

## 2 Peter 2:15-22 The Way of Balaam

**Intro: One of the things about teaching chapter by chapter and verse by verse through books of the Bible**

A) It's sometimes you come to passages that aren't the funniest to teach. **Like 2 Peter chapter 2**

B) The whole chapter is dealing with false teachers.

C) It might not be fun – but it is necessary! – Like eating your veggies – kid

**God loves his people and so he warns his people.**

A) Here in 2 Peter 2 – Peter writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – **spends a whole chapter dealing with this subject of false teachers.**

B) Last week we looked at V.1-14 – Peter describes the Characteristics of false teachers -

- Always around
- Subtle approach – come across subtly at first
- Distort the truth – about Jesus – deny Deity and atonement
- Motives are to exploit
- In their arrogance – they Despise authority

**C) Peter mentions their motives v.3 v.10 v.14 of being Covetous**

1) and being driven by their own lust and greed

**As we come to v. 15 today**

A) Peter is going to give us an example of that in the form of a man from the OT named Balaam

15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. **Mr. Ed before Mr. Ed**

B) They have gone the way of Balaam – Balaam is this mysterious prophet the Bible talks about in Numbers chapters 22,23,24

C) Balaam is a part of what has been called the OT Hall of Shame

**Readers digest version of his story:**

A) Balak the King of Moab – hears that the Israelites were heading in His direction – this group numbering 3 million in total

B) Balak is concerned – he has heard what they did to Zion / and Og

1) So he sends some of his official men to go & see Balaam the prophet

*King Balak wishes to see you/ – Balaam prays – God says I can't go*

**C) Go back to your king – Tell him I Prayed God said I cannot go to the king**

**Balak sends two other even more important officials - King Balak wants to see you immediately**

A) Again Balaam prays – the Lord says no don't go Balaam says – *sorry the Lord says I can't go w/ You*

B) But then Balaam says - *even if you were to give me a houseful of Gold – hint / I WOULD NOT GO*

C) So those guys go back and tell Balak – once again he prayed and God said no he can't come.

1) Balaam even said *even if we gave him a houseful of gold.....*

D) **Well Balak got the hint** – Balak sends guys out a third time – to go to Balaam -

1) this time w/ a cart full of Gold - King Balak wants to see you & there is more gold where this came from

E) So Balaam prays a third time – *Lord can I go –*

**The Lord gets perturbed by the stubbornness and persistence of this prophet and says go ahead and go**

A) *Just don't say anything but what I tell you to say*

B) Balaam rides off on his DONKEY- and I'm sure that God was shaking his head – when will he learn?

**C) On the Journey – Angel of the Lord appears – The Donkey sees him but Balaam doesn't**

**The Donkey veers into the field/ Balaam hits – Donkey goes back into the road around –**

A) Then riding along thru a Vineyard – Walls on both sides – Angel again –

B) Donkey presses Balaam's Leg against the Wall – Crushing it

C) Balaam gets mad hits donkey – the donkey keeps on going

Finally 3<sup>rd</sup> time The Donkey Angel sword drawn – Donkey sits down – Balaam starts smacking this donkey

A) Notice our text - Lord opens the mouth of his "dumb donkey" Note that it says. It says "a dumb donkey" spoke to him.

B) That is A donkey who couldn't speak spoke.

1) So, you have a dumb donkey and a dumber prophet. You have "Dumb and Dumber."

C) So the Lord opens the mouth of the Donkey – let me read to you from Numbers 23 - <sup>28</sup> 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?"

D) Crazy right – this Donkey is talking to Balaam – what happens next is even crazier.

**<sup>29</sup> And Balaam said to the donkey,**

E) Imagine coming home today – Dog Spot says – I'm sick of Alpo...

1) would you stand there amazed or say – Well Spot what would you like eat?

**<sup>29</sup> And Balaam said to the donkey,** "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!"

Balaam is talking to the Donkey and the Donkey is talking back

<sup>30</sup> So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Have I ever done this to you before?"

And Balaam said, "No."

<sup>31</sup> Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

So The Lord opens Balaam's eyes and he sees the Angel of the Lord – who says if it wasn't for this donkey I would have killed you.

