

26-0726p Transcript

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

Bible Reader: John Nousek

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Balaam Son of Beor, Part 2

Scripture Reading

Bible Reader (0:04 - 0:36): John Nousek Mark 11:12-14: (0:04) This evening's scripture reading is Revelation chapter 2 verse 14, a single verse, which (0:13) reads, Nevertheless, I have a few things against you. (0:19) There are some among you who hold to the teaching of	<i>continued</i> Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the (0:26) Israelites to sin, so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. (0:35) Amen. (0:36)
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Transcript (0:04 - 23:09), Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(0:41) Well, good evening. (0:43) Hope everybody had a blessed day. (0:47) Spent most of mine in front of the computer, finishing this lesson.

(0:55) And this is part two of Balaam, son of Beor. (0:59) And this morning, we started the lesson on how the angel of the Lord was looking out for Israel. (1:08) How he had their backs as they were entering into the promised land, protecting them from unseen danger.

(1:17) Israel was not aware of his actions as he was working on their behalf. (1:22) But God was busy foiling the plans of the king of Moab. (1:29) King Balak, king of Moab, conspired with the leaders of the Medians, and they hired an infamous man from (1:38) Pethor named Balaam.

(1:42) And he was a baru from Mesopotamia. (1:47) The baru were an evil cult who were schooled in the black arts and knew all of the local religions and their (1:57) gods and how to serve them. (2:00) They kept their ears open to all the recent news so they could use that information to their advantage.

(2:09) The baru were servants of Baal, and so by extension, they were agents of Satan. (2:19) For a price, they would perform their specialty of cursing. (2:25) They cursed individuals, families, towns, and countries.

(2:33) Balaam came from a family of baru whose reputation among the pagan countries was far spread. (2:44) His name even sends fear among those who hire him because his name means, in his language, a devourer of people. (2:58) And his father, his name also is not a pleasant name.

(3:05) It means consume like fire. (3:11) So these names were indicative of their character, actually, as being a baru. (3:18) Nobody ever shrank back when they heard my name, Jim, which probably means something like a fluffer of pillows (3:26) or a peeler of potatoes.

(3:29) But Balaam came from a family of baru who had a specialty of cursing. (3:40) And we finished this morning's lesson, part one, having read numbers 22. (3:48) And we'll pick up right after King Balak sent his second delegation of princes in his attempt to get Balaam to curse Israel.

(4:06) So Balaam receives the second delegation of princes. (4:12) They're bigger and prettier princes than the first batch. (4:16) So Balaam knew that Balak was in a desperate situation and probably would pay big dollars, if there were dollars back then, for his services.

(4:31) But soon God would put his word in Balaam's mouth, and he'd ask Balak the question, (4:37) Is God a man that he should lie, or son of man that he should change his mind? (4:47) His answer to them should have been, No, go home. (4:52) Surprisingly, the angel of the Lord let him go, only if certain conditions were met. (5:00) The condition was if the men came to him in the morning.

(5:06) But what happened? Balaam rises, saddles up his donkey, and he goes. (5:14) He was so eager at the prospect of making money. (5:20) That was his livelihood.

(5:22) So God was quite angry with him. (5:26) And isn't it said in Proverbs that God hates the feet of those who rush into evil. (5:34) So Balaam is opposed by Christ himself in the form of the angel of the Lord.

(5:41) He doesn't know it yet because he can't see what his donkey saw. (5:47) The poor donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in front of it with his sword drawn. (5:57) So he tries avoiding the angel.

(6:00) But Balaam was so determined to get paid riches for his job, he's not of his right mind. (6:09) The poor donkey was mistreated and beat upon by Balaam three times for not listening to him. (6:16) So the Lord miraculously opens the mouth of his donkey to reason with him as to why the beating.

(6:27) In Apostle Peter's second letter, during his discussion on false teachers, (6:33) and Peter lumps Balaam in with the discussion of false teachers, (6:40) gives us the answer about Balaam and his donkey. (6:45) In 2 Peter 2, 15 and 16, he says, (6:50) They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam, son of Beor, (6:58) who loved the wages of wickedness. (7:02) But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by his donkey, a beast without speech, (7:09) who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

(7:15) So Peter gives us insight that Balaam didn't follow the straight way because of his greed for dirty money. (7:26) Balaam loved the wages of wickedness. (7:36) And his attitude of heart was considered wrongdoing even to the point of madness.

