

“BEWARE OF BALAAM”

Numbers Chapters 22 – 25

CHAPTER 22 – “THE WAY OF BALAAM (COVETOUSNESS)”

(v1-4) Who are the Moabites, where did they come from? The Moabites are descendents of MOAB (*perhaps of my father*), the name of a man and a nation in the Old Testament. He was a son of Lot by an incestuous union with his older daughter (Genesis 19:37). Their present king is Balak.

(v5-7) Who is BALAAM? (Balaam means *lord of the people*) - A magician or soothsayer, who was summoned by the Moabite king BALAK to curse the Israelites before they entered Canaan (Numbers 22:5-24:25; Deuteronomy 23:4-5). (The New Testament mentions Balaam in three passages: (1) Peter speaks of **false teachers** who *"have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam"* (2 Peter 2:15). (2) Jude speaks of **backsliders** who *"have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit"* (Jude 11). **Balaam's error was greed or covetousness**; he was well paid to bring a curse upon the people of Israel. (3) The nature of Balaam's curse is made clear by John in the Book of Revelation. It refers to some members of the church in Pergamos who held *"the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality"* (Revelation 2:14.) Balaam's demise is found in Joshua 13:22-23 - *The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them.*

(v8-18) Verse 12 is key *"And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."*

(v19-22) At first glance this may seem as a contradiction of instructions and response, however, C.I. Scofield gives some insightful understanding, as he writes, "In v. 12 the directive will of God was made known to Balaam; in v. 20, the LORD's permissive will. The prophet was now free to go but knew the true mind of the LORD about it. The matter was wholly one between the LORD and His servant. The permission of v. 20 really constituted a testing of Balaam. He chose the path of self-will and self-advantage, and the LORD could not but gravely disapprove."

(v23-35) Balaam vs. the Donkey and the Donkey wins? Who's the real donkey?

(v36-41) Balaam and king Balak meet; Balaam seems to have focus according to verse 38, at least for a while.

CHAPTER 23 – “GOD’S ORACLES FOR BALAAM”

(v1-12) God speaks through Balaam with a warning to Balak and pronouncing God's **BLESSING** upon Jacob (Israel), this is known as Balaam's first oracle (prophetic speech, utterance, or declaration).

(v13-26) God speaks through Balaam a second oracle, speaking of God's **PROTECTION** upon Israel.

(v27-30) Balak wants to try a third mountain with the idea that maybe "Mt. Peor" would bring a curse. Superstitions are useless before God.

CHAPTER 24 – “ORACLES OF BLESSINGS & JUDGMENT”

(v1-9) Balaam delivers another oracle of blessing upon Israel.

(v10-13) Balak has had enough; he's thoroughly fed up and angry!

(v14-25) God is not done as He pronounces judgment upon Moab and others who are against Israel.

CHAPTER 25 – “THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM”

(v1-16) Israel engaged in acts of sexual immorality idolatry with the Moabites/Midianites. This was a violation of the first commandment.

(v17-18) The Lord called Israel to attack Midianites; this is recorded in Numbers 31:1–24.

Insight is giving to us regarding the doctrine of Balaam in Numbers 31:16 (cp. Revelation 2:14). Deuteronomy 23:3-6 – “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Peithor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.”