

Lessons From Balaam (Slide 1)

Numbers 22-24

Reading: Numbers 22:22-35

The story of *Balaam* is a cautionary tale. We might use the old adage, “*You can’t judge a book by its cover,*” with regards to Balaam. There are at least three lessons we can discern from this story.

(Slide 2)

1. We are cautioned in whom we are to place our trust. There are many false teachers in the world today who may seem Godly.
2. The Lord God, Jesus The Christ and the Holy Spirit are truly the only ones who can discern what’s in a man’s heart.
3. The importance of using the entirety of the Bible for understanding.

Using just a cursory look at “*Balaam*” from the book of *Numbers* one would think that since God spoke directly to him that he was: a good man, that he was God’s prophet likened to Elijah or Elisha and that he was Godly.

Balaam makes such statements as these:

(Slide 3)

“Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me.” Numbers 22:8

“Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God. Numbers 22:18

Balaam even spoke Messianic Prophecy:

(Slide 4)

Numbers 22:17-19

**17 "I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near;
A star shall come forth from Jacob,
A scepter shall rise from Israel,
And shall crush through the forehead of Moab,
And tear down all the sons of Sheth.**

(Slide 5) **18 "Edom shall be a possession,
Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession,
While Israel performs valiantly.**

**19 "One from Jacob shall have dominion,
And will destroy the remnant from the city."**

Two interesting facts about Balaam are (1) he was a gentile, (2) he certainly was a Prophet but he was also a soothsayer as confirmed by:

Numbers 22:7 (Slide 6)

So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand;

And from Joshua we learn that Balaam was a diviner (soothsayer) and we learn his ultimate fate.

Joshua 13:22 (Slide 7)

The sons of Israel also killed Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner, with the sword among the rest of their slain.

The Israelites were the very people Balaam was summoned by Balak to deal with as we will see in the following summary.

Numbers 22:1-21 summary.

When the Israelites escaped Egypt by the power of God, they encountered many enemy nations in the land of Canaan in which God would deliver to them. That is; when they obeyed Him.

When they would come close to any nation the sheer number of the people was intimidating to the surrounding nations. Their reputation and their overwhelming size was a threat to Balak in the land of Moab.

Balak had so much anxiety that he summoned Balaam through messengers in the capacity of a soothsayer to place a curse on the people saying;

Numbers 22:6c (Slide 8)

"For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

Balaam tells Balak's messengers that he will refer to God as to what He wishes for Him to do. This is God's response:

Numbers 22:12 (Slide 9)

12 God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

That should have been the end of it. No matter what *Balak* spoke to him after that, Balaam should have repeated the same to him. *"These people are blessed, leave them alone."*

But Balaam was driven by something else rather than God's righteous word.

Balak sent a greater number of messengers even more prestigious than the first. They were instructed to offer Balaam a great deal of wealth. As we revealed earlier in this lesson Balaam stated;

"Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God. Numbers 22:18

Balaam once again referred to God:

Numbers 22:20-21 (Slide 10)

20 God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you shall you do."

21 So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey and went with the leaders of Moab.

After this was the incredible part of the Donkey speaking to Balaam. As a child I thought this was one of the most fascinating instances in the Bible.

Now looking at this circumstance one might say that what God caused to happen was unfair. After all, he told Balaam to go with them. But God was correcting the attitude of Balaam. How do we know that? We read other passages of scripture that better clarify the type of person Balaam was.

Our *Brother Jude* was at first intent on writing a letter about the common salvation of Christians but instead wrote about a people who have crept in amongst the brethren to corrupt the way of *Christianity* by living salacious lives.

They deny that Jesus is the Christ and commit abominations before God. They are fleshly, lustful, greedy and corrupted. Jude likens them to those of the Israelites who were evil and died in the wilderness. To the people of Sodom and Gomorrah who went after strange flesh by committing sins against nature and corrupting the flesh.

Then he gets to Balaam-

Jude 11 (Slide 11)

Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

God put the Angel with his sword drawn in front of Balaam because he loved unrighteousness and coveted what Balak had to offer.

2 Peter 2 is an epistle in which Peter warns of false prophets/ teachers and in:

(Slide 12)

2 Peter 2:14-16 (*Speaking of false teachers*)

14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; 15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, (Slide 13) who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

Revelation 2:14 (Slide 14)

But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.

Though we don't read about this in Numbers 22-24, Balaam did curse the Israelites by influencing them to worship idols which is exactly what they started to do in Numbers 25.

One thing we need to understand is that when the children of Israel warred against another nation they were to kill all of them. The reason is simple. So that they would not be corrupted by the gentile nations. In Numbers 31

we read of the war between the Israelites and the Midianites. In that battle Balaam was killed vs 8. In the next verse they kept alive the women and little ones.

This angered Moses and here is the reason why:

Numbers 31:13-16 (Slide 15)

13 Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp. 14 Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. (Slide 16) 15 And Moses said to them, "Have you spared all the women? 16 Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the LORD.

At first glance in Numbers 22 one might think that Balaam was a righteous person but thanks be to God we have the complete story of Balaam. In the Old Testament and the New. That really defies those that feel the Old testament is outdated and need not be studied.

What have we learned from this lesson:

1. We need the entirety of the Bible to gain the valuable lessons from its pages. Can we know when someone is sincerely a friend of God?

Jesus says in **Matthew 7:15-20** (Slide 17)

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 So every good tree bears good fruit, (Slide 18) but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Use the Word of God to determine those who you can trust!

2. God knows the heart of man:

The Psalmist writes in:

Psalms 44:20-21 (Slide 19)

20 If we had forgotten the name of our God

Or extended our hands to a strange god,

21 Would not God find this out?

For He knows the secrets of the heart.

3. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is complete with one main theme: to bring us to God through Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:13-17 (Slide 20)

13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, (Slide 21) 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (Slide 22) 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Let these sound principles guide us in Christian Walk!

Invitation

Today, if you haven't accepted the Gospel call; why wait?!! Hear the invitation, repent, confess your belief in Jesus as Christ, and submit yourself to that watery grave of baptism that will indeed bring you to Life. The Lord Himself will add you to His church.

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If you have been baptized but haven't lived according to your commitment, may we pray for you and with you as you travel this journey in Christ on earth.

Until the Lord comes: make your wish known before He returns.

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Reading:

Numbers 22:22-35

22 But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him. 23 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way. 24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall, so he struck her again. 26 The angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left. 27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick. 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" 29 Then Balaam said to the donkey,

"Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now." 30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No."

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground. 32 The angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was contrary to me. 33 But the donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live." 34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back." 35 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I tell you." So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak.

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