

# The Zeal of Phineas - Numbers 25

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having true zeal for God, as exemplified by Phinehas, while warning against spiritual compromise represented by the teaching of Balaam.*

**Scripture:** Revelation 2:12

**Topics:** "Phineas", "True Zeal for God", "Holiness and Righteousness"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of having true zeal for God, contrasting it with false zeal that lacks knowledge. He draws from the story of Phinehas in Numbers 25, who acted with righteous zeal to stop a plague among the Israelites caused by their sin. Beach encourages believers to seek a holy zeal that aligns with God's honor, urging them to confront and eliminate sin in their lives. He highlights the need for the church to be vigilant against teachings that corrupt and weaken their faith, advocating for a return to true holiness and commitment to God. Ultimately, he calls for a personal response to God's Word, inviting the Holy Spirit to ignite a passion for righteousness within each believer.

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## Transcript

...and his presence in our midst. Amen? There's basically three areas of Scripture that we would like to minister on this morning. One is found in the book of Revelation, another part is found in the book of Psalms, and another one is found in the book of Numbers.

And we will look at each one of these three areas of Scripture, and we're going to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give us an understanding heart, that we might comprehend his desire that will be expressed to us through the Word of God. And not only do we want to understand his desire, but we want the power to act upon it. The power to act upon the Word of God this morning.

So, could we just for one moment bow our hearts before God? And let's pray and ask him, Father, we thank you for your grace and love and mercy. We thank you for the moving of your Spirit in our midst. We thank you for challenging us to be holy, thine in all things.

Now, Lord, I pray that you would reveal to us, Lord, this desire within your heart for us, and that you would make it real to us and give us the power by your provision to act upon it, to receive it into our spirit. May we have good ground this morning, where the Word brings forth and multiplies. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

I want to invite you, if you would please, to turn your Bibles to Revelation chapter 2. Revelation chapter 2, and we're going to look at a certain statement that Jesus made to the church in Pergamum. The church in Pergamum. We hear much in the church today, particularly in the charismatic movement, particularly in the Pentecostal movement, we hear much about being zealous for God.

To be zealous for God, to be excited for God. We hear much about being on fire for the Lord Jesus Christ. How many have heard that statement, be on fire for God, or be zealous for God? And we've heard people say, you know, that people get excited about baseball games and football games.

Ought not the church of God become excited about the Lord and the things of God? Well, I tend to agree with that statement. We ought to have a zeal for God. But unfortunately, there is a zeal that is spreading throughout the religious world today that is not according to knowledge.

This zeal is not according to knowledge. If I might use the terminology, it is not representative of God's zeal. There is a zeal that a man can have that is not truly representing the zeal of God.

How many remember that Jesus made a statement, the zeal of the Lord hath consumed me. Jesus was filled with a zeal for God. Jesus was filled with a holy zeal for God.

And through the word of God this morning, we are going to discover the true zeal for God and its characteristics versus the false zeal of God and its characteristics. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to be zealous for God. To be zealous for a good purpose.

And I want to encourage you this morning to be zealous for God. But I want your zeal to be according to true knowledge. And this is what we're going to discover this morning.

Therefore, we can title this message, Having True Zeal for God. Having True Zeal for God. Revelation chapter 2, beginning in verse number 12.

To the angel of the church in Pergamon write, these are the words of him who has the sharp double-edged sword. I know where you live, where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name.

You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city, where Satan lives. Now verse number 14 is our text, our particular text that we're going to use in Revelation. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you.

You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Here we have a very interesting statement. Now I want to bring your attention to certain facts before we go on.

First of all, understand that this is Jesus himself talking. This is Jesus speaking to his church, to his redeemed, those who are washed in the blood. The Bible says in Revelation chapter 1, verse number 5 and 6, to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

So this is an exhortation being made to the blood-washed church. You see, the Lord Jesus Christ has an all-searching eye, and he is beholding the affairs that are occurring within the church today. He is the one who is properly scrutinizing exactly what's going on, and may I suggest that he is the one who knows what's going on in your life.

