

is a tremendous amount in Balaam that deserves our respect and deserves our admiration.

The question is sometimes asked: Was Balaam a true prophet? Of course it is important we think ~~that~~, what do we mean by prophet? What do we mean by true? If by prophet we mean what the Scripture means, we mean one whom God uses as His mouthpiece. And we have almost 3 full chapters of the OT given over to words that Balaam spoke because God gave them to him. So Balaam was a true prophet in the true sense of the word. He was one who was God's instrument, one who was God's spokesman. He was certainly not a perfect man. He was a great deal better than a great many people today who are greatly used of the Lord. At least a great deal better during the greater part of his life than a great many are. But the question whether one is a prophet is not refer to whether he is a good man specifically; it refers to whether he presents God's message, and Balaam definitely presented God's message. So he was really a prophet. There is no question about that. Some have tried to make it out that Balaam was some kind of a necromancer, some kind of a representative of heathen deity. Such an idea is absolutely contrary to what is presented in the Scripture. We are not told a great deal about Balaam, but we are told that he spoke for Jehovah, that he called on Jehovah, and received an answer from him, that he gave the message of Jehovah, that he was a true prophet. And yet in the end we find him condemned. We find words of terrible condemnation in the NT. We find him today generally considered as an example of a very bad person, and I think it is a terrible example of what can happen. As Paul said, I keep my body under lest I become a castaway. Now keeping the body under is only one, but a very important one, of the various ways in which the Christian worker can utterly ~~fail~~ fail. Now I don't mean he loses his salvation. But the thing is it is hard to tell who is saved. God knows, but you don't know whether someone else is saved. If they truly have believed in Christ they are saved, but you can't see their heart. But when you look at the men who have done a great work for God and then have been castaways, it is pretty hard in many cases for us to know whether the person was truly saved, and then fell into sin and he is saved as by fire and will rejoice in heaven thro eternity in what Christ has done for him, but will sorrow through eternity in how he wasted so much