

Balaam

Way, Error, Doctrine of Balaam

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following *the WAY of Balaam* the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (II Peter 2:15).

“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after *the ERROR of Balaam* for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core” (Jude 11).

“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold *the DOCTRINE of Balaam*, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication” (Rev. 2:14).

As previously seen, II Peter 2:15 records “the way of Balaam,” Jude 11 records “the error of Balaam,” and Rev. 2:14 records “the doctrine of Balaam.”

All three of these are used in passages referring to Christians entering into a state of affairs within Christianity — reflecting the same sins — which *NOT ONLY* defiles their high calling *BUT* also dishonors the Lord Who purchased their salvation with His Own blood.

Way and Error

The way and error of Balaam appear in companion passages of Scripture and would seem to refer basically to the same thing.

The way of Balaam is associated with the “wages of unrighteousness” in II Peter, and *the error of Balaam* is associated with “reward” in Jude.

Thus, *the way and error of Balaam* have to do with *monetary or material gain*; and, according to the Old Testament account, monetary or material gain is acquired through one’s willingness to compromise the principles of God and proclaim things contrary to the revealed Word of God.

The way and error of Balaam can be found in Numbers chapters twenty-two through twenty-four.

Balak, king of the Moabites, hired Balaam to come into his land and pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel. Balak had seen what Israel had done to the Amorites; and knowing that this nation would soon be passing through his country, he was afraid. He feared the Israelites because of the power which the nation exercised through their God.

Balak knew that the only way in which the Israelites could be defeated was through severing the relationship which existed between Israel and their God.

Thus, Balak hired Balaam to come into Moab and pronounce a curse upon the Israelites, attempting, through this means, to incur God's wrath upon them in an effort to sever this existing relationship and to ultimately bring about their defeat at the hands of the enemy.

However, once in Moab, on three separate occasions, only blessings proceeded from the lips of Balaam. And Balak, angered by the turn of events, sent Balaam out of Moab into his own country.

Doctrine

The doctrine of Balaam is different than *his error and his way*. *His doctrine* had to do with that part of his teaching which was contrary to the Word of God.

However, an inseparable relationship existed between *his doctrine, his way, and his error*. That part of his teaching which was contrary to the Word of God (his doctrine) resulted from his willingness to prophesy either good or bad for monetary or material gain (his way and error).

And, remaining within this same framework, it would be little different among servants of the Lord today. One's willingness to compromise the principles of God (*the way and error of Balaam*) — for whatever reason — would precede and be inseparably linked to teaching that which was contrary to the Word of God (*the doctrine of Balaam*).

1) *Doctrine of Balaam — Past*

Scripture surrounding the doctrine of Balaam and its tragic results is given in Num. 25:1-3:

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

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

And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.”

The Israelites, after coming into Moab, began to commit fornication with the “daughters of Moab,” eat meat sacrificed to idols, and bow down and worship the gods of the Moabites.

And in order to put a stop to these sins and stay the hand of God’s judgment upon the entire nation, Moses was instructed to *slay every Israelite who had “joined himself unto Baal-peor.”*

And twenty-four thousand Israelites perished under God’s judgment because of these sins.

What caused the Israelites to depart from the one true and living God Who had delivered them from Egypt?

What caused them to begin serving false gods and following the idolatrous ways of the Moabites?

The answer is given 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.”

Balaam *could NOT* curse Israel. *ONLY* beautiful prophecies filled with blessings flowed from his lips when he was called into Moab by Balak. But Balaam did succeed in leading the Israelites astray through his counsel.

The Israelites, through the counsel of Balaam, *were led to commit fornication, eat things sacrificed to idols, and bow down before other gods.*

And, because of these sins, the judgment of God fell upon His people.

The counsel of Balaam — i.e., “the doctrine of Balaam” — had to do with sins committed by a people under covenant relationships with God — the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. The former was unbreakable and the latter, in relation to the former, was misrepresented by the doctrine of Balaam:

IF you WILL, THEN I will; BUT, IF you DON'T, THEN...

It was true that Israel's covenant relationship with God could NOT be broken; it was also true that Israel's position as firstborn could NOT be changed; BUT, it was NOT true that Israel could sin with immunity, as the doctrine of Balaam evidently inferred.

God's wrath was manifested because of the sins of His people, and the thousands of Israelites who succumbed to the counsel of Balaam were overthrown in the wilderness, short of the goal of their calling.

2) Doctrine of Balaam — Present

This same type teaching, which could ONLY be seen as a form of the doctrine of Balaam, is one of the MOST widely taught doctrines in the Church today.

Christians know — as their counterparts in the Church in Pergamos (Rev. 2:14) — that they have been saved by grace through faith, and NOTHING can alter their positional standing “in Christ.”

And in view of this unalterable positional standing, they reason that they can conduct their lives in any manner which they choose and it will make NO difference.

However, AS in the case of the Israelites, SO in the case of Christians.

Christians, as the Israelites under Moses, have been saved for a purpose. Every Christian is enrolled in a race (I Cor. 9:24-27), and every Christian is engaged in a conflict (Eph. 6:10-18; II Tim. 2:4, 5).

The goal set before Christians is to win the race, be victorious in the conflict. And God has made provision for Christians in order that at the end of the race they might say with Paul:

“I have fought a good fight [‘I have strained every muscle in the good contest’], I have finished my course [‘race’], I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

The enemy, Satan, on the other hand, is doing all within his power to bring about defeat in the lives of Christians. Satan's main objective in the present warfare is to prevent Christians from qualifying for crowns and thus positions of rulership with Christ in His coming kingdom.

God is presently bringing into existence *a new order of sons* to replace the order now ruling in the heavens; and the incumbent rulers — Satan and his angels — are doing all within their power to retain their present governmental control over the earth.

The main facet of the doctrine of Balaam which is being widely promulgated in Churches today is the teaching that future blessings and rewards are guaranteed for every Christian, *SOLELY* on the basis of Christ's finished work at Calvary and the Christians' positional standing "in Christ."

Thus, all Christians — regardless of their conduct during the present time — will receive crowns and positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.

However, the teaching throughout the Word of God is to the contrary.

The Israelites did NOT sin with immunity, and NEITHER can Christians.

Sin in the camp of Israel resulted in the Israelites being overthrown in the wilderness, short of the goal of their calling.

And it will be NO different for Christians.

An entire generation of Israelites, twenty years old and above, was overthrown in the wilderness, on the right side of the blood (the death of the firstborn in Egypt) BUT on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (the land set before them)

And the type-antitype structure of this in the book of Hebrews (chs. 3, 4, 6, 10), referenced in I Cor. 9:24-10:11, makes it very clear that an exact parallel can be seen in the lives of Christians.

They too, EXACTLY as the Israelites under Moses, can be overthrown on the right side of the blood (eternally saved) BUT on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (an inheritance in the land set before them.

"...and I took the crown that was upon his head" (II Sam. 1:10).

"Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11).

