

"The Mystery of Balaam"

Part 1

Numbers 22

Introduction: Today we are returning to a study of False Prophets and as we do, we are going to look at a man named Balaam. The text we shall look at today is Numbers 22. The man Balaam is covered in Numbers 22-25. The setting here is that Israel is in the wilderness moving toward the Promise Land. The king of Moab, Balak, sees this massive group of people and he knows what they have done to the Amorites. All of this strikes fear in him and so he is going to turn to a Satanic practice in order to overcome the people of Israel. He knows a man who is a prophet, and he is going to call upon him.

I. Error of Balaam

Notice Numbers 22:1-7

Here we see the setting. Balak the king of Moab is afraid of the people of Israel who were about 2-3 million in number. He then sends messengers to a man that he knows of whose name is Balaam and he sends with the men rewards of divination. Balaam is a prophet, and we know from the New Testament that he is a false prophet. Balak wants to pay Balaam to come and curse the people of Israel. Balak, the king of Moab had watched Israel wipe out other peoples and so he desires for Balaam to somehow come and curse them so that they will be debilitated, and he can overcome them. He knows that Balaam has a reputation of cursing and blessing people. This tells us Balaam definitely has a connection with the demonic world.

Now before we look at Balaam let me point out how God had instructed Moses concerning Moab.

Deuteronomy 2:9

⁹ And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.

If Balak would have just talked with Moses and Israel, he would have had no problem and he could have saved himself a great deal of trouble and money.

Application:

How many times have we pictured the worse possible situation when the truth is that God actually had other plans? How many times have we caused problems because we thought we knew how things would go?

Back to Balaam. Now Balak knows that Balaam does this for personal gain and prophet.

Jude 1:2-4, 8, 10-11

³ *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

⁴ *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

⁸ *Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.*

¹⁰ *But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.*

¹¹ *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

The **ERROR** of Balaam is that he was controlled by personal gain. Even if he knew something was completely against the will of God, he would find a way to carry out the task in order to get the rewards, as we shall see.

Balaam is driven by GREED. He will have many opportunities to bow before God, but his GREED will control him and lead him to eternal damnation.

Application:

Greed has caused many people to ignore their eternal needs and to focus upon more wealth. Let us notice a few examples.

Matthew 26:14-16

¹⁴ *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,*

¹⁵ *And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.*

¹⁶ *And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.*

Remember when Elisha commanded Naaman to dip in the river seven times to be healed of his leprosy?

2 Kings 5:14-16, 20, 22, 25-27

¹⁴ *Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.*

¹⁵ *And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.*

¹⁶ *But he said, As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.*

²⁰ *But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.*

²² *And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.*

²⁵ *But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.*

²⁶ *And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?*

²⁷ *The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.*

Gehazi's greed was his down fall. There are many people today that live for more. They are not content with what God has given to them and so they are always looking to get more wealth.

Matthew 6:23-24

²³ *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

²⁴ *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

Paul's words to Timothy describe Balaam perfectly and they also describe many people today who also share in the ERROR of Balaam.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

⁶ *But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

⁷ *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

⁸ *And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*

⁹ *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

¹⁰ *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

II. Way of Balaam

The ERROR of Balaam was his greed. Now we shall see the **WAY OF BALAAM**.

2 Peter 2:15

¹⁵ *Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;*

The greed of Balaam became the way of Balaam. Take someone who loses their temper easily and someone makes a comment about them then the response is "THAT IS JUST THE WAY THEY ARE." His main motivation in life which is GREED becomes his way of life.

Notice Numbers 22:7-13

God tells Balaam, "NO, these people are blessed." But when Balaam goes back to the men of Balak, and he just tells them that God will not let him go. He leaves out the part that the people are blessed, and that God says for this reason it is not permissible to curse them. Why does he not tell the men the entire Word from God?

The reason he hides the Truth is because he really wants to do as Balak desires. He is basically saying, "I have a price and you need to go back to Balak and gather more riches."

Application:

Too many times we are like Balaam. Let me explain. There is some kind of opportunity that comes before us, and we really desire to grasp it and so we pray. "Lord what do you want me to do?" Then God answers and He says, "DON'T GO!" Now deep down on the inside we want to seize the opportunity so bad. We just start looking for ways to get our will done without being too offensive to God.

This is very dangerous. When God tells us "**NO**" it is for a reason. He knows that there is something down the path which we are looking that can do some major damage to us.

Let us remember that God wants the very best for us.

John 10:9-11

⁹ *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

¹⁰ *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

¹¹ *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

Our Lord wants us to enjoy the abundant life, but we have a sin nature that desires the forbidden.

Let me get you back to Balaam. God's perfect will for him is to NOT GO.

Notice Numbers 22:14-20

The men of Balak leave and then after a period of time they return with more riches and promises. He again goes to the Lord in prayer. This proves that he has had his mind set on going the entire time. He is thinking that maybe this time God will say, "YES."

Notice Numbers 22:18 again.

I want you to notice how he refers to God. He calls Him the LORD MY GOD. This man has the language of a believer, but he is not a believer.

Application:

This reinforces the message that we looked at last week.

Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Balaam would fit right into the MANY.

God gives permission for Balaam to go but there are certain guidelines. He can only do what God tells him he can do and nothing else.

Notice Numbers 22:21-22

This seems odd. God gave him permission to go and when he went the Lord's anger was kindled against him. What is this about?

God knew the heart of Balaam. He knew why Balaam was going and it was because he wanted the wealth and the riches offered to him. He was willing to somehow curse Israel even against the will of God. That is the WAY OF BALAAM. God's **PERFECT WILL** for him was not to go and now we see that in God's **PERMISSIVE WILL** he is permitted to go.

Application:

You and I need to be sure to do all we can to stay in the perfect will of God. How do I find this perfect will?

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

To get outside the will of God is dangerous and if a believer goes too far the consequences can be very painful

1 Corinthians 11:28-30

²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

²⁹ For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

³⁰ For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Conclusion:

There are 2 applications I want to leave you with:

Application #1

Next week we will continue with Balaam. As we close let me just remind you that we need to be surrendered over to the Lord and not controlled by the flesh. We all have weaknesses and when God tells us not to go down a certain path we must die to the flesh and walk in the will of God.

Application #2

Be sure you are saved! Balaam had many opportunities to get right with God, but he never did. He was so close and yet so far away. There are many people that are modern day Balaam's today. They have the language of a believer, but they are not saved.