

# Lessons Learned From Balaam

**Numbers 22: 1-41**

Most people just remember the  
donkey who spoke.

# Introduction

We could call this a lesson on how not to treat a donkey.

Okay, you can chuckle all you want, but people would rather this be the point of the lesson rather than what lessons we are really supposed to learn.



# Introduction

The lives of Old Testament characters provide both positive and negative examples-

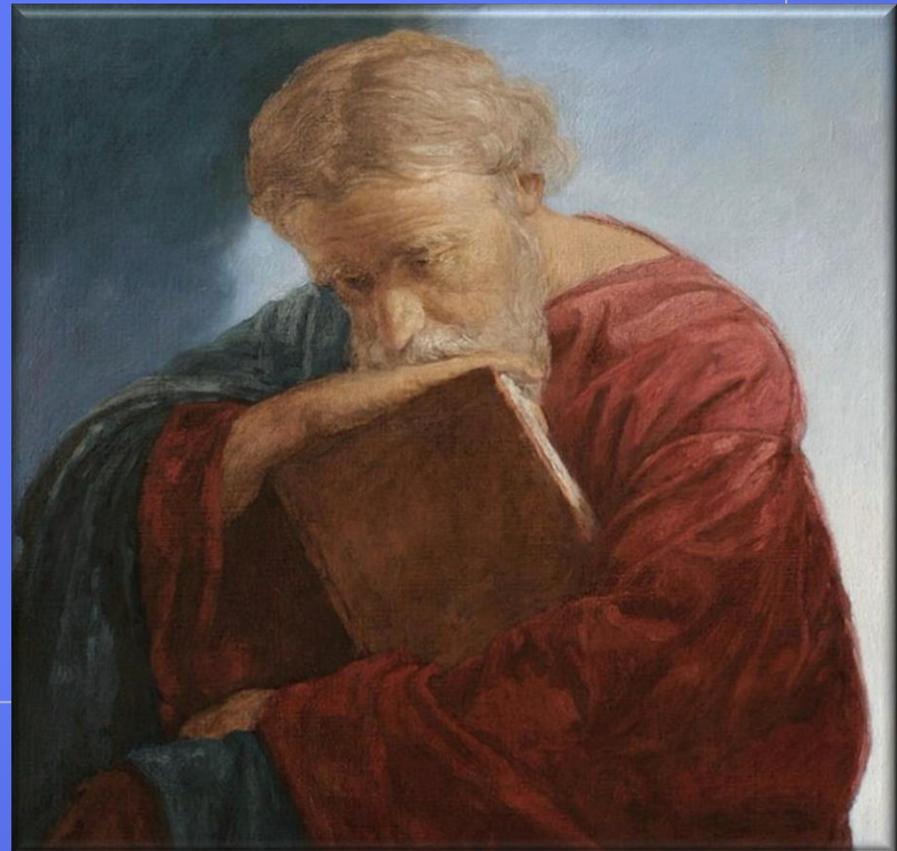
I Corinthians 10:11

Paul said that the things written before were written for our learning- Romans 15:4