He understands your thoughts, even as you think them right now. He knows what's going on in your mind and in your heart. He's beholding.

The Bible in Revelation depicts Christ as the one who stands in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, which suggests Christ's immediate presence among and in the midst of the church, beholding, seeing what's going on. Is that comforting to you? It's comforting to me. I have a few things against you.

You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam. Now, Balaam has a teaching, according to the Bible. And what his teaching was is simply this.

He taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols, and by committing sexual immorality. Now, this particular portion of Scripture is referring to an Old Testament story that we will turn to at this time. Numbers chapter 25.

Numbers chapter 25. Now remember, the message is the zeal, having true zeal for God. Let's begin reading in verse number one.

It's not too many verses. Verse number one. Now remember, this is the actual story that Jesus is referring to.

This is the actual story. While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality. With Moabite women who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods.

The people ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor, and the Lord's anger burned against them. The Lord said to Moses, Take all the leaders of these people, kill them, and expose them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the Lord's fierce anger may turn away from Israel.

Now I want to invite you to go to chapter 22. Go to chapter 22, and let's just get the gist of what's going on here. The Israelites had been traveling through the wilderness, and they had been gaining territory, driving out enemies.

This is what the Lord promised. It was in preparation for their ultimate victory that would occur when they entered into the land of Canaan, and there drove out the nations and possessed the land. God promised Israel the land of Canaan.

Now in preparation, they were going through the wilderness, and they were being tested, and they were learning how to trust God, learning not how to complain, learning how not to bicker, and unfortunately, many of their lessons, they failed, as we do. And they had just overcome several different kings in the wilderness, and their name was spreading throughout the entire territory. And people were speaking of the Israelites as people whose God defended them.

And God was putting his fear in the hearts of all of the kings of the land. And when Israel would march on, people would tremble because they had heard of the great and glorious things that God did for Israel. For example, delivering Israel out from the bondage of Pharaoh.

God had made a name for himself as the Almighty God, and the word was spreading. The enemy, listen, the enemy was getting concerned because this God who defended Israel was a mighty God. Now here's

the setting.

Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across Jericho. Now Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites.

The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, this horde is going to lick up everything. Boy, talk about God putting the fear of his people into the enemies. They saw Israel camping a little ways beyond their borders, and this is what they said, We are done for.

We're done for. These people are going to come and they're going to take our fields, they're going to take our cattle, they're just going to lick up everything, and we're just going to be dispossessed. We're going to be cast out.

Now is that a picture of victory and triumph? Praise the Lord. This horde is going to lick up everything around us as an ox licks up the grass in the field. What an illustration.

Have you ever seen a cow? I don't think any of us have seen ox. Have you ever seen a cow in the field? Does it miss grass? No. It doesn't miss it.

It gets every little one it can find. So Balak, son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, sent messengers to summon Balaam, son of Beor, who was at Pethor, near the river, in his native land. Now Balaam was a prophet.

He was not an Israelite man. He did not belong to the tribe of Israel, but he was a prophet. Listen to what Balak wanted Balaam to do.

Balak said, A people has come out of Egypt. Now remember, there's spiritual significance to what we're talking about. Can you see it? A church has come out of the world.

This is the spiritual application. They cover the face of the land and have settled next to me. Now come and put a curse on these people because they are too powerful for me.

Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For I know that those you bless are blessed and those you curse are cursed. Can you see the strategy? Now follow me through.

The strategy of Balak was this. These people are too strong and we cannot overcome them. However, if we can somehow corrupt them, perhaps then we can be more powerful than they are.

Balak's plan was to corrupt the Israelites and in corrupting them, he would weaken them and in weakening them, he would gain an advantage over them and be able to bring them into captivity. Now, do you remember what I read? Just keep your Bible right there in Revelation. I'm going to read it again.

