



GOD ALLOWS US TO GO OUR WAY!

In the Scriptures we read of the example of a man who never wanted to bear the restraints of the Lord. His own paths were well set and firmly established in his heart. Balaam was such a man. He was a prophet of God and God had set a path for him but he preferred to walk in his own ways.

God made His will very clear to Balaam. So in the morning he met the 'committee' that had come from Balak to visit him. He clearly told them that the Lord had prohibited him to go and therefore he was not at liberty to leave. He said that the restraints of the Lord had prevented him from doing what he wanted to do.

"And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

*"And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they." **Numbers 22: 14, 15***

Soon a higher committee was sent by Balak to invite Balaam. And what did they say?

*"For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people." **Numbers 22: 17***

Not only did Balak send more honourable men to Balaam but he promised to give him a bonus and to honour him. We know that Balaam succumbed to the pressure and he thus became the first hired servant in the Bible. God had asked him



VERSE

"And God came unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.

"And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."

not to go. Balaam could have girded himself with God's truth but there was a greed in his heart. There are many such prophets in the Christian world today. These prophets know the truth of God on several matters. Yet when someone asks them to do a thing that is contrary to the word of God, they say, "I will pray about the matter". And when another tempting offer is made to them they will again say, "I will pray to God again". Such people are no different from Balaam, in reality.

Many times when we pray to the Lord we try to twist His arm. If we are honest with ourselves we will acknowledge that we have experienced this in our lives. We may have known the clear mind of God on certain matters but when pressures came we said, "We shall pray again and seek His mind." Finally we yield to the pressures of men in our lives. We may have known the mind of God under the conviction of the Holy Spirit; the word of God may have come to us under the power of the Holy Spirit or we may have made commitments to honour the word of the Lord. But when the pressures build up we give up and come to a place of saying, "I will seek the mind of the Lord, again." As a result of having such an attitude God may allow us to go in our own ways. Let us humbly acknowledge that this has happened in our lives before. Many a time we have not girded ourselves with the truth God had spoken to us .

Balaam began to seek God again and again. "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I will say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And God's anger was kindled wherever he went..."(Num 22:20, 22)

How can we interpret this verse? Balaam prayed again to the Lord. And God replied, 'Go'. And when he went God was angry with him. We need to know that **when we are set in our minds to go in a particular way, God will allow us to go in our own way.** Under such circumstances God will permit us to follow the dictates of our heart.

Let us look at another example- that of Lot. These examples are a warning from God to each one of us.

"And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which

are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

*“And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.” **Genesis 19:15, 16***

We see here that when Lot was unwilling to leave Sodom and Gomorrah. He lingered and dilly-dallied. He was reluctant to obey. But the angels brought him and his family out of the city: “And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, oh, not so, my Lord. Behold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape unto the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die. Behold now this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.” (Gen 19: 17 - 20)

The Lord gave Lot a chance to escape to the mountains but he did not do so. He replied, “Not so, my Lord.” Lot began to pray like Balaam that he may be left to go his own way. He prayed, “God, give me your grace to go my own way.” On the one hand he said, “Lord you saved my life” and then in the same breath, he complains, “You are going to kill me by sending me to that mountain.” The Israelites had the same heart that Lot had! The word says that they always erred in their hearts.

Finally, Lot said, “*This city is very close by*”. Lot was a man of the cities. He was used to city life. He was a city-dweller who had close ties with the people of the cities. He always preferred to be in the cities rather than to be in the wide, open, meadows and pastures. So on the one hand he was grateful to God for having saved him from the big city (of Sodom and Gomorrah), but on the other hand, he continued to insist and say, “I will go to that small city.” We need to know that when he went to that city of Zoar, the angels did not hold him back from going on in his own ways. They let him pursue his own path. Beloved, God will let you go your own way and pursue your own path if you happen to persist in doing your own thing.

Let us acknowledge that there are times when we want to leave the will of God and pursue our own ends. At such times only the Spirit of God can save us from our own selves. If we fail to hear the voice of God it is likely that we shall leave the will of God and run after our own desires. Let us be grateful to the Lord for the times when the Holy Spirit restrained us from rocking our boats and ruining our spiritual lives! In the life of Lot there was an intervention by God. In the beginning God had intervened in his life and prevented him from being destroyed together with the people of Sodom **but when the heart of Lot continued to err, the Lord left him to his own carnal desires and the cravings of his heart.** Let each one carefully note that the angels did not come to warn Lot of the danger of leaving God's will and going to Zoar! The same thing happened to Balaam. God said, "Go in your own way." Remember, God will let His people go their way of rebellion if they continually desire to go out of His restraints. If we have been apprehended with great longing and desire to do the will of God and to be prepared as a 'bride', we will work with Him, today, tomorrow and the next day. Remember, as we progress in the wilderness, hearing and obeying His voice, our pathway shall intersect with His eternal plan and purposes.

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