

Doctrine of Balaam

1. Balaam was an ungodly prophet who lived at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia (Deut. 23:4).
2. Although he was identified with the Midianites (Num. 31:8) Balaam possessed some knowledge of the true God. Balaam gave honor to the Lord for his prophetic gifts but in the end he was absorbed with himself.
 - *Numbers 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.*
3. In the year BC 1401, the Israelites encamped in the Plain of Moab. Balak, the king of Moab, united with the Midianites to drive the Israelites away. He wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites for money.
 - *Numbers 22:5 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:*
4. Despite his initial apprehensions over the lawfulness of cursing the Israelites, Balaam decided to speak whatever the Lord gave him. Balak agreed.
5. Seven altars were prepared, upon each of which Balak and Balaam offered a bullock and a ram. Three times Balaam started to speak against Israel and three times his cursing were turned to words of blessing and magnificent prophecies.
 - *Numbers 24:17 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.*
6. Realizing that he could not curse the Israelites, Balaam suggested that the Israelites be led into acts of sexual immorality (Num. 31:16). The results are recorded in Num. 25.
 - *Numbers 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.*
7. Balaam's life came to an end when Balaam sided with the Midianites in a pitched battle against the Israelites.
 - *Numbers 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.*

8. The Word of God looks upon Balaam as an evil person full of evil deeds. Jude 1:11 warns about the error of Balaam which was believing that God must in righteousness curse the nation of Israel because of the evil in it. Natural morality gives way to a higher morality based upon the work of Christ at Calvary whereby sinners can be justified in the sight of the Lord.
9. The way of Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15) is the great sin of simony or commercializing the gifts of God.
 - *2 Peter 2:15 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;*
10. The doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14) is to abandon godly separation in favor of worldly conformity. Balaam taught Balak to corrupt people he could not curse (Num. 31:15,16; 22:5; 23:8) by encouraging them to marry Moabite women and so commit spiritual fornication (James 4:4).
 - *Revelation 2:14 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.*
 - *Numbers 31:15-16 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.*
 - *Numbers 22:25 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.*
 - *Numbers 23:8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?*
 - *James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*
11. The tragedy of Balaam is reflected in that he was a man who could have been used in a positive way in the service of the Lord. His soul was sensitive to spiritual matters and he had contact with God in a most unusual way until the day greed was found in his heart.