Numbers - Commentaries by Paul L Johnson

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I want to return to the book of Numbers chapter 22. Numbers chapter 22, and I suppose we ought to read most of the chapter in order to have the entire context before us. Numbers 22. And the children of Israel set forward and pitched. And the plains of Moore on this side, Jordan by Jericho. And Baylor the son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done unto the Amorites, And Moab was so afraid of the people, because there were many, and more of was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites at that time. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Biore, to Peter, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt. Behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore I praise thee. Curse me this people. For they are too mighty for me per adventure. I shall prevail that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land. For I want that he whom thou blesses is blessed, and he whom thou cursed is cursed. And the elders of Mauve and the elders of Midian departed, with their rewards of divination in their hand. And they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balaam. And he said unto them, Lord, here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me. And the Princess of Moab abode with Balaam. And God came to Balaam and said. What men are these with thee? And Balaam said unto God, Balak, the son of Sephora, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt which covers the face of the earth. Come now, curse me then her adventure. I shall be able to overcome them and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them. Thou shalt not curse the people for their blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the Princess of Balak, get you into your land, for the Lord refuses to give me leave to go with you. And the Princess of Moore rose up, and they went under Balak and said, Balaam refuses to come with us. And Balak sent yet again, Princess, more and more honorable than they. And they came to Balaam and said to him. Thus saith Balak, the son of Zipporah. That nothing I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me, for I will promote thee unto very great honor, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me. Come, therefore I pray thee, curse me this people. And Balob 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. Now therefore I pray you, tear ye also hear this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more. 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 shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his *** and went with the Princess of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went. And the Angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was writing upon his *** and his two servants were with him. And the *** saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in. And the *** turned aside out of the way, and went into the field, and Balaam smoked the *** to turn her into the way. But the Angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards of all being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the *** saw the Angel of the Lord, she thrust herself under the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall, and he smote her again. And the Angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place. Where there was number way to turn either to the right hand or to the left, and when the *** saw the Angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smoked the *** with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ***. And she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said into the *** Because thou hast mocked me, I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee, and the acid unto Balaam.

Am not I thine *** upon which thou has ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? What I ever want to say to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, And he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. And the Angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ***? These three times? Behold, I went. Out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me. And the *** saw me, and turned from me these three times, unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee and saved her alive. And Balaam said unto the Angel of the Lord, I have sinned, for I knew not that thou studest in the way against me now. Therefore, if it displeased thee, I will get me back again. And the Angel, the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the man, but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the Princess of Balaam, and then a few. Verses in the 23rd chapter. And Balaam said unto Balak, Bill me here 7 altars, and prepare me here 7 oxen and seven Rams. And Balak did his Balaam had spoken. And Balak and Balaam offered on every altar of bullicking around. And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go. Peradventure the Lord will come to meet me, and whatsoever he showeth me, I will tell thee. And he went to a high place. And God met Balaam. And he said unto him, I have prepared 7 altars, and I have offered upon every altar a Bullock and a ram. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. And he returned unto him, And lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he and all the Princess of Moab. And he took up his parable, and said, Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram out of the mountains of. Saying, Come, curse me, Jacob, and come defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, or how shall I defy whom the Lord has not defied? Far from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob in the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. We know, of course, that the. Chapters 22 Through 24. Give us all of the parables that Balaam uttered that were given to him by God. But this afternoon I thought we might just look a little at the first parable that is uttered by Balaam and the circumstances of the people. That. Leads up to this unusual circumstance that we have, where the enemy undertakes to curse and to destroy the people of God to prevent their entering into the Promised Land, the very purpose for which they were redeemed. For we know that when they were brought out of Egypt, the children of Israel. The object, the purpose for their redemption, is that they might be brought into the land of Canaan, and there they would be for God's pleasure. So this wilderness through which their passing was only, you might say, incidental. The object that God had in mind was for them to be brought into the land. And it appears here in the plains of Moab, as we read in the beginning of chapter 22, that the enemy seen in this King Balak. The enemy is

seen here with an effort to destroy the people of God and to prevent. They're entering into the promised land, the blessings that God had for them. So we might say that it's the it's an expression of the power of the enemy. Against the people of God, to destroy them and to prevent them from entering into what God has provided for them. And in a way, of course, we can say this is typical of the Lord's people today. I'm sure it isn't necessary to remind us that when we read of the children of Israel in the Old Testament, we see in them a picture and a type of the Lord's people today.

