

## Numbers Chapters 23

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V: 1 The thing that sticks in my minds is what we read a couple of times in **Numbers 22**.

**Numbers 22:35** “And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak...”

- Balaam instructs Balak to build 7 altars and to sacrifice 7 oxen and 7 rams.

V: 2 “... Balak & Balaam offered...” working together, working in concert.

**Amos 3:3** “How can two walk together unless they be agreed?”

V: 3-8 Balaam tells Balak to stand by while he approaches God.

- God meets with Balaam and gives him the words to speak to Balak.
- You brought me here to curse Jacob and to defy Jacob:

**Genesis 12:3** “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

V: 8 When God blesses, they are blessed – nothing anyone can do about it.

**Romans 8:31** “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

V: 9-10 The blessing:

1. This people shall dwell alone, sanctified, independently, not dispersed among the nations.
2. They shall be reckoned among the nations – not destroyed or assimilated, they shall last.
3. They shall prosper and grow in fulfillment of God's promises to them.

**Genesis 13:16** “I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.”

- Balaam invokes the blessing given to Israel by God's through His promise to Abraham.
- 4. Balaam declares, may my last days be like theirs!

V: 11 What have you done?! You're not cursing them, you're blessing them!

V: 12 Loose paraphrase – “I told you so...”

V: 13 Balak had taken Balaam where he could see the whole camp of Israel, or perhaps the magnitude of the problem from Balak’s perspective.

- Let’s go to another vantage point where you can’t see all of them, just the edges, or fringes of the camp.
- Instead of looking dead on, just use one eye, maybe if you squint a little... - you know, “give em the evil eye.”

V: 14-15 Another hill top, another 7 altars and 7 oxen and 7 rams.

- Standby while I consult with the Lord.

V: 16 The Lord met with Balaam and gave him what to say to Balak.

V: 17-18 Balaam takes charge in the name of the Lord and tells Balak to “rise up” or stand up and hearken to the word of the Lord.

V: 19 God keeps His promises, it is part of His character.

**Hebrews 6:18** “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:”

1. God doesn’t change.
2. God doesn’t lie.

**Isaiah 40:8** “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand forever.”

V: 20 We cannot reverse that which God is purposed to do:

**Deuteronomy 32:39** “See not that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand.”

V: 21-24 God has not seen iniquity in Jacob or perversity in Israel?

**Micah 7:18-19** “<sup>18</sup>Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. <sup>19</sup>He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

**Psalm 32:1-2** “<sup>1</sup>Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. <sup>2</sup>Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

**1 Peter 4:8** “... for love shall cover the multitude of sins.”

- God's love for us, God's grace working in our lives, abiding in His love and in His forgiveness.
- Does this mean we can just go out and do whatever we want, living willfully, sinfully? Absolutely not!
- There is no excuse for W.D. – Willful Disobedience.

**Romans 8:1** “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

**Romans 8:34** “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

- God see's no iniquity in Israel – they are His children.
- This statement or observation may be a clue to what happens later.

Again the blessing:

1. God see's them as righteous.
2. God is with them.
3. They have a leader, a King – who is God Himself.
4. God brought them out of Egypt, and He is mighty.
5. There is not enchantment or incantation that will work against Israel.
6. They will be a testimony of God's power.
7. They will be like a powerful lion that consumes the prey.

V: 25-26 Balak: Stop talking – don't say anything more.

- Balaam: I told you...

V: 27-30 Balak: let's try another hill – 7 more altars, 7 more oxen & rams.

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## *Numbers Chapter 24*

V: 1 Balaam figures something out...

- He went not as at the other times:

**Numbers 23:2** “Balak and Balaam offered...” 7 oxen, 7 rams 3 times.

**Numbers 23:23** “Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel...”

- It would appear that Balaam was trying to use divination and enchantments, but the power of God was greater.
- Part of the divination process was examining the internal organs of animals.

V: 2-9 The Spirit of God comes upon Balaam, much as it did later with king Saul.

- Balaam again begins to pronounce blessing upon Israel culminating in:

*“Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.”*

- Repeating the blessing to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3**.

V: 10-11 Balak has had enough, he blows his top – “I called you to curse my enemies, but you’ve blessed them these three times!”

- You could have been rich, but God has held you back from honor.

V: 12-14 What did you expect? I was only allowed to speak the word of the Lord.

