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Professor. Steven Notely

BIB 201: New Testament Literature: OC

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Week 12 DQ1: The Teaching of Balaam

In Professor Notely's article "The Teaching of Balaam," he makes the case that knowledge of the first-century Jewish interpretation of the biblical account recorded in Numbers 21–24 is crucial to fully comprehending the allusions to this teaching that appear in the New Testament. In this narrative, the non-Israelite prophet Balaam, who was sent to curse the Israelites by King Balak of Moab, is the main character. Balaam, however, can only bestow blessings on the Israelites due to God's intervention. Balaam's story is frequently used to caution people against utilizing their spiritual abilities for their own benefit or in opposition to God's plan. The "teaching of Balaam" refers to the counsel Balaam subsequently delivered to Balak regarding how to mislead the Israelites by engaging in idolatry and immoral sexual behavior. The New Testament makes reference to this doctrine as a caution against false teachers who encourage immorality and idolatry for their personal benefit in 2 Peter 2:15–16 and Jude 1:11. In order to fully understand the relevance of Balaam's teaching in the New Testament, more study of first-century Jewish faith and philosophy is required.