

Numbers 25:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

Analysis

Israel 'began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab' at Shittim, just before entering Canaan. This sexual immorality was simultaneously spiritual adultery—the Moabite women drew Israelite men into idolatrous worship (verse 2). Sexual sin and idolatry intertwine throughout Scripture; physical unfaithfulness expresses and enables spiritual unfaithfulness.

Historical Context

Shittim (later called Abel-shittim, 33:49) was Israel's final camp before crossing Jordan into Canaan. This sin occurred at the threshold of promise fulfillment—a recurring biblical pattern where temptation intensifies just before breakthrough. Balaam's failed curses (chapters 23-24) gave way to Midianite-Moabite seduction (31:16).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Why does temptation often intensify when you're closest to spiritual breakthrough or promise fulfillment?
2. How are sexual immorality and idolatry connected in contemporary context?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּשָׁב	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּשֵׁטַיִם	וַיְהִל	הָעָם	לְזַנּוֹת	אֵל
abode	And Israel	in Shittim	began	and the people	to commit whoredom	H413
H3427	H3478	H7851	H2490	H5971	H2181	
בְּנוֹת	מוֹאָב:					
with the daughters	of Moab					
H1323	H4124					

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 10:8 (Parallel theme): Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

Joshua 2:1 (Parallel theme): And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

Numbers 33:49 (Parallel theme): And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

Revelation 2:14 (References Israel): But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Micah 6:5 (Parallel theme): O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.

Joshua 3:1 (References Israel): And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

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