



Balaam's Blunder Numbers 22-25 & 31:16

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Notes

I. Balaam in the New Testament.

Jude 11 (NKJV) – They have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Rev. 2:14-16 (NKJV) – **¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold 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.**

Describing the 6th Trumpet (which kills 1/3 of humanity) –
Revelation 9:20-21 (NKJV) – ²⁰But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.
²¹ And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Balaam's problem: He runs greedily after profit. Tricks Israel into sin.

II. Balaam – a Donkey of a Man.

The back-story – Israel's victory over the Amorites (Num. 21:23-24).

Numbers 22:2 (NKJV) – Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

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Numbers 22:5-7 (NKJV) – ⁵ Then he [Balak] sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor.... ⁶ Please come at once, **curse this people for me**, for they are too mighty for me. **Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them** and **drive them out** of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.” ⁷ So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner’s fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak.

Numbers 22:8-13 (NKJV) – ¹² **And God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.”**

Balaam's failure. ☹

Numbers 22:19 (NKJV) – Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me.”

Numbers 22:20-21 (NKJV) – ²⁰ And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If the men come to call you, rise *and* go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do.” ²¹ So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

Numbers 22:22-35 (NKJV)

²² **Then God's anger was aroused** because he went, and the **Angel of the LORD** took His stand **in the way** as an adversary against him. ²³ Now the **donkey saw the Angel of the LORD** standing in the way with **His drawn sword in His hand**, and the **donkey turned aside**. So **Balaam struck the donkey** to turn her back onto the road. ²⁴ Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, *with* a wall on this side and a wall on that side. ²⁵ And when the **donkey saw** the Angel of the LORD, **she pushed herself against the wall** and crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall; so he **struck her again**. ²⁶ Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. ²⁷ And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, **she lay down under Balaam**; so **Balaam's anger** was aroused, and he **struck the donkey with his staff**.

²⁸ Then the **LORD opened the mouth of the donkey**, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?”

²⁹ And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!”

³⁰ So the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?”

And he said, “No.”

III. Balaam's 4 Prophesies.

1. Balaam's first prophecy fails to **curse** Israel (Num. 23:7-10).

Numbers 23:7-10 (NKJV)

- ⁷ And he took up his oracle and said:
 “Balak the king of Moab has brought me from Aram,
 From the mountains of the east.
 ‘Come, curse Jacob for me,
 And come, denounce Israel!’
⁸ **“How shall I curse whom God has not cursed?
 And how shall I denounce whom the LORD has not
 denounced?**

Proverbs 26:2 (NIV) – Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest.

2. Balaam's second prophecy actually **blesses** Israel (Num. 23:18-24).

Numbers 23:18-24 (NKJV)

- ¹⁹ “God is not a man, that He should lie,
 Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
 Has He said, and will He not do?
 Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
²⁰ Behold, I have received a command to bless;
 He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.
²¹ “He has not observed iniquity in Jacob,
Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel.
 The LORD his God is with him,
 And the **shout of a King is among them**.
²³ “For there is no sorcery against Jacob,
 Nor any divination against Israel.

The difference between **sorcery** and **divination**:

- **Divination** is the magic of predicting the future. Only 1 God-approved method of divination: the Urim and the Thummim (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ez. 2:63 & Neh. 7:65).
- **Sorcery** is the magic of changing the future.

Balak hires Balaam to change the future (Num. 22:6). But, Balaam denies the ability to change the future.

3. Balaam's third prophecy **actually predicts the future** (Num. 24:3-9).

Numbers 24:3-9 (NKJV)

- ³ Then he took up his oracle and said:
 “The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor,
 The utterance of the man **whose eyes are opened**,
⁴ The utterance of him who **hears the words of God**,
 Who **sees the vision of the Almighty**,
 Who **falls down, with eyes wide open**:
⁷ “His king shall be higher than **Aqab**,
 And his kingdom shall be exalted.
⁹ **“Blessed is he who blesses you,**
And cursed is he who curses you.” [Gen. 12:3]

4. Balaam's fourth prophecy **predicts the future with much more specificity** (Num. 24:15-24).

Numbers 24:15-24 (NKJV)

