

### **Recap of 3/19/17 (Numbers 22:20-25:9):**

1. "Balaam was a hireling prophet who finally succumbed to the pressure of greater honor and more money. He was willing to look at things 'from another viewpoint' in hopes he could find a loophole in the revealed will of God." (Wiersbe)

2. Balaam uses a pagan ritual in an attempt to bribe God (building seven altars and offering seven bulls and seven rams). Though he tries three times to find a way to curse Israel, God causes him to bless them instead. The four blessings are summarized this way: Israel is a people set apart to God, separate from all others, and no one can curse a people God has blessed; God is unchangeable, a living presence with Israel and the source of their success; Israel will be victorious and prosperous; and finally, utters a blessing that is commonly thought to be a Messianic prophecy, God will send a deliverer who will ultimately defeat all God's enemies.

3. Life lessons from Balaam:

-Love of money will put us on a collision course with God's will. It will send us down a wrong road in life (Matthew 6:19-24; 1 Timothy 6:3ff). "Love of money will confuse your life, blur right and wrong, and muddle your sense of purpose" (365 Life Lessons from Bible People). The Compact Guide to the Christian Life tackles the issue of materialism in the life of the believer: "Materialism is making money and material possessions the goal of life—our god. Even if we say and think that Jesus is our Lord, even if we go to church and read Christian books, we are really serving whatever is unconsciously the goal of our life." The signs of materialism according to the guide are possessiveness, preoccupation with material things, and covetousness.

-God is sovereign over people and circumstances and will use them to advance His purposes.

-God protects His people. We wrestle not against flesh and blood but have God's supernatural power and spiritual weapons to protect us. (Ephesians 6 and 1 John 4:4)

-God is committed to blessing His people and being with them in all circumstances (Hebrews 13:5,6; Romans 8:31-39)

-Beware of false teachers who hide their greed behind pious talk. Beware of those who say "the Lord told me."

-We must separate ourselves from sin and deal with sin in the Body or God will deal with it. (Numbers 25:1-18)