

Balak had a very high idea of Balaam's ability. He said he knew that whoever Balaam blessed would be blessed and whoever Balaam cursed would be cursed (6). It should be noted that the Bible does not say that Balaam had any magical power. It merely shows that Balak thought that Balaam had such a power. Balaam himself makes no such claim. He insists that he can bless only those whom the Lord blesses and can curse only those whom the Lord curses.

b. Balaam's first answer (xxii.8-14)

Balaam at this point appears wiser than Nathan in the incident mentioned above. Even though he saw the rewards that were brought by the elders of Midian, he told them that he would inquire of the Lord before giving them any answer.

What men are these? (9). This does not imply that God did not already know who they were. God wants us, in praying to Him, not only to have wonderful communion with Him, but also to clarify our own ideas and spiritual understanding. Sometimes a problem almost solves itself, in case it is expressed clearly.

c. The second embassy to Balaam (xxii.15-21)

When Balak heard that Balaam refused to come, he immediately concluded, as a worldly man would, that what was needed was a more tempting offer. When Balaam did come he naturally concluded that this inference had been correct. The situation, when the new messengers reached Balaam, was quite changed. The first ones had come to him with a new proposal, and he did right to seek the Lord's will before replying. Now the Lord's will was already known to him. He should have immediately repeated his previous refusal, since there was no new fact which could possibly warrant a reopening of the question. However, instead of following the known will of God, Balaam declared that he would again seek to learn God's will in the matter. This was in itself an act of disloyalty to God. Once God's will is clear, it is not honouring to Him to seek further light: what He now desires is immediate and unquestioning obedience.