

Oh, What God Has Done!

By Adam Blaney

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him” (Psalm 34:8). Numbers 22-24 records for us the story of the wicked prophet Balaam and his encounter with Balak, king of Moab. As the story goes, Balaam is called to come and “curse” Israel on behalf of Balak, so Moab would not be harmed by Israel’s conquest of the Promised Land. Balaam entreats the Lord, hoping for the message by which he could curse Israel. Instead, he ends up bringing a blessing from God. In chapter 23, there is a shocking statement that Balaam makes about Israel. In verses 13-24, he praises God for all He has done for Israel and concludes by this bold proclamation: “...It now must be said of Jacob and of Israel, ‘Oh, what God has done’” (Numbers 23:23).

The statement itself is not a shocking one, as it is clear from Scripture that God deserved the praise for all of His work. However, it is shocking because of the mouth from which it came. It didn’t come from the mouths of Israel who should have known best what God had done. Yet, it was wicked Balaam, who as an outsider, could not deny God’s presence with His people. It happened often in the nation’s history. Balak called for Balaam because he was “...sick with dread because of the children of Israel” (Numbers 22:3). He knew what their God could do. Before Israel conquered Jericho, Rahab the harlot spoke of all God had done (dried up the Red Sea, etc.), and said that when they heard of those things, “...our hearts melted” with fear. All people around knew and were fearful of God’s power, everyone except Israel. They should have known best, yet from the time they left Egypt until they were destroyed about 1000 years later, rarely did they do anything but complain and rebel against God. What a sad story, but what a powerful lesson that should be learned!

We often sing in the beloved old hymn, “Count your many blessings, name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.” The Scriptures are filled with such encouragements also. “Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God,” was the message for Job (Job 37:14). From God Himself we have recorded, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). In the context of that psalm, the writer is recording the many things God had done for Israel. Sometimes, as we live in such a blessed nation and society, it is easy for us to fall into the same trap as did Israel. We become so conceited and self-involved that we forget to recognize what God does for us each day. It would do us well to heed the words of the song, and count our blessings. It may very well surprise us what God has done. The more time we take to “be still” and “consider the wondrous works of God,” the more help we would have in appreciating and understanding Him. What a shame it is for others to

have to remind us how blessed we are! “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him” (Psalm 34:8).



Things I Want to Give Myself for Christmas

Mark N. Posey

It was priceless! I was in Wal-Mart last week, and I saw a little boy secretly lifting a toy over into the shopping cart as his mother was looking the other way. She turned just in time to see it fall in and said, “Derek, what are you doing? You know Christmas is almost here. We can’t buy that today.” To which he replied, “But mom, I want to get **me** this for Christmas.” I had to laugh and say under my breath, “At-a-boy!” Since then, I’ve thought long about that scene and decided that there are some things I want to give **myself** for Christmas – not physical things, but spiritual things. Consider the following.

I want to give myself a greater faith in the provisions of God.

God provides all of our needs (Philippians 4:19). We shouldn’t think that the Philippians were wealthy benefactors of Paul who could easily spare the money. As Paul described them in 2 Corinthians 8, it is plain that their giving was sacrificial. This promise meant something to them! The promise is to supply **all** your needs, but it is all your **needs** (not a promise to go beyond needs). In this, the promise is both broad, and yet, it is restricted.

I want to give myself a greater hope in the promises of God.

God is faithful and true in everything that He says and does. So, you can count on the promises of God in the Bible to be absolutely trustworthy. Christians draw great hope from the words of the well-known song, “Standing on the Promises of God” (cf., 2 Peter 1:4; Hebrews 6:12; 10:23). Read Romans 4:19-21. The promises of God don’t depend on our abilities, but instead they depend on God’s ability. Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 when Isaac was born. They themselves had **zero** ability to bear children. The key was Abraham’s confidence that **God** had power to **do** what He had **promised**.

I want to give myself a greater love for the person of God.

The strongest thematic message in the Bible is God’s love in redeeming man through Jesus Christ. Everything revolves around God’s love. God, Who created the universe by His Word, is the source of love, which is love in its truest, purest and perfect form. Therefore, we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Let us grasp how wide, long, high and deep the love of God is. God’s love endures forever (Psalm 118:1). The earth is filled with God’s love (Psalm 119:64). His love is even better than life (Psalm 63:3), and it surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:18; cf., Romans 8:38-39).

