

Balaam prophesied about the great future God had in store for Israel and that God found no fault with Israel.

Numbers 23:21-24 NKJV 21 "He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel. The LORD his God is with him, And the shout of a King is among them. 22 God brings them out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox. 23 "For there is no sorcery against Jacob, Nor any divination against Israel. It now must be said of Jacob And of Israel, 'Oh, what God has done!' 24 Look, a people rises like a lioness, And lifts itself up like a lion; It shall not lie down until it devours the prey, And drinks the blood of the slain."

Then the children of Israel engaged in harlotry and idolatry. They “joined” with Baal Peor.

Numbers 25:1-3 NKJV 1 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

Join:#6775, tsamad, meaning to link, join, or yoke.

2 Samuel 20:8 NKJV 8 When they were at the large stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Now Joab was dressed in battle armor; on it was a belt with a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips; and as he was going forward, it fell out.

Psalms 50:19 YLT 19 Thy mouth thou hast sent forth with evil, And thy tongue joineth deceit together,

Israel joined with Baal Peor both physically and in purpose.

The Stone Edition Chumash translated Numbers 25:3 as “Israel became attached to Baal-Peor.”

Matthew Poole, a seventeenth century theologian writes:

The word implies a forsaking of God, to whom they were and should have been joined, and a turning to, embracing of strict conjunction with, and fervent affection after, this false god.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the Israelites enjoyed their worship of Baal-Peor and didn't want to give it up!

Hosea 9:10 NKJV 10 "I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, And separated themselves to that shame; They became an abomination like the thing they loved.

Separated: #5144, nazar meaning to hold aloof, or set apart.

Moses contrasted those who joined with Baal-Peor with those who clung to God.

Deuteronomy 4:3-4 NAS95 3 "Your eyes have seen what the LORD has done in the case of Baal-peor, for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the LORD your God has destroyed them from among you. 4 "But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you.

Hold fast: #1695, dabeq, meaning to adhere, to stick closer, cleave, or join.

dabaq, #1692 which is used to explain that a husband is to cleave to his wife.

**Discussion Question: Compare the Nazarite vow and the way a husband is to cleave to his wife with the actions of the children of Israel when they joined with Baal-Peor and separated themselves to Baal-Peor.**

God didn't wait for a court of law to convict those who participated in this worship as described by Deuteronomy 17.

Deuteronomy 17:2-7 NKJV 2 "If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant, 3 "who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, 4 "and it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, 5 "then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. 6 "Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 7 "The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

God immediately pronounced judgment and told Moses to have the judges carry out the sentence.

Numbers 25:4-5 NKJV 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel." 5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

Even as the judgment is being carried out, the children of Israel persist in their worship of Baal-Peor!

Numbers 25:6 NKJV 6 And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Who is Baal-Peor?

- Baal means master of lord and is used in reference to many different idols that the Israelites worshiped.
- Peor is from the name of the hill or mountain above the plain of Moab where this event took place.

Numbers 23:28 NKJV 28 So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, that overlooks the wasteland.

- The early church father, Jerome, associates Baal-Peor with Chemosh.
- The Jewish Encyclopedia states that "this form of Baal worship especially called for sensual indulgence."<sup>ii</sup> The name "Peor" comes from the Hebrew, "pa'ar," #6473 meaning to yawn or open wide.

Isaiah 5:14 NKJV 14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself And opened its mouth beyond measure; Their glory and their multitude and their pomp, And he who is jubilant, shall descend into it.

- Matthew Poole and John Wesley comment that Baal-Peor is the same as the Roman god Priapus who is a fertility god noted for his large phallus.

Understanding the nature of this worship helps to understand Pinchas' actions and why his actions stopped the plague.

Numbers 25:7-8 NKJV 7 Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; 8 and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and

thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel.

The literal version sheds additional light on this passage.

Numbers 25:7-8 YLT 7 and Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, the priest, seeth, and riseth from the midst of the company, and taketh a javelin in his hand, 8 and goeth in after the man of Israel unto the hollow place, and pierceth them both, the man of Israel and the woman--unto her belly, and the plague is restrained from the sons of Israel;

Pinchas is symbolically piercing Baal-Peor.

