

“Balaam and the talking Donkey”

Numbers 22

Open: Story

- Balak, the king of Moab, gets worried about the coming destruction and sends a message to the Israelites, trying to persuade them from destroying their country. **(vs. 1-5)**
- Balaam was asked to curse the children of Israel. **(vs. 6-7)**
 - Balaam was a prophet of God; but Balak failed to recognize that it was God that did the blessing and cursing, while Balaam got distracted by the potential of financial gain.
- Balaam housed these messengers and opens himself to needless temptation. **(vs. 8)**
 - Balaam ignored the obvious right because he was enticed with hopeful financial gain.
- Balaam is approached by God and given a command to not follow them. **(vs. 9-13)**
 - God reproves Balaam for his foolish actions and makes clear the obvious right.
- Balak sends more men, with more power, and more money. **(vs. 15-17)**
 - “The devil never gives up”; the devil never stops attacking the way of right. Remember that the Devil only pays for a one-way ticket.
 - Balaam was lifted up in pride when he saw how men of power were seeking his help and failed to recognize that it was God who gave him his position. It was not of his own ability that blessings and cursings were made.
- Balaam says the right action, but opens himself up a second time to a needless temptation **(vs. 18-19)**
 - Balaam saw the potential financial gain and was hoping to manipulate God into getting financial compensation.
 - We need to recognize that God is not going to change His answer based on our view of life.
- Balaam ignores God’s sarcasm and angers God. **(vs. 20-22)**
 - Those who want to go against God’s will will always find away twist what God has said.
- God uses the donkey to warn Balaam. **(vs. 23-27)**
 - God makes one last attempt to get Balaam’s attention.
- God opens the mouth of Balaam’s donkey. **(vs. 28-30)**
 - “Sin makes people stupid!”

Tran:

- **Lev. 26:3-12**
- God warned His people about getting distracted while on the way to victory.
 - God did not intend anything less than complete victory for the child of God.
- God warned His people about going astray after other gods.
 - God did not want His people settling for anything less than complete satisfaction.
- God warned His people about following anyone who would lead them astray from God’s command and will.
 - God did not want His people to be robbed of enjoying the fulness of the blessings of obedience.

I. Do not leave yourself an opportunity to do wrong.

- A. Balaam did not disobey God in that he cursed the people of God, but he remained unwilling to stand for right and eventually gave into fleshly temptations. **James 1:15** *“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”*
- i. Balaam knew what was right to do; but he wanted to see if God would make an exception for him.
 - ii. God told Balaam what he wanted done, but Balaam wanted to see if God really meant what He said.
- B. Balaam failed to recognize that one can only play with sin for so long before you get burned. **Prov. 6:27** *“Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned.”*
- **Mark 14:54** *“And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: & he sat with the servants & warmed himself at the fire.”*
- C. Balaam failed to understand that just because you think you are strong enough to make it through the temptation without sinning does not mean you should see if you are. **Rom. 13:14** *“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*
- i. Don’t wait until you fall to discover why God told you to do what He told you to do. **Prov. 5:11-13** *“And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, [12] And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; [13] And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!”*
 - ii. Do not wait until people are hurt, as a result of your lack of obedience, before you discover why God told you to do what He told you to do. **Ruth 1:1** *“...And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.”*
- *Because of Balaam’s action, not only do the children of Israel commit fornication because of the idolatry but 24,000 people died in the plague that God sent as a result of their idolatry. Num. 25:9*

II. Potential personal profit will not replace God’s promised blessings.

- **II Peter 2:15** *“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;”*
 - **Jude 1:11** *“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.”*
- A. Balaam saw an opportunity to make a financial profit off his position. He got greedy and tried to manipulate God into God giving him permission to get he wanted, instead of trusting in God’s ability to provide for him what he needed. **Ps. 18:20** *“The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me”*
- God rewards you according to how you obey His commands, not by trying to outthink or manipulate God.
- B. Balaam failed to recognize that God’s reward to the obedient had greater value than the tangible profit he was seeking to gain from an unrighteous source. **Prov. 10: 2** *“Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death.”*
- i. **Prov. 10:16** *“The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked sin.”*
 - ii. **Prov. 10:22** *“The blessings of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.”*

- *“The world will always claim they can give you what God has robbed you of; but do not be fooled into believing God has kept back any good thing from you.”*
- **Numbers 24:11** *“Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.”*
- **Ps. 84:11** *“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”*

III. Don't be a stumblingblock to those who are following you, or to those who are weak in the faith.

- Numbers 31:16 gives us insight to Numbers 25:1. Balaam could not curse Israel for financial gain, but he could show Balak how to trick Israel.
 - Balaam instructed Balak to through a feast for ‘worship’ because he knew the Israelites would not be able to resist the temptations of idolatry and immorality.
- A. Balaam could not get what he wanted from God, so he took his revenge out on God by causing those, whom God loved most, to fall. **Rom. 14:13** *“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.”*
- B. We are to recognize that those around us may be weaker than we are, and just because I can avoid falling into certain temptations does not mean that those around me can. I need to make sure that I do not give a false sense of security, with my actions, to those who are weaker in the faith. **I Cor. 8:9** *“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.”*
- C. Balaam failed to recognize the importance of his position as a prophet of God. He used his position as a tool of destruction instead of using it to build up God's people.
- We have been instructed to pick up the fallen, not set traps for the righteous to fall into.
 - i. **Gal. 6:1** *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”*
 - ii. **Prov. 26:27** *“Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.”*

Close:

- Don't leave yourself an opportunity to do wrong.
- Potential personal profit will not replace God's promised blessings.
- Don't be a stumblingblock to those who are following you or to those who are weak in the faith.