As they were the people of God in that day, we who are believers on the Lord Jesus are the people of God today. And we stand in a similar place that the children of Israel had of old. So you might say that the the place that Israel occupies here is typical of our own place. And I would like to just briefly give a little summary. Of what we have in the history of Israel. From the book of Exodus, they're being delivered out of Egypt to the present time when we read here that they have pitched in the plains of Moab. You remember their history as a nation really begins when they're redeemed out of Egypt. By blood and by power, the Passover night, when the blood was applied to the doorposts and the lentils, preserving them from the judgment of the destroying Angel who came. Who went throughout the land to destroy the first barn and then there being? Delivered from their enemies, crossing the Red Sea on dry land and looking back and seeing all of their enemies dead on the seashore. And they sing that song of deliverance you remember in the 15th chapter of Exodus, that song of redemption. So they are redeemed people. Redeemed by blood and power. And you and I today stand as those who have been redeemed. By the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been delivered. From this present evil world, as we read in Galatians 1, So just as Israel was redeemed by blood and by power, so we have been redeemed by blood and power. That is, our sins have been washed away by the blood, and the power of God has delivered us from the world and from the enemy. We read in Colossians one that we have been. Delivered from the power of Satan. And translated into the Kingdom of the Son of his love, we have been delivered from the power of Satan. And just to anticipate a moment, what we really have in the these parables of Balaam is the is a testimony to that fact that the Lord's people have been delivered from the power of Satan, from the power of Satan, God. Satan cannot pluck us out of the hand of Christ. We are delivered from the power of Satan. He cannot. Rob us of our place in Christ. He cannot rob us of the glory to which we are going. Now, we might have a lot of trouble along the way, and I think we'll be able to see later when we just touch on chapter 25, that there's a difference between the power of Satan and the Wiles of Satan. As to his power, it's broken. We've been delivered from the power of Satan. We still have to contend with his Wiles. But as Israel was delivered, as we have it in Exodus. Then we have also the fact that God would dwell in the midst of His people, and we have the Tabernacle, wonderful blessing that not only are they redeemed and delivered, but they are the habitation of God. God would dwell in the midst of His people. Well, isn't that what we read in the end of Ephesians 2IN whom ye are builded together for a habitation of God by the Spirit. God would dwell in the midst of his people. God would find in his people His house. His dwelling place. And we go on in the history of the children of Israel and we see that when the Tabernacle is set up, then they have the wonderful privilege of approach to Him. In the book of Leviticus. We see how that they can bring their offerings and approach God. And we have also the the character of God's dwelling place, the holiness. It becomes his house.

