

I would like to say, "Welcome," to everyone today on God's Sabbath. We are in the Georgia area today.

Brethren, in the last sermon we looked at how the children of Israel were constantly rebelling against God and Moses. And we've been looking at why God told us in Jude of things we were not to forget. We are told to always remember things of our past and keep them in mind as they are important to you and me in the Church of God at the end of this age. We are the Church that Jesus Christ will return to in just a short while, and we are preparing for that return. God is preparing His Church for the Millennium, a time when God's laws will be put in place. And that will begin a new age where peace will begin to encompass this whole earth.

You can be turning to the book of Jude, as that's where we will begin today. God wants you and me to understand our history and what took place with God's spirit and without His spirit. So we have been looking at what took place a long time ago when God was delivering Israel. God tells us not to forget what took place. So today we will continue with the series, *Rebellion*, and this will be *Part 3*.

Jude, in verse 5 we find, I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Eternal, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, and here Jude is reminding us of what God did, and He afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Verse 6—And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode; they rebelled. That's what they did, and God has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Do we remember when God asked Job about this day? And God asked Job, could he do such a thing? Could he reserve a day? And God has reserved a day, as we know, and we know when this is, and we know it is because of rebellion, that's why. And we will see today how serious rebellion is.

Verse 7—as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. And we looked at this in a past sermon, about Sodom and Gomorrah. Likewise, also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. This is what they do. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Eternal rebuke you!" But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. And we've looked at this in past sermons. And we know they speak terrible things about you and me, brethren, those that once walked side-by-side to you and me in God's Church. So it includes those that were once among us that walked side-by-side with us in God's Church. And God says, **Woe to them! For they have gone in**

the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished, as in the rebellion of Korah.

So today we will begin to see what Balaam did that God reminds you and me about in His book, and tells you and me not to forget these examples that were written in God's book. And this is where we ended in *Part 2 of Rebellion*. So we will begin today, and look at Balaam, and understand who he was and how God used Balaam.

Numbers 22:38-41. We'll pick up the story. Balak and Balaam looked down upon the children of Israel from a high vantage point, a high place. And it was for the worship of Baal, a location that they thought had some sort of spiritual power. That's what they thought. And Balaam requested that Balak build seven new altars in the high places just for Balaam to sacrifice upon. And Balaam sacrifices seven bulls and seven rams. False religion often counterfeits elements of true worship, but it's in a superstitious kind of way, believing that God is primarily interested in rituals. But we know that God is preparing a people that know how to worship their God, who will one day be His children ruling in His Kingdom, preparing to be in the Kingdom of God. Therefore, our name, brethren. But here we see Balak and Balaam in their form of worship, using animal sacrifices. So hold your place here in Numbers 22 and let's turn over to Hebrews 10. Hebrews 10. Rituals, such as animal sacrifices, are not what God is really after. Rather, the purpose behind them is what was important. Animal sacrifices did teach obedience, but we know that it looked to the need for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And in many places in the scriptures we see where God said that "sacrifice and offerings," talking about burnt offerings and offerings for sin, "God did not desire, neither did God have pleasure in them."

Hebrews 10:4, God's word tells us, **For *it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He*** (talking about Jesus Christ) **came into the world, let's notice what He said, He said: Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You** (talking about God) **have prepared for Me** (Jesus Christ). **In burnt offerings and *sacrifices for sin*—let's notice—You had no pleasure.**

Verse 7—Then I said, Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.

Verse 8—Previously saying, Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings for sin* You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them* (which are offered according to the law), then He said, Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By what will we have been sanctified (set aside) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man (Jesus Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. There is no power in rituals or locations themselves. And this is a fact that was lost on the ancient Baal worshippers. They thought that certain locations had spiritual consequences. And Balaam, the greatest prophet of his time, will be unable to curse Israel (as we will see). And Balaam cannot curse the children of God, the children of Israel, because the true God will not allow it. And in fact,

Balaam in his prophecies, God will have him pronounce blessing upon blessing (as we will see) on Israel. Balaam eventually ends up uttering a prayer, and he says, "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my end be like his."

