

## **March 5 — His Way, Not Yours**

### **READ**

Numbers 19:1-21:35

Numbers 20:12, *“But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in Me enough to demonstrate My holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I give them!”*

### **THINK**

If you have ever watched a reality TV show, you’ve probably experienced a cringe moment when someone decides to act irrationally, and you realize that it will not end well for them. In a way, that’s how we feel in this passage of today’s reading. We read how God clearly told Moses to SPEAK to the rock to draw water from it. Instead, Moses acted irrationally, took credit for producing the water, and then struck the rock — twice!

It’s easy for us to read this and see that it won’t end well. But chances are, we’ve done the same. We become impatient and think our plans will work better. We think that slightly tweaking God’s plan won’t really matter. So, we take control, act on our impulses, and experience the inevitable fallout. When we attempt to usurp God’s authority in our lives, it NEVER ends well.

In our finite minds, God’s ways are often complex and not easily understood. But rest assured, they ARE the best way. We can be confident that His plans are meant for our good and His glory. Be patient. Follow His instructions, and watch Him work beyond your expectations.

### **PRAY**

Heavenly Father, Thank You for taking care of me. I know that I have tried to take control when Your plans are clearly better. Help me to be patient and wait on Your direction. Guide me to follow Your instruction so that You will receive all the glory. In Jesus ’name, Amen.

## March 6 — Lessons From a Donkey

### READ

Numbers 22:1-24:25

Numbers 22:21-23, 28, *“So the next morning Balaam got up, saddled his donkey, and started off with the Moabite officials. But God was angry that Balaam was going, so He sent the angel of the Lord to stand in the road to block his way. As Balaam and two servants were riding along, Balaam’s donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand. The donkey bolted off the road into a field, but Balaam beat it and turned it back onto the road. ... Then the Lord gave the donkey the ability to speak. ‘What have I done that it deserves your beating me three times?’ It asked Balaam.”*

### THINK

Isn't it ironic that a donkey was more spiritually perceptive than Balaam, the prophet? Pride, self-importance, and money seemed to throw this wayward servant of God off-track. He knew the Lord didn't want him to go to Moab and curse His chosen people and, at first, he obeyed. But deep down, he really desired to go and so he compromised. He tried to buy time to see if God would change His mind, and God even said, “Go!” But God had a plan of His own to get Balaam back on track!

Isn't it just like God to use the most unlikely of sources to teach us valuable lessons? Balaam's faithful donkey saw the angel of the Lord wielding a sword and tried to steer his master off the roadway. The animal had enough sense to know that it wanted no part of that run-in! Balaam, initially blind to the situation, took it out on the poor animal. As God opened the donkey's mouth to speak truth into the situation, the prophet had to humble himself — and the donkey got the best of him in the conversation!

What can we learn from Balaam's donkey? First, when God asks us to do something, He wants total obedience! Why? Because partial obedience is still disobedience! Also, when we move out of God's will, He often puts roadblocks in our path to steer us back on course. God wants us to live our best lives without compromise or pride. So take a lesson from a donkey and stay on track with God's will, and you WILL be blessed and useful to God in even the strangest of circumstances!

### PRAY

Dear Lord, I seek to obey Your commands. Help me to squash my pride and selfish desires to carry out Your plans for my life. May You be glorified through me! Amen.

## March 7 — Choose God!

### READ

Numbers 25:1-26:65

Numbers 25:1-13, *“While the Israelites were camped at Acacia Grove, some of the men defiled themselves by having sexual relations with local Moabite women. These women invited them to attend sacrifices to their gods, so the Israelites feasted with them and worshiped the gods of Moab. In this way, the Israelites joined in with the worship of Baal of Peor, causing the Lord’s anger to blaze against His people.”*

### THINK

Think of the imagery above. The Lord’s anger “blazed” against His people. Yikes! It’s easy for us to look at the Israelites with disgust. How could they so easily just give in to such debauchery? It’s hard to imagine just rolling over to Satan’s schemes and involving in such wretched acts. But is it, really?

People are like elevators — they can either take us up or down — way down. That’s why God is so clear about us hanging out with the right people. He knows how easily we can be persuaded to do things we wouldn’t normally do. Bad associations often take us farther than we want to go and cost us more than we want to pay. And for the Israelites, that’s exactly what happened! They began to allow their personal desires to jade their relationship with God. So, in His anger, God sent a plague upon His people. But one man, Phinehas, took action. He killed a man and woman caught in an immoral act before the Tabernacle. And his one act of obedience halted the plague — but not before 24,000 had been slain.

What does this tell us, other than the fact that God’s anger “blazes” against those who flagrantly break His commands? It’s all about single actions. It’s about making choices in the moment to stand for God’s truth.

Every time we stand up for what’s right and go against the grain — no matter how big or small — we are setting the stage for Christ’s righteousness to take center stage. So, don’t give into relationships that can only take you down. Choose to surround yourself with like-minded people who are grounded in Jesus. Then you won’t be tempted to do what you would otherwise never do! This allows God’s glory to blaze, instead of anger, and you will stand in a place of promise and blessing instead of death and destruction. So, CHOOSE GOD!

### PRAY

Dear Lord, I want to remain faithful to You. Help me stay on track with Your wants and desires. I seek to live out Your best! Amen.

## **March 8 — What's Next?**

### **READ**

Numbers 27:1-29:40

Numbers 27:22-23, *“So Moses did as the Lord commanded. He presented Joshua to Eleazar the priest and the whole community. Moses laid hands on him and commissioned him to lead the people, just as the Lord had commanded through Moses.”*

### **THINK**

Have you ever been demoted? You put time and energy into making something great, only to see someone else receive the reward. If so, you're not alone!

In today's reading, Joshua is appointed the new leader of Israel. Moses had to hand over the reins after all he'd done (and put up with) for God's chosen people. And, he had to contend with the added disappointment of knowing he'd never personally enter the Promised Land! But Moses didn't complain or try to persuade God otherwise. Instead, his response was “What's Next?”

Have you been in a position like Moses? Demoted and discouraged after you invested in a certain relationship, company, or team, without reaping the benefits?

There's a lot we can learn from Moses' response. On this side of eternity, we may not see the reward of our efforts, there may be moments of demotion, but God sees all the good done for His Kingdom. Like Moses, we have to trust Him and look to what's next versus focusing and questioning God on what seems “fair.” As Christ-followers, our goal should be to further HIS Kingdom, not our own personal goals. Because, regardless of what's next in this life, we will one day receive the ultimate promotion when we see Jesus face to face in heaven!

### **PRAY**

Dear God, Thank You for the reminder that You are always there, whether I receive a demotion or a promotion. Help me to not focus on furthering my name but furthering Your Kingdom! Amen.

## **March 9 — How Good is Your Word?**

### **READ**

Numbers 30:1-31:54

Numbers 30:1-2, *“Moses said to the heads of the tribes of Israel: ‘This is what the Lord commands: When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.’”*

### **THINK**

In sitcoms and movies, people often find themselves in tricky situations. Instead of telling the truth and resolving the issue, they often build a web of lies and deception. In a way, it’s almost a game — will they get away with it? Or, at the very least, it’s made humorous — as if the lie is really no big deal.

As believers, however, we’re called to a much higher standard. James, in the New Testament, puts it plainly — let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no. In fact, swearing to do anything is generally discouraged because “yes” should be enough!

How good is your word? Is it enough to say, “Yes, I will do this,” and the person in front of you can trust that to be true? Or do you have to emphasize and make additional promises to assure the person that you’ll truly do what you have said?

Real-life drama can’t always be resolved as quickly as TV shows and movies. Don’t take vows and promises lightly. When you make them, be sure to keep your word and follow through!

### **PRAY**

Father, Help me to be a person of my word. Before I promise something, let me consider what is required, and prompt me to follow through with my commitments. Amen.

## March 10 — Vessels of Love and Grace

### READ

Numbers 32:1-33:56

Numbers 32:15, *"If you turn away from following Him... you will be the cause of their destruction."*

### THINK

Our choices impact others. We influence those around us, even if we don't realize they're watching us — especially children! They notice everything we do. They watch us as if they are recording our words and actions. And when the tables turn, we hear our words and see our actions played out in their lives.

God was so angry at the Israelites for their disobedience that He let them wander in the wilderness for forty years until their sinful generation passed away. But, unfortunately, they passed their sin down to the next generation. Their children committed to the same sin, causing God's anger to burn more.

Both generations needed to break this cycle and turn back to God. Otherwise, they would cause further destruction to their people. We, too, must be mindful of our daily choices. Any wrong decision we make might cause someone else to stumble. If we turn away from God and others follow us, we become catalysts for death and destruction. But if we follow Jesus and obey His Word, we become vessels of His love and grace.

We are a living testimony for Christ. We can be part of the problem or a part of the solution — which is living to glorify God. By choosing His will and His way, we become ambassadors for His kingdom and lead others to life everlasting — and that's exactly what God has called us to do!

### PRAY

Lord, Help me to live for You. Fill me with Your love and grace so that it overflows to those around me. Draw them to Yourself, so they can experience Your love and know that You are God. Amen.

## March 11 — Christ our Refuge

### READ

Numbers 34:1-36:16

Numbers 35:15, *“These six towns will be a place of refuge for Israelites and for foreigners residing among them so that anyone who has killed another accidentally can flee there.”*

### THINK

Old Testament times were harsh. If you were accused of an accidental killing, the avenger of the slain had every right to enact the same revenge — unless you were inside a city of refuge. If you could get to a city of refuge, you would remain there for protection until the death of the high priest. At that time, you could return to your home without fear of retaliation.

Now, you might be thinking, “What on earth can I gain from knowing this in 2021?” The truth is cities of refuge were a picture of Jesus! Let’s look at some of the parallels below:

1. Both Jesus and refuge cities are open to *all* people in need, not just the Israelites, without fear of being turned away when we seek protection.
2. Both are the only alternative for those in need. Without this specific protection, we face death.
3. Full freedom for us and those who needed a city of refuge comes with the death of a high priest.

However, there is one crucial distinction! Cities of refuge are helpful only to the *innocent* — those who needed to flee after an accidental slaying. With Jesus, only the *guilty*, those who’ve admitted that they are sinners in need of a Savior, can find safe harbor.

Praise the Lord that our high priest, Jesus Christ, has already died and resurrected for our sins! Not only can we find refuge in Him, but we can also find salvation and freedom. Jesus’ single sacrifice heals, protects, and transforms our lives.

### PRAY

Lord Jesus, I take you as my refuge and my salvation. Thank You for dying for me, so I don’t have to live in fear but can, instead, enjoy Your presence. Amen!