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you. You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam. The teaching of Balaam can be understood today as satanically inspired doctrines that are floating around in the world and in the church that are designed to bring mixture and inner corruption within the heart of God's people in order to weaken them from the life of holy consecration to God.

Listen, that's the devil's only hope. For if we be united to Christ and walk in Him and abide in Him, then there is nothing that can stop us from possessing everything that God wants us to possess in Him. If

you're in Christ, there's nothing in the world that can pervert you, seduce you, destroy you.

If you refuse to compromise, then satan becomes as Balak. He becomes fearful of you because he sees in you his doom, his destruction. What was it that Jesus said regarding satan? The enemy's coming and he has nothing in me.

So what was Balaam's plan? I'll tell you what, Balak. Balak's plan. Now whose plan was it? Now I'm confused.

It was Balaam's plan to Balak's distress. Here's what satan is saying. If I can corrupt him, I'll weaken him.

And if I can weaken him, I can gain an advantage over them. I want to invite you to turn your Bibles now to Psalm 107. Psalm 107.

Psalm 106. Thank you. Beginning in verse number 24.

Verse number 24. Now we are about to discover the main thrust of the heart of God this morning. The setting, we have a people whose God promised to fight their battles.

Who are going forth, possessing all of their enemies. Driving out their enemies. We have an enemy, Balak, who is terrified of this great army.

Because he sees that he cannot overcome them. So he consults with a prophet who counsels him to internally corrupt this great people. And in doing so, they will be weakened.

And in becoming weakened, we may just be able to overcome them rather than they overcome us. This is the setting that we have in the scene right now in the Bible. Now remember, Balaam's advice, Jesus said he hates it.

The teaching of Balaam. Now we're about to read a man who had a zeal for God. But notice what his zeal prompted him to do.

Verse number 24, Psalm 106. Talking about Israel, then they despised the pleasant land. They did not believe his promise.

They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the Lord. So he swore to them with uplifted hand that he would make them fall in the desert, make their descendants fall among the nations, and scatter them throughout the lands. Listen to this.

They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor. Now that's referring to what we're discussing here in Numbers chapter 25. And eight sacrifices offered to lifeless gods.

Listen to this. They provoked the Lord to anger by their wicked deeds, and a plague broke out among them. Verse number 30.

But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked. This was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations to come. The Bible speaks of a man named Phinehas.

Now let's go back to Numbers chapter 25 and finish reading the story that we stopped reading. The zeal of God, being filled with the zeal of God. We stopped at verse number 4, Numbers chapter 25.

Let's begin in verse 5. So Moses said to Israel's judges, Each of you must put to death those of your men who have joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. Listen. Then an Israelite man brought to his family a Midianite woman, right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel, while they were weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

When Phinehas, now here's that guy's name, Phinehas, where we find in Psalm 106, what did Phinehas do that made the Lord so pleased? When Phinehas, son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, what did he see? The sin. God grant us the spirit of Phinehas, not so we look at our brother, but we look at ourself. The zeal of God.

When Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand, and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear through both of them, through the Israelite and into the woman's body. Right in the act of sin, this priest took a spear and thrust it right through the man, right into the woman, right into the ground.

He drove the spear through both of them, through the Israelite and into the woman's body. Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped. But those who died in the plague, number 24,000, listen to what the Lord said about Phinehas' actions.

Verse 10. The Lord said to Moses, Phinehas, son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites, for he was as zealous as I am for my honor. Among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them.

Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites. Friends, we have a picture here of holy zeal.

A zeal that is equal to God's zeal. A zeal that is zealous for God's honor. A zeal that will not put up or tolerate that which is not pleasing to the Lord.

A zeal who says no to compromise. No to mixture. Listen.