But Leviticus is chiefly concerned with the approach of the people of God to God. That's why in the beginning of Leviticus God speaks to the people out of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle now having been set up, and He dwells in the midst there. The privilege that people have of approaching Him, coming into His presence, then when we come to the Book of Numbers. Where we have read this afternoon. We read in the very beginning that God speaks there in the wilderness. He's not speaking out of the Tabernacle, but in the wilderness, because it's in numbers that we have the wilderness experience of the people of God. We have them viewed as going on toward the promised land, redeemed and endowed, and going on towards the promised land. I might mention in regard to the I use the word endowed. They were not only redeemed in the book of Exodus, but I used that word endowed in regard to their typically receiving the Spirit. You remember when the rock was smitten in Exodus 17 and water came out. That, I believe, is typical of the Spirit of God being given to believers. Consequent upon the. Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus The smiting of the rock undoubtedly would bring before us the Lord Jesus on the cross and as the result of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross that has so purified our hearts. And you know, we do have pure hearts. The apostle Peter says, I stir up your pure hearts by way of remembrance. Our hearts have been purified by faith. The precious blood has been applied, and so God, who knows the hearts of all men, our hearts being purified by faith, not only being born again by God's Spirit, but we receive the Spirit of God, a divine person. To dwell in these bodies. Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost? You see, because we're sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, whereby we cry out the Father. The Spirit of God begat life. We are born of God, we are born of the Spirit so that there is a spirit of life. But then the Holy Spirit himself is a divine person, comes and takes up his abode of when we believe the gospel of our salvation so that our hearts are purified by faith, we are redeemed, we're cleansed, and I say endowed with the Spirit of God. Now that's the character of God. Is presented in Scripture and that's the circumstances in regard to Israel. And then when we come to the book of Numbers, we see that God makes a wonderful and practical arrangement for them as to their journey through the wilderness. He gives them instructions as to how they were to encamp around about the Tabernacle. Every tribe had a particular place. And then he makes provision for the movement of the camp, providing all that the Levites need for the transporting of the of the Tabernacle and and all that pertained to it. And he makes provision for them and in the way of guidance and direction. Because when the people go forward in the 10th chapter of Numbers, we read that the ark of the covenant of God went forth to seek out a resting place for them. God undertook in a wonderful. To give them everything they needed, God redeemed them, God endowed them with the Spirit and God gives them every arrangement for their for their blessing and everything in order and undertakes to lead and guide them all. You would say what a privileged people, what a privileged people. And when you think of all of these things, you would say they would be so thankful. They would be so grateful for all this. But the first thing we read when they start their journeys in the 11Th chapter of Numbers is that they murmured and they complained. Murmurings and complaints. And we're not really surprised, are we? Because we feel ourselves and we say, who is more blessed than we are today? What people have ever had greater blessing than the Lord's people in the day in which we live?

Think of not only redeem, but the wonderful endowment that we have, the Spirit of God and the light of God, the revelations that God has given. We have the, you might say, the accumulated light, all of the accumulation of light that God is given from the beginning. We're living in the consummation of the ages, and as it says in First Corinthians 10, we have all of the accumulated light of God Himself found in this precious book in the Spirit of God-given that we might enter into it, and He has undertaken the lead and to guide and to protect. And should we not be those who are filled with praise and grateful and humble? And devoted and loyal. But we're not surprised that the Children of Israel murmured and complained, because we find the same thing. And we find that the same spirit prevails among the Lord's people today as it did in that day. And you know, as we go on in the book of Numbers, it's it's a failure after failure, murmuring against Moses. You remember Miriam and Aaron, and then they despise the the pleasant land. A wonderful report given out about the the land of Canaan and and because they were little difficulties involved. Why, they complained, and they murmured, and they were fearful of going up, and they were defeated by

their enemies. And then we have that awful rebellion of coral rebelling against the authority of Moses. Think of that. Well, don't we find some of these things rising up among the Lord's people, speaking against those whom the Lord might be using, and even rising up in rebellion and despising the pleasant land? And one might say, oh, I've never despised anything of the Lord. Well, I'm not so sure. Do our hearts really enter into what God has provided for us? Does it seem as nothing in our sight as it did to the children of Israel when they had the report of the of the pleasant land? What we find that there's problems all the way through and not only that, but Moses himself himself failed. You remember, he was so provoked with the people of God that he had to say here now you rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? And the result was God had to say to Moses, you're not going into the Promised Land, even Moses. The meekest man on the earth, God said, and he failed. What a history when we read of all of this. And that's the history of of God with his people. And we see how that. They even murmured finally. And there was the fiery serpents. When I turn back to the 21St chapter, there's something I want to point out that might be helpful to us. It's in the 21St chapter that we have the fiery serpents. And the people being bitten, but what I wanted to point out especially is what we have in verse 16. And from thence they went to beer. That is the way over of the Lord's bacon of Moses. Gather the people together and I will give them water. Now this really is not in response to a request of the people. There were times when they wanted water. That is, they cried out for water. But it seems the Lord initiates this. He said, Gather them together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song. Spring up. Oh well, sing ye unto it. The Princess ****. The well, the nobles of the people digged it by the direction of the Lawgiver with their staves, and from the wilderness they went to Matina. Now what I want to point out is this. We know of course, that the springing well here is a is a type of the Holy Spirit. Water and movement this way Isn't a picture a type of the Holy Spirit? Now, I'm not suggesting that the Holy Spirit is given twice to the believer. I've mentioned in Exodus when the rock was smitten and water came out, I think is a type of the giving of the Spirit to those who believe the gospel of their salvation. They're sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. But it, it, it appears to me that what we have here is that the people of God now in a typical way for the first time, recognize you might say that it's only in the power of the Spirit.

