

Numbers 31-33 – 28 January 2021

“The Passion of the Church”

Introduction

*Israel has been in the desert for 40 years b/c of disobedience, now they're on the plains of Moab!

*Numbers 26-30 are the final instructions b4 going in...no more instruction, it's time for a commitment to action!

*Num 31-36 finishes the book with God calling them into deep action, thorough action, not apathetic half-hearted efforts

*We've heard of the 'Passion of the Christ' – Jesus's ambition and drive to fully complete the mission!

*Today we talk about the 'Passion of the Church' – Do we have the ambition & drive to fully complete the mission? (Applies to Israel & to us – Acts 7:38)

Today, we'll see 3 Markers we can use to rate the 'Passion of the Church'

1st Marker to rate the Passion of the Church: Are you eager to go far enough in wiping out past sins?_(Chap 31:1-54)

Read Chap 31:1-12

1. Midianites were a nomadic people that were w/ the Moabites in (Num 25) convincing Israel, thru their women, to go lusting after other gods.
2. They received the help of the prophet Balaam to show how to corrupt God's people
 - a. Balaam had prayed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, & let my end be like his!"
 - b. But he had no interest in living life of righteous
 - c. So vs 8 tells us, he died the death of a sinner, in the company of sinners
3. Notice they killed the men, took women & children captive, burnt the cities & took the spoils

Read Chap 31:13-18

1. Command for the women and boys to be killed
2. In that culture the boys would grow up w/ a blood oath to avenge this on Israel.

3. Why the women? Look at vs 16
 - a. The women were the very source of the problem at Baal-Peor in Num 25
 - b. These adulterous women were more deadly than entire army of men they just wiped out!
4. We often cop-out and think the problem is just physical problem (“this army of men need to go”)
 - a. When the root problem is a spiritual one (like dealing w/ these adulterous women)
 - b. Are we going deep enough to root out the problems of our heart?
5. Dealing w/ the sinful tendencies of our heart is no time to go light or chicken out
6. Turn to I Cor 6:9-18
 - a. Know your past sins that you’re vulnerable to
 - b. Flee from them & be completely rid of them

Read Chap 31:19-24

1. This cleansing after the battle has a very practical effect of cleaning contamination & virus

2. Also has a spiritual effect of recognizing that war should be washed off to continue holy communion w/ God
 - a. Jesus had the disciples wash their feet
 - b. Sin of this life gets on you, even if it's just from you beating beat the forces of darkness!
3. Are you willing to get yourself dirty/bloody in effort of ridding temptation & sin from your life?

Chap 31:25-47 (Read Vs 25-31 & 41-47)

1. The spoil split between those who went to war and those that didn't
 - a. Customarily, spoil was to soldiers alone, but God did not want looter/pirate soldiers So, He commanded they split it w/ all the people.
2. Notice they tithed on both parts of the spoil.

Read Chap 31:48-54

1. Special thanks offering to the Lord for no death
2. They were determined to be rid of this sin & took great personal risk...which God rewarded!!

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT MASS KILLINGS

1. When God-ordained instruments of authority (such as government or Israel) take vengeance on evildoers, we as Christians can be at peace, knowing that good has been done when vengeance has been executed.
2. This was God's authority being meted out thru Israel. This wasn't Israel's action, but the all-knowing God who decided... (two things)
 - a. They've had their chances to repent
 - b. It's time to limit the harm & sinful influence these heathens are putting out
3. Watch 6.5-min video on ccchambersburg.org called "Why did God command the Israelites to kill the Canaanites?" for more information.

2nd Marker to rate the Passion of the Church: Are you eager to go far enough in taking God's present promises? (Chap 32:1-42)

Read Chap 32:1-5

1. Reuben & Gad request to stay east of Jordan for the good cattle land and not go west
 - a. Half of tribe of Manasseh also in on this
2. Problem is – they're looking at something nice when God's trying to give them something **AMAZINGLY BETTER** in the promised land.
 - a. Exp: A guy keeps praying for \$100 when the Lord's trying to bless him with \$1,000!
3. Read Phil 3:13-14 – They were only looking for good enough, but there's so much more!

Read Chap 32:6-15

1. Moses says no this will dishearten the rest from taking the land (recounting the 10 spies in vs 8-13)
2. Moses believes their trying to rebel against God...not true...read on.

Read Chap 32:16-19

1. They will go fighting w/ all Israel, no prob
2. So they're not rebels against their countrymen, they're just rebels against God's best. WHY?
 - a. Lazy? Scared? Unbelief? All the above.
 - b. Read Jud 5:15-16 – They're reluctant to aid

Read Chap 32:20-27

1. Moses agrees and they're happy
2. Vs 22 - they're "guiltless before the Lord" but they've settled for God's permissive not perfect will.
 - a. Just as we saw in Num 22-23 with Balaam
3. Not a good land for them, though they think so
 - a. Judges 11 – these lands were terrorized often
 - b. Thru period of Judges, then Assyrian & Babylonians, they'll be the 1st ones raided

Read Chap 32:28-42 (Read Vs 28-33)

1. It goes on to mention the cities each built
2. So, the agreement is ratified before the leaders

3rd Marker to rate the Passion of the Church: Are you eager to go far enough in wiping out future sins? (Chap 33:1-56)

Read Chap 33:1-2

1. Lord command Moses to write of their journey
2. This is a log for historical record

Chap 33:3-49

1. Most were campsites, not cities that could be located today. Only unique vss are 38-40

Read Chap 33:50-56

1. Lord commands to drive out the inhabitants
2. If you don't, their idolatry will tear you later

Application

1. Read Rom 6:11-13 – How to do these things?
2. Start by ridding your environment!
 - a. Do we have idolatrous media in our home?
3. Don't just passively deal w/ sin as things happen, but evaluate your world and take action!

Conclusion

So how's your passion Church? How's your commitment to God? Lukewarm or on fire?

1. **Are you eager to go far enough in wiping out past sins?**
 - a. Israel has to get a little dirty...even bloody to break off their past sin
 - b. Just as Israel was blessed w/ no casualties, we will be blessed by ridding these things
 - c. Let our faith overcome our fear & timidity
2. **Are you eager to go far enough in taking God's present promises?**
 - a. Whether lazy, scared or unbelieving...don't miss out on the blessings of obedience!
 - b. Overcome fear with faith live the abundant life Jesus talked about!

- 3. Are you eager to go far enough in wiping out future sins?**
- a. When was the last time you looked around your house and evaluated your environment?
 - b. Only the spiritually minded are willing
 - c. We need to proactively lead our family.

Coming Up

Chapter 34-36 - Planning to Conquer

We finish the book of Numbers with the plan of how to allocate the land to each Tribe!