

In The Wilderness

Numbers 25:1-18

- In these last few chapters we've watched as a spiritual battle has taken place involving God's people Israel, even though they didn't know anything about it. As Balak and Balaam have gone from altar to altar, mountain to mountain, Israel continues to march toward their promised destination, totally unaware that evil forces have been gathering together against them and plotting how they can either stop them in their tracks, or possibly destroy them all together.

V1-18

- When chapter 24 ended you may have gotten the impression that Balaam went back to his home and left Balak to deal with Israel by himself, but unfortunately for him that was not the case. In chapter 23 when the Lord spoke to Balaam about Israel, telling him not to curse them but bless them, Balaam picked up on something that the Lord said in the prophecy.
- In **23:8**- Balaam heard the Lord say > **"How shall I curse whom the Lord has not cursed, and how shall I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced"**, also in **23:21**- The Lord said that > **"He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has He seen wickedness in Israel"**. Listening to these prophecies gave Balaam an idea on how to collect the money that Balak was offering to put a curse on Israel without actually cursing Israel at all, you may ask how is that possible?
- Balaam understood that cursing Israel wasn't an option because the Lord had blessed them and whom the Lord has blessed man cannot curse successfully. But if you can get them to disobey God, this will in turn bring judgment on themselves, and you still accomplish the same goals but through different means. So Balaam taught Balak how to seduce Israel into idolatry and sexual immorality, and this chapter is a direct result of the ungodly counsel Balaam gave to Balak, we know all of this because **Num 31:16** tells us that this happened because of Balaam's counsel.
- **V1-2** the women of Moab came down and introduced themselves to the men of Israel and afterward invited them to their pagan sacrifices which included sexual immorality, and Israel began to participate in both the false worship and the sexual sin. People don't ever think that you can be around perverseness and illicit sin and somehow it not negatively affects you, it may not get you immediately or right away, but eventually it wears you down until you give in to it. Remember Lot > **2 Pet 2:7-8**- that seeing and hearing Sodom-Gomorrah ungodliness took a toll.
- **V3-5** this caused the anger of the Lord to be directed at Israel, Balaam might couldn't curse Israel but he knew how to defile Israel and bring the judgment of God upon them > **Rev 2:14**- mentions this as God addresses the "Church at Pergamos" telling them that He has a few things against them, because they held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit immorality.

- Listen there are people who are adapt at getting people to do things or make decisions that are harmful to their walks with God, while they themselves appear to not have been involved in the situation, but if you look closer they were whispering in people's ears, encouraging them that what they were contemplating nothings wrong with it, and afterward when the fallout begins to take place they take no accountability.
- **2Pet 2, Jude 11**, says the way of Balaam, and the error of Balaam, is to creep in and lead people astray by teaching them how to sin, and entice others to do the same, deceiving them into thinking that they'll get away with it. Israel is hit with a plague because of these sins and Moses tells the leaders to kill everyone who has joined themselves to Baal.
- **V6** later we see the man who brings this Midianite woman into the camp is "Zimri" whose father is one of the leaders within the tribe of Simeon, and the woman he brought in was the daughter of one of the heads of the Midianite people, so we have some kids who are used to do things their way because of belonging to prominent families. So Zimri waltzed in with his new girlfriend in the middle of prayer meeting, in front of everyone, and goes into his tent for some alone time this occurs while a plague that is killing twenty four thousand people is raging through the camp
- **V7-9** but Zimri and his girl are unconcede, that is until Phineas leaves the prayer meeting and shows up inside the tent and with a sharp spear in his hand, and goes after the couple killing both of them. Amazingly with this singular act and stand for righteousness, God stopped the plague, don't ever think that one person cannot make a difference, spark a change, cause a revival in people's lives, and notice Phineas was also a child from a well known family being the grandson of Aaron the high priest, the difference is the dead couple used their privilege to indulge their sin, while Phineas used his influence to provoke and further Godliness.
- **V10-13** because of Phineas zeal for the honor of the Lord, a couple of things take place > **1st** his actions saved lives, twenty four thousand died, but plenty more would have if not for the actions of Phineas, **2nd** Phineas is given a special reward of a lasting priesthood for himself and his descendants, all of this happens after he acted, so he didn't know God was going to do any of this, so his motive was pure and selfish.
- **V14-18** the name of the main perpetrators are given and the Lord tells Moses to deal with the Midianites for their schemes, and not to show them any leniency, what is sad that before this incident remember Israel was not to touch them because they were related, but afterward God tells them to show no mercy. Just in case you were wondering what happened to Balaam and did he go and live a comfortable life with all the money he made from Balak > **Num 31:7-8**- tells us that he got his as Israel attacked Midian and found Balaam there and killed him.
- **Ps 18:25-26** tell us that we can never out slick or out scheme the Lord, you may get away with it seemingly with man but not with God, He will repay all wrongdoing whether it is acknowledged by man or not, God will judge properly, as we see with Balaam. When they finally caught up with Balaam I can imagined he said I wasn't there, ask anyone, in fact when they tried to pay me to curse you I didn't, but you did teach Balak how to entice us into sabotaging ourselves.

