

## Balaam's dilemma Numbers 24:1-25

As we read the story of **Balaam** (the son of Beor, a man endowed with the gift of prophecy) we see him to be a man who was eventually able to hear from God. This God certainly is understood to be the true God of the Israelites.

**Numb.22:1-6** 1 And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan [by] Jericho. 2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they [were] many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. 4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all [that are] round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field 5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which [is] by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: 6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they [are] too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, [that] we may smite them, and [that] I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest [is] blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed  
The deeds of Israelites in leaving Egypt and even the crossing of the Red Sea had reached the ears of many nations and certainly the conquest of the Amorites.

Let look at some things we need to know about Balaam.

1. The King of Moab wanted to curse or turn the God of the Israelites against them.
2. Balak, the King of Moab, has the misunderstanding that he can defeat the Israelites by causing a man name Balaam, who had a reputation as a prophet, curse the Israelites, and to bless him.
3. When we look closely to Balaam we see he dies a wicked man and an enemy of God and God's people. (Matt. Henry Cmty)
4. Balaam was no stranger to Israel's cause; so that he ought to have answered the messengers at once that he would never curse a people whom God had blessed; but he takes a night's time to consider what he should do or to see if God might change His direction. This certainly gives Balaam away as being tempted by the riches being offered to him. This allows Satan to have Balaam entertain sin in his heart. +
  - a. It seems today there are many "men of God" who are seeking wealth, fame, and power but promising to make ones wishes come true by manipulating the will of God even when they are working directly against God known will.
  - b. Balaam should have just said he could not do anything against God's people, and that he would not. When ever we need to take time to figure out what to do in a very obvious situation we are usually looking for a way to get something God never meant for us to have. It is never a good thing to keep requesting anything that is contrary to God's will or God's ways.
5. By Balaam waiting over night to tell these men what he would do he encourages temptation. Balak's continuing to call for Balaam and offer him riches to curse these people is like asking God to do contrary to His will; He can not curse without cause.

**Num. 22:12-14** 12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they [are] blessed. 13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you. 14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

God made it clear to Balaam He was not to go with these people, and not to try to curse them since they were already blessed. This is where it should have ended. No second guessing, not asking God is He sure, not allowing Satan to cause doubt in our minds or heart, like was done in the garden with Eve. When God says no He means no, it is not up to anyone to try to change God will, since He is perfect and all knowing. Balaam seems to refuse Balak's offer but he really does not see to detest this request like a true man of God should.

When we know something is strictly against God's will for us to do and someone tried to lure us into doing it we need to be appalled at the thought. It is not enough to just state God says no, we need to make it clear how disgusted we are

at the thought of what ever it is. This is how Satan gets his foot in the door of our heart; he sees the temptation taking root because of some kind of gave in the flesh at the cost of our spiritual welfare.

**Num. 22:15-21** 15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. 16 And they came to Balaam , and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: 17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. 18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more. 20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, [and] go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. 21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

The first time the these princes were ask to stay the night it was supposedly to allow God to speak to Balaam but this time God had already made Himself clear. So what was the purpose of Balaam asking them to stay the night? He says I may know what the LORD will say unto me more. How many times does God have to make Himself clear to us before we believe Him? God sees Balaam's heart and where it might first appear Balaam is being couscous he is greedy and desires to impress the king with His powers. At first glance one might think God changes His mind but then it says in verse 22 And God's anger was kindled because he went. When God makes it plain something is sin and we ignore His words and continue begging Him for it at times he gives in to the lust of our heart hoping to teach us a lesson. We should always know God will never withhold any good thing from us.

**Num.22:22-30** 22 And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants [were] with him. 23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. 24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall [being] on this side, and a wall on that side. 25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. 26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where [was] no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? 29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. 30 And the ass said unto Balaam, [Am] not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since [I was] thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay

This shows how when a man gets his heart set on something not of God's will there are times when the truth is far from their heart. To have this animal put in a supernatural position to not only save Balaam's life but to actually speak to him and show him how outside God's will he has gone is still not enough to get Balaam to go home.

**Num.22: 31-35** 31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. 32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because [thy] way is perverse before me: 33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. 34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. 35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

If you had an animal not only save you life but actually speak to you, it should make you truly think about what it is you are doing.

Balaam was told: 1. Not to go 2. Not to curse the people God had blessed.

So what was the use in him going and? Once he gets there we see more trickery in order to make the King think he would curse these people if he could but it is not

**Num.22:41-23:1-8** 41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam , and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost [part] of the people. **23:1** 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?

After this Balak continues to request Balaam to curse these people so he tell Balak to build 7 more alters and he sacrifices 7 more bulls to no avail. Balaam says in Num. 23: 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 seven bullocks and seven rams. 30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on [every] altar.

When you read the following scriptures we see Balaam fortelling

**Num. 24: 15-25** 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 dwelling place, 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.

Although it is not clear in the earlier chapters we see in:

**Num. 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.

**Rev. 2:14** But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

**Numb 31:8** 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.