

26-0726p - Detailed Summary

26-0726p - Balaam Son of Beor, Part 2, Jim Lokenbauer

Bible Reader: John Nousek

This detailed summary by Grok, xAI, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

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Balaam Son of Beor, Part 2

Scripture Reading

Bible Reader (0:04 - 0:36): John Nousek

Mark 11:12-14: John read Revelation chapter 2 verse 14 as the evening's Scripture reading. The verse states, "Nevertheless, I have a few things against you. There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who

continued

taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin, so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality." The reading concluded with "Amen."

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 23:09), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(0:41-4:00) Introduction and Recap of Part One

Jim opened the evening service by greeting the congregation and expressing hope that everyone had enjoyed a blessed day. He noted that he had spent most of his own day at the computer finishing the lesson. This message is the second part of the study on Balaam son of Beor. In the morning session the focus had been on how the angel of the Lord was looking out for Israel, protecting them from unseen danger as they prepared to enter the Promised Land. Israel was unaware of these protective actions, yet God was actively foiling the plans of the king of Moab.

King Balak of Moab had conspired with the leaders of Midian and hired the infamous Balaam from Pethor. Balaam was a baru, a member of an evil Mesopotamian cult trained in the black arts. The baru knew the local religions and their gods, kept informed of current events in order to exploit them, and served Baal—and therefore functioned as agents of Satan. For a fee they specialized in cursing individuals, families, towns, and entire countries. Balaam came from a family of such practitioners whose reputation was widespread among the pagan nations. His own name meant "devourer of people," and his father's name meant "consume like fire," names that accurately reflected their character. Jim contrasted this with his own ordinary name, which carries no such intimidating meaning.

The morning lesson had ended with the reading of Numbers 22, just after King Balak sent a second, more impressive delegation of princes in a renewed attempt to persuade Balaam to curse Israel.

(4:06-8:29) The Second Delegation, the Donkey, and Divine Restraint

Balaam received the second group of princes, who were greater in number and status than the first. Recognizing Balak's desperation and the likelihood of a large payment, Balaam was eager to

proceed. Yet God would soon place His own word in Balaam's mouth, leading to the rhetorical question, "Is God a man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should change his mind?" The proper response should have been an immediate refusal and a command for the men to return home. Surprisingly, the angel of the Lord permitted Balaam to go, but only under the strict condition that the men first came to him in the morning.

Instead, Balaam rose early, saddled his donkey, and set out at once, driven by the prospect of financial gain. God was angry with this haste. Proverbs warns that the Lord hates the feet of those who rush into evil. The angel of the Lord—identified as Christ Himself—stood in the path with drawn sword, though Balaam could not yet see Him. The donkey, however, perceived the danger and repeatedly tried to avoid the angel. Balaam, obsessed with the promised riches, beat the animal three times. The Lord then miraculously opened the donkey's mouth so that it reasoned with its master about the unjust treatment.

Peter later explains the episode in 2 Peter 2:15-16 while discussing false teachers. He states that such people have left the straight way and followed the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. The speechless beast spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. Peter's insight reveals that Balaam's greed for dirty money had driven him into wrongdoing that amounted to madness. After the donkey spoke, Balaam finally saw the angel with sword raised and was rebuked under threat of death. He humbled himself, bowed, and offered to return home, but the angel commanded him to continue under the same restriction: he must speak only the words the Lord gave him.

(8:29-12:42) Balak's Meetings and the Threefold Blessing of Israel

King Balak went out to meet Balaam, who immediately declared that he could utter only what God told him. Balak then sacrificed to Baal and shared the sacrificial meal with Balaam—an act normal for a pagan but inconsistent with true service to the living God. Balak next took Balaam to the high places of Baal so that the seer could view the Israelite camp and pronounce a curse.

In Numbers 23 Balaam instructed Balak to build seven altars and prepare oxen and rams. After inquiring of the Lord, Balaam delivered the word God placed in his mouth: a blessing upon Israel rather than a curse. Shocked, Balak moved Balaam to a different vantage point, built another set of altars, and again sought omens. Once more God put His word in Balaam's mouth, and again Israel was blessed. Balaam declared that Israel's God was with them, that the shout of a king—understood as the presence of the angel of the Lord—was among them, and that no curse, omen, or divination could prevail against Israel. In panic Balak ordered Balaam neither to curse nor to bless, yet Balaam insisted he must speak only what God commanded.

