

MARCH 23

Numbers 36

You did it! You finished the first four books of the Bible! If you're up to date in your reading, great. If not, don't sweat it. It literally takes you two or three years to get into shape, to lay down the daily habits; and the only way you do that is by getting behind and coming up with ways to stay on target.

Numbers concludes with the tribe of Manasseh. I don't think this story is put here for trivia. It demonstrates that people learned to seek the Lord and ask for modifications of the laws He had given. First the daughters came to Moses the right way, then the leaders of the tribe asked for an amendment, and finally the daughters complied and did the right thing.

This story was to show that the people now knew to come to God and His appointed representatives, to get answers instead of complaining or doing their own thing. It will be sort of funny in Joshua to see the people come after Joshua for making a decision without consulting the Lord. They got the message.

Deuteronomy 1

One more book to go and you have read the Pentateuch! The Penta-who? The Jewish name for the first five books. Again, as you've seen so far, these books are rich in helping us, as disciples, see the heart of God as the plan of redemption unfolds. There are lots of foundational truths, biographies, stories and symbols. And all of what we find here helps us see the great heart of God, our Savior.

Deuteronomy is one big final speech to the people. These are Moses' final words to the nation he shepherded out of Egypt and through the wilderness for 40 years. At the beginning they were 2,000,000+ rebellious, disorganized people. Now Israel is an obedient nation. They will never be this devoted to God again, until the Tribulation and the return of Christ.

One of the things to look for here is the phrase, *the Lord our God*, or *the Lord your God*. At some point in Jewish history the Jews stopped saying the name Yahweh and coded it to be the word "Lord." What Moses is actually saying here is "Yahweh our God." This is powerful. Yahweh is personal and compassionate. He, the ever-living One, has let the people call Him by His name. God is the word, "Elohim," powerful and almighty. So if you are interested, underline every time you find the phrase, *the Lord our God*. There are a few of them and they are not filler in Moses' sermon. These words have great meaning.

Vs. 1-5 Moses is recounting their history, telling the people how they came to this place, both physically and spiritually.

From Mt. Sinai to Kadesh-barnea was only an eleven-day journey. That is when and where they should have entered the land. Now, 40 years later, Moses was standing with the people opposite Jericho. Notice the references to the battles against Sihon and Og. This is a significant notation, since, as we'll see, one of these guys was a giant.

Vs. 6-18 Now Moses will recount their spiritual journey to this place.

Vs. 6-8 This was God telling the people to go to Kadesh-barnea to take possession of the promise to Abraham. Notice the mention of the Euphrates. The promise to Abraham included the land to the Euphrates.

Vs. 9-18 Because of God's vast blessing on the people, God multiplied them into a nation. This section seems to summarize God organizing them as a nation with different levels of organization and government. Not only this, but there was also the organization of the nation around the worship of God. They were ready to enter the land.

Vs. 19-46 This is a retelling of the rebellion at Kadesh-barnea. This isn't just information. It is telling the people what the spiritual condition was and how that led to their spiritual journey in the wilderness.

V. 22 Notice that Moses says it was the idea of the people to spy out the land. In itself, there was nothing wrong with that request and God allowed it, but we know it really came from a heart of fear and unbelief.

Vs. 26-28 This was the effect of the ten spies on the entire nation.

Notice also in v. 29 that giants are mentioned.

V. 36 Notice that God promised Caleb that He would give him the land where he had walked. That was giant country. I'll bet Caleb couldn't wait to take a bead on those huge targets.

V. 37 Moses blamed their rebelliousness as part of the reason God wouldn't allow him to enter the land. This is parenthetical since the rebellion at Kadesh occurred 38 years earlier, but it was spurred on by the same kind of bitterness and complaining of the people.

Vs. 41-46 This again is showing the present generation how the previous generation ruined their own hope by continual rebellion against the Lord.

