

**Episode:** Promised Land Series No. 10

**Narrator:** Phinehas

**Primary Scriptures:** Numbers 25-36

**Story Summary:** Moabite women, second census, prepare to enter Canaan

**Location:** Plain of Moab

**Time:** c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses  
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus  
c. 1445 BC The Ten Commandments  
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Numbers 25:10-13; 26:65; 27:22-23; 31:16; 33:55-56

It's been about forty years since the Israelites left Egypt. God had long been preparing the Promised Land for the Israelites. He left the Canaanites in place so the wild animals would not take over.<sup>1</sup> God had every intention of driving the Canaanites out slowly in front of the Israelites so the land would already be fruitful and the cities already built and in place. Yes, the Promised Land was perfectly prepared for the Israelites to invade.

The Israelites should also have been perfectly prepared to invade. After all, they had just spent the last forty years depending on God and watching him do miracles. No men who were older than twenty at the time of the Exodus had survived the Wilderness. Overall, the Israelites had overcome many enemies and hardships, and were on the banks of the Jordan River, in a position to cross over and take the Promised Land. But they weren't truly ready. It turns out the prophet Balaam had revealed a vulnerability of the Israelites that the Moabites quickly exploited.<sup>2</sup>

The Israelite men began to engage in sexual immorality with the Moabite women, and began to worship their false gods. God's anger burned! Moses demanded that any of the men who had done this horrific action be put to death to assuage the anger of the Lord. Still, 24,000 Israelites died in a subsequent plague as a result.

After a second census and more regulations, God gave Moses one last major battle: to take vengeance on the Midianites and Moabites for deceiving the people of Israel.

God instructed Moses about dividing up the land. God knew the land would be conquered, so this is not "counting the chicks before they are hatched." Two tribes determined to take land on the east side of the Jordan River, which was approved by Moses on the condition that they help the other tribes conquer the land west of the Jordan River. Now, the Israelites are truly ready to take the Promised Land. Without Moses.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 23:29

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 31:16

### Discussion Questions:

1. Numbers 24 would lead you to believe that Balaam had not aided the Moabites in resisting the Israelites, but had actually blessed the Israelites. What information does Numbers 31:16 add? What was the result of Balaam's advice?
2. What was God's solution to the sexual immorality of many of the Israelite men?
3. Why did God instruct Moses to take a census before entering Canaan?
4. When Moses was told that he would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land, what was his immediate response?
5. When Joshua replaced Moses, what was Moses careful to do?
6. Why did the Reubenites and Gadites want to stay on the east side of the Jordan River? What was the condition for them to have that land?

1. That Balaam had advised the Moabites to entice the Israelite men into sexual immorality and idol worship. The Israelite men fell for the temptation. 2. Have their own people put them to death. God wanted the Israelites to be rid of obvious sin before entering the Promised Land. 3. So it would be clear how to allocate the land among the tribes. Num. 26:52. And, to verify that none had survived the Wilderness who were not supposed to. Num. 26:64-65. 4. That God immediately replace him with an excellent shepherd/leader Num 27:15-17 5. Approve of Joshua and transfer his authority in a public ceremony. Num 27:22-23 6. Because the land was suitable for them. They were to lead the other tribes in conquering the west side.

### Application Questions:

1. On the plains of Moab, the Israelite men fell into idol worship after succumbing to the sexual temptations of the Moabite women. Is it your experience or observation that other temptations are often tied to sexual immorality?
2. According to Numbers 25:11, why did God reward the actions of Phinehas? In your life, what would it look like to be zealous (over-the-top dedication and enthusiasm) for God?
3. God replaced Moses with Joshua. Joshua had faithfully been the assistant of Moses for forty years! When you have wanted promotions at work, church, or social groups, how dedicated had you previously shown yourself?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Numbers 25:11, God approved of Phinehas killing a man who committed sexual immorality. Does this seem like a fitting punishment to? How was this man's transgression similar to modern sexual promiscuity? How was it different?
2. According to Numbers 27:14, Moses wasn't allowed to enter the Promised Land just because he had made a mistake when he hit the rock at the Waters of Meribah. Moses served God faithfully for forty years, but was punished harshly for this mistake. Why?
3. According to Numbers 33:55-56, what would happen if the Israelites did not drive out all of the inhabitants of Canaan? What happens when you leave traces of sinful living in your life?