

Bible Commentary – 1 Corinthians – Chapter 7

We present to you our commentary on 1 Corinthians. In our study we will make use of the usual tools of exegesis but we will also support our conclusions by making reference to numerical clues in the Scripture. Our purpose is to show how spiritual numbers can be a valuable study aid. You will find a chapter by chapter exegesis of this book on Page 99 BIBLE of www.biblenumbersforlife.com

COMMENTARY

Summary of main points in the text:

- 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman' (v.1)
- '**Let each man have his own wife, and each woman her own husband**' (v.2)
- 'Do not deprive one another ... come together so Satan does not tempt you' (v.5)
- 'It is better to marry than to burn with passion' (v.9)
- '**A wife is not to depart from her husband** ... a husband is not to divorce his wife' (v.10-11)
- 'Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called' (v.20)
- 'He who is called while a slave is the LORD's freedman. Likewise he who is called while he is free is the LORD's slave' (v.22)
- 'You were bought with a price; do not become the slaves of men' (v.23)
- 'The time is short ... for the form of this world is passing away' (v. 29-31)
- 'He who is married cares about the things of this world, how he may please his wife' (v.34)
- '**A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if he dies she is at liberty**' (v.39)

Parallel passage (Numbers 23)

1 Corinthians 7 is the 140th chapter of the New Testament.

Numbers 23 is the 140th chapter of the Bible. Numbers 23 is the account of Balak taking Balaam to a high mountain overlooking the children of Israel. **Balaam ordered that seven altars be constructed and a ram and a bull be sacrificed on each altar.** Balaam and Balak conducted the sacrifices together. Balaam left Balak by the altars and went to a solitary place where he received words from the Lord.

Instead of a curse in this chapter Balaam twice pronounces blessings over the children of Israel: '**How can I curse those whom God has not cursed?**' and '**No misfortune is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel**' and '**It will be said of Jacob and of Israel 'See what God has done!'**'"

Balak complains '**Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all!**' Balaam replies '**Did I not tell you I must say whatever God puts in my mouth?**' Balaam appears to confound Balak's goal of cursing the children of Israel. But in reality **Balaam is teaching the Moabite King how to stumble them.**

Interpretation of the parallel passage:

The point of Balaam's lesson to Balak is to show that actions speak louder than words.

Balak has asked Balaam to invoke imprecations and curses upon the children of Israel. Balak had a belief that the words of Balaam were powerful in themselves to decide fate. Balaam saw a different perspective: that God looks at our actions, judges sin and punishes wickedness. If there is no sin in our actions, then there is no judgment. Seeing no sin in Israel's actions, Balaam couldn't predict downfall.

To achieve Balak's desire of hurting his enemy, **Balaam devised an evil scheme.** To bring misfortune to the children of Israel he advised Balak to seduce the men of Israel into sexual immorality with the women of Moab. He knew if Israel's behavior was perverse, then God would judge them¹.

Balaam taught Balak without words. He provided Balak with a clue through the perverse sacrifice he offered on the seven altars. He deliberately left Balak standing alone beside the perverse sacrifice so that Balak's evil imagination would guess Balaam's plan without Balaam telling him plainly.

The perverse sacrifice was the combination of a ram and a bull burnt together on the same altar. We do not know how the animals were arranged on the altar. We speculate that the ram being the smaller animal was placed on top of the larger animal. But they could have been side by side.



We apologize for the poor illustration which shows a priest (Balaam) and the King of Moab. We do not know how either was attired. The Bible does say they offered the sacrifices together.

¹ The reader is welcome to search these chapters carefully. In no place does Balaam actually explain to the evil Balak this is his plan or how to execute his evil scheme.

The bull represents the Gentiles. The ram represents the Israelites. The two male animals arranged close together on the altar were figuratively lying in the same bed! Such a perverse sacrifice would never have been acceptable to God.

When Balaam offered the perverse sacrifice, the spirit of sexual uncleanness came upon Balak and he concocted his evil scheme to seduce the Israelites through sexual sin. The daughters of Moab were offered to the men of Israel. The spirit of sexual immorality came upon those men and they sinned.

God judged the Israelites and 24,000 died in the plague. Balaam used his inside knowledge of the ways of the Lord to bring a curse upon the Israelites. All without using his words! Balaam did not lead Israel into false beliefs. Balaam never sinned in what he spoke. Balaam was not a false teacher. Balaam was a prophet who compromised his morals and by his example led others to do the same.

Balaam was covetous and served for a fee. His own practice and way of life was perverse. No surprise then he was a tool of the Devil to lead men astray into ungodliness and perverse ways.

When we judge spiritual leaders their character and way of life is of greater importance than words.

A godly spiritual leader, like Paul, avoided the contamination of covetousness by going so far as to serve the Lord at his own expense. He set the example to believers of the highest standard of holy living. His teaching was validated by his godly life.

Application to the passage of 1 Corinthians 7

Paul devotes many verses in this chapter to describe in careful detail how men and women of faith ought to share intimate relations. Paul's wise counsel is for believers to remain celibate if they can control their passions. The inability of the Israelites to exercise self-control is a warning to us.

At the surface level of application our LORD is expressing his fervent desire that we keep our bodies uncontaminated by sexual sin and perversion. We are called to holy living. This is a matter of vital importance. We know because the instructions in 1st Corinthians chapter 7 are presented in extensive detail. The Corinthians were preoccupied with following after Bible teachers. However, unless their lives conformed to godly practices their knowledge of Bible truth was useless.

At a deeper level, the LORD is speaking to the church as his bride. He is emphasizing to us our duty of total devotion to him. We are not to follow after men. We are not to become the devotees of public speakers or gifted expositors. If we are always listening to the teaching of men, we will not learn to hear the inner witness of the Holy Spirit in our own heart. The Greeks loved wisdom and admired cleverness and eloquent speech making. God speaks to our spirits with inexpressible words, with groans. Meditation in the Lord's Supper is a way to learn to hear the witness of the Holy Spirit. We would all do well to practice the presence of God, not to have our ear's tickled by teachers.

Spiritual Numbers

1 Corinthians 7 is the 140th chapter in the New Testament. The number 140 means '**Evil Schemes**'. Balaam devised an evil plan to stumble the Israelites. Why? So he could obtain the diviner's fee. What corruption! To think that a man would sell the souls of others to enrich himself is revolting.

1 Corinthians 7 is the 1,069th book in the Bible. The number 1,069 is the 180th prime number. The spiritual meaning of 180 is "**Sin Brings a Curse**" (180). Balaam knew this to be true. Pity he used this knowledge to stumble the Israelites, not to warn them of danger.

The first verse in 1 Corinthians 7 is the 124th verse in the book. The number 124 means '**Escaped Trap**'. The last verse in 1 Corinthians 6 is the 163rd verse in the book. The number 163 means '**Word Hid in Heart**'. There are 40 verses in 1 Corinthians 7. The number 40 means '**Testing**'. Why did the Israelites succumb to the temptation of the Moabite women? We can only escape moral entrapment if we love Jesus above all. Tests will come to everyone – this is the hazard of living in the world. Those tests will prove who is holding the reins of our heart.