That anything is accomplished for God. It seems as if in the book of Numbers they had undertaken everything in their own strength. They had undertaken things in the flesh, and the result was there was failure and failure and murmuring and complaining. You might say they had the Spirit, but there was no real dependence upon the Spirit. There was no real recognition of the fact that it's. The Spirit of God. That accomplishes anything and everything that is of God in the believer. Turn to Romans 8 and I want to read there of what I have in mind. It's one thing to have the Spirit. As a believer whose heart has been purified by faith, but it's another to recognize the power of the Spirit and be in the enjoyment of the Spirit. In Romans 8 it says in verse four that the righteousness of the law. That doesn't mean the keeping of the 10 commandments, but what it means is the righteousness that God looked for in the Law, the righteous requirement of the Law, if there's going to be righteousness fulfilled in the individual which the Law demanded. It says might be fulfilled in us, not by us, but in US. It can be fulfilled in us now who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. We know it's been pointed out before that those words who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, which are found in the first verse of this 8th chapter do not belong there. You see, in verse one it should read. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, period. For there is not a question of the walk, it's the question of the. Of the work of Christ, the work that has been done for us, that puts us before God in such perfection that there is no condemnation, that even though there is an evil nature within, we still have the flesh within. There is no condemnation. We recognize that it's sin that dwells in me, but our standing before God is in Christ. And we're in the Spirit before God. We're not in the flesh. We're not in Adam. There is no condemnation. So you omit the words who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. But in verse four, those words belong there. But there it's a matter of, of the of the walk. And you it's in, it's in connection with the Spirit who walk not after the flesh, but after. The spirit. Now that's the thought I had in mind in the in the Exodus, or rather Numbers 21. When the people recognize the Spirit, there is the recognition of the Spirit's power and dependence upon the Spirit of God. And you know, right after this we have the first, their first victories. They defeat Sion, king of the Amorites and also Aug, king of Basin. They're able to be victorious because they recognize the power of the Spirit. The power of the Spirit. And not going on in the flesh. Well, I think it's remarkable that this. The chapter 22 The power of the enemy comes in. The enemies power comes in. As soon as there is victory on the part of the people of God, there's a victory. They overcome Ogg, king of Basha. Our king of the nation. And you remember something about this king. There's not too much said about him in Scripture, but the thing that is noted about this man was his bed, and it was a large bed. He was obviously a large man, but it's remarkable that Scripture makes reference to his bed. And I suppose that this would have typically a reference to you might say that what we are in the flesh that desires an easy path in this world that indulgence of the flesh. Aug king of basin is his. He was a large man is a big eye that gets in the way so often and and the the ministering to self and it's overcome.

