

(Angel of the Lord) 02 - Balaam

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores the story of Balaam and the angel of the Lord, highlighting themes of hypocrisy, divine intervention, and God's protection over His people.

Duration: 1:01:23

Scripture: Numbers 22:22

Topics: "Identity in Christ", "God's Protection"

Description

Ed Miller explores the story of Balaam, emphasizing the significance of the angel of the Lord's appearances in the Old Testament, particularly how they represent Jesus. He highlights Balaam's hypocrisy and the attempts to curse God's people, revealing that God sees His people as clean and united, despite their flaws. The angel of the Lord stands against condemnation and works to turn curses into blessings, demonstrating God's love and protection for His people. Miller encourages believers to see themselves through God's eyes, recognizing their worth and the absence of condemnation in Christ.

Transcript

Before I start also let me make a comment about the book and the reason I'm commenting is because some of you brothers I gave your name to the editor and they're supposed to send out these books to certain people and if you look like a pastor or an elder or something then I sent in your name and they're supposed to send you a book. So I don't know if they did or not. So if I saw that I had sent your name to them and I saw you on the list I didn't give you a book.

If you didn't get one and you'd like one I brought some extra so just let me know I'd like everybody to have one and so if you didn't get one that's the reason that the editor failed in doing that. So anyway as we come to the study of God's Word there is a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable and that is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. Listen to these words from Daniel 2 22.

It is he who reveals the profound and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness and light dwells within. Isn't that a wonderful verse? Exactly so, exactly so.

He's promised if we would come as little children that he'd reveal his things unto us. He promised if we would come with our mouths opened wide that he would fill us. We were dry ground that he'd rain upon us.

He delights to meet with us and so I'm going to ask you please to join me as we commit our time to him and then we'll look in his Word. Our Father we would not in any way try to work up an attitude of childlikeness but we just pray that we might cry out with the Abba that the Holy Spirit cries in us. We just want to cry to you.

Thank you for planting a thirst in our hearts. Thank you for planting a hunger in us. Thank you for calling us and drawing us and now we say draw us again and we'll run after you.

Show yourself we pray. Shine forth. Minister unto us.

We pray that our spirits might hear with the language of life your Word this evening. Thank you that you're going to show yourself to us and tune our ears to hear the music. We ask in the all-prevailing name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. Let me set before your hearts again what we're going to be looking at in the few sessions that I have. We've been discussing or we're going to discuss this marvelous appearance of the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament and as I mentioned in the introduction study when the expression the angel of the Lord appears in the Old Testament you can substitute the name Jesus because that's the appearance of God.

Second person of the Godhead that's an appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. He actually appeared over and over again depending on how you break it up at least 20 times probably more and I've tried to list all of those on the paper that you can have out there from Hagar where he first appeared all the way to Zachariah where he last appeared and every appearance of the angel of the Lord it would be marvelous if we could study those 20 or 25 appearances and I encourage you to do it because it's exciting and I think we would have a full summary in picture form of all the different ways the Lord Jesus wants to appear to you. Everything he ever was he is and everything he ever will be he is right now he's everlastingly the same and if he appeared in the Old Testament in order to rescue his people from this way and that way and so on that's how he always wants to meet with us.

We've been looking and we're going to continue to look at Psalm 34 verse 7. Psalm 34 7 says says the angel of the Lord encamps around those that fear him and rescues them and I'm suggesting that every time he appeared in the Old Testament as the angel of the Lord he rescued somebody he delivered somebody and every time Jesus shows up he sets you free in some way. Sometimes it's so obvious you can hear the chains fall off when he appears and it's such a great liberty when he sets you free but every time he appears and you go through those angel of the Lord appearances sometime he rescued from thirst, sometime he rescued from fear, sometime he rescued from defeat, sometime he rescued from despair or discouragement but every time he showed up it was to rescue. Now because our time on a weekend like this is so abbreviated and it's so short we don't have a lot of time to to get into many things I tried to find among the angel of the Lord appearances anything that was common denominator.

