

This week's Audio, Video, and Teaching Notes are posted here.

Zeal and the Roots of Righteousness (From Shittim to Gilgal; The Matter of Peor; Balaam's Advice; Pinchas Stays the Plague; Reuben, Gad, and the Half-Tribe of Manasseh; A Witness Altar to YHVH; Has the Matter of Peor Truly Been Cleansed; Dispersion of the Northern Kingdom; Confessing the Sins of Our Fathers; Circumcision of The Heart; Psalm 106; YHVH is a Zealous, Passionate, and Jealous God; The Righteousness of Pinchas; The Jealousness of Elijah; The Zealousness of Mattathias; Stand Up for the Torah; Zeal and the Spirit of the Living God)

July 27, 2019 – Ross Nichols
Zeal and the Roots of Righteousness

Audio/Video Link:

<https://unitedisrael.org/zeal-and-the-roots-of-righteousness/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7B-bvt2jgg>

<https://www.facebook.com/unitedisrael/videos/3114385395268238>

TEACHING NOTES

-In last week's message we learned about Balaam's Book (Numbers 22:1 – 24:25) and the Pagan Prophecies. We also learned about a place called Shittim and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal and the righteousness's of YHVH. Audio/Video/Teaching Notes Link:

<https://unitedisrael.org/balaams-book-the-pagan-prophecies/>

-Mic 6: 5 O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of YHVH."

-In this week's Torah Portion the children of Israel are in the last stage of their journey and they are on the east side of the Jordan in the Plains of Moab in a place called Shittim. This particular leg of the journey from Shittim to Gilgal represents the last stop outside the land in Shittim and Gilgal is the first stop inside the land once they cross over the Jordan. A great deal happens in a short period of time in a not so great distance and it is here that we learn about the matter of Peor. This is called out as a great and grievous sin. The title of today's class is, "Zeal and the Roots of Righteousness". There is a great and grievous sin and a manifestation of something quite positive and good. We are going to focus on the good, the bad, and the ugly from Shittim to Gilgal.

-Num 25: 1 While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. 2 These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of YHVH was kindled against Israel. 4 And YHVH said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before YHVH, that the fierce anger of YHVH may turn away from Israel." 5 And Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor."

-The story gets even worse, an incident is mentioned where one Israelite man takes one of these women and commits a very bad act with the women in the sacred precinct. Then one named Pinchas stands up and stays a subsequent plague. The people of Israel prostituted themselves with the daughters of Moab and were offering sacrifices to the

gods of these other people. The children of Israel have been through a great deal leading them up to this point and you would think that by now they would have worked out all the bad within themselves and begun to prepare for the entry into the Promised Land. It says specifically that Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor.

-Baal is generally assigned to a Canaanite god, sometimes translated as Lord, but Baal, Lord, or Master of Peor is this particular god in which they yoked themselves. It's this matter/thing of Peor that they attached themselves to and associated with all sorts of licentious behavior. Through this they had become one with another god and this is one of the greatest crimes outlined in the biblical text. They are walking after and sacrificing to these other gods and this leads to a great and devastating plague which takes the life of 24,000 people of God.

-Num 31: 16 Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against YHVH in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of YHVH.

-Balaam advises these other rulers of a way that they can penetrate the people of Israel's security. Balaam recognized the YHVH was standing on behalf of the children of Israel that he could say nothing unless YHVH put it in his mouth. Yet there was another way, to present to the children of Israel an enticement to encourage them to go into all sorts of bad behavior and it worked.

-One man by the name of Pinchas, a priest and descendant of Levi stands up and takes charge of the situation and stays the plague. We will talk about what makes Pinchas a hero of the faith as it relates to zeal and talk about what happens to him years later. By this time the tribal allotments have been made and Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have kept their word to Moses and then requested to stay on the east side of the Jordan. They agreed to go over and help settle the land and help battle the inhabitants of the land and once the land was secure and the allotments were made then they would go back.

-Jos 22: 9 So the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned home, parting from the people of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, their own land of which they had possessed themselves by command of YHVH through Moses. 10 And when they came to the region of the Jordan that is in the land of Canaan, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of imposing size. 11 And the people of Israel heard it said, "Behold, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built the altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the people of Israel." 12 And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole assembly of the people of Israel gathered at Shiloh to make war against them.

-Shiloh is where Joshua begins to distribute the land, the first area with the children of Israel really plant a strong hold in the land. It's there that for 369 years that the tabernacle and the headquarters is stationed. The children of Israel have heard that Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built an altar outside of the holy precinct. They are going to war against their brothers because they feel that they have violated the sacred order.

-Jos 22: 13 Then the people of Israel sent to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, 14 and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribal families of Israel, every one

of them the head of a family among the clans of Israel. 15 And they came to the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, and they said to them, 16 "Thus says the whole congregation of YHVH, 'What is this breach of faith that you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away this day from following YHVH by building yourselves an altar this day in rebellion against YHVH? 17 Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of YHVH, 18 that you too must turn away this day from following YHVH? And if you too rebel against YHVH today then tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. 19 But now, if the land of your possession is unclean, pass over into YHVH's land where YHVH's tabernacle stands, and take for yourselves a possession among us. Only do not rebel against YHVH or make us as rebels by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of YHVH our God. 20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah break faith in the matter of the devoted things, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? And he did not perish alone for his iniquity.'"

-The point is, a couple of things bother us about what you are doing, your sin is going to bring catastrophe on all of us. Remember when Achan took this devoted property that wasn't his and how that affected us? Your crime has implications for the whole body of Israel. Leading this charge is the zealot Pinchas.

-Jos 22: 21 Then the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh said in answer to the heads of the families of Israel, 22 "The Mighty One, God, YHVH! The Mighty One, God, YHVH! He knows; and let Israel itself know! If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith against YHVH, do not spare us today 23 for building an altar to turn away from following YHVH. Or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings on it, may YHVH himself take vengeance. 24 No, but we did it from fear that in time to come your children might say to our children, 'What have you to do with YHVH, the God of Israel? 25 For YHVH has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you people of Reuben and people of Gad. You have no portion in YHVH.' So your children might make our children cease to worship YHVH. 26 Therefore we said, 'Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, 27 but to be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we do perform the service of YHVH in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and peace offerings, so your children will not say to our children in time to come, "You have no portion in YHVH.'"

-What they are saying, if we did this in wrongful intent then let God take action. If we did it in thinking that one day our descendants would feel separated from you and so we are creating an alternate worship site, we are not doing any of that.

-Jos 22: 28 And we thought, 'If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we should say, "Behold, the copy of the altar of YHVH, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.'" 29 Far be it from us that we should rebel against YHVH and turn away this day from following YHVH by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of YHVH our God that stands before his tabernacle!"

-John 22: 30 When Phinehas the priest and the chiefs of the congregation, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh spoke, it was good in their eyes. 31 And

Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh, "Today we know that YHVH is in our midst, because you have not committed this breach of faith against YHVH. Now you have delivered the people of Israel from the hand of YHVH." 32 Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the chiefs, returned from the people of Reuben and the people of Gad in the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the people of Israel, and brought back word to them. 33 And the report was good in the eyes of the people of Israel. And the people of Israel blessed God and spoke no more of making war against them to destroy the land where the people of Reuben and the people of Gad were settled. 34 The people of Reuben and the people of Gad called the altar Witness, "For," they said, "it is a witness between us that YHVH is God."

-Two things stand out in the text, first an altar need not be an altar upon which burnt offerings and sacrifices is offered. An altar does not necessarily mean a place of slaughter. Here is a place of slaughter on which no slaughter is performed. It's for a witness and it represents dedication to YHVH without bloodshed. Secondly, the assumption was that the children of Israel were in rebellion and that when they thought of themselves in that rebellious place they made this comment, is not the matter of Peor bad enough. They said that they are not cleansed of that iniquity to this day. From the time the incident of Peor takes place, going all the way through the conquest of the land, they at least believed that this matter of Peor has not been cleansed. Has the matter of Peor truly been cleansed at this time?

-Hosea is a prophet to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, to Ephraim the ten tribe kingdom which ultimately were scattered throughout all the ends of the earth. Remember Judah is exiled from the land following the Babylonian destruction in 586 BCE, when Jerusalem was destroyed, they took the kingdom of Judah, the southern tribes into Babylon for 70 years. Daniel talks about this in chapter 9. At the end of this 70 years Judah returns but the northern tribes / Ephraim, the Book of Hosea is written to them.

-Hos 9: 10 Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree in its first season, I saw your fathers. But they came to Baal-peor and consecrated themselves to the thing of shame, and became detestable like the thing they loved. 11 Ephraim's glory shall fly away like a bird-- no birth, no pregnancy, no conception! 12 Even if they bring up children, I will bereave them till none is left. Woe to them when I depart from them! 13 Ephraim, as I have seen, was like a young palm planted in a meadow; but Ephraim must lead his children out to slaughter. 14 Give them, O YHVH-- what will you give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. 15 Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal; there I began to hate them. Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of my house. I will love them no more; all their princes are rebels.

-This is very strong language about Ephraim and its associated with Baal-peor and notice the mention of Gilgal. Every evil of theirs is in Gilgal for there I hated them. For the wickedness of their doings I drive them out. We are talking about a place and events that took place in this area which echo throughout biblical literature into prophetic pronouncements.

-Hos 9: 16 Ephraim is stricken; their root is dried up; they shall bear no fruit. Even though they give birth, I will put their beloved children to death. 17 My God will reject them because they have not listened to him; they shall be wanderers among the nations.

-History has obliged. The northern tribes lost their identity and there is an association that the prophet Hosea makes that ties this great sin at Shittim and Gilgal with the ultimate dispersion of the tribes. The idea of this particular Torah portion and the story of Pinchas and the tribes caused me to think about the sins of the fathers. There is still a requirement to confess the sins of the fathers in order to avert further danger and its part of the restoration. We can't excuse the actions of the fathers, we have to confess the sins of the fathers. Has anyone ever said, let's work on these confessions. In confessing the sins of the fathers I want to show you the way out.

-Lev 26: 38 And you shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And those of you who are left shall rot away in your enemies' lands because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them. 40 "But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, 41 so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies--if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43 But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes. 44 Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am YHVH their God. 45 But I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am YHVH." 46 These are the statutes and rules and laws that YHVH made between himself and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai.

-These words describe a time when the children of Israel will be in the land of its enemies being consumed, pining away, not only for their sins but because of the sins of the fathers. That's what put them in this place, but it's not a hopeless place or a helpless condition. There has to be a circumcision of the heart that involves humility and involves following the steps of this plan. You are in a certain place because of certain things that took place historically. We must not only make confession of the sins that we have committed but the iniquity of the fathers. How do we even begin to do that? Psalm 106 is a good place to start.

-Psa 106: 28 Then they yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead; 29 they provoked YHVH to anger with their deeds, and a plague broke out among them. 30 Then Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stayed. 31 And that was counted to him as righteousness from generation to generation forever.

-People associate the greatness of Pinchas with this act and how they understood the phrase, and then stood up Pinchas and executed judgment. In the Hebrew it says, and he stood up and he prayed. There is a difference between executed judgement and prayed. We know from the Torah that Pinchas did more than just stand up and pray.

-Num 25: 10 And YHVH said to Moses, 11 "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy.

-YHVH tells Moses, he's turned away the plague, he was zealous for my sake and ultimately stopped the plague because YHVH in his jealousy was going to wipe them all out. The root word is translated sometimes as jealousy and sometimes as zealous. The same word is used to describe Pinchas as is used to describe YHVH. The word passionate would be a better word. The root word is associated with becoming red in the face and overcome with deep emotion. Pinchas and YHVH are both zealous.

-Exo 34: 14 (for you shall worship no other god, for YHVH, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),

-Exo 20: 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I YHVH your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,

-Deu 4: 24 For YHVH your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

-Deu 5: 9 You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I YHVH your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

-Deu 6:15 for YHVH your God in your midst is a jealous God--lest the anger of YHVH your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

-YHVH is a jealous, zealous, and compassionate God and tolerates no association of his people with worshipping another. We are created the way we are in his image. The feeling that God has when his people have been with another god is comparable on some level with a person taking someone else's spouse. If YHVH is a passionate God then so should be those who seek to follow him. Psalm 106 says that the actions of Pinchas, driven by this passion/zeal were counted unto him as righteousness. A lot of times people don't associate righteousness first of all as even being something that can be achieved by a person but it clearly is and it's required according to the biblical text. YHVH's ways are righteous and we ought to be passionate about serving YHVH and keeping his ways.

-Psa 119: 136 My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your law. 137 Righteous are you, O YHVH, and right are your rules. 138 You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness and in all faithfulness. 139 My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your words.

-Psa 69: 9 For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

-The haf-Torah reading for this week's Torah portion Pinchas marries up another person from the biblical text who is also a passionate person, one by the name of Elijah. The rabbis call Elijah, Pinchas and say Elijah is sort of another manifestation of Pinchas and they demonstrate very similar traits in that both of them exhibit zeal on behalf of God's ways. In 1 Kings 18 there's this great battle where Elijah faces the prophets of Baal and he slays 450 of these prophets. Then word gets back to Jezebel and she tries to have him killed. He is scared and he flees to Horeb.

-1 Kin 19: 9 There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of YHVH came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 He said, "I have been very jealous for YHVH, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." 11 And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before YHVH." And behold, YHVH passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before YHVH, but YHVH

was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but YHVH was not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but YHVH was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. 13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He said, "I have been very jealous for YHVH, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

-Zealousness also figures in the Book of Maccabees. Mattathias burns with Zeal and his heart was stirred and he gave vent to righteous anger. Thus he burned with zeal for the Torah as Pinchas did. Pinchas stands out as a zealot. Mattathias cried out, let everyone who is zealous for the Torah and supports the covenant come out with me. As he drew near to die he said this to his sons, arrogance and reproach have now become strong, it is a time of ruin and furious anger, now my children show zeal for the Torah and give your lives for the covenant of our fathers. He is trying to illustrate how bad times have gotten and it's so out of hand you even have to be willing to give your life for the covenant. People were being killed for standing up for the covenant.

