

Psalm 106:28-33

In the Torah reading in Numbers 34-35, the boundaries of the Promised Land are given, and those in charge of the distribution of the inheritance are named. This section of Psalm 106 cautions, first with the dangers of idolatry at the incident of Baal Peor and then with a reminder of why Moses did not lead them in.

Psalm 106:28 - "They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead."

"joined" = *tsamad* - join, fasten; figuratively, to serve

The LXX has "they were initiated" i.e. into the rites and worship of the idol

See **Numbers 25:3** - To this idol the Israelites joined or "yoked" themselves: they withdrew themselves from the yoke of the true God, whose yoke is easy, and put their necks under the yoke of an idol.

"the dead" - referring to the dead idols/gods of the heathens.

Participation in the sacrificial feasts of the Moabites was an act of communion or mystical union with their lifeless gods. That is why God is called "the living God."

- **Wisdom of Solomon 15:17** - "For being mortal, he worketh a dead thing with wicked hands: for he himself is better than the things which he worshippeth: whereas he lived once, but they never."

- **Deuteronomy 5:26** - The people "heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire"

- **Jeremiah 10:10** - "The Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation"

- **1 Thessalonians 1:9** - "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God"

- **Acts 14:15** - "We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them"

- **1 Timothy 4:10** - "We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe"

- **2 Corinthians 6:16** - we are "the temple of the living God"

Psalm 106:29 - "Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague

brake in upon them."

"provoked" = *ka`ac* - to be angry, to grieve

God is depicted as displaying the emotional response to betrayal by a spouse - grief and anger at the same time. This was practically true in that physical sexual acts were the gateway into the "spiritual adultery" of idol worship.

Psalm 106:30-31 - "Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore."

Targum - Phinehas "prayed"

Syriac version - "he interceded with the Lord that the plague might stop"

LXX - "he appeased, made atonement"

We are called to remember Baal Peor and the response of Phinehas at this point, because Israel is about to enter the Promised Land and will be in direct contact with the Canaanites and their idols. They might be tempted as they were at Baal Peor. God wanted to remind them of the danger and then the reward to Phinehas for his zeal.

The image of the impaled couple lifted up on Phinehas' spear points to Christ who also "made atonement" - who took such sins - and all others that we have committed - on Himself and was impaled and lifted up. For manifesting this image through his zeal, Phinehas was rewarded. A similar event was Moses' lifting up the serpent in the wilderness for healing of the people bitten by the fiery serpents (**Numbers 21**).

- **John 3:14** - "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Psalm 106:32 - "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips."

"See The waters of Meribah" in **Numbers 20:3-13**

Moses angrily responded to their murmuring - "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch water out of this rock for you?" Then he struck the rock rather than speaking to it, as God had commanded. For this he was prevented from entering the Promised Land.

- **Numbers 20:12** - "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

This is to remind Israel that God and his word is to be obeyed exactly, and to the letter.