Were there any angel of the Lord appearances that were similar and I was struck as I dipped into that great treasury with the three appearances of the angel of the Lord when he appeared with a sword in his hand. The angel of the Lord with a sword in his hand and so I thought that would be fun to just look at those three as an illustration of the many different ways he appeared. The first time he appeared with a sword in his hand he appeared to Balaam and God helping us will look at that this evening his appearance to Balaam in order to rescue his people and then he appeared to Joshua with a sword in his hand.

Lord willing we'll look at that tomorrow morning and then he appeared to David when David numbered the people. Angel of the Lord with a sword in his hand and we'll look at that together Lord willing. I'm going to ask you to turn in your Bibles please to Numbers chapter 22.

Numbers chapter 22 the angel of the Lord encamps around those that fear him in order to rescue them and I'll tell you right up front what I think he wants to rescue us from in this story. The angel of the Lord encamps around those that fear him in order to rescue them from the curse from condemnation. He stood in the way of that one that wanted to condemn God's people and I'd like to develop that wonderful principle with you.

In order to appreciate this particular appearance I'm going to ask you to bear with me as we do a little donkey work because I think it's important that we understand a little bit about this man Balaam. If anyone illustrates 1st Samuel 16 7 I think Balaam illustrates that. 1st Samuel 16 7 says man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart.

Balaam illustrates that truth because what you see is not what you get and when you look at Balaam's life you sometimes scratch your head in confusion and say this man is really an enigma. Balaam is a hypocrite and he's a good one and he fools a lot of people. When you read about Balaam and see some of his words and see some of his actions some of his behavior some of the things that he did you say well now where's the problem? What's wrong with this man? How come everybody's so hard on Balaam? He looks pretty good to me.

Some of you know that we have a tape ministry. As I teach we tape and we offer the tape. Some years ago I did a study in the book of Numbers and I have it on tape.

I haven't done it in many years. If you order that series on tape, see I'm pushing for the tape, if you order that series on tapes you're going to call Lillian up and say where's the end of it? How come he stopped at chapter 21? I'll tell you why because chapter 22 was Balaam and I had no light on Balaam. That's why I stopped at 21.

So if you get my Numbers series it only goes to 21 because I didn't understand this guy. I couldn't find the problem and I read the commentators and they're cutting them down. I said I don't see that.

I couldn't make it my own. Now it's true that Balaam wasn't a Jewish prophet but he seemed to know the Jewish God. He seemed to be acquainted with the God of heaven.

I'm going to ask you to look at a couple of verses and I'll illustrate this. Now I understand in a group this size that there might be some brothers here that have never even heard the story of Balaam, that haven't had the same opportunities that some of the rest of us have had to have our teeth caught on Bible story. And so even though there's such a mass of information, I'll try to give enough so that we'll be able to at least pick up the story line and especially that which is connected with the great truths, the life principles of God and the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Numbers chapter 22 beginning at verse 1. This is the whole issue around which the Balaam story revolves. Then the sons of Israel journeyed and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho. A little comment before we continue.

Their journey is over. They've been through the wilderness. They've had a great victory on the wrong side of Jordan.

God had given them Sihon and Og in this great victory. And there's another group here that becomes afraid. Verse 2, Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

So Moab was in great fear because of the people for they were numerous. And Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel. And Moab said to the elders of Midian, now this horde will lick up all that's around us as the ox licks up the grass of the field.

And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. And so he sent messengers to Balaam son of Baor at Pethor which is near the river in the land of the sons of his people to call him saying, behold, the people came out of Egypt. Behold, they cover the surface of the land and they are living opposite me.

Now therefore, please come curse this people for me since they're too mighty for me. Perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land for I know that he whom you bless is blessed and whom you curse is cursed. And basically that's the issue.

Balak the king hires Balaam the prophet and the purpose of his hiring, curse God's people. I'm going to pay you to curse God's people. I'm afraid of them.

We want them destroyed. Now when you hear Balaam speak, you think, this guy only wants God's will. This guy really wants to honor the Lord.

Balaam has a heart for God. Oh, to these eyes maybe. But that's not the reality.

A glance at chapter 22 verse 8. In chapter 22 verse 8, when he was given the offer to curse God's people, in effect he said, let me pray about it. And doesn't that sound spiritual? Let me pray about it. And when God answered in verse 12, do not go with them.

