

Parashah Balak

פרשה בלק

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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Honoring G-d or Men?

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 22:2-25:9

הפטרה: Micah 5:6-6:8

הברית: Romans 11:25-32

החדשה

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In this week's reading (*Bamidbar / Numbers 22:39-25:9*) Bilam (Balaam) is a professional diviner whom Balak hired to curse Yisrael. It is interesting that though Bilam struggles with whether to honor G-d or man (Balak) He is constrained to say only what G-d puts in his mouth to say. What G-d puts in his mouth are prophetic utterances that are full of blessings for Yisrael and not a curse. This frustrates Balak as he tries to have Bilam curse Yisrael three times. Three times and in three locations Bilam went with Balak to curse the Children of Yisrael, (i) in *Bamidbar / Numbers 22:39-23:3*, (ii) in *Bamidbar / Numbers 23:13-14*, and (iii) in *Bamidbar / Numbers 23:27-30*. In the recorded account of Bilam and his dealing with King Balak and with G-d we find lessons that pertain to our relationship with both G-d and man.

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במדבר 23:25-24:2

25 יִשָּׁבֵב עַד-יֵאכֹל מִרְקָה וְדַם-חֲלָלִים יִשְׁתָּהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק
26 אֶל-בִּלְעָם גַּם-קֹב לֹא תִקְבְּנוּ גַם-בִּרְדָּךְ לֹא תִבְרַכְנוּ: וַיַּעַן
בִּלְעָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-בָּלָק הֲלֹא דִבַּרְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר כָּל
27 אֲשֶׁר-יִדְבֵר יְהוָה אֵתוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה: וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל-בִּלְעָם
לְכֵה-נָא אֶקְחֶךָ אֶל-מְקוֹם אַחֵר אוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵינַי
28 הָאֱלֹהִים וְקִבַּלְתוּ לִי מִשָּׁם: וַיִּקַּח בָּלָק אֶת-בִּלְעָם רֹאשׁ
29 הַפְּעוֹר הַנִּשְׁקָף עַל-פְּנֵי הַיְשִׁימֹן: וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל-בָּלָק
בְּנֵה-לִי כֹזֵה שִׁבְעָה מִזְבְּחֹת וְהִגֵּן לִי כֹזֵה שִׁבְעָה פָּרִים
30 וְשִׁבְעָה אֵילִם: וַיַּעַשׂ בָּלָק כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר בִּלְעָם וַיַּעַל פָּר
כֹּד וְאֵיל בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ: וַיִּרְא בִלְעָם כִּי טוֹב בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה לְבָרַךְ
אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא-הִלֵּךְ בְּפִעַם-בְּפִעַם לְקַרְאֵת נַחְשִׁים
2 וַיִּשֶׁת אֶל-הַמַּדְבָּר פָּנָיו: וַיִּשָּׂא בִלְעָם אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא
אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל שֹׁכֵן לְשִׁבְטָיו וְהָדָו עָלָיו רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים:

Bamidbar / Numbers 23:25-24:2

23:25 Then Balak said to Balaam, 'Do not curse them at all nor bless them at all!' 23:26 But Balaam replied to Balak, 'Did I not tell you, 'Whatever the Lord speaks, that I must do?'' 23:27 Then Balak said to Balaam, 'Please come, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will be agreeable with God that you curse them for me from there.' 23:28 So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor which overlooks the wasteland. 23:29 Balaam said to Balak, 'Build seven altars for me here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me here.' 23:30 Balak did just as Balaam had said, and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar. 24:1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness. 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. (NASB)

25 HaShem was merciful on Bilam even after He told him directly in
Bamidbar / Numbers 22:12 that *“You shall not go with them; you shall not curse
the people; for they are blessed.”* G-d spoke to Bilam directly and in plain
language and yet he went with Balak. Do you think Bilam was so focused on
gaining riches and honor from Balak that he went back again and again with him?
30 When Bilam went with Balak to curse Yisrael He prayed for something that he
knew was wrong especially since G-d had warned him and that he had almost
died (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 22:22-35*). Have you ever prayed for things you
know are wrong? What about praying for things that you know are not in G-d’s
will? Is it possible to pray for things that are outside of G-d’s will and not realize
35 it? We need to be very careful how we pray and what we are praying for, or we
may fall into the same path as Bilam did going against G-d’s will and attempting
to curse Yisrael even when told not to.

