

Declaring God's Blessings and Curses (Numbers 22-25)

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Date: 16 July 2023

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[0 : 00] Let's get our Bibles open if you have them on you or on your phone. And we'll be listening to Numbers chapter 22. Pastor Paul will be preaching from 22 to 25, just covering the entire story.

But for time's sake, I'm going to be reading for us from Numbers 22, and then he'll fill in the rest. So this is meant to be a humorous story as well.

So I will try my best to read God's Word. But we come as well knowing that it is God's living and active Word. Hear the word of the Lord.

Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across from Jericho. Now Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

And Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites. The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, The Lord is going to lick up everything around us as an ox licks up the grass of the field.

[1 : 11] So Balak, son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at the time, sent messengers to summon Balaam, son of Baor, who was at Pethor near the river in his native land.

Balak said, A people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the land and have settled next to me. Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me.

Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For I know that those you bless are blessed, and those you curse are cursed. The elders of Moab, the Midian, left, taking with them the fee for divination.

When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said. Spend the night here, Balaam said to them, and I will give you back the answer the Lord gives me.

So the Moabite princes stayed with him. God came to Balaam and asked, Who are these men with you? Balaam said to God, Balak, son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message.

[2 : 19] A people that has come out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them and drive them away. But God said to Balaam, Do not go with them.

You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed. The next morning, Balaam got up and said to Balaak's princes, Go back to your own country, for the Lord has refused to let me go with you.

So the Moabite princes returned to Balaak and said, Balaam refused to come with us. Then Balaak sent other princes, more numerous and more distinguished than the first.

They came to Balaam and said, This is what Balaak, son of Zippor, says. Do not let anything keep you from coming to me, because I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say.

Come and put a curse on these people for me. But Balaam answered them, Even if Balaak gave me his palace, filled with silver and gold, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the Lord, my God.

[3 : 26] Now stay here tonight, as the others did, and I will find out what else the Lord will tell me. That night God came to Balaam and said, Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you.

Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him.

Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field.

And Balaam beat her to get her back on the road. Then the angel of the Lord stood in the narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it.

So he beat her again. Then the angel of the Lord moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam.

[4 : 37] And he was angry, and beat her with a staff. Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, What have I done to you to make you beat me this three times?

Balaam answered the donkey, You've made a fool of me. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now. The donkey said to Balaam, Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden to this day?

Have I been in the habit of doing this to you? No, he said. Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a sword drawn.

So he bowed down low and fell face down. The angel of the Lord asked him, Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you, because your path is a reckless one before me.

The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her. Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, I've sinned.

[5 : 55] I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back. The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you.

So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite town on the Amunon border, at the edge of his territory.

Balak said to Balaam, Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you? Well, I have come to you now, Balak replied, but can I just say anything?

I must speak only what God puts in my mouth. Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath-Huzoth. Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep and gave some to Balaam and the princes who were with him.

The next morning, Balak took Balaam up to Bar-Moth-Baal and from there he saw part of the people. And this is God's word for us.

[7 : 01] Let's hear it. Let's hear it. Let's hear it.

Let's hear it. Let's hear it. Are they going to work? You're going to need your Bibles open in front of you. So let's look at it together. The expression is, if I could just be a fly on the wall.

You know, like, I'd really like to be a fly on the wall in the Springbok changing room at half time. I wonder how that conversation would have gone. I would like to be a fly on the wall.

Oh, that's quite loud. As Chris Hipkins is having a meeting with a few of his wayward ministers. I wonder how that conversation would have gone. I'd like to be a fly on the wall when she takes that report home to her parents.

That'll be fascinating to hear how that goes. I'd like to be a fly on the wall when he tries to explain to his wife what he bought on that credit card statement.

[8 : 10] No, why he really needed it. There are some conversations that you aren't part of, but you're fascinated to hear what was said.

Sometimes it's just random curiosity. Sometimes those conversations are actually about you. You wonder what gets said about you when you aren't in the room.

When you're not there. What do they say? What do your friends say? If they get together and you're not invited, how does that conversation go? Do they like you? Do they think you're doing a good job? Do they think you're nice to be with?

Or do they privately talk amongst themselves and say, yeah, Paul's a bit of an idiot. No, I don't think he's, he's not that smart. I really, I think he's just sort of messing up his life.

Well, when it comes to the book of Numbers, Israel gets to overhear one of those private conversations. They weren't there, but if they'd been a fly on the wall, this is what they would have heard.

[9 : 14] Israel will get to hear what their enemies think about them. And more than that, Israel will get to hear what God thinks about them. Now, that might be historically interesting, but here's the kicker.

