



Parsha Balaq

Bemidbar 22:1-25:9

Beit Emet Congregation ~ Jerusalem, Israel & Vancouver, WA

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This week's *parsha*, "**Balaq**", which features the story of Bil'am and his talking donkey, according to Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum, is one of the most strangely picturesque in all of Torah. He goes on to point out that, "*Since the Torah states that 'there did not arise another prophet in Israel like Moshe' (Debarim / Deut. 34:10), the rabbis inferred that while there never arose another prophet in Israel of the stature of Moshe, there did arise a prophet of comparable stature among the other nations. This was Bil'am, who was sent to the nations so that they could not argue that if they had had a prophet like Moshe, they would not have rebelled against the Torah. The Torah describes Bil'am as 'knowing the knowledge of the Supreme (as we'll read in B'midbar / Numbers 24:16). Yet instead of reproving the nations and bringing them to the service of G-d, Bil'am's advice to them was to untie the reins of chastity that had hitherto bound the Children of Noah and to let wild immorality loose on the world.'*"

Rabbi Greenbaum goes on to note that, "*As the adversary of Moshe, who brought the Torah to Israel, Bil'am is the chief adversary of Israel. To look at him from the outside, one might easily have been deceived, for this arch prophet of the Seventy Nations may well have appeared on the surface as a supremely pious and spiritual individual. The Torah itself testifies that he received prophecy from HaShem. Presumably Bil'am was constantly engaged in meditations and rituals, and surrounded by priests, monks and other acolytes.*" And, "*Bil'am is the very epitome of those who choose This World, the world of extraneous splendor, glory, wealth and appetite, over the World chosen by Avraham, Ya'aqob, Moshe and the Children of Israel: the World of Truth. Having chosen This World, Bil'am cannot but look askance at the Children of Israel, whose eccentric religion appears to make no sense in terms of the visible logic of the material world. Israel's existence is such an affront to the world chosen by Bil'am that he feels compelled to 'cast the evil eye on them' -- to demonize and curse them. His haughty spirit is offended that this nation of escaped slaves seeks to reign in man's material appetites and desires and elevate them in the service of G-d.*"

The rabbis teach that, as a prophet, Moshe taught the knowledge of Elohim (**the Tree of Life**) to B'nei Yisra'el, who were supposed to teach that knowledge to the world. Bil'am, on the other hand, taught the other side of knowledge (**the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**). This *parsha* and next week's, **Parsha Pinchas**, teach us much about false worship and its results. I encourage everyone to read the teaching we presented a couple of years ago titled, "**The Teaching of Bil'am**".

It is on the website and it is included with this week's e-mail. It addresses this issue in depth and brings it into the history of B'nei Ephraim (*the Northern Kingdom*).

Now, our text this week for **Parsha Balaq** begins in **B'midbar / Numbers 22:1-4**; *And the children of Yisra'el set out and camped in the desert plains of Mo'ab beyond the Yarden of Yeriho. And Balaq son of Tsippor saw all that Yisra'el had done to the Amorites. And Mo'ab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Mo'ab was in dread because of the children of Yisra'el. And Mo'ab said to the elders of Midyan, "Now this company is licking up all that is around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." Now Balaq son of Tsippor was sovereign of the Mo'abites at that time, and he sent messengers to Bil'am son of Be'or at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, "See, a people has come from Mitsrayim. See, they have covered the surface of the land, and are settling next to me!*

Let's begin our look at this week's *parsha* by understanding who Moshe and B'nei Yisra'el were dealing with. First, **Mo'ab** gets its name, which literally means "**seed of the father**", because the first-born daughter of Lot named the son her father sired with her, **Mo'ab**. Now, **Mo'ab** is spelled "*Mem-vav-aleph-be'*" and has a numeric value of 49. Forty is the number of testing and nine (*which is the letter "tet"*) is the serpent. **Balaq** (*bet-lamed-kuf*), which means "**destroyer**", was a Midyanite and, at that time, king of the Mo'abites. He was the son of **Tsippor** (*tzadee-pey-vav-reish*) which is translated as "**small bird**"; but has the connotation of "**twittering**" or "**making noise**" like a bird.

Torah uses **Mo'ab** here instead of **Balaq**, when we're told that "**Mo'ab was in dread**". This is a common practice in Scripture, since Balaq, as king, represented the whole of the Mo'abites. But, what I found interesting was what the meaning of the name can do to our reading. For example, we can read it as "*the seed of the father (Lot) was in fear of Yisra'el*"; or using the gematria of 49 (40 being testing and 9 being the serpent), the "*testing serpent was in fear of the Children of Yisra'el*".

