

## **The Teachings of Balaam:**

*Revelation 2:12-14*

*(This Sermon Outline Adapted from "The First Principles of the Doctrine of Balaam",*

*Originally preached by Edward O Bragwell Sr.)*

### **Intro:**

**I.** While reading through the letter to the Church at Pergamum, there are two items for which they are rebuked: one of them is for holding to the teaching of Balaam:

**A.** While v14 is enough to let us know that he was not a righteous person, who was this Balaam, and what did it mean hold to his teachings?

**II.** The majority of his story is found in Numbers 22-24

**A.** He was a prophet of the Lord located in Midian

**B.** He was hired by Balak, the king of Moab for the purpose of cursing Israel, to try and stop them as an advancing enemy

**C.** You may famously remember him as the only person we know of to have had less common sense than the donkey he rode on:

**D.** He is held in extreme dishonor by the N.T. writers:

**1.** Peter states that he loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pe. 2:15)

**2.** Jude describes those that follow his way as following the ways of Cain and Korah (Jude 11)

**3.** And again, our opening reference in Rev. 2

**III.** If this man is so clearly wicked, ungodly, and outright destructive, how could any Christian ever be tempted to hold to his teachings?

**A.** That's what we are going to look at for the rest of our time this morning:

**B.** There may be more, but it seems that Balaam governed the way he lived his life by at least three principles: and once we've looked at them, I think that you'll see that the doctrine of Balaam is alive and well throughout the religious world today.

### **i. Do it... if the price is right.**

**a.** We've all heard the saying "Everybody has a price"

**i.** It carries the idea that everyone can be bought, anyone can be made to compromise



- c. If it allows you to maintain a friendship or other relationship?
- d. The Doctrine of Balaam says: go ahead: do it, if the price is right:

## **2. Decide How YOU Want it to be, Then Make God Agree**

- a. By the time that we get to verse 18 of Numbers 22, Balaam had already made up his mind that he was going to go with those men of Balak: But he also wanted God's permission
  - i. During the first interchange, God told him not to go, and Balaam apparently submits to God's will (22:14)
  - ii. But he desperately wants to go, to obtain those rewards, so he asks God again (Num. 22:19)
  - iii. God tells him, go ahead, go, but shows his displeasure against him (Num. 22:20-35)
  - iv. He would still speak as though he sought God's approval 22:38, multiple occasions afterwards (23:27)
- b. Unfortunately it is often the case that individuals do not pick up God's Word in order to find out what they need to do: They've already decided what they want to do, and want God to rubber stamp it:
  - i. Decide how they want to worship-- force scripture to agree
  - ii. Decide how they want to be saved-- try to make scripture agree
  - iii. Decide to be like the world in an number of ways-- try to make scripture, or the preacher agree with their decision
  - iv. The great danger in this attitude is that it will very quickly bring about one's spiritual destruction: God has promised that those who seek the truth will find it: The problem is that this attitude is not one that seeks truth: and God has also made a promise to those who approach His will this way: 2 Thess. 2:8-12
    - i. In other words, God isn't going to force you to accept the truth: if I'm determined to make scripture agree with what I want, God will eventually throw His hands up, and let me believe what I want to.
- c. The doctrine of Balaam... Do what you want if the price is right, and then convince yourself that its okay!

### **3. The Best Way to Defeat God's People, is to Let them do the Work:**

- a. Balaam eventually advised Balak on how to get Israel to curse itself: Num. 25:1-3 gives the details of the sin, while 31:16 gives credit to Balaam for the plan
  - i. He drew Israel's hearts to follow after the wickedness of the nations around them
  - ii. Have you heard the old saying "Its not the water on the outside of the boat that sinks it, but what gets inside"
- b. The Church cannot be destroyed by any outside force or power: The Church can only be harmed from within:
  - i. The wickedness, and immorality of our society around us should be caused of concern, but it can only harm us if we bring it into the Church
  - ii. False religion, compromises in doctrine, denominations, these things are not threats to the church unless we compromise with them.

### **Conclusion:**

- Pergamum was warned against holding to the teachings of Balaam: I think we can see why! They are not only destructive, but are easy and popular habits to form
- If we ourselves wish to keep free from them as well, we must:
  - Hold on to the truth of the Gospel, make sure that we will not sell it at any cost
  - Determine that we will seek out what God's will is, and put it into action at any cost
  - Keep ourselves free from outside influences, and be driven only by the influence of Christ.