NEHEMIAH 13:1-2 / NUMBERS 31:16

THE CURSE OF BALAAM

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!