- Let me tell you what is going to happen in the future:

V: 15-24 Balaam speaks of having his eyes opened, having a vision of the Almighty:

- I shall see Him, but not right now, in the future:
- A Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre out of Israel – speaking of the Messiah, Jesus.

The wise men asked king Harod:

**Matthew 2:2** “Saying, where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.”

**2 Peter 1:19** “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”

**Revelation 22:16** “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

- Messiah is going to come and establish His kingdom, but it is still a ways out.

V: 25 Seemingly Balaam and Balak go their separate ways. As we get into chapter 25 we see the children enter into the sin of idolatry and fornication. There is a piece of this puzzle that is missing.

- Balaam had hoped to have the same end as the children of Israel, but he had gone far beyond what God had commanded him.

**Numbers 32:8** “And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain: namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.”

Moses, speaking of the Midianite women taken captive:

**Numbers 32:16** “Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and thee was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.”

**2 Peter 2:14-15** “<sup>14</sup>Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: <sup>15</sup>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;”

Jesus wrote to the church in Pergamos:

**Revelation 2:14** “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”

- Putting the pieces together; looking back to **Numbers 23:21 & 23.**

“<sup>21</sup>He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel...” – “<sup>23</sup>Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel...”

- Realizing that he could not curse the children of Israel or use incantations against them, he realized he could only help to bring God’s wrath upon them through sin, and still obtain the reward of divination.
- Balaam advised Balak to have the Midianite women go down to the Hebrew men, to entice them to sin, to engage in the worship of their gods, eating food sacrificed to gods and to commit fornication.
- Balaam eventually dies with the Midianites, receiving the due reward for his treachery, but the tactics of the enemy are still the same, appealing to our flesh.

**1 John 2:15-17** “<sup>15</sup>Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world

passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

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## *Numbers Chapter 25*

V: 1-3 The people begin to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

- They were drawn into worshipping their gods and eating food sacrificed to their idols.
- Israel committed spiritual fornication worshipping other gods; they also committed physical fornication with the women of Moab.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-4** “<sup>3</sup>For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: <sup>4</sup>That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”

V: 4-5 God responds to the people’s sin:

- Moses instructs the judges to slay every man who joined himself to the pagan god’s, particularly the leaders who should have known better and put a stop to it.

**Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

*They were still under the admonition:*

**1 Peter 1:15-16** “<sup>15</sup>But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; <sup>16</sup>Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy.”

V: 6 One of the men of Israel had the nerve, the shameless disrespect to actually bring a Midianite woman down into the camp in the sight of all the congregation. In front of those who were actually weeping before the door of the Tabernacle. This man was flaunting his sin.

- Lasciviousness: inclined to lustfulness; wanton; lewd sexual desire.
- Licentious: sexually unrestrained; libertine, shameless.

V: 7-8 Phinehas see’s what is happening and takes immediate action, taking a spear in thrusting the two through together.

*Discipline versus legalism:*

- Discipline is God centered, legalism is man centered.
- The difference between discipline (obedience) and legalism is motivation.
  - Discipline says “I will do this because I love God, and I want to please Him.”
  - Legalism says “I will do this to gain merit with God, or with man.”

V: 9 Phinehas' action stopped the plague that had begun within the camp, 24,000 men.

- The result of Balaam's evil counsel to Balak.

V: 10-13 God blesses Phinehas and his descendants because he was zealous for God.

- Zealous: ardently active, devoted, passionate, or diligent.

**Psalm 106:30-31** <sup>30</sup>Then stood up Phinehas and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. <sup>31</sup>And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore."

V: 14-15 God names names – now we know where Paul got it.

- He was a prince, a leader amongst the Israelites, she was of the royal house of Midian.

V: 17-18 God instructs Moses to "vex" the Midianites, to strike them, fight against them.

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Balaam in the church today: Balaam is mentioned in 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation as a warning to us.

1. Not to allow covetousness to control us, not to allow materialism to control us.
2. Balaam is an example of someone who knew what God's perfect and revealed will was and sought with everything in him to get around it for his own purposes.
3. When a direct frontal assault won't work, the enemy will try deception and guile. It will usually involve some aspect of the flesh
4. We are called to personal holiness, because He that has called us is Holy.

[Peter warns us about false teachers leading people away:](#)

**2 Peter 2:15** <sup>15</sup>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;"

- Peter promises that God will judge these false teachers; but he also warns believers to exercise spiritual discernment lest they be taken captive by false doctrine.

**1 John 4:1** "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirit whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."