

Doctrine of Balaam

Introduction

Balaam was a typical hireling prophet, seeking only to make a market of his gift. This is the way of Balaam as spoken by Peter in 2Pe 2:15-17 and characterizes false teacher.

2Pe 2:15 They have left the straight-way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.

2Pe 2:16 But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey -- a beast without speech -- who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

2Pe 2:17 These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

The error of Balaam was obvious. He was willing to sell his soul to the Devil.

Jude 1:11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

A holy God, Balaam reasoned must curse such a people of Israel. Like all false teachers he was ignorant of the higher morality of vicarious atonement, by which God could be just and yet the justifier of believing sinners.

Rom 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished –

Rom 3:26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Joh 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

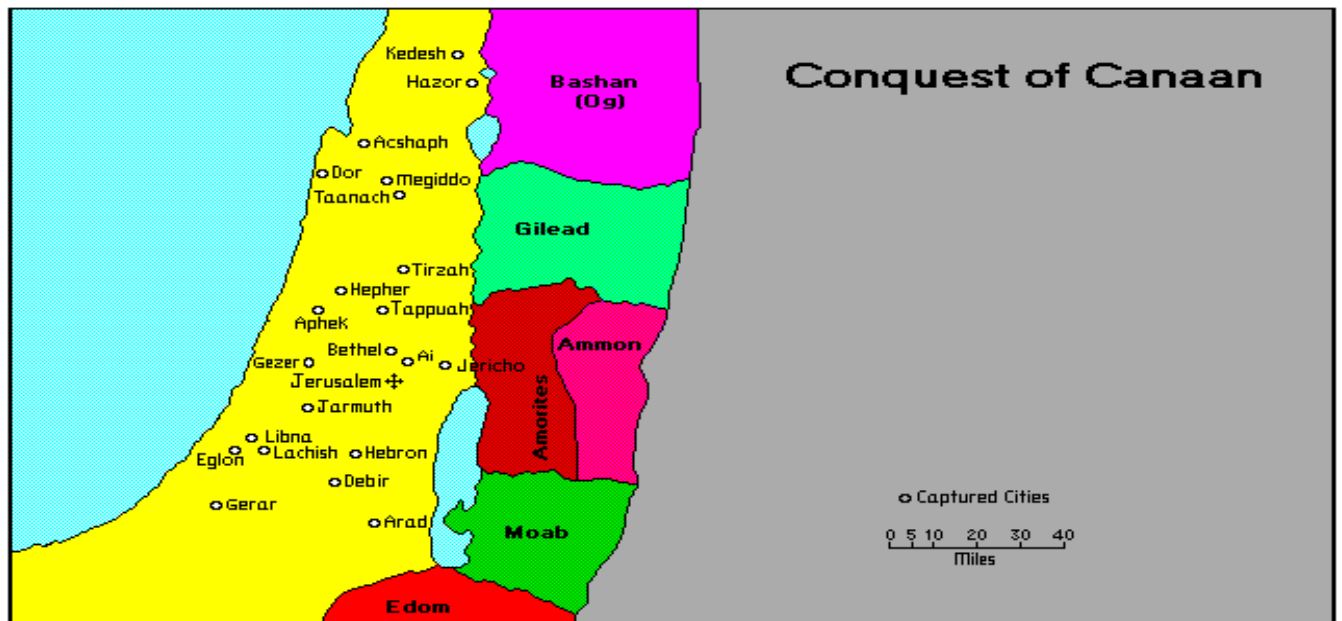
Joh 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Joh 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Eph 2:8 For by Grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves.

Balak Sends for Balaam

Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across from Jericho. Now Balak saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites,



Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites.

The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." Balak who was king of Moab at that time, sent messengers to summon Balaam who was at Pethor, near the River, in his native land.

Balak said: "A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me.

Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For I know that those you bless are blessed, and those you curse are cursed."

The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said "Spend the night here," Balaam said to them, "and I will bring you back the answer the LORD gives me." So, the Moabite princes stayed with him.

God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?" Balaam said to God, "Balak king of Moab, sent me this message: 'A people that has come out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them and drive them away.'"

But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed."

So, the Moabite princes returned to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us." Then Balak sent other princes, more numerous and more distinguished than the first. The new delegation spoke once more to Balaam. "I will reward you handsomely. Come and put a curse on these people for me."

Balaam answered them, "Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the LORD my God. Now stay here tonight as the others did, and I will find out what else the LORD will tell me."

That night God came to Balaam and said, "Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."

When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road. Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So, Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bagmoth Baal, and from there he saw part of the people.

The Prophecies of Balaam

Balaam said, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."

