still suffer from this temptation to worship God in ways that may seem more fun or pleasurable, or even follow other religions that look more appealing to our sinful hearts.

Even the chiefs and leaders of Israel were being led away by the worship of Baal and into sexual immorality. God's people need pastors, elders and other leaders who will serve as godly examples and strengthen God's people in His Word. God sent a plague on Israel for their adultery and worship of Baal. A total of 24,000 died. 1 Corinthians mentions 23,000 died. The difference is that 23,000 died from the plague and the extra 1,000 were the chiefs and others who were executed by Moses for their idolatry.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:6–8 that “these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.’ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.” Dear Christian, be like Phineas: have zeal for the LORD, His Word, and His worship where Christ comes to cleanse us from all our sins.

Tuesday (April 18) – Numbers 26

This is the second census in Numbers. The first one was in chapter one. In comparing the second census with the first we see that some tribes drastically lost men while some grew. In the first census there were 603,550 men and in the second there were 601,730. In a 38 year period one would expect the nation to increase instead of to slightly decrease! The point of the census is threefold. First, to teach us that faithfulness to God is more important than large numbers. A small congregation that is faithful to God's Word is more God-pleasing than a large congregation that has compromised with the world. Second, it shows that God fulfills His threats of punishment. The chapter ends with Moses writing how that entire generation all died out because of their disobedience, except Joshua and Caleb who were obedient. Third, the census shows that God is faithful in keeping His promises. God is bringing the Israelites into the promised land as He said He would do, and this census was to determine how much land each tribe will receive in proportion to their size. God is faithful in keeping His promises, and He will take us into the heavenly promised land just as He promised us through Christ.

Wednesday (April 19) – Number 27

In this chapter we see God's love and care for individuals and for families. He ensures

that no family will lose out on their inheritance. God through Christ cares for our needs of both body and soul. God also provides a leader for Israel to succeed Moses. Just as Joshua will lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, so Christ is our Leader and our Way into our promised eternal inheritance.

Thursday (April 20) – Numbers 28-29

These two chapters are an overview and a summary of the scheduled offerings for the Old Testament worship along with their liturgical calendar of various festivals. The purpose of these daily and monthly sacrifices along with the various festivals was for the people's lives to be centered around worship of God, receiving His grace and forgiveness, and remembering how He saved them in the past. In the same way, our lives are to be centered around Christ and His Word and Sacraments. We also have a liturgical calendar that centers around the great saving events that Jesus has worked for us (Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, etc.).

Friday (April 21) – Numbers 30-31

Chapter 30 is on the matter of voluntary vows made to the LORD. Such a vow once voluntarily made must be kept. However, God knows how sinful hearts like to sometimes pit one authority against another. In order to keep love and harmony within a family, God made the rule that a vow cannot go against how the head of the household was leading the family. In chapter 31 Israel was to be an instrument of God's just punishment on the Midianite nation that hated God and tried to destroy His people by seducing them earlier in chapter 25. This is a fair and just punishment and is what unrepentant sin deserves. This story moves us to see how seriously God takes sin, so that we would repent of it and trust that He will save us from it, and also save us from all who hate us because we are Christians.

Saturday (April 22) – Numbers 32

This chapter reports how Moses gave Gad, Manasseh and half of the tribe of Manasseh the land east of the Jordan under one condition: they must send their men over the Jordan to help in the war to conquer the Promised Land. The rule of God's Kingdom is: first the fight, and then the inheritance. This is still true. The Christian who doesn't fight won't inherit. We must fight here against the Devil's temptations, the spiritual traps in the sinful world, and against our own sinful heart with its selfish desires. This battle cannot be won by our strength but by relying on Christ's power. After the fight is over, we will inherit (not earn) eternal life.

Sunday (April 23) – Numbers 33

Moses recounts Israel's journey in the wilderness. It's good to look back on our lives to see how Christ has been with us, guiding us, and preserving us in body and soul. The Israelites are reminded that they are to destroy the nations in the land of Canaan or else the people will get them to fall away from loving and serving the true God. It's a call to us that even though we are in the world, we are not to compromise with it in sin, but trust in Christ's guidance and protection in our lives.