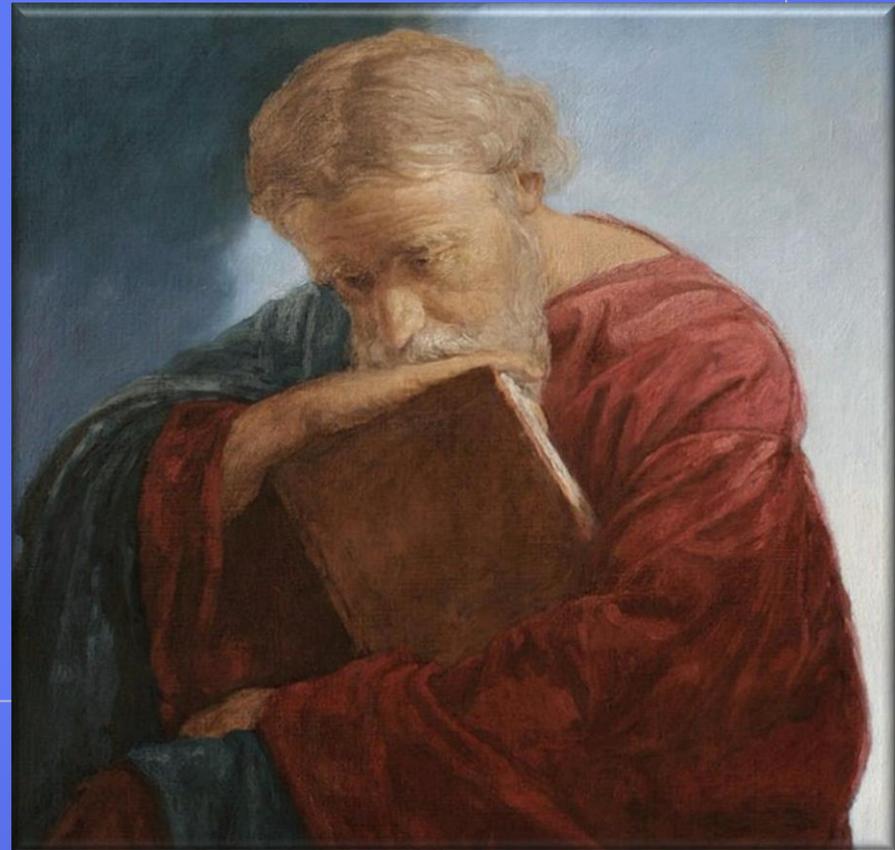
# Introduction

- ▶ Balaam was an unusual person who provides one of those “negative examples” from which we can learn



# Introduction

- ▶ This is the first time he is mentioned in the scriptures
- ▶ His name also occurs three times in the New Testament and a few times in the Old Testament.



# Setting Up The Scenario

- ▶ *After 40 years in the wilderness, Israel was on the way to Canaan.*
- ▶ *They had defeated Sihon's army*
- ▶ *Who had previously conquered Moab-*  
*Numbers 21:26*
- ▶ *And Og, king of Bashan east of Jordan.*
- ▶ *They were encamped in the plain of Moab intending to pass around it to Canaan- Deuteronomy 2:9*

# Who was Balaam?

- ▶ **The one to whom Balak sent messengers to hire him to come and to curse Israel.**
- ▶ **He was the son of Beor who lived in Pethor near the Euphrates river- v. 5**
- ▶ **He was a prophet of God- II Peter 2:16**
- ▶ **God spoke to Balaam**
- ▶ **And Balaam spoke great truths- 23:19 & 24:17**
- ▶ **Balak had confidence in him because of his accuracy in his prophecies - v. 6**

# Numbers 22:1-4

- ▶ 1 And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho.
- ▶ 2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.



# Numbers 22:1-4

- ▶ 3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.



# Numbers 22:1-4

- ▶ 4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time.



## Numbers 22:5-7

- ▶ **5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me:**

# Numbers 22:5-7

- ▶ **6** Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.
- ▶ **7** And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.

## Balaam's First Response

- ▶ Appears wise and honorable-
- ▶ 8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.