Victory that is overcome as they recognize the Spirit of God. And that well that springs up that well, that springs up unto everlasting life. Well now, as I say, this is the background that leads up to chapter 22. The children of Israel, the people of God, they're redeemed, endowed, and they've had all of these experiences with God and God's governmental ways with them, and they've entered into the power of the Spirit. So the enemy comes. And he's going to destroy. That's his fault. He's going to destroy everything that God has wrought. Because that's really what's involved here. It isn't so much what the people are in themselves. You see, it isn't what the people are in themselves. The people are viewed in these parables of Balaam. The word that is put into Balaam's mouth by God views the people of God from the top of the rocks. Notice that when we come to chapter 23, when Balaam first speaks in verse 9, far from the top of the rocks. I see him. In other words, the people are viewed from God's. A vantage point. They're viewed from above. It isn't the people of God viewed in their tents there in the plains of Moab. Viewed from that standpoint, there might be many things that the enemy could come in and condemn. But viewed from the top of the rocks, viewed from on high, viewed from God's vantage point, it's what God has wrought. And what God has wrought cannot be destroyed. What God has blessed cannot be cursed. What God has done. Cannot be reversed. The enemy's power is completely and utterly frustrated. In these parables of Balaam in the in this attempt of Balaam to to do the enemies work, he's completely frustrated and is if for the Lord allows us to be together again and we go on in these parables, we'll see how that eventually Balak becomes so frustrated that he leaves the scene entirely and it's all left. For blessing from God through the mouth even of an impious man, this man Balaam. So we see that the enemy's power is broken. He's completely frustrated. Completely stymied, he can do nothing against the people of God. For you see, the viewpoint is when the Lord, when God first speaks to Balaam in verse 12 of chapter 22. Notice what he says. Thou shalt not go with them. Now this is the expression of God's mind. Thou shalt not go with Him. Thou shalt not curse the people far they are blessed. And in the 23rd chapter. Verse 20 Balaam recognizes this. He says, behold, I have received commandment to bless. And he has blessed and I cannot reverse it. I cannot reverse it. There's no power against it because as we read at the end of verse 23, it's not a question of what the people are in themselves. It says, what hath God wrought? It's a question of what God has done. And the enemy cannot overturn the work of God. He can, he can play havoc with the people of God in their walking ways, but he cannot overturn the work of God. He cannot reverse the blessing. All that God has in his purpose and counsel for his people cannot be reversed or taken away by the power of the enemy at all. So in these, in this. Circumstance these chapters 22 Through 24. Where we have Balaam. Uttering these parables, we have God meeting the power of the enemy and

frustrating him in every way. But now let us look at the 25th chapter for a moment, for just a little contrast. After the wonderful display, and I might say that there's no indication that Israel knew anything of what was going on. This that was going on between God and Balaam and Balak and Balaam. There's no indication that the people of God there in their tents and the plains of Moab knew anything about it.

It was entirely outside them. It was God's matter, and God took it in hand and God settled it. But now, then we have something that's going on down in the plains. We have something now. We have a view of what is going on in the camp of Israel among the people in chapter 25. And Israel abode and **** them. And the people began to commit ******** with the daughters of. Moab, you see, and we read in verse. Three and Israel joined himself under bail pior, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. Well, turn to the Book of Revelation chapter 2 and verse 14. We see who was behind this sad failure, the children of Israel joining with the daughters of Moab. And the result was that they took up with the false gods of those people. And in verse 14 of chapter two, he says to the church at Pergamos, but I have a few things against. Thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. Who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication? Now you see, we read in chapter 22 how that Balak came to Balaam and wanted Balaam to curse the people of God. That is, he was, he wanted to exert power against the people of God, to destroy them, and he was frustrated. Now it seems that after that, Balaam, because you will, if you read carefully, you know that Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness, and Balaam wanted that reward from Balak so bad, but God didn't allow him to curse the people. But it appears that later Balaam undertook to. Instruct Balak how he could hinder the people of God. And that is as we read here, to commit fornication to each thing, sacrificing to idols. So in chapter 25 of Numbers, when we read that the children of Israel committed ******** with the daughters of Moab, it was at the Council of Balaam that this took place. Now what I'm saying is this. That when it comes to the power of the enemy, as seen in the desire of Balak to curse the people of God, God came in and God delivered the people. There was no power against His people. But when it comes to seductions of the enemy, when it comes to his wives, when it comes to his enticing the people of God. Into pathways that are not according to the mind of God, while it does not. Take away the blessings that we have from God in Christ, they're ours as it were entitled and we're going to be in that glory conformed to his image. Everything that God, his purpose is going to be brought to pass. In the meanwhile, our joy, our peace, our blessing, our testimony is can be destroyed and the Lord dishonored. And that's what we find now with the children of Israel committing ********* with the daughters of Moab. They were enticed into associations that were not of God and it resulted in their taking up the gods of these people. And so God was robbed of his portion and his people. He was robbed of the joy that he would have in his people. And the the people were deceived and deluded. We know, of course, that there were many, or at least there were some who were unhappy about it. And one man was very faithful by the name of Phineas. But the point I'm making here is that. While the power of the enemy is broken, we've been delivered from Satan's power. We still have to contend against his Wiles. Turn to the 6th chapter of Ephesians, Ephesians 6 and verse 11. I read this mainly for the expression we have here. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the Wiles of the devil. Again, I remind you, it doesn't say against the power of the devil because God himself is the one who who, as it were, withstands the power of the devil to destroy the people of God. But it's the Wiles of the devil devil. That's why the apostle Paul could say to the Corinthians that.

