

## Numbers 24 Bible Study Notes Part 1 of 2

**1 And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.**

Clarke Lee's Commentary: "*and the spirit of God came upon him.*" Here we see that God is indeed able to move upon the unregenerate and cause them to do his will.

**3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: 4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! 6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. 7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.**

Clarke Lee's Commentary: "*He shall pour the water out of his buckets,*" A prophesy of the church of grace, in the age of salvation by grace, which Christ will usher into being on earth. The water pouring out of his buckets is a prophetic picture of the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout all the world as seen in scripture in: ***Re 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,***

***and his seed shall be in many waters,*** His seed shall be in many waters is a prophetic picture of how through Jesus Christ scripture shall be fulfilled and the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, shall cause salvation to be to all people; fulfilling the scripture in: ***Re 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;***

***and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.***

This was literally fulfilled in King David's time. Saul, the 1<sup>st</sup> anointed king over Israel, was sent by Samuel to destroy the Amalekites which he did, though not as instructed and was rejected by God from being king. We see in 1Samuel chapter 15 this truth, and there Samuel slew King Agag. We find further in **2Sam 5:12** and in: ***1Ch 14:2 And David perceived that the LORD had confirmed him king over Israel, for his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel.***

This is also a prophetic picture Church of Grace, in the age of Grace in which we are living, being established by Christ and she, the church, is exalted upon the earth; as God exalted his people Israel in the Old Testament. The church of Jesus Christ in time is exalted above earthly things for its focus is on heavenly things.

It is further a prophetic picture of the end of time, the resurrection of all the dead, and the final revelation of Jesus Christ, King forever. Finally, when this heaven and earth are destroyed and the church is carried away to the new dwelling place this exaltation will be manifested in the utmost degree.

**8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. 9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.**

**"God brought him forth out of Egypt;"** The "him" here spoken of is Israel. This declaration is; Israel shall enter the land of Canaan and be conquerors therein. God is again verifying that He is intent in fulfilling the promise of his word of truth.

**"Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."** God is here giving Balak and Moab a choice, to bless or curse Israel, and therein find a blessing or curse for themselves. What do you mean?

- First: If Moab will hear the Lord, bless Israel, and not be there enemy; they themselves will find a blessing. Howbeit, that blessing may only be that they are not destroyed by Israel, but nonetheless, a blessing.
  - Secondly: God says to Moab; if you curse my people Israel; you will be cursing your own selves; because I will turn it against you and you will not be blessed by me.
  - Thirdly: We see in this phrase that God is still remembering the promise he made to Abram in: ***Ge 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.***

**10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. 11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.**

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Balak finally understands; Balaam is not going to curse Israel in any way. Now he is angry that Balaam has not done as he wished and cursed Israel, and that his own device and hope of defeating Israel is foiled.

**"Therefore now flee thou to thy place:"** He sends Balaam away, in a manner that suggests that if I see you again I will kill you. Herein we see; Balaam's deceptive devices to get the riches and honor of the King of Moab is brought to fruitlessness. Balaam would have fared much better to have totally refused to come to Balak as God told him to do at the start.

It seems that the Lord's word is finally getting through to Balak. Balak recognizes that the Lord hath kept Balaam from doing what he wanted and to get out of his promise of honor and riches to be bestowed upon Balaam, he declares that God denied you the reward I promised you. **"I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour."**

**12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, 13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak? 14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.**

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Many commentators believe, as I do, and it is obvious (by looking at several other scriptures) that Balaam gave private council to Balak. Thus, we see here; **"and I will advertise thee"** and my study bible gives a reference here to ***Re 2:14*** which makes this as good a place as any to give these details.

Balaam, in his covetous spirit, is still not giving up the hope of some monetary gifts, even if he has to do it by private consults. We have scripture to support that Balaam indeed gave council to Balak as seen in: ***Nu 25:1-3 1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people***

**did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.**

**Nu 31:16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.** Here is definite proof that Balaam had a private consultation with Balak, because here in this verse God tells us that this is what happened. Remember the word of God in: **Lu 12:1 In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he (Jesus) began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. 3 Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.** And in: **Lu 8:17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.**

We find further evidence in: **Re 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**

From these scriptures, we can draw a certain conclusion; Balaam did indeed privately advise Balak of how they could trip up God's people and bring them into disfavor with God. It is the same satanic tactic used from the very beginning of time to entice men to give in to their own lust for power and ungodliness, disobedience to God.