Listen to verse 13. It looked like Balaam wanted to obey God. Go back to your land for the Lord has refused to let me go with you.

God said, no, I want to obey God. Sounds pretty good. And then in another part of the story where the angel of the Lord checks Balaam in the path and stops him in the way, verse 34, Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, I've sinned.

I did not know you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it's displeasing to you, I will turn back. Doesn't that sound good? It sounds like Balaam is confessing his sin and he offers to retrace his steps and do whatever Jesus wants him to do.

Balaam, as this offer continues, keeps raising the ante. Listen to Balaam's words as Balaam offers him more money. If you curse him, I'll double it, I'll triple it, I'll give you a lot of money.

Listen to his words. Chapter 22, verse 18, Balaam replied to the servants of Balaam, Though Balak were to give his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the Lord our God. The Lord my God.

Isn't that an amazing thing? Doesn't that sound like he's pretty good? I don't care if you give me a house full of money. I can't go against God. Verse 19, please, of chapter 23.

23, 19 and 20. God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should repent. As he said, and will he not do it? Has he spoken? Will he not make it good? Behold, I have received a command to

blast.

When he is blast, I cannot revoke it. Doesn't Balaam sound good? That's why you're not getting tapes on him. Because I read this guy and he sounds great.

Listen to his testimony about himself. Chapter 24, verse 3. He took up his discourse and he said, The oracle of Balaam, son of Baal, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty falling down, having his eyes uncovered. Wonderful word.

As Balaam contemplates his own death. Chapter 23, 10. Who can count the dust of Jacob or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous.

That's what Balaam said. Let me die the death of the upright. Let my end be like his.

Who is this Balaam? You couldn't give me enough money to go against God. Whatever he says I'm going to do. Where he says I'll go, if I find out I'm wrong, I'll turn around and go the other way.

This is the one, 23, 5, where we read the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth. 23, 16. The Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth.

24, 2. The spirit of the Lord came upon him. We're saying he doesn't sound like a villain. He sounds like a real spiritual guy.

How about 24, 17? This is the prophet who prophesied of the Lord Jesus. A star shall come forth from Jacob. A scepter shall rise from Israel.

And so, brothers, if we read with these eyes only, if we just look at what it sounds like and what it looks like, we're going to say Balak hired the wrong guy. Balak was the one blind. He picked out this guy, the guy who knows the Lord and loves the Lord and wants to obey the Lord and refuses to go against the Lord.

That's what it looks like. But God has lifted the veil for us. God has taken away the mask of the heart of this wicked man.

He hasn't left us to wonder or guess about the character of this man, Balaam. Three men, three inspired men in the New Testament, have passed the sentence on him. Peter, Jude, and John.

Here are the references. You can either look it up or just trust me on this. 2 Peter 2, 15 and 16.

Peter calls him the mad prophet. Peter says, he's the one who forsook the right way, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, who was a transgressor. Jude calls him a false teacher and warns people about the error of Balaam.

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John says that he ran headlong into error for pay. He calls him a false teacher, a stumbling block, someone who taught people how to do idolatry, how to commit encouraged immorality. That's what the New Testament says about Balaam.

Even in the Old Testament, when you read the record, and I was so confused reading that, look at where is this guy? He sounds so good. But even there, there are little hints. For example, in Joshua 13, 22.

He's not called a prophet. He's called a diviner, called a soothsayer. There were some commands against that in the law of God.

He's a false prophet. There's no question when the angel of the Lord stood against him, he saw beyond that cover, those words, Numbers 22, 22, the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. He knew he was wrong.

The angel of the Lord stood against him. Verse 32, I have come as an adversary because your way is contrary to me. Jesus knew he was wrong.

Some argue if Balaam was a soothsayer, and if Balaam was a diviner, and if he was doing this by demons and so on, and evil spirits, and trying to conjure up the dead, you must be wrong because why God put his words in his mouth. I have to laugh when I hear that argument, especially from this chapter. Because of verse 28 and 22, 22, 28, the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey and said to Balaam, what have I done to you that you've struck me these three times? Just because his words are in his mouth.

What's that prove? Especially in this chapter. God put his words in the mouth of the donkey. That's full.