No to the teaching of Balaam. Whatever is in your life, friends, in your houses, in your cars, whatever you have access to when nobody sees you, that is presently a form of Balaam's teaching, because it is seducing you and corrupting you and weakening you spiritually, whatever it is, until the spirit of Phinehas arises within you, which is the spirit of Christ, because, spiritually speaking, that's the type, because who has a zeal for God? What does the Bible say? Sister Beach read it this morning. He loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

The spirit of Phinehas is the spirit of God, typically speaking, that's in the believer that needs to rise up, the spirit of Christ, that needs to rise up and say, I love righteousness and hate iniquity. Until that spirit arises and puts to death that sin, then may I suggest Balak and his plan is working in your life. But to those who fall upon the rock, humble themselves before God, and let God raise up within them.

To them, the Bible promises, verse 12, I am making my covenant of peace with him. To them, it is promised peace, peace that the world cannot give, peace that the devil cannot take away, a peace that comes from God. Verse 14, the name of the Israelite who was killed with the Midian woman was Zimri, son of Selu, the leader of the Simeonite family, and the name of the Midianite woman who was put to death was Cosby, daughter of Zur, a tribal chief of a Midianite family.

The Lord said to Moses, treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them. The name of the Midianite that seduces us is crumbling. The name of the Midianite that seduces us is complaining.

The name of the Midianite that seduces us. What is it in your life? You see what the Lord says? How should you treat the Midianite? How should you treat that sin? Kill it. Don't put up with it.

You say, well, how can I do that, preacher? Bring it to God. Now, how did Phineas kill him? With a spear? The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Friends, if you'll take the word of God in the hands of the Holy Spirit, with an open and honest heart, God will smite your enemy.

God will put it to death. And you will be delivered from Balaam. Compromise.

And behold, he is. Body, soul, and spirit. Now there is zeal.

For God. Remember, don't you be criticizing and judging people. Don't you be judging the church, the denomination, or the brother.

When God starts dealing with sin, you don't look at your brother, you look in yourself. And you pray for your brothers. And you bless them that curse you, and you do good to those that spitefully use you.

You don't go around as the judge and start making judgments about all these so-called backslidden Christians and denominations. The Lord will chide you if you do that. You find a place of prayer and humble yourself before God.

And you let Him cleanse you from sin. Amen? And then you let God cleanse you from all sin. And then you'll be able to help people, not in a critical way, by being holier than thou.

But you'll help them by showing them the love of God and the purity of living a wholesome Christian life. You'll serve them. Now friends, that's the message that God placed on my heart.

But here's what we need to do. We need to ask God to make it real to us. And ask Him to ignite the fire of His Word into our hearts.

That we might be a partaker of the zeal of Phinehas. Seek sanctification. Seek it.

Seek to be wholly His. And let the gentle working of the Holy Spirit deal with you in a personal way. And all the joy and peace that you will have.

I'm going to invite Sister Beets if she would come. Now, it's 25 of 1. Everyone here knows. Everyone's been here before.

If you have to go, you just go. But if you don't, may I encourage you to spend quiet time before the Lord. Sister Beets is going to play quietly.

If you want a fellowship, you may. Go out in the vestibule. But right now, let's give God a chance to make His Word real.

The steps of a Phinehas. Lower yourself before God. Humble yourself.

Ask the Lord Jesus to reveal His holiness and His desire for you. And then just ask God to make you willing to lay everything before Him. And say, Lord, my body's Yours.

My spirit is Yours and my mind is Yours. Use it for Your glory and deliver me from everything that's not pleasing in Your eyes. We got a witness this morning by the Holy Ghost, remember? For a short time, felt like God wanted to tear everything down.

Right? How many felt that? Felt a power in the Holy Ghost. Why did God do that? To confirm His Word. Here's how that'll happen.

It's not magic. It's not emotion. Oh, it's going to happen! Come on! No, it's none of that stuff.

Here's how it happens. You take to heart the message of God's Word. You ask God to stir in you the Spirit of Phineas, spiritually speaking.

A holy zeal for God's honor. To be wholly sanctified and set aside. And every stronghold and bondage in your life will fall to the ground in the presence of God's enemies.

In the presence of God's power. That's it. So, let's give God a chance.

As Sister Beach plays. And we'll just wait upon the Lord for a few moments. In His quietness.

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