

#My Jubilee Bible

Reflection/Discussion Guide: Numbers 22-Deuteronomy 2; Psalm 40-56

This guide is broken into three parts:

1. A brief overview of the Scriptures you are reading this week
2. Questions for personal reflection
3. Questions for group discussion and application

Feel free to answer the questions for personal reflection at your own pace. They are designed to help consider a section of Scripture: the people, relationships and events described in the section.

Overview of Numbers

After a long series of rebellion, mutiny and downright rank behavior in disobedience to God, the Exodus generation is still complaining. Meanwhile God is still blessing, watching over and carrying them nearer to the Promised Land so that their children may enter into His promises.

At the beginning of this section the people are traveling through the plains of Moab. Unknown to them the people of the land are extremely fearful of this great people and their great God. Balaak, the King of Moab has hired a diviner to speak curses over God's chosen people. Balaam can't do it. Every time he tries God intervenes and gives him blessings to speak over his people.

Multiple attempts to curse Israel, but unfortunately the men of Israel get captivated by women of Moab and engage in immoral worship of Moab's gods. Another plague ensues only stemmed by the faith of a priest named Phinehas.

Another census is taken and inheritance rules are altered to accommodate families where there is no male heir. The daughters become heirs and keep the land in their families.

Moses names Joshua as his successor and the Exodus generation is passing and plans are being finalized for the wilderness generation to be able to enter the Promised Land.

The book of Deuteronomy opens with Israel preparing to leave Mount Horeb and preparing to cross the Jordan River.

For a brief, but great overview of the book of Deuteronomy, please go to <http://www.jubileestl.org/my-jubilee-bible/>

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Questions for Personal Reflection

Numbers chapter 22-24 The Plains of Moab

- Israel's presence in the wilderness does not go unnoticed. Joshua and Caleb were correct: "Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them."— (Numbers 14:9) Even with all of their problems, the Moabites and Midianites are overcome with fear because of the people of Israel.
 - What is it about Israel that causes such fear? (22:4, 5)
 - How does Balak hope to overcome Israel? (22:7-8)
 - Why is Balaam resistant to Balak's plan? (22:12)
 - Why did Balaam change his mind? (22:20, 21)
 - Why is God angry with Balaam? (22:32)
 - How is it possible that God gives permission to do something, yet is angry when Balaam chooses to do it?
 - What has been the result of continuing to pursue something when God has advised against it?
- How is God's sovereignty demonstrated through Balaam's oracles?
- Even though Israel has been very rebellious God is still determined to bless them and to make them a blessing.
 - How do the oracles of Balaam help you when you get discouraged with your journey Jesus?
- Though Balak couldn't get Balaam to curse Israel, they did find a weak spot. (25:1-18)
 - How many laws do the people break in this story?
 - Why do Phinehas's actions stop the plague? (25:11)
 - We often associate jealousy with envy, or pettiness. How is God's jealous right, true, good and justified?
 - How does this passage help you desire to be ruthless with sin in your life?

Numbers chapters 26-27 Transition to a New Generation

- God commands another census and it's determined that the Exodus generation has died in the wilderness as promised by God. All have died except Joshua and Caleb. (26:65)
 - The death of that generation meant that the next generation would now be responsible for taking the Promised Land and receiving the inheritance of land. The Daughters of Zelophehad bring a case before Moses. Their father died with no male heir.
 - In that time and in the backdrop of Egypt and Canaan, the land would revert to the nearest male relative. God makes a decision that cut against the grains of social norms. The daughters may be heirs.
 - How is this an example of God leading people, not just out of a physical land, but also into new social territory?

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- Sadly, Moses' sin of failing to uphold God as holy prevents him from going into Canaan.
 - Why does God select Joshua as the next shepherd of Israel? (27:18)

Numbers chapters 28-29 Offerings and Feasts

- Throughout chapters 28-29 a series of offerings and feasts seems to be fairly continuous. Weekly Sabbath, Monthly, and the seven feasts all had offerings associated with them.
 - How did these offerings aid the people in their relationship with God?
 - Though we don't have offerings and feasts, they all pointed to Jesus. How does this shed light onto what Jesus accomplished for us in our relationship to God?

Numbers chapters 30-31

- Vows can be either things we promise not to do, or things that we promise to do out of a sense of honor to God. Their not just thoughts of what we might do, but commitments expressed in words. The big idea is that when we make these commitments we are to keep them.
 - What are some of the warnings given around making vows?
 - Why might it be helpful to discuss the possibility of making a vow with a trusted friend before committing to it?
 - What are some vows that you have made to God? How are you doing with keeping them?