At the beginning of Numbers 24, perceiving that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, Balaam no longer sought omens. Facing the wilderness and seeing the camp, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied as a true prophet of God. He gave God the glory, blessed Israel a third time, affirmed that God blesses those who bless Israel and curses those who curse them, and foretold the future doom of the Canaanite nations. Enraged that Balaam would not curse his enemies and therefore would receive neither honor nor riches, Balak dismissed him. Jim emphasized that the Savior had used an evil enemy and turned intended curses into blessings, demonstrating that He truly had Israel's back. The angel of the Lord had stopped a pagan sorcerer trained in the deep things of Satan and compelled him to bless God's people instead.

(12:42-16:48) Balaam's Final Counsel and the Disaster at Peor

Jim cautioned the congregation not to feel sentimental toward Balaam; the man was never rehabilitated. What the Lord accomplished was comparable to a school hero thrashing a bully so that the students were rescued. The immediate threat was removed, yet Balaam still had one final scheme. God was fully aware of it and allowed it as a test of Israel's faithfulness.

Numbers 24:14 records that Balaam spoke privately with Balak before departing. Scripture does not quote the counsel, but Israel's subsequent behavior makes its content clear. Numbers 25:1-3 describes how the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. The Moabites invited the Israelites to the sacrifices of their gods; the people ate and bowed down. Thus Israel joined itself to Baal of Peor, and the Lord's anger burned against them. A plague followed, killing twenty-four thousand men.

After the plague purged the unfaithful, Israel's army marched against Midian. Numbers 31:7-8 reports that they killed every male, including the five kings of Midian and Balaam son of Beor, who died by the sword. Numbers 31:16 later explains that the Midianite women, through the counsel of Balaam, had caused the sons of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord at Peor, bringing the plague upon the congregation. Moses therefore ordered the surviving women put to death because of their role in the corruption.

Balaam's whispered advice had been a strategy of internal corruption: if he could not destroy Israel by external curse, he would destroy them by appealing to their sensuality and leading them into idolatry and immorality. Jim compared the scene to Satan whispering temptation in a person's ear. Balaam was simply doing Satan's bidding.

(16:48-19:13) Christ's Revelation of Balaam's Teaching in the Church

In Revelation 2:14 Christ Himself exposes the true nature of Balaam's counsel. Addressing the church at Pergamum He says, "But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality." Within the Pergamum congregation were people practicing exactly what Balaam had advised Balak: eating meat sacrificed to idols and engaging in the sexual immorality characteristic of Baal worship, which involved temple prostitutes. The same divine Person who confronted Balaam in the wilderness was now confronting the same teaching inside the church.

Balaam had not needed demonic forces to harass Israel; he simply taught Balak how to corrupt the people's hearts and make them unfaithful to God. The same strategy was at work in Pergamum.

(19:13-23:09) The Heart of True Obedience and the Closing Invitation

An important personal question arises from the narrative: How many of us, like Balaam, are restrained from sinning merely by fear of God's punishment? Balaam obeyed the command not to curse Israel, yet his heart remained evil and he still found a way to extract payment by advising the corruption of God's people. Believers must therefore guard against simply continuing former patterns of life while "faking" Christian behavior in the hope of avoiding judgment. A genuine change of heart is required—an authentic desire to love and serve God. The fundamental choice is whether we aim to please man or God.

God desires the heart. He wants willing obedience that springs from love and gratitude for what He has already done. He gave His Son, who died on the cross to take away our sins; that is the ultimate demonstration that He has our backs. As Christians grow, they must learn the nature of sacrificial agape love. The mature believer shares the mindset described in 1 John 4:18: there is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Early in the Christian walk the fear of God's wrath is appropriate and still necessary when we are tempted to do wrong. Yet the mature Christian delights to please God and willingly obeys. Jesus declared in John 14:21 that the one who has His commands and keeps them is the one who loves Him. Hebrews 6:1 therefore urges believers to leave the elementary teachings about Christ and press on to maturity, for the mature are able to distinguish good from evil.

Israel was tested and should have known better. When false teachers or evil plans are whispered in our ears, we must reject the temptation as Israel ought to have done. The outcome for both the corrupters and the corrupted was tragic. These biblical accounts are recorded so that we may learn from them. Jesus had Israel's back; He prevented the curse and turned it into blessing. He has our backs as well. As long as we walk in obedience to His will, we will receive His blessing.

The invitation was then extended to anyone who needed the prayers of the saints. Jim closed with thanks.