And to refresh, I will read from what Mr. Armstrong had to say about Balaam. And Mr. Armstrong wrote, "Remember about the Old Testament character, Balaam, who, as you read in the Book of Revelation (second chapter, verse fourteen)," but I'll just quote this for you, "and it's in the words of Christ and it caused Israel to sin?" And it says, **Revelation 2:14—But I have a few things against you, because you have them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.**

Mr. Armstrong says, "Let me give you some interesting new facts about this Balaam. Balaam, it now appears, was in his time successor in office to Nimrod, founder of the world's pagan civilization. And Balaam was the greatest prophet of the time - in that pagan religion - the Pontifex Maximus of the pagan world (so to speak) - the chief oracle of paganism. Does it, then, seem strange that he prayed to God and appeared to be a servant of God?" That's the question that's being asked. "When King Balak of Moab sent emissaries to hire Balaam to put a curse on the people of Israel, Balaam asked the emissaries to remain overnight, so he could go aside and pray, and ask God if he might go with them. If he was the chief *pagan* prophet, actually sitting in SATAN'S SEAT, as head of Satan's religion upon this earth, **WHY** would he pray to God about such a thing?"

And Mr. Armstrong says, "I feel quite sure that most people who have read this account have supposed Balaam to be a prophet of God - not of Satan. Did he not do *right* in consulting God? Surely Satan would not do that! But let's take a quick look at the incident."

"The children of Israel, under Moses, had pitched camp in the plains of Moab." You can be turning back to Numbers 22 (and you may want to just put a marker here because we'll be coming back, back and forth). "The children of Israel, under Moses, had pitched camp in the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan river, near Jericho. And the King of Moab, Balak, saw what these Israelites - there were at least two or three million of them..." So you can imagine him standing there and looking out and seeing two to three million camped, "and he knew what they had done to the Amorites." He had heard the stories.

"And he was struck with fear. And the Moabites were far outnumbered. So King Balak sent messengers to Balaam, who lived at Pethor in Mesopotamia - a far distance, near the Euphrates River. And they took with *them* the fees for divination, *to* hire Balaam to curse the Israelites. And he said, 'They are too mighty for me,' was Balak's message to Balaam, 'for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and whom you curse is cursed.'"

So let's go to Numbers 22 and let's pick up the story flow. And let's look at the account. And this is where Balak sends for Balaam. **Numbers 22:1—Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan *across from* Jericho. Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they *were* many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. So Moab said to the elders of Midian, Now this company (this people) will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field. And Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites at that time. Then he sent messengers to Balaam, the son of Beor, at Pethor, which *is* near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: Look, a people has come from Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! Therefore, please come at once and curse this people for me, for they *are* too mighty for me. Perhaps I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.**

Verse 8—When the elders of Moab and Midian, Balak's messengers, delivered the message to Balaam, let's notice what he said, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Eternal shall speak unto me. And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

Verse 12—Let's notice what God said to Balaam, You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they *are* blessed. So let's pay attention to what God told him. And Balaam rose up in the morning and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land, for the Eternal refuses to give me leave to go with you.

Verse 19—"Again King Balak sent messengers to Balaam — this time more noble princes of higher rank, and more money. Again Balaam asked them to remain overnight, 'that I might know what the Eternal will say unto me more.' This time God allowed him to go with them, but forbad him to curse Israel. Yet the angel of God stopped Balaam's donkey on the way. WHY?" Why would He stop the donkey? "Now doesn't all this sound as if Balaam were GOD'S prophet, not Satan's? Yet, let's see what we read in the New Testament!"

So put your marker here, as we'll be coming back. But let's turn over to 2 Peter 2:15. 2 Peter 2:15, and let's see what was written by Peter. "And Peter speaks of false prophets." He talks about prophets "following the way of Balaam," who loved the wages of unrighteousness. So **2 Peter 2:15** says, **Which have forsaken the right way, and are going astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.**

And over a few pages to Jude (just over a few pages), Jude 11. We spent a lot of time in Jude because of what God said to you and me upon whom the end of the ages would come. **Jude, verse 11.** "Jude

writes: ‘Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for a reward.’”

Let's turn over a few more pages to Revelation 2:14. Revelation 2:14. And let's see what Jesus Christ had to say. "Jesus Christ says to the Church of the Pergamos era: ‘But I have a few things against you, because you have them that hold the doctrine of Balaam,’” let's notice, “‘who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel...’”

