

# Error of Balam - Part 2

by Keith Green

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*The sermon explores the conflict between Balaam's desire for personal gain and his role as a prophet of God, emphasizing the importance of obedience and the dangers of sin.*

**Duration:** 26:44

**Scripture:** Numbers 23:3-5, Numbers 23:8, Numbers 23:20, Jude 1:10-13

**Topics:** "Obedience To God", "Surrendering Will"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Balaam and Balak from the Bible. Balaam is asked by Balak to curse the enemies of Israel, but instead, he blesses them as directed by God. Balak becomes frustrated and asks Balaam to curse them again, but Balaam insists on speaking only what God puts in his mouth. The speaker emphasizes the importance of obeying God's will and not grumbling or complaining about the work of the Lord. He reminds the audience that serving God is a privilege and that we should surrender our own will to His.

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## Transcript

Behold, hey look, don't bug me, I've come. Am I able to speak anything at all? Now, let me translate that for you. I'm not allowed to say what I want to say.

Am I able to speak anything at all? I don't even have a will left. God's got me so, so harnessed in, I can't even say anything. What God tells me to say, I'll say.

Balaam is unhappy being a mouthpiece of God. Now, I know I've seen this in men of God, I've seen it in pastors. Look at it again.

Some of you are confused, you don't understand what I mean. Behold, I'm coming now to you. Am I able to speak anything at all? The word that God... Look at it again.

Some of you are confused, you don't understand what I mean. Behold, I'm coming now to you. Am I able to speak anything at all? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak.

In other words, I can't say anything... Now, you can read it the other way. I don't say anything but what God tells me. That's not what his attitude is, and you'll see in the rest of this book.

His attitude is, I don't even have a will of my own. God doesn't let me do what I want to do. Now, you might be able to say that in a godly way.

I have no will of my own. I have given my will to God. I don't do what I want to do.

Not what I will, but what He wills. You can say that two different ways. You can say that in a godly way.

I can't say anything at all. Am I able to speak? What God says, I'll speak. I've met pastors who God has put in there, and all I do is complain about the work of the Lord.

God's made me a pastor. These people wear me out. In 1977, I played at a church in Fort Worth, and the pastor of this church was called by another pastor.

In fact, it's the pastor that I got the piano from, said of the pastor that I played with in Fort Worth, that he's the only egomaniac that God uses, that He knows. The guy that was called the only egomaniac that God uses, that He knows, said to me, this church just doesn't deserve me. He said, I'm going to give them two more years, and if they don't snap to it, I'm just going to split.

I'm just going to leave. I'm going to go find another church of people that deserve me. I'm not kidding.

That's pretty much what this guy said to me. And I remember going, I was about two years old in the Lord, and I remember going, well, and I was riding in the car with him, and what could I say? Going, well, what about your job? I've done everything I can, and they're just not coming to, and if they don't come to, I'm just going to leave and find a people that deserve the call of the Lord in my life. So here's, and I've met other pastors that were always grumbling, I could be doing this, I could be doing that.

Nobody does God a favor. That's what Leonard said, let it be forever now that nobody has given up any for God. Nothing.

Everything you've given up is a piece of dirt plot on the ground compared to what God has given to you. You haven't given up anything. The privilege of serving the creator of the universe.

There is no greater calling than serving him. Whether it be doing dishes or pastoring a thousand people church, there's no greater calling. Balaam is saying, I can't speak anything at all.

What God says, I'll speak. He's mad. He's bummed out.

39. Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kereah, Chuzok. And Balak sacrificed oxen, Balak, and sheep, and sent some to Balaam, and the leaders were with him.

Then it came about in the morning that Balaam took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal. And he saw from there a portion of the people of Israel. Chapter 23.

Then Balaam said to Balak, Balaam said, Build seven altars for me here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me here. Balak did just as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar. Then Balaam said to Balak, Stand beside your burnt offering, and I will go.

Perhaps the Lord will come to me, and whatever he shows me, I will tell you. So he went to a bare hill. Then Gath met Balaam, and he said to him, I have set up, and he, Balaam said to Gath, capital H, I have set up the seven altars, and I have offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

Then the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return to Balak, and you shall speak thus. So he returned to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, he and all the leaders of Moab. And he took up this discourse, and said, From Arun, Balak has brought me, Moab's king, from the mountains of the east.

Come curse Jacob for me, and come denounce Israel. How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce whom the Lord has not denounced? As I see him from the top of the rock, and I look at him from the hills, behold the people who dwell apart, and shall 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, and let my end be like his.

Then Balak said to Balaam, What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, but behold you have actually blessed them. And he answered and said, Must I not be careful to speak what the Lord puts in my mouth? Then Balak said to him, Please, come with me to another place, from where you may see them, although you will only see the extreme end of them, and will not see all of them, and curse them for me from there. And he took him to the field of Zacheh, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

And he said to Balak, Stand here beside your burnt offering, while I myself meet the Lord yonder. Then the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and he said, Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak. And he came to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, and the leaders of Moab with him.

And Balak said to him, What has the Lord spoken? Then he took up his discourse, and said, Arise, O Balak, and hear. Give ear to me, O son of Zippor. God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should repent.

He's the guy that said that. God's not going to change his mind. Or has he spoken, and will not make it good? Behold, I have received a command to bless.

When he has blessed, then I cannot revoke it. He has not observed misfortune in Jacob, nor has he seen trouble in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

God brings them out of Egypt. He is for them like the horns of the wild ox, for there is no omen against Jacob, nor is there any divination against Israel. At the proper time, it shall be said to Jacob, and to Israel, What God has done.

Behold, a people rises like a lioness, and as a lion it lifts itself. It shall not lie down until it devours the prey and drinks the blood of the slain. Then Balak said to Balaam, Do not curse them at all, nor bless them at all.

Don't say anything. Shut up. If you're not going to bless them, and if you're not going to curse them, then don't bless them.

But Balaam answered and said to Balak, Did I not tell you, whatever the Lord speaks, that I must do? See, that's his catch-all. And it's just a religious hotline. Sure, he's saying what God has said to say, but he hasn't done what God has said to do.

Then Balak said to Balaam, Please come, and I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will be agreeable with God that you curse them for me from there. Now this guy, Balaam, is the biggest stupid idiot in the whole world.

Balaam keeps going. Why? He's looking for payment. He really wants some money.

He realizes that he's got to say what God wants him to say, but he's also been hired by Balak to curse. So he's trying to find a way to please God and to please man. He's trying to find a way to do his job and get payment, and to also say, I'm a Christian and I never do that.

I'll only do what God wants me to do. Perhaps it will be agreeable with God that you curse them for me from there. So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the wasteland.

Now this Balak thinks that there's some power in Balaam of his own. He doesn't know God. He thinks that if Balaam curses Israel, they're going to be cursed.

But Balaam's reputation has not been made on his own. God apparently has anointed Balaam as a prophet. And so Balak thinks it's Balaam's choice.

Maybe God. He's saying, maybe God will let you do it now. And Balaam thinks if he can get, Balak thinks if he can get Balaam to curse him, even if God tells him not to, that they're still going to be cursed.

I mean, it's just stupid. And Balaam said to Balak, build seven altars for me here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams. Balak did just as Balaam had said and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

This is getting expensive. When Balaam saw that, now look at this, verse one. Look at this.

When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omen, but he set his face toward the wilderness. In other words, remember the other time he said, stay here, I'm going to go listen to the Lord. He realized, well, I don't have to go and ask God again.

He's already told me what to say twice. And he said, he's pretty smart there. But it goes to show you that God is not telling him to continue to go on with this guy.

He's making up his own mind this third time to just say it. Now watch what happens. Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe, and the Spirit of God came upon him.

This guy's pretty heavy. And he took up his discourse and said, The oracle of Balaam, the son of Beor, and the oracle of a man whose eye is open, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered. How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel, like valleys that stretch out, like gardens beside the river, like aloes planted by the Lord, like cedars beside the waters.

Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be by many waters. And his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brings him out of Egypt.

He is for him like the horns of the wild ox. He shall devour the nations who are his adversaries, and shall crush their bones in pieces, and shall shatter them with his arrows. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion who dares rouse him.

Blessed is everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone who curses you. Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam. It's that time.

And he stuck his hands together, and Balak said to Balaam, I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times. Therefore, flee to your place now. I said I would honor you greatly, but behold, the Lord has held you back from honor.

What Balaam said, he clapped his hands together and said, you better flee, because I'm going to cut your stupid head off. That's what he's saying. You better get out of my presence, before I slice and dice you.

Second, I said I would honor you. I said I would pay you. I will richly honor you, but the Lord has held you back from the honor that I was going to give you.

And Balaam said to Balak, did I not tell your messengers, whom you said had sent to me, saying though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the Lord, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the Lord speaks, that I will speak. And now behold, I'm going to my people.

Come, and I will advise you what these people will do to your people in the days to come. And he took up his discourse, and he explains how, he gives another oracle, saying how, we can read it, the oracle of Balaam's son, verse 17, I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near.

In other words, I see Israel, but not now. And I hear him, but not near. A star shall come forth from Jacob, and a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Shep.

And Edom shall be a possession. Syrits and Amazel shall be a possession, while Israel performs valiantly. One from Jacob shall have dominion, and shall destroy the remnant from the city.

And he looked at Amalek, and took up his discourse, and said, Amalek, and on and on, he talks about all the cities around him. Then Balaam arose, and departed, and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way. Now, the thing about Bible study is that's the whole story of Balaam, except there's little bits and ditties, five and six chapters up.

God is talking in hindsight, then, about different other things that Balaam said and did. Now, if you're just glossing over this, it seems like Balaam's pretty obedient to God and goes home, and that's fine. But when he says to him, I said to your people, and even if you were to give me all the silver and gold in your house, well, Balaam did another thing.

We skip over it. You can see in chapter 25. Look at chapter 25.

While Israel remained at Shekim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab, for they invited the people to the sacrifices of their God. Hey, why don't you guys come to the movies with us? And the people ate and bowed down to their God. So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against Israel.

We can read this real quick. So Israel joined themselves, and the Lord said to Moses, Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the Lord. Take all the leaders and execute them, so that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.

So Moses said to the judges of Israel, Each of you slay as men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor. And behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses in the sight of all the congregations of the sons of Israel while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation, took a spear in his hand, went after the man of Israel into the tent, and he pierced both of them through the man of Israel and the woman through the body.

So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked, and those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand. So he took her into the tent and was having sex with her, and the guy killed them both right through both bodies. And it was against the law of Moses for them to marry anybody from another race because of the spiritual impurity.

But now all we have is Balaam saying to him in verse 14 of 24, Now behold, I am going to my people. Come, and I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the days to come. That's all.

I will advise you. Okay? That's all we got. Now you can turn to Numbers 31, verse 16.

Let's read 31. Now this is years and years and years later. This is not immediately.

This is chapters later. And remember when Balaam says, I see him, but not now. When he starts doing his thing, he says, I see him, but not now.

I behold him, but not near. He's going to get you, but not right away. Here, the Lord spoke to Moses in chapter 31, verse 1. Take full vengeance for the sons of Israel and the Midianites.

Afterward, you will be gathered to your people. This is the end of Moses' life. This is many years later.

Moses spoke to the people, saying, Amen from among you for the war that they may go against Midian to execute the Lord's vengeance on Midian, a thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel. Verse 7. So they made war against Midian, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. And they killed every male.

And they killed the kings of Midian, along with the rest of their slain. Five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam, the son of Beor, with the sword.

Okay, there's his death. And the sons of Israel captured the women of Midian and their little ones, and all their cattle and their flocks and all their goods they plundered. Then they burned all their cities where they had lived and all their camps with fire.

And they took all the spoil and all the prey, both as men and as beasts. And they brought the captives and the prey and the spoil to Moses and the Eleazar, the priest, and to the congregation and so on and so forth. Moses and Eleazar, the priest, and all the leaders of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp.

And Moses was angry with the officers of the army and captains of thousands, captains of hundreds who had come from the service and the war. Moses said to them, Have you spared all the women? Behold, look at this closely, these caused the sons of Israel through the council of Balaam to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor. So the plague was among the congregation of the Lord.

So what Balaam said to them, I'll give you advice, I can't curse them, but if you want to know how to get them, send your hookers, send your daughters, send your loose women down there to entice them and

tempt them and intermarry with them and then invite them over to your religious services and to the feasts of your God and you'll steal their hearts away from their God. You understand? That's what it says in verse 16. Behold, these caused the sons of Israel through the council of Balaam to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor.

Well, we just read the chapter what happened in Peor. God, they went, you know, back in verse, in chapter 25, you can go back there, the sin of Peor, while Israel remained in the city and the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. Right? Through the council of Balaam.

He says, send your women out there. This is how, now look, this is what he said. Balaam was wise.

Man of God. Why? Just misused it. That's all.

He says, I can't curse them. God doesn't want to curse them. But sin will curse them.

If you can get them to sin, you won't have to curse them. You won't need me to curse them. Sin will curse them.

You can write that down. That's a very important thing. The devil may not be able to rip you out of the hand of God.

The devil can't attack you sometimes. He can't really get to your heart. Your enemies can slander you.

That won't hit you. God might even test you. But God will never leave you, forsake you, or tempt you.

But sin will curse you. And, the devil, all he's got to do is get you to sin. Remember, when Satan came up before God and said, God says, where have you come from? He says, I'm going to and fro among the earth.

And God says, have you considered my servant Job what a fine young man he is? He says, ah yeah. Take down all his riches away. He'll curse you to your face.

And that didn't work. He says, take away his bodily health. He'll curse you.

He'll spit in your eye. And he says, all right. You're on.

Balaam says, I can't curse him. God won't let me. Now, you know, there's some real, you know, Christians are just sheep.

You know, God calls us his sheep because sheep are the dumbest animals there are. They are. They are.

They're absolutely stupid. I mean, that's why, you know, God didn't say, you're my, you know, dolphins or chimpanzees or conker spaniels or anything. You're my sheep.

Sheep are absolutely the lowest intelligent barnyard animal there is. That's why he calls us sheep. And Balaam is such an idiot because he says, I'll, I'll obey God.

I'll only say what he says to Israel in an oracle or a divination or some big, you know, spiritual thing. But then instead of sharing God's feelings about Israel, he's just obedient outwardly. He doesn't have the heart of God for Israel.

He wants to make some money. And I bet you that when he says, I'll give you advice, I'll tell you how to get Israel, that Balak probably paid him. He probably made his money, probably went home a richer man.

The error of Balaam is to use the gift of God for money and also to ask God twice after God said no the first time. To find a way around of being obedient to God all the way through the story. He always finds a way around obeying God because he doesn't share God's heart.

He just does what God says, but he doesn't share his heart. And if you don't share God's heart, you might think you're doing what he wants you to do. But you'll only be going through outward motions of obedience.

You might read your Bible and say your prayers and keep the rules and in your heart be a wicked, wicked servant. Unless you know and share his heart and his attitude towards sin and his hatred towards sin and his love for souls and his love for others. And you know, I remember Winky Pratt and he used to teach on this through Jude.

We'll go to Jude to close this up in a minute. But um Winky Pratt he taught on it and he always said that Balaam and let me tell this story real quickly. He says Balaam the error of Balaam was he did what God said and then went around God's God's commandment to tell him if you really want to get him this is the way to curse him.

Now why would God punish Israel for that? Because nobody nobody is responsible for your sin but you. Nobody is. If somebody calls if some girl comes into your room completely naked and says come on baby you know it's not it's not her fault if you sin with her.

That's why God cursed Adam and Eve and the serpent. Eve said it was the serpent Adam says it was the wife you gave me. Eve said it was the serpent.

Serpent says duh you know. Serpent's curse gets rid of his legs. You're going to eat dust the rest of your day.

The woman's curse you're going to have pain and childbirth. The man's curse you're going to bring forth your food instead of being able to pick it and just prune the garden and fertilize it and take care of it. Now you're going to have to scrape in the desert to get what? To get your food and travel the rest of your day instead of being in this garden.

So all of them were cursed. And nobody I I've gotten letters from people that blamed me you know people that used to live with us or people that worked with us that said well I really was supposed to do this but you gave me this counsel and I did this and it was wrong. And I said well if you really believed you were supposed to do it you should have done it.

You can't blame me for not doing it. If I give you if I give any of you counsel and you know God told you to do something else you're a fool not to obey God. You're foolish not to listen to counsel and you're foolish not to listen.

Listen is one thing. You're foolish not to fear that maybe you're doing what's wrong. You're foolish not to consider that counsel might be from God.

But in the end if you're sure with all your heart that God told you to do something that the whole world says not to do you're an idiot for not doing it. No matter if the whole church says you shouldn't do it. And nobody you can you know sure your pastor will be responsible in his life for giving you the wrong counsel but you are ultimately responsible for taking the wrong counsel.

Watch that. Okay. Let's turn to Jude.

The last book right before Revelation. It's only one chapter long. Verse 10.

Talking about evil men. Evil men that creep in unnoticed into the church. But these men revile the things which they do not understand and the things which they know by instinct like unreasoning animals by these things they are destroyed.

Woe to them for they have gone the way of Cain and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam perished in the rebellion of Korah. These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feast when they feast with you without fear caring for themselves clouds without water carried along by winds autumn trees without fruit doubly dead uprooted wild waves of the sea casting up their own shame like foam wandering stars for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. So for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam sold their conviction.

Lord we ask that through your words in the study tonight that you would teach us instant obedience the fear of coming to you a second time after you've made your will clear to us and all these principles God of letting our hearts agree with your position rather than try to find a way around it and just obey the outward surface thing God I ask that you burn this into our hearts and make it real to us in our lives for your glory in Jesus name.

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