You get to hear what your enemies think about you, and you get to hear what God says to your enemies about you. So let's be a fly on the wall and listen in.

The book of Numbers is a road trip book. Go on a journey, this is your book. This is what you want to take with you. They start at Mount Sinai, and they finish on the edge of the promised land.

But they make a beginning, but they haven't arrived. If you like, they've started the Christian life, but they haven't got there yet. And the book of Numbers is about that journey.

It's about two generations. First generation, they left Egypt, they rebel against God, they wouldn't go into the promised land. And so therefore, that generation will die in the wilderness.

[10:25] Second generation, they grow up and replace their disobedient parents over 40 years.

And they are now on the edge of the promised land. They share some of their moral faults that their parents have, but they've also had some great victories in the chapters before us.

So chapters one to 10, it's about numbering, counting off the fighting men, because they form up into an army. Chapters one through 10.

Chapters 11 through 20, that people move as an army, but they will not do what God says. They turn out to be complainers and grumblers. They're fearful. They're disobedient before the Lord.

They refuse to enter the promised land, and therefore, they're going to wander in the wilderness for 40 years under God's judgment. Then chapter 21, we see the new generation emerging.

And there's a great victory in battle, as the Israelites position themselves ready to enter the promised land. And at the end of chapter 21, just before our reading, we find the nation of Israel.

[11:27] They're all lined up across the Jordan River. On the other side of the Jordan River is the promised land. They're all about to go in. And then we leave them behind. The story isn't about them.

We cross the river, so to speak. We zoom in on the enemies. And we read, Now Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and Moab was terrified because there were so many people.

Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites. The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, This horde is going to lick up everything around us as an ox licks up the grass of the field.

All through the book of Numbers, if you read through, you hear the Israelites are terrified of the opposing armies. They have fortified cities. They are giants.

They're going to eat us up. They're going to take our children away. They are horrible. But if Israel could be a fly on the wall with their enemies, with Moab, they would hear how scared witless they were of the Israelites.

[12:34] Well, what is Moab and Midian going to do with the Israelites? They are going to hire a professional to deal with the problem.

They aren't getting enhanced super soldier. They aren't recruiting a sharp shooting assassin.

They're not getting some mega muscle warrior. No, they are getting a six gun shooting prophet for hire who is going to curse the Israelites.

So they send their emissaries back to the Euphrates River to get the world famous Balaam son of Beor. Here's the message. Verse 5.

A people have come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the land. They've settled next to me. Now come, put a curse on these people because they're too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land.

For I know that whoever you bless is blessed and whoever you curse is cursed. And at this point, if you've got an ear that's attuned to something to do with the Bible's storyline, you hear that line, whoever you bless is blessed and whoever you curse is cursed.

[13:48] And you're thinking about your Sunday school days and you're going back and you're thinking, what's his name? Abraham. He's the guy that God promised, I will bless those who bless you.

Whoever curses you, I will curse. And across this whole episode of Balaam stands God's promise to bless Abraham and his descendants.

That's a theme. It keeps coming back. Chapters 20, 22, 23, 24. Now, all this material that we're reading, there's no Israelites around.

How do we know what Balak and Balaam were saying to one another? Well, we find out if you read on to chapter 31 that Balaam is captured by the Israelites.

And so, I assume he had a little interrogation session with Moses and Moses takes that material and he shapes it and he structures it with poetry and prophecy.

[14:50] It reflects a deep engagement with the Bible's storyline. You're going to read about things going back to Eden. It's going to point forward to the coming of the Messiah.

And if you want to understand these stories and this account of Balaam, you need to remember your Sesame School days. Anyone remember Sesame School today? This lesson is brought to you by the number three.

Three. We have three acts. Balaam on the way, Balaam with Balak, Balaam going away. Balaam has three encounters with the Lord before he decides to travel to Moab.

Balaam has three incidents with his donkey. Balaam has three episodes with the leaders of Moab that run across two days. So we have these three times this reading the next morning, the next morning, the next morning.

Balaam offers up three sacrifices, delivers three, main oracles. So just keep remembering the number three when you read this material. It's prepared, it's structured, it's put here on purpose.

[15:52] What is the purpose? To encourage the people of God. Now I want to do two things this afternoon. I just want to go through the story of Balaam here in the book of Numbers and then we'll look at how the New Testament uses Balaam as a warning for Christian believers.

So let's just dive into the story. Firstly, Balaam the bad prophet who blesses God's people. So the messengers arrive with a bag of money and a request for Balaam to come and curse Israel.

