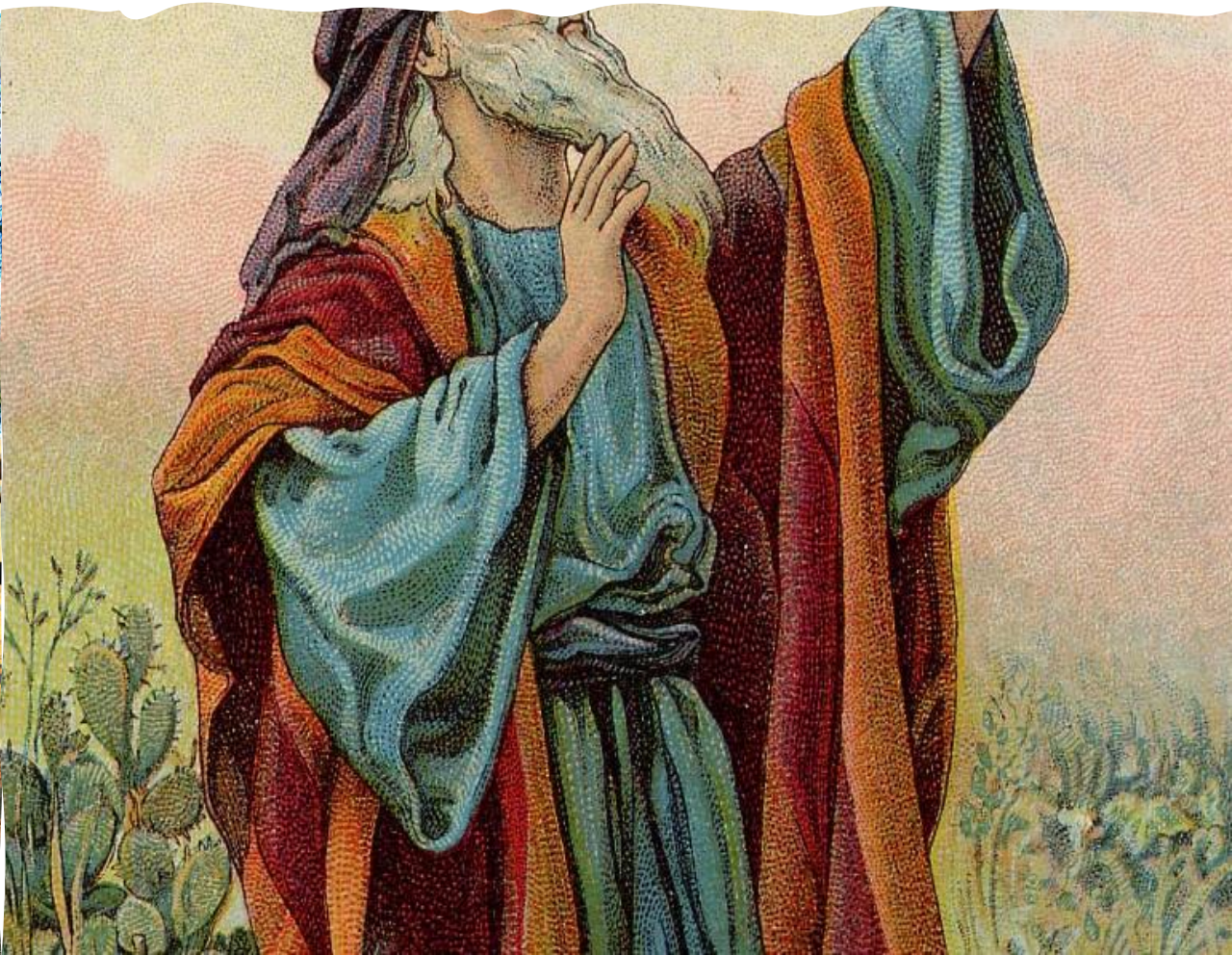


Ungodly Counsel—A Donkey is Better Than a Prophet

Numbers 23:18—25:9

May 7, 2023



**Balaam's
Remarkable
Oracle
Numbers
23:18-26**

- 18 Then he took up his oracle and said:
“Rise up, Balak, and hear!
Listen to me, son of Zippor!
- 19 “God *is* not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
- 20 Behold, I have received *a command* to bless;
He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.
- 21 “He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel. The Lord his God *is* with him, And the shout of a King *is* among them.
- 22 God brings them out of Egypt;
He has strength like a wild ox.

