

# The Wages of Unrighteousness

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the serious consequences of unrighteousness and the importance of true repentance and moral purity.*

**Scripture:** 2 Peter 2:15

**Topics:** "Consequences of Sin", "Importance of Repentance"

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## Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the grave consequences of unrighteousness, using the story of Balaam to illustrate how one can be led astray by the allure of worldly gain. He warns against taking sin lightly and stresses the importance of genuine repentance that produces visible change in one's life. The sermon highlights the dangers of compromising faith for personal gain, as seen in Balaam's actions, which ultimately led to Israel's downfall through immorality. Stegen calls for vigilance against sexual immorality and urges the congregation to uphold God's standards in their lives. The message serves as a reminder of the serious repercussions of straying from the right path.

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## Transcript

"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; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet." (2 Peter 2:15-16).

Some people sin and think lightly of it. They think they can sin easily and say sorry and carry on as normal as if nothing has happened.

No! We read how John the Baptist said to those who came to him to "show forth the fruit of repentance". When you repent, your life after that should show forth the fruit of your repentance.

There is a lot contained in this passage and some of it is frightening.

We read in Revelations how the Lord sent seven letters to the churches. He reprimanded the church in Pergamos, for having the teachings of the Nicolaitanes (Rev 2:12-14). They had the same teaching which Balaam did.

When Israel came out of Egypt the king of Moab feared them greatly and hired the services of Balaam to curse them. The king of Moab, Balak, was a descendant of Lot. Moab was in alliance with the Midianites against Israel. The Midianites again were related to Moses, because his wife was from the Midianites.

God commanded Moses to destroy Moab and Midian, before he would be taken to heaven. Moses did not complain that Moab was from Lot the nephew of Abraham and hence related and that the Midianites were his wife's family. He faithfully did what the Lord commanded him.

Now this Balak, king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse Israel. It's very similar to the way the traditional Zulus go to the sangoma to curse people who have wronged them.

Balaam enquired of the Lord and the Lord revealed Himself to Balaam, "you shall not curse Israel for I have blessed them". So Balaam told Balak's delegation that he could not go with them to curse Israel.

For the second time Balak sent a delegation more honourable than the first to Balaam to ask him to come and curse Israel. In stead of answering them straight what God has told him and send them away, Balaam was tempted by their promises of riches and again asked the Lord, thereby tempting the Lord, whether he could go with them. So the Lord gave him leave to go, but the Lord was angry with him and almost killed him on the way had his female donkey not saved his life.

Balaam went on this way because he was enticed by the money he could get from this matter - he was enticed by the wages of unrighteousness.

Take note of what Balaam did. He was a prophet and seemed to say the right things, but see what was inside him. He was more concerned with the things of this world and his relationship with Balak than to be pleasing to God.

So eventually to appease king Balak, though he could not curse Israel, he advised him to make a feast and also invite Israel to join. He advised him to let his most beautiful girls be at the feast and entice the Israelite men and befriend them and form relationships with them. In that way the two nations would become friends and there won't be any war.

Balaam gave demonic advise. That is indeed what happened and many Israelite men fell into gross sin and the Bible records that Israel committed fornication and adultery and many died because of that (Numbers 25).

As this immorality carried on a prince of Israel, Zimri, took a girl from Midian, Cozbi, and walked into the congregation of Israel in front of Moses and the rest of the congregation with his girlfriend and went into his tent. When Phinehas the priest saw this, his anger was kindled and he took his spear, forced his way into the tent, and found them in the act, where he thrust his spear through them both and they died. It was also the end of the idolatrous party and fornication. God praised Phinehas and gave him the promise of an everlasting priesthood for what he did.

God then commanded Moses to destroy both Midian and Moab for what they did and Moses executed it faithfully. In that battle both Balaam and Balak died.

Sexual immorality is a terrible sin. May we never allow it in our midst.

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