

Numbers 25:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

Analysis

The statement 'Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor' describes covenant unfaithfulness through idolatry and immorality. The phrase 'joined himself' uses covenant language, indicating Israel's spiritual adultery by attaching to false gods. God's anger burning against Israel demonstrates that covenant privilege brings greater accountability—those who know God and reject Him face severe judgment. This incident, occurring on Canaan's threshold after forty years of discipline, showed the new generation's susceptibility to the same sins as their fathers.

Historical Context

Baal-peor was a local manifestation of the Canaanite fertility god Baal, worshiped at Mount Peor in Moab. Worship involved ritual prostitution, combining spiritual and physical adultery. This seduction came through Balaam's counsel to Moab (31:16), showing his persistent opposition to Israel despite inability to curse them. The plague killed 24,000 (verse 9), demonstrating judgment's severity. Paul later used this incident as a warning to Christians (1 Corinthians 10:8).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual adultery (idolatry) parallel physical adultery in seriousness and covenant violation?
2. What modern forms of Baal worship (materialism, sexuality, power) tempt God's people toward unfaithfulness?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------|----------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| וַיֵּצֵא מֶדָּ | בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: | לְבַ עַל | פָּעַ וּר | וְחָר | אֵף |
| joined | And Israel | H0 | himself unto Baalpeor | was kindled | and the anger |
| H6775 | H3478 | | H1187 | H2734 | H639 |
| יְהוָה ה | בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: | | | | |
| of the LORD | And Israel | | | | |
| H3068 | H3478 | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 22:17 (References Lord): Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,

Hosea 9:10 (References Israel): I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.