Balaam prays about it and the answer from God is a hard no. Verse 12, God said to Balaam, do not go with them. You must not have put a curse on those people because they are blessed.

Messengers take the answer back. Well, round two, more officials arrive from Moab, presumably with a bigger bag of money, are the same request. And they should get the same answer from Balaam, but Balaam says, let me pray about that.

Now at face value, that sounds good. Let me pray about that. But actually, we're starting to see that what is it that drives Balaam? It's the money. See, when God gives you a hard no, he means it.

[17:07] It's like saying, God said, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not murder. And then Balaam says, well, I'll pray about stealing or adultery or murder.

And I'll see if the Lord says it's okay. To be sure that verse 20, Balaam gets permission to go. But given what happens later, it's hard not to see that permission as a kind of giving in to him.

Look, you want to go and sin? Then way you go. Off you go. We'll see how your sinning turns out. Yeah, you've got permission. Go on. So off Balaam goes on his famous donkey.

2001, the world was introduced to another talking donkey, Shrek's sidekick. And he's the comedic relief. That's what that talking donkey is there for.

And I'll tell you, that's what the talking donkey is here for in this passage. We are meant to laugh with Shrek of the talking donkey. You are meant to laugh here in this passage.

[18:10] You see, verse 21, Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, went with the Moabite officials, but God was very angry when he went. And the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him.

Donkey sees the danger, turns away from the angel who has a drawn sword. Balaam beats and berates his donkey and off they go again. This encounter with the angel happens three times.

Each time the donkey turns away, saving Balaam's life. And the incident with Balaam and the donkey mirrors what's going to happen shortly with Balak, what he will try to do with Balaam.

See, as Balaam tries three times to drive the donkey on against opposition from God, so Balak will try three times to drive Balaam to curse the Israelites, pushing against the opposition from God.

And we're meant to see the humour here. The most spiritually aware character, the one that sees the angel, is the donkey.

[19:12] And then they have a discussion, the man and the donkey, and one of them argues and reasons really well, who is the smart one in the conversation?

The donkey. Moab has recruited this high-powered prophet for hire, and his donkey has more spiritual sense than this man does.

If you are Israel, you're meant to go, well, nothing to worry about here if this is the calibre of the super-prophet. His donkey knows more than he does. Well, suitably warned by the angel just to stick with the Lord's message, Balaam arrives in Moab.

And up a hill they go so that Balaam can see the edge of the Israelite camp. Balaam and Balak offer up sacrifices on seven altars. Then, chapter 23, verse 5, the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, go back to Balak and give him this word.

So he went back to him and found him standing beside his offering with all the Moabite officials. Then Balaam spoke his message. Balak brought me from Aram, the king of Moab, from the eastern mountains.

[20 : 24] Come, he said. Curse Jacob for me. Come, denounce Israel. How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the Lord has not denounced?

From the rocky peaks I see them. From the heights I view them. I see people who live apart and do not consider themselves one of the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob or number even a fourth part of Israel?

Let me die the death of the righteous and may my final end be like theirs. Balak said to Balaam, what have you done to me?

I brought you to curse my enemies, but you've done nothing but bless them. He answered, must I not speak what the Lord puts in my mouth? Well, Balak tries to ride Balaam forward to curse Israel, but Balaam sees the spiritual danger of doing that and like his donkey, he turns away and he blesses Israel.

Well, the Moabite king tries again with Balaam. More sacrifices, but the same result. Let me paraphrase verses 18 to 24. God isn't going to change his mind about his people. They will be blessed.

[21 : 32] Nothing bad is going to happen to them because the Lord is with them. He brought them out of Egypt and he will take them into the promised land as his victors. Again, Balak berates him, but still they have a third go.

So chapter 24, now verse one, now when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not resort to divination as at other times, but turned his face towards the wilderness.

When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him and what follows is more blessing for Israel.

Culminating in the promise, verse nine, may those who bless you be blessed and those who curse you be cursed. At which point, Balak's anger burns against Balaam.

No reward money for you. Well, as a consolation prize, Balaam gives out four more prophecies. Verse 17, a king will come from Israel and he will crush Moab.

[22 : 37] A ruler will come out of Jacob and he'll destroy Edom. Oh, and by the way, the Amalekites, they're going to get a clobbering and so will the Kenites, Asher and Eber. Okay, must run now.

Bye. Boom. He's gone. Here is Israel, a fly on the wall, listening to the efforts of the Moabite king to defeat them spiritually, to have them curse so that they could be overpowered by military might.