A) The Lord knew what was in Balaam's heart – he would do anything for money. **Greedy and Covetous**

B) The Lord says since you are this far – go ahead but remember don't speak anything but what I tell you –

C) This is serious

1) It is a serious thing to speak for God

D) So Balaam comes to Balak – Balak says I want you to Pronounce a curse on these people

1) Balaam says well I will try – but I can only say what God puts in my mouth

So they go up on a hill overlooking the camp of Israel – Balaam raises his hands – opens his mouth – out comes – Beautiful blessing

A) Balak bummed – **NO No No !!! Curse not a Blessing**

B) Try another spot – another Mt. Looking down – Curse – instead Blessing

1) Same thing – Balaam pronounces a blessing over Israel

C) **3<sup>rd</sup> Time – Same result** – Accept this time the Lord puts into Balaam's mouth a Beautiful awesome Blessing about the Messiah

1) How the Messiah will come to the People of Israel and for the people of Israel and do an awesome work

D) So Balaam couldn't curse the people of Israel he could only Bless them

So at this point Balaam says I can't curse them but here is what you can do – **You can get them to put a curse on themselves**

A) Women to seduce them – worship their gods God will be Angry at them

B) This is called the Doctrine of Balaam in the book of Revelation –

1) Mixing the world with the Lord – Compromise

C) It is all FUELED BY THE Way of Balaam which is GREED

D) Balak follows Balaam's advice sends the women down into the camp to seduce the men of Israel

1)They give in take these woman as wives – end up worshipping their gods and bringing a curse on themselves.

**So Peter gives this example: These false teachers – follow the Way of Balaam**

A)Greed is the driving force for everything that they do.

B)They have no fear of God in their hearts

C)They are not serving God or the people – they serve themselves- their own lust and their own appetites

**RESULT of those who follow the way of Balaam :**

**V.17-22** 17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. **V.19**

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

#1 **WELLS without water"**

A)How disappointing to be so thirsty and come up to a well with no water

Aa)or a water fountain and you push the button and there's no water in it, there's no refreshment.

B)Notice how *V.18 they speak Great swelling words of Emptiness* – Big noise no substance

C)I've always loved that story of the old Native American man who was very wise.

1)And he went to a Christian church one Sunday

**D)On this particular Sunday this pastor hadn't really prepared a message**

1)He had not poured over the text, had not spent time before the Lord.

**So he tried to make up for his lack of preparation with his Charisma and energy.**

A)He spoke real loud and passionate, moving all around working up a sweat

B)he pounded the pulpit as he spoke – he was really into it.

Bb)And the people in his church loved it. They said, "He preached up a storm."

1)That was their words: "He preached up a storm."

C)Someone asked the old Native American what he thought.

1)He uttered six short words: "High wind. Big thunder. No rain."

D)That's essentially what Peter is saying: "High wind, big thunder, no rain,

1)clouds without rain, wells without water."

E)They make lots of noise – they can sound eloquent but these false teachers have nothing to offer to these people

**Do you know that every human being has an inborn thirst for God?**

A)We thirst for spiritual reality, something authentic and real. We all do.

B)And false prophets know this and so they make promises, but they are wells without water.

Augustine, "Thou hast made us for Thyself," "our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

C)Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well in Samaria - <sup>13</sup> Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again.

D)People attempt to satisfy this thirst in many ways, and they end up

1)Only Jesus Christ can give inner peace and satisfaction.

<sup>14</sup> But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I

will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life.”

**There is A Perpetual flow of life that comes from Jesus – a fountain that never ever runs dry.**

A)Jesus said something similar in John 7

Jesus said to the thirsty, **"If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. This he spoke of the Holy Spirit**

B)So the False teachers are Wells without water – clouds that bring no rain!

**#2 V.19 They promise Freedom but they themselves are slaves of Corruption**

<sup>19</sup> While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage

William Barclay comments: "If a man dedicates himself to those fleshly pleasures, in the end he so ruins himself in bodily health and in spiritual and mental character that he cannot even enjoy them. The glutton destroys his appetite, the drunkard his health, the sensualist his body, the self-indulgent his character and peace of mind and begins his experience of hell while still on earth."