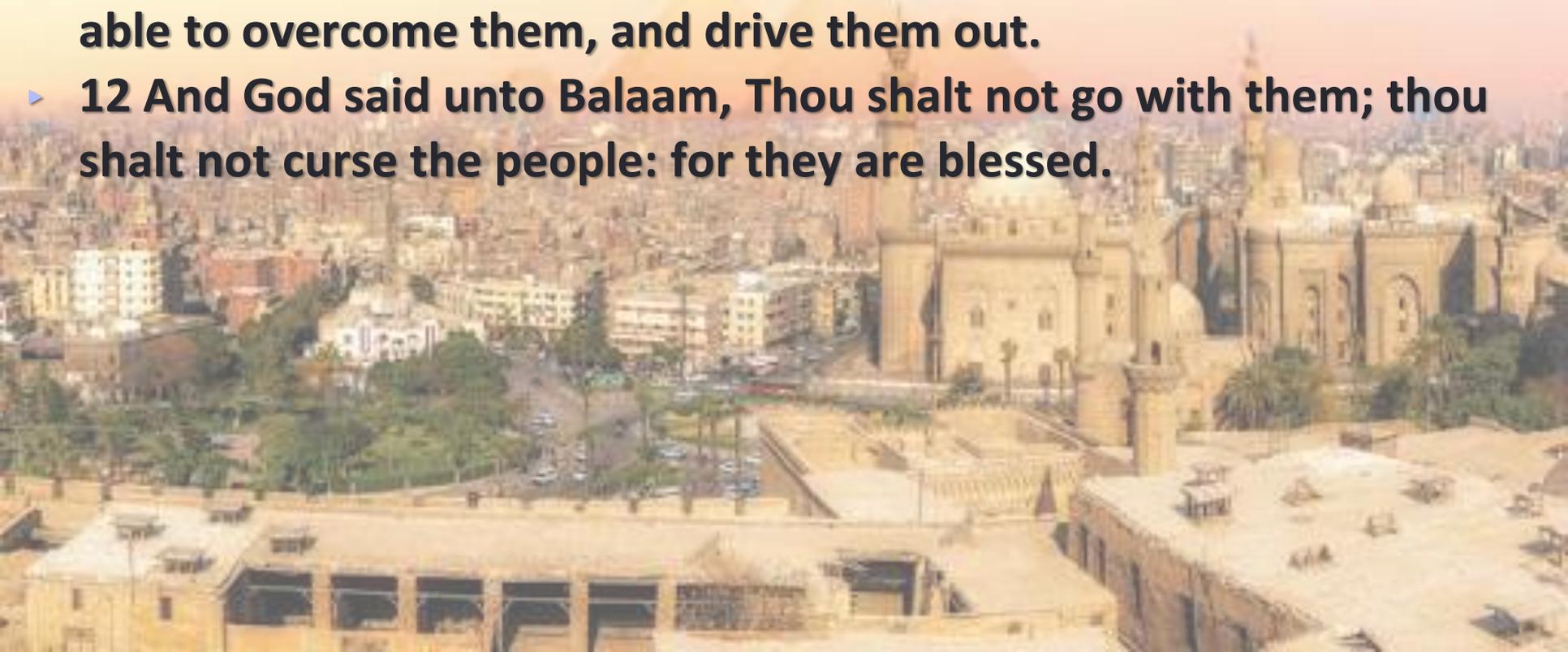
## Balaam's First Response

- ▶ Balaam told the messengers to stay overnight so he could ask God about the matter



## Numbers 22:9-12

- ▶ **9 And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?**
- ▶ **10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying,**
- ▶ **11 Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.**
- ▶ **12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.**





## Balaam's First Response

- ▶ Balaam said God would not allow him to go.
- ▶ But told only the first part of God's message.
- ▶ Had he told all, it might have ended Balak's plan.
- ▶ 13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you.