So in fear, Balaq speaks to the elders of Midyan to enlist their support. Now, **Midyan** (*Mem-dalet-yud-nun*) means "**strife**". **Midyan** was one of the sons of Avraham by his second wife Keturah, according to **B'reshith / Genesis 25:1-2**. So, like the Yishma'elites (*Arabs*), the Midyanites are also children of Avraham. Today, the Midyanites are still around, and refer to themselves as Druze, or the Druz'im, and consider themselves Arab, due to past intermarrying with Yishma'elites.

Now, Balaq sends messengers to **Bil'am**, the prophet. **Bil'am** (*Bet-lamed-ayin-mem*) literally means "**not of the people**" and hence "**foreigner**". OK, the name of Bil'am's daddy was **Be'or** (*Bet-ayin-vav-reish*) meaning "**torch**" or "**lamp**". It sounds as if he too may have been a "*prophet*". So, Bil'am lives in **Pethor** (*Pey-tav-vav-reish*) meaning "**soothsayer**" or "**interpreter of dreams**". It literally translates, "**to say or speak light**". This is indeed a fitting name for your home, if you're an aspiring prophet. It pays to advertise. We're also told in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 23:4** that this was in **Aram Naharayim**, meaning that he was an Aramean from near the Euphrates River in the area of Babylon.

Let's move on with **B'midbar / Numbers 22:6-14**; *"And now, please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too strong for me. It might be that I smite them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." And the elders of Mo'ab and the elders of Midyan left with the fees for divination in their hand, and they came to Bil'am and spoke the words of Balaq to him. And he said to them, "Spend the night here, and I shall bring back word to you, as YHVH speaks to me." So the heads of*

Mo'ab stayed with Bil'am. And Elohim came to Bil'am and said, "Who are these men with you?" And Bil'am said to Elohim, "Balaq, son of Tsippor, sovereign of Mo'ab, has sent to me, saying, 'See, a people has come out of Mitsrayim and cover the surface of the land. Come now, curse them for me. It might be that I am able to fight against them and drive them out.' " And Elohim said to Bil'am, "Do not go with them. You do not curse the people, for they are blessed." And Bil'am rose in the morning and said to the heads of Balaq, "Go back to your land, for YHVH has refused to allow me to go with you." And the heads of Mo'ab arose and went to Balaq, and said, "Bil'am refuses to come with us."

Notice, it says above, in the ISR Scriptures translation, that these men came with money, or fees for divination. Actually, in the Hebrew, it says that they came with charms; meaning that they brought the tools for witchcraft with them. Elohim asks Bil'am, "*Who are these men?*" And, Bil'am spells it all out. Hashem asks these questions for this purpose, several times in Scripture. In **B'reshith / Genesis 3:9**, after Adam and Chawah tasted of the forbidden, He asks; *And YHVH Elohim called unto Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"* And, similarly in **B'reshith 4:9** He asks; *And YHVH said to Qayin, "Where is Hebel your brother?"* Before Hashem gives instruction or judgment, He clearly establishes the circumstances, like the true "**Judge**" He is. Notice here too, that Bil'am doesn't tell Balaq's men, the next morning, to report to Balaq that he shouldn't try to curse or harass the Children of Yisra'el, because YHVH has blessed them.

Now, **B'midbar / Numbers 22:15-21**; *Then Balaq again sent heads, more numerous and more esteemed than they. And they came to Bil'am and said to him, "This is what Balaq son of Tsippor said: 'Do not be withheld from coming to me, please, for I esteem you very greatly, and whatever you say to me, I do. Therefore please come, curse this people for me.' "* And Bil'am answered and said to the servants of Balaq, "Though Balaq were to give me his house filled with silver and gold, I am unable to go beyond the word of YHVH my Elohim, to do less or more. And now, please, you also stay here tonight, and let me find out what more YHVH says to me." And Elohim came to Bil'am at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise and go with them, but only the word which I speak to you that you do." And Bil'am rose in the morning and saddled his donkey, and went with the heads of Mo'ab. Adonai tells Bil'am, that *if* the men come to summon him, *then* he is to go with them. But, he is only to do what Yah says to him to do. But, what does Bil'am do? He acts in his own interests, the next morning, and saddles his donkey and goes with them, without them even asking him.

