

Lesson 12 - 17 July 2011

God's Message Through Balaam

Lesson Scope: [Numbers 22-25](#)

Lesson Focus

Balak had hired Balaam to curse Israel. To the heathen, who believed they could influence their gods to switch their protection from one people to another, this seemed like the answer to their threat from Israel. Not only Balak but also Balaam seemed to believe that Jehovah God could be manipulated to the advantage of Israel's enemies.

God's message through Balaam revealed that He was far from turning away from Israel. God had a plan for Israel that extended far into the future. and He would work through Israel to accomplish that plan (Numbers 23:23). Balak is not the only man in history who sought the destruction of God's people. Mortal man however cannot hope to obstruct God's plan for His people or interfere with the blessings God has in store for them

This lesson gives an interesting view of Israel from the perspective of those around her. In spite of the hardships and disciplines of the wilderness, or because of them, Israel was a mighty, growing nation that other nations could not ignore. The principles that governed them and made them strong apply to God's people today.

In spite of all the good that was promised and Israel was experiencing, Balaam's counsel to Balak was all too successful. Having God's promises will not keep us if we become careless in our personal lives. Study this lesson with that background principle in view.

God's people face a foe that is intent on their destruction. But God overrules and turns their schemes into blessing

Lesson Aim: To see principles related to God's blessing upon His people.

Theme Verses: [Genesis 12:2-3](#). And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Lesson Text:

A Separated People

Numbers 23:5

⁵ And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.

Numbers 23:8-10

⁸ How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, *whom* the LORD hath not defied? ⁹ For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. ¹⁰ Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth *part* of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

An Unalterable Purpose

Numbers 23:19-24

¹⁹ God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? ²⁰ Behold, I have received *commandment* to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. ²¹ He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God *is* with him, and the shout of a king *is* among them. ²² God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. ²³ Surely *there is* no enchantment against Jacob, neither *is there* any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! ²⁴ Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat *of* the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

Numbers 24:2-9

² And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding *in his tents* according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him. ³ And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: ⁴ He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open: ⁵ How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, *and* thy tabernacles, O Israel! ⁶ As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, *and* as cedar trees beside the waters. ⁷ He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. ⁸ God brought him forth out of

Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce *them* through with his arrows. ⁹ He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed *is* he that blesseth thee, and cursed *is* he that curseth thee.

The Ultimate Provision

Numbers 24:12-14

¹² And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, ¹³ If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do *either* good or bad of mine own mind; *but* what the LORD saith, that will I speak? ¹⁴ And now, behold, I go unto my people: come *therefore*, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

Numbers 24:17-19

¹⁷ I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. ¹⁸ And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. ¹⁹ Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

Questions for Study

A Separated People

1. Why was Israel not numbered among the nations?
2. What blessings did Israel experience by being separated from the nations?
3. What blessings do we experience by being a separated people?

An Unalterable Purpose

4. Why was Balaam able to say God had not seen perverseness in Israel?
5. What blessings was Balaam referring to in Numbers 24:5-7?
6. What must we do to be recipients of God's blessings?

The Ultimate Provision

7. What would the Star of Jacob provide for Israel?
8. What has He provided for us?"

Analyzing the Passage

Israel was God's special people. They were a separate people, singled out and distinguished from the Gentiles (Numbers 23:9). As such they became

a target for the enemies of God. God was blessing His people, however and the years in the wilderness had not destroyed their strength. When Balaam viewed their camp from the top of the high place, he was impressed with their numerical strength (Numbers 23:10).

God was not about to withdraw His protection. He empowered them with "the strength of an Unicorn" (wild bull) (Numbers 23:22; 24:8). There was no magical power of enchantment that could be used against Israel, because God, the greatest power in the spirit world, was protecting and blessing them (Numbers 22:24).

Israel would conquer the Promised Land and make it their permanent home (Numbers 23:24: 24:8-9). The "-Star," "Sceptre," and "he that shall have dominion-" refer to Christ (Numbers 24:17-19).

Principles and Applications

A Separated People

1. No man can remove God's favor from His people (Numbers 23:8, 23). God's people belong to Him not because of their goodness but because of His love. - Our adversary the devil" would easily overcome us but for the grace of God. This "accuser of our brethren" would be glad to turn God against us if this were possible (Revelation 12:10). Because this is not possible we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16).

2. God's people are a special, separated people (Numbers 23:9). Because God calls His people to higher standards than the people around them, and because He wants to spare them from the judgments He will pour out on the world. God calls His people to a life of separation. While this separation serves as a barrier to close association with the world, it also serves as a mark of identification with God and as an avenue to receive God's blessings.

