



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Numbers 22: 41 – 23: 14

“The Prophecies of Balaam, part I: The Distinctiveness of Israel” TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the word of God and for the power that it exercises in our lives through the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in it. We thank Thee for the person of our Lord as he has set forth in the Gospel and in the Scriptures. And we thank Thee Lord for the privilege of studying, of responding, to the ministry of the Word of God in a way that glorifies Thy name.

We pray Lord that Thou will give us enlightenment, that Thou will give us motivation and enablement through the Holy Spirit, do the things that the Scriptures say are our responsibilities before Thee. And we especially give Thee thanks for the completed Scriptures that we have in our hands so simple for us to obtain and study. We give Thee thanks for that privilege and we prayed that we may take advantage of that as well.

Deliver us from cursory handling of the word of God as if the declarations of it are unimportant. We know that they are the word of God and therefore of supreme significance for us in all of the aspects of our lives. We ask Thou blessing upon this hour and the hour that follows, in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We are looking at the history of Israel as they moved from their bondage in the land of Egypt onto the edge of the Promised Land, under the general theme of "From Egypt to Canaan." And we have noted in our studies that there were three particular places where Israel hesitated along the way for a time. One time was at Mount Sinai where they received the law. Another time was at Kadesh-Barnea where they were on the verge of entering into the land, sent spies in, refused to follow the advice of the spies and turned and then wandered in the wilderness for approximately 38 plus years.

And then finally coming near the entrance into the land, they came into the planes of Moab and there they had the interesting experience with Balak the king of Moab who sent off to Mesopotamia and obtained the prophet, a false prophet, it seems, though one with knowledge of spiritual things in order that he might curse the children of Israel. They believed in those days that men did have the power to curse and when they cursed, men were cursed. And so consequently Balak thought that he may get his hands upon a prophet who was able to curse and if he should curse the children of Israel, Israel would be cursed. And having heard that Balaam was an unusual one, he sent for Balaam. And the result of this encounter with Balak and the Moabites and Balaam is this strange result, that this heathen prophet, who had some understanding of spiritual things and even knew about Jehovah, gives us four important significant Messianic promises, and prophecies I should say.

That's an amazing thing when you think about it, that from the lips of this man, this howling prophet, who three times in the New Testament is mentioned in a very deprecatory way, is nevertheless the voice by which God speaks prophecies concerning the future of the nation and the Lord Jesus Christ himself. So we are looking at the prophecies of Balaam now and tonight we are going to look at the first of the prophecies, and this is one that stresses the distinctiveness of the nation, Israel.

Balaam was a man with endowment. He was a prophet and evidently he held that office and holding that office, there were certain privileges that were his because he held that office. He is called in the New Testament a prophet. And sometimes individuals who are prophets, even though they may be false prophets, give out a prophecy that turns out to be true. We have an illustration of that in the New Testament in Caiaphas who prophesied and then his words, which had a strange significance for him, and a different significance from what they ultimately have are said by the Apostle John to refer to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. So he was a man with endowment.

He knew about Jehovah, he knew about Yahweh. That would not be really surprising if you realize there was a whole lot of interaction between so-called holy or spiritual men in the East. We know, of course, when our Lord was born there were magi who had understanding of spiritual things. Just as today, there are many people who know about Jesus Christ, who know about the Lord Jehovah, who know a great deal about Christianity but who are not genuine believers at all.

Now he was also a man with a tremendous opportunity because he is called by Balak to come and to enter into the closest relationship to the nation Israel. They are gathered on the plains of Moab. He is called by Balak and comes because of the money that was to be given to him and has the remarkable privilege of going up into the high place and looking out and seeing that vast company of people increased by the grace of God who had come up from the land of Egypt.

Now Balaam, in my opinion, there is some question about this and you have to realize that I am giving you one opinion and one approach but I think it is the majority approach of the evangelicals. Balaam was a man who was a false prophet and who fell away. In fact, if you were looking for an illustration of what is set out in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 4 through verse 6, on individuals who have great privileges but who turn away from them, Balaam would be an illustration of it.

