**The Doctrine of Balaam**

**By A. Edwin Wilson**

*"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things scarificed unto idols, and to commit fornication"* ([Revelation 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.14&t=NKJV)).

As the end of this dispensation closes, we learn of a religious state of affairs coming into the forefront that grossly dishonors our Lord. Note [Jude 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.11&t=NKJV):

*"Woe unto them for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."*

1. Cain's bloodless sacrifice is the first one mentioned. When God demanded a sacrifice of blood for the atonement of sin, Cain preferred to bring a bloodless offering of the fruit of the field. The earth was under the curse of God, and that which Cain brought would likewise be under a curse. Though the Lord gave him ample opportunity to take back the bloodless offering and bring a blood sacrifice, he refused to do so. God still demands atonement by blood, and that demand was satisfied at Calvary by the death of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Today this is denied by man, and on every hand he is urged to do the best he can and hope for heaven.

2. The second deviation from the plan and purpose of God was exemplified by the error of Balaam, who was prepared to compromise the principles of God for wealth and worldly position.

He was a priest who placed a price upon his services, and would attempt any sort of religious exercise if the pay was sufficient. Today, both the church and the minister too often place a price on the services of the servants of the Lord. Many are willing to teach and preach if it means worldly success and social attainment. Many refuse the call of God today because, in many instances, the remuneration seems to be very little.

3. A third characteristic of default in Christian circles is called the gainsaying of Korah.

He was a priest who stood in the midst of the people of God and publicly opposed the truth. Today, in the highest places of Christendom, there are religious and denominational leaders bold enough to stand up and oppose the fundamental Truth of the Word of God. Instead of teaching and preaching the Word of God, they are teaching and preaching the wisdom of man.

You will notice in the Scripture quoted — [Revelation 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+2.14&t=NKJV) — that attention is called to the doctrine of Balaam rather than the error of Balaam. Few of the commentators have distinguished between the error of Balaam and the doctrine of Balaam. Therefore, the teaching pertaining to the doctrine of Balaam is practically nil.

The doctrine of Balaam was that which he taught which was contrary to the Word of God. His error was willingness to prophesy either good or bad for money. To understand the doctrine of Balaam, which was that to which God objected in the church of Pergamos, it might be well for us to review briefly the background of Balaam's doctrine.

Balak, a king of Moab, was advised that the children of Israel would soon be coming through his country. He did not want them to do so because he thought they would despoil all of his land. He knew that he could not defeat them because of the power of Jehovah, their God. He also knew that defeat could come to the children of Israel only if he could separate Israel's God from them. He conceived the idea of employing Balaam to come and curse Israel, thereby incurring the anger of God so that the defeat of Israel would be comparatively easy.

Balaam (of whom we know practically nothing) was perfectly willing to hire out to Balak for his ungodly scheme. However, God warned Balaam not to accept the offer of Balak, neither attempt to curse the children of Israel. However, Balak's money was so great that he was persuaded to start the journey to the country of Balak with the intention of pronouncing a curse upon Israel. In the course of his journey, an angel appeared; and after the unusual experience of being warned and then hurt by his ass, he offered to return home, but the angel insisted that he go on to Balak.

When he arrived in Moab, Balak took him to a mountain where seven sacrifices were offered, but Balaam could only speak words of blessing upon the children of Israel. Balaam was then taken to another mountain where another seven offerings were offered on altars, and again, nothing but words of blessing came out of his mouth. Balak took him to a third mountain, and once again seven other sacrifices were offered, but when Balaam opened his mouth nothing but beautiful prophecies concerning the children of Israel came forth. Balak was so angered that he hastened to get rid of Balaam, who returned to his home.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, as far as most students of the Word are concerned, this is the end of Balaam. But in [Numbers 25:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+25.1-3&t=NKJV) we read:

*"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.*

*And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.*

*And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel."*

Herein we learn of the children of Israel eating meat scarificed to idols, bowing down and worshipping the gods of Moab, and committing fornication with the daughters of Moab. What happened? How could Israel sink so low? What was the occasion of her indulgence in these gross sins which so angered the Lord that twenty-four thousand of the children of Israel perished under the judgment of God?

In [Numbers 31:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+31.16&t=NKJV), we have the answer:

*"Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord."*

In the battle against the Midianites, in which Israel took all of the women captive, God had Moses save all the women alive; but there were further orders for them to kill every woman that had been involved with any of the children of Israel. These women were to be put to death because it was the counsel of Balaam — that is, the doctrine, the teaching of Balaam to the children of Israel and the women of the Moabites — that caused the children of Israel to sin so wickedly.

Balaam, having failed to curse Israel, did succeed in seducing them by the wiles of his counsel to eat meat scarificed to idols and to commit fornication. After he had counseled the children of Israel to commit these sins, the women of Moab then lured the children of Israel into sin.

The children of Israel were the covenant people of God; the children of Israel were God's chosen people; the children of Israel were called God's firstborn son. No matter what the children of Israel did, their covenant relationship could not be broken. And the DOCTRINE OF BALAAM, broadly stated, is that since Israel was God's covenant people, that relationship could not be altered or changed; that is, no harm could come unto them for any sin in which they cared to indulge.

That is the doctrine in the church today, so hated by our Lord — the doctrine of Balaam. As expressed in common terminology, the doctrine of Balaam is that since salvation is grace, and one having become a Christian through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is eternally secure, then nothing that a Christian does can alter his relationship with the Lord.

The doctrine of Balaam is also expressed in these words — very artless and seemingly guileless but filled with tragic potential — that every Christian is going to rule and reign with the Lord, regardless of the kind of life the Christian lives.

There is no acceptance of the truth of God that some Christians will reign over ten cities and other Christians will reign over none — that some Christians will overcome and other Christians shall be overcome — that some Christians shall inherit the birthright and other Christians will forfeit their inheritance — that some Christians will enter into the joy of the Lord and other Christians will suffer weeping and gnashing of teeth.

*"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown"* ([Revelation 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.11&t=NKJV)).