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The War Against Midian

31: 1-54



Chapter 31 picks up the storyline of **Chapter 25**, and the account of the debauchery of **Isra'el** at **Ba'al Peor** (to see link click [Ea - Taking a Stand for God](#)). The delay in describing this battle only adds punch to the content. We remember that **Midian** was placed under **the cherem** judgment of **Ha'Shem** (see the commentary on **Leviticus Ff - Cherem**) because of **its** part in carrying out **Balaam's** wicked scheme **to put a stumbling block before the sons of Isra'el, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality** (**Revelation 2:14**). As a result, **YHVH** said to **Moshe**, **"Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them, because they treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the affair of Ba'al Peor (25:16-18a)**. This chapter tells the story of the holy war of **Isra'el** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Ag - The Problem of Holy War in the TaNaKh**), the judgment of **God** against **His enemies** and **the enemies of His people**.

The idea of a "holy war" almost seems like a contradiction in terms to many people today who find the concept distasteful, even in light of the evil terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7th, 2024. Muslim terrorists proclaim their jihads against **Isra'el** and the United States, but the reader of Scripture can only understand this text by accepting the concept of a "holy war." **Yeshua Messiah Himself** will one day wage a "holy war" against the antichrist the armies of the world at the end of the Great Tribulation (see **Revelation Ex - The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon**). Therefore, we must believe that the

terrible events in this chapter are moral . . . and are from **God!** The most important issue in approaching texts such as this is not to concentrate on the suffering and pain of **the God-rejecting Midianties**, but to focus on the holiness of **the LORD** that it celebrates. In the midst of **His** terrible wrath, **God** demonstrates **His** mercy, as we will see.⁷⁰³