Just because God speaks through an impure instrument, doesn't mean he approved. Just because God gives a vision to a Pharaoh, or an Ahaz, or a Belshazzar, or a Nebuchadnezzar, that doesn't mean that they're right with God. Balaam's a wicked man.

In my opinion, soothsayer, diviner, false prophet, corrupter, that's not the worst title given to him in the Bible. In my opinion, the worst title given to Balaam in the Bible is counselor. Counselor.

In chapter 25 of Numbers, we read about the great sin of Baal-peor, the intermarriage of God's people with the heathen women of Midian, and the turning in a wholesale way to idolatry. All that angered the Lord. He sent a plague because of that sin of mixture and idolatry.

24,000 people died because of that plague. And according to 1 Corinthians 10, 8, 23,000 of the 24,000 died in one day because of that plague. Where did they get the idea to intermarry and turn to idolatry? Listen to Numbers 31 and verse 16.

Numbers 31, 16 says, Behold, these caused the sons of Israel through the counsel of Balaam to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and so the plague was among the congregation. He counseled it. When John wrote to the church at Pergamum, he wrote these words, I have a few things against you because you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam.

Then he adds this, who kept teaching Balaam to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel to eat things, sacrifice to idols, and to commit acts of immorality. You say, I don't remember Balaam doing that. I read the record, Balaam sounds so good.

God says he was a counselor. I think it went something like this. Balak, I'll pay you money if you curse him.

I want your money, I want honor, let me check it out with God. If he lets me, I'll do it. I can't do it.

I'll give you more money. Let me ask again. I'll try.

I can't do it. I'll give you more money. Okay, let me try once more.

And that was going on. And when it was all over, he couldn't do it. And Balak said, I was going to pay you so much money.

He wants the money. The Bible says he wants the money. So he puts his hand on Balak's shoulder and he says something like this.

Look, look, I can't curse God's people. You hired me to curse. How can a man curse God's people? The only one that can curse them is Him.

And He won't do it unless I do it. If they intermarry, I'll tell you what to do. If you could get as many of the most lust arousing damsels of Midian to go and intermingle with them, and because once you've got their flesh, they can lead them into idolatry.

If that happens, God can curse them. But I can't curse them. And he planted that idea in Balak's mind.

He counseled him with that. And that's what happened. And a terrible plague came.

This is Balaam. This is the one that wanted to curse God's people. And that's what he tried to do by all means and by every means.

Tried to curse God's people. Brothers, Satan does not want you blessed. I think it would be the shock of your life if you realized how much Satan hates the Lord Jesus.

I think it would be the shock of your life if you realized how much Satan hates you because you love the Lord Jesus. If he could get God's people to live under condemnation, to live under a curse, he would do it. Now, to finally prepare our hearts and end the donkey work before we look at the lesson, I'm going to give you three more passages.

And they come from different parts of the Bible. One is from Deuteronomy, chapter 32. It's about Balaam.

Deuteronomy 32, verses 3 to 5. Listen. Now, here's the verse. Deuteronomy 32, 5. And isn't that a wonderful verse? He wouldn't let him do it.

And he turned the curse into a blessing because he loved you. The next verse is Joshua, chapter 24. Same idea.

Joshua 24, verses 9 and 10. Isn't that a great truth? to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing.

I don't know if you are familiar with that fact. We use it a lot, turn the curse into a blessing. But this is where it is in the Bible, in terms of Balaam.

And that's what God did. The point of all of that background was to home in on the appearance of the angel of the Lord. The angel of the Lord appeared to Balaam with a sword drawn in his hand.

Now, there's a couple of ways we could look at it. Let me mention the way we're not going to look at it, but I'll encourage you to study it that way because it's so instructive. The angel of the Lord stood with a sword in his hand and opposed Balaam so that he could win Balaam.

You've got to see the Lord striving with Balaam. He could have wiped him out. He could have taken that sword and cut off his head.

But he loved Balaam. He was trying to win him. And it's amazing to read the record and the patience of the Lord, the angel of the Lord, as he tries to work with him.

We don't have time to develop any of this, but the angel of the Lord stood in his way to turn him around. And every time the angel of the Lord stands in somebody's way to turn him around, the principles illustrated by Balaam are always true. One of the first things he does is he thwarts the circumstances.