## Balaam's First Response

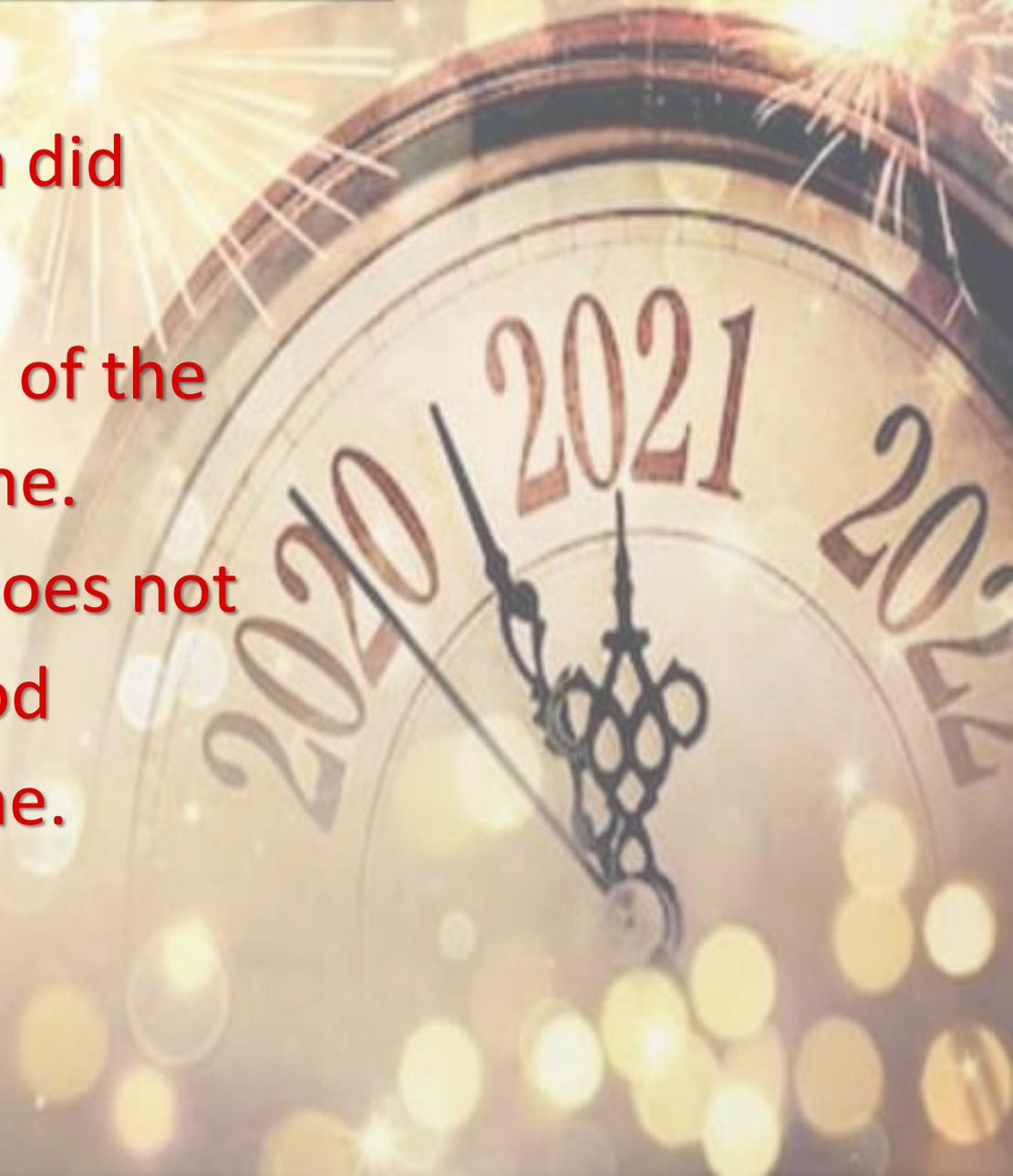
- ▶ **14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.**
- ▶ **We will later on learn that this left the door open for Baalam to profit financially.**

## Numbers 22: 15-18

- 15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they.
- 16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:
- 17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.
- 18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more

# Balaam's Second Response

- ▶ This is where Balaam did wrong.
- ▶ Apparently the word of the Lord had limits of time.
- ▶ He forgot that God does not change and when God speaks it is for all time.



# Balaam's Second Response

- ▶ **Notice:**
- ▶ **19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more.**



## Balaam's *Second* Response

- ▶ **The first time God spoke should have been enough.**
- ▶ **This teaches us that some people are not satisfied with what God hath spoken, but want to push for something different.**
- ▶ **For people with this attitude, God will allow them leeway in what they want to do, but will still hold them accountable.**
- ▶ **2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 God allows them to believe the lie—those who loved not the truth.**

# Numbers 22:20

- ▶ **20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.**
- ▶ **Here God gives Balaam permission to go, but limits Balaam on what he can do and say.**
- ▶ **But we soon find that God was upset because Balaam did not listen the first time.**

# Numbers 22:21-22

- ▶ 21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.
- ▶ 22 And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

