

BALAAM'S PROPHECIES AND EVIL COUNSEL

BIBLE TEXT Numbers 23:1-30; 24:1-25; 31:8, 16; II Peter 2:12-17

LESSON 111 - SENIOR COURSE

MEMORY VERSE: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Numbers 23:1-30 (KJV)

¹ And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.

² And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

³ And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.

⁴ And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

⁵ And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.

⁶ And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.

⁷ And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, *saying*, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

⁸ How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, *whom* the LORD hath not defied?

⁹ For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

¹⁰ Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth *part* of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

¹¹ And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed *them* altogether.

¹² And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?

¹³ And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Sacrifice Offered and Prophecies Given

1 Balaam orders Balak to build seven altars and prepare oxen and rams for sacrifices, Numbers 23:1, 2

2 Balaam goes to inquire of the Lord, and returns with the answer, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?" Numbers 23:3-8;

Isaiah 47:12-13 (KJV)

¹² Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

¹³ Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from *these things* that shall come upon thee.

3 Balaam prophesies that Israel will dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations, Numbers 23:9, 10;

Deuteronomy 33:28 (KJV)

²⁸ Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob *shall be* upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

Exodus 33:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *is it* not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

Ephesians 2:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

4 Balak complains that Balaam blesses Israel altogether, when he called him to curse them, Numbers 23:11

5 They go to the top of Pisgah and build altars and offer sacrifices, and Balaam goes again to inquire of the Lord, Numbers 23:12-18

6 Balaam's answer, "God is not a man, that he should lie"; "I have received commandment to bless ... and I cannot reverse it," Numbers 23:19, 20

7 The Lord has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, and the shout of a king is among them; and it shall be said of them, "What hath God wrought!" Numbers 23:21-24;

Romans 4:7-8 (KJV)

⁷ *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

⁸ Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

II More Prophecies Concerning Israel

1 When Balaam saw that it pleased God to bless Israel, he set his face toward the wilderness and saw Israel, and the Spirit of God came upon him, Numbers 24:1-4

2 He exclaimed, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" Numbers 24:5

3 They are spread forth as gardens by the river's side and aloes which the Lord has planted, Numbers 24:6;

Psalms 104:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

4 His king shall be higher than Agag and he shall eat up the nations, his enemies. This makes Balak angry and he tells Balaam to flee to his place, Numbers 24:7-11

whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence.

¹⁴ And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

¹⁵ And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet *the LORD* yonder.

¹⁶ And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.

¹⁷ And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken?

¹⁸ And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:

¹⁹ God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

²⁰ Behold, I have received *commandment* to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

²¹ He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God *is* with him, and the shout of a king *is* among them.

²² God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

²³ Surely *there is* no enchantment against Jacob, neither *is there* any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

²⁴ Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat *of* the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

²⁵ And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.

²⁶ But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do?

²⁷ And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.

²⁸ And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon.

²⁹ And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here

5 Balaam takes up his parable, "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." And, "Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion," Numbers 24:12-19;

Revelation 1:7 (KJV)

⁷ Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 22:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

Matthew 2:2 (KJV)

² Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Genesis 49:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

6 He tells of the destruction of different nations and says, "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!" Numbers 24:20-25

III Evil Counsel

1 Through the evil counsel of Balaam, the Midianites enticed many in Israel to sin, Numbers 31:16;

Revelation 2:14 (KJV)

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.

2 Israel makes war against Midian. Five kings are slain, and Balaam also is slain, Numbers 31:8

3 Peter speaks of cursed children, who speak "evil of dignities," "having eyes full of adultery." They shall utterly perish in their own corruption and receive the wages of unrighteousness, II Peter 2:10-14

4 They have forsaken the right way and followed the way of Balsam, II Peter 2:15, 16

NOTES:

Determination

Balak was determined that Balaam should curse Israel. We find that the enemies of the Lord do not give up with one rebuff. The devil is a ruthless foe. When he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, the devil could not get Jesus to yield to His hunger by commanding the stones to be made bread, but he did not give up his efforts. He takes Him next and sets Him on a pinnacle of the Temple. That effort failed. Then he takes Him into an exceedingly high mountain and uses his most subtle temptation, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, and promises he will give them to Jesus if He will only fall down and worship him. What a wonderful Savior we have! No power of hell could move Him from God's way. Earthly fame, wealth, position, and honor were all set aside. His one desire was to do the will of the Father.

Balak took Balaam from one high mountain to another, each time offering sacrifices. Not knowing God as Balaam did, he hoped that the Lord might be induced to change His mind and curse a people whom He had hitherto determined to bless. Finally, when Balak's efforts failed, he told Balaam to flee to his place, that Balak had thought to promote him to honor, "but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour." The real child of God would rather have the approving smile of the Lord on his life than any honor the world could give. Whatever might have been in Balaam's heart at this time, he realized he could not defy whom the Lord had not defied nor curse whom the Lord had not

seven bullocks and seven rams.

³⁰ And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

Numbers 24:1-25 (KJV)

¹ And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

² And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding *in his tents* according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.

