

# The city, seduction and sex

Dominic Steele, Numbers 25

1 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, 2 who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. 3 So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD's anger burned against them.

4 The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the LORD's fierce anger may turn away from Israel."

5 So Moses said to Israel's judges, "Each of you must put to death those of your men who have joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor."

6 Then an Israelite man brought to his family a Midianite woman right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel while they were weeping at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 7 When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand 8 and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear through both of them—through the Israelite and into the woman's body. Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped; 9 but those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.

10 The LORD said to Moses, 11 "Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them. 12 Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. 13 He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites."

14 The name of the Israelite who was killed with the Midianite woman was Zimri son of Salu, the leader of a Simeonite family. 15 And the name of the Midianite woman who was put to death was Cozbi daughter of Zur, a tribal chief of a Midianite family.

16 The LORD said to Moses, 17 "Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them, 18 because they treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the affair of Peor and their sister Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader, the woman who was killed when the plague came as a result of Peor."

1 Great heights and deep valleys

2 Dishonor; anger; turning away anger; praise 1-9

a Dishonor 1-3a

b Anger 3b-5

c Flagrant dishonor 6, 14, 15

d 'Turning away anger' = atonement 7-9 cf Numbers 3-4

e Praise 8-9, 10-13

f Judgment 16-18 cf Numbers 31

3 Deep valleys and great heights

a Warnings over dishonor 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

i men

ii women

iii single

iv married

b Praise the priest who turns away God's anger  
Hebrews 7:23-28, 1 Peter 2