Then, we read in **verses 22-35** that Elohim is less than pleased; *But the displeasure of Elohim burned because he went, and the Messenger of YHVH stationed Himself in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. And the donkey saw the Messenger of YHVH standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Bil'am beat the donkey to turn her back onto the way. Then the Messenger of YHVH stood in a narrow passage between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. And when the donkey saw the Messenger of YHVH, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Bil'am's foot against the wall, so he beat her again. And the Messenger of YHVH went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn aside, right or left. And when the donkey saw the Messenger of YHVH, she lay down under Bil'am. So Bil'am's displeasure burned, and he beat the donkey with his staff. Then YHVH opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Bil'am, "What have I done to you, that you have beaten me these three times?" And Bil'am said to the donkey, "Because you have mocked me. I wish there were a sword in*

my hand, for I would have killed you by now!” And the donkey said to Bil’am, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever known to do so to you?” And he said, “No.” Then YHVH opened Bil’am’s eyes, and he saw the Messenger of YHVH standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand. And he bowed his head and fell on his face. And the Messenger of YHVH said to him, “Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? See, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is reckless before Me. And the donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, I certainly would have killed you by now, and let her live.” And Bil’am said to the Messenger of YHVH, “I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. And now, if evil is in Your eyes, let me turn back.” And the Messenger of YHVH said to Bil’am, “Go with the men, but only the word that I speak to you, that you speak.” Bil’am then went with the heads of Balaq.

It’s odd that Bil’am doesn’t seem to have any concern about having a conversation with his donkey. He was probably used to seeing various similar manifestations in his line of work. Remember the Pharaoh’s magicians. The occult pagan world would have zero followers without manifestations to impress and/or frighten the followers. However, Hashem made sure Bil’am had no options; not to the left or to the right. Elohim put him in a position where he had to listen and obey, or die. It’s interesting too, that this “**Malach**” or “**Messenger**” of Elohim had the authority to declare to Bil’am, “..... **your way is reckless before Me**”.

Then, Bil’am and Balaq meet in **verses 36-40**; *And when Balaq heard that Bil’am was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Mo’ab, which is on the border at the Arnon, which was in the extremity of the border. And Balaq said to Bil’am, “Did I not urgently send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to esteem you?” And Bil’am said to Balaq, “See, I have come to you! Now, am I at all able to say somewhat? The word that Elohim puts in my mouth, that I speak.” And Bil’am went with Balaq, and they came to Qiryath Hutsoth (the City Center). And Balaq slaughtered cattle and sheep, and he sent some to Bil’am and to the heads who were with him.* Here, it starts to get interesting. These two meet up in Mo’ab. In fact, it says from the Hebrew, “**that when Balaq heard that Bil’am was coming, he went out from ‘Ayr’ or ‘his fortified city’ to meet Bil’am**” and they went to the “**center of the city**”. There, in the most public of places, likely the city square, Balaq made offerings to his mighty one(s). Now most English translations read, “**and he sent some to Bil’am and to the heads who were with him**”, or a reasonable facsimile there of. However, the Hebrew word used for “**sent**” in this case is “**shalach**” (*shim-lamed-chet*), which has the connotation of these offerings being sent “**toward**” or “**for**” Bil’am and the heads, or “**princes**” who were with him. “**Shalach**” also represents the “**laying on of hands**” or identifying with, as was done with the “**sin offerings**” that were burnt at the Tabernacle altar. So, these very public sacrifices were an ascension to honor, and to lift up, Bil’am and the leaders.

Now, we move on with **B’midbar / Numbers 22:41- 23:12**; *And it came to be the next day, that Balaq took Bil’am and brought him up to the high places of Ba’al, and from there he saw the extremity of the camp. And Bil’am said to Balaq, “Build seven altars for me here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me here.” And Balaq did as Bil’am had spoken, and Balaq and Bil’am offered a bull and a ram on each altar. Bil’am then said to Balaq, “Stand by your burnt offering, and let me go on. It might be that YHVH does come to meet me, and whatever He shows me I shall declare to you.” And he went to a bare height. And Elohim came to Bil’am, and he said to Him, “I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered on each altar a bull and a ram.” And YHVH put a word in the mouth of Bil’am, and said, “Return to Balaq, and this*

is what you say.” And he returned to him and saw him standing by his burnt offering, he and all the heads of Mo’ab. And he took up his proverb and said, “Balaq the sovereign of Mo’ab has brought me from Aram, from the mountains of the east. ‘Come, curse Ya’aqob for me, and come, rage at Yisra’el!’ How do I curse whom El has not cursed? And how do I rage at whom YHVH has not raged? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I observe him. Look, a people dwelling alone, not reckoning itself among the nations. Who shall count the dust of Ya’aqob, and the number of one-fourth of Yisra’el? Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!” And Balaq said to Bil’am, “What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and look, you have kept on blessing!” And he answered and said, “Should I not take heed to speak what YHVH has put in my mouth?”

