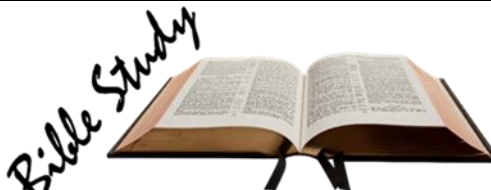


Wednesday Sept. 17, 2025		Lesson 3 of 4
--------------------------------	--	------------------

## THE WAY DOWNWARD: THE WAY OF BALAAM

### Scripture Setting

Jude (KJV)

### Key Verse

““Woe unto them! for they ... ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward” (v. 11).

### Who Was Balaam?

Numbers 22

#### His Name

“According to a Hebraic source, the name means, “swallowing up the people, destroyer of people.”

#### His Origins

- We are first introduced to Balaam in Numbers 22.
- His father was Beor of Pethor.
- Evidence shows that he knew Israel’s God (v. 8).
- Scripture suggests that he was well known to King Balak because Pethor was situated near Balak’s homeland, and so Balak would have known him as a soothsayer (Num. 22:5).

### His Character

- Balaam’s character was questionable. On one side of his character, he presented himself as being obedient and submissive to God’s will.

- Contrast this Numbers version of Balaam with the character described in Deuteronomy 23:5, Joshua 24:10, and Nehemiah 13:2.

Deut. 23:5. “Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee.”

Joshua 24:10. “But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.”

Nehemiah 13:2. “Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing.”

#### Balaam’s Greed

- Numbers 22 does not tell us whether Balaam accepted the reward or not.
- However, Jude 11 infers that he did, “... and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.”
- Peter concurs: “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”; 16But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet” (2 Pet. 2:15-16).

God's Anger Against Balaam

- Why was God angry with Balaam?

Numbers 22:20-21

*"And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.*

*21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab."*

- Peter referred to Balaam's "madness" (2 Pet.2:16). What did he mean by that? (Num. 22: 20-22 & 32.)

*20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.*

*21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went:*

*32 And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:*

- Balaam's Perverse Way

The KJV Dictionary defines perverse as:

1. Literally, turned aside; hence, distorted from the right.
2. Obstinate in the wrong; disposed to be contrary; stubborn; intractable.

- Balaam was indeed perverse. From the beginning, God had told him explicitly, *"Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed"* (v. 6).

Merchandizing Gifts

- Balaam had a gift. He knew God and God spoke to and thru him. However, he used his gift for financial gain.
- We must be careful that we are not motivated by greed. Rather, we must use our gift to serve others (1 Pet. 4:10-11).

**His Doctrine**The Real Balaam

- Balaam painted an exemplary picture of himself, yet his actions exposed his underhandedness.
- Revelations 2: 14, *"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."*
- What was Balaam's doctrine? His doctrine could be called the Principles of Betrayal. (See also Numbers 31:16)

*Lesson Continues – Take Notes*