And so the donkey goes out of the way. He changes the circumstances. And when that doesn't work, he brings pain into somebody's life.

And so the donkey pressed his leg up against the wall. That's the Lord trying to reach him. And then when that doesn't work, the Lord usually brings him to a dead end where you can't go either to the right or to the left.

And when that doesn't work, the bottom falls out from under you and the donkey went right down. And when that doesn't work, God brings in an unprecedented miracle in your life so that you can behold it. And this donkey starts to talk to him.

That's an amazing thing. It's God trying to reach him, trying to save him, trying to help him, turn him around. And then God contrasted him, according to Peter, with the donkey.

Everything Balaam claimed, the donkey experienced. Balaam said, I've seen the Lord. The donkey said, I saw the Lord.

Balaam said, I heard the Lord. The donkey said, I heard the Lord. Balaam said, I'm a new man.

I've been changed. He said, He changed my nature. I talked.

The donkey's the Christian? Really? I mean, he's the one. Think about it. He's the one that suffered redemptively for somebody else in order to save him.

And everything that Balaam was trying to believe and trying to fake, this donkey was experiencing. It's just such an amazing thing as God tried to reach him. But the point I want to share has to do with the angel of the Lord not withstanding him in order to reach him and to save him, but withstanding him in order that he wouldn't curse you, that he wouldn't curse me.

He represents all the enemies that wants to bring condemnation on the people of God. Praise God he tried to save him. But praise God that he resisted him to save us, to rescue us.

One thing to get into the wonder of this, brothers, is to realize that as far as Israel was concerned, the people of God who were the ones that would have been cursed if it had worked, they didn't have a clue this was going on. This was all behind the scenes. This was done over their heads.

This was done in secret. They were going to curse. They were just living from day to day.

They're in their tents. They're waiting for the next move to go across the Jordan River. It's not like a temptation you can see coming.

If you see it coming, then you can pray. You can trust God. But this was behind the scenes.

Someone's trying to curse you. Someone's trying to bring you into condemnation. You're just living.

You're just going to work. You're just dealing with your family and your kids. You don't have a clue how much Satan hates you and how he wants to bring a curse on you.

Every minute he's trying to bring you into condemnation. While you sit there and while I stand here, I'm not trying to scare you, but I'm saying there's an enemy. And there's also an angel of the Lord standing with his sword raised in front of that enemy.

And that enemy says, I'm going to curse God's people. And he says, no, you're not. You're going to have to come through me to curse them.

This is an amazing story, brothers. I wonder if eternity will someday reveal how many times the angel with the sword of the Lord has resisted someone who has secretly tried to come in and bring a curse on your life or on my life. We didn't know anything about it.

There's music in this. You hear the music? You hear God sings over you. The angel of the Lord, as I said, would have taken that sword and decapitated Balaam in a moment of time.

It would have been all over. He didn't even see it coming. It would have happened.

It's over. It's done. He not only didn't kill him on the spot.

He could have easily done that is what he did. He not only didn't kill him because he was striving with him and trying to work with him and trying to turn him around, but because he wanted to turn the curse into a blessing. He wanted to show us how he rescues.

He rescues by using evil, not necessarily stopping it. He could stop it. But he seems to get glory from turning the curse into a blessing.

He gets great glory when he uses evil people and evil means and turns that thing around to his glory, working good out of evil. Balaam is not forbidden. Balaam is not stopped.

He's conquered. He's vanquished. He's overcome.

God turns him around. Now, let me show you the blessed rescue. Chapter 23 of Numbers.

According to the record, four different times, at least three times, Balaam attempts to curse God's people, but four times he speaks. And these four times the angel of the Lord resists and turns the curse to a blessing. These four attempts by Balaam to curse God's people have been called the four prophecies of Balaam.

Sometimes they're called the four parables of Balaam because every prophecy was a parable. For those that are interested, here's the breakdown of the verses. The first prophecy is in 23, 1 to 12.

The second prophecy is in 23, 13 to 24. The third prophecy is in chapter 23, verses 25 to 24, 9. And the last one is in chapter 24, verse 10 to 24, 25. Each of these prophecies is given from a slightly different perspective.

I told you one of the things he was doing was trying to get Balaam to turn around. And one way he was doing that, this is a little on the side, but Balaam is claiming, I want to know God's will. And God says, no.

And he said, okay, but what if we look at it from here? And God said, I said, no. He said, well, okay, but I wonder if we look at it from over here. He's trying to get God to change his mind because he really wants his own will.

And I think a lot of this parleying with God, oh, I really am seeking God's will, and I'm just making sure that it's God's will. I think that could be dishonest, and we're just trying to get our own will, and we're trying to use that. But in this first parable, in fact, in all of these parables, you're going to get the heart of it.

You've got to realize that Balaam did not see what he saw. He went up to a certain place, but he didn't see what he saw. And the proof of it is that Balak and Balaam went together.

And they go to a certain place, and they look out, and Balak sees something, and Balaam sees something, but they're seeing different things. They're looking at the same thing, but they're not seeing the same thing. And the way God turned the curse into a blessing is Balaam was trying to see like Balak saw so he could curse.

But God did a miracle and opened his eyes, and he saw like God saw, so we see Balaam looking out of God's eyes at the people he's trying to curse. And so now Balaam is looking at the people. It illustrates the people.

And so the first place they go is in 23.3. And Balak takes Balaam, let's go to the bare hill. Let's go to, the Hebrew is a bald height. It's just a rock that's bald.

There's no growth. There's no trees. There's no shrubs.

It's just a bald height. In each case, he tries to impress God and bribe God by putting up the altars and offering seven animals and so on. But that's just to bribe God.

I don't have any doubt that Balaam had 20-20 vision with these eyes. But what you're about to see, brothers, is how God turns the curse to a blessing, and it's a marvelous thing. From the bald mountain, from the bald rock, from the bald height, Balak and Balaam stand in there.

They look over, and the Bible says they were to look at the extremities of God's people, the fringes. They didn't see everybody from the bald height, just the edges. And if you know anything about the edges of God's people, you know the trouble that the edges get into.

They're not with the body. They're not compact. Those are the ones the Amalekites got.

Amalek came and got the people in the back of the line. And so they're sort of scattered in there, all over the place. And the idea is, look at them.

Disconnected, scattered, weak, vulnerable, feeble. Curse them. They deserve to be cursed.

No different from everybody else. Balaam looks out, verse 9 of 23. As I see him from the top of the rocks, as I behold him from the hills, behold the people who dwells apart and will not be reckoned among the nations, who can count the dust of Jacob or number the fourth part of Israel.

Let me die the death of the upright. Let my end be like his. Balak saw weakness, feebleness, vulnerability, the edges, the people always in trouble, not connected.

Balaam looks out and he says, I don't see that. I see a people united. I see a body.

They're one. And I don't see them like all the other nations. I see them separated from all the other nations.

And you just see a little portion. I don't see a little portion. He says, I see millions of people.

Count the dust of the earth. That's what I see. And Balaam's eyes looked out there and he saw the people of God.

And they were everywhere. And they were one. And they were set apart.

And they were united. And they were a body. And they were separated from the world.

And he looked at them and he says, wow, I wish I could die the death of the righteous. I want to die like that. And I look at them, a people, a massive people, separated under God and away from the world.

That's what he saw. And you can imagine Balak. When Balak heard that, it doesn't say this in my version, he screamed at the top of his lungs.

And he grabbed his hair and he began to pull his hair. And he said, you idiot, what are you doing? What are you doing? What are you seeing? Chapter 23, verse 13, come with me. And Balak said to him, please come with me to another place from where you may see them.

Although you'll only see the extreme end of them, you will not see all of them. Curse them for me there. And so he took him to the field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah.

And he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar and so on. All I see, you see weakness and vulnerability. I don't see any weakness.

I see a people that are a body and they're one and they're united and they're separated from the other nations of the world. He said, you crazy man, come with me. Look here.

And then they go up to Mount Pisgah. You're familiar with that? That's where Moses was allowed to view the land. You know, when you look at this, it almost looks like here they're only seeing a little portion, just a little piece.

But the way it's worded, the extremities doesn't mean they're only looking at the edges, but the extremes. From there you see everything. And they saw all of the people and they were out in their camps.

A brother shared with me today a piece of paper showing how they camped and actually in the shape of a cross. And they were just camped out there. And they looked down from the mountain and saw that.

It's as if Phalic was saying, take a look at all the people. Now they're the ones that just came through the wilderness. And they're the ones that built the golden calf.

And they're the ones that tried to stone Moses and Aaron. And they're the ones that complained ten times and griped. And they're the ones that hated manna.

Curse them. Curse them. Look at them.

These people, they're sinful people. Curse them. Phalic stands up.

Chapter 23:21. I'm going to read it from the King James so you get the real impact of it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.

The Lord his God is with him. The new American standard said he's not observed misfortune in Jacob, nor has he seen trouble in Israel. These are the ones that just came through the wilderness.

They deserve to be cursed. They're grumblers. They're grippers.

They're idolaters. They're murderers. Phalic looks out and says, I see who you're talking about, but I don't see any sin in that.

I see no iniquity in Jacob. Nothing. Not one stain.

And Phalic stood up there because God changed his eyes. And he didn't see anything. And then finally he says in verse 23, there's no omen against them.

There's no reason to curse them. You hear the music brothers? When he sees you, he doesn't see any weakness. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

And when he sees you, he doesn't see any sin. He sees the Lord Jesus and his righteousness. Well, you can imagine Phalic is steaming mad.

He says, come on man, tell what you see. I see what you see and I don't see what you see. God closed his physical eyes and opened new eyes.

And Phalic says, come with me, come with me. Chapter 23, 27. And Phalic said to Balaam, please come.

I'll take you to another place. Perhaps there it will be agreeable with God that you curse them for me from there. And so Balaam took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the wasteland.

Now, let's look at the dirt. Let's look at the dust. They're barren.

There's not a fruit. It's not possible. There's no fruit when you curse these people.

It's a wasteland. Unprofitable. It's dross.

It's waste. It's debris. It's stubble.

These people can't bear fruit. They deserve to be cursed. They're weak.

Curse them. I don't see them as weak. They're a united body and separated from the whole world.

They're dirty. They're sinful. Curse them.

I don't see them as sinful. I see no sin in them. I see no sin in Israel.

Curse them. They're barren. They don't bear fruit.

It's a wasteland. Chapter 24, verse 2. Balaam lifted up his eyes. And he saw Israel camping tribe by tribe.

And the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his discourse and said, The oracle of Balaam, the son of Baor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered. Here's what he sees.

How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel, like valleys that stretch out, like gardens beside the river. I was driving Balak nuts. A wasteland.

He said, I see a garden. I see a garden. This is marvelous.

Verse 6, like valleys that stretch out, like gardens beside the river, like aloes planted by the Lord, like cedars beside the waters. Water will flow from buckets. His seed will be by many waters.

And on and on. That's what he saw. He stands up there.

And Balak is going crazy. Because Balaam is not seeing what he sees. He said they deserve to be cursed because they're weak.

Answer the truth, brothers. Do you deserve to be cursed because you're weak? Do you hear the music? That's not how God sees it. He said, I've been so disconnected from the body, and I'm such a straggler, and I'm a maverick, and I'm all alone, and I'm feeble, and I can't resist temptation, and I fall.

God said, I don't see it that way. I see my people as a body. He said, yeah, but I'm not separated from the world.

God said, I see my people separated from the world. He said, yeah, but I feel so dirty inside. I'm so guilty.

What I did and what I shamed, the shame I brought on him and his men. I said, I don't see any iniquity in Israel. But I feel so barren, and I can't bear fruit, and there's no love in my life and no forgiveness in my life.

And I read about fruit. It's not there. God said, I see a garden.

Do you hear the music, brothers? This is the glorious thing, where God's turning the curse of Balaam into a blessing. This last time Balaam speaks is unsolicited. Balak fired him.

You're done. Forget it. You know, it's interesting here where there's some controversy over whether his eyes were closed or whether his eyes were open.

And actually, there's some legitimate scholarship that says the word there is actually the man whose eyes are closed. And if I'm reading it right, it looks like in the last two prophecies, he goes up like this with his eyes closed in order to illustrate to Balak it's not these eyes. And he goes up there sort of like Clairvoyant.

You know, he's in a trance. But his eyes are closed. He says, let me tell you what I see.

What's he seeing with? He's seeing with God's eyes. Let me tell you what I see. In the last two, he's seeing that way.

But this last one is an extra. It's a freebie thrown in. Chapter 24, verses 10 to 24, 25, Balaam begins to speak.

Commentators point out that the words of this final vision, and you'll have to study it on your own, one of the most amazing prophecies in all the Word of God. It stretches further than any prophecy ever stretched. He even saw beyond what Daniel saw when you're talking about going into the future.

His prophecy covered already more than 34 centuries. Looking forward into it. And he said, I see.

I'm just going to sort of paraphrase it. You can read it. He said, I see human history this time.

I see human history. And I see nations rising and falling. He talks about Assyria.

They didn't even come onto the scene yet. I see nations rising and falling. I see wars.

They're doing well and then they're defeated and then they rise up and another nation comes. And he looks all the way down and he tells about victories and defeats and all of human history. What did he see in the middle of all that human history? Verse 17, I see Him, but not now.

I behold Him, but not near. A star shall come forth out of Jacob. A scepter shall rise from Israel.

And as he looks out down the quarters of time and sees all of the human history in the middle of it all, he sees one who has glory and majesty. A star and a scepter. He was a diviner.

He was a magician. Another day, another place, came another group of magicians. And they looked up and they saw a star.

And they said, where is He who is born King of the Jews? And they saw the scepter. And in the middle of all the rising and the falling, and it's almost as if if Velik could have spoken then, he'd say they deserve to be cursed because they're so vacillating. They're so up and down.

And one minute they're up, and one minute they're down. And one minute they're victorious, and one minute they're not victorious. And one minute the enemy's in charge, and one minute they're in charge.

And that whole vacillation, up and down, look at their history. And he said, all I see is what's in the center of their history. And this is what Dana was talking about today.

Christ in you, the hope of glory. Christ in me. And that's what he saw.

You deserve to be cursed, and so do I. I'm so weak. But he doesn't see that. You deserve to be cursed, and so do I. We're so sinful, but he doesn't see that.

You deserve to be cursed, and so do I. So barren. So fruitless. But he doesn't see that.

You deserve to be cursed, and so do I, because it's up and it's down, and it's good and it's bad, and I'm in and I'm out, and he says, All I see is Christ. All I see is the star. All I see is the sun.

Do you hear the music? Do you hear the music? It doesn't matter how you see yourself. There is therefore now no condemnation. And the angel of the Lord stands with a sword against condemnation.

And he stands against Balaam, and he stands against Satan, and he stands against every evil and anybody that would bring condemnation into your life. And he stands against you, if you believe in the condemnation. And what he's saying is this.

I don't care what it feels like. I don't care what it looks like. I don't care what people tell you.

I don't care if they try to curse you. My people are clean. That's what I see.

A body. One people separated from the world. My people are clean.

That's what I see. No iniquity in Jacob. My people are a garden, fair like an oak by the river.

Bob only gave us the second half of the verse. The second half is God sings over us. You notice the first half talks about the one who's victorious, the conqueror, the one with the sword.

That's why he can sing. He can sing because he's the angel of the Lord with the sword in his hand. The angel of the Lord, brothers, encamps round about those that fear him to rescue them from thirst.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear him in order to rescue them from condemnation and from the curse. May God help us to see through the eyes of God what he sees when he sees you. If you saw what he sees, you'd sing too.

You'd sing too. Let's pray. Father, thank you for turning this curse to a blessing.

Thank you for showing us what it is to look through your eyes when you behold us. Oh, it's so impossible on the level of earth. We know we're so weak.

We know we're so sinful, so barren, so vastly. And yet we know by faith that what you see is the reality. Oh, work it in us, we pray.

Set us free, we pray in Jesus' name. The gym's open until 12. Tomorrow morning, early morning worship, 7-15.

Breakfast at 8 and the meeting right thereafter, okay? So enjoy your evening. Don't snore too much.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14967.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ed-miller/angel-of-the-lord-02-balaam/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net