Bilam went with Balak to curse Yisrael but G-d constrained him to bless
Yisrael instead. Another interesting observation of the Hebrew text is found in
40 Bilam’s blessing of Yisrael. The words given to Bilam emphasize the covenant
blessings; specifically here (*24:3-9*) Bilam refers directly to the blessings of
Avraham from Parashat Lekh Lekha (*Bereshit / Genesis 12*) *“I will bless those
who bless you, and the one cursing you I will curse.”* The promise of protection
to Avraham in this context suggests that the promise of blessing and cursing
45 extends to the nations in regards to how they relate to Yisrael.

Bamidbar / Numbers 24:3-9

*24:3 He took up his discourse and said, ‘The oracle of Balaam the son of
Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened; 24:4 The oracle of
50 him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered, 24:5 How fair are your
tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel! 24:6 ‘Like valleys that stretch
out, Like gardens beside the river, Like aloes planted by the Lord, Like
cedars beside the waters. 24:7 ‘Water will flow from his buckets, And his
seed will be by many waters, And his king shall be higher than Agag, And
his kingdom shall be exalted. 24:8 ‘God brings him out of Egypt, He is for
him like the horns of the wild ox. He will devour the nations who are his
adversaries, And will crush their bones in pieces, And shatter them with
his arrows. 24:9 ‘He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who
dares rouse him? Blessed is everyone who blesses you, And cursed is
60 everyone who curses you.’ (NASB)*

In the blessing to Avraham (shown below) have you ever noticed particularly how
the promise on blessing and cursing is written in Hebrew? The text is written in
65 such a way to suggest that those who bless are many (written in the plural form)
while those who curse is few (written in the singular form).

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ יֵב
 2 וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֵרָאָה; וְאַטְשֶׁה לְנֹפֵי נְדָוָל
 3 וְאַבְרָכְךָ וְאַגְדִּלְךָ שְׁמֹךְ יְהוָה בְּרַכָּה; וְאַבְרָכָה מִבְּרַכְיֶיךָ
 4 וּמִקְלָלֶיךָ אֲאִר וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְּךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחֵת הָאָדָמָה; וַיֵּלֶךְ

70 The form of the words (grammar, plural and singular) suggests that there are few that will curse and many who will bless, however, according to history and in our own life experience it seems that this is actually reversed since many have cursed Yisrael and it seems as if many more are against us as believers than those who are for us. I believe there is a spiritual truth underlying the Hebrew text in the blessing Bilam spoke with regard to the covenant of Avraham from *Bereshit / Genesis 12 1-3*. The truth is that in the end, we see that Yisrael is blessed above all nations, not because of anything she has accomplished by her own strength but because G-d has maintained His faithfulness to her. In this week's parsha, we see G-d's continued faithfulness to Yisrael. Similarly, in our circumstances, G-d has also maintained His faithfulness to us as well, even though it feels as if more are against us than who are for us the Lord is keeping and protecting you and me just as he protected Yisrael. I believe there is more going on in the background, in the spiritual realm, than we might realize. The story of Bilam, Balak, and Yisrael is a testimony to that.

85 In Bilam's fourth discourse, he reveals the role of the promised Messiah. The Messiah is the precipice (the highest point, the culmination) of Yisrael's and the world's (nations) blessing found in *Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-5*. Bilam reveals the role of the messiah by the use of the Hebrew word "shevet" (scepter). The "scepter" language from *Bereshit / Genesis 49:10* is incorporated here in *Bamidbar / Numbers 24:17*.

Bamidbar / Numbers 24:15-19

24:15 He took up his discourse and said, 'The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, 24:16 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, And knows the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered. 24:17 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth. 24:18 'Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, While Israel performs valiantly. 24:19 'One from Jacob shall have dominion, And will destroy the remnant from the city.' (NASB)

105 Bilam speaks of the coming messiah, the scepter of Yaakov. The message that "He is not near" means that His appearance is in the distant future (with respect to Bilam's time). A scepter is a reference to the Messiah coming as a king and that no one would be able to stand against. *Bamidbar / Numbers 24:17* states that this scepter will "tear down all the sons of Sheth;" it is through this blessing,

are more than I can list or even remember. Please forgive me and have mercy on my soul. Today I turn away from my sins and each day I will continue to turn from those things which cause me to sin, especially the sin that is in my heart. I yield my heart and my life to Yeshua and accept Him as Lord. I accept and receive Your love Lord, I desire for you to direct my life in all that I do. Glory and honor be to Your name.

In Yeshua's name I pray. Amen.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever