

#41 Pinchas Numbers 25:10 to 30:1

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Remove the earthly things from our lives.
- * Working for the Lord is hard when we add earthly traps to our walk.
- * Adding too much to our lives can consume our time and keeps us from doing what God wants us to do.
- * Insulate ourselves from things that can take over our lives.

Pinchas is the name "Phinehas" in English. Because Pinchas was zealous for God, God gave Pinchas a covenant of shalom (peace) and his descendants would hold the priestly office forever. The example of Pinchas teaches us to be zealous for God. In the end our zeal will result in eternal life just like Pinchas was given a priestly office forever. We should also recognize that God expects us to keep His commandments.

Those who teach and keep God's commandments will be rewarded by God. It says in Hebrews 6:10-12 NKJV: "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Teaching people to keep God's commandments in Jewish thought is one of the ways we love others. We are to be diligent to keep God's commands until the end; we are not to become lazy or get tired of doing what is right. We are to live like we believe and keep God's commandments so that we inherit God's promises.

It says we need to keep God's commandments in order to receive His promises. Perhaps the spearing of these sinful people in this portion is a picture of the eternal punishment of those who don't keep God's commands. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." God is just; He will reward those who do good and because He is just, He must also then punish those who do wrong.

One of the people who Pinchas speared was a leader from the tribe of Shim'on (Simon). The other was a daughter of one of the leaders of the Midyan (Midianite) clans. They were a mixed group the Bible says. God told Moshe to attack Midyan because they had tricked them into idolatry and treated Israel as enemies.

Then God tells Moshe to take a census of those 20 and over for military service and there were 601,730 men. God said the promised land was to be given by the numbers counted. Those with more people would be given more land and the land was to be decided by lot. There were 23,000 male Levites one month or older. They would not get a land inheritance. All those that who originally entered the desert died there except for Joshua and Caleb, the two spies that had made a positive report.

Some daughters had no brothers and they were to get their father's inheritance. There is a change in the original ruling which suggests that it is okay to seek God's direction on how to follow His commandments. Commandments could be updated to make appropriate rulings. We should be reminded that **only appropriate laws should be applied**. Instead, some think this is a license to add their own ideas to God's commandments which is wrong. I won't even empty my waste basket on Shabbat, but that is how I follow the commandment to rest on Shabbat. Rest most likely refers to common chores and our regular work. Talk to God about it.

For example, Shaul uses the Torah to say leaders should be supported if they need it. He quotes this from the Old Testament. "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain;" Deuteronomy 25:4 NKJV.

Shaul said, "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages;' 1 Timothy 5:17-18 NKJV. We should understand that the commandments in the New Testament portion are applications from the Old Testament portion.

Some rules for inheritance are then given in this portion. God instructs Moshe to climb a mountain in the 'Avarim range (Mt. Nebo, Deuteronomy 34:1) where he will die and also where he will be able to see the land given to Israel. He will not be able to enter the land because of his disobedience when he spoke to the people and then struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock.

God instructs Moshe to delegate authority to Y'hoshua (Joshua) and the community laid hands on Y'hoshua and commissions him. God would speak to Israel through the Urim. The Urim were the stones on the priestly garment. Each stone represented a tribe of Israel. The stones would supernaturally light up to give Israel an answer from the letters derived from the different names of the tribes. Of course, there were also prophets in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

The priests were to make offerings at the proper days and times and with the prescribed animals and other types of offerings. They were to use lambs in the first year without defect. They made a fragrant fire with flour. Offerings were made every day, on Shabbat, the first of the month, and on all of the feasts. What the priests were to do for the feasts is described. The portion ends with it saying that Moshe told the people what God commanded.

The Haftarah is 1 Kings 18:46-19:1. Eliyahu (Elijah) had just put the false prophets of Ba-al to death and Izevel (Jezebel) then threatens Eliyahu. Eliyahu was despondent, but an angel came and gave him food and the food kept him for forty days and nights until he got to Mt. Horev, the mount of God. God asks him why he is there.

He says that Israel has abandoned the covenant and that he is being pursued. Eliyahu stood at the entrance of the cave and waited for God's leading. We now know where the cave is and can go online and see videos of the real Mt. Sinai and see the cave. Eliyahu eventually hears a quiet voice and covers himself, and God speaks to him. Eliyahu explains what he is doing and God tells him to anoint Haza'el to be king of Aram. Also, he is to anoint Yehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel, and anoint Elisha the son of Shafat of Avel-M'cholah to be prophet after him.

Pinchas is also another messianic type. God gave Pinchas a covenant of shalom and the Messiah Yeshua also gives us peace. Pinchas' descendants would be priests forever because of Pinchas' zeal and this is also a picture of Yeshua's zeal; He is also our High Priest forever. Pinchas made atonement for Israel by his act of killing the idolaters and Yeshua made atonement for us, giving His life for us. Yeshua didn't deserve to be executed (Luke 23:13-15), but He gave Himself up for us (John 10:18) so that we could be reconciled (brought back) to God.

There is a broken (separated) vav in Numbers 25:12 and it is in the word "shalom" which means peace. It is the word used when God gave Pinchas a covenant of peace. The result of the broken vav looks like a yud and an object shaped like a vav without the top of the letter. The yud represents that which is heavenly and vav means hook or nail. Perhaps we could infer from the word "shalom" in Numbers 24:12 that which was heavenly was nailed to a stake for us so that we can have peace with God. So, the broken vav in this verse in Numbers could refer prophetically to what Yeshua did for us when He died for us.

Also, the word shalom with a yud in it instead of a vav is the word Shalim which means complete. We have received peace from our Messiah Yeshua and we are complete in Him. Yeshua said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;" John 14:27 NKJV. We are complete through Yeshua, "You are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power;" Colossians 2:10 NKJV. Remember, some of these insights were intended by God, but we are to actually keep God's words and not just look for insights. Both Yeshua and Shaul (Paul) said that was wrong (John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:3-4).

Pinchas gave his all to do what was right. We too should do all we can to do what is right. Part of that is to remove the love of earthly things from our lives. Yochanan said, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world —the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever;" 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV.

As believers in the Messiah Yeshua, we are to have a different point of view about life. Some people highly value the things of this world and they are in love with this world. I have been around people who talk about all they have and the next big money-making project they have. That is their life. Spiritual things have very little value to them. Sometimes in their pride they view anyone who has meager means or as spiritually minded as second rate, but that is not true for those who love God. Anyone who loves God is never second rate. Yochanan said in 1 John 3:1 NKJV, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God." Sons of God in the Bible are those who keep God's commandments and act like they are part of the family. Noah was a son of God who saved the world because he did what was right.

Some people who have money and things want it all for themselves and some will even say proudly, "Look at all that I have." Instead of being generous towards God and the poor, they think the poor should do it all on their own.

There are people who use their resources well though. Don't get me wrong. Not all of us are able to give vast sums away, but there are people who are very generous. One person I know of gives 80% of what he makes to God and still has lots of money left over. After all, how much money, how many cars, how huge of a house, and how many airplanes do we need. I'm not saying we have to give like he did. That is something he decided to do. He put his money where his mouth is. I like to think that I respect God too and that I am generous for His purposes. With that in mind, I contribute to organizations that give God the glory and help others spiritually.

Sometimes the more we have, the more distractions we have in life. It's not a bad idea to pare our lives down and remove some of the earthly things from our lives. Giving is one way to show that you are zealous for God. Perhaps we should be saying to ourselves, put your resources where your heart is. Do you have a heart for God, for the poor, to stand faithful, and to live your life for the Lord? Shaul (Paul) said in Titus 2:12, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." God expects us to have a balanced life and put God in His proper place in our lives.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 NKJV:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

It says love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. That is a tall task. Yet it is a commandment of God. The word strength in the Hebrew can also mean resources.

When our life is consumed with work, multiple hobbies, having fun all the time etcetera, it can take up a considerable part of our day. Working for the Lord becomes more of a chore when we add earthly traps to our walk. Some people have the attitude that they give enough to God. That may be true, but some of the people I knew that lived like that only took 1 hour for God out of the 168 hours they have in a week. I met someone once that told me they didn't have time for God because they were too busy watching TV. What a waste of life.

I know someone who graduated from Harvard and they don't have a TV. They didn't get to where they were in life by watching TV. I'm not saying we shouldn't watch TV. Perhaps you could use an hour of your time during the week to do something for God instead of playing video games or watching TV. Is that too much to do?

Adding too much to our lives can consume our time and keeps us from doing what God wants us to do. What if God wanted you to lead someone to Him, but you were too busy watching TV. What we do matters. Someone I met for only a few minutes once thanked me years later for my encouragement and had become a believer as a result of my encouragement.

Why not do something. You might enjoy it so much that you'll add more time for God to your agenda. I used to take time to fellowship with believers a couple times a week, feed the poor every month, and if more time opened up, I'd find something else I could do. Why not invest in eternal things. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal;" 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NKJV.

It is worth insulating yourself to a certain extent from worldly things that can take over our lives. Instead of being too busy for God, turn the tables a little and get busy for God some. I make sure I take time for prayer every day. If it means giving up TV in the evening, that's what I do. I know some of us are incredibly busy. Instead of trying to take too much on for yourself, have at least a 15-minute Bible study every night with your family. Our kids need encouragement in this ultra secular world. Limit your TV, limit your video games and Facebook, and take time every day to do something spiritual. See if you can get that 1 hour of spiritual activity up to 2 hours per week and see if you don't enjoy your life more. Some of us are so wrapped up in worldly things that we are actually stressed out just from those things. Some of us are doing great; keep up the good work!

What are some ways that you can insulate yourself from worldly things?

Taking time every day to pray and study the scriptures.

Taking time every day to pray and study the Bible with your family.

Tell yourself every day that God is the most important part of your life.

Tell yourself that earthly things are going to pass away and find something that has some eternal verity to life.

Take time to do something spiritual during the week.

Pinchas was zealous for God. God blessed his descendants for what he did. Wouldn't we want to receive blessings from God; how about eternal blessings? Eliyahu (Elijah) thought all was lost and went to the

mountain of God. When God spoke to Eliyahu, God put him to work. It wasn't over after all. Pinchas put himself into doing what was right and seeking the things of God.

As believers in the true God, we are to have a different viewpoint about life. Don't let your life be totally wrapped up in projects, hobbies, making money, and worldly things. Sometimes, the more we have the more distractions we have in life. Some of us just make up distractions instead of doing the important spiritual things of life. Give, share your time, think of little ways you can make a difference, and watch out for all the worldly desires that come our way.

Keeping ourselves busy with worldly things can keep us from engaging with God and the eternal verities of life. Work at spending more time doing spiritual things. Why not make a commitment to do something, even if it is just 15 minutes more or 1 hour more a week? Set the time aside. Surely, we can do that. There is a lot we can do, but don't get stressed out on worldly things; instead work at freeing up time for God.