## Numbers 22:23-25

- ▶ **23 And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the donkey turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the donkey, to turn her into the way.**
- ▶ **24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.**
- ▶ **25 And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.**

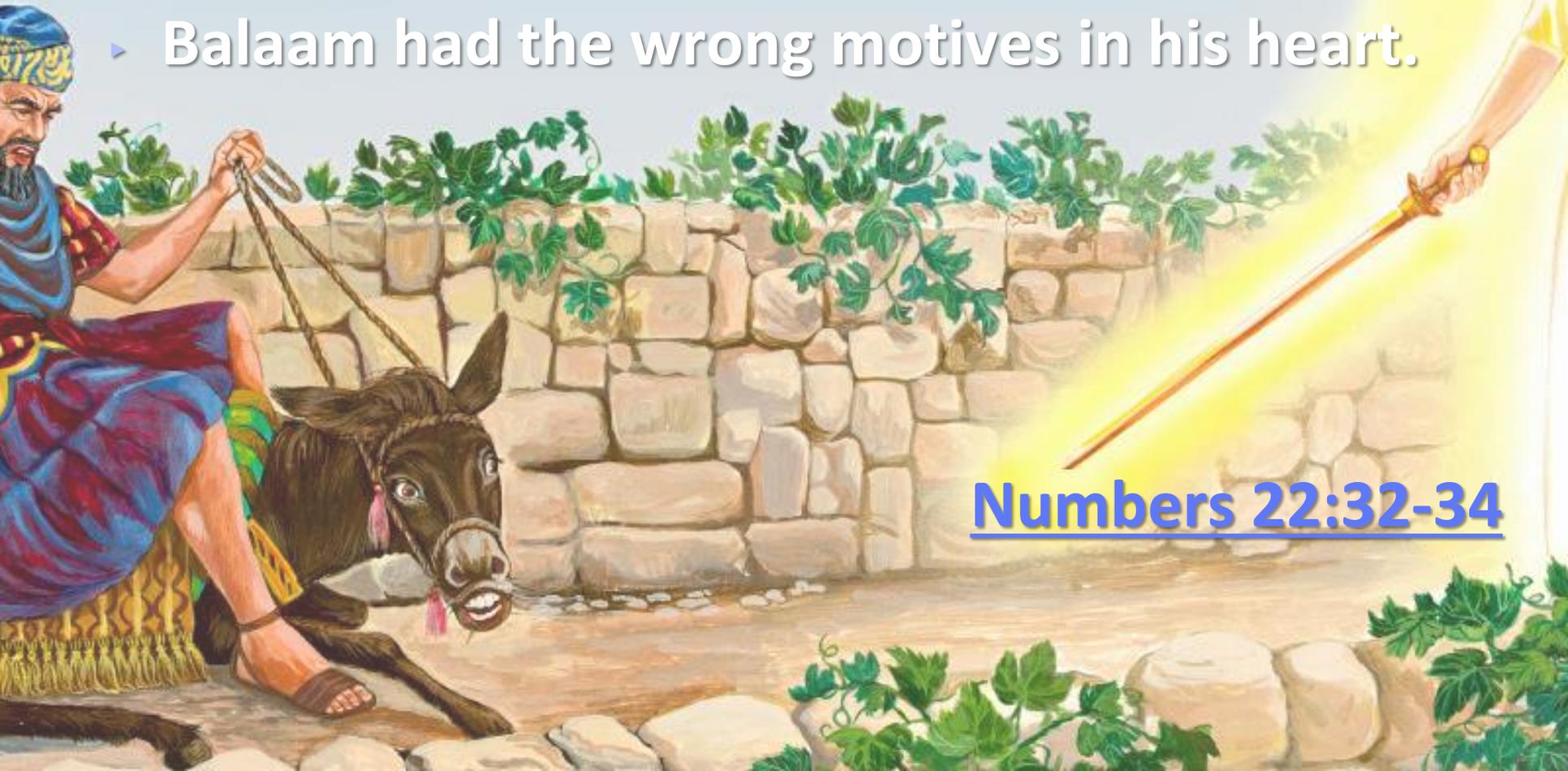
## Numbers 22:26-28

- ▶ **26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.**
- ▶ **27 And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the donkey with a staff.**
- ▶ **28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?**

## Numbers 22:29-31

- ▶ **29 And Balaam said unto the donkey, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.**
- ▶ **30 And the donkey said unto Balaam, Am not I thine donkey, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.**
- ▶ **31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.**

- ▶ **32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:**
- ▶ Balaam had the wrong motives in his heart.



