



“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:” Acts 16:16

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;”
2 Peter 2:15

Gain by soothsaying is when a person is paid for telling the future. This also includes prophets who do not belong to the Lord but are in the business of being paid for some kind of prophecy about future events. We even watch it on TV, especially during pagan holidays like Halloween, to honor the dead and evil spirits. The occult practices during this time display magic, supernatural, and paranormal phenomena. Any form of pagan practice involves the false teaching of pagan gods. Some have entered the church today preaching a different doctrine that is not of the Gospel of Christ. People are no longer looking to God for answers, but instead are seeking special prophets' advice who are not Christians at all. We are not to glory in any spirit of the dead or any other kind of spirits. We are not to go and have our fortunes read or play games that seek the spirit world for advice. Any character of divination, enchanter, charmer, or consulter with familiar spirits is an abomination unto the Lord [see Deuteronomy 18:10-12]. We should be aware that these practices bind a person to live a life of darkness where deceit and lying spirits control the individual.

Have you ever read about the prophecies of Balaam? In Numbers chapter 22, you can read the story about the prophecies of Balaam. Balaam was a mercenary prophet from Pethor. He was a prophet for hire. We have many prophets for hire today. Some are pastors claiming to be prophets of God but are not following the truth of the Gospel of Christ. We should heed the warning about Balaam, who was a man who practiced divination. In other words, He predicted future events. Balaam was hired by King Moab to curse the Israelites. Can you imagine being paid to curse people? Yet, through many generations, some families have talked about being cursed. This is why James states that **the tongue is full of iniquity and sets on fire the course of nature that brings chaos rather than order in people's lives** [see James 3:6].

Yes, we can learn lessons from the story of Balaam. The first thing we can learn is to bless others and not curse them. Is it harder to bless than to curse? Some would say yes, but it



should not be this way. Christians should already be doing this since they have the Spirit of Christ living within their hearts. If they do not have the Spirit of Christ living within their hearts, then they can pray for it after they have repented. If your focus is on something other than God, your heart is in the wrong place. It is what you focus on that causes you to speak out a curse because your focus is on gaining something you want, or you are angry about something. What can we do about individuals who consistently harass or persecute others? The apostle Paul tells us to bless those who persecute us [see Romans 12:14]. By blessing them, it will reveal the individual's own behavior and help them to come back to the character of Christ. It is similar to the random acts of kindness policy that helps one see their own negative behavior or feelings. We all need to be noticed and loved.

Balaam received payment to curse the Israelites. He rode on a donkey with the princes of Moab. This was after God had visited and spoken to Balaam, giving him specific direction on what he was to do, but Balaam ignored God's instructions. God sent an angel of the Lord to stand in the way of Balaam. The donkey saw the angel and turned out into the field. Balaam hit the donkey with a stick and tried to turn the donkey in the direction it should go. The donkey began and still saw the angel, thus running into the wall and crushing Balaam's foot against the wall. Balaam hit the donkey again. The donkey still saw the angel and had nowhere to go because the angel of the Lord always blocked his path. The donkey fell with Balaam on top. Balaam got mad and started to hit the donkey again with his stick. That is when the donkey started to talk back to Balaam as to why he was being beaten.

The Lord had to open the eyes of Balaam for him to see the angel of the Lord. The angel of the Lord asked Balaam, "Why did you hit your donkey three times?" The angel of the Lord told Balaam that he had to stand against him because his way was wicked [see Numbers 22:32]. Despite Balaam's disobedience, Balaam ended up speaking the blessings of the Lord and not cursing the Israelites. Let us see what the Apostle Peter had to say about Balaam when he was referring to false prophets and teachers.

Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;



2 PETER 2:15

The second lesson is to be aware of false prophets and teachers. They have no concern for those within the body of Christ, and they are intent on going their own way. They trap others to follow them into coveting after their own desires. They are deceitful in bringing in a stumbling block before God's chosen people, causing them to sin [see Revelation 2:14]. Sexual immorality is one of the well-known sins in Christian leaders today. False teaching is a stumbling block when the truth has been told, but is being ignored for personal pursuits. A true prophet will give the truth according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A true prophet will believe in the Bible as the written word of God. A true prophet will not be selfish but will follow Christ and lead others to follow Christ. A true prophet will not seek after their own best interest; instead, they will be concerned with the well-being of others who are in the family of God.

The third lesson is to repent. Balaam would not repent and accept God's word. Balaam was deceptive, and he chose who he wanted to listen to. Balaam knew the truth, but decided to find a way to be disruptive, causing Israel to sin. Balaam did not believe in God's sovereignty. Balaam worshiped many pagan gods. He may have spoken God's words, but his heart was not in what God spoke. Many organizations that say they are Christian-based are promoting a different lifestyle that is not pleasing to God. Let us not be caught worshipping something other than the true God who has given us His son Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Be ye holy for I am the Lord your God. It is the Lord who sanctifies us. Be careful to not defile yourself. Keep yourself pure before the Lord. Bless and curse not, and always look to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith. Tame your own tongue to speak blessings in the name of Jesus. Do what Peter said in the following verse and inherit a blessing.

Be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:9

Share this:

- [Share on X \(Opens in new window\)](#) X
- [More](#)