That he feared lest their minds be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, Just as Satan deceived Eve. He said that was what he feared in Two Corinthians 11, that their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity or singleness of eye to Christ. That they might he he was fearful that they might not be faithful, that they might, as as it were, be illicit in their spiritual affection. That they might allow their hearts to go out to the things of this world and ungodly, unholy and unrighteous associations. That's what happened in Numbers 25. They took up with the daughters of Moab, The daughters of Moab. You remember how the Moabites began a very, very disgraceful beginning. It was after a lot, you remember, was delivered out of Sodom. That he had two children by his daughters, two sons there mentioned, one was Moab. So you might say that the daughters of Moab are an issue of Lot. It's that which they represent, that which has issued from Lot. And what does Lot speak of? We know, of course, that Lot has been brought before us many times as a picture of a worldly Christian. Because Lot was a righteous man, as we read in Peter, Peter. We wouldn't know it from the history of the Old Testament, would we? Just what kind of a man Lot was. But Peter tells us that he was a righteous man. The Lord knows how to deliver the righteous and reserve the ungodly to the day of judgment. So he was a righteous man, but Lot was one who wanted the well, well watered plains and he wanted to settle down in this world. And we know that he's found in that city of Sodom. What a contrast with Abraham. We know, of course, that he went out from Abraham. There was a time when he was with Abraham. Then a test came. And we know that this is always the way with God, that He does test his people. And Lot went along with Abraham for a while. Then there came a test. And it wasn't necessary for a Lot to pitch his tent towards Sodom. But when the test came, that's what he did. And so the test will come with each one of us who profess to be gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. The test will come. Something will come up. God allows it from time to time. And the question is of whether we will remain with Abraham as he did. He remained in the land, and it was after a lot was separated from him that God told him to walk up the length and the breadth of that land as if now he was free to enjoy it. And lodge, you remember, pitched his tent towards Sodom and eventually found his way into Sodom. And he was a very active man there. But you know, there's one thing I want to point out about a lot in Sodom. That sometimes is overlooked when we think of Lot in Sodom. I suppose a young persons especially, they think of Lot down there, just enjoying himself, going to all of the amusements that they have in they had in those days, and living a very riotous life, like the prodigal. No, Now, if you read carefully in the Word of God, you find it that he was vexed with the manner of life down there. He didn't. He wasn't a profligate. In fact, one of the things that that they say about him, when the angels came down to deliver him, that they said this man came in as a stranger and he, he sits as a judge among us. Undoubtedly Law had been correcting those people for their profligate life and he wasn't exactly going on with them and all of that, but he was content to dwell in their midst and he was taking part in all of their affairs. He was one who sat in the gate of Sodom. You know what that means? That means he was taking part in their in their civic affairs. He had something to say about the running of the government of that city. He had to say as to the the the various laws that would be passed. He was very active in all of the civic affairs in that city. That's the kind of a Christian that Lot represents. He represents a worldly minded Christian who might be morally free from the.