[Numbers 22:32-34](#)

## Numbers 22:32-34

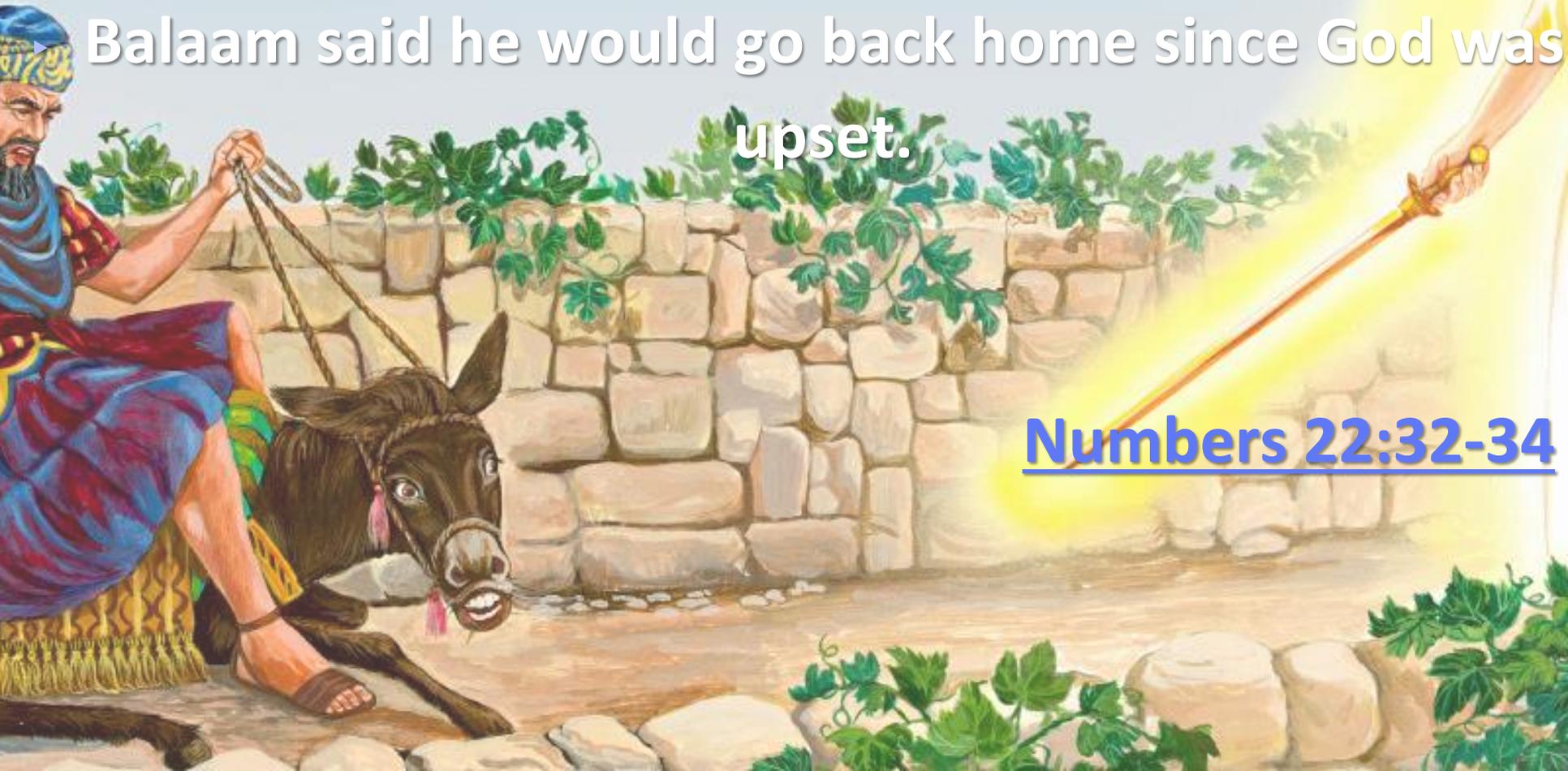
- ▶ **33 And the donkey saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.**



