

# Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



## “When Compromise Threatens Shalom”

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### Devotion and Discussion Questions

**Key Texts (TLV):** Numbers 25:1-13; Num. 23:20-23; Num. 31:16; Ex. 34:14-16; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Cor. 4:3-4; Deut. 21:22-23; Ezek. 33:11; 1 Pet. 4:17; Ps. 50:3-6, 8, 16-21; Is. 53:3-6; Rom. 4:25-5:1; Rom. 5:6-10

There are some Bible stories that make their way easily into children's books. David watching sheep under the stars. Moses floating down the river in a basket. The little boy bringing his loaves and fish to Yeshua. These are the stories we tell softly, the ones we can imagine illustrated with warm colors and gentle rhymes. Numbers 25 is not usually one of those stories. And yet, tucked inside one of the most shocking and uncomfortable moments in the Torah is one of the most beautiful promises God ever gives. ADONAI gives Pinchas, the grandson of Aaron, what He calls a *b'rit shalom* — a covenant of peace.

That sounds wonderful, doesn't it? A covenant of peace. But then we read the story, and we discover that this peace did not come through passivity or by pretending everything was fine. It came in the middle of open rebellion, brazen compromise, spiritual adultery, and devastating judgment. It came when one man refused to be at peace with the sin that was destroying the people of God. So as we come to Numbers 25, we are not simply looking at an ancient scandal in the wilderness. We are looking at the danger of compromise, the holiness of God, the seriousness of sin, and the mercy of the One who ultimately brings us shalom — not by driving the spear through us as we deserve, but by being pierced for us, so that we could be reconciled to God.

### 1. THE ENEMY CANNOT CURSE WHAT GOD HAS BLESSED

As Numbers 25 opens, Israel is staying at Shittim. This is basically Israel's last wilderness stop. Forty years of wilderness wandering are nearly over, and they are on the brink of entering the land of promise. They had been here forty years earlier, on the cusp of entering the Promised Land, but because of the faithlessness of the Exodus generation — because they forgot the God who had set them free from Egyptian slavery — they wandered in the desert for four decades. Now the next generation is here once more, near the Jordan, across from Jericho. It is a setting filled with hope and anticipation. They have every reason to be confident because God has been speaking blessing over them. As Balaam said, “*Look, I received a command to bless. He has blessed—I cannot change it!*” (Num. 23:20). And again, “*There is no sorcery effective against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel!*” (Num. 23:23).

Balak had tried over and over again to curse Israel, but there was simply no way to attack Israel through a spiritual, demonic curse. God was with His people. He had blessed them. The enemy could not defeat them through a direct frontal attack. But the enemy is relentless. Numbers 25 tells us, “*While Israel was staying in Shittim, the people began to have immoral sexual relations with women from Moab. Then they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, so the people were eating, and bowing down before their gods*” (Num. 25:1-2). This did not come out of nowhere. Later, Num. 31:16 tells us this happened “*because of Balaam's advice.*” He could not curse Israel directly, so he counseled them into compromise. And that is still one of the enemy's

strategies today. If he cannot destroy what God has blessed from the outside, he will try to seduce God's people from the inside.

## 2. COMPROMISE PULLS US OUT FROM UNDER GOD'S COVERING

When Israel became bound to Baal of Peor, the anger of ADONAI burned against Israel. The enemy could not curse God's people directly, but when the people chose to walk in disobedience, when they chose to participate with the enemy of their souls, they brought the curse upon themselves. The Lord had already warned them in Ex. 34:14–16, *“For you are to bow down to no other god, because ADONAI is jealous for His Name—He is a jealous God.”* He warned them not to make covenant with the inhabitants of the land, not to be drawn into their sacrifices, and not to be led into spiritual prostitution with their gods. This was not a small matter. It was not simply private failure. Their compromise was pulling them out from under the canopy of God's blessing and protection.

At its root, the idolatry of the ancient world is the same as the idolatry of the world today. Twenty-first century believers may not be tempted to bow down to stone or wooden idols, but the same spiritual forces are still at work. The “gods” of this age still offer pleasure, self-indulgence, economic security, power, and a focus on me, me, me. Many people say, “I love Yeshua,” while rationalizing sexual immorality, greed, pride, political idolatry, or a diluted version of the Gospel that has been mixed with the spirit of the age. This is not condemnation; it is truth and grace. Scripture warns us plainly: *“Now the deeds of the flesh are clear: sexual immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, witchcraft, hostility, strife, jealousy, rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, just as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit God's kingdom”* (Gal. 5:19–21). So we put ourselves before the Lord and say, “Search me. Know me.” A clear conscience does not make us innocent. As Paul wrote, *“For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this. It is the Lord who judges me”* (1 Cor. 4:4).

