

## **Balaam's Advice**

Numbers 25, 31

by Don Falkos

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Balaam said to the king of Moab, "The Lord would not allow me to curse the people of Israel. But if they could be persuaded to rebel against their God they would bring the Lord's curse upon themselves. Send your young women to entice the men of Israel to take part in the fertility rites of your gods." And it worked. Soon many Israelite men were indulging in sexual activity with Moabite women; they ate meat that had been sacrificed to pagan idols; and they worshiped the Baal of Mount Peor.

The Lord ordered that these men be executed and also sent a plague to ravage the people.

Then a man from the tribe of Simeon brought one of these women into the Israelite camp in full view of everyone and took her into his tent. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar and the grandson of Aaron, took a spear and followed them into the tent. He killed them both, driving the spear all the way through the man's body and into the woman's.

The plague stopped, although many had already died.

The Lord said to Moses, "Phinehas and his descendants will be priests for all time because he displayed passionate zeal on my behalf and made atonement for the people of Israel. Now take vengeance on those who deceived you into worshiping the Baal of Peor."

Israel went to war against Moab led by Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest. They killed everyone except the young girls who were still virgins. And the pagan prophet, Balaam, was among the dead.