"So Jesus Christ, Peter, and Jude all tell us that Balaam was a FALSE prophet. And when we research into his actual identity, we find that Pethor, where he resided, was the headquarters of the highest priest of the pagan Babylonian Mystery religion. And in reading through Numbers 22, 23, and 24, one might suppose that Balaam was just an ordinary individual of no consequence. Yet here was the king of a nation. He passed up his own priests, passed up his own magicians, he passed up his own astrologers of the pagan religion. And he sent his highest princes, with rich rewards and much money. And he sent them a great distance, to Pethor, near the Euphrates River, in Mesopotamia. And he would not have sent them to any but the most powerful practitioner of divination."

"Other scriptures show that these higher magicians of divination were often demon-possessed. This Balaam could have been DEVIL-possessed, so that it was actually Satan himself in possession of the human Balaam, working in and through him. WOULD SATAN CONSULT GOD ABOUT DOING SUCH A THING? And the answer comes sharp and clear! Satan himself WOULD consult God, precisely as Balaam did, under such circumstances! Most have assumed that Balaam had been a true prophet of God. But this is not true. And the answer is found in the first two chapters of the Book of Job," about what Satan would do. And you don't have to turn there, we've been through this account and we know the story.

"Satan himself is here pictured in conversation with God concerning the righteousness of Job. We know that God ALLOWED Satan to afflict Job — but God placed a limit on HOW FAR Satan could go with Job! God is SUPREME RULER of this universe," brethren. "And at first, God allowed Satan to take all that Job possessed, but not to harm Job's person...Satan argued that a man would give up all he possessed to save his own life — but if only he could afflict Job's PERSON, Job would turn against God. So God now gave Satan permission to go this much further with Job — but to spare his life." He couldn't take his life. "In like manner, the Satan-influenced (or Satan-possessed, as the case may be) Balaam well KNEW that God had set limit to his powers. Satan is the god and invisible ruler of this world — yet God is SUPREME RULER over all. Every ruler has authority and power ONLY within his own boundary lines or

jurisdiction. There are NO boundary lines on God's rulership — but there are on Satan's. And he well knows it! There could be no sin — there could be no evil — unless God ALLOWED IT! And if God did not allow it there could be no free moral agency — no free choice — and that would nullify God's PURPOSE!"

Let's turn over to 2 Corinthians 11, 2 Corinthians 11:13, and we'll see that "...Satan's ministers talk about God, and they masquerade as God's ministers." **Verse 13—For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if His ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness—let's notice—whose end shall be according to their works.** Because of their rebellion, brethren, because of what they'd done, and there is a day of judgment for them.

"This high priest of Satan knew that Israel was God's own nation, and he knew that they were under God's protection. And this divine protection sets a boundary line on his power to harm God's nation. And Satan is well aware that there are limits set upon his powers." And therefore, the post that just came out that tells us that God is beginning to limit the demon world and their powers, including Satan. And we know that they will ultimately be chained—here in the post from God's apostle and God's prophet, that that is taking place. But here we also see, when God was working with ancient Israel, that God limited the powers that could harm His nation that He was bringing out of Egypt.

"Balaam would have been overjoyed to be able to curse, harm, or destroy Israel. But he KNEW — he was FULLY AWARE — that doing this was beyond his power — UNLESS, as God allowed Satan to go further than originally allowed in afflicting Job, the Almighty God would now, would maybe now allow him to curse and harm Israel. Balaam WANTED to curse Israel. He WANTED the fee!" He wanted the money!

"Now, with this in your mind," let's go back to Numbers 22:18 and let's notice what Balaam did. Numbers 22:18. "When the highest princes of Moab came, on the second visit, he said: 'If Balak would give me this house full of silver and gold, I CANNOT GO BEYOND the word of the ETERNAL... It was not a matter of Balaam being willing. He was willing to harm Israel. It was a matter of HAVING THE POWER to do so."

