

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

March 20, 2016

- ✓ Numbers 23:1-30 – Balaam’s oracles.
- ✓ 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:16 – Need for sexual purity.
- ✓ Psalm 20:1-9 – Pray for the King.

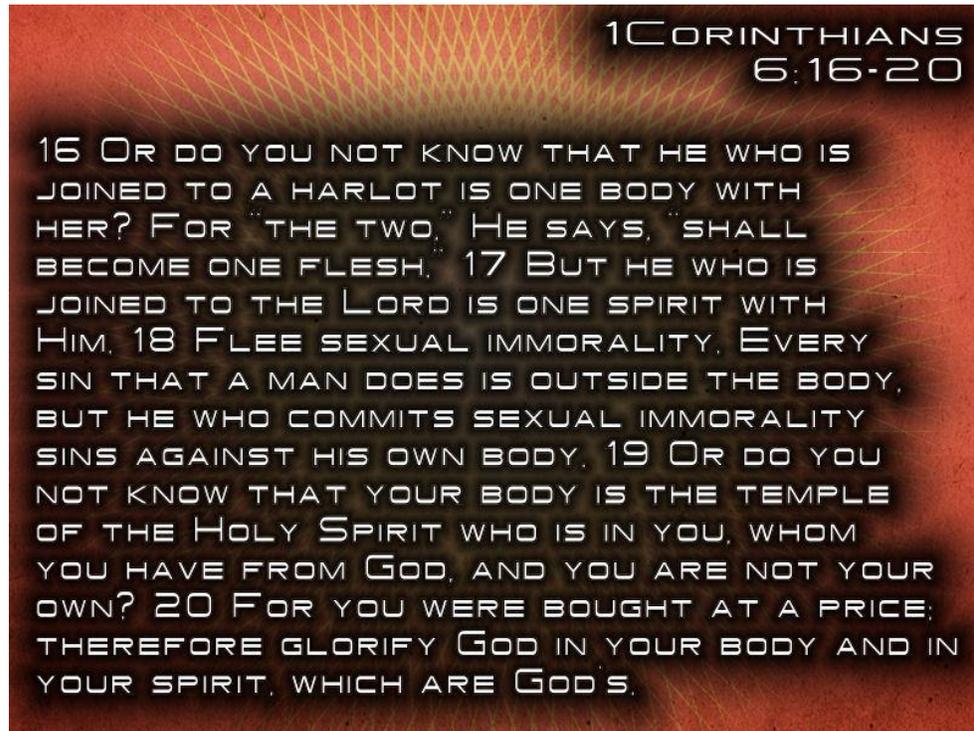
REFLECTIONS:

Numbers 23:1-30. The narrative: Balak takes Balaam to an observation point to view Israel, Balaam instructs Balak to offer sacrifices, Balak obeys Balaam by sacrificing animals, Balaam tells Balak to stand by his offering altars, Balaam goes alone and Yahweh reveals Himself, Balaam returns to Balak, who is standing by his offering, and Balaam obeys Yahweh and speaks oracles from the Lord. The focal point of the structure is the revelatory encounter between Yahweh and Balaam. Balaam becomes the central spokesman for Yahweh, speaking only that which Yahweh had spoken to him, namely blessings on Israel. These blessings include a “people who lived apart,” which means that they lived apart from other nations in safety and security as recipients of God’s grace. Israel was Yahweh’s treasured possession, elected by God Himself. Although they had endured the trials and tribulations *as a consequence* of their rebellions in the wilderness, God was intent on bringing the nation in the Promised Land and blessing them abundantly. In verse 10 there is evidence of God’s election of Israel and the fulfillment of His promise to Abraham to make a great nation through him and bless him through the hardship and oppression in Egypt. In short, Balaam sees the divine blessing that rests on Israel as surpassing anything he has seen thus far. In fact, he indicates it would be his good fortune to die as the children of Israel can die so he could have assurance that his offspring would belong to a blessed nation and live in safety and peace. He dearly wanted what Israel possessed. However, would he accept the terms in the covenant of Israel? Unfortunately, no—for later he was not willing to submit to God’s plan for blessing for he counseled the Moabite leaders to subvert Israel through idolatry and immorality in chapter 25. As a result, he ended up dying violently (Num. 31:8, 16). Here is a man who clearly saw the greatness that comes with being the people of God, but he did not want to submit to the terms. He ended dying a horrible death.



1 Corinthians 6:12-7:16. Although it is common to hear the slogan among Christians and pagans that “all sin is sin” as if one is not any better or worse than another, the Bible has an altogether different view: *1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.* So, even though Christ died for all sins, there are certain sins that are more pernicious than others. But how is it that all other sins are *outside* the body, but sexual immorality is *against* one’s own body? What

about drugs, alcohol, gluttony? Are they not sins against one’s body? Yes and no! Yes in that drugs, alcohol, and gluttony do destroy the body, which is viewed as holy due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—as indicated in this text. But no in that they do not destroy the body from within. We must



remember that “body” refers to the whole person as per the metaphysics of hylomorphism. In other words, as human beings we are not body + soul, but body/soul. Body and soul are two aspects of one person. The point here is that when a Christian engages in immoral sex, he is involved in an act of intimacy and self-commitment which involves the whole person and not the mere manipulation of some “peripheral” function of the body. An immoral sexual act involves the inner life on the most intimate level as one opens oneself up in immorality in a one flesh relationship that is so deep and intimate that it involves God in that relationship, since God is so deeply intertwined in the life, again as noted in our passage. While drugs, alcohol, and gluttony are sins against the body physically (“outside the body”), they do not bring such evil *into* such an intimate area of life as a one flesh coitus (or masturbation). There is evil activity that goes on in the soul in sexual immorality, like evil fantasies, that does not exist in other sins. All other sins may bring damage on the body and person, but none are so deep and intimate as an immoral sexual act where one is binding the most intimate area of life to another in sin with the darkest of thoughts and imaginations.

Psalm 20:1-9. This brief chapter is what is known as a royal psalm. The king was about to go to war, but before he did he stopped to pray in the sanctuary, where he was joined by the congregation who interceded for him. In the first five verses the people intercede for the king, in verses 6-8 we see the king's assurance, in verse 9 we have repeated intercession of the people of God for the king of Israel. A lesson here is that we as the people of God should pray for our leaders regardless of who they are:

1 Timothy 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. I don't know about you,

but I know that I need to pray more for our leaders than complaining about them. Of all people, we should know that our hope does not rest in my government. Rather, our hope is the coming kingdom when all things will work out for the good in every situation because we will have the Righteous King on the Throne with scars of love on His wrists. Moreover, we should thank the Lord that we can continue to grow in the Lord in Total Truth, Whole Truth, without being harassed by the government on a personal level or as the Faith Bible Church family.

In, by, with, through, and for *Esse*,

Pastor Don

