

CHURCH TRAITORS

TEXT: ***Numbers 22:34: 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.***

Revelation 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.

Numbers 31:15-16:

¹⁵ And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?

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.

It is a sad and sorry spectacle to see the king of Moab and his lords climbing to the craggy rocks accompanied by the prophet Balaam.

They seek to look upon Israel with an evil eye, and to speak out curses and destruction upon the tents of the unsuspecting people of God in the plain below. Like buzzards, dogs, and greedy vultures, they watch and scheme to crush the nation of God's children, which Balak fears.



Looking down on their innocent prey, cunning devices and malice is on their countenances. They secretly try to break the power of the people of God and His favor with them. They knew that their weapons of the sword, spear, and armor would not prevail against this God-blessed people, so these agents of satan entice a sorcerer to rain curses and destructive judgment upon them in a new type of warfare.

This warfare is not unknown to us:

Ephesians 6:12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

What a glorious blessing it is to be right with God, and on pleading grounds and praying terms, with nothing between our soul and our Saviour!

What a glorious blessing it is to be right with God.

It is a blessing to know that God watches over His own day and night, even though we are unaware of the dangers, plots, and schemes to destroy our walk and power with God. The devil will leave you alone if you are not a threat to his evil kingdom.

But these saints were walking in the power of the Spirit, and what amazing wonders God was working for them. Satan found a practicing sorcerer and tried to induce him and bargain with him with glittering gold, silver, and high honors — just like he did with Judas — to get him to curse God’s people. By trying to hold on to two worlds, both Balaam and Judas lost both. They tried to gain the wealth of this world at the expense of cursing a whole nation, and by destroying the pure and the holy.

Balaam knew enough about the power of Jehovah God to want to be on His side, but he did not believe that He was the only true God. And even though he had clearly heard the Word of the Lord when he consulted Him, Balaam’s desire to remain true to Him waned because of his great love for the hire of unrighteousness.



He could not enjoy the world to the fullest because of the fear of God, nor could he enjoy God and heavenly things because of the love of the world. He was willing to see God’s people commit sin and break fellowship with God, and then become defeated, sad, or cursed, in order to satisfy his own lusts.

Hebrew 3:12-13:

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the Living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

No man liveth unto himself and no one dieth unto himself. We are influencing

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If it were not for the Lord, the Church would have been swallowed up long ago. Backsliding preachers and saints become enemies of the church working from the inside, trying to undermine and deceive — if it were possible — the very elect of God. But remember, saints, as long as you are with the Lord, He will be with you.

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Isaiah 41:10a: Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee;

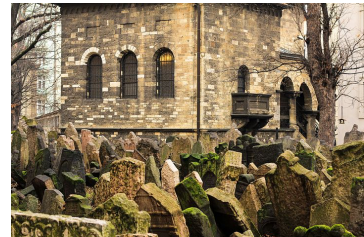
If we keep near the Cross, consecrated to Christ and crucified to the world, the flesh and the devil, we are as safe as though we were in Heaven. When the Presence of the Lord is with us, we are joyful, happy, and content. Without Him in our midst, we are nothing and are defenseless. Our protection is not in a creed; it is in Christ. ***There is no safety in joining a denomination – our safety is in a pure heart, washed in the Blood of Jesus.***

How many have sold out cheap, as did Samson, Balaam, David, Solomon, and Judas. Some were recovered from their transgression and unrighteousness, but the worst part is the treachery to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If Balaam had not wanted to make merchandise of God's people, and if he had hated sin as he should have, this incident would never have happened.

So it is with us. If we keep prayed up, packed up [ready to go to our heavenly home], we will not become the tool of satan.

So long as God is with a church, her power is not in numbers, but in the anointing of the Spirit. The worst thing that can happen is to be neither hot nor cold — to have a name and to live, but to be as dead as a door nail.



