

## Numbers 25:7-13

### THE ZEAL OF PHINEHAS

- I. The sad setting.
  - A. The great spiritual weakness in the nation generally at this time.
  - B. The Moabites and Midianites, acting on the advice of Balaam (31:16; Rev. 2:14), wanted to make Israel curse-able to God.
  - C. “Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor” (3) and “separated themselves unto that shame” (Hosea 9:10b).
    1. Generally, the nation fell into sin, for the 24,000 who died in the plague were all guilty of this sin (Deut. 4:3,4).
    2. It seems that many of the leaders and heads of the tribes were guilty (4).
    3. Their sin was openly and brazenly committed by Zimri, a Simeon prince (6-8).
- II. God responded by leading Israel back into the way of a constant, humble repentance.
  - A. “The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel” (3b). This anger was out of His undeserved love.
    1. God demanded Christian discipline on the leaders who sinned: they were stoned to death and their bodies hung (4).
    2. And God sent a plague which killed thousands of the guilty (9; Deut. 4:3; I Cor. 10:8).
  - B. God’s mercy and faithfulness were also displayed positively.
    1. The godly in Israel responded to the sinful display by weeping at the door of the tabernacle (6b).
    2. Phinehas exercised a holy zeal, taking a sword and publicly executing divine justice on the sin and sinners (7,8).
    3. Phinehas “made an atonement for the children of Israel” (13b).
  - C. God rewarded Phinehas’ zeal by giving him “My covenant of peace...even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood” (12,13).
- III. Important lessons for all, but especially for the elders of the church.
  - A. Let us heed the warning of this incident, especially the danger of spiritual ease in times of prosperity.
  - B. Remember Phinehas for his zeal, i.e., his excited jealousy for God and His glory).
  - C. This zeal of Phinehas was fulfilled in Jesus, who not only appeased God’s wrath, but satisfied it by bearing it Himself.