Parashah Balak פרשה בלק

Shabbat Tammuz 14, 5770, June 26, 2010
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d http://www.matsati.com | matsati@matsati.com

Honoring G-d or Men?

דוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 22:2-25:9 הפטרה: Micah 5:6-6:8 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.

במדבר 23:25-24:2

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 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)

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25 HaShem was merciful on Bilam even after He told him directly in 30

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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? 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 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 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 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 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 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 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).

וִּמִלֵּלֶלְךֵּ אָאָר וִיבִּרְכַּוּ בָּךְּ כִּל מִשְׁפְּחָת הָאַבְּמָרִּ נְּנִיּי נְּדִּוֹלְ וֹאֵבֵּרֶלְךָּ וִאָּנַדְּלָהְ שְׁמֵלֵּ וֶדְוֹיִה בְּרָכָּה: וַאֲבֶּרֶלְהַ מְעַּיִּלְּ וֹאַבִּרֶלְךָּ אָאָר וִיבִּרְלָּוּ שְׁמֵלֵּ וְדְוֹיִה בְּרָכָּה: וַאֲבֶרֶלְהַ מְעַיְּלְּדְּ וְמִאְרְלְּדְּ וֹיָאַכֶּר וְדִּוָּה אָלִר שְׁמֶלְ אֲשֶׁר אַרְאָרָ מִשְׁפְּחָת הָאָבְּלְהּ נְּדְּוֹלְ

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 75 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 80 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.

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

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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)

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,

Yisrael is promised victory over Balak, not by her own power, but by the hand of the Messiah. The "star that shall come forth (rise) from Yaakov (Jacob)," in Hebrew, the word "kam" (rise) suggests that this is no mere man but the divine Messiah who along is able to bring the covenant of Avraham to its final and glorious fulfillment.

In the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) Yeshua understood His role as Messiah and in *John 10:27-33* Yeshua is reiterating the same eternal promise of G-d's unfailing love towards His people. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Yisrael, she is protected and ultimately saved, no man is able to "pluck them out of My hand," for the Messiah of Yisrael is in fact the eternal Almighty One, "I and the Father are one." (10:30)

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27 τῶν ἐμῶν καθὼς εἶπον ὑμῖν. τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἐμὰ τῆς φωνῆς μου
28 ἀκούει, κὰγὼ γινώσκω αὐτά καὶ ἀκολουθοῦσίν μοι. κὰγὼ ζωὴν αἰώνιον δίδωμι αὐτοῖς καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀπόλωνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ οὐχ
29 ἀρπάσει τις αὐτὰ ἐκ τῆς χειρός μου. ὁ πατήρ μου öς δέδωκέν μοι μεῖζών πάντων ἐστιν καὶ οὐδεἰς δύναται ἀρπάζειν ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ
30, 31 πατρός μου. ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἔν ἐσμεν. Ἐβάστασαν οὖν πάλιν
32 λίθους οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα λιθάσωσιν αὐτόν. ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς Πολλὰ καλὰ ἔργα ἔδειξα ὑμῖν ἐκ τοῦ πατρός, μου, διὰ ποῖον
33 αὐτῶν ἔργον λιθάζετε μὲ ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι λέγοντες, Περὶ καλοῦ ἔργου οὺ λιθάζομέν σε ἀλλὰ περὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ὅτι σὺ ἄνθρωπος ὢν ποιεῖς σεαυτὸν θεόν. ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς

The foretelling of the Messiah in the blessing from Bilam, the reiteration of the covenant promise, and G-d's unfailing faithfulness to Yisrael and to us, illustrate that G-d's message to us on "eternal salvation" for those who are in Yeshua and for whom Yeshua intercedes is just as secure as the very nature of G-d Himself. Do you see the spiritual implications here? Our salvation is as sure as the very existence of G-d himself, there are no doubts. According to the Ketuvei Shelachim, no one can seize us by force from Yeshua's hands. This assurance is demonstrated in the salvation purchased for the elect by His (G-d's) Son, our Messiah Yeshua. Nothing in this world or in this universe could ever separate us from His love. Would you like to be a part of the family of G-d today? You can have the assurance that is described in the Scriptures on salvation that we have studied today. You can also know that you are forgiven of your sins and know that without a doubt! If you would like this, the first step is to ask Yeshua to come into your heart, be Lord of your life, and forgive you of your sins. Come say the following prayer with me.

Heavenly Father,

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I come humbly before you in prayer. I admit and confess that I have sinned against you. I believe that you sent Yeshua the Messiah to die for me. I believe that throughout all of Scripture you have made this it clear that Yeshua's blood was poured out for me to make atonement for my sins. I repent of my sins, they

John 10:27-33

Sheep My, my voice hear, and I know them, and they And I life follow me. eternal give to them, and in no way shall they perish into the eon: and not shall any seize them by force from out of my hand. My father who has given to me, greater than all is; and no one is able to seize them by force from out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father we are one. Bore then again stones the Jews that they should stone him. Responded to them Jesus, mang good works I showed to you from my Father; for what work of them do you stone me? Answered to him the Jews, saying, concerning a good work we do not stone you; but concerning blasphemy, that and that you, being a man, make yourself God. (Literal Translation)

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 150 and honor be to Your name. In Yeshua's name I pray. Amen. 155 160 165 170 175 180 Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah! 185 :דנו מורנו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד: Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi, "Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever