

The Folly of Balaam

Numbers 22-24

- The Children of Israel are wandering
- Aaron dies, Numbers 20
- Israel is dwelling among heathen nations
- Numbers 21 ends with Bashan and Og defeated

1. To Curse or Not to Curse? Numbers 22:1-21

- 1 – in the plains of Moab (distant kin; Lot)
- 2 – evidence of battles seen
- 3 – Moab afraid and distressed
- 4 – Moab to Midian (d. kin) – they will get us
- 5 – introduced to Balaam
- 6 – Balaam hired to curse Israel
- 7 – getting money ready for Balaam
- 8 – Balaam: God will speak to me what to say
- 9 – God does speak (theophany)
- 10-11 – Balaam recounts (God knew)
- 12 – don't go; don't curse; they're blessed
- 13 – the Lord won't let me go
- 14 – "Balaam refuses to go with us."
- 15-17 – will pay whatever
- 18 – "even a house of silver/gold can't make me go"
- 19 – wait for answer from the Lord
- 20 – God: if they ask, go, but only say what I tell you
- 21 – he rose up early and went with the princes of Moab

2. Talking Donkey – Numbers 22:22-35

- 22 – God is mad; angel stands in the way
- 23 – donkey saw the angel; went into field

- 24 – angel now stands in narrow path
- 25 – donkey crushed Balaam’s foot in wall
- 26 – angel went further – cannot pass
- 27 – donkey saw angel, bows; Balaam angry and smites the donkey
- 28 – God allows donkey to speak (Balaam not surprised – he had just spoken to God)
- 30 – donkey lets Balaam have it
- 31 – God opens Balaam’s eyes
- 32 – angel to Balaam: why did you do this?
- 34 – Balaam: I have sinned
- 35 – God: go but only saw what I tell you

3. Balaam’s Oracles – Numbers 23-24

1. 23:7–10 – countless Israel
2. 23:18–24 – military might; moral Israel
3. 24:3–9 – glory of Israel’s king(s)
4. 24:14–19 – coming of a conqueror
5. 24:20 – ruins of Amalek.
6. 24:21–22 – destruction of the Kenites
7. 24:23–24 – ships of Kittim bring destruction

Lessons:

1. Don’t take money over serving God
2. Don’t waffle obedience and disobedience
3. Disobeying God brings consequences

Balaam in the New Testament:

- 2 Peter 2:15 – loved wages of unrighteousness
- Jude 11 – greedily
- Revelation 2:14 – doctrine of = greed

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