- ¹⁵ “The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor,
 And the utterance of the man **whose eyes are opened**;
 [Blue text: **is** in 3rd prophecy]
¹⁶ The utterance of him who **hears the words of God**,
 And **has the knowledge of the Most High**,
 [Red text: **not** in 3rd prophecy]
 Who **sees the vision of the Almighty**,
 Who **falls down, with eyes wide open**:
¹⁷ “I see Him, but not now;
 I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob; [Star of Bethlehem; Mt. 2:2?]
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, [Messianic; Gen. 49:10-11?]
 And batter the brow of **Moab**, [David foretold; 2 Sam. 8:2]
 [Moab **not** mentioned in 3rd prophecy]

- ¹⁸ “And **Edom** shall be a possession;
[Edom not mentioned in 3rd prophecy]
 Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, [Seir = Edom]
 While Israel does valiantly.
- ¹⁹ Out of Jacob One shall have dominion,
 And destroy the remains of the city.”
- ²⁰ Then he looked on **Amalek**, and he took up his oracle and said:
“Amalek was first among the nations,
[Agag, King of Amalek is mentioned in Num. 24:7]
 But *shall* be last until he perishes.”
- ²¹ Then he looked on the **Kenites**, and he took up his oracle and said:
 “Firm is your dwelling place,
[Kenites not mentioned in 3rd prophecy; Judges 1:16]
 And your nest is set in the rock;

IV. Is Balaam a Prophet?

Or, perhaps a diviner who practices divination? He makes no promise of changing the future.

1. Before Balaam's 1st prophecy (Num. 22:8, 13 & 18).

For example – Numbers 22:8 (NKJV) – And he said to them, “Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me.”

2. After Balaam's 1st prophecy (Num. 23:12):

Numbers 23:12 (NKJV) – So he answered and said, “Must I not take heed to speak what the LORD has put in my mouth?”

3. After Balaam's 2nd prophecy (Num. 23:26):

4. After Balaam's 3rd prophecy (Num. 24:13):

V. What happens after Balaam's 4th prophecy?

Numbers 31:16 (NKJV) – Look, these *women* caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

2 Peter 2:12-16 (NKJV) – ¹² But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do

not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption,¹³ and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. *They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you,*
¹⁴ **having eyes full of adultery** and that cannot cease from sin, **enticing unstable souls.** *They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.*¹⁵ They have **forsaken the right way** and gone astray, **following the way of Balaam** the son of Beor, **who loved the wages of unrighteousness;**¹⁶ but he was **rebuked for his iniquity:** a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

Revelation 2:14 (NKJV) – **But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold 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.**

Acts 15:19-20 & 28 (NKJV) – ¹⁹ Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the **Gentiles** who are turning to God, ²⁰ but that we write to them to **abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.** ²⁸ For it seemed good to the **Holy Spirit, and to us**, to lay upon you no greater burden than these **necessary things:** ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to **idols**, from **blood**, from things **strangled**, and from **sexual immorality.**

Sexual purity is a foundational ways for demonstrating faithfulness (Deut. 13:1-5).

VI. Impalement.

Numbers 25:1-3 (NKJV) – ¹ The people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. ² They invited the people **to the sacrifices of their gods**, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So **Israel was joined to Baal of Peor**, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

Numbers 25:4 (NKJV) – Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the **leaders of the people** and **hang the offenders** before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.”

Numbers 25:6-8 (NKJV) – ⁶ And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping **at the door of the tabernacle of meeting**. ⁷ Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; ⁸ and he went after the man of Israel **into the tent** and **thrust both of them through**, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. ⁹ And those who **died in the plague were twenty-four thousand**.

- **Tent of meeting** – תְּעִיר לְאָזֶן – This phrase occurs 99 times in the Torah. It refers to the Tent that houses the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.
- **Tent** – תְּהִקָּה – This is probably not the same “tent” as the tent of meeting” in Num. 25:6, but the people see this as a religiously significant event. No doubt, the widespread immorality is a religious orgy.

Numbers 25:13 (NKJV) – ¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹¹ “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. ¹² Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; ¹³ and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.’ ”

¹⁴ Now the **name of the Israelite** who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father’s house among the Simeonites. ¹⁵ And the **name of the Midianite woman** who was killed was Cozbi the daughter of Zur; he was head of the people of a father’s house in Midian.

Phineas, a person in the lineage of a High Priest ends the plague by impalement. Crucifixion is a form of impalement. For this, he receives the “covenant of an everlasting priesthood.”