

# BALAAAM'S LOVE OF MONEY [2]

(Num. 22:22-24:25 NKJV)

**INTRODUCTION:** It is said, "Every man has his price." This means, that if promised enough money, or fame, or power, everyone will do that which he, or she, believes to be wrong. Balaam was willing to disobey Jehovah for a house full of silver and gold. We must not willingly sin against the Lord for all this earth's gold and silver. I hope that we hold our fellowship with the Lord of greater value than any amount of money. If we are willing to sell our souls to the devil for all this world's wealth or pleasure, we have made a terrible bargain! (Mt. 16:26 NKJV) Let us learn from Balaam to detest the love of money which leads to much sin and grief. (I Tim. 6:10) (Review first lesson).

## I. A MOST UNUSUAL THING HAPPENED TO BALAAAM ON HIS WAY TO MOAB

- A. The angel of the Lord stood in Balaam's way *"as an adversary against him"* (vs. 22)
  1. The donkey, Balaam was riding upon, saw the angel *"with His drawn sword...and turned aside"* (vs. 23)
  2. The donkey *"crushed Balaam's foot against the wall"* in an effort to avoid the angel (vs. 24,25)
  3. When there was no way around the angel, the donkey *"lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused..."* (vs. 26,27)
- B. *"Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey..."* (vs. 28)
  1. The ISBE attempts to explain away this miracle by stating, "What about the talking of the ass and the marvelous prophecies of B.? We would suggest the following explanation. By influencing the soul of B., God caused him to interpret correctly the inarticulate sounds of the animal." (Vol. I, pg. 379)
    - a. I know people can hear the sounds animals make and believe they are speaking in the human language
    - b. People can hear the inarticulate sounds that babies make and deceive themselves into believing that they have actually have heard articulate words
  2. The apostle, Peter, wrote by inspiration, *"a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet."* (II Pet. 2:16)
    - a. "It is truly said, however, that a passing illusion of this kind, while it testifies that the Apostle understood the words, like all his contemporaries in their most natural and simple sense, does not oblige us to hold the same view; if he was mistaken in this matter, it does not at all affect the inspired truth of his teaching." (PULPIT COMMENTARY, Vol. II, pg. 292)
    - b. The above quotations prove why we must not place our faith in the words of uninspired men!
  3. If we can believe, that God created this universe and all that is in it, out of nothing, why should we judge it incredible that He caused a donkey to speak with a human voice? (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3)
- C. Balaam talked back to the donkey and said that he wished he could kill her (v.29,30)
  1. "That Balaam should answer the ass without expressing any astonishment is certainly more marvelous than that the ass should speak to him." (IBID., pg. 293)
  2. "Balaam was at this moment intensely angry, and nothing blunts the edge of natural surprise so much as rage. Things which afterwards, when calmly recollected, cause the utmost astonishment, notoriously produce no effect at the moment upon a mind

which is thoroughly exasperated." (IBID.)

D. *"Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes..."* (vs. 31)

1. The angel told Balaam that he should be very grateful to his donkey for he would have been killed if it had not been for her efforts to save him (vs. 32,33)
2. We are often blinded to who are our enemies and who REALLY are our friends!
3. Balaam confessed that he had sinned (vs. 34)
4. He was told to go on to Moab, but he could only speak the word the angel gave him (vs. 35)

## II. TO BALAK'S GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT, BALAAM BLESSES INSTEAD OF CURSES, ISRAEL

A. Balaam clearly told Balak that he could only speak, *"The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak"* (vs. 37,38)

B. Balak took Balaam to a place where he saw *"the utmost part of the people"*. It was believed that he needed to see those that were the subject of the curse (vs. 41)

1. Here seven altars were built. Seven bulls and seven rams were offered on them in an effort to obtain the Lord's favor for their wicked desire (Num. 23:1-3)
2. God met Balaam and *"put a word in Balaam's mouth"* (vs. 4-6)

C. In his first oracle, Balaam spoke of how Israel was favored by God for her religious and moral separateness from heathen nations (vs. 7-10)

1. Balaam's oracle shocked Balak (vs. 11)
2. Balaam defended himself by saying, *"Must I not take heed to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth?"* (vs. 12)

D. Balak thought that a change of scenery might help Balaam to do what he had been requested to do (vs. 13,14)

1. Sometimes people are disappointed to discover that moving has not changed for the better their: guilty conscience; bad attitude; living conditions; relationship with their families; financial status; etc.
2. Our moving to a different location will not cause God to look with favor upon our sinful desires
3. It will not change our relationship with God

E. In the second oracle, Balaam again spoke words of blessings upon God's children (vs. 18-24)

F. In desperation, Balak took Balaam to a third location, but the results were the same (Num. 23:25-24:25)

## III. BALAAM'S LOVE OF MOHEY WAS HIS DOWNFALL FOR HE WAS WILLING TO MISUSE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY FOR MONEY AND FAME (II Pet. 2:15)

A. Because he was filled with greed, he was covetous (Jude 11)

1. The word "covet" means "To have an inordinate desire for, especially for something belonging to another" (FUNK & WAGNALLS STANDARD DICTIONARY, Vol.1, pg. 300)
2. The word, "inordinate" means, "Not restrained by prescribed rules or bounds, immoderate, excessive." (Ibid., pg. 654)

B. Covetousness is that disposition of heart which motivates one to:

1. Want what others have to the degree that one would be willing to sin to get it (Give examples)
2. Place the obtaining of material possessions above everything, or everyone, and that includes one's fellowship with God (Give examples; Mt. 5:33)
3. Be selfish and not share his, or her, possessions with others (Give examples; Acts

20:35)

4. Be dishonest in business (Give examples)
  5. Pervert the Holy Word of God (II Pet. 2:1-3)
- C. Jesus warned against the sin of covetousness and told a parable to illustrate this sinful attitude (Lk. 12:13-21)
- D. The covetous person is an idolater (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5,6)
1. Riches is his god and he neglects the true God for riches!
  2. No one can serve God and riches at the same time (Mt. 6:24)
- E. If we have a love of money, we are an easy prey for Satan! (I Tim. 6:6-10)
- F. Before you conclude that you are NOT covetous, remember, that covetousness is difficult for the one possessing it to detect it (Example: Have you heard anyone ever confess, "I am covetous?")

**CONCLUSION:** Where are you laying up your treasures? Are you selfish? How do you view your material possessions? Can you say with Paul, "*I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel?*" (Acts 20:33) Will you place God first in your life?

~ Don Hastings ~