Satan will find some Jezebel with the influence to wiggle into the royal blood in order to destroy Israel and to turn them over to Baal worship.

Let us look a little further into the character and life of Balaam and see what God reveals about him. It is easy to form judgment on his actions to condemnation. We know he became a bad man and betrayed his trust. But, as repulsive as his character became, seen at a distance when seen near, it has much to say that is human — much like ourselves – inviting compassion and even admiration. He has traits of firmness, conscientiousness, and nobleness.

For example, in the text, he offers to retrace his steps as soon as he perceives he is doing wrong. But he is blinded to the full perversity of his course. He asks guidance of God before he will undertake a journey.

Numbers 22:8: And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me:

Then Balaam professes to the servants of Balak:

Numbers 22:18: 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.

Balaam states that no bribe on earth could induce him to pronounce a false curse against the people God has said are blessed, nor was he willing to pretend he was pronouncing what would be a powerless curse in order to receive a reward. Instead, he prays to “*die the death of the righteous*” — that his last end may be like his.

Yet, with all the good one might have done and with the right attitudes to show — all this is forgotten when we sin against Christ.

The Bible declares Balaam’s inspiration was from God. He is no ordinary man. His reputation was well known. Balak knew of his reputation, and sent for him urgently.

However, Balak struck at his weak spot,

Numbers 22:36-37:

36 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.

37 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

The lure of riches, honors, and medals worked on his heart. Satan is willing to pay the highest dollar to get you to go Balak – to get you to go back on Jesus – to get you to use your influence against the cause of Christ.

The great gifts within him were perverted by ambition and greed. He used God’s gift to accumulate wealth. He so corrupted himself that he hoped God was flexible like a man as he schemed time after time to try to get God to allow him to curse the Children of Israel. He professed a willingness to reverence God’s Will as long as he was able to profit from doing so. In short, Balaam’s going to prayer was simply to purchase an indulgence to sin.

In Chapter 22, we see the dread that had fallen over all the nations because of

God's people. God had magnified them in the eyes of the heathen.

Numbers 22:5d: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me.

God has put fear into the hearts of the lost.

Numbers 22:4: Now shall this company lick up all that are round us, as the ox kicketh up the grass in the field.

God makes misdeeds known among the wicked: Balak had seen “*all that Israel had done in the Amorites and Moab, was sore afraid of the people and sore distressed.*”

To the house of Balaam they go, with the reward of unrighteousness. Balaam orders them to tarry until he has a consultation with the Lord. He responds in the morning, saying God would not allow him go.

They return with a feeling they can win, because he said, “*The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.*” They knew that God wasn't willing – but perhaps suspected that he was.

Returning with more noble princes and greater enticements, Balaam consults with the Lord hoping He would change His mind. Balaam knew better than this, for in later prophecies,

Numbers 23:19a: God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the Son of Man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?



When we yield to temptation, we sin.

James 1:15: Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

This is exactly what happened to Balaam.

God, knowing his determination to have his own way, lets him have it. This was not God's perfect will, but His permissive will. If you reject God's best and first choice, He will not break your neck to keep you from having your own way. But you will pay dearly for it.

Numbers 22:22: 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.

Then comes three checkings and warnings, but Balaam is blinded to them. (And so will you be blinded when you yield to the devil.)

Numbers 22:23-34:

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.

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.



Notice:

Numbers 22:34: 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.

Oh, this dreadful blinding of the heart after God warned him three times, telling him he was perverse before Him, and that He would have killed him and saved the mule, except the beast had turned away and spared him three times.

If God would take the scales off our eyes even this morning, we would be frightened to death at our true condition. Being blinded to reality, we go on in our lukewarmness, thinking we are as good as many of the rest. We may be. But this is not the standard by which the Lord measures!

Balaam wants to please himself, without displeasing God. His problem is how to go to Balak without offending God. God lets man go on, if he is so minded. Finally, he meets Balak. Notice now the three temptations — how each time Balaam builds an altar to the Lord to inquire of him as he had the other times. Balaam knows only one approach to the Lord.