In fact, in some ways Balaam reminds us of Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve Apostles, it is possible to be an apostle, and be lost as Judas proves. Balaam knew Jehovah; Judas knew Jesus Christ. Balaam loved money, the rewards of his prophetic gift. Judas loved silver. He was the one who was the treasurer of the Twelve. And remember in that incident in John chapter 12, he objects to what Mary of Bethany does in breaking the ointment of spikenard very precious and comments that could have been sold for 300 pence and given to the poor. And John goes on to say it was not that he really had a high regard for the poor, but he kept the bag and that is the purse, the wallet, and he was pilfering what was within it. So in that sense, Judas an apostle is a remainder of Balaam the Prophet.

Balaam betrayed God's elect nation; Judas betrayed God's elect person. So in one sense, Balaam reminds us of that line of individuals who have a great deal of knowledge of spiritual things but ultimately betray the Lord Jesus Christ, just as Judas and others have done. In fact, some have suggested that Balak and Balaam, together, stand as illustrations of the antichrist and false prophet. Balak, the king of Moab, suggesting the antichrist; and Balaam, his prophet, suggesting the false prophet. Perhaps that's carrying it a bit too far if we want to be certain of that, but nevertheless, it is something for Bible students to think about.

Now remember this, that Balaam prophecies have both an interpretation and an application, that is, in the historical context of Numbers chapter 22, chapter 23, and chapter 25. And in the Hebrew text, we look at this in a grammatical, historical, theological way, and seek to understand exactly what Moses understood when by the grace of God he penned these chapters. But at the same time we remember that the prophecies while they have their interpretation also have their application. And the application of prophecies, we are told in the New Testament, is not simply for the age in which they were given, but may also be for later ages as well. In fact, Paul tells us that

the things in the Old Testament were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

So we look then at this as prophecy that had to do with the nation Israel given by the Prophet Balaam for the King of the Moabites, Balak, but we also will seek occasionally to make some application of the truth to our particular situation. He certainly writes that is Moses does of the physical nation of Israel, but the spiritual truths that pertain to the nation often also are related to the body of Christ, which is that manifestation of the people of God in our day.

Now let's look at our passage and first of all we will read of the prophetic situation in verse 41 through chapter 23 in verse 3, so chapter 22, verse 41 through chapter 23, verse 3: "And it came to pass on the morrow that Balak took Balaam and brought him up into the high places of Baal that thence he might see the utmost part of the people." He follows the traditional methods of oriental diviners and one of the things that characterize them was to get as good of view as you possibly could of the situation, and so, to see Israel in the planes of Moab and they now are literally hundreds of thousands of people, it would proper and an expected thing to go up into a bare high place where he could overlook the company of the Israelites.

And remember also that they were divided up into four quarters. I do not know that in this study we had made reference to this, I think we did back in Book of Exodus that God set out a certain way in which the tribes were to gather themselves around the Tabernacle and as the north, east, south, west. Three of the tribes were in the north, three in the east, three in the west, three in the south. So in a moment a reference will be made to a fourth part, and that is the reason for it. So here, Balaam is brought up into the high places of Baal; that is, places were they worship their false God that then he might see the utmost part of the people.

And Balaam said unto Balak, "Build me here seven altars and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams." You notice by the way this figure of seven which as we

read through the whole of the Bible we discover it has some symbolic significance and no doubt it's related to the sevens that the Bible unfolds as the story of the Scriptures is given by the writers of Scripture, but the beginning is the seven days of creation. And so the seven days of creation in which everything was created suggests the complete or the perfect accomplishment of things and that is why probably seven began to have the symbolic number of perfection or completeness.

"So build me here seven altars, prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams," and incidentally the oxen and the rams were very expensive animals. So they didn't go out and just get any kind of animals; these are the expensive animals. And Balaam, obviously an accomplished prophet, is making as much of these as possible so it's seven oxen, seven rams, and Balak did as Balaam had spoken and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bull and a ram. And Balaam said unto Balak "Stand by Thy burnt offering!" as if to expect some word from him, "And I will go, per adventure the Lord will come to meet me and whatever he showeth me, I will tell thee." And he went to a high place. So he follows the traditional methods of the Oriental diviners.

Heathenism had no sure word of prophecy like the children of Israel had. And so they sought the will of God in sorcery and augury. Now they did not have a revelation of a God who stands over all things and yet is within all things at the same time. No concept of an omnipresent and also a transcendent God, one who is sovereign within our sphere and sovereign over it all, a God who is with us and yet is over everything created. That was something they did not have and they had the concept of God being within everything in this particular world of which we are a part, and so if he is within this world, then everything that happens in the world is a manifestation of the activity of God. And so, those who practiced augury looked for phenomena in the physical universe. And the phenomena in the physical universe were things that would tell them things about God's activity. So, that is what is meant, when we read here that, "Balaam went up into in a high place."

Now, if you will just turn the page just a bit, you will see that this is what Moses is speaking about and what Balaam is thinking, if you read the 1st verse of chapter 24: "And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at the other times, to seek for enchantments, but set his place toward the wilderness." So, he did not go for his magic spells and whatever as he had done before. So that's what he wants. He wants to go up into the high place and see if he can find some signs in nature that might be manifestations of the Lord God. So seven alters, the sacred number, and notice the expression that he uses in verse 3. It's rather strange, "Perhaps the Lord will come to meet me."

Now having described this, Moses goes on to write in verse 4 through verse 10 of the prophetic declaration that comes, and I am going to read through all of these verses now:

"And God met Balaam, and he saith unto him, 'I have prepared seven altars and I have offered upon every altar, a bullock and a ram.' This is Balaam speaking to the Lord. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth." You will notice by the way, this is, Balaam does not seem to have any of this within himself, but it is something given him sovereignly by the Lord God. And said, "Return unto Balak and thus shalt thou speak." And he returned unto him and lo he stood by his burden of sacrifice, he and all the princes of Moab."

So Balak is still standing by the sacrifice he has offered; he is looking for a prophecy of cursing the children of Israel because they have already beaten one of the nations that whipped him. And so he is fearful of them and he wants them under the curse. And he took up his parable. And by the way this word "parable", I do not know how it is translated in the NIV. I had the NIV open on my desk, but I frankly forgot to see what they, how they rendered the Hebrew word. But this word, the word *mashal* in

Hebrew is a word that sometimes means parable. At other times it means simply, sometimes it means a burden, and then at other times it means simply a saying, and that's I think clearly the force of it here.

“And he took up his saying and said ‘Balak, the King of Moab hath brought me from Aram.’ That's a word for Mesopotamia. ‘Out of the mountains of the East, saying ‘Come curse me Jacob and come defy Israel.’ ‘How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him and from the hills I behold him. Lo the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations.’ (What a magnificent word is given to this Mesopotamian false prophet.) ‘Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel?’”

Notice that, "the fourth part," because evidently where he is, he can see very well a fourth of that vast number of people. But he recognizes from his site, "They are in the four fold division," and it is so large, even the four fold division that the word that the Lord gives to him is who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel. "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his."

You can just imagine, the downcast look that came over Balak's face when he heard this prophecy from Balaam, because it's not a prophecy of cursing, it's a prophecy of blessing. So, Balaam then comes and gives this magnificent prophecy. And the essence of it, I'll gather up just for the sake of time in three things. First of all, I want you to notice that it is a word of divine sovereignty. That stands out right in the beginning, because in verse 8, the word that God put in the mouth of Balaam is, "How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?"

Now, as I mentioned earlier, cursing was thought to be automatically effective in the East. And what Balaam says is "I cannot even open my mouth to say anything against

the children of Israel. How is it possible for me to curse whom God has not cursed? How shall I defy whom Yahweh has not defied?" So he is limited, he is limited by the power of God. As a matter of fact he is limited by the divine purposes of the election of the nation Israel.

Now, if you read the funny papers us some of us do, you know that, well *B.C.* is one of my, one of my favorite comic strips. I always read *B.C.* My breakfast does not taste really as good as it normally does if I am not able to read *B.C.*, but *B.C.* has a little section from time to time called the "curse exchange." And if you will remember, friends come and they curse each other and they walk off arm and arm. Well, I think that probably there is some relation. I have not had a chance to do any scientific research into this, but I just have a hunch that Johnny Hart did a little bit of study concerning the ancient East and that arose out of something like this. That is, the idea that people could actually curse and those curses would come true.

In this case, the reason that Balaam says what he says is that God had set his hand upon the nation Israel and he has blessed them out of his sovereign purpose and design, and therefore there is nothing that Balaam or any other false prophet can possibly do to keep Israel from experiencing the things that God has said are going to happen to them. And all of the things that God has said are going to happen to Israel ultimately, even through divine discipline in case they disobey the Lord, ultimately lead to the eternal and everlasting blessing of the nation Israel. That is so plainly taught in the word of God that I can understand why the Lord God put this word in Balaam's mouth, "How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?"

Now that's the first thing. The second thing is found in the very next verse. Now notice the 9th verse begins with the word "For". In the Hebrew text, that is a little conjunctive particle key which means that "For", so here are the reasons why God and Balaam do not curse Israel. First of all, "For from the top of the rocks I see him..." Balaam is talking, "...and from the hills I behold him: Lo, the people shall dwell alone,

and shall not be reckoned among the nations." So first of all is Israel is distinguished from the nations by divine choice. They are not reckoned among the nations. You and I, if we are Gentiles, we belong to the nations. But Israel is not reckoned among the nations. Israel is separate, and they are marked out as separate by divine election.

Now we know from the study of the Scriptures that that goes all the way back to God's first word to Abraham confirmed to Isaac and then confirmed to Jacob. And, in fact, so confirmed to that land that God changed Jacob's name and gave him the name "Israel", from which "Israelites" come. Abraham has a progeny that is wider than Israel, but Jacob's progeny is Israel. Abraham is the father of Gentile believers, but not Jacob. Jacob is Israel, and Israel stands related to him. "Lo it is a people that shall dwell alone. It shall not be reckoned among the nations." That is brought about by divine choice.

Let me ask you to turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 7. Just turn on a few more pages. We will read a few verses. Beginning with the 6th verse of Deuteronomy 7. This is one of the great passages of the Old Testament in which Moses looks back over Israel's history and explains their divine election and God's love of them. "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord Thy God. The Lord Thy God hath chosen Thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people, but because the Lord loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt."

Now we don't have the time to look at all of the other passages, but, you can look at passages like Exodus chapter 19, verse 5 and verse 6, in which a similar kind of regard for them is spoken by the Lord and since this is early in their history maybe I can read these two verses. Exodus chapter 19, verse 5 and verse 6, where we read: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a

peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." And we go on into the New Testament, and we read in the New Testament, and the same distinction is constantly maintained between the nation and the nations. Perhaps its fullest exposition is found in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

I just finished writing a little dissertation on Galatians chapter 6 and verse 16, and in this particular verse, we have this idea expressed again in false language where we read: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." And one of the reasons I wrote this is because the New International Version has miss-rendered this particular passage, grammatically, syntactically, exegetically, and theologically, their rendering is wrong. And they have it this way: "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God," as if those individuals in Galatia who were members of the Christian church were the "Israel of God."

But that is plainly not Paul's statement. And what he is merely, what he is really saying is, "That those who walk according to this rule of the new creation, peace be upon them," and then on in Epistle in which he has been very harsh regarding Judaizing professors. He lets the true believing Jews in the church know that he is not speaking against them, and pronounces a blessing upon them as the Israel, the ethnic Israel of God. Those Jewish individuals who have not yielded to the blandishments of the Judaizers and thus been misled by them.

It's the same thing that the apostle says in Romans 11 when he says: "There is a remnant according to the election of grace at the present time." And that's the remnant. It is the Israel of God. It's composed of people like Charles Steinberg, or John Steinberg, or Paul Steinberg or any other Jewish believer that you can think of, they belong to the Remnant. They are the Israel of God. And they are the ones that Paul is speaking about

there. So I concluded a little disquisition by suggesting that the NIV should be changed because that rendering, like the emperor, has no clothes.

So at any rate, I hope that we will live to see the day in which that particular rendering is transformed. The NIV likes to let people know and Ken Barker is now the man who is in charge of their work. They like to let others know that if you see some rendering of the NIV that is wrong, you should write them and give them reasons for it. And ultimately I am going to send them a copy of my paper and hope that maybe he will come to his senses and change that particular rendering.

At any rate notice what Balaam has said here now as he has been given the word of the Lord. Israel is a people that dwells alone, it shall not be reckoned among the Gentiles. That has been true down through the centuries. By covenant, they are to be both physically and spiritually separate from the nations. That's why Moses says "O, Israel, who is like unto thee?" That's why they are the objects of the national election of a loving God.

To my mind, one of the finest illustrations of the nation, Israel, is a phenomenon in the Atlantic Ocean. There is a river in the ocean, someone has said, "In the severest droughts, it never fails. In the mightiest floods, it never overflows. The Gulf Stream of Mexico is its fountain, and its mouth is in the Arctic seas. There is in the world no other such majestic flow of waters. Its current is more rapid than the Mississippi or the Amazon. Its waters is as far out from the gulf as the Carolina coast, or of an indigo blue. They are so distinctly marked that their line of junction with the common sea water may be traced by the eye. Often in an airplane when an individual looks down and sees a ship, half of the ship will be in the Gulf Stream, the other half in the Atlantic Ocean, generally. But within Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf Stream remains separate." Part of the people but nevertheless a distinct part. A nation not reckoned with the nations.

As you know, I love Scotland and one of the places of interest in Scotland is the Northwestern Coast. And Scotland is a cold land but because of the Gulf Stream,

Inverewe Gardens on the Northwest Coast almost tropical growth is found in that garden because of the warmth of the Gulf Stream. Israel is like the Gulf Stream in the midst of humanity and that's why Israel will never be assimilated.

I know what you are thinking. Well, I know some Jewish individuals who have married Gentiles. Yes, you do, here and there, but Israel stills stands separate from the nations not reckoned among them. That's the voice of conviction of all of the peoples of the face of this globe. Israel is separate and distinct and will remain so because she is the object of the Sovereign care and concern of the Lord God in heaven, and he has an ultimate purpose for them and Romans chapter 11 sets it out so plainly, and the rest of the prophets confirm that in the future all Israel, Israel as a whole, shall be saved and enter into the covenantal blessings promised to Abraham, confirmed to David, and given a fuller and redemptive significance by the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah chapter 31.

Now the third word. Isn't it amazing that this magnificent prophecy in the early dawn of Israel's history among the nations, so to speak, is given here? "Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel," he says and so the third word is the word of justification and restoration. Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his."

Now you will recognize, if you have been reading the Book of Genesis at all recently, that this particular statement in verse 10, "Who can count the dust of Jacob?" is a statement that heavily relies upon the statement made in chapter 13 and verse 15 of the Book of Genesis where in giving further word of the Abrahamic promises, the Lord says to Abraham after Lot was separated from him: "Lift up now your eyes. Look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which thou seest to Thee will I give it, and to Thy seed forever, and I will make Thy seed as the dust of the Earth so that if a man can number the dust of the Earth then shall Thy seed also be numbered." That's what Baalam is speaking about when he says, "Who

can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" So the promise of Genesis chapter 13, verse 15, verse 16 is going to be fulfilled and further he continues and concludes by saying, "Let me die the death of the righteous." Isn't that interesting? Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.

Did you notice that word, "righteous?" Now that, in the Hebrew text is not the ordinary word for righteousness. It's a word that means something like "upright", but they are upright, because of the righteousness that is conferred upon them in grace. They stand that way as a nation before the Lord God. So what we have here is illustration of the doctrine of justification by faith, which is that God declares righteous on the basis of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, those who receive them through the instrumentality of faith alone.

Faith, someone has said, is the echo of the human heart to the voice of God in the Scriptures. Some time ago, I was listening to a tape by a former student of mine. He is the pastor of the Moody Church now, Erwin Lutzer, a very good preacher. Erwin was a student of mine about 20 years ago and told an interesting story in illustrating the doctrine of justification by faith. He said there were some folks who were riding through West Germany in a Rolls Royce. Now this is a true story; this is not one that he made up. And when they were riding through West Germany, their car broke down. That's a comfort to us people who drive those simple models like Oldsmobiles and Chevrolets and others to know that a Rolls can break down.

Well, they couldn't find anybody in the vicinity of where they were to work on it and so they went to the phone and they called the Rolls factory in Great Britain and as a result, two mechanics flew from Britain to West Germany and fixed the car and then flew back, and they waited for two to three months afterwards. They expected a bill, and they expected a big bill, but since they were driving Rolls, it did not mean to much to them other than the fact that they thought it was coming. So finally after two to three months they decided that they had better call into the company and find out where the bill had

gone, because after all, that was kind of an expensive excursion for two men to make over there to fix an automobile.

So they called the company and they explained what had happened and they asked about the bill. There was sort of silence on the line and the man said, "Well, isn't there a bill?" And they received this reply. "No, there is no bill. We have no record of this having happened. As a matter of fact, they went on to say, we have no record of anything ever having gone wrong with a Rolls Royce."

Well now, was the Rolls Royce perfect? Although it was obvious it was not perfect because it broke down in West Germany and I imagine they break down in Dallas, Texas too but as far as the company was concerned, it was perfect. Now that's the way that we stand before the Lord God. When we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are the same old sinners that we used to be except that the work of redemption has begun within us, and so far as our ultimate standing is concerned, if we stood on our merits, even then we would be lost. But we stand righteous because of the merits of Christ, which had been imputed to us. We stand in him. Now that is true of the nation Israel as a nation. In the future, their status as head of the nations stands secure because of the sovereign eternal choice made in time past, which God will bring to pass in the future because he is faithful to his word.

Can our unfaithfulness make void the promises of God? "No," Paul says in Galatians and particularly in Romans chapter 3, "That's impossible." So I am not surprised then that old Balaam says, let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his. The last end of course suggests that Balaam has some concept of the fact that when people in Old Testament times died, they had hope of a life in the presence of God that was to come. In Genesis chapter 25 and verse 8, we read, "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man," he is describing me here, "and full of years, and was gathered to his people." So the saints of the Old Testament expected to resume their enjoyment of life with those who belonged to them.

Well, Balak didn't like this prophecy. We read in verse 11 and 12, and Balak said to Balaam, "What hast thou done unto me? I took Thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blest them all together!" And he answered and said, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?" So Balaam reminds Balak of the terms under which he accepted his employment. He said, "If you want me to come, I am not going to curse. I will only say what God tells me to say." Sounds like a good prophet, does he not? But the fact is, he could not help but say what the Lord put in his mouth. Balaam was a person who loved the effects of righteousness more than the cause of it because he says, "Let me die the death of the righteous. Let my last end be like his." So far as we know, he is not willing to come in faith renouncing his own personal righteousness and giving himself over to the merits of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Notice one final thing and I will stop with this because we have just one minute left. You notice how I always stop just right on time. Note the deep impression that the blessedness of the saints often makes on the world even when we may not realize it is so. He says, "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his." So even Balaam, though he may have never had any true experience of divine life, saw that those who do are blessed by the eternal God.

Here tonight, if you have never believed in Christ, we invite you to trust in the Lord God who gave these remarkable promises and who offers us in the same inviolable, unconditional way eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Come to Christ and believe in him and rest in his merits and according to the company of heaven, your status will be the status of a person who is righteous even though in yourself you may still be as James said, a sinner. Let us bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word and we thank Thee for these great prophecies so filled with remarkable things made at the dawn of the unfolding of the divine plan of redemption. We thank Thee for the nation Israel that exists today, like the

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Gulf Stream, not reckoned among the nations but still separate. Go with us. We pray with a sense of awe over the sovereign power of our mighty loving and electing God, for Jesus' sake. Amen.