³ And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

⁴ He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

⁵ How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, *and thy tabernacles*, O Israel!

⁶ As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, *and as cedar trees beside the waters.*

⁷ He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

⁸ God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce *them* through with his arrows.

⁹ He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed *is* he that blesseth thee, and cursed *is* he that curseth thee.

¹⁰ And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed *them* these three times.

¹¹ Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.

¹² And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying,

¹³ If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do *either* good or bad of mine own mind; *but* what the LORD saith, that will I speak?

cursed.

Outstanding Prophecies

In the words that the Lord put in Balaam's mouth to speak are some of the most outstanding prophecies we have in the Word of God. His eyes were certainly opened and he saw into the future.

These oracles are evident prophecies of the victories which the Israelites should gain over their enemies and of their firm possession of the Promised Land. They also refer to the great victories to be obtained by the Lord Jesus Christ — that Lion of the tribe of Judah — over sin, death, and Satan. The world has already seen many of these prophecies fulfilled, and we believe we are drawing near to the time when they will all be fulfilled. God is sovereign, and His power is over all. He could cause a dumb beast to speak the language of men to reprove a rebellious seer; and God can, and in this case did, use reluctant lips to speak the praise of the Almighty and of His chosen people. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee" (Psalm 76:10).

"Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." After 35 centuries, they are still a distinct people. No man could have foretold that. No other nation or people has been preserved like that. God alone could foresee, know, and do it.

A Mighty Hand

"According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!" The nations around were already awaking to the fact that God was with Israel. When the spies went into Jericho, Rahab said, "I know that the LORD hath given you the land ... and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

The people and nations around the Children of Israel realized it was not the wonderful leadership of Moses, nor the strength and might of the people he was leading, that was bringing this people forth to such triumphant victory; but that there was a God in Heaven, whose mighty hand was outstretched in behalf of a people He deigned to bless. Some people can defy God and curse and blaspheme His name, but just let the Lord lift His hand with power and they will tremble and their hearts melt with fear.

Prophecies Concerning Jesus

"Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion:" A most wonderful prophecy of Jesus! And when we think of the early era in which it was given we marvel at the revelation God gave Salaam.

The planets were all considered emblems of royalty. So when he spoke of a Star arising out of Jacob and a Sceptre out of Israel, he prophesied that a King was coming who would have dominion over all the earth. Several hundred years later the wise men were guided by a star to the place where that King was born.

The angel announced to Mary: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33). This was spoken to Mary many years after Balaam had his vision. Salaam's prophetic statement, that began: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh," shows that the event of which he and the angel of the Annunciation spoke would take place in some future time. There will come a time when all who have lived must stand before that Sceptre and hear their eternal judgment spoken. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10); "I

¹⁴ And now, behold, I go unto my people: come *therefore*, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

¹⁵ And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

¹⁶ He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, *which* saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

¹⁷ I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

¹⁸ And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

¹⁹ Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

²⁰ And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations; but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever.

²¹ And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

²² Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

²³ And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

²⁴ And ships *shall come* from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

²⁵ And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

Numbers 31:8 (KJV)

⁸ And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.

Numbers 31:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; . . . and the dead were judged ... according to their works" (Revelation 20:12).

Evil Counsel

After the Lord had so marvelously revealed to Salaam the blessings that would come to Israel in the latter days, that prophet turned aside and, as it were, mockingly revealed to the Midianites how to entice Israel into sin. It is no wonder that Peter and Jude come out with such severely scorching remarks and compare him, and others like him, to clouds without water, carried about of winds; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever (**2 Peter 2:15-17** ¹⁵ 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; ¹⁶ But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷ These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. **Jude 1:12-13** ¹² These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; ¹³ Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever).

Jude also says that the "angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Balaam was slain in battle with the enemies of the Lord.

Warning

We are warned that in the last days perilous times would come when men would be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

When Balaam looked into the future and saw how the Lord would bless Israel in the latter days, he wished his latter end would be like theirs. But we see that he was not willing to pay the price to obtain that blessing. Many people are like Balaam: they would like to have the blessing of the Lord in their latter end and be ushered into Heaven when they pass out of this world. But they want the world while they are living. They are not willing to sacrifice worldly pleasure and honor that they might have eternal life in the end.

Moses is a fine example of one who is willing to forsake all and follow Jesus. Moses forsook a throne, honor, wealth, and fame, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (**Hebrews 11:25** ²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Where did Balak take Salaam to offer sacrifices?
- 2 On how many altars did Balak offer sacrifices?
- 3 What was Balaam's sin?
- 4 What nation enticed Israel into sin through the evil counsel of Salaam?
- 5 What is that Star arising out of Jacob typical of?
- 6 What does it mean for a Sceptre to arise out of Israel?
- 7 Name some of the prophecies that Salaam gave that have been fulfilled.
- 8 Name some of the prophecies that we believe are near fulfillment.

2 Peter 2:12-17 (KJV)

¹² But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

¹³ And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

¹⁴ Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

¹⁵ 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;

¹⁶ But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

¹⁷ These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.