



Numbers 22-25

1. False teachers/prophets have power too (22:1-7; Deu 13:1-3; 2Th 2:9-10; e.g. Exo 7:11, 22, 8:7; Act 8:9-11).
 2. Many of those who end up in hell did mighty works in God's name, claimed Him to be their Lord/God, counted themselves among the upright – even occasionally feared Him and repented of their sins (22:8-21, 31-41 and 23:1-30 and 24:1-24, w/24:25 [notice Balaam “went back to his place” versus becoming a proselyte = Refused to become a part of the covenant community yet claimed God to be “His God”] and 25:1-3 and 31:16 and Rev 2:14; Mat 7:21-23).
 3. You are no different than Balaam (i.e. a person who thinks too highly of themselves) if you cannot be loyal/commit yourself to those you did not create and/or cannot control (24:25 – “his place” = ML his family [loyal to those he created] w/25:1-3 and 31:16 [loyal to those he could control; he may have lost his ability to control thru blessing/cursing, but he still yielded the power of corruption and by this would retain his power/control over people like the Midianites/Moabites. Hence his reason for still hanging around/being committed to them – despite what his own mouth had spoken in prophecy against them from God! In this light consider Heb 6:5 = People can “taste the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come” and yet still choose to follow the path of their own glory/gain; Consider also Simon in Act 8:9-24]).
 4. People doing God's work w/wicked motives (e.g. for personal gain) remain under His wrath (22:22-33, 32 w/Jud 1:11; 2Pe 2:15).
 5. Even donkeys know that effective/persuasive reasoning requires: 1) never assuming you know the context or actions of another (23-29, 28-29; 1Ti 6:4) and 2) a Socratic approach (i.e. reasoning thru thought-provoking questions) (22:30; e.g. Mat 12:22-32, 36-37 = Even God on J-Day will “reason” w/us using the Socratic approach as His means of establishing justice).
 6. God never lies, period (23:19a).
 7. God never changes His mind: 1) simply b/c somebody wants Him to (23:11-12 w/19b, 25-30), 2) based on people's incessant/repetitious pleading/persuasive efforts (23:1-6, 27-30; Mat 6:7; Lev 19:31; Deu 18:9-14), 3) when what He has said is unconditional (23:7-10, 22-24 w/20 – “He has blessed and I cannot revoke it = God has already unconditionally decreed that Israel w/ blessed), 4) unless what He has spoken was conditional and those conditions are met (e.g. Exo 32:9-14; Jon 3:10; Jer 18:6-10, 26:1-13; Joe 2:1-14).
 8. No power - supernatural or otherwise, can harm those God has promised to protect (23:21-23a; Deu 11:25).
 9. As a demonstration of their divine inspiration, Balaam's final prophecies carry forward the key evangelistic elements of God's promise to Abraham and prophetic vision to Jacob (fulfillment to begin 1500 yrs later): 1) Nations blessed thru Israel (24:1-7; Gen 12:3), 2) Israel w/a conquering, eternal king from the tribe of Judah (24:15-17; Gen 17:6, 49:9-10a; 2Sa 8:2, 11-14; Rev 5:5), 3) Israel as the kingdom that shall reign supreme over all others (24:7b-8, 18-24; Gen 12:1-2, 49:10b).
 10. Just b/c you haven't heard from God (e.g. in answering prayer), doesn't mean He has forgotten you or stopped working on your behalf (chs 22-24 = God was working but Israel didn't know; ch 25 = Israel's lack of trust that God was still working for them [albeit “behind the scenes”] led them to again resort to idolatry; See Exo 32; Consider also Joh 5:17).
 11. Collateral damage (25:9): 1) happens when leaders know of sin but do nothing about it/move too slow (25:4 = The leaders became part of the collateral damage), 2) can be avoided if we seek justice the moment we become aware of sin in the congregation (25:5-8).
 12. The best pastors turn back God's wrath from His people by: 1) caring far more about God's glory/name than the comfort or happiness of their people (25:11-13), 2) killing (i.e. excommunicating) w/o hesitation or pity any among God's people who “yoke themselves” to another (thru committing capital crimes) (25:6-8).
 13. Bugs Bunny and Satan have this in common: both follow the principle of “if you can't beat 'em, join em” (25:14-18; This was a popular tactic among pagan nations when conquering others. Hence one of the reasons the Babylonians carried the Israelite captives back to their country).
 14. The epitaph on the tombstone of Israel's first generation reads like the lives of many Christians: “Though they had time and plenty of opportunities, nothing really changed.” (25:9 w/26:1ff = The last of the first generation is now all dead [23k = sex immorality and idolatry, 1k = idolatry only – 1Co 10:8]; Exo 32 w/Num 25).
- “The significant parallels between the golden calf and the Baal Peor stories suggest the old generation of Israelites have made little or no progress in their commitment to God's covenant.” – D. T. Olson
15. God does not lie *and* He also doesn't forget – especially those He promised to curse (25:14 – “Zimri...belonging to the Simeonites” = Tribe of Simeon w/Num 16:1 = Tribes of Levi and Rueben w/Gen 49:1-7; e.g. Those who go apostate).
- “Levi, Reuben, and Simeon in Numbers [are] a reflection of the curses these three sons received in Jacob's deathbed ‘blessing’ of his twelve sons.” – M. Douglas