(7:46) The angel of the Lord made the donkey speak with a human voice to bring Balaam back to his senses. (7:56) Balaam finally saw the angel of the Lord with his sword held high and was rebuked with threat of death. (8:04) He humbled himself and bowed before the angel of the Lord and was willing to actually go back home.

(8:15) But he was ordered to proceed on the same conditions as before, (8:21) where the angel said, But only say what I tell you. (8:29) The king of Moab goes out to meet him and Balaam states that he can only say what God tells him. (8:38) Balak sacrifices to Baal, his god, and they eat that sacrifice.

(8:44) That was normal for Balaam to eat sacrifices made to idols. (8:52) You know, that's customary

for the pagans. (8:55) But if Balaam was a man of God, he would not have done that.

(8:59) Then Balak takes Balaam to the high places of Baal, that he may see the Israel camp and curse them. (9:10) And in chapter 23, Balaam orders Balak to build seven altars and prepare oxen and rams for a sacrifice. (9:20) And Balaam inquires of the Lord, and God put a word in Balaam's mouth, (9:25) which he tells to Balak.

(9:28) And Balak was shocked. (9:31) Instead of a curse, he blessed Israel. (9:37) Balak took Balaam to a different vantage point and built another altar and made a sacrifice.

(9:45) And he sought omens. (9:47) Bad habits are hard to break, by the way. (9:51) And omens are like curses.

(9:54) God put the word he wanted, Balaam, to speak in his mouth. (9:59) And again, he blessed Israel, mentioning that their god was with them, (10:06) and that the shout of a king, and that would have been the angel of the Lord, is among them. (10:13) He delivers an in-your-face to Balak by stating, (10:19) there is no curse, no omen, and no divination against Israel.

(10:28) At this news, Balak panics and says, do not curse them and do not bless them. (10:34) But to Balaam's credit, he says, must I not be careful to speak only what God tells me? (10:43) When at the start of chapter 24, Balaam saw that it pleased God to bless Israel, (10:52) they went through the motions a third time. (10:55) But instead of seeking omens, he faced the wilderness and saw Israel.

(11:00) And at this point, God fills Balaam, not with just a word, but with Holy Spirit. (11:09) And Balaam actually prophesied as a prophet of God, (11:19) giving God the credit and glory, and blesses Israel yet again. (11:25) And basically cites that God blesses those who bless Israel, (11:31) and curses those who curse Israel, and foretells the future doom for all the nations of Canaan.

(11:41) And Balak was so angry with Balaam, he said because he would not curse his enemies, (11:48) he would not get honor and riches from them, and they parted ways. (11:53) What a wonderful Savior we have. (11:56) He used an evil enemy and turned curses into blessings.

(12:02) He had Israel's back. (12:11) The angel of the Lord stopped the pagan diviner priest, who was a sorcerer, (12:18) schooled in the deep things of Satan, who was hired to bring about evil upon God's people, (12:26) and used him to bless his people, Israel instead. (12:32) Talk about twisting an arm behind a guy's back and making him cry, (12:37) Uncle, that's what the angel of the Lord did.

(12:42) But don't feel warm and fuzzy over Balaam. (12:45) He was not rehabilitated. (12:48) What the Lord did here was like the school hero rescuing the students from the school bully by beating him up.

(12:59) Yes, the bad guys were humiliated, and their plans were foiled, (13:04) but old Balaam had one last dirty trick up his sleeve. (13:09) God was fully aware of it, but used it as a test for Israel, to test their faithfulness. (13:22) In Numbers 24, 14 we read, (13:41) We're not told what Balaam said to Balak, but by the behavior of Israel right after that, (13:49) I think we can guess what Balaam's advice was to Balak.

(13:55) The scene plays out in these next few verses. (13:58) Numbers 25, 1 through 3 says, (14:11) For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. (14:20) So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against them.

(14:31) So God sent a plague on his unfaithful people, and 24,000 men died because of it. (14:42) After God purged Israel of its unfaithfulness, the Israel army marched to Midian. (14:51) In Numbers 31, 7 through 8 it says, (14:54) Then they waged war against Midian, as the Lord had commanded Moses, and they killed every male.

(15:04) Among the slain were Evi, Rikon, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. (15:14) They also killed Balaam, son of Beor, with the sword. (15:22) So Balaam paid the price of his life for the evil he did against God's people.