-In a speech attributed to Mattathias before he died he said... 1 Maccabees 2 "Remember the deeds of the fathers which they did in their generations and great honor and an everlasting name. Was not Abraham found faithful when tested and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Joseph in the time of his distress kept the commandments and became Lord of Egypt. Pinchas our father because he was deeply zealous received the covenant of everlasting priesthood. Joshua because he fulfilled the command became a judge in Israel. Caleb because he testified in the assembly received an inheritance in the land. David because he was merciful inherited the throne of kingdom forever. Elijah because of great zeal for the Torah was taken up to heaven. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah believed and were saved from the flame. Daniel because of his innocence was delivered from the mouth of lions. So therefore stand up for the Torah."

-Abraham trusted YHVH and it was counted unto him as righteousness. Pinchas stood and prayed and exhibited zeal matching his zeal with the zeal of YHVH as best he could aligning himself passionately with the creator and it was counted for him as righteousness. Passion for the teaching of a passionate Elohim is what distinguishes the true followers in all ages from the crowd. More than passion is needed. Pinchas in his zeal acted with haste with the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Elijah the prophet, zealous for the Torah and for the covenant, they have done this and they have done that and I alone am left. He thought he was alone, then YHVH told him there are more than 7,000 who have not bowed to Baal.

-In our zeal we have to be somewhat reserved and sensitive to the spirit as well. A lot of people act in zeal but there's a sensitivity, a guidance from the spirit which must be coupled with that zeal. As an example, in today's Torah portion, when Moses goes to appoint his successor, if zeal is all it took Pinchas would be the one who brought the children of Israel into the Promised Land, but he anoints and appoints Joshua to do that task of settling the tribes. Why is that? Right after YHVH tells Moses for the final time, you will not go in the land, this is what Moses speaks to YHVH....

-Num 27: 15 Moses spoke to YHVH, saying, 16 "Let YHVH, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation 17 who shall go out before them and come in

before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of YHVH may not be as sheep that have no shepherd." 18 So YHVH said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. 19 Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight.

-One must demonstrate more than zeal, it requires one in whom there is Spirit. We are talking about zeal and the roots of righteousness. We as seekers of YHVH, as those who seek to live according to his ways, we should be very passionate and zealous. We serve a passionate God. We should trust in YHVH. Both of these are considered righteousness and we should stand and pray. By standing and praying Pinchas in his zeal was able to quell the storm that was coming against the children of Israel, to stay the plague. Above all we should pray to be those in whom the Spirit is. Zeal is not enough, it requires the Spirit of the living God which at times demonstrates great zeal and it's also passionate and loving kindness. Think on these things.

Shabbat Shalom, Shavua Tov, See you Next Week!

THIS WEEK IN TORAH

JULY 27, 2019

This week's Torah Portion Pinchas: "Phineas" (Numbers 25:10 – 30:1) The zeal of Phinehas, A new attitude toward Midian, Census of the new generation, The count of the Levites, Grievance of the daughters of Zelophehad, Laws of Inheritance, God shows Moses the land, Joshua to succeed Moses, Daily offerings, Sabbath offerings, monthly offerings, Passover offerings, Offerings of the Feast of Weeks, Offerings of the Feast of Trumpets, Offerings of the Day of Atonement, Offerings of the Feast of Booths, Shemini Atzeres.

"This Week in Torah" FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/571648826269105/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

-Tanakh Tours of Israel 2019 – 11/11/2019 – 11/19/2019

<https://www.truth2u.org/tanakh-tour/>

-Blossoming Rose Israel Tours (2019 – 2020): (Sep19, Oct19, Dec19, Feb20, Mar20)

<https://blossomingrose.org/israel-tours/>

-Tabor & Nichols Israel Tour 2020 – Walking the Ancient Paths: 2/28/2020 – 3/10/2020

<https://blossomingrose.org/israel-tours/tabor-nichols-walking-the-ancient-path-tour-2020/>

-UNCC Mt. Zion Archaeological Project, Dig Mt. Zion (2020): June/July 2020

<https://digmountzion.uncc.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/digmountzion/>

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-UIWU Official Website: <https://unitedisrael.org/>

-UIWU YouTube Website:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq31WAlio9zC1eXDzrEVzlg/videos?view_as=public

-UIWU Facebook Website: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/unitedisraelworldunion/>

-UIWU Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/unitedisrael/>

-UIWU President, Tabor Blog, Religion Matters from the Bible to the Modern World:
<https://jamestabor.com/>

-UIWU Executive Vice-President, Ralph Buntyn, "Remembering David Horowitz":
<https://unitedisrael.org/category/remembering-david-horowitz/>

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