Beware of the Teaching of Balaam!

Intro:
- Rev. 2:14 “the teaching (doctrine) of Balaam” - one way the Lord described false religious doctrines

- this lesson: Beware of the Teaching of Balaam!

The “teaching of Balaam” is symbolic of false teaching? – metaphor, symbolic
- Rev. 2:14 teaching that puts a stumbling block before people, whereby they fall into sin

- Balaam and Balak (king of Moab)
  - Balaam was a prophet of God
  - Balak (king) tried to get Balaam to curse Israel, so they couldn’t defeat the Moabites, but God didn’t allow Him to curse His people
  - so Balaam taught Balak how to put a stumbling block before Israel, whereby they sinned, and God punished them for their sins

- the teachings of Balaam are false teachings that are stumbling blocks to people, resulting in sin, and punishment
  - Rev. 2:14 anyone who puts a stumbling block before another, religious doctrine (eat. . . .) or immorality
  - Jude 1:4, 10-11 false teachers, for pay rush headlong into the error of Balaam

- What are some present-day teachings of Balaam? – stumbling blocks placed before people, resulting in sin
  - any false religion or religious teaching
    - Gnosticism entices people through deceitful philosophy, promising a special relationship with God that cannot be obtained except through that religion
      - Rev. 2:15 Nicolaitans
  - pagan religions entice people with fulfillment of lustful desires, that whatever you believe is ok
  - enlightenment religions entice people with enlightenment, usually through an ascetic lifestyle
  - Pentecostal religions entice people with the promise of supernatural power, using magic and tricks to deceive them
  - Catholic religions entice people with the promise of eternal life, obey the priest and saved, punishment will only be for a short time in purgatory, can always be forgiven even if die before confession
    - Protestant religions entice people with once saved always saved, no matter what you do you’ll be saved anyway

- anything promoting immorality
  - Rev. 2:20 Jezebel, metaphor, eat. . . , and immorality, anyone who calls themself a prophet and leads Christians away
  - 2 Pet. 2:1, 13b-15 false prophets and teachers, entice people to sin with lust, following the way of Balaam, loving the wages of unrighteousness
    - sexual sins: condoned by society (commercials, pornography, etc.) and religion (homosexuality, adultery, etc.)

- teaching of Balaam is any false teaching – stumble, sin, punishment
How do we avoid falling prey to the teachings of Balaam? – stumbling blocks placed before people be false teachers

- test everyone and everything – religions, teachers, ourselves
  - 1 Th. 5:21-22 principle: examine everything carefully, hold fast good, abstain from every form of evil

- 1 Jn. 4:1; Rev. 2:2 test religious teachers, prophets
  - illus.: study, members of church with prophet, test the prophet (Matt. 7:15-16; Deut. 18:21-22)

- 2 Cor. 13:5 test ourselves
  - illus.: rf - 1 Tim. 3:1-13 test elders and deacons to see if they meet qualifications
  - illus.: rf - Phil. 2:15 prove ourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God
  - illus.: rf - Ja. 1:22 prove ourselves to be doers of the word, and not hears who delude themselves

- Work as a member of this congregation – teach, learn, study, get the word out
  - preaching, teaching – everyone is teaching someone something, general sense
    - 2 Tim. 4:2, 3-4 preaching: reprove, rebuke, exhort
    - illus.: high school class, questions from kids can teach the teacher, Justin asked, when studying Jesus tempted in the wilderness to sin by turning stones into bread: if it wasn’t a sin to eat bread, why would it have been a sin to turn stones into bread

- remind, charge, instruct – teaching and learning
  - 2 Tim. 2:14 remind and charge brethren regarding what they are to do and teach, and what they are to avoid
    - illus.: Mason, 3, Amen after both prayers last night, reminded me about saying Amen
    - 1 Tim. 1:3-4 instruct brethren not to teach strange doctrines, not pay attention to false teaching

- false doctrines identified – learning
  - 1 Tim. 4:1-5, 6 pointing out false doctrine to brethren

- guarding the truth – getting the message out, pillar and foundation of the truth
  - 1 Tim. 6:20-21 guard the truth of the word (1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 2:2 word intrusted)

- elders refuting – correcting, others learning as observe
  - Tit. 1:9 elders who refute those who contradict

- to avoid falling prey to false doctrine (teachings of Balaam), test everyone and everything, and be a faithful member of this congregation, learning, and helping to get the message out to others
  - welcome testing from others – personally and as church – may save some

What do you do, if you find yourself following a false doctrine (teaching of Balaam)? – stumbled, believed and adhering to false doctrine

- Rev. 2:16a repent, change of heart resulting in a change of action - Rev. 2:14-15

- illus.: visiting church in Sinton Tx, elder told me about Roy Cogdill preaching there many years before when they had a kitchen, after they learned the truth, they closed down the kitchen and never used it again
  - repented of false religion doctrine they had believed, practiced

- when we find ourselves doing the wrong thing, no matter the reason, we repent, changing our mind and changing our actions to conform to God’s word
What awaits those who repent – the faithful? – those not stumble, those repent when stumble
- Lk. 13:3, 5; 2 Pet. 3:9 everyone has to repent to be saved, go to heaven
  - for those who do. . . . (below)

- Rev. 2:17 eternal life - Rev. 2:14-16
  - “give the hidden manna” signifies the bread from heaven that gives eternal life
    - Jesus is the bread from heaven that gives life
  - “give him a white stone” signifies acquittal
    - a white stone was used in courts to signify acquittal, and a black stone to signify condemnation
  - “and a new name written on the stone” signifies participation with God in the new Jerusalem, heaven
    - Jesus writes on the saved “the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem
      (Rev. 3:12)

- those who repent of the things they’re doing wrong, and live faithful to God, will spend eternity in heavn with Him
  - Rev. 2:10b-11 faithful until death, not hurt by the second death – not cast into the lake of fire

- inv.: Are you faithful to God?
  - rejecting and exposing the teachings of Balaam