

Balaam and the Righteous (Quality: Average)

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Date: 19 December 1976

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[0 : 00] In the Lord's help, we will speak from the 23rd chapter in the book of Numbers, the latter part of verse 10. The book of Numbers, chapter 23, the latter part of verse 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my love come be like this. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my love come be like this.

Adam is one of the most mysterious characters in the world of God. There are others, and by these mysterious characters we learn.

God has dealings with men according to his own purposes. Whether they be good men, that is, men upon whom his everlasting favour rests, or whether they be men upon whom it does not rest.

And it is very evident that Balaam was one of the solemn characters whom God used as his mouthpiece, as he does others, to declare certain things at certain times, and to deal with them in a way which is to the believer most mysterious, whose mind feels that God ought really to deal with gracious people only.

[1 : 45] that God is one of the most mysterious, and that God is one of the most mysterious characters. But far from this, he gives us several examples, like King Nebuchadnezzar of old, when he was taught that sacred tradition, that God doeth as he will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hands, nor say unto him what doeth.

Those that walk in pride, he is able to buy it. So that there are characters such as this king, Nebuchadnezzar, with regard to whose eternal standing, it is an open question.

But with regard to Balaam, it is not an open question. One of the great seals of this truth, this solemn truth, comes from Peter, when he speaks of Balaam, rubbing the wages of unrighteousness, helping us to trace underneath, in the path of Balaam, and that spirit, that he would, he would have cursed Israel, for the wages of unrighteousness.

Had God given him no charge at all, he would have cursed. But God gave him absolute instruction.

Well, when we trace the history of Moab, we trace it right back to associations with Abraham, through Lot, in association with Lot, and Lot's daughters, one of them bearing by her own father, a son called Moab, and the other daughter, a son called Ammon, which proved to be two bastard children, who were to be a thorn in the side of Israel.

[4 : 05] This answers a great question. How did Balaam know there was such a thing as a righteous person? How came he into contact with such people as this?

This answers that question. Through that long lineage, and dating right back to the time of Abraham, these things were passed orally, if not in writing.

And now, he sees this people, this seed of Abraham, this seed of Jacob, the seed that God had promised to bless, and bless in his sermon of Abraham.

Here they are before him. And here is the king of Moab, resorting to this very natural and commendable way, as far as human wisdom is concerned.

He didn't take up arms. He sought to curse the people. This is very different from some of the tactics of earlier in the midst.

[5 : 28] He had great faith in the cursing of this prophet Balaam. Therefore, he sends for him from the far country to come and curse the children of Israel.

being persuaded that this would be far better than all the force of arms that he could bring against him. Then he had an association also with worship.

And so did the king of Moab, altars, oxen, rams. You will notice so much of any prayers, no calling upon any gods.

They just were from the time of Elijah, you will remember, when they had fallen into idolatry so far as to cry to Bael.

Oh, Bael, hear us, they cry. There's no mention here of any Bael that has not yet come upon the sea. He does very shortly, but not yet.

[6 : 48] But there is a semblance of worship. That's the point. Taughters, shedding of blood, and oxen, and rams, and the scriptural figure of perfection, seven.

All this gives a strong view of the knowledge that Baelam had also made a chance of worship.

And though it had deteriorated, and though it had passed through many changes, yes, there was this same effort.

And again, further than this, Baelam's references to God. that he must ask what he should say.

This is the crucial point in the whole thing. This is the solemn part of a natural religion, natural association with God.

[8 : 06] we read that God met Baelam. Met him. We cannot comprehend this.

Try as we may, we shall never reach the answer to this, that God met Baelam. He put a word in his mouth.

But if we look at the other side of it, we shall see the answer and the reality of it, that God was watching over his people, frustrating the designs of King Baelam.

Whatever design he devised, God was great. God held the key in his own hand, secret with his. This is the comforting part of it.

This is the lesson for the Lord's people. This is where we see the great enemy put to flight.

[9 : 11] Oh, how perilous the position. Israel knew nothing of it. Not any intimation whatsoever at this case that any of them were aware of the evil devices of the King of Merck.

Now how great a picture this is. Almost like a canvas. A painting of magnitude of the opposition of God's enemies to the truth.

always seeking to do something to damage, frustrate, disappoint, overturn. Always looking for some device as a great enemy and his thousands of dark angels will overturn the work of God and of grace.

and the more we see of it in this evil world the more as we go fully convinced of the tremendous power of this great enemy and how he doesn't despise individuals.

He uses an individual if he can to worm his way in and to bring confusion and darkness and bitterness and use any one of us if God permits.

