

My Name Is Balaam

by Vic Zarley

My name is Balaam. I am a fortune teller of old. King Balak has asked me to curse a large group of people who are encamped in his land. The king knows my reputation of being very good with both blessings and cursings. When I bless people, they stay blessed and when I curse people, they bump into walls, trip over shoes, their toothbrush handle breaks off, and more. I'm very good. Whatever I choose to do, through my power, I can do it.

Strangely, when the king of Moab, Balak, asked me to curse these people who had invaded his land, I was totally willing to. But I couldn't. I knew they were God's chosen people. When Balak sent some of his reps to my house to ask me to come to his palace, they brought me promises of enticing gifts if I would curse them. But I couldn't. I asked them to stay the night and I'd check with the Lord to see if there was any way I could, but in the morning, I had to tell them to go back to the king empty handed. I really wanted to curse these Israelites encamped there but, because they were a blessed people, the Lord said, "No!" It infuriates me!

Next, the king sent princes to try and entice me to cooperate. They were authorized to give me even more stuff. Plus they'd see to it that I got a higher status. "Come on, God," I pleaded, "just let me do one small curse, please." I asked the latest princes to stay the night in hopes I'd get an okay from the Lord. But, that night, the Lord repeated that the Israelites were not to be cursed. The Lord said I could go with the princes, though, if I waited until they called on me.

But I didn't want to wait. I saddled up my donkey and called on THEM. Let's go! I'm thinking, maybe God will change His mind when I get there. Suddenly, my donkey acted very strange. He veered off the road. I was so focused on the cool stuff I might get for my curses, the mammon, that I did not tolerate my animal's behavior. I did not want anything to get in my way! I beat my donkey until he got back on the road. Then he veered again, this time crushing my foot against a wall! The nerve of that donkey! I beat him again. The worldly riches I could have are going through my mind. What is this donkey doing? He's deliberately forcing me to think of him. The nerve!

Next, the donkey laid down. This was the final straw. I beat him with my stick but, horror of horrors, the donkey began to speak to me. He turned to me in anguish and asked me if in all the many years I've had him, had he ever behaved this way before. I tell him, "No." (But I was talking to a donkey, here. I looked around

to see if anyone was watching me or if I was on some reality show or something.) The donkey continued by telling me he doesn't deserve the beatings I'm giving him. In my mind, I know he deserved the beatings I was giving him. He was veering from the path I had directed him to go. He is a beast of burden, who is to follow only my commands! He was not doing that.

Suddenly, appearing before me, I see the reason the donkey has been straying from the path. The Angel of the Lord, sword drawn, is before me! Oh, shoot! Oh, man! I'm in trouble now. Let's see, I think, humbleness is always best in situations like this. I'll be humble and



throw myself before him. I hope he buys it. That's what I did. I told him I'd sinned and asked him if he wanted me to go back home. He said I came

close to being slain by him—if it hadn't have been for the donkey, I'd be mincemeat by now. That did not paint a pleasant picture for me. I looked at my donkey and petted his head. "Nice donkey," I said. "Thanks for your help," I smirked, pretending to mean it.

"So, what do you want me to do?" I asked the Lord. He said that I could go on to see the king, but I must say only what he tells me, and nothing more. "Okee-Dokey," I told him. I still hoped that the Lord would change His mind, though, before I got to the king's palace. If there was anyway I could have the prizes they were offering me, I'd take them!

So, at the king's palace, I had to tell him that I could not curse those intruders because they are blessed. God won and I lost.

This story from Numbers 22, told through Balaam, in first person, covers many things.

We see Balaam's obstinate attitude and hardened heart, only wanting to serve himself and obtain his glory and his mammon. We see the Lord, who simply must get his attention, first causing a simple beast of burden, the donkey to be able to speak, but then, opening Balaam's eyes, revealing Himself with sword brandished.

In the above story, Balaam was quite skeptical as well as faking humbleness. Two things: 1) God needed to let King Balak know these people camped on his land were blessed and, despite Balaam's self interest, God's needs took priority over Balaam's selfish needs. 2) God knows when we are faking humbleness and do not have eager and pure hearts craving for Him. There is nothing we can say or do (while we have a defiled heart, filled with pride of self) that can make an impression on God.

We may think we are on the road to heaven, but we seriously strive for mammon (worldly recognition and worldly riches) and we love to control others by our curses and by our blessings. We may not even be aware that we reside in that unholy city, having usurped God, where we are opportunists, seeking our treasures from our defiled heart's point of view, then receiving those treasures, but not being satisfied, somehow. How can the walls we've built up that consist of pride that make us macho men and macho women, be torn down? How can we become sensitive and vulnerable, humble and open, loving and kind? Our hearts must desire to be made over by God and, as we seek first His kingdom, this will be done.

We have bits and pieces of Balaam and King Balak dwelling in us. God makes everything a parable that can be used to help us obtain a pure heart, help us seek only after treasures that will not deteriorate, help us allow our thick walls to come down so that God can heal us and nurture us into someone who is more like Him, helping us be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect. King Balak, in us, is very concerned about this invasion of holiness. He finds the children of God repulsive and desires to rid himself of this "infestation" on his land. We can learn from this personality that God placed in the Bible. We can welcome the children of God (despite the world's opinion of holiness) and make a place for them to reside in our hearts. Balaam,



in us, loves to be in charge. He loves mammon. He loves power. He wants to bargain with God. He is often asleep, unaware of the wonderful gifts (the fruit of the Spirit) that are ready to ripen and be distributed by Christ through our hearts to a dying world, wrapped up in mammon and pride.

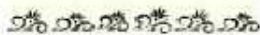
We can deny both King Balak and Baalam a home in our souls, if we can see them. Jesus says, what we pray believing will come true, so let us pray that we stop fooling ourselves and learn to see ourselves for what we are, so that we might be purified as God wants us to be, and gradually be more like Him.

God's Son died for us, eliminating our sins. He is our Lord and Savior. We must allow Him to be Lord for us and allow Him to save us from ourselves, our pride, and our impure hearts that desire treasures that do not satisfy. This is why the Word, the Bible, is here and this is why Jesus, the Living Word, is here. Focus only on Him and allow Him (and His Word) to catapult us out of the strange and unsatisfying entanglements this world continues to offer us.

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Say goodbye to King Balak, if he resides within. He only wants to defeat the children of God and he will use any means to do that. Say goodbye to Balaam, if he resides within. He only wants to manipulate people and accumulate worldly things. He does not really have much interest in serving God, though he may pretend to have some interest. If he does, it will be only for his own gain. Say goodbye to all these characteristics that may reside within us and say hello to Jesus Christ, who will burn up the dross, the impurities, that are defiling our hearts. We can do this because God says with Him all things are possible. But we don't want all things. We only want Him. God has simplified the whole process through His Son, Jesus Christ. All we need to do is totally rely on Him. Do not waste another minute striving after other things.

Ask Jesus to come into your heart right now. He will gladly do this.



Now is a great time to repent of trying to be in control of your situation, instead of submitting to the will of God. If you agree, let's pray this prayer, with your whole heart: Father God, I repent of compromising for the sake of my foolish and worldly desires. I am sorry for trying to act against Your supreme will for my own selfish interests. Forgive me for trying to even manipulate You in order to gain mammon for myself. Humble me, Oh Lord, to accept that you have placed others in my path who refuse to give me access to a place that is not pleasing to You. I want You to be in full control of every aspect of my life and I want no part of any rebellion against You. I thank You for showing me the truth and giving me another chance to do what is right. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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needs to be unified and purified, cleansed of all worldliness, selfishness, division, and a host of other ills which afflict and hinder her, especially in the west, so that the final harvest of souls can take place before the soon return of our Lord. To this end, we post the website: www.TheFinalHarvest.org

We want to encourage those of the Christian faith to be sure their lamps are filled with oil and pray that God will prepare their hearts, minds and souls for the trials and tribulations that must come to make us ready. The Church in the east and other persecuted areas of the globe is already walking in this fire, and we believe the western Church will also walk in this, in the very near future.

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Thank you, and God bless you.
Vic and Eva Zarley

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