Tent: (NKJV) or hollow place (YLT): #6898, qubbah: meaning a domed cavity or a pavilion.

Belly: #6897 qobah: meaning the abdomen or belly.

Both from #6895, qabab, which means to scoop out, figuratively to stab with words, or curse.

- The only place qabab is used is in connection with the curses that Balaam was supposed to speak over the children of Israel from the mountains around the camp of Israel including Mount Peor!

The implications are that this hollow place and the belly of the woman are cursed or stabbed with words.

Afterwards, God sends the children of Israel to attack the Midianites during which both Balaam and Balak are killed.

Numbers 31:6-8 NKJV 6 Then Moses sent them to the war, one thousand from each tribe; he sent them to the war with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the holy articles and the signal trumpets in his hand. 7 And they warred against the Midianites, just as the LORD commanded Moses, and they killed all the males. 8 They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed-Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.

**Discussion Question: How is this sequence of events prophetic of the end times?**

**Discussion Question: How does Paul characterize the effect or consequences of sexual sin?**

**Discussion Question: When the children of Israel worshiped the golden calf, what was the result? How are these situations alike? How are they different? When the children of Israel participated in the rebellion of Korah, how did Aaron make atonement for the children of Israel and stop the plague? Compare these situations.**

As a result of Pinchas' actions, God grants a covenant of peace to him.

Numbers 25:10-13 NKJV 10 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 11 "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. 12 "Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; 13 'and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.'"

Pinchas' actions should not be construed as vigilante justice.

The LORD praised Pinchas saying that Pinchas turned back God's wrath because Pinchas was "zealous with my zeal." Zealous or zeal: #7065, "qana" meaning to be or cause to make zealous, jealous or envious.

First Fruits of Zion in the Torah Club Volume 1 Unrolling the Scroll write:

God is jealous in the sense that a loving husband is jealous over his wife. If your spouse told you, "I don't care if you see other people; it doesn't bother me," you would be alarmed that he or she no longer holds your wedding vows sacrosanct. It should bother you that your spouse had such little affection for you that infidelity was not even an issue. ... God's jealousy over us is an indication of His love for us.<sup>iii</sup>

What is a covenant of peace?

Peace: #7965, "shalom" which means safe, well, happy, friendly, peace, prosperity and over all well-being.

- Shalom, שָׁלוֹם, is written with a broken vav. The top part resembles the letter yood which is the hand. The bottom part looks like a spear or nail. The nail pierces the hand of Yeshua as He was on the cross to bring us peace.<sup>iv</sup>

Zechariah 12:10 NKJV 10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Pinchas' name, פִּינְחָס, is written in the Hebrew of this verse with a small yood.<sup>v</sup> This small act of Pinchas' in slaying only one man among the many who were slain, 24,000, made a difference.

Ezekiel mentions a future covenant of peace with Israel when David is shepherd over the people.

Ezekiel 34:23-25 NKJV 23 "I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them-My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 "And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. 25 "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

The covenant of peace is an eternal covenant and that God will live in their midst forever.

Ezekiel 37:24-28 NKJV 24 "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 "Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. 26 "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28 "The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.""

Pinchas' part in the covenant is that his descendants would be priests to God forever. As Pinchas was zealous for God, so God was zealous for Pinchas.

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<sup>i i</sup> Poole, Matthew. *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*. Commentary on Matthew 18:3-4. ©1683

<sup>ii</sup> Jewish Encyclopedia. *Baal-Peor*. Morris Jastrow, Jr., J. Frederic McCurdy, Marcus Jastrow, Louis Ginzberg. <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2246-baal-peor>. ©1906

<sup>iii</sup> Torah Club Volume 1 Unrolling the Scroll. First Fruits of Zion. Page 653.

<sup>iv</sup> Pastor Mark Biltz. El Shaddai Ministries. Commentary on the Torah Club Volume 2 Shadows of the Messiah - Pinchas. 2008.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.