[10:47] None can take heed none can think they stand rather they have bitten to take heed lest they fall. So that with all this there is the evidence of the constant power of the prince of the power in the air seeking to deceive seeking to gather unto himself some of the Lord's people whereby he may at least snap one of them out of the covenant that the ancient story and history and fact of Balaam as much as it is to us I need for mystery reveals the all prevailing power of God no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper said the prophet Isaiah and every tongue that rises up in judgment against thee shalt thou condemn and and

God's truth and word will prevail right for the uttermost now that we come back to the question how did Balaam know there were such people as the writer we may turn it to ourselves we may bring it home that's the best thing to do with it how do I know there is such a people as the righteous how is my eye or my eyes ever open to see a righteous person you think about it yourself let us assume that you can answer in affirmative and say yes my eyes have been opened to see a righteous person and this is so and it can be the eyes of an ungodly person too who is open to see the eye the righteous many there are, we have met them who have said I know one man today still alive who sat by his mother's dying bed he said he could see she got something that he hadn't got a remarkable thing you know and still today that man shows not the slightest evidence whatsoever of any mark of grace he's a sabbath breaker the greatest degree and that he does not follow that though you may see a righteous person and recognize them as such at least to put it in this way that they've got something that you haven't got but if the Lord has opened your eyes to really see a righteous person one thing will be evident and that is you will love that person by that I mean you will be drawn to them you will feel a peculiar union to them it will not be really a recognition of something they have that you haven't but it will be of a nature now that is great now Boulam had not this but it behooves the seeking soul by way of seeking comfort and help in their journey here below to ask themselves can they define a righteous person it is not the same as defining righteousness you know it is not entering into every detail and point of sacred and holy doctrine no how would you best then define a righteous person would it be by their walk

would it be by their conversation would it be by their spirit you may be able to look back to the days of your childhood and growing years many can and can see very clearly that then though they knew not God themselves they could identify a person by whose walk and character and conversation they could see that they were different God had made them to differ they could see that there was something that they could not define but there was something whereby they were not like others they did not live like others talk like others and their example was an example founded upon their belief in the word of God in the scriptures of truth and in that which concerned the work of the Trinity now this great question therefore we must ask with regard to Balaam how did he know and then having come to this point he says let me die the death of the righteous oh what is this what is this strange request what difference between the death of the righteous and the unrighteous any when it comes to the last breath and eternity any difference he knew there was he knew there was a difference and yet he was a lost character he was like Kudus he knew he preached he was among the disciples he took the bag and was their treasurer and he went to his own place he took his own life is there any difference in death this great question therefore is alone examined by the people of God that's all this solemn searching question will never occupy the mind of an ungodly person to that great extent that they will wish to abide by one end is Balaam so clear in his desire let me die the death of this right the answer is very clear

because he knew there was a difference in their death in their end in their eternal state how did he know this don't ask me I can't tell you obviously he did oh how comforting to foreign nature is the thought that there is no difference when you come to the end when you come to the end it's annihilator it's the end it's nothing beyond the grave no sort of eternal bliss or eternal condemnation no and how clear it stands out still doesn't it it's an absolute fact that there are those who totally deny life after death who totally deny the resurrection of Christ the resurrection of his people and the resurrection of the unjust it was so clearly revealed to Daniel it has been so clearly revealed all through the scriptures and yet you see

Balaam must have known about Abraham he must have known about Isaac and Joseph to go no further with the patriarchs he must have known he had this knowledge but why the question why the request why did he want to die their death ah this is the point that we are brought up to and that is this that he didn't want to live their life he wanted to die their death he wanted to come in at the finish and be right here at the end but not to live their life not to walk in that pathway of the right far too strict far too holy far too separating and oh how this solemn thought so pervades the minds of many today they want to die the death of the righteous but he loved the wages of unrighteousness so that we can see when he was sent for a promised right reward that he would have gone his heart was after the reward and when he then came the second time and offered him greater reward he still asked him to sigh as recorded in the previous chapter and to abide the night to see what the Lord would sigh till the Lord said to him we could go the Lord met with him on that road the second time when he said he could go by the ass in the narrow passageway you know and where that dumb precursor spoke as

[24 : 16] Peter refers to so clearly the dumb ass forbade the madness of the cross and yet God had told him he could go but he must speak what he put into his mouth now Balaam did without any hesitation or fault speak what God told him he did not deviate the hair's breadth from what God commanded now how solemn this is isn't he and yet underneath in his heart it is quite clear that as Peter tells us by divine inspiration he he had his eye on the wages of unrighteousness righteousness he would have cursed but God forbade him so that we look first of all to the majesty of God in this tremendous matter of using such a man as this to declare a lot of things as this and yet to declare them without a fraud in other words to do as he was bidden so God can take advantage of the greatest tool that he can possibly find and use it to his own honor and glory and such a character is by him now is this truth that is expanded and does this enlarge as we view it in the scripture at this day all these centuries afterwards does this stand as a most awful solemn fact that there are those who want to die and say let me die the death of the righteous let my last end be like his but when it comes to the life of the righteous and a clean heart before