3. Divine blessings upon the righteous extend beyond death (Numbers 23:10). The choices of life must be considered in light of eternity. It is unwise to make choices on the basis of present gratification, expecting to change one's course later. God's people make their choices in light of eternal consequences. The blessings begin in time and continue in eternity.

An Unalterable Purpose

4. God's Word is irrevocable (Numbers 23:19-20). It does not change because God knows the end from the beginning. While there may be slight variation in the application of God's Word those principles remain changeless. Nonresistance, nonconformity and other Bible teachings are as impor-

tant today as they ever were. God knew the challenge our generation would face in applying these principles, yet He still gave them and we are responsible to live them out.

5. The Lord provides a way for His people to live in victory over sin (Numbers 23:21). We live in a world that is increasingly bold. Magazine racks in stores, billboards, and public immodesty advertise with the intent to draw us into sin. It is possible, however, to live above sin. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). If want God's blessing on our lives, we must live in victory and repent when we fail.

6. The Lord pours out blessings for the prosperity of His people (Numbers 24:5- 7). Without the blessing would of God, many of the things we take for granted would not be possible. Christian day schools along with a Christian curriculum, Bible schools, and a faithful leadership that gives sound, practical teaching are all part of the blessings God has given for the prosperity of His people.

7. God will complete His purpose for His people (Numbers 24:8,. 9). The Father's sight of this purpose is to prepare a spotless bride for His Son. It is easy to lose sight of this as we relate to fellow brethren and sisters with their human weaknesses. Even though we face an increasingly evil world and some become discouraged and give up God's purpose of a spotless bride will be realized (Ephesians 5:27).

The Ultimate Provision

8. The promised King provides final and complete victory evil (Numbers 24: /7-19). Jesus' coming, His death and His resurrection put into place the plan of salvation. Although Satan continues to oppose God's people, his destiny is sealed. It is all a matter of time till he meets his doom.

Important Teachings

1. No man can remove God's favor from His people (Numbers 23:8, 23).

2. God's people are a special, separated people (Numbers 23:9).

3. Divine blessings upon the righteous extend beyond death (Numbers 23:10).

4. God's Word is irrevocable (Numbers 23:19-20).

5. The Lord provides a way for His people to live in victory over sin (Numbers 23:21).

6. The Lord pours out blessings for the prosperity of His people (Numbers 24:5-7).

7. God will complete His purpose for His people (Numbers 24:8-9).

8. The promised King provides final and complete victory over evil (Numbers 24:17-19).

Answers to Questions

1. Why was Israel not numbered among the nations?

From God's perspective, Israel was His special people. He worked with them, and through them He brought the Messiah (Deuteronomy 32:8, 9). They were governed by divine laws and did not fit the pattern of the nations around them (Esther 3:8).

2. What blessings did Israel experience by being separated from the nations?

God's presence dwelt among them. They were given their own land and victory over their enemies. When Israel lost their separation, they were defeated and scattered among the nations.

3. What blessings do we experience by being a separated people?

Separation is necessary in order to have God among us and to experience His blessing (2 Corinthians 6:17). Separation helps preserve the faith and spares us from sharing in the judgment and reaping of those around us.

4. Why was Balaam able to say God had not seen perverseness in Israel?

Israel had those who rebelled against God. However, as long as Israel accepted God's purging of the rebellious element among them, continued to offer sacrifices to cover their sin, and lived as God's covenant people, God viewed them as a holy people (Exodus 19:5-6).

5. What blessings was Balaam referring to in Numbers 24:5-7?

As a nation governed by divine laws, who had God dwelling among them, Israel was the choice nation to live in. As a nation they had an aura of strength and well-being that came from God.

6. What must we do to be recipients of God's blessings?

We must live in Christian victory. As a church we must deal with sin and help the uncommitted to experience full surrender. The Word of God must be the highest authority among us.

7. What would the Star of Jacob provide for Israel?

The Star of Jacob would provide kingly leadership and complete deliverance from the enemy.

8. What has He provided for us?

He has provided for our salvation and for final and complete victory over the enemy. He gives us the hope of His Second Coming and eternity in His presence.

Summarizing the Lesson

God's message through Balaam emphasizes His plan for Israel. Balaam's prophecies make it clear that no forces of opposition, earthly or supernatural, can thwart God's plan.

May we be among those whom God call bless, so that we can confidently face the future, knowing that God will see us through.

Research Guide

1. Other verses that speak of Israel filling a special place among the nations are Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 26:19; 28:1.
2. Some verses that show the special place the church fills are Ephesians 1:4; James 2:5; 1 Peter 2:9.