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Balaam's Second Encounter with God 22: 15-20

Balaam's second encounter with God DIG: Why do you think God did not allow Balaam to speak false prophecies, even though He allowed other false prophets to speak in other situations? Why did Balaam think that ADONAI would change His mind? Why is there no inconsistency between 22:12 and 22:20?

REFLECT: Balaam's words in 22:18 sound so great. Do you think they were sincere or just pious talk? How can we know if a person is sincere? Why is the love of money so destructive? Have you ever had selective listening from the LORD so you could do what you wanted to do? How did that turn out?

Balaam heard the first part of the LORD's command: get up and go with them;
but not the second part: but do only what I tell you.

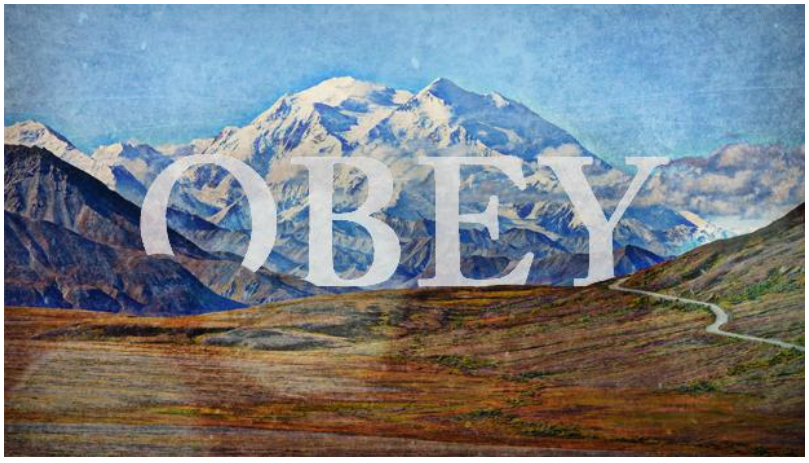
Further negations (22:15-17): Undaunted in **his** pursuit of victory over **Isra'el**, **Balak** sent **Balaam** a larger and even more impressive delegation of **rulers of the** two **nations** with the promise of paying any fee **Balaam** asked, plus bestowing royal honors on **him**.[474] **Then King Balak sent rulers, more numerous and more distinguished than the first group** to persuade the reluctant **sorcerer (22:15). He** assumed everyone could be bought for a price, and must have thought that **Balaam's** first refusal was merely a negotiating tactic. Thus, **they** told **Balaam** that **he** could name **his** own price, and offered **him** a blank check, so to speak. **Here is what King Balak** says: **Please don't let anything keep you from coming to me. I will reward you very well, and whatever you say to me I will do. So please come, and curse these people for me" (22:16-17).**

Paul warned **Timothy** that **people who long to be rich fall into temptation, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (First John 2:16), and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge**

them into ruin and destruction will come upon **them** suddenly without warning**. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.** To illustrate his point, **Paul** referred indirectly to **some people** undoubtedly known to Timothy, who had fallen into the trap of **craving money,** and had **wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. But** Paul's solution for the believer is to **flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness (First Timothy 6:9-11 NLT).**

Balaam's greed (22:18-19): Knowing **God's** will in the matter, **Balaam** should have refused to even consider this second offer, but **the** greedy **sorcerer** was still hoping to find some way to circumvent the will of **ADONAI**. **His** words were simply pious talk. With **his** lips **he** professed to obey **the LORD**, but in **his** heart, **he** coveted the money and hoped **YHVH** would change **His** mind.[475] **But Balaam answered the rulers of Balak, "Even if Balak were to give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of ADONAI Elohim to do anything, great or small" (22:18).** We must remember that **Balaam** was polytheistic and **ADONAI** would have been one of the many gods in his pantheon. Here, **his** use of the name of **Isra'el's God** was one of fraudulent boasting.