God a heart as the psalmist had cleansed man they cannot they do not want they will not have the walk of the righteous far too narrow it it forbids them so many pleasures forbids them so many lusts it forbids that they should do the bidding of their own nature or this separation the nation shall dwell alone he says in the previous verse the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nation this lonely path the church of God has ever had to tread of separation from the world and separation unto

Jesus Christ is the path that leads to the death of the righteous but to have the form of godliness and deny the power of it and the practice of it and conformity with it to be disobedient and rebellious and all such things as this has been amply proven to be a place of solemn confusion we have the parable of the ten virgins to show us that right until the last minute they were expecting to be admitted to the marriage hut and it was not until the door was shut and they sought entrance through the closed door that they realized and this therefore is a part of the great lesson that

Jesus taught when he was upon earth that he thanked his father that he had hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto you which of these paths therefore are we found in on which side of the line do we stand because it is a matter of vital importance have you ever had the desire to die the death of the righteous to be right at last for your last end to be like his to die in the faith of God's will to be found in that great day like the hymn writer declared and expresses can I bear the piercing thought what if my name should be left out when thou for them shalt call can it be therefore that desire of yours is like my hope what about your walk what about the knife of faith what about the pathway of trial the sanctification of affliction what about that path which the vulture's eye hath not seen and the lion's world hath not trod in that narrow way that right way which

Jesus so beautifully set out this isn't having plenty of religion is it this isn't having plenty of presumption and this awful familiarity with Jehovah this broadness of mind which we're exhorted to today whereby we may approach God on equal terms far from it far from it but oh how clearly God sets out in the case of Balaam the knowledge that he had his association with Israel far back as it was through the king of Moab but then the voice of

[32 : 09] God through it although God suffered him to go he gave him the different words from which to speak but he did permit this device of the king of Moab to go so far it was all founded upon wages it was I will promote thee to honour above all that he could ever think as he came from the mountains of the east living perhaps as a recluse we don't know but all this he had his eye on but God frustrated it all how true it is therefore that this narrow way proves to be the right one that this pathway so despised that is so challenged by men and with their undoubted ability criticised to the last degree how true it is that the reigning power of the air the prince of the power of darkness among whom we all had our conversation in time past said the apostle

Paul how true it is that he still has that power that power to deceive to call white black and black white clothe himself as a minister and an angel of night deceive the nation why we are still in the midst of it as our forefathers ever were and read Peter's general epistles and see in some of those chapters how he was embroiled in it those days of the church's early history which we were speaking last several that God has appointed otherwise there is such a thing as the death of the righteous what a happy blessed end to come to the death of the righteous while to the last end to be like the righteous what is that last end what it is why it's to die in pain these all died in pain and having as I've often said come to this they must have lived in pain pain isn't some emergency being given at the last minute except in the case of the dying things it is a lifetime experience these all died in faith because they lived in faith there's no mention here of faith at all but we can see it can't we clearly in the death of the righteous let me die the death of the righteous but now let us come to this in conclusion is this a heartfelt desire of yours shall I among them stand is this a heartfelt desire and is there within the accompanying grace to live the life pass through the trials endure the affliction is this what with your cross your trial whether it's a permanent one or whether it's a temporary one are you willing with made with them to run your race looking unto

Jesus the author and finisher of faith are you these two things fit in together you want the life of faith now this is where you can pick out righteous person this is the hallmark of a true believer and look what company they are where you're going to look for them among the high or the low mainly among the low not exclusively of course not many wise men after the flesh not many mighty not many nobles are called but it doesn't say not any not many God has chosen the foolish things of the world to concern the wise if you've learnt this lesson and are learning it you'll be quite content to be poor and needy and to be among the lowly quite content to be among those who are utterly dependent upon the

Lord Jesus for every grace and favour and the more trials you have the more you will feel the reality of this lesson it will be more deeply burnt into your heart the more you have to go into deep waters the deeper your faith is tried the better it will be gold in the furnace tried ne'er loses aught but dross so is the Christian purified and battered by the cross is there a reconciliation with the life of the righteous in your heart content all honour to forego but that that comes from God a desire to walk by faith inwardly and a desire to walk by faith outwardly according to God's known will and mind is it or is it just this choice of a solemn bailout let me die the death of the righteous this is what he interposes you see in what

God says he sees their blessedness their security he sees that they are God's chosen people he envies their lots he wants this last end to be like theirs and yet God has left it on record that he loved the wages of unrighteousness what an example no wonder the church of God has ever dwelt around this solemn ground the utmost care but there is an answer to it and you can give it through grace and only through grace God are you willing not only desirous but willing to walk the path of obedience the path of trial are you willing to be taught instructed to live the life of faith that you may ultimately die die people's death if so the scripture is very clear he will give grace and glory that the two will ever go together oh lord and his blessing amen will love do i will pity unity have withopp people at very heart