Verse 19— Now, therefore, I pray you, tarry you here this night that I may know what the Eternal will say to me more. And God came unto Balaam at night and said unto him, If the men come to call you, rise up and go with them, yet the word which I shall say unto you—let's notice—that shall you do. And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his donkey and met with the princes of Moab. And God's anger—let's notice—was kindled because he went. Now, why would God be angry? Because

He told him he could go. But God knew what his intentions were. God knew what Balaam's mind was on, and He knew His intent. And his mind was on the reward, the money. He wanted the money. He wanted that reward. And God had it written in verse 32, the last part, let's notice...**verse 32**, in the last part, **Behold, I went out to withstand you—let's notice why—because *your way is perverse before Me***. God had it written in His book why. What he wants to do is not good, brethren. God calls it perverse.

And let's notice what takes place next. Balaam is persistent about going, even though God told him earlier not to go. But God knew he would because God knew his mind and knew his intentions. God knew he was influenced or even possessed by Satan. God knew it. God knew who he was.

Continuing on in **verse 22**, let's notice what's said, **Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the angel of the Eternal stood in the way for an adversary against him**. So God knew what was in Balaam's mind and what his intent was, and here God had it written that he was an adversary to the angel and to God. **Now, he was riding upon his donkey, and his two servants were with him. And the donkey saw the angel of the Eternal standing in the way—and let's notice—he had a sword in his hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. And Balaam hit the donkey to turn her in to the way**. Now, I don't know where the term "dumb donkey," but it's another word that's used, starts with an "A" came from, but it seems to me that it should be the other way around. Even the donkey had better sense than Balaam. **But the angel of the Eternal stood in the path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side and a wall on that side**.

And **verse 25—And when the donkey saw the angel of the Eternal, she thrust herself into the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he hit her again. And the angel of the Eternal went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn, to the right hand or to the left hand. And when the donkey saw the angel of the Eternal, she fell down under Balaam; she just lay down**. And this does not look like a dumb donkey to me, but looks like a smart one to me. And maybe these are where those two terms come from. Who knows? **But Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the donkey with a staff. And the Eternal opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, What have I done to you, that you have hit me these three times? And Balaam said to the donkey, Because you have mocked me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you! Talking to the donkey! And the donkey said to Balaam, Am I not your donkey upon which you have ridden, ever since I was yours, and to this day? And would I ever want to do such unto you?** So here we see Balaam answering the donkey, **And he said, No**. So here is Balaam talking to a donkey. Now, I cannot imagine doing such a thing as talking to a donkey. Seems to me this would clue a person in that there was a higher power talking to him somewhere, but anyway. The donkey could see the angel with the sword that was drawn, while Balaam could not at the beginning. And this was all further ironic when you know what Balaam was supposed to do. Balaam was supposed to have been able to communicate with the gods through animals, and here he was talking to a donkey. However, in this situation the seer was blind to the presence of the true God. It was the animal, the donkey, who was

the seer, perceiving the true will of God in the angel that blocked the path. And the "dumb donkey" saw it first before Balaam saw it. So that's kind of ironic in itself.

Then the Eternal opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Eternal standing in the way with his sword drawn in His hand; and he bowed down his head and fell flat upon his face, when he saw the sword. And the angel of the Eternal said unto him, Wherefore have you smitten your donkey these three times? Behold, I went out to withstand you—let's notice—because *your* way is perverse before me. And the donkey saw me and turned from me these three times. A smart donkey, brethren. And unless she had turned from Me, surely now I would have slain you and saved the donkey alive. And Balaam said unto the angel of the Eternal, it's got his attention at this point, and he said, I have sinned, for I knew that You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You—let's notice, as this is getting Balaam's attention, and he says, If it displeases You, in other words, he would just go back, he would turn around.

So we, here, see that the angel has gotten Balaam's attention, and he realizes that if he does not obey what God had instructed him to do, in the very way that God instructed him to do, that it would cost him his life. So he is getting the message. And let's see what the instructions are to Balaam, **verse 35—**And the angel of the Eternal said unto Balaam, Go with the men—and let's notice what his instructions are—but only the word that I shall speak unto you, that you shall speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

And when Balak heard that Balaam had come, Balak was glad Balaam was there, and he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the outmost coast. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto you, to call you? Wherefore camest you not unto me? So the king is asking, "Why did it take you so long? Didn't you know I had sent for you?" It's what's being said. But we see that Balaam did not mention to the king that he was delayed because he was talking to a donkey. He left that part out. And the king said, Am I not able to promote you to honor? So here Balak is reminding Balaam that he is the king and that he can promote him to great honor and much wealth.

