



# House of New Beginnings

ShalomAZ Ministries

*In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption*

## **"The Day Deception Walked into the Camp"**

***Pinchas (פִּינְחָס) "Phineas"***

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

### **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

#### **Key Texts: Numbers 25**

Have you ever been so close to breakthrough that you could see it—feel it—even taste it? That's where Israel was in Numbers 25. They had survived the wilderness. They had won decisive battles. God had blessed them, protected them, and kept them safe from every curse. Balaam couldn't touch them. Every curse turned into a blessing. They were invincible—until they weren't. What happened?

Deception walked into the camp. It didn't come with swords or curses. It came dressed in seduction. In flattery. In cultural blending. The enemy knew he couldn't attack from the outside, so he lured them from the inside. What Israel faced that day isn't so different from what we face now. We live in a world full of spiritual traps that don't look like curses—they look like options. Today, let's learn from their fall and Pinchas' faithfulness so we don't miss what God wants to do right on the edge of our own breakthrough.

#### **1. THE ENEMY CAN'T CURSE YOU—SO HE'LL TRY TO LURE YOU**

Israel was untouchable. Balaam, the pagan prophet, tried to curse them from every angle—and failed. Why? Because as long as they were under God's covering, they were spiritually untouchable. But instead of giving up, Balaam changed tactics. He counseled the Moabites and Midianites to send in their women—to draw the Israelites into sexual sin and idolatry. And it worked.

Numbers 25 tells us that while Israel camped in Shittim—on the cusp of promise—they let their guard down. They joined themselves to the daughters of Moab. They attended pagan feasts. They bowed to other gods. And in doing so, they stepped out from under the blessing of God and into judgment. The same is true for us. The enemy may not be able to spiritually assault you—but if he can deceive you, seduce you, or slowly wear you down, he can get you to walk away from the shelter God gave you.

#### **2. COMPROMISE DOESN'T ALWAYS LOOK EVIL—SOMETIMES IT LOOKS INVITING**

When Zimri, a prince in Israel, walked into camp hand-in-hand with Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader, he didn't come with weapons—he came with comfort. He came with deception disguised as freedom. Her very name, **Kazbi (כַּזְבִּי)**, means "lie" or "deception," and her father's name, **Tzur (צֹר, Oppressor)** is rooted in the same word as *MiTZRayim*—Egypt, the place of oppression. The enemy always sends deception from the house of bondage, hoping you'll take the bait and walk away from freedom.

Zimri's name means "my music, my praise"—yet here he is, the one meant to bring honor to the Lord, bringing dishonor into the camp. **Tzur (Oppression) sends Kazav, (Deception) into the camp to defile and destroy our Zimri – our praise.** This is what deception does: it rebrands rebellion as freedom. It makes idolatry look like intimacy.

But underneath, it's spiritual sabotage. The enemy's strategy hasn't changed—he still seeks to seduce us into tolerating what God calls treason.

### **3. THE PATH TO PEACE STARTS WITH ZEAL FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

When deception walked into the camp, most of Israel froze. They wept. They stood still. But one man—**Pinchas**—stood up. He didn't wait for consensus. He didn't shrug his shoulders. He grabbed a spear and ran into the tent. His bold, priestly zeal stopped the plague that had already claimed 24,000 lives. And in response, God gave him a **covenant of peace (brit shalom)**—not because he was violent, but because he was passionate – zealous – for God's Righteousness.

Zeal for the LORD's righteousness is not a temper tantrum. It's not self-righteous rage. But a willingness to deal with sin the way God does—seriously, swiftly, and with a heart that burns for His people to be restored. Pinchas stood in the gap and turned away God's wrath, just like Yeshua would do generations later—not with a spear in His hand, but with nails in His hands and a spear in his side. Peace doesn't come from ignoring sin. It comes when sin is confronted, confessed, and covered by grace.

### **CONCLUSION**

So what about you? Has deception crept into your camp? Has the enemy slipped in through a door you left cracked open? You may be close to breakthrough. Close to freedom. But even now, deception is trying to lure you from the inside. Maybe it's compromise in purity. Maybe it's cultural idolatry. Maybe it's spiritual apathy. Whatever it is, don't wait until the plague spreads. Don't just weep at the door of the tent—stand up and destroy the compromise in your life.

Yeshua stood up for you. He took the curse that you deserved. He took the spear you and I should have faced, and in doing so, He made a way for true peace. Today, will you turn from compromise and come back under the canopy of His protection? Will you let the Prince of Peace pierce your heart with conviction and flood your soul with His shalom?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think deception is often more dangerous than direct attack?
2. What are some examples of "Kazbi" deception in today's culture?
3. What are subtle compromises that believers often overlook?
4. How can we cultivate holy zeal without becoming harsh or judgmental?
5. What does "a covenant of peace" mean for someone who takes sin seriously?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Abba, we confess that we've too often allowed deception to linger in our lives. We've called compromise "grace," and we've traded Your holiness for the comfort of culture. But today, we ask You to open our eyes. Help us to see where the enemy has walked into our camp. Give us hearts like Pinchas—hearts that burn with love for You and for Your people. Help us deal with sin—not to earn peace, but to walk in the peace You already purchased through Yeshua. Thank You that when we were deceived and deserving of death, He stepped in and took our place. Today, we return to You. Today, we choose truth.

In Yeshua's name—Amen.