



Minor Prophets
Lesson 2: Balaam

1. Introduction to the story of Balaam

When the children of Israel were within sight of the Promised Land, they pitched their tents in the Plains of Moab on the east side of the Jordan River near Jericho.

A bizarre, wizard-like prophet entered the stage.

2. Who was Balaam?

- Balaam was a mystery man whose name meant “ancient” or “elder of the people.” Baal means “master” or “lord”.
- Balaam came from Mesopotamia, 450 miles away, near the Euphrates River. He had achieved fame as a prophet and was known as a “great one.”

Numbers 22:1-6

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Numbers 22:16, 17

Numbers 23:7

3. What did Balaam do?

- Although Balaam at first refused, he wavered and went with Balak’s representatives.

Numbers 22:21

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Numbers 22:22

- Balaam continued because of covetousness.

Even after his foot was crushed, he went on his way, warned by a donkey.

Numbers 22:24-28

4. Balaam blessed Israel three times.

Each time Balak invited Balaam to curse Israel, he ended up blessing Israel instead.

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Numbers 23:1-11

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Numbers 23:13-20

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Numbers 23:27

Numbers 25:8-10

5. Balaam's advice to Balak.

- Balaam could not curse Israel. Instead, after blessing Israel three times, he gave advice to Balak about how to cause Israel to sin.

Revelation 2:14

Balaam knew that judgement would come upon Israel if they entered into idol worship and committed sexual sin with the Moabites. So, he offered that advice to Balak the Moabite king.

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Numbers 25:1-9

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Numbers 31:15, 16

6. Balaam's sins and problems

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Jude 11

Balaam was willing to bless and curse people for money. He traded holy things. His anointing and office became a tool of evil in his hands.

2 Peter 2:15

Peter was writing about false prophets and teachers.

1 Timothy 6:9, 10

The love of money blinded him. He was a hireling prophet who sought to make money from the gift God gave him.

Even though he misused his gift, his prophecies were accurate, true, and prompted by the Holy Spirit. He would only speak what God told him to say. He ended up blessing and not cursing the children of Israel.

His final prophesy was about the Messiah!

Numbers 24:17

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Numbers 23:8**7. Balaam's seed is still in the pulpit.**

People like Balaam are active in today's church.

They still seek Balak's gold.

Spiritually, the doctrine of Balaam never rises above the carnal reasoning and natural attractions of this world.

8. What do we learn from the life of Balaam?

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Balaam genuinely heard from God and delivered accurate prophecies.

However, being used by God does not mean a person is right with God. Teaching, prophecy, leadership, or knowledge can coexist with a compromised heart.

- Obedience delayed is often disobedience disguised.

God told Balaam not to go with Balak's messengers.

Numbers 22:12

Instead of ending the matter, Balaam kept entertaining the offer. He was hoping God might change His mind.

When God's will is clear, continued negotiation usually signals a desire to justify what we already want. Repeated "praying about it" can become a way to sanctify disobedience.

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Though he never directly cursed Israel, his love of gain led him to find another way to profit – by advising Moab to seduce Israel into sin.

- Knowing God's truth is not the same as loving God's people.

Balaam spoke blessings over Israel but later worked against them.

Good doctrine without love for people is religion.

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Balaam's counsel caused widespread sin and death in Israel.

Leaders in the church must recognize that their choices affect others. Your position has influence.

- A tragic end is possible after a promising beginning.

Joshua 13:22

Balaam died among God's enemies.

Finishing well is more important than starting strong. This is where many people fail in the ministry.

Hebrews 3:14 – New Living Translation

For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.