

Numbers 23 Bible Study Notes

1 And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams. 2 And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. 3 And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place. 4 And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. 5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Notice that God put his word in Balaam's mouth. God will have his way as He is creator and ruler over all created things.

We should always remember, God will sometimes use sinful ways and circumstances to accomplish His own will and purpose. We see many times in scripture; that God will use sinful nations to invade, capture, and destroy, Israel because of their disobedience to God.

6 And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab. 7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. 8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? 9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Clarke Lee's Commentary: "*lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*" This is a prophetic picture of the Church of Grace today, which is the Kingdom of God on earth and it is not reckoned by men as a nation.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

Clarke Lee's Commentary: In effect, God is saying to Balak; I have a covenant promise with Jacob and I will not break that promise. God is saying; I made a promise to Jacob that his seed would inherit the Land of Canaan and it is going to come to fruition.

11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether. 12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Notice, Balak is not hearing what God is saying. Israel cannot be cursed for I have blessed. Balak has not been riding an ass and meeting an angel of the Lord with a drawn sword. Balak has not looked death in the face nor heard, with understanding, the voice of God. Even with Balaam telling him; I can only speak the words that God gives me; God has tied my hands and I am powerless to do anything but his bidding right now.

13 And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence. 14 And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. 15 And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet the LORD yonder. 16 And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus. 17 And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken?

Clarke Lee's Commentary: We notice that Balak now ask; What hath the Lord spoken?

18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: 19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Clarke Lee's Commentary: God, through Balaam, speaks to Balak and says to him: I made my covenant with Jacob and his seed and I cannot lie. Therefore, I will keep my word which I have spoken and will do what I have said I would do. Nothing you can do will change that.

20 Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Balaam says to Balak: I have received commandment to bless Israel. God has blessed Israel; God will not change, and I can't do anything about it. Notice, Balaam now states that he recognizes that he cannot do anything except God grant him the power.

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Don't you see the pronouncement of the age of salvation by grace in this speech? Balaam says to Balak, God did not see iniquity in Jacob and made his covenant with him. Neither does God see the iniquities of Israel, the seed of Jacob, because of the covenant that God made to Jacob. God made promise that there would come of Jacob's seed a king and that is the prophesy of the coming of the Messiah.

Surely, in this we see that because God does not lie and keeps his promises, Christ the King did come, and because of his birth, life, suffering, death on the cross, burial and resurrection, God does not see our sins in the eternal perspective. We, like Israel, must answer to the consequence for our sins in life, but in the eternal perspective they are removed forever by the finished work of Jesus Christ, who will return as King of kings and Lord of lords.

This was prophesied further in: ***Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.***

22 God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

Clarke Lee's Commentary: The world today will tell you that the unicorn is a mythical creature. It may be true that there is no such creature as depicted by films and books of men. However, scripture says the unicorn is real. It is a God formed creature and apparently it was of great strength. We can't draw a definite conclusion from scripture as to what exactly it looked like but the fact remains: God said the unicorn exists and thus it is real.

23 Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Balaam tells Balak; God is their defense and He will not fail to deliver them. All the world shall say of them: look what God has done for his people. We look back upon their deliverance from Egypt and the miracles of the wilderness journey and say "***What hath God wrought!***"

24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. 25 And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. 26 But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do?

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Balak tells Balaam; If you can't curse them, then please don't bless them. Balaam answers that I can only do as God commands at this time. Notice that Balaam has really got the picture now and tells Balak; "**All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do**". Balaam is now will to tell all.

27 And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence. 28 And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon. 29 And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. 30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.

Clarke Lee's Commentary: This is continued in the next chapter.