Parashat Pinchas
Numbers 25:10–30:1 (pages 1195-1215 in Plaut)

Blessing:
Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

WE DID NOT COME TO TORAH. TORAH CAME TO US. FOR US TO COME TO IT, WE MUST ASK, "WHAT IS IT THAT THIS PORTION HAS COME TO TEACH US?"

I.   The Big Picture: The Book of Numbers (Bemidbar)

II.   Summary of Parashat Pinchas

The narrative in this portion begins when the Israelites' forty-year journey in the wilderness is coming to an end. At the conclusion of the previous parashah, Balak, a group of Israelite men have sexual encounters with Moabite women and end up worshipping the local deity, Baal-peor. Although many Israelites go astray, the account focuses on one couple in particular: an Israelite notable and his Moabite partner, Cozbi, who act profanely in front of the entire Israelite community. Phinehas ("Pinchas" in Hebrew), Aaron's grandson, impales the couple with a spear, thus checking the plague God sent to punish the Israelites for their worship of foreign gods. Parashat Pinchas opens with the conclusion of this episode.

•   Pinchas is rewarded for his action with the blessing God bestows on him in the form of a pact of friendship that promises that the priesthood will remain in his family for all time.(25:10–15)
•   Israel fights a war against the Midianites. (25:16-18)
•   A second census is taken. (26:1–65)
•   The daughters of Zelophehad force a change in the laws of property inheritance. (27:1–11)
•   Joshua is chosen to be Moses' successor. (27:15–23)
•   The sacrificial ritual for all festival occasions is described in detail, including Passover, the Sabbath, the New Moon, the Festival of Weeks and the Day of Atonement (28:1–30

III.   Our focus this morning:

          Reading #1: Numbers 25:10-18 page 1194

          Reading #2: Numbers 27:15-23 pages 1204-05

          Reading #3: Numbers 28:10-1   page 1210