Numbers chapters 32-36

- Israel begins to settle. Reuben and Gad are staying on the west side of the Jordan. They have found plenty of fertile land and request to stay. (32)
 - What is Reuben and Gad's reasoning for staying on the west side of the Jordan? (32:1-5)
 - What concerns does Moses express? (32:6-16)
 - How can you relate to this dilemma?
- Moses recounts their journey from Egypt to the shores of the Jordan. (33)
 - Why is it helpful to keep track of where you have been and experiences you have had?
 - What are some ways that you have found to recall the mercy and faithfulness of God through your life?
- The Lord defines the borders of the land and which tribes will inherit which plots. He then identifies the leaders of the tribes responsible for establishing the allotments. (34)
 - How do these logistics help Israel to remember that they are one people, even though they will have their own plots of land?
 - How does being a part of a tribe help people in their sense of identity?
- A place for Levites and refugees. (35)
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- What are some ways that God ensures that the Levites have a sense of permanence in the land? (35:6-7)
- How does God make sure that the other tribes are equitable in giving the Levites space? (35:8)
- How does God provide for a just and equitable way to distinguish between murder and accidental killing, or manslaughter? (35:30-34)
- How are these provisions helpful in a culture where vengeance has been the norm? (35:26-29)
- A complication with inheritance. (36)
 - What is the solution for Zelophad's daughters to maintain inheritance rights for their family? (36:5-9)
 - How do these laws aid keeping the family inheritance in tact?
 - What dilemma's have you faced that mean personal sacrifice for greater cause?
 - How does this passage help you in making those kinds of decisions?

Deuteronomy chapters 1-2 Recapping Rebellion and Wondering

- God commands Israel to make preparations to move from where they are and take the land that their parents had refused to take by faith.
 - God tells Israel that they are ready to move on, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain." (1:6)
 - What are some areas that you sense God is calling you to leave behind so that you can move toward the plans God has for you?
 - How do verses 1:19-33 serve as a warning to help you move forward?
- God used even the punishment or their rebellion (wilderness wondering) as a means of preparing future generations. (2:1-25)
 - What decisions about your future direction are you afraid of?
 - How does God encourage Israel that he is preparing the way for them? (2:25)
 - What circumstances are you concerned about for your future?
 - How do you think God is at work preparing the way ahead for you?

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CG Discussion Guide

Icebreaker: Briefly explain BLESS, then ask: Who did you BLESS this week?

Read Psalm 51

In reading the Old Testament we often see how God deals with our sin through confession and atoning sacrifices that point ultimately to Jesus and the forgiveness we receive through his sacrifice. David's confession in Psalm 51 helps us deal with the fact that we sinned and now we are experiencing guilt and shame.

- What does David ask for in verses 1-2?
 - What is the basis of his request?
 - What convinces you that God is merciful and steadfastly loving toward you?
- In verse 4 David says that he has sinned against God and God only.
 - Who do you usually think is most offended by your sin?
 - How is your sin primarily crossing God's will?
 - How hard/easy is it for you to take responsibility for your sin?
 - In what way is God a better judge of your guilt than you are?
- In verses 8-9 David seems to be saying that sin is his natural inclination.
 - In what ways do you see that at work in you?
 - David seems to be warring against self-deception.
 - What are ways that you struggle with justifying yourself rather than taking responsibility for your sin?
 - Even in the midst of his sin David recognizes that God delights in.
 - How does this verse help you in being honest with yourself? God?, Others?
- In verse 7-12 David uses visual language to describe his need for forgiveness.
 - How does cleansing and restoration lead to joy?
 - Why do we need a willing, and steadfast spirit after we have sinned?
- In verses 13-17 David wants to share the good news of forgiveness with others and to help them not sin.
 - How is sharing your experience of forgiveness a part of the restoration process?
 - How does knowing you're forgiven affect your emotions?
 - Why is it easier to bring sacrifices to God than a humble and contrite spirit?
 - How is offering your brokenness to God more impacting than making extravagant sacrifices?

Prayer:

- Are you struggling with knowing that you are forgiven? How can we pray for you?
- Pray for people who need to hear about God's forgiveness. Who are you planning on BLESSing this week?

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Notes: