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Balaam is Alive and Well

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality” (Revelation 2:14).

Imagine a fortified city that an enemy wants to conquer, but the walls are too strong for a direct assault. What can he do? Well, one thing he can do is to send spies into the city to sow the seeds of discontent, tempt them to self-reliance from their king, and spread rumors that the fortifications are actually prison walls keeping them in, not protecting them from what is outside. The people begin to see themselves as victims abused by their king instead of dependents protected by him. Not only will some people leave the protections of the city in their pursuit of “freedom,” but they will even destroy the walls protecting everyone else in their zealotry to “free” others. This devious technique is the teaching of Balaam.

In order to get Israel out from under God’s unassailable protection, the prophet Balaam needed the people to do his work for him by committing spiritual adultery and becoming unclean. He didn’t do this straight on, he appealed to the lusts of the flesh, “enticing unstable souls” (2 Pt. 2:14a) to sin. Balaam caused Israel “to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the Lord” (Num. 31:16). The teaching of Balaam appeals to someone’s flesh in order to get them out from under the protection of God, their government, their family, etc. This is done by enticing people to “free their flesh” through “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissen-

sions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these” (Gal. 5:19b-20a), weakening them and bringing God’s judgment on them (unsaved) or God’s discipline (saved).

The teaching of Balaam has been employed throughout history—most recently by Marxists to overthrow governments from the inside by sowing class envy, jealousy, and discontent among the people—weaponizing the people against themselves, their government, and society to destroy the walls from within. It is being used today in America to “enticing by fleshly desires, by sensuality” (2 Pt. 2:18b) to weaken our society through sin, sowing discontent, envy, and immorality, and breaking us up into the fleshly affiliations of politics, race, creed, sexual orientation, etc that fight among themselves so that “like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit” (Pro. 25:28).

In the Church, the teaching of Balaam is obviously rampant in every attempt to bring the works of the flesh into the Church or draw people out of the Church through their flesh to make them a prey. When pastors teach sin is okay or join with “the things of the world” (1 John 2:15b), this is the teaching of Balaam, which tempts Believers to the spiritual adultery of fleshly “freedom” and license to sin. Its purpose is to make Believers weak and ineffective as a Body, undermining their testimony in the world and blessing from God.

Balaam’s teaching is the exact same technique Satan used on Adam and Eve, leading mankind out from under God’s protection by tempting them through the lusts of the flesh to see God’s purposes as a prison. Thinking they were freeing themselves from an oppressor, they instead became prey to sin and death.

May we seek to “build up the wall and stand in the gap before [God] for the land” (Ez. 22:30b). Pray that Christ’s “peace be within your walls” (Ps. 122:7a). Amen.

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