



SERIES:	04 Numbers - 2013
MESSAGE:	Numbers 24-25
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	Numbers 24-25

MESSAGE SUMMARY

The Lord used the false prophet Balaam to bless the nation of Israel, and through Balaam's final prophecy in Numbers 24, God sealed the fate of Israel and its surrounding nations. But even though the Lord blessed His people, they still sinned, worshiping the gods of other nations. When God poured out His wrath on their sin in Numbers 25, we actually see the depth of His mercy and patience.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Like the early church, we take the old covenant and seek to make application to understand the foundation for New Testament truth
 - B. Balaam is one of those enigmatic, mysterious people
 1. Clearly called a false prophet in the New Testament (see 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14)
 2. More literary real estate was given to him than Mary, the mother of Jesus, or any of the twelve apostles
 3. Yet the spirit of the living God spoke through him—overriding his bad motivation and false doctrine—and miraculously used him as a vessel
 - C. Take comfort in the fact that God spoke through Balaam's donkey first
 1. He can speak through anyone
 2. 2 Chronicles 16:9
 - D. Even though the Lord told Balaam not to go with Balak, he went anyway
 1. He was bent on going his own way because he wanted financial remuneration
 2. But through him the Lord spoke blessing on Israel several times
- II. Numbers 24
 - A. Mount Peor
 1. Eastern side of the Jordan River and Dead Sea
 2. Associated with a false god
 3. This was the very first time Israel worshiped Baal
 - B. Baal
 1. The storm god; he was thought to control the rain, the sun, and all natural forces, including bringing fertility to the land
 2. Whenever there was a drought in Israel, they would be tempted to worship the false gods of those around them
 - C. It was believed that fertility was the direct result of the sexual union of the gods and goddesses
 1. Worshipers would seek to imitate that

2. The worship of Baal was very sexual and sensual
 3. Baal's cohort was Ashtoreth/Astarte—Easter
- D. Balaam was conning Balak this whole time, but now there was an overwhelming voice from the spirit of God that spoke through Balaam in a very direct, unusual manner
- E. In the Old Testament era, the nations around Israel believed in different ideas:
1. Polytheism—many gods
 2. Henotheism—each god was assigned a specific geographical location
 - a. The king of Syria, Ben-Haddad, used this as an explanation of northern Israel's victory over Syria
 - b. I Kings 20:23
 3. In the middle of all this was monotheistic Israel
- F. The third oracle
1. Verse 3
 - a. Balaam was a seer, but God opened his eyes
 - b. He was compelled to go down before the Spirit of the Lord
 2. Verse 7
 - a. Israel was pictured as a man carrying two buckets of water, the source of life and refreshment, then pouring it out
 - b. Ironic reversal of what Pharaoh tried to do to Israel: drown the seeds (see Ex. 1:22)
 - c. The imagery of a man with water was the Lord's blessing upon the Israelites to spread and grow throughout the world
 3. There are seven billion people in the world, thirteen million of which are Jewish—two-thirds of one percent
 - a. Yet twenty-five to thirty-three percent of Nobel Prizes have been given to Jewish people
 - b. They have become a source of great blessing
 - c. Genesis 12:2-3
 4. *Agag* (v. 7) could be a title, not a specific name
 - a. "His king" could refer to David, but it fits Jesus Christ better
 - b. Isaiah 35:7; a very real part of Messiah's reign is described in verse 7
 5. Verse 9
 - a. Jacob's blessing: Genesis 49:9-10
 - b. It was as if Balaam knew of this prophecy, or the Spirit of God put that same thought in his heart
 - c. Genesis 12:3
 - d. Think about the nations who attacked Israel that are no longer world powers
 - e. God's people are not His perfect people—they just happen to have a covenant with the living God
- G. The fourth (final) oracle
1. Verse 17
 - a. Revelation 22:16: Lucifer is a copy of that, a second-rate star (see Isa. 14:12)
 - b. Genesis 49:10: the scepter represents the right to rule as a king
 - c. Jesus will return and be the King of kings and Lord of lords (see Rev. 19:11-16)

2. This is a prediction of Christ
 - a. Matthew 2:2
 - b. Magi in Nebuchadnezzar's court; Daniel 9:24
3. Edom (v. 18)
 - a. Will become bitter enemies with Israel
 - b. One of the Maccabean kings, John Hyrcanus, defeated the Edomites
 - c. Herod the Great was an Idumean
4. The Amalekites (v. 20) were the first to attack Israel when they left Egypt (see Ex. 17:8-13; Deut. 25:17-18)
5. The Kenites (vv. 21-22) lived among the Midianites, but in the mountains
 - a. Kain was the originator of the tribe
 - b. Asshur refers to Assyria (Assyrian captivity in 722 BC)

III. Numbers 25

- A. Numbers 31:16 helps explain what happened between chapters 24 and 25
 1. What Balak and Balaam failed to do by sorcery, they accomplished by seduction
 2. It was as if Balaam told Balak, "If you put them in a place where their religion mingles with another religion, and bring idolatry into the camp, then God will curse them"
- B. This compromising philosophy is the doctrine of Balaam
 1. This is Satan's principle: if you can't beat them, join them
 2. God blessed the Israelites, but they put themselves in a curse-able position
 3. When Jesus was delivered up, it was an inside job—Judas did it
- C. Verse 4: God demanded immediate surgery
- D. Phinehas was a gatekeeper of the tabernacle (see I Chron. 9:20)
- E. God and the Bible have been criticized because of this chapter
- F. Instead of being brutal and warmongering, God is merciful
 1. In taking away the cancer, Israel was saved
 2. God was patient with the Canaanite population
 - a. Genesis 15:13-16: four hundred years
 - b. Another four hundred years went by as Israel was under the bondage of the Egyptians
 - c. God waited eight hundred years before He punished the Canaanites and told Israel to drive them out
- G. There comes a point when God's wrath must eclipse God's mercy—when His judgment must interact with man's sinfulness
 1. Galatians 6:7
 2. The only Canaanite who repented was Rahab (see Josh. 2:1-21)
- H. Matthew 7:13-14
 1. If you think about it, all roads lead to God; pick any road you want—you'll see God someday (see Heb. 9:27)
 2. However, the wide part of that road leads to destruction; the narrow road leads to life

IV. Closing

- A. Yes, there's only one way—but how merciful that God made a way
- B. God said, "I'll put all of your sin on one Man, so that all you have to do is trust in Him and turn to Him and you'll be saved"
- C. Last time I checked, that's a great deal!

Figures referenced: John Hyrcanus

Cross references: Genesis 12:2-3; 15:13-16; 49:9-10; Exodus 1:22; 17:8-13; Numbers 24-25; 31:16; Deuteronomy 25:17-18; Joshua 2:1-21; 1 Kings 20:23; 1 Chronicles 9:20; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Isaiah 14:12; 35:7; Daniel 9:24; Matthew 2:2; 7:13-14; Galatians 6:7; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11; Revelation 2:14; 19:11-16; 22:16

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