(15:29) Numbers 31, 16 says, (15:33) After the battle, look, these women caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, (15:41) to turn unfaithfully against the Lord at Peor, so that the plagues struck the congregation of the Lord. (15:49) So after they put the men to the sword, they brought the remaining women before Moses, (15:57) and Moses gave the order to kill them because of their role in the corruption of the Israelites. (16:05) The advice Balaam whispered in King Balak's ear was how to corrupt and get God's people to sin.

(16:15) And can't you picture Satan whispering silently in someone's ear to tempt them to get them to sin? (16:26) Well, that's Balaam doing Satan's bidding here. (16:36) If he couldn't affect change from without by cursing them, he would affect change from within by corrupting them. (16:48) In the second chapter of John's book of Revelation, Christ himself reveals the true answer as to Balaam's evil teaching.

(17:00) Revelation 2, 14 says, (17:03) But I have a few things against you, Pergamum, (17:06) because you have there someone who holds to the teaching of Balaam, (17:12) who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, (17:20) to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality. (17:26) So in the church, there were people practicing what Balaam told Balak. (17:36) They were eating meat sacrificed to idols, and they were participating in fornication the way they do in Baal worship.

(17:49) They have priestesses, temple prostitutes, (17:53) and that was leaking in to the church at Pergamum. (17:59) And Christ called it there, and Christ called it back in the day of Balaam. (18:04) It was the one and the same person of the Godhead dealing in both situations.

(18:13) So there it is. (18:13) Balaam didn't need to curse Israel, calling upon demonic forces to harass them. (18:23) He just told Balak to appeal to their sensuality by corrupting their heart and making them unfaithful to God.

(18:33) And there's an important lesson here in our lesson for us to understand. (18:40) It's the question we all need to ask ourselves. (18:44) How many of us, like Balaam, are restrained from sinning merely through the fear of God's punishment? (18:54) Balaam listened to God and didn't curse Israel, (18:58) but he was still evil, and he still found a way to get his filthy lucre out of Balak (19:08) by telling Balak how to corrupt God's people.

(19:13) So we have to be on guard, and not to simply go about doing what we've been doing (19:23) before we were Christians, and just faking it in hopes of not getting punished by God. (19:34) We have to have a change of heart. (19:38) We have to genuinely want to love and serve God.

(19:46) We have to ask ourselves, who do we want to please, man or God? (19:52) God wants our hearts, and He wants us to willingly to choose to obey Him (19:58) out of love and gratitude for all that He has done for us. (20:03) He gave us His Son, Jesus, who sacrificed Him on the cross in order

to take our sins away. (20:13) You can't ask more out of a person.

(20:16) That's having our backs. (20:18) He paid the price for us. (20:23) But as we start our Christian walk, we have to learn about the love of God (20:29) and what sacrificial agape love is.

(20:33) The mature Christian has the same mindset that John speaks about in his first letter. (20:41) In John 1, 4, 18, he says there's no fear in love, (20:45) but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. (20:50) The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

(20:56) So as a Christian is taught and grows up in their spirituality, (21:01) at the beginning we feared God's wrath, as we still should. (21:06) If we're doing things we shouldn't be. (21:09) But the mature Christian will want to be pleasing to God and willingly do as He says.

(21:16) That's how we actually show our love to God. (21:21) Jesus said in John 14, 21, (21:24) Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. (21:29) He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

(21:41) So as Paul said in Hebrews 6, 1, (21:44) Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity. (21:52) The mature can distinguish between right and wrong. (21:57) Israel was tested by God.

(22:00) They should have known better. (22:03) When false teachers or evil plans are whispered in our ear, (22:08) we have to reject those temptations as Israel should have. (22:12) We saw the result of their following the corrupt advice of Balaam.

(22:19) And we read what happened to the one doing the corrupting. (22:23) And to those people, it didn't end well for either of them. (22:29) So let's learn the lessons from these stories in the Bible.

(22:33) That's why they're there. (22:35) As we saw, Jesus had their backs (22:38) and prevented them from being cursed and spared by any demonic assault. (22:46) He turned the potential cursing into a blessing.

(22:50) And Jesus has our backs too. (22:53) And so long as we're doing what he wants, we'll receive his blessings. (22:59) So there's the lesson.

(23:02) The invitation is open for anyone who needs the prayers of the saints. (23:07) Thank you. (23:09)