Profligacy that fills this world. But he's one who is. Taken up with earthly things, taken up with the affairs of life, and gets involved in all of the social measures, in the political aspects and things that belong to this world of which the Christian is not a part at all. That's what Lot would represent. Well, the daughters of Moab, I think would be bring before us the subtle way. In which the enemy would seek to lure the people of God into. An earthly path and into earthly mindedness, because, you know, it can sound very good. It can sound very good as to like social measures and so forth and getting occupied. There's a lot of want, there's a lot of misery, there's a lot of sorrow, there's a lot of injustice in this world. And the Christian feels it. And I don't want to be misunderstood because it would be a strange Christian who did not feel injustice. And misery. And want. And that's why we look forward to the Kingdom. And that's why we long for the Lord to come. We want to see everything according to God. And we want to see justice, we want to see, we want to see peace, we want to see all of these things, but we

have to leave them into the hands of the Lord at the present time. And we cannot take, undertake to to legislate and put everything in order. And that's the thought I had in regard to the Wiles of Satan. In other words, in a very subtle way, we might be LED into these things rather than taking the place. That the very first parable, if you'll turn back to that 23rd chapter. The place that the very first parable brings before us. And I just want to touch on this because. The first parable brings before us the place that God has for his people. Now you remember in verse nine he says it's from the top of the rocks that I see him. And from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. That's the first thought is that here is a people that God has set apart for himself. He has set them apart for himself. A people for his possession, as we had this morning in that verse, that he's made us a Kingdom priests. He's made us a people for himself. He has set us apart. We're not a part of this world. We've been separated from it. We've been sanctified by the will of God. That's what we read in Hebrews 10. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. Once for all, we've been set apart. It's the will of God that we should be set apart, and it's the work of the Lord Jesus Christ that sets us apart. What sets us apart is not that spirit of stand thou by thyself. I'm holier. That's not the thought. It's the will of God, it's the work of Christ, and it's the work of the Spirit of God. Because we do read about sanctification of the Spirit. In first Peter chapter one we read about there being sanctified by the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. For sanctification of the Spirit is not some experience that we enter into as believers. It isn't some super spiritual state. It isn't some state of ecstasy into which we enter. It means that when we were. Born again of God's Spirit when life was imparted to us by the Spirit of God. We were set apart for God. What really sets us apart in this world is the will of God, the work of Christ, and the power of the Spirit of God. And I believe that separation should be viewed in that light. It should be viewed in that light. It's because God himself has set us apart. And that's the real meaning, to put it simply, of sanctification to set apart. And we're set apart to God. As I say again, by God's will, and through the work of Christ, and because the Spirit of God has has begotten life and us, so he says here, lo, the people shall dwell alone. And shall not be reckoned among the nations.

From God's side we can speak of it as sanctification. From our side, the response of it is separation. From our side, we speak of it as separation. We recognize what God has done himself and what he has made us to be a a peculiar people, a people for his possession. And so the result is that we are separate. Well, again, I want to go back to Abraham and Lot just for. While Lot was one who was down in the city of Sodom, Abraham dwells alone on that mountain, and it was really Abraham who delivered Lot. Through his intercession, I have no doubt that it was through the intercession of Abraham that Lot was delivered out of that city. And it was Abraham who was there in communion with God. He was, you might say, dwelling alone. He was not reckoned among the nations. He was in the place of separation, but he was in the place of communion. He was in the place of power. And he was able to deliver, whereas Lot on the other hand. Was in a position of weakness and out of communion and had to be literally plucked as a brand for the burning, saved as it were by the skin of his teeth as scripture would speak of so as by fire well this first parable while God comes in and frustrates the the effort of the enemy to destroy the people of God, he puts into balaam's mouth these. And this first parable that God put into his mouth would be that which we would lay hold on at the very outset. The youngest believer in the room, the child who has believed on the Lord Jesus, should from the very outset understand that God has set you apart for himself. He has set you apart. So that separation when it's brought up. Separation from the world is based on the fact that you have been sanctified, set apart for God. And if we look at it in that light, I believe that we will have more power and effectiveness in our separation, connecting it with the sanctification that has been wrought for us and the power of God. So God overcomes the power of the enemy and brings in a word of blessing in the mouth of this man, Balaam.

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