

# Balaam & Balak: Conspiring to curse Israel

*Parashat Balak ([B'midbar/Numbers 22-25](#)) 5781 B"H (Updated 7/15/22 5782, 10/23/23 5784)*

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## A king and a prophet-for-profit (Balak and Balaam)

[Numbers 22-25](#) contains the complex account of King Balak of Moab and Balaam, a pagan prophet-for-hire.

King Balak was terrified of what would come to his kingdom once the Israelites arrived.

Israel had just decimated the Amorites, so this king had reason to be concerned.

Balak's fear rubbed off on his people. [Numbers 22:3](#) says ["Moab was filled with dread because of B'nei Y'Israel \[the children of Israel\]."](#) The Moabites knew Israel was strong, both in number and in power.

King Balak believed in the supernatural realm. He professed faith in Balaam's powers: ["I know that whoever you bless will be blessed and whoever you curse will be accursed!"](#) ([Num.22:6](#)). Clearly, Balaam had a reputation as a divination

expert in the region. Balaam has been called a “prophet for *profit*” and the “seer who *couldn’t* see.” He didn’t get these nicknames for no reason. He had a prophetic gifting and even interacted with the LORD God of Israel, but he was much more interested in collecting divination fees than seeking the will of ADONAI.

## **A Talking Donkey, Border-line Animal Abuse, and a Message**

King Balak wanted Prophet Balaam to curse Israel in hopes that he could fight against the Israelites and win.

Balaam had every intention of fulfilling the king’s request through his oracles, but the God of Israel told him not to curse Israel because they are blessed.

If you have never read the account, I encourage you to do so because you will read about **a talking donkey, border-line animal abuse, and a special messenger/angel of the LORD with a message for this selfish prophet.**

Why rely on the media to inform you of stuff that is “strange but true?” **You can’t make this stuff up, nor would you want to.** Read [Numbers 22](#) for yourself [here](#).

## **The error of Balaam described by [Jude \(Judah\)](#) and [Peter](#)**

Once a pagan, always a pagan, in the case of Balaam. **This is *not* a redemption story.**

The lost man, in this case, Balaam, despite encountering the living presence of the Almighty, doesn’t end up found in the sense of being saved.

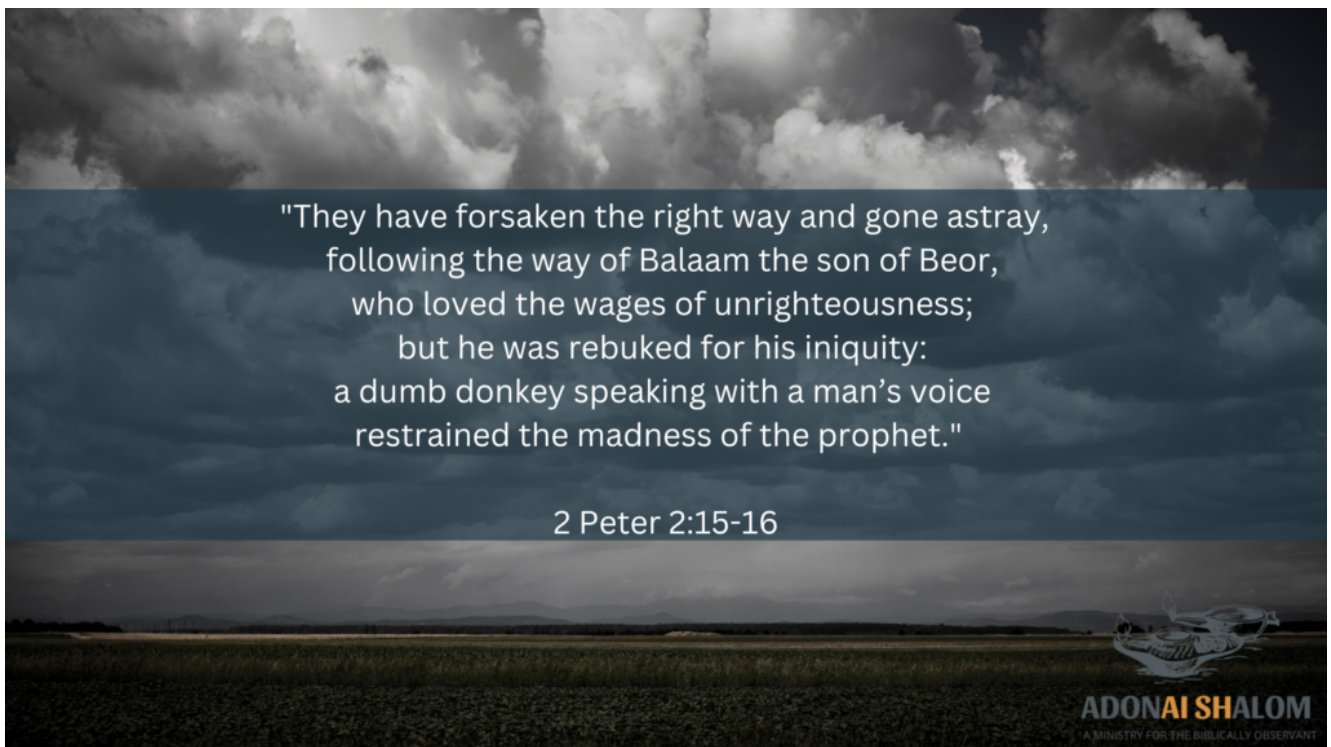
He was found guilty.

Peddling prophecies.

Desirous of personal financial gain.

Peter writes that Balaam “loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

"They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet." 2 Peter 2:15-16, emphases added



G.K.Beale and D.A. Carson's [Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament](#) describe Balaam's sin:

*"The rebuke that Balaam received from the donkey . . . was the result of miraculous intervention by God, but Peter emphasizes the ironic symbolism: Balaam's sin was irrational, and he was rebuked by an irrational beast."*

*Beale, 1056*

Likewise, Judah (known more commonly in English as Jude) categorizes Balaam right along with other ungodly people who have gone before, from the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain,

and [Korah](#), all acting “like animals” who have no reason.

"Woe to them! For they went the way of Cain; they were consumed for pay in Balaam's error; and in Korah's rebellion they have been destroyed. These people are hidden rocky reefs at your love feasts - shamelessly feasting with you, tending only to themselves. They are waterless clouds, carried along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever." Judah (*Jude*) 1:11-13, *emphasis added*

The gloom of utter darkness.

Well, that sounds horrible.

And it is!

And it is real!

## **What we can learn from the false doctrine of Balaam**

Balaam thought “a little sin” wouldn’t do any harm. That just wasn’t true.

Balaam’s demise should be a lesson to the lukewarm. There are so many people who attend churches and congregations, yet have little love in their hearts. So many people claim to be pastors and teachers, prophets and evangelists, but they either have given up the anointing or have sought to use it for selfish gain.

**We must beware of the false doctrines that prevail, and seek only the LORD and His Truth.**

Too many believers today think that if they have one foot in the door to heaven, they can experiment a bit with the other foot.

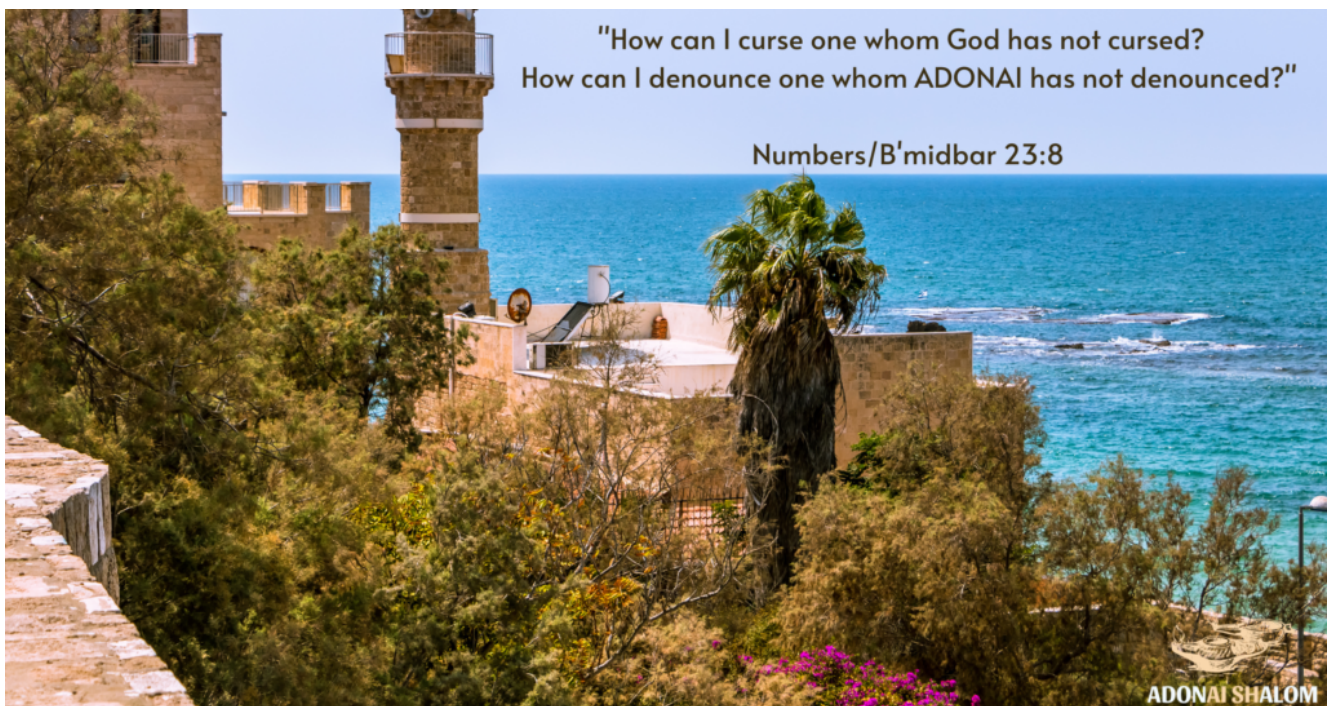
That's a bad idea because before they know it, they will slip on the uneven ground.