And as Israel listens in, the Lord simply will not let it happen. The word of the Lord, spoken through Balaam to Israel's enemies, God is for them and with them they will be blessed.

And after all the incidents, if you've read early chapters of Numbers, all their disobedience and their defiance in the book of Numbers, Israel, how does the Lord speak about them to her enemies?

Chapter 23, verse 21, no misfortune is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel. The Lord their God is with them, the shout of the king is among them. It's all but good, says the Lord.

[23 : 48] Let me tell you what the Lord is still saying about his people today. Because we too are children of Abraham.

Not by blood, but by faith. As Apostle Paul tells New Testament believers Galatians chapter 3, understand then that those who have faith are children of Abraham.

Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announce the gospel in advance to Abraham. All nations will be blessed through you. So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

So that Christian brothers and sisters, God isn't changing his mind about his plans to bless his people. He won't let anyone curse you or destroy you.

He is with you. He is for you. There's no enemy whose plans will work against your eternal salvation. If you could be a fly on the wall of those who are hostile and antagonistic towards you and your hope in the Lord Jesus, those who seem to live in fortified cities, those who seem to be giants, those who seem to be so terrifying, actually none of what they say matters.

[25 : 10] because the Lord is with us. Rest easy. Be brave. Your future is sure and certain and overwhelmingly good because the Lord's in control.

No satanic power, no worldly scheme. He is the sovereign. Nothing and no one can thwart the Lord's plans to rescue and save and bless his people.

We live in a very secular country where religion is kind of looked down on and Christianity particularly seems to be inappropriate and despised. Our faith is more and more publicly mocked. Christian morality is called evil. I just anticipate things will just get tougher and meaner for Christians. Christians. It might be shocking to be a Christian as a fly on the wall in the offices of government or your average Kiwi neighbours but actually it doesn't matter whose wall you are a fly on.

The message of God's intentions and his power to bless his people it's the only message you need to hear. That's the best news for you to take home this evening.

[26 : 31] God is for you and his purposes are that he will see his people blessed. Well in Numbers we see Balaam the bad prophet who blesses God's people but it's worth looking at Balaam as a warning for Christian believers today because we just want to spend a few moments looking at him a bit more because if you just take a kind of narrow view of him from this passage you might misunderstand him.

He's much more complicated and he's much more dangerous than he appears. I mean he prays to the Lord and yet his heart is motivated by greed. God puts his word in his mouth but he's a kind of pagan sorcerer who practices divination.

That's a kind of an abomination to the Lord. The testimony of the book of Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Nehemiah, Micah, New Testament, 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation, they all declare that Balaam is evil and wicked.

Balaam is the poster child for false teachers in the New Testament. So 2 Peter 2, they've left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam, son of Beza, who loved the wages of wickedness but he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey, an animal without speech who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

Or Jude chapter 1, woe to them, they've taken the way of Cain, they've rushed for profit into Balaam's error. They've been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

[28 : 11] The confusing thing for us though is that Balaam speaks the truth about God's people. He ends up blessing them and he warns of judgment on their enemies.

But it's a mistake to think that all false teachers are always saying false things, they always wear black, they have a scar on their face and they talk with an evil.

Ha ha ha! Of course they don't. That's not bad people. Balaam looked good. He was world famous in his day.

He was rich, he was successful, he prayed, he sounded very knowledgeable about God's people. But he was also crooked and conniving and greedy.

He just wanted the cash. Now if we had all, only had all these chapters, we might be tempted to sort of give Balaam a B minus or a C plus. I mean he's trying to serve the Lord but well he's just an ignorant pagan.

[29 : 11] You know, what does he know? But Moses tells us a little bit more about Balaam. We find out from Numbers 31 that Balaam is the ideas man behind Israel's fall into sexual immorality in chapter 25.

Balaam couldn't deliver curses on Israel in order to get a financial reward from the king of Moab but he did come up with another strategy. Get Israel to sin.

And so chapter 31, the Moabites and the Midianites, chapter 31 verse 16, followed Balaam's advice and enticed the Israelites to be unfaithful to the Lord in the Peor incident so that a plague struck the Lord's people which is what we read about in chapter 25.

While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women who invited them to sacrifice to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods.

So Israel yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and the Lord's anger burned against them. Food, religion and sex are an intoxicating and destructive mixture.

[30 : 27] And we need to see that the chapter 25 isn't about sort of Middle Eastern strangers meeting and falling in love, Moabites and Israelites. It's a love story. No, no, no. This is planned

deception.

This is spycraft 101. This is the honey trap, the seductive woman luring and trapping and tricking Israelite men to lead them astray.

