

“For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Ga 1:12 AV)

Introduction: in Numbers 22-24 we have the most amazing account of a prophet of the land of Canaan. The Moabites were frightened. Israel had come out of Egypt and was now threatening their land. Balak, the king of Moab, sent messengers to this man Balaam to come and curse Israel. At first, Balaam refused, because God forbade him to do so. After Balak had raised the amount of the reward, Balak consented to God, but only after receiving a message from the Lord, forbidding him to say anything more than the words God gave him. You know the story.

As Balaam went, the Angel of the Lord would have slain him, but Balaam's donkey shied out of the way. This happened several times, until Balaam struck the donkey. God opened the mouth of the donkey, and it spoke to Balaam and asked why he had been struck. God then opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the Angel of the Lord with a drawn sword. God again forbade Balaam to say anything other than the words that God gave him. After arriving at the place, Balaam blessed Israel three times, much to the chagrin of Balak, for God did not allow Balaam to curse Israel.

The whole story is very instructive. Though it has much in it that smacks of comic opera, yet it is the word of God, and the very form of the narrative shows how God is mocking the enemies of Israel. The ancient world was much into blessings and cursings, and would have considered the threat of a curse by Balaam as a very serious threat against Israel. But God turns the threat into a blessing and mocks both Balaam and Balak. Their mediator is an ass and they are made to look very foolish indeed. This shows that God controls even the words of false prophets, but does not allow them to go beyond His purpose, however much course they have with dark powers, or how greedy they are, or how much sympathy they might have with secular authority. As Balaam said, “Blessed is he that blesses thee, and cursed be he that curses thee,” reaffirming the Promise that God had given to Abraham. At this time he also gave a prediction of the coming of the Lord Jesus.

There are several things that can be derived from this narrative. [1] God is God of the whole world, and men must deal with Him always. [2] The character of the human instrument did not in any way lessen the authority of the message from God. [3] No imagination of men can ever take from or add to the Word of God. The authority of Scripture is independent of the messenger and his imagination or reason, and judges both the messenger and those who receive the message. [4] God can use any instrument He wants to deliver His message to men: in this narrative, he used a greedy false prophet and the mouth of an ass, and an angel to deliver His message. It was in divers ways and at different times God spoke in the past, but His word for these days is His Son Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. [5] After God has spoken plainly it is sinful for us to continue to press God, as if He could be persuaded to change His mind. For His own purpose, God indulged Balaam and permitted him to go to Balak, but God did not condone his greed and

rebellion and sent His angel to teach Balaam. Though a prophet of the Lord, Balaam was not a good or a righteous man, and later we read of his execution by the Israelites after they had entered the land of Canaan. [6] It is interesting that even Balaam spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ. He spoke of David who would waste the Moabites and bring them into bondage, but he speaks of the final victory of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Star who would arise out of Jacob who would have dominion.

I would urge you to read the narrative of Balaam in the light of God's rule over the nations and the authority and power of His word.

But this brings us to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to Him we look for the final solution of all matters, including the Scriptures. What view did Jesus have of the Scriptures?

I. Testimony of Jesus Himself.

- A. John 10:35 "broken" common to breaking the law, the Sabbath, annul, deny, withstand its authority. The appeal to Scripture was final. The authority was supreme.
- B. Matt. 19:3-6: concerning Adam and Eve. Gen. 2:24 is God's word from which instruction in morals and life can be derived.
- C. Mark 10:5-9 and I Cor. 6:16ff.
- D. Matt. 15:3-7; Mark 7:6,10; Their tradition is contrasted with Scripture
- E. Rom. 10:5, 19,20. Scripture is quoted as the Word of God. Paul is just following the example of Jesus.
- F. Matt. 22:29. Error comes from not knowing the Scripture!!
- G. Matt. 4:4,7,10; Jesus refutes the devil with Scripture—our example.

II. New Testament Usage of the Old Testament:

- A. Heb. 3:7 with Psalm 95:7
- B. Acts 13:35 with Ps. 16:10
- C. Rom. 15:11 with Ps. 117:1
- D. Acts 4:24,25 with Ps. 2
- E. Heb. 1:7,8 with Ps. 97:7 and Ps. 104:4
- F. Romans 15:10 with Deut. 32:43

III. New Testament Claims:

- A. Gal. 1:6-9;
- B. 1Cor. 14:36-38;
- C. II Thess. 3:6,12;
- D. I Thess. 2:13;
- E. I Tim. 5:18; Deut. 25:4
- F. ; Luke 10:7 Laborer worthy of his hire/
- G. II Tim. 3:16. "All Scripture is Inspired" not a human product breathed upon by God; but breathed out by the Spirit of God Himself. "God-Given." There is no other term in the Greek language that could have so emphatically expressed the Divine origin of

the Scripture (Warfield).

Acts 2:4; Rev. 22:18,19. Such things are not to be said about human, natural utterances. (Illus. Warfield: each stone in an avalanche has its own path, and we can avoid each, and in avoiding each, can we avoid the avalanche?) There are literally scores and scores of direct and indirect statements.

IV. But Inspiration is just one act of God's superintendence over the world:

- A. Nah. 1:3: The message was to Nineveh
- B. Matt. 5:45: God sends his rain on the just and the unjust. He is the God of all.
- C. Dan. 4:17; God gives the kingdom to whom He pleases—for His own purpose
- D. Phil. 2:13: God works in men to will and to do of His good pleasure.
- E. Prov. 21:1. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

Summary: The Bible is a universal book to all men, not just the church, because there is but one God. It is for peasants and it is for kings. It is for wise men and it is for fools. It is for history scholars and for firemen and sailors. It shows the heart of God—beware that you inquire too closely into the reasons for things that are beyond our grasp. David said, "I do not inquire into things too high for me." The mysteries of evil, of predestination, of Inspiration, of God's rule over the world, have all proved to be rocks that pose dangers for those who are not humble in mind.

Faith teaches us to trust in God. We are to do good to all men, and pray God's blessings on all men. We are not to seek revenge or seek to destroy any race of men. Why, because in the last day, there will be people out of every kindred and tribe and nation who are blessed of God and stand before the throne of God clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are to love all men for the elect's sake.

That reprobate you see may prove to be the father, grandfather, or greatgrandfather of one of the elect. His children may come to Christ and be blessed of God. God values and preserves his life now, because of his purposes of grace in generations to come. Therefore we value his life lest we strike at the elect of future generations. How mysterious is the grace of God—His ways are past finding out. Beware of pronouncing judgment upon any man, for you do not know of the blessing that may come from his offspring. This is also in the mind of God.

How do I know this: because of the nation of Israel. God preserved Israel through many generation of sin and rebellion, because He had promised that the Lord Jesus would come from Israel. Because of this, no nation shall utterly perish, but shall be represented in heaven before the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith.

May God bless you.