Follow the way of the LORD – stay true to Him and His Word, and He will guide You in His Perfect way.

## **Balaam ended up *blessing* Israel and prophesying of the coming Messiah!**

As much as Balaam didn't want to admit it, he knew he couldn't get away with cursing Israel.

He rightly states in [Numbers 23:8](#), "[How can I curse one whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce one whom ADONAI has not denounced?](#)"



King Balak becomes desperate, "[What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but look, you've actually blessed them!](#)" [Numbers 23:11](#)

Balaam continues, "[There is no sorcery effective against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel! Now it will be said of Jacob and Israel, 'See what God has done!'](#)" [Numbers 23:23](#)



King Balak urges Balaam to just stop already! Balak says, ["Do not curse them or bless them at all!" \(Numbers 23:25\).](#)

Both of these pagan men are starting to understand: Israel is untouchable because Israel belongs to God!

Balaam gives an oracle about the beauty of the Israelites' tents and the victories that God's people will continue to enjoy.

**In the fourth oracle particularly, Balaam prophesies of the coming of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.**

["I see Him, yet not in this location. For a star will come from Jacob, a scepter will arise from Israel . . . '" \(Numbers 24:17\)](#)

The prophecy ends with various descriptions of Israel's triumphs.

Balaam and Balak, defeated, went their own separate ways. [\(Numbers 24:25\).](#)

Sometimes the enemy will try to raise up all kind of chaos in your life. If you remain faithful to Messiah Yeshua, Jesus the Son of God, the devil will eventually have to give up and move on. The victory is guaranteed, if you will continue to trust in Him.

["Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7](#)

***Update 10/23/23:***

This morning I received a wonderful question on our Facebook page inbox regarding [Numbers 23:21.](#)

["He has not observed iniquity in Jacob,  
Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel.  
The LORD his God is with him,  
And the shout of a King is among them."](#) (NKJV)

This is a rare case in which I actually prefer the NIV translation here:

“No misfortune is seen in Jacob,  
no misery observed in Israel.  
The LORD their God is with them;  
the shout of the King is among them.” (NIV)



My brother in Christ was asking if this would be considered a Messianic prophecy.

I responded that yes, I believe this is a Messianic prophecy because Balaam wanted so very much to curse Israel (but again see [Numbers 23:8](#) in which he discovers that is altogether impossible). The LORD puts His Word into Balaam's mouth and Balaam ultimately finds himself prophesying about the future – including the coming Messiah.

Israel is at war today.

The Messianic prophecy of [Numbers 23:21](#) is indeed an uplifting promise for us to remember today and to share with our friends in Israel.

There shall be a time when “no misfortune is seen in Jacob”  
and “no misery observed in Israel.”

This verse gives us the certainty that we know the LORD their God is with them – the King, the Lion of Judah, and ultimately Israel will have victory and the shout of our King will be heard.

Maranatha!

**Please leave a comment below with your thoughts!**