A Biographical Study of Balaam

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**Balaam**

**CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY**

I.  The foolish prophet
   
   A.  God’s warning
       1.  Balaam was a Midianite prophet.
       2.  He resided at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia (Num. 22:5).
       3.  He was offered a bribe by Balak, king of Moab, to curse Israel (Num. 22:4-8).
       4.  He refused the first bribe after being warned by God not to receive Balak’s money (Num. 22:9-13).
       5.  However, after the second attempted bribe, he was allowed by the Lord to accompany Balak’s messengers to Moab (Num. 22:14-20).
   
   B.  God’s wrath
       1.  An unseen angel
           a.  En route he incurred the wrath of God and was nearly killed by the angel of the Lord who stood in the pathway with a drawn sword (Num. 22:21-28).
           b.  At first, only his donkey saw the angel and was beaten by Balaam when the frightened animal bolted from the path (Num. 22:22-27).
       2.  An unusual animal
           a.  The Lord opened the donkey’s mouth, and it protested the brutal treatment handed out by Balaam (Num. 22:28-30).
           b.  Finally, Balaam saw the angel and was severely rebuked by him (Num. 22:31-33).
           c.  Balaam acknowledged his sinfulness, but was commanded by God to continue the trip to Moab (Num. 22:34-35).

II.  The frustrated prophet

   A.  The occasions—Upon meeting Balak, the false prophet from Pethor attempted to pronounce a divine curse upon Israel on six separate occasions (Num. 22:39—24:25; Deut. 23:4-5; Mic. 6:5). Each time, however, when he opened his mouth to utter bad things against Israel, God filled it with blessings instead (Num. 22:39-24:25; Josh. 24:9-10; Neh. 13:2).
       1.  First blessing—Numbers 23:7-10
       3.  Third blessing—24:3-9
       4.  Fourth blessing—24:15-19
       5.  Fifth blessing—24:20
   
   B.  The overview—At least six key prophecies were uttered by Balaam during these futile attempts to curse Israel.
1. The aloofness of Israel (Num. 23:9)
2. The population increase of Israel (Num. 23:10)
3. The faithfulness and power of God enjoyed by Israel (Num. 23:19-24)
4. The victories of Israel (Num. 24:8-9)
5. The coming Messiah of Israel (Num. 24:17-19)
6. The defeat of the enemies of Israel (Num. 24:20-24)

III. The filthy prophet—Unable to curse them, Balaam attempted with some success to corrupt them by encouraging sexual relations between Israelite men and Moabite women (Num. 25:1-3; 31:16).

IV. The fallen prophet—Balaam was eventually killed by the advancing Israelite armies (Num. 31:8).

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY
I. Balaam’s spiritual condition—Joshua said Balaam had practiced divination, i.e., the occult (Josh. 13:22).

II. Balaam spiritual example—Three New Testament authors referred to Balaam. 
A. Peter spoke of the way of Balaam (2 Peter 2:15). He sold his gift to the highest bidder.
B. Jude spoke of the error of Balaam (Jude 11). Balaam falsely concluded God could be forced into condemning Israel because of the sins of that nation.
C. John spoke of the doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14). In essence, this says if you can’t condemn your enemy, then corrupt him.

STATISTICS
Father: Beor (Num. 22:5)
First mention: Numbers 22:5
Final mention: Revelation 2:14
Meaning of his name: “Pilgrim” or “lord of the people”
Frequency of his name: Referred to 61 times
Biblical books mentioning him: Eight books (Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Nehemiah, Micah, 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation)
Occupation: Prophet turned soothsayer (Num. 22-24; Josh. 13:22)
Place of birth: Pethor (Num. 22:5)
Circumstances of death: He was killed with the sword by the Israelites (Josh. 13:22).
Important fact about his life: He attempted to curse Israel (Num. 23-24)