

# What do you want?

*Numbers 25:1-11*

Pastor Johanan Justin

God has called Christians to live passionately and zealously for Him. Yet, we struggle with boredom, apathy, and aimlessness. The Bible tells us to keep our heart with all vigilance (Prov. 4:23). From the heart flow our longings, desires and passions. Reignite the zeal of the Christian life and let Christ be Lord over our loves and Prince over our passions.

Every Christian, Called to Passion (Num. 25:1-11)

## 1. The Enemy

The plague that Israel faced was a devious plot successfully executed against them. Balak, a Moabite king, had summoned Balaam, a diviner, to curse Israel. Instead, God made Balaam bless Israel three times. However, Balaam had another plan (Num. 31:15-16): to lure the Israelite men to yoke themselves to Baal (vv. 2-3a). Balaam was the mastermind, turning Israel's passion against them. Like the Israelites, we too have an enemy that we need to be watchful of - Satan (1 Peter 5:8). Satan hates us with a passion. While he has no authority over us, he is a master at turning our desires against us. Satan has kept the schemes of Balaam alive, even today (Rev. 2:14). Your enemy longs passionately for your utter destruction! What do you want? Let the Holy Spirit reveal the desires of your heart and repel the schemes of Satan.

## 2. The LORD

As the Israelites yoked themselves to Baal, the anger of the LORD ("*Yahweh*", God's covenantal name) was kindled against them (v. 3b). Yet, God still provided a passage of deliverance. God's anger would turn away if judgement was executed against the guilty men (v. 4). Israel was like a wife who had entered into a marriage covenant with *Yahweh*, the

Husband. Idolatry is not just a superficial mistake we make; it is a sin of passion. When Israel bowed down to Baal, they provoked the jealous anger of the LORD (Ex. 20:4-5a). Jealousy is a powerful passionate character trait (Prov. 27:4) that comes from a broken heart (Ezek. 6:9a). Your covenantal God yearns jealously for your whole heart! What do you want? Let the Holy Spirit keep you from provoking the LORD your God to jealousy.

## 3. The Rebel

Amidst all that was happening, an Israelite man (Zimri, chief of the Simeonites) had indifferently brought a Midianite woman (Cozbi, a tribal head in Midian) into his family (v. 6). They were both deluded by their political status and fooled by their lustful desires, thinking it could save them from God's hot jealousy. Your deluded pride lusts recklessly for rebellion. Success breeds pride, and pride can become a passionate slave driver over our hearts. What do you want? Let God search our hearts and keep our pride from driving us to destruction.

## 4. The Saviour

The plague ceased after Phinehas' immediate and decisive action (vv. 7-8a). It was the heart passion Phinehas shared with God, expressed through his decisive action, that moved the heart of God. Phinehas' passion and zeal had saved the nation of Israel; he made atonement for the people of Israel (v. 13b). Your Saviour (Jesus) is zealous for your unblemished holiness. What do you want? Like Zimri, we deserve to be put to death for our whoring. Yet Jesus took our place to pay for our whoring. He takes the plague and wrath of God for us, bears the spear, and turns the wrath of God away. Jesus is our Saviour and Husband that has sanctified

us (Eph. 5:25-27). Let us enthrone Him as  
the King of our heart!