Before, as we’ve studied this *parsha*, some have naturally wondered, “**who did Bil’am think he was seeking to hear from?**” Verse 41, above, tells us that Balaq brought Bil’am to the “**high places of Ba’al**”. Notice that Bil’am has Balaq build seven altars and offer seven bulls and seven rams for him, “for Bil’am”. Was he really trying to cleanse the high places of Ba’al in order to hear from Elohim? Since Bil’am had the knowledge of YHVH, as **Chapter 24, verse 16** says, he would have known that Hashem sets apart His priests to make offerings on His altar. I think Bil’am believed his own press releases. Since he was a “*big deal prophet*”, he was above the commands. For the sake of the Children of Yisra’el, YHVH used Bil’am to convey His message to Balaq and the Mo’abites. We’ll look deeper into this in a few minutes.

And before we go on, I want to point out something, a very profound picture that often gets overlooked. In **verse 9** we read; *For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I observe him. Look, a people dwelling alone, not reckoning itself among the nations.* Here we see exactly what Elohim called the Children of Yisra’el to be; a people dwelling alone, separated, set-apart; and, not counting themselves among the nations of the world. Oh, that it would be that way today here in Eretz Israel.

Now, let’s read on in **B’midbar / Numbers 23:13-26**; *And Balaq said to him, “Please come with me to another place from where you see them. You only see the extremity but not all of them. Curse them for me from there.” And he took him to the field of Tsophim (the watchers), to the top of Pisgah (peak of contemplation), and built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar. And he said to Balaq, “Stand here by your burnt offering while I meet over there.” And YHVH came to Bil’am, and put a word in his mouth, and said, “Go back to Balaq, and say this.” So he went to him and saw him standing by his burnt offering, and the heads of Mo’ab with him. And Balaq asked him, “What did YHVH say?” And he took up his proverb and said, “Rise up, Balaq, and hear! Listen to me, son of Tsippor! “El is not a man, to lie; nor a son of man, to repent! Has He said, and would He not do it; or spoken, and would not confirm it? See, I have received, to bless. And He has blessed, and I do not reverse it. He has not looked upon wickedness in Ya’aqob, nor has He seen trouble in Yisra’el. YHVH his Elohim is with him, and the shout of a Sovereign is in him. “El who brought them out of Mitsrayim, is for them like the horns of a wild ox. For there is no sorcery against Ya’aqob, nor is there any divination against Yisra’el. Now it is said to Ya’aqob and to Yisra’el, ‘What has El done!’ Look, a people rises like a lioness, and lifts itself up like a lion; it lies not down until it devours the prey, and drinks the blood of the slain.” And Balaq said to Bil’am, “Do not curse them at all, nor bless them at all!” And Bil’am answered and said to Balaq, “Have I not spoken to you, saying, ‘All that YHVH speaks, that I do’?”*

Again, Elohim forbids the cursing of Yisra'el. We also see that Hashem has indeed forgiven and forgotten the sins of the people, such as the golden calf and the various rebellions, in **verse 21**, where He says, ***“He has not looked upon wickedness in Ya'aqob, nor has He seen trouble in Yisra'el.”*** He even warns them that there will be no sorcery (*spells or enchantments*) or divination (*false prophecies*) spoken against them, because Yisra'el will devour its enemies.

As we examine the question of **“whom”** was Bil'am really seeking to hear from, we see some interesting things. As I said a few minutes ago, it would seem that the altars and offerings of Balaq were for Bil'am. He insisted that Balaq go through these steps for him. Elohim never asked Bil'am to require these of Balaq. Then, in **Chapter 23, verses 4 and 16** we read the phrase, ***“And YHVH came to Bil'am...”*** or in some translations, ***“And Yahweh appeared to Bil'am...”*** In the Hebrew, these read; ***“Va eeqar YHVH al Bil'am...”*** Now from the Chumash, we learn that the verb **“and came”** or **“va eeqar”** (*vav' yud-kof-reish*) is related to the word **“va qaree”** which means **“a form of contamination”** and also **“camouflage”**. If we dig a little deeper, we see that this gives the connotation that YHVH's appearing was **“contaminated”** or **“camouflaged”**. When Elohim came to Bil'am, back in **Chapter 22** when Balaq's men first came to him, the Hebrew word **“came”** was **“bo”** (literally **“came”** or **“come”**). Here we see a whole different picture. Bil'am never obeyed YHVH's instructions concerning Balaq and the cursing of Yisra'el. He really intended