- ▶ **34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.**

▶ Balaam said he would go back home since God was upset.

[Numbers 22:32-34](#)



# The Lessons To Be Learned

Leaving out any part of God's word is dangerous.

Balaam told the first messengers only part of God's answer.

All of God's word is important and needful-

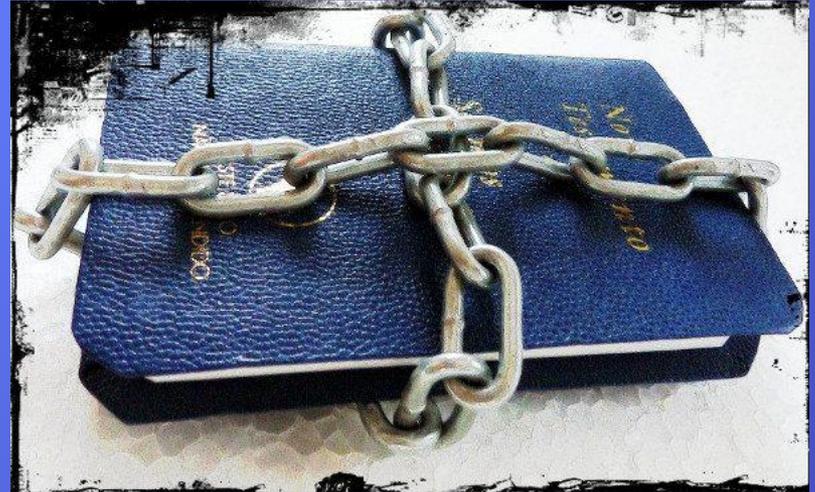
Matthew 4:4

Leaving out any  
was a

sign of unfaithfulness

Balaam and all

today- Acts 20:27



# The Lessons To Be Learned

- ▶ **God's will and purpose can not be thwarted.**
- ▶ **Not by kings, greedy prophets or anyone else.**
- ▶ **Those who oppose it do so to their own disappointment, sorrow and destruction.**



# The Lessons To Be Learned



- ▶ **Balaam failed to appreciate his relationship to God.**
- ▶ **He was a prophet through whom God revealed His will.**
- ▶ **He was willing to sell his relationship for the “wages of unrighteousness”.**