A)Pursuing the lust of the flesh – results in bondage

B)Mathematics of sin is always the same – Add to sorrow, subtract Joy, Multiply....Divide heart

C)These false teachers promise but they can't deliver

1)They pretend to offer life but end up offering death

**Like the Judas tree in the Middle East / in Israel**

A)It is a tree that has a beautiful red flower – very attractive / It attracts Bees by the Millions

B)But the Nectar that is in the Flower has an Opioid in it that is deadly

**C)So if you go to Israel you see a Judas tree – underneath will be piles of dead bees**

**D)The bees were attracted to it / Looked so beautiful to them /**

1)but there was poison in it that Kills them before they can even fly a few feet away

**E)That is like these guys they promise liberty but they themselves are enslaved to sin**

1)Promise liberty but – the result is death

**There can be no freedom or fulfillment apart from submission to Jesus Christ.**

A)"*The purpose of life,*", *"is not to find your freedom, but to find your master."* P.T. Forsyth

B)Jesus said; **You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free – he who the son of man – Jesus – sets free is free indeed.**

1)True freedom is only found in Jesus

C)They Promise freedom but can't really deliver freedom.

**#3 They are Worse off at the end than they were at the beginning**

<sup>20</sup>For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

<sup>21</sup>For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

**It is one thing to not know the truth about Jesus or to know it and not accept it – that is bad**

A)Still trying to fulfill the lust of the flesh

**B)But it is even worse to know the truth – to have received the freedom in Jesus - forgiveness**

1)And then to turn from it and to pursue the flesh again

C)Become entangled again – it is worse than in the beginning –

1)A new kind of hardness of heart – resisting the Holy Spirit

**Now V.20-21 Has caused some confusion in Church circles – Lose your salvation**

A)John they went out from us... never a part of us

B) Paul – Demas forsaken the faith

C) 1 Timothy 4 In the last days – people will depart from the faith –

1) Hard to forsake something and to leave something that you were never a part of

**So which is it? Never a part – Or Forsaken**

A) I think it can be both – some people leave because they were never really saved

B) But I think the Bible makes it clear it is possible to walk away from Jesus

C) Not clear on what happens to that person - But this passage is dealing with false teachers – and I think v.22 is the key

**22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, (a pig) having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”**

A) Why do dogs return to their own vomit? – Dog people here?

B) My dog has done this – so gross.

C) I have never done that –

1) I have never seen a human being do that

**But Dogs do that all the time – why that is their nature**

A) Example of pigs – You can dress a pig up

B) But you know what that pig is going to do the first chance she gets. - Head for the mud- the mire

C) Why? That is the pig’s nature!

D) That is what Peter is saying – these guys act this way because it is their nature.

1) They are not really born again

E) Crooks and con artist – peddling religion to take advantage of others. –

1) Their judgment will be severe.

**Before we go today there is one more thing I want us to consider about Balaam**

**Interesting when the Lord had his people camp in the wilderness – he had them camp according to tribes / in Blocks around the Tabernacle**

A) Read about this in Numbers 3 – Tab was the Center of Israel’s camp w/ the tribes on all sides in Blocks /

B) On the West was Ephraim which included Benjamin, Manasseh # 108,000

C) On the east front side was Judah which also included Issachar and Zebulun Biggest 186,000

D) On the sides were the Tribes of Dan – which included Asher and Naphtali

1) Numbered around 150K

E) And on the other side Reuben – which included Gad and Simeon. They also numbered around 150k

**So if you were looking down on the nation of Israel from an aerial perspective this is what you would see. – A CROSS**

A) So when Balaam – looked down upon the camp of Israel He would see a CROSS and he couldn’t curse – ONLY BLESS

B) Now I don’t think that Balaam understood the Significance of that –but it is an interesting Picture for us

**C) Satan seeks to look down upon our lives & pronounces a Curse / but if we have allowed our lives to be covered by the cross / Faith in Cross**

D) We are Blessed by the Lord instead of Cursed by the enemy because

1) Jesus became Curse for us – We are now Blessed in Him !!

**Now if you don’t know Jesus – you are still under the curse –**

A) Sin brought a curse – the wages of sin is death – the soul that sins surely die

B) Death – separated from God for all eternity

C) But Jesus took the curse so you could be blessed by God

1) Forgiveness – removal of guilt and shame – Hope of heaven