

Nehemiah 13:1-2 *On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; 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.*

Numbers 31:16 *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.*

STORY FROM NUMBERS 22-25:

- Balak, king of Moab, was afraid of Israel because of their victories over other nations
- He knew he could not beat them by physical means, so he sought to use spiritual means
- He hired the soothsayer/prophet Balaam to place a curse on Israel, for he knew that if God's blessing on the Israelites could be destroyed, then they would no longer be a threat!
- Even an encounter with a talking donkey did not deter Balaam from his mission; he had been promised great wealth and he coveted the payoff.
- Even though Balaam thought the God of Israel was just another divinity he could use for his own purposes, God intervened and would not let this heathen prophet curse Israel.
- Four times Balaam tries to pronounce a curse, only to have it turned into a blessing on Israel.
- However, when the curse didn't work, he gave Balak some counsel that eventually did!
- Balaam suggested that the Moabites invite Israel to their feasts, and Israel eventually became involved in the same idolatry and immorality, bringing judgment upon themselves.
- **What the curse couldn't accomplish, the counsel did!**

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH:

- Satan first tried to stamp out the infant church with persecution, but it did not work.
- Nowhere in the New Testament is the church commanded to hide from persecution, or promised that they will be eliminated from severe trials; **because the curse cannot succeed!**
- However, three times near the end of the first century, the church is warned about the tactics (counsel) of BALAAM which did succeed with Israel.

THE WAY OF BALAAM

2 Peter 2:15 *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;*

- Peter is condemning false teachers who prostitute their gift for personal gain (2:1)
- These people are sensual and covetous, using the world's mentality in their ministry.
- God does not bless us for our benefit or glory, but so we can do the work of the ministry!
- They are "cursed children" - what the devil couldn't do to them, they have done to themselves!

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

Revelation 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.*

- God condemns Pergamos for mixing godliness and worldliness, abandoning their separation.
- Balaam could hear from God, yet he led people away from God!
- He said "I have sinned" (22:34) but his confession was not sincere for it did not change his actions!
- He prayed "Let me die the death of the righteous" (23:10) but would not live the life of the righteous!
- **THE PEOPLE WHO COULD NOT BE CURSED WERE CORRUPTED!**

THE ERROR OF BALAAM

Jude 11 *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

- Jude is condemning those who reject authority (v.8), murmurers, complainers, etc. (v.16)
- The error of Balaam was thinking that God must curse Israel because of her sins.
- Some condemn the church for its "blemishes" but forget God's grace! God will have a church!