

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

March 21, 2016

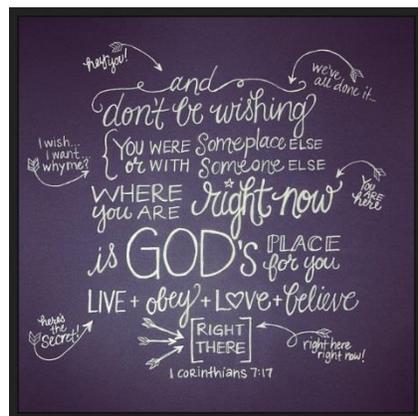
- ✓ Numbers 24-25 – Balaam’s third and fourth oracle (24); Worship of Baal (25).
- ✓ 1 Corinthians 7:17-40 – Live as you are called.
- ✓ Psalm 21:1-13 – Joy in the salvation of the Lord.

REFLECTIONS:

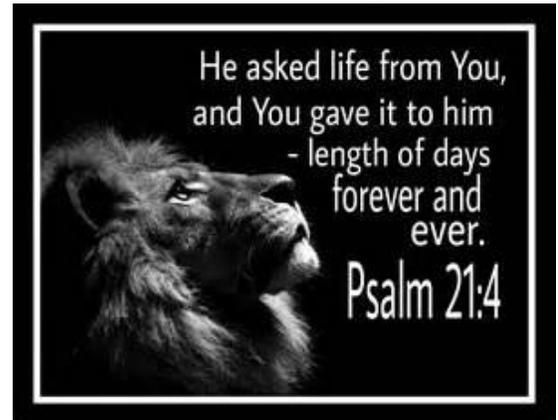
Numbers 24-25. Afraid to attack the vast number of Israelites, and after failed attempts to curse Israel by means of Balaam’s four prophecies (Numbers 22-24), the Moabites seek to subvert and assimilate Israel through idolatry and immorality. We see the principle here that when the world cannot eliminate the people of God through direct conflict, it often tries to neutralize its witness by absorbing them into the world. Of course the neutralizing of Israel would mean the neutralizing of their witness to the Lord’s grace plan related to the Promised Land as well as the coming Messiah. The Acacia Grove is the region across the Jordan from Jericho. It was in this area that the Israelites joined themselves to a false god through idolatrous worship with the local fertility god in ritual prostitution. God responded by telling Moses to execute the offenders, which allayed the wrath of God and thus the plague that killed 24,000 people. God loves His people, but when they join themselves with the harlots of the world, they can expect God to inflict punishment on them. Christians are warned by God that He will discipline His own people for aberrant behavior (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 11:28-30).



1 Corinthians 7:17-40. In verse 17 believers are told to walk as the Lord has called each one. The following verses (17-24) make it clear that this refers to the circumstances that God places a believer in to serve Him. Serving the Lord and being effective in the area that God has placed us in is far more important than the circumstances themselves. Verse 17 has sometimes been misused as evidence that Christians should not attempt to improve their social or economic standing. On the contrary, Paul encourages Christian slaves to obtain their freedom if the opportunity arises (21), while assuring them that they can live to God’s glory and *with God* when their living situation cannot be changed (24). The point is that we should live our lives as unto the Lord and if we can change circumstances for the better, fine. If not we can still live in, with, by, and for the Lord *by knowledge and by love*. Regardless of where we are we are to live to please Him in all things. This is the only way to a blessed, transcendent life. Changing circumstances may be helpful and rightly desirable. However, until the Lord comes into the circumstances they will still lack the transcendence that we all desire by nature.



Psalm 21:1-13. Psalm 21 is closely related to the previous psalm in structure and contents. In this psalm David rejoices in the strength and victory of the Lord. David is referring to himself in third person and throughout this psalm his joy is in the Lord's strength. Regardless of the circumstances of life, we have the privilege of living in the power of God over all of the details of life. This, of course, is something that the unbeliever has no concept of. Living in the Lord's strength is gained by a second person relationship with God that is characterized by thoughts and communication (prayers) with Him throughout each day as we sanctify each day with His presence, thanking Him for His grace and living in His presence. This is real life with God that goes beyond the first person ("I") and third person ("He") orientation to God, which are more about self and mechanics than any relationship. Walking with the Lord each day really is a "You-me" relationship just as in any close relationship.



All because of Christ,

Pastor Don