## 3. TRUE ZEAL REFUSES TO MAKE PEACE WITH SIN

While Moses and the leaders were weeping at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, an Israelite man openly brought a Midianite woman before the whole assembly. He walked right past the leaders and into his tent. Pinchas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, saw what was happening. It might have been tempting for him to think, “If Moses is not saying anything, who am I to say something? If my father, the High Priest, has not moved, maybe they know something I do not know.” But that was not his reaction. Seeing such blatant and fearless defiance of God's instructions, and seeing the impact this sin was having on the community, Pinchas rose from the assembly, took a spear in his hand, and acted. At that moment, the plague stopped, though 24,000 had already died because of the plague.

ADONAI's response to Pinchas is striking: *“Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the kohen has turned away My anger from Bnei-Yisrael because he was very zealous for Me among them, so that I did not put an end to Bnei-Yisrael in My zeal. So now say: See, I am making with him a covenant of shalom!”* (Num. 25:11–12). Pinchas' zeal was actually an act of peace. The question is, peace with whom? Peace with God or peace with the world? We cannot be at peace with God and at the same time be at peace with sin in our lives. The word translated “zeal” can also carry the idea of jealousy. ADONAI is zealous for His people. He is zealous for purity, righteousness, holiness, and obedience. He is zealous to root out sin because it creates a barrier between Him

and the people He loves. If there is one thing God does not want us to be at peace with, it is sin in our lives.

## **CONCLUSION**

How did Pinchas deal with sin? Zealously. Harshly. How does God deal with sin? God does not wink at it. His holiness demands that where He is, sin cannot abide. And so ADONAI sent His Son, Messiah Yeshua, to deal with our sins — to take them upon Himself. Isaiah says, *“But He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement for our shalom was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed”* (Is. 53:5). Sin so seriously separates us from the Lord that He was willing to endure such suffering to reconcile us to Himself. In a much greater way than Pinchas could have ever dreamed, Yeshua our Messiah dealt harshly with sin. But instead of inflicting the piercing – the judgment – upon us as we deserved, He took it upon Himself, being pierced Himself on our behalf, bringing shalom to all who place their faith in Him.

We were created in His image, to reflect His beauty and His glory. But all of us have sinned and fallen short of reflecting God’s glory. The paycheck for sin is death, but God has offered what we do not deserve — the gift of eternal life through Messiah Yeshua. He took our punishment upon Himself. He was pierced for our transgressions. He is our atonement. If you do not know the Lord, then you are in the place of Zimri, just as we all were, deserving death. But life is available. Choose life. Choose Yeshua. And if you do know the Lord, do not take sin in your life lightly. God did not deal with it lightly. He was pierced so that we might have peace. So call out to Him: “Search me and know me. Root out sin in my life. Make me more like You.”

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it significant that Balak and Balaam could not curse Israel directly, but Israel still fell through compromise?
2. What does Numbers 25 teach us about the difference between being at peace with God and being at peace with sin?
3. Where do you see modern believers most tempted to mix faith in Yeshua with the idols of pleasure, money, power, nationalism, or self-centeredness?
4. What are some areas where we may say, “My conscience is clear,” while still needing to let the Lord search and judge our hearts?
5. How does Yeshua’s willingness to be pierced for our sins deepen our understanding of true shalom?

## **CLOSING PRAYER:**

ADONAI, search us and know us. We do not want to be deceived by the spirit of this age or seduced into compromise. We do not want to call peace what You call rebellion, and we do not want to make room for sin that separates us from You, the Source of life and shalom.

Thank You for sending Yeshua, who was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. Thank You that the chastisement for our shalom was upon Him. Give us clean hearts, faithful spirits, and holy zeal that refuses to make peace with sin. Teach us to walk under the canopy of Your blessing and protection, and make us a people who reflect Your beauty, holiness, mercy, and truth.

*B'Shem Yeshua*, In the name of Yeshua, amen