So let's notice Balaam's answer to the king in **verse 38—**Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto you! Balaam did not mention the donkey. And he said to the king, Have I now any power to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak, as the King James, New King James says. And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath Huzoth. And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam and to the princes that were with him. And it came to pass on the morrow that Balak took Balaam and brought him up unto the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people. And if we remember, there were two to three million of them.

And later on, if you want to note it, in Numbers 23:20, Balaam said that (you don't have to turn there), "Balaam said that God had blessed Israel, 'and I CANNOT reverse it.'" It's what he said. Brethren, we know that God is the God of Israel, Israel's God, not Balaam's God. "Balaam practiced divination and

enchantment — and God will not allow it AGAINST ISRAEL. Balaam WANTED TO GO JUST AS FAR IN THE WRONG WAY as he dared. And that's Satan's way!"

"...But Satan was RESTRAINED and UNABLE to go further than he did against Job," as we know.

"Balaam was RESTRAINED and UNABLE to go further than he did against the children of Israel. And we, we may be ABLE, IF WILLING, to go farther in sin or wrong ways. And we are a free moral agent to do so. But just to go just as far as you dare IS THE WAY OF SATAN," brethren, just to play on the fringes, and it's "NOT THE WAY OF GOD!" It's not God's way.

Let's turn to chapter 23 and let's look at verse 5. We know that God has used Satan and the demons for His good, and here we see God taking charge. And God tells Balaam what he is to say. And I am sure that Balaam remembers the incident with the donkey and the angel, and that his life depended on what he would say. He remembered the angel and the sword and that the angel told him that if he had proceeded any farther it would have cost him his life. So we can see that he had limits put upon him, and now there are limits being put on the demon world at this time.

Verse 5—And the Eternal put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus you will speak. And he returned unto them, and Lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he and all the princes of Moab. So we can see the setting; they've all gathered there waiting on Balaam to pronounce his prophecy and his curse against Israel. And Balaam opened his mouth and he blessed the congregation of Israel.

Verse 11—Balak, the king, is stunned by what takes place. And he said, "You didn't curse them! You blessed them!

Verse 14—Balak, undeterred, tries again and he takes Balaam to the top of Pisgah, in the field of Zophim, as if going to another place would have some influence upon God. So they go through the seven altar ritual again and the result is the same.

Verse 19—This time Balaam explains to Balak that God is not like a human being that changes their mind, in who's word is not good.

Verse 23—Balam is forced to admit that none of their hocus-pocus can work against the children of Israel, none of it.

Verse 25—Let's notice what the king said to Balaam, "If you can't curse them, at least don't bless them!" The king would have been better off just to pay Balaam just to keep his mouth shut, brethren. But instead, let's notice that Balak wants to try another location, because in their mind they think this spiritual power is in different locations. So this is what is taking place again.

Numbers 23:17—Balak is determined to have Israel cursed, and he brings Balaam to a third mountain top, Peor, to go through the seven altars, seven bull, seven ram ritual again. And from Mount Peor Balaam again issues beautiful blessings upon the children of Israel. And it was, as we know, it was God that turned what was to be curses into blessings.

Chapter 24:11—Balak becomes outraged at Balaam and tells him to just go home, yet Balaam has more to say.

Let's notice **verse 17**, what came out of his mouth, and let's notice the prophecy that he states and what he says. And he says, **I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A Star will come out of Jacob;**

A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult. And Edom shall be a possession. So we know that this language clearly refers to the Messiah. It's what came out of his mouth. And the pagan, Balaam, had a vision of the coming of Jesus Christ, and he was visible from afar. And he said He was like a star, and He was like a scepter, majestic and powerful, and He is the victor over His enemies, including Moab, the nation that hired Balaam to curse Israel.

Let's go to Revelation 22:16. Revelation 22:16. Brethren, the one out of Jacob, the Messiah, will be victorious over all His foes, and it will begin at the return of Jesus Christ in just a short while. It's not long now. Balaam prophesied about a "Star" that would come out of Jacob. And in Revelation 22 Jesus Christ is represented as a star. And let's notice what was written, and let's notice **verse 16. Revelation 22:16—I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the Churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.**

And let's turn to Genesis 49:10 quickly. Genesis 49:10. And we can see what Balaam prophecy was about, about these two things. **Genesis 49:10—And it's written in God's book that, The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.** The scepter, the symbol of kingship which will abide in Judah was to go to the Messiah. From the tribe of Judah it is coming in power, which is just a little while away, brethren. We are on the horizon.

Let's continue on in the story flow. Let's turn over to Deuteronomy 2. This whole story is really ironic when you know the end of the story and what took place. Brethren, Balak was aware of what had happened to his enemy, Sihon, and he was terrified that he and his kingdom were next. He could see this two and three million people. And the irony of all of this is Israel had no fight with Moab, when you know all the facts. They only wanted passage to the promised land. That's all they wanted. In fact, we will see that God had it recorded here that God had even told the Israelites not to attack Moab, so it's ironic that it all even took place. And it tells us about the desert years, and God had it recorded here. And let's look at the story.

Deuteronomy 2:1— And we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Sea, as the Eternal spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days. And the Eternal spoke to me, saying: You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward. And command the people, saying, You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So let's notice what's being written. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully. And let's notice what God told them: **Do not meddle with them, and this is important that we understand this, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may**

drink. For the Eternal your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the Eternal your God *has been* with you. And let's notice what God had recorded in His book. We know that they always complained, and we've looked at their complaining through this series. We looked at their murmuring. We looked at their rebellions. And we looked at how they said over and over about what they did not have. Here God had it recorded and God says (let's notice what He said), **These forty years the Eternal your God *has been* with you --let's notice-- you have lacked nothing.** Brethren, they had the cloud by day and the fire by night. They had God provided everything for them, and God says (and He had it recorded in His book) that they lacked nothing. And all we read about is their complaining, their murmurings against Moses and Aaron.

Verse 8—And we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab. Then the Eternal said to me, Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession. But either Balak didn't know this or didn't believe it. I don't know which. But Balak probably realized that a military action was not going to stop the Israelites, and he had heard about where they had come from and the power that accompanied these people. He knew this. He knew that that water had parted. Those words travelled! And he knew that this people had been delivered from Egypt, from Pharaoh, and God tells you and me not to forget what happened way back then, that we are to learn from what took place and apply it to our lives.

Let's go back to Numbers 25, and you may want to put a marker here just so you can read the heading at this time. It's about the harlotry and the idolatry of the Israelites. And Israel's journey was just about over, and they stand at Acacia Grove in Moab, just across the Jordan River from the city of Jericho, but what happens? Chapter 25 describes one of the most horrible events in God's book, and it's recorded here in Numbers. And it's about how Israel went into such idolatry and sinfulness, and it's almost unbelievable, brethren, as we go through this story. It's a hard thing to comprehend what they did. It's a hard thing to comprehend that if we were there we would have been right along with them.

And when we look in God's book we find that Balaam advised Balak to set a trap of sin for the Israelites so that God would curse His people. That's what he thought.

Revelation 2:14, if, remember what Jesus Christ said. Balaam taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel. In other words, he taught him. He was their teacher. And he taught them to eat things sacrificed to idols—let's pay attention to what's being said—and to commit sexual immorality. So that's what he taught him.

So hold our place in Numbers and let's look at Numbers 31:16. Numbers 31:16, advice that Balaam gave to Balak. **Numbers 31:16—Look, these,** it's talking about the Midianite women, **caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, so Balaam taught them what to do, to trespass against the Eternal in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Eternal.** Balaam's plan worked. The women of Moab and its Midianite women sexually enticed many of the Israelites to join with them in their sexually immoral idolatrous practices, a new way they perceived to

worship God. And it was exciting! Yet it was, in fact, a hideous rebellion against the Great God! That's what it was! Temple prostitutes seduced Israelite men into sexual rites linked with their religious sacrifices to Baal or to 'Mosh, and it's also known as Molek.

