

# PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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## LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE LIFE OF A MADMAN

This article will place emphasis upon one of the more ignoble and infamous persons we read about in the Bible. He was one who engaged in madness (2 Pet. 2:16). The person I’m referring to is Balaam. The majority of information regarding this man is the Book of Numbers (Num. 22-24). When one looks carefully at said information, one finds several lessons that can be learned from the life of that madman. Note: you should read Num. 22-24 before moving on to the lessons listed below.

### LESSON #1 – A GOOD START IS NOT ENOUGH TO PLEASE GOD

King Balak of Moab (Num. 22:10) sent a plea for help, via messengers, to Balaam (22:1-7). Balak wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites (22:6) so that his armies could drive them out of the land (*ibid*). Balaam’s response to the appeal? He would not make a move before first consulting the Lord (22:8). He then declined the request and asked the messengers to leave (22:13). Balak tried again, this time sending more messengers with a bag of goodies in hand (22:15-17). Balaam was offered “Carte Blanche” if only he would curse the Israelites. Note Balaam’s response: “*And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more*” (22:18). Here is a man off to a wonderful start. Yet, Balaam did not stay the course. He wavered in his resolve (22:19). Folks, a good start is not enough. Lots of people start the race (Heb. 12:1), but very few (Mt. 7:14) finish it (Lk. 18:8). Yes, there are many like Demas out there (2 Tim 4:10). There are, however, very few like Paul (2 Tim 4:6-8). Let’s be finishers.

### LESSON #2 – THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO WANT THEIR WILL TO BE GOD’S WILL

Regarding Balak’s request, God could not have spoken in clearer terms to Balaam. He said: “*Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed*” (22:12). Yet, Balaam was obviously hoping God would change His will (22:19). Why else would Balaam consult God again, unless he was hoping God would succumb to his will? Many are the people today who follow in the path of Balaam. They convolute God’s will to match their own. This is true concerning things like: institutionalism, fellowship, divorce and remarriage, the role of women, carnality, etc, etc, etc. Sadly, if said folks do not repent, some day, while suffering everlasting punishment (Mt. 25:46), they’ll find out that their making their will “God’s will” was a very bad idea (2 Jn. 9-11).

### LESSON #3 – FRIENDS CAN TURN INTO ENEMIES WHEN THEY TRY TO SAVE THE ERRING

Balaam, clouded by greed (2 Pet. 2:15), was determined to side with Balak and God allowed it, even though He did not like such (22:20, 22; cf. Rom. 1:28). Off Balaam went towards Moab to meet Balak and gain his reward (22:21). He would have a strange trip. The angel of the Lord went to withstand Balaam (22:23, 31, 33). The ass Balaam was riding upon was able to see said messenger (22:23, 25, 27, 33). The faithful beast of burden did all it could do to help Balaam (*ibid*). Yet, Balaam wanted to kill the animal for such (22:28-29). So many today get really mad when someone tries to help them spiritually. Yes, true friends can quickly turn into enemies in the eyes of the unrighteous (cf. Gal. 4:16). Speaking from experience I could tell you of so many people, who were at one time very friendly to me, who now want to string me up, figuratively speaking. If you have ever approached carnally minded people with a word of biblical reproof then you likely know what I am talking about.

### LESSON #4 – SOME PEOPLE CLAIM IGNORANCE TO TRY TO ESCAPE THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS

Balaam could not see the messenger for a time (22:31). Once Balaam caught a glimpse of the angel of the Lord, he started down the “*I didn’t know you were against me*” road (22:34). Yet, he did know that he should not have been on the ass riding off to riches (22:12). So many people try to claim ignorance today in a vain attempt to escape the condemnation of God. It will not work (Rom. 1:20; 2 Th. 1:7-9; Mt. 13:41).

### LESSON #5 – SOME PEOPLE DO FOR THE LORD WHAT THEY ARE FORCED TO DO

Three times Balaam tried to curse the Israelites, but was made to bless them instead (24:10). Now you can rest assured that greedy Balaam really wanted to curse the people and gain his reward. How so? Why continue to try cursing the Israelites? Why come up with “Plan B” for Balak (Num. 31:16; Rev. 2:14)? I suppose nobody in the “church” today acts out of forced necessity. YEAH SURE!!!

### LESSON #6 – SOME PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE IN REBELLION ON EARTH YET BE BLESSED IN ETERNITY

Balaam, despite his error, wanted to die the death of the righteous (23:10). Balaam did not understand that people die like they live (Rev. 20:4-6; 21:7-8). Listen, if you want to go to heaven one day, then you MUST walk the walk (Mt. 7:21).