

Numbers 22-24 - Balak & Balaam

How Do You Use Your Influence? --- --- 2) How Easily Are You Influenced?

BALAK

2 And Balak the son of Zippor **saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.** 3 **And Moab was in great dread** of the people, because they were many. **Moab was overcome with fear** of the people of Israel. 4 And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." So **Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab** at that time, 5 **sent messengers to Balaam** the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the people of Amaw, to call him, saying, "Behold, a people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me. 6 Come now, **curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me.** Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." 7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed **with the fees for divination** in their hand. And they came to Balaam and gave him Balak's message.

BALAAM

8 And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, **as the LORD speaks to me.**" So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. 9 **And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"** 10 And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, 11 'Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Now come, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" 12 **God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."** 13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, **"Go to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."** 14 So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us." ***15 Once again Balak sent princes, more in number and more honorable than these.*** 16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: **'Let nothing hinder you from coming to me, 17 for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do. Come, curse this people for me.'**" 18 But Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the LORD my God to do less or more. ***19 So you, too, please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me.***" 20 And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, **"If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you."** 21 ***So Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab.***

Balak --- Godly Influence Or Self-Interested Manipulation?

First what is motivating him to influence Balaam

- Balak saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites (killed Og and Sihon, their cities and people)
- Motivated by dread and fear

He tried to persuade Balaam to curse Israel

- They came with bribery (**fees for divination**) -- **MANIPULATION**
- They came with **PRINCES** and **GREAT HONOR**

How Easily Are You Influenced, How Committed Are You To Principle?

God came to Balaam - and His first answer should have put an end to the discussion

- God gave clear direction to Balaam vs 12 **"You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."**
- 19 ... please stay here tonight, that I may know **what more the LORD will say to me.**

Balaam allowed himself to be persuaded

- Maybe he didn't like the LORD's answer
- Maybe he wanted the money or the prestige

DOING WHAT YOU WANT, BUT TRYING TO APPEAR AS SPIRITUAL

- What MORE the LORD will say?
- **The men didn't come to call, But Balaam moved quickly** to go with them ANYHOW
- He was looking for a way to do what HE WANTED while appearing to do what God wants

GOD Intervenes Protecting Israel when they were unaware

22 But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way ***as his adversary***. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. **23 And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand.** And the donkey turned aside out of the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the road. **24** Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. **25** And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pushed against the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall. So he struck her again. **26** Then the angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. **27** When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. **28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"** **29** And Balaam said to the donkey, **"Because you have made a fool of me.** I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you." **30** And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?" And he said, "No." **31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam,** and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face. **32** And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, ***I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me.*** **33** The donkey saw me and turned aside before me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let her live." **34** Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the road against me. Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back." **35** And the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, ***"Go with the men, but speak only the word that I tell you."***

Manipulators Do Not Give Up Easily

Num 24:10 ESV And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, **"I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them these three times.**

Balak kept trying to get Balaam to curse Israel -- Balaam came back with the same answer 3 times

- He kept **pushing** Balaam to do what **he wanted - even if it meant disobeying God**
- He used bribery, intimidation, and bullying to get Balaam to curse Israel

In the end Balaam Gave in...How Committed Are You To Principle?

While it appears Balaam tried to do right his heart was motivated by greed

- 2Pe 2:15-16 ESV Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, **who loved gain from wrongdoing**, 16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

He obeyed the letter of what God told him, yet found a way to satisfy Balak and get a reward

- Rev 2:14 ESV But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to **put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.**

Lesson: - use our influence for the good of others

- Php 2:3-4 ESV **Do nothing from selfish ambition** or conceit, but in humility **count others more significant** than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to **the interests of others.**
- Heb 10:24-26 ESV And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works**, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.** 26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
- Rom 15:1-2 ESV We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 **Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.**

Lesson: Be willing to stand on principle

- Pro 1:10 ESV My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.
- Jas 4:6-8 ESV But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives **grace to the humble.**" 7 **Submit** yourselves therefore to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 **Draw** near to God, and he will draw near to you. **Cleanse** your hands, you sinners, and **purify** your hearts, you double-minded.

Remember the LORD is always watching out for you EVEN WHEN YOU ARE NOT AWARE

Psa 121:1-8 ESV A Song of Ascents. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. 8 The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.