So why are we going through all this? Because God said for you and me to understand what human beings can do, even after everything that they have seen their God do, without His spirit and with His spirit. And we will see what they can do with both as we go through this series.

Let's go to Psalms 106. Psalm 106, and we'll start in verse 19. God had it written in the Psalms about what took place, and we'll look at this account. **Psalms 106:19**—And it says, **They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molded image.** They rebelled, brethren, that's what they did, even then, and it didn't take them long. **Thus they changed their glory into the image of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt,** after all they had seen, brethren, all the plagues that they had seen upon the Egyptians, seen that water part. They forgot God their Savior. **Wondrous works in the land of Ham, awesome things by the Red Sea.** And they saw it firsthand. **Therefore, He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses, His chosen one, stood before Him in the breach,** and we saw that in the past sermons, where Moses and Aaron did this, to turn away God's wrath, lest God destroy *them*. **Then they despised the pleasant land; They did not believe His word, but complained in their tents, and did not heed the voice of the Eternal.** **Therefore, He raised His hand in an oath against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness, to overthrow their descendants among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.**

Verse 28—They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, and Balaam was their teacher, brethren, he's the one taught them, and ate sacrifices made to the dead. That's how bad it had gotten. But it gets worse. **Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, and the plague broke out among them.** Then Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stopped. **And that was accounted to Phinehas for righteousness to all generations forevermore.** And we will look at this account, about what Phinehas did, in just a short while.

Verse 32—They angered *Him* also at the waters of strife, let's notice, **so that it went ill with Moses on account of them.** It's where Moses became angry. And that's why it said, "It went ill with Moses," because he lost it. He lost his temper. **Because they rebelled against His spirit, so that he spoke rashly with his lips.** Talking about Moses. **They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the Eternal had commanded them, but—let's notice—they mingled with the gentiles and learned their works.** They served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons (we thought it couldn't get worse), and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood. It's hard to believe they would do such a thing, brethren, but this is what man is capable of, and that's what God wants you and me to see. **Thus they were defiled—let's notice—by their own works, and played the harlot by their own deeds.**

Let's go back to Numbers 25:1 and see what God had recorded about this terrible incident that took place in verse 1. **Numbers 25:1**—Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods,

and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, just what we just read about in the Psalms, and the anger of the Eternal was aroused against Israel. The Eternal said to Moses, Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Eternal, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Eternal may turn away from Israel. So Moses said to the judges of Israel, Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor. It's how serious an offence it was. And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren—let's notice—a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. It had gotten pretty bad, brethren.

Now when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

Then the Eternal spoke to Moses, saying: Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath (by his action, by what he did), from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. Therefore, Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel by his actions.

Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, *was* Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites. And the name of the Midianite woman, we might want to take notice of this, who this was, because it's referred to later, *who was killed was* Cozbi the daughter of Zur; he *was* head of the people of a father's house in Midian. So it was his daughter.

Then the Eternal spoke to Moses, saying: Harass the Midianites, and attack them; for they harassed you with their schemes by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a leader of Midian, their sister, who was killed in the day of the plague because of Peor. The people had been seduced into joining the worship of Baal, and Zimri, an Israelite prince of Simeon, brazenly presented or paraded (better said, I guess) this princess of Midian. Just paraded her right in front of the whole congregation, "before Moses and the whole congregation," and they were performing their act inside of it, everyone to see. And we know what that was, because that spear went through both of them, brethren, and it was in an open tent in view of those at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Aaron's grandson, Phinehas, took a spear and drove it through the two. And therefore, twenty-four thousand people had died, until he stopped it. And in terms of the death toll this was even a worse disaster that we looked at in *Part 1* about the rebellion of Korah. We thought that was pretty bad, but fourteen thousand seven hundred died in that rebellion, and here twenty-four thousand died because of their rebellion and what they had descended into. God was pleased with Phinehas in executing

judgment, and gave the line of the priesthood to his descendants as an everlasting covenant of peace. And following this incident, I guess as you could call it, this rebellion, God gives Moses instructions to harass the Midianites, to engage them in battle and provide His vengeance upon them. And this battle, which will be Moses' last (it'll be his last battle) is reported in chapter 31, but we're not going through that at this time.