- 23 “For *there is* no sorcery against Jacob, Nor any divination against Israel. It now must be said of Jacob And of Israel, ‘Oh, what God has done!’
- 24 Look, a people rises like a lioness, And lifts itself up like a lion; It shall not lie down until it devours the prey And drinks the blood of the slain.”
- 25 Then Balak said to Balaam,
“Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all!”
- 26 So Balaam answered and said to Balak, “Did I not tell you, saying, ‘All that the Lord speaks, that I must do’?”

Oracle

Oracle → parable saying

Hebrew → משל → Mashal)

William Foxwell
Albright





The Bible towers in content above all earlier religious literature; and it towers just as impressively over all subsequent literature in the direct simplicity of its message and...its appeal to men of all lands and times.

— *William F. Albright* —

AZ QUOTES

Balaam's Theology

- **God is not a man--subject to misrepresentation**
- **Nor a son of man—subject to fluctuation or change**
- **What He has said He will do**
- **He has chosen to overlook iniquity in Jacob**
- **God's strength is that of the Aurochs**
- **His majesty is that of a lion in the field**



Aurochs

Balaam's Messianic Oracle

Numbers

24:15-19

- **15** So he took up his oracle and said: “The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor, And the utterance of the man whose eyes are opened;
- **16** The utterance of him who hears the words of God, And has the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Who falls down, with eyes wide open:
- **17** “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.
- **18** “And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, While Israel does valiantly.
- **19** Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, And destroy the remains of the city.”

Israel curses Itself

Numbers

25:1-9

- ¹Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab.
- ² They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.
- ³ So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.
- ⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.”
- ⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor.”
- ⁶ And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.
- ⁷ Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand;
- ⁸ and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel.
- ⁹ And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

Twin Sins of Israel

- Harlotry with Moabite women
- Worship of Moabite gods



The Nature of Balaam's Iniquity

Numbers 31:12-16

- ¹² Then they brought the captives, the booty, and the spoil to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the children of Israel, to the camp in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.
- ¹³ And Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the congregation, went to meet them outside the camp.
- ¹⁴ But Moses was angry with the officers of the army, *with* the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, who had come from the battle.
- ¹⁵ And Moses said to them: “Have you kept all the women alive?”
- ¹⁶ Look, these *women* caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

The Fate of Balaam

Joshua 13:22

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- ²² The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them.



The Impact of Balaam's Sin -----Revelation 2:12-17



- ¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,
- ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:
- ¹³ “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.
- ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.
- ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.
- ¹⁶ Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.
- ¹⁷ “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.”

A comment from a Theological Commoner

Revelation 2:22-24

- ²² Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.
- ²³ I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.
- ²⁴ “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.

Based on:

- Chapters 22—24 of Numbers, Balaam would not get a failing grade for his obedience to God—even though his presence made his actions less than commendable. However, the early verses of chapter 25, after Balaam left, record that Israel committed harlotry with the women of Moab. Little in chapter 25 suggests that Balaam had anything to do with this. However, Moses speaks in chapter 31: ‘Have you allowed all the women to live?’ He [Moses] asked them. “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” (15-16).
- “Here the reader is introduced to the fact that before Balaam departed, he had given to Balak counsel, which perhaps can be reconstructed as follows: ‘I cannot curse what God has blessed; but you have paid me handsomely, and I do know people very well. These folks have been in the wilderness a long time, and you have many beautiful women in Moab. I suggest you send your women among them, and my guess is that with their behavior they will bring down God’s curse upon themselves.’”