

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

As mentioned in our previous paper, the casual reader would perhaps have thought that after proclaiming the future of Israel, and many of the surrounding nations, as well as revealing his own lost estate; Balaam was sent home by King Balak. Sent home without reward, sent home in disgrace. However other scriptures tell us that this was not so.

Micah 6:5, tells us of a conversation that took place between Balak and Balaam, as they walked together from "Shittim unto Gilgal" It was during this time that Balaam revealed to the King of Moab, a plan that he knew would work. It is a modern principle today. "If you can't beat them, join them". Break down the principle of separation, and you will overcome the most powerful of the people of God!

Balak could never hope to overcome the people of God, with arms or forces; they had already annihilated two great giants who with their armies were much mightier than any force that he could muster. Also Balaam that mighty soothsayer was unable to curse the people who were blessed by God. But the people themselves could do what neither Balak or Balaam could do. God had compelled Balaam to say "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations". If they could be tempted to compromise their separate position; If they could be enticed to participate in the worship festivals of the Moabites, with its filth and idolatry. If they were to mingle their holy seed with that of the fallen descendants of Lot; then they would bring down upon themselves the wrath of a jealous and angry God. The curse that Balaam through fear was unable to pronounce they would bring upon themselves.

Thus Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. (Rev. 2:14). Separation is not a popular word today. God's people are being constantly exhorted to join hands with others who call themselves 'Christian', regardless of their associations, or any evil that they may feel at liberty to practice. We are constantly told that we must show 'love', and that we must show the world that we can get along nicely together, no matter what the state of those that we are exhorted to associate with.

If believers insist on the practice of the fundamentals of Biblical faith and practice, they are then branded as "Fundamentalists", and regarded as fanatics, and put in the same group as Muslim, or Hindu, or other fanatics, who do not shrink from committing murder, violence, rape and the like. We hear constantly the claim that "all religions are the same", that "all religions lead to God", and similar things. Those who push these ideas, become very angry when the Gospel is preached, and as is happening in Afghanistan as I write, those who dare to tell the truth of God to people, are killed or cast into prison.

Let men say what they will, the truth remains that there is only one way to God, and the Lord Jesus is that way. John 14:6. Those persons who repent of their sins, (are genuinely sorry for the evil things that they have done in their lives), and turn away from sin. Those persons who put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work alone. Those persons who gladly confess that Christ alone is now their Lord and Master, who name the name of the Lord, are commanded to "depart from iniquity." 2Tim.2:19. They are then commanded to cease immoral conduct, and to "Follow after righteousness, faith, love and peace, with them who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart". (verse 22.)

Many of the early believers in Corinth, were saved from an idolatrous background. The Apostle Paul made it clear to them that they were not to continue in their old associations, and practices, but must, "come out from among them, and be separate". They were not to touch what is unclean. 2Cor. 6:14-18. Satan hates to see believers walking in separation from the world, and from whatever is evil. He knows that such persons have power, and they are a threat to his kingdom. Thus it is that as he had Balaam for his servant in those past days, so still he has

Balaam - No. 3
by Charles E. Wigg

those who will do his bidding, to tempt, or even to command, (as if it was from God), believers to compromise. To no longer be separate from the world, and from those who practice what is evil.

Thus we have the "Doctrine of Balaam", that which he taught to Balak, which is in short. "Don't be fanatical, show 'love' to all, don't dare to be separate from the world, from worldly 'Christians' or from people of other 'faiths', or religions.

So it was that Balak sent his pretty girls amongst the people of Israel. These charmed them, lavished their lust upon the people, and invited them to attend their idol festivals. They bowed to the idols of the Moabites, and were involved in fornication and adultery, with the people of Moab. This provoked Israel's Holy God to jealousy and anger, and He smote them with a plague, with the result that twenty four thousand souls perished, without ever a sword being drawn. What a solemn lesson this is for us. (1Cor. 10:7-11.) Though God does not kill His people today physically, yet this explains why there is so much deadness to be found in the Church.

THE WAY OF BALAAM

It is Peter in chapter 2 of his second epistle who warns us what to expect in the last days. He tells us that just as there were false prophets amongst the Old Testament people, so there will be false teachers amongst us. The greater the ignorance of the word of God and what it teaches, amongst God's people, the more readily they will accept such men. In stripping away their garb, (the sheeps clothing), he draws attention to what they teach, (destructive heresies), how they teach it, (with well turned words), and their ways, (how they live). The place of privilege that they assume will not shelter them from the anger of God. Because God spared not the angels that sinned, in spite of their position of power and privilege.

He says in verses 15 and 16, that they have forsaken the right way and gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, who loved the reward of unrighteousness. This is a solemn warning to us, but also gives us a clue as to what to look for in "false teachers". Wherever those who claim to be 'men of God', or 'servants of God', set their hearts on money, let us beware! This is common today. I heard of one famous man who appeared on television, and tearfully told his massive audience that the Lord had appeared to him, and told him that unless he raised a huge sum of money by a certain date, then He would take that man away. The amazing thing was that his audience was so gullible, that they contributed the sum asked for, by the date mentioned?

I recall that on my last visit to India there was an Indian "Evangelist" from U.S.A. who arrived at the meetings that he held in different parts, in a helicopter. There was another of the great "Faith preachers", who visited India, who justified his luxurious life style. The wearing of 'designer suits, driving a 'Rolls Royce' motor car, staying in the most expensive, luxurious hotels etc. Claiming that the Lord Jesus had the 'best of everything'. This of course was not true, as anyone who knows the Gospels can readily see.

Let us be warned, wherever one who claims to be serving the Lord, yet is asking for money, or uses his 'gift', or position for personal gain, you may be sure that such are following the way of Balaam.

THE ERROR OF BALAAM

Jude tells us about the same kind of people, telling us that they "run greedily after the error of Balaam, for reward. It seems to me that Balaam erred firstly by trafficking with evil spirits. It is an awful error to think that one can make use of the power of evil for personal fame and aggrandizement. It is true that such powers will exalt and extol the supposed powers of such men. We see this in Simon Magus, (Acts 8:9). He gave out that he was some

Balaam - No. 3
by Charles E. Wigg

great one. He was even willing to pay money to obtain the powers that were possessed by the Apostles, so that he might use it to exalt himself to gain a following.

The flesh loves popularity, and to be praised by men. The genuine servant of God will be deaf to the praise of men, and seek only the praise of God. The true servant will be like his Master, who made himself of no reputation.

The second error that Balaam made was to reason that God could be moved to curse a people whose sin had been covered by the atoning blood of the Passover Lamb. He was looking at God's people as Satan does. That dreadful being who does not hesitate to accuse the saints to God their heavenly Father. But the blood of Christ, the Lamb silences the accuser, Rev. 12:11. God knew before hand that our Lord Jesus would die on the cross. That there He would satisfy the claims of Divine righteousness, Rom. 3:21-26. Those who are righteously justified by God, are beyond any condemnation. Rom. 8:1 & 30-34.

The error of Balaam is perpetuated today in what is called the 'Falling away' doctrine. At its roots, it supposes that the sacrifice of Christ is not enough to secure my souls salvation. I must do something, I must hold on, otherwise I will fall away and be lost eternally. If this is true, then Christ died in vain. He did not finish the work of my salvation, when hanging on the cross. This is the error of Balaam.

May God save us from the dreadful doctrine of Balaam, the doctrine of compromise. May God save us from following in the way of Balaam. Deliver us from the spirit of the age, that loves luxury, and material reward. May God save us from the error of Balaam. Let us learn the lessons that God would teach us, from the life, example, and mistakes of this wicked man!

C. E. Wigg. 18.9.01.