Great prophecies are made about the children of Israel as Balaam speaks with Balak.

Numbers 23:8-12:

8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?

9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.

12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth? . . . lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.



He desired to die the death of the righteous, he said; but he does not choose to live the life of the righteous.

Many are like Balaam. God will not let him curse His people, for they are blessed. The devil will trot you to the Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, or Catholic church, and if you will not sour on them and curse their religion out, he will try to show you a group that will get in your hair.

To the holiness group now, Balak takes Balaam — hoping he will look with cruel

eyes and malice upon them and rain down curses. Just like Balak, he tries to find someone who will rain down curses upon God's people. Balaam erected seven altars with bullocks and rams trying to accomplish some dreadful evil against Israel. He may have been a man of great power, but what does God say to him:

Numbers 23:23: Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

What God was saying was that no form of divination would prevail against the people whom God Himself — the Omnipotent One — was protecting and leading.

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living who are regenerated by the power of the Gospel.

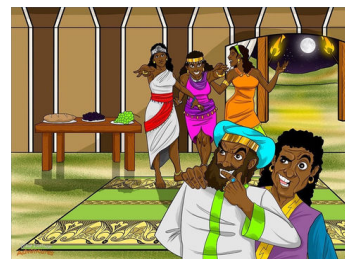
1 John 5:12a: He that hath the Son hath life;

Colossians 3:4: When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in Glory.

The living God will not inhabit a dead church. A living church is a praying church, a clean church. There is no backbiting, murmuring, church fusses, gossiping, or pleasure loving that can still hold God's Presence there. A living church is a visiting church — a church which reaches out to the lame, the feeble, the impotent.

If anything is wrong with our lungs, we are afraid of T.B. or asthma. We try to get deliverance. The prayer meeting is the lungs of the church. If anything happens here, at best there is a gradual decline and lukewarmness, and in comes the doctrine of Balaam — the prophet of betrayal. This is the warning our Lord Jesus gave to the church of Pergamos.

Do you know what Balaam did when he found he could not curse the people of God? He bade the king of Moab to seduce the men of Israel by the women of Moab who were fair and beautiful. They were to fascinate the young Hebrews, especially those who were already married, and seduce them into sin. Then their young fellows would entice the young ladies and women of Israel. This is a battle of spirits, and the warfare is without natural weapons. It works on the cold and the lukewarm.



Next they were to invite them to their idolatrous parties which were polluted with lust. Balaam knew that the lewdness of their actions would grieve the Lord and cause Him to leave them, and that He Himself would then curse them. Balaam

knew one thing for sure: God hates sin and He must judge it.

Never let any sinning church members who believe in carnal security come around and entice the people of God by saying: "*We have to sin a little in thought, word and deed every day. Sinning keeps you humble. We cannot keep from sinning.*" You are tools of the devil!!

1 John 3:8: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

The devil will work hard to lead you to dishonesty, worldliness, licentiousness, and drinking, to a Babylonish garment or a wedge of gold, to dishonor the Lord and bring swift judgment on all the saints. This happened in the case of Achan. It happened to Samson who lost his consecration in a petting party.

Remember – all religious rites are not spiritual. Here is where the devil worked on Israel by inducing them to the end that they might enter into their way of worship. God struck them with fierce judgment and brought a plague which killed 24,000 until Phinehas turned God's wrath away by making atonement for the people. Notice how his atonement was made. He judged the sin in the camp with a javelin in his hand.

Numbers 25:1-11:

1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor.

6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So

the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

⁹ And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

¹⁰ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

¹¹ Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for My sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in My jealousy.

Who is the worst stumbling block in this church? It is the one who teaches saints to sin, having gone back into its practice himself.

Like Balaam, we persecute another, whether innocent being or beast, blaming our perverse calamities on them — but it is God checking our madness.



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