The LORD put a message in Balaam's mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this message."

Who can count the dust of Jacob or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!" Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them!"

Then Balak said to him, "Come with me to another place where you can see them; you will see only a part but not all of them. And from there, curse them for me." So, he took him to the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah, and there he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offering while I meet with him over there." The LORD met with Balaam and put a message in his mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this message."

So he went to him and found him standing beside his offering, with the princes of Moab. Balak asked him, "What did the LORD say?" I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it.

There is no sorcery against Jacob, no divination against Israel. It will now be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'See what God has done!' The people rise like a lioness; they rouse themselves like a lion that does not rest till he devours his prey and drinks the blood of his victims."

The Prophecy from Peor

Then Balak said to Balaam, "Come, let me take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God to let you curse them for me from there." Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not resort to sorcery as at other times, but turned his face toward the desert.

When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:

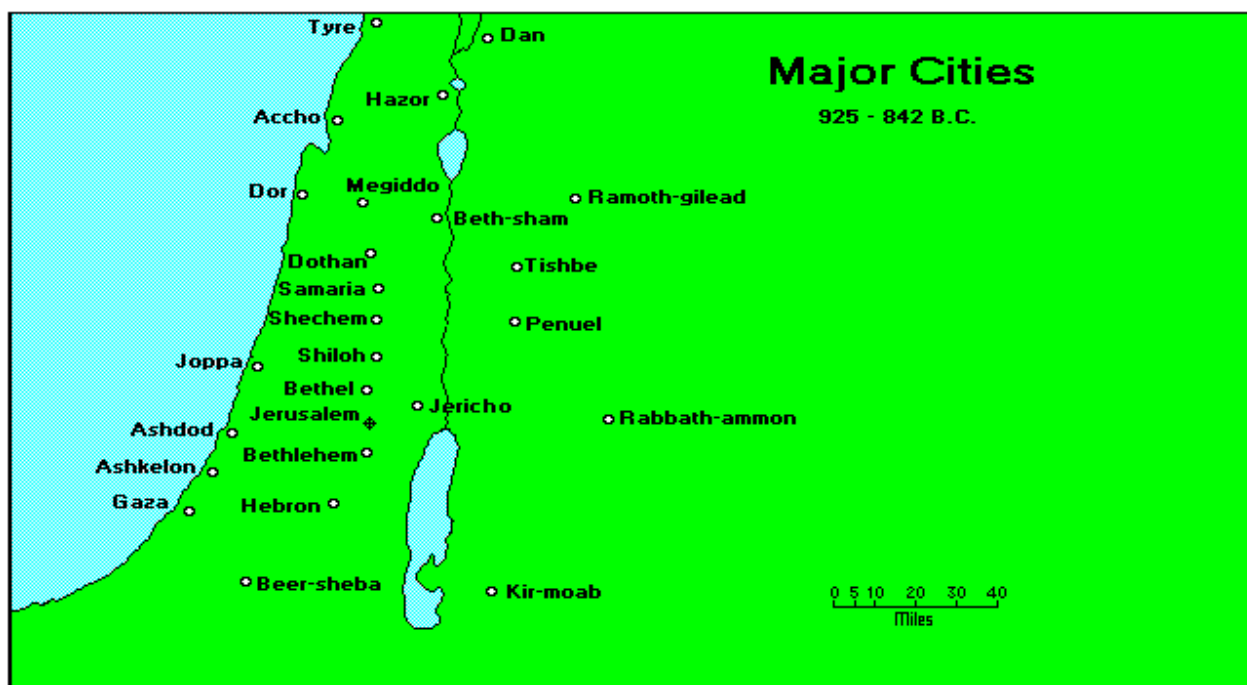
"How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel! Like valleys they spread out, like gardens beside a river, like aloes planted by the LORD, like cedars beside the waters."

The King Vents his Anger

Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to him, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them.

Then Balaam got up and returned home and Balak went his own way.

The Sin of Peor



While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, bringing on a plague.

Num 25:17 "Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them,
Num 25:18 because they treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the affair of Peor and their sister Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader, the woman who was killed when the plague came as a result of Peor."

Num 31:16 "They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD'S people.

Jos 22:17 Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the LORD!

The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the LORD'S fierce anger may turn away from Israel."

Apparently, one Israelite man did not get the message for he brought his new found Midianite girlfriend into camp and flaunting Moses pronouncements about fraternization he had went into the Tabernacle to have sex. Phinehas took matters into his own hands.

When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear through both of them. Shortly thereafter the plague against the Israelites stopped.

The LORD said to Moses, "Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them all" and that they did.