Imagining a house **full of silver and gold, Balaam** was greatly tempted by the new offer. However, **he** remembered how sternly **Ha'Shem** had forbidden **him to go** the last time. **He** already knew **God's** will in the matter. Nevertheless, **he** decided to implore **Him** once again. **Now, please, you too, stay here tonight; so that I may find out what else ADONAI will say to me" (22:19).**



God's answer (22:20): As was likely the case in the first encounter (see **Dp – Balaam's First Encounter with God**) this second encounter with **Elohim** took

place at **night**, a time recounted in the TaNaKh for revelations, dreams, and visions. As **He** did so with **Abimelech** (see the commentary on **Genesis, to see link click Fe – Then God Came to Abimelech in a Dream**); **Laban** (see **Genesis Hr – Laban Pursues Jacob**); and twice we see this in the book of **Dani'el**, first with **Nebuchadnezzar's dream** (see the commentary on **Dani'el Ak – Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**), and secondly with **Nebuchadnezzar's vision** (see **Dani'el Bf – Nebuchadnezzar's Vision of a Great Tree**).**God came to Balaam during the night and said to him, "Since these men have come to summon you, get up and go with them; but do only what I tell you (22:20)."**

Perhaps **YHVH** will change **His** mind. Such was indeed the unspoken premise behind all **sorcery**. The same ritual procedures were repeated by the ancients until a favorable omen was received. It was common to sacrifice three times on two or three consecutive days, based upon this hope. So, **Balaam** would have had **king Balak** repeat the same sacrificial ritual, although in different places, in order to get the desired result. Even in dream interpretation, a single dream was not decisive, as in the case of Pharaoh in **Genesis 41:5**. Therefore, **Balaam** assumed that **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** was fickle, and attempted to exploit **his** delusion with the aid of **sorcery**, without a drop of success.[476]

There is no real inconsistency with **Numbers 22:12, "You are not to go with them; you are not to curse those people, because they are blessed."** The absolute and unchanging ban there had to do with **not putting a curse on the Israelites**. Going with **the princes**, which was forbidden in mercy in **22:12**, was ordered as a judgment here at **22:20**. **Ha'Shem** often punishes disobedience to **His** declared will by permitting the rebels **to eat the bitter fruit of living their own way,** thus **choking on their own schemes (Proverbs 1:31 NLT).** Thus, **He gave Balaam** the desires of **his** evil heart**; but sent a wasting disease into his soul (Psalm 106:15 ERV**; also see **Psalm 81:12; Isaiah 66:4; Jeremiah 2:19; Romans 1:28-32).** After many attempts to rescue **Judas** from hell, **Yeshua** told **him, "Go, do what you have to do,"** even though **the Master** knew the evil in **Judas'** heart. The same is true here, **God** said, **"Get up and go with them,"** even though **He** knew the evil in **Balaam's** heart.

Overjoyed at the opportunity to make a fortune, **Balaam** immediately set out. Blinded by money, **he** had every intention of **cursing Isra'el** when **he** arrived. Despite **ADONAI's** warning, **Balaam** was intent on earning **his wages**, ignoring the fact that **the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a)**. **He** heard the first part of **the LORD's** command: **get up and go with them**; but not the second part: **but**

do only what I tell you. **He** only heard what **he** wanted to hear. Often, we find ourselves suffering from the same selective listening. We will quote a proof text or passage that supports our position, while ignoring those that do not. Mitzvot contrary to our wishes are easily ignored while those that affirm us are waved around like flags. Lest we fall into the error of **Balaam**, we must be careful to obey **the whole Word of God (Acts 20:27)**.[477]

God was protecting **the Israelites** by stifling the powers of the demons and idolatrous nations who wanted to consume **them**. It was a mighty, supernatural protection against attacks from the vicious and powerful forces of darkness whose sole intent was to destroy **God's people**, thereby foiling **God's** plans. **He** was turning **curses** into **blessings**.[478]

*Dear Heavenly Father, Praise **You** for the blessings that **You** love to pour on those who love **You**. What a comfort it is that **Messiah Yeshua** is preparing a home in heaven for those who love **You.** **Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to Myself, so that where I am you may also be (John 14:1-3).** The riches of this world will soon be gone. What lasts for eternity is our love for **You** and **the deeds Your** children do for **You** with their heart of love. **You** see the heart motive for all **deeds** and **You** have promised to reward those whose **deeds** pass through fire which tests the heart motive. **For no one can lay any other foundation than what is already laid – which is Yeshua the Messiah. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear. For the Day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test each one's work – what sort it is. If anyone's work built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. (First Corinthians 3:11-14). Only one life will soon be past – Only what's done for Messiah will Last!** It is a delight to serve **You** with our whole heart! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*