As disciples, we really should be about the future, working to reach lost people and to make them disciples. Still, it is good to look at history, personally or as a church. When was our faith fresh? If it isn't fresh anymore, what happened? When was the church on target? Was it reaching people? Did it only grow through transfer growth? What have we lost? What do we need to do? I've seen two churches totally ignore their history and refuse to accept what happened to them. It's not in the Bible, but it is true, that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. In Christ there is a very cool "reset" button. That reset button is being broken in Him: His grace, His love, His forgiveness, His freedom, His mission. In any culture on earth, in any time period, newly abiding in Him, His Word, and His Spirit will put our lives on the right track, following Him in the harvest.

Luke 5:29-6:11

Luke 5:29-39

Vs. 29-32 The healing of the paralytic, the calling of Matthew and this party happened very near to each other.

Apparently Matthew was well off and wanted his tax collector and sinner friends to meet Jesus. The Pharisees went after Jesus' disciples first, and Jesus told them that He didn't come to call the "righteous." The Pharisees didn't get it and they weren't satisfied either.

Vs. 33-39 Then the Pharisees went to the disciples of John the Baptist to create a division between the followers of John and the followers of Jesus. In Matthew, it is the disciples of John who ask the question, but here it is the Pharisees. The Pharisees must have gone to John's disciples and led them to Jesus, probably initiating the conversation. Jesus' words in these parables would have been understandable to the disciples of John, but the Pharisees would have missed the point. If you read the end of John 3, you'll know why. John the Baptist himself used the bridegroom illustration with his disciples. The minute they would have heard Jesus use this parable, John's disciples would have connected Jesus' words with John's and it would have made them feel better, not bitter.

Jesus' second Passover, mentioned as the "feast" in John 5, happens here before Luke 6. If you read John 5:12, notice the words of the Pharisees, *Who is the man who said to you, "take up your bed and walk?"*

Luke 6:1-11

Vs. 1-5 According to John 5:16, *And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.*

The event of healing on the Sabbath gave the Jews (Jewish religious leaders) something to go after Jesus about. It gave their irrationalism something to justify itself.

In these verses, Jesus and His disciples are walking back to Jerusalem after the Passover. Apparently these are Pharisees from Capernaum who are walking with them. The key phrase here is in v. 5. Jesus has told them that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sin. Now He tells them that *the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.*

Vs. 6-11 Matthew mentions that this synagogue was the synagogue belonging to these particular Pharisees. It appears that this event was set up, trying to trap Jesus. Matthew 12:9-14 gives a better picture of what happened here.

If you read John 5 you'll see that the Pharisees had already decided they had to get rid of Jesus after His actions in Jerusalem. Now they will be constantly following Him, looking for something. These two occasions gave them the necessary proof and motivation to plan Jesus' death. Ironically, He had told them that He was both the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Psalm 66

It doesn't say who wrote this or when it was written, but you could imagine that this was written by David sometime after all of his running had ended. Now, David was King of Israel as God had promised him at least 20 years earlier.

Vs. 1-4 Notice that this is a call to all peoples and nations to give praise to God.

Vs. 5-7 What the Lord had done was not only seen in His might in creation; but in protecting David, it was like God protecting the children of Israel coming out of Egypt.

Vs. 8-12 Although this sounds like it could have also been written about Israel coming into the land, until David became king, Israel was always an oppressed people. Notice that all the peoples were called to bless God for His deliverance.

Vs. 13-15 This sounds like David. During those years on the run, David had made promises and longed to be in the tabernacle. It was probably during this time of running that David vowed that if he ever became king, he would build a temple, a house for the Lord.

Vs. 16-20 I think this is clearly David. What great praise and what a hope we have. I was reading this morning as Jesus told His disciples a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not to lose heart. I think that is David's message also.

Proverbs 11:24-26

Sounds like the Lord is giving us a good argument for tithing and being generous. Again, Jesus told His disciples to use "unrighteous mammon" and the things that belong to God (everything) for the glory of God and for His kingdom. We are to spend generously in the harvest making disciples, who make disciples.