## The Lessons To Be Learned



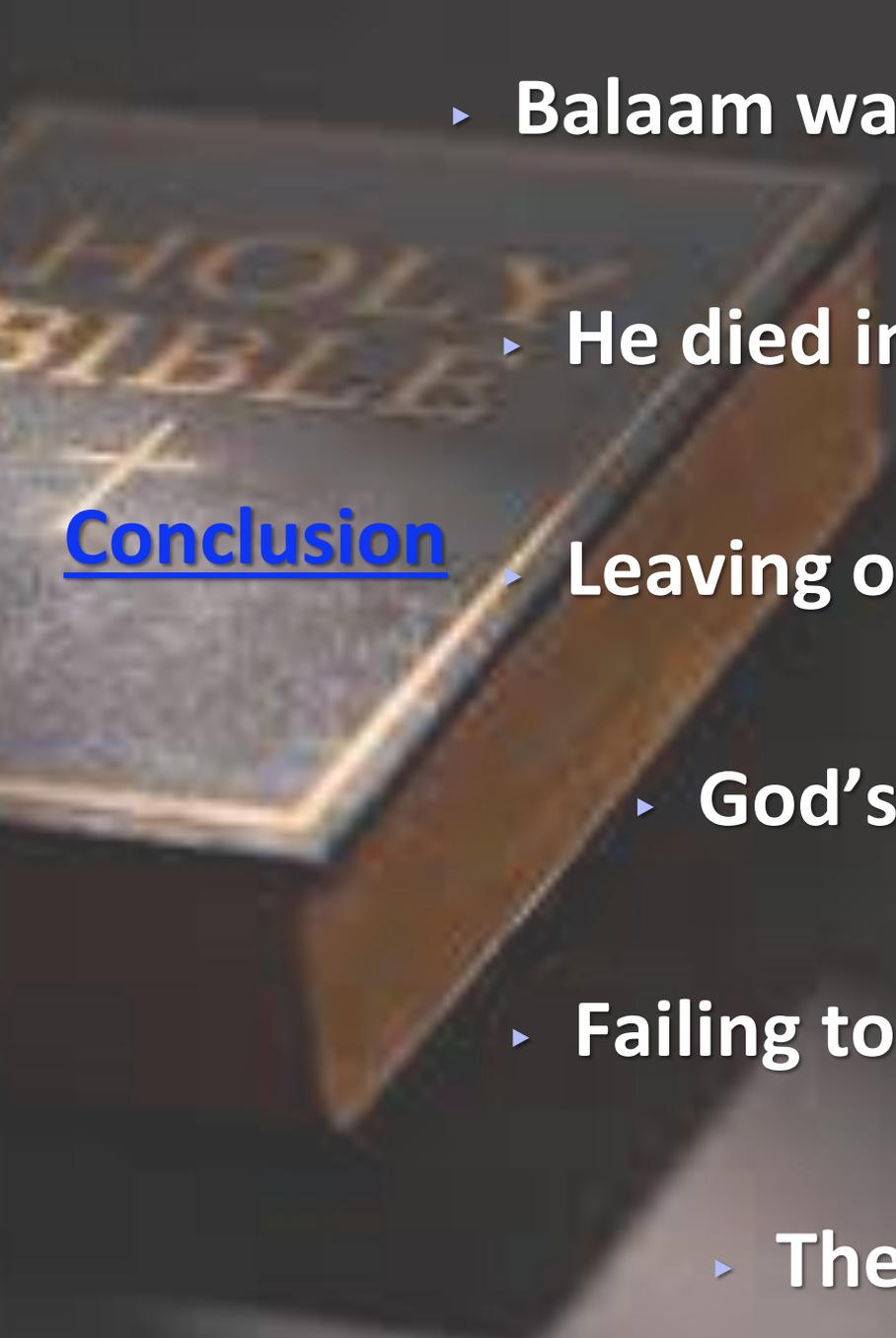
- ▶ Christians should realize the great honor of being a member of God's family- I John 3:1
- ▶ And never exchange that honor for the temporary enjoyment of the trash and trinkets of this world- Matthew 16:26

# The Lessons To Be Learned

- ▶ The danger of pursuing wealth.
- ▶ The motive that led to Balaam's destruction.
- ▶ It will lead to many different sins- I Timothy. 6:9-10
- ▶ Because of it Achan was stoned to death and Gehazi died a leper.
- ▶ It motivated Judas to betray Christ.
- ▶ It has destroyed the lives of many Christians also.

## Balaam's End

- ▶ Balaam was not satisfied.
- ▶ He still wanted gain from the situation.
- ▶ He loved the wages of unrighteousness-  
II Peter 2:15
- ▶ He told Balak how to weaken Israel-  
Numbers 31:16
- ▶ Through idolatry and sexual immorality-  
Numbers 25:1-3

- 
- ▶ Balaam was killed along with the kings of Midian- Numbers 31:8
  - ▶ He died in dishonor and infamy- Jude 11
  - ▶ Leaving out any part of God's word is dangerous.
  - ▶ God's will and purpose cannot be thwarted.
  - ▶ Failing to appreciate our relationship with God.
  - ▶ The danger of pursuing wealth.
  - ▶ Certainly good lessons to be learned.

## Conclusion