Let's turn to Numbers 26 and let's look at verse 64. **Numbers 26:64.** The first generation that had come out of Egypt is now gone, and God requires another census, which Moses and Eleazar, Aaron's son and successor, undertakes. **Verse 64—But among these whom they counted there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai in the first census. For the Eternal had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun.** So those were the only two that were left alive.

Numbers 27. And God tells Moses that he will not be allowed to enter the promised land because he rebelled at God's command when he struck the rock to bring forth water. And it's a harsh punishment. **Numbers 27, and let's start in verse 12—Then the Eternal said to Moses: Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. And when you have seen it, you also—let's notice—shall be gathered to your people, in other words, he would die, as Aaron your brother was gathered, in other words, as Aaron had died when he went up the mountain. For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation—let's notice-- God's telling him why—you rebelled against My command, to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes. (And it's talking about the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin.) Moses spoke to the Eternal, saying: Let the Eternal, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, and that the congregation of the Eternal may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.**

And the Eternal said to Moses: Take Joshua, the son of Nun, with you, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay—let's notice—in whom is the spirit, so we know that God was with Joshua, and lay your hand upon him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give him some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Eternal for him by the judgment of the Urim. And at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation. So Moses did as the Eternal commanded him. He took Joshua, set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands upon him and inaugurated him, just as the Eternal commanded, by the hand of Moses.

Let's go to Numbers 31:48 and we'll see the vengeance upon the Midianites and upon Balaam. Numbers 31:48 we find before Moses died God commands Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites. Before, they, with the Moabites, set out to deliberately destroy the Israelites through their idolatrous religious practices. And not a single Israelite dies in the war. Not one. Not the first one, brethren. Moving their leaders to take a special offering, to make a special offering, an atonement offering.

Numbers 31:48—Then the officers *were* over thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, came near to Moses; and they said to Moses, Your servants have taken a count of the men of war who *are* under our command, and not a man of us is missing. Not one! Therefore, we have brought an offering for the Eternal, what every man found of ornaments of gold: armlets and bracelets and signet rings and earrings and necklaces, to make atonement (to make *atonement*) for ourselves before the Eternal. God was with Israel in *this* battle and it's God that gave them the victory.

Let's go back to verse 8, chapter 31:8. Verse 8 says that one of the men who was slain in the war was Zur. This Zur was one of the instigators to bring false worship to Israel, and it was his daughter, Cozbi, (Remember her?) that Zimri had paraded before the congregation of Israel, before they were both slain by Phinehas.

In verse 9 we see the women of Midian taken captive in the wake of the battle, and Moses is incensed by this, really, as these are the same women who led Israel astray with the Moabites. And he commands that all but the virgins among them be put to death.

Verse 16—This is the verse that actually explains what happened in the incident of Baal Peor. We learn that it was the counsel of Balaam that the Midianite women followed when they caused the children of Israel to sin against God, resulting in the plague that cost twenty-four thousand lives. And without this explanation, brethren, in God's book, Balaam might have been given the benefit of the doubt, without God revealing it. And some may assume that Balaam to have be a prophet of God, who was following God's will, following God's instructions. But Balaam did not die the death of the righteous, brethren, as he had so eloquently prayed.

Verse 8, Balaam died by the edge of the sword, being put to death along with the Midianites, by the Israelites at God's command. **They killed the kings of Midian with *the rest of those who were killed*—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. And let's notice, Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.**

So just what lessons can we learn from Balaam in what took place? As bad as all this is, brethren, there is something worse. Spiritual adultery is far worse than anything we've went through here today. And the worst judgment is saved for those who *knowingly* deceive others. Like Balaam, their sin will eventually catch up with them. There is a day of judgment God tells about in this book, and I fear for some that walked side-by-side with you and me, brethren. I fear for them.

Let's turn over to Joshua 13:22 for the last scripture. **Joshua 13:22**, we can see where this is recorded again and what his position was while he was upon this earth. **Joshua 13:22**—**The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, and here it is, the soothsayer (a diviner), that's what he was, among those who were killed by them.** And his name means "destroyer of the people."

So, brethren, as we continue on with this series we've looked at what rebellion can do and how bad it is, and we will continue on in the next sermon about rebellion.

And that will conclude the sermon today.□