And for the first time in the whole story so far we encounter the local deity Baal, the false god that will keep tripping up Israel for centuries.

Baal is the fertility god, the god of harvest and crops, the god of herds and cattle, the god of babies and prosperity. Honor this little local god and everything will go well.

What happens is Israel commits spiritual adultery against the one she's spiritually married to, the Lord who saved and rescued her.

[31 : 32] And so verse 4, chapter 25, the Lord said to Moses, take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the Lord so that the Lord's fierce anger may turn away from Israel.

So Moses said to Israel's judges, each of you must put to death those of your people who have yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor. We shouldn't look at the crime and be shocked by the extreme punishment.

We should look at the punishment and therefore realize how extreme the crime is. Verse 6, Then an Israelite man brought into the camp a Midianite woman right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel while they were weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

When Phinehas son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear into both of them right through the Israelite man and into the woman's stomach.

Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped. For those who died in the plague, number 24,000. Blatant, flagrant, this isn't some secret embarrassing sin that this man and woman have been caught in.

[32 : 45] He brazenly, shamelessly ignores Moses and the whole assembly in order to do what he wants. Thousands of people are dying from this plague, this judgment, but he and others like him, they simply just don't care.

Man was a leader. What a tragic example, he says. Here is how the Israelites are undone. Their enemies just need to seduce them into sin and they will bring God's anger on themselves.

The apostle John points to this incident in Numbers when he warns Christians and warns churches. Speaking to the church at Pergamum, the Lord Jesus says, Revelation chapter 2, nevertheless, I have a few things against you.

There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.

The enticement started with a shared meal and thinking that you're spiritually bulletproof against idols, but the idea that you're immune to temptation, the notion that you're safe no matter what.

[33 : 55] The apostle Paul, you've been working your way through 1 Corinthians, he turns to this incident in Numbers 25 and warns New Testament Christians. 1 Corinthians 10, verse 8, we should not commit sexual immorality as some of them did and in one day 23,000 of them died.

Now these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So if you think you're standing firm, be careful that you don't fall.

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind and God is faithful. He'll not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear but when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. And the apostle Paul says the way out of this kind of temptation, not through a kind of steely resolve.

It's not thinking an idol's nothing. It's not like I'm going to pray my way out of this. No, his advice is very simple. Run away, quickly. Go. Get out of there. Take off. We are naive if we think we are immune from the idols of our world.

[35 : 04] We are naive if we think we are immune from being seduced into sin. God's people in the wilderness, God's people at Pergamum, God's people at Corinth, and God's people here today.

We may be good at surviving a direct, head-on attack from a false teacher like Balaam, but so often we fall for the way of Balaam, which is the sideways attack, the indirect assault, the subtle deception that seduces God's people into sinful behavior and so undermines our faith.

The Bible points to Balaam's schemes and says, don't get seduced into sin. Our struggle's not against flesh and blood, but against Satan and his demonic schemes.

And do you know what? He knows every weakness you have. He knows every chink in your armor. He knows which temptations you are susceptible to.

He knows which buttons to push. But you also need to remember that the Lord is looking out for you. The Lord's erected a warning sign. It says, Balaam.

[36 : 18] And so you are on your guard. You're looking for the direct assault, but also the subtle seduction that tempts you into sin.

Three things to take home from this chapter. Oh, these chapters. Take home from these chapters. That fly on the wall knowledge. Being seduced and enticed into sin is a folly we are all capable of committing.

But through numbers, you've been warned. We're prepared. We know the danger. And we recognize that this sort of seducing sin, oh, we've got to be ruthless with our own hearts over.

Our second thing, take home from these chapters this evening, that fly on the wall knowledge.

There are false teachers at work in and around the church. They are deceptive.

They're hard to spot. Oh, but they are out there. But numbers gives you a kind of photo fit sketch of what they look like, what drives them, how they work.

[37 : 23] And thirdly, take home from these chapters this evening, that fly on the wall knowledge.

Oh, you do have spiritual enemies, but the Lord's controlling and directing this world so that his people will be blessed.

Even in places where you don't know what's being said and what's being plotted, the Lord has promised, I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you.

The Lord is watching over you for your good, for your blessing. Let's pray together. Father, we give you thanks and praise that you are a great God.

Your enemies will not defeat your work. You will bless your people, and you will see that they are blessed. Strengthen the believers here tonight. Give us wisdom to see the seductive sins as well as the direct attack.

Help us to know that there are false teachers working against the cause of your people, and yet you are the great God who will rescue and save. We give you thanks this night in Jesus' name.

[38 : 32] Amen.