Now, that thought aside, we see that it is apparent that God moved Balaam to prophesy of what would be in the future. We shall elaborate on these prophesies as we move forward in the texts.

**15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: 16 He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:**

Clarke Lee's Commentary: Balaam here admits; God has opened his eyes and caused him to see visions of what will be in the future. We know that God caused him to see by this phrase "**and knew the knowledge of the most High**".

Some will say if Balaam "**knew the knowledge of the most High**" he must have been a true prophet of God. I remind you that there are many who know the commandments of God but refuse to do them. These are testified against, signifying that they are not God's people, with the interpretation given by Jesus in: **Mr 4:14-20 14 The sower soweth the word. 15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.** I believe we can plainly see; Balaam had head knowledge of God, but no knowledge of God in his heart.

As demonstrated earlier in our commentary, we have scriptural testimony that Balaam was not the good seed described in **Mark 4:20**. This is a reminder to us that God is able, and does, use the ungodly to fulfill his manifest purposes in life. In other words; Balaam had knowledge, but he did not have God's grace as scripture testifies against him.

**17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.**

Clarke Lee's Commentary: In this verse and following we see prophetic pictures of future kings and happenings that shall be in the life of Israel.

**"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh"** Balaam shall see Christ, just as all people that have ever been shall see Christ, in the end of time at the final resurrection. **Re 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.**

Sadly, some will see him (**but not nigh**) as the Judge who will pronounce the doom of eternal damnation, while others will see him as Saviour and Lord forever.

**"there shall come a Star out of Jacob"** Certainly, this is a prophetic picture of Christ incarnate, but it also may be of King David as it concerns Israel. Read **2Samuel, chapter 8**, and see how King David fulfills this prophesy. We shall also see some of this in the next verses and their commentary.

**"and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel"** Another prophetic picture, like is seen in **Ge 49:10**, of the coming of Christ. Notice here that Sceptre is capitalized signifying that it is representative of a name. We know from scripture; kings of the earth held sceptres, and if you came into the presence of the king, if he held out the sceptre to you, you were allowed to approach the king. If he did not hold out the sceptre to you, you were taken out and killed. Thus, we see the picture of God the Father sending to earth God the Son (the Sceptre) and God the Son delivering all those the Father gave unto him by holding out to them his own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Christ has now risen from the dead and ascended back to the eternal heaven from whence he came. God the Father sitting on the throne with God the Son and salvation by grace being extended to God's people by the Sceptre being extended to them. This name, Christ Jesus, is the only name whereby men may have eternal life, in the eternal heaven. The extension of the Sceptre being withheld, drives the unforgiven ones from the face of God and lands them in eternal death and an eternity in the lake of fire.

**"and shall smite the corners of Moab"** This was brought to fruition through King David as seen in: **2Sa 8:2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.**

**"and destroy all the children of Sheth"** What is intimated here? Sheth is a different spelling of Seth, who is the son of Adam, whose lineage leads us to Noah. See **Genesis chapter 5 and Luke chapter 3**. Noah and his descendants are the ones who populated the earth after the flood, all the other blood lines being destroyed by the flood. Therefore, Sheth is indicative of the population of all the earth or all people in time from the flood to the end of time.

Notice that a Star and a Sceptre (both in singular form) shall rise out of Israel. Christ is the guiding light in our lives in this world of darkness. Christ is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and shall be the King that shall rise up and set all things in order in the eternal day.

Remember, God is prophesying of Israel, his own chosen people. Israel is representative of God's chosen and called people throughout all time. Sheth is representative of those who have rejected Christ and salvation. The destruction of "**all the children of Sheth**" is the picture of the final judgment when all whose names are not recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life will be eternally condemned and cast into the eternal lake of fire.

**18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.**

Clarke Lee's Commentary: "***And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies***" This was brought to pass through King David as seen in: ***2Sa 8:14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.*** This also fulfilled another prophesy, concerning Jacob and Esau, made in: ***Ge 25:23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*** Isn't it amazing? How God continues to establish and fulfill his promises, and demonstrates that He doesn't forget what he has promised.

Seir was a portion of the land of Edom as described in: ***Ge 32:3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.***

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