

The Wages of Unrighteousness

2 Pet. 2:15-16

Introduction:

- A. Balaam's dilemma (Num. 22)
 - 1. His love for God (vv. 8-13)
 - 2. His love for "the wages of unrighteousness."
- B. Balaam is typical of Christians who love the wages of unrighteousness.
 - 1. Want to maintain their relationship with God.
 - 2. But, also want to find a way to also enjoy "the wages of unrighteousness."
 - 3. So, they rationalize themselves into various compromises – while still professing love for God.
- C. Let us beware of the most common "wages of unrighteousness" that often leads to compromise.

Discussion:

I. Profit.

- A. Balaam's profession versus his practice (vv. 18-22)
- B. Gospel is sometimes compromised for profit.
 - 1. Preachers and churches teach truth, but not whole truth (cf. Acts 20:20, 27).
 - 2. Preachers and churches sometimes show favoritism for profit. (cf. Jas. 2:1-9).
 - 3. Preachers and churches often ignore open sin for profit (cf. 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Thess 3:6)
 - 4. Brethren often neglect duty to Lord for profit – find a way to "justify" it.

II. Prestige.

- A. Balak offers Balaam great prestige (vv. 15-17)
- B. Truth is sometimes compromised for prestige.
 - 1. Peter's efforts to protect his prestige among Jewish brethren (Gal. 2:11-13)
 - 2. "Clergy Appreciation" week – preachers honored in an effort to promote "world brotherhood and religious understanding among all people, regardless of religious persuasion."
 - 3. Membership in social and civic organizations that promote things inconsistent with godliness.

III. Popularity.

- A. The Lord's way and His people have never been popular with the world. (Acts 28:22)
- B. Gospel is sometimes compromised for popularity.
 - 1. Immodest dress often makes one more popular than modest dress (cf. 1 Tim. 2:9)
 - 2. Pop psychology and entertaining stories more popular than "preaching the word." (2 Tim. 4:2-4)
 - 3. "Contemporary" worship more exciting and popular than New Testament worship.
 - 4. Carnal means of recruiting members more popular than gospel plan.
- C. "Pleasing men" (popularity) must never be our aim in life (Gal. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4; Eph. 6:6)

IV. Pleasure.

- A. Sin offers transit pleasure or it would not be effective (Heb. 11:25; Tit 3:3)
- B. Easy to compromise our principles for a moment of pleasure.
 - 1. Esau (Heb. 12:16)
 - 2. David.
 - 3. Rationalize - "How can anything so pleasant be so bad" (cf. 1 Cor. 6:13).

V. Peace.

- A. Peace is great and to be pursued (Psalm 133:1; 1 Pet. 3:10; Rom. 14:19)
- B. Peace at expense of truth and purity is fatal (Jas. 3:17; Jer. 8:11; Lk. 12:51)

Conclusion:

- A. Few of us are likely to completely forsake the Lord and His way for these wages.
- B. But, we are more likely to compromise with sin and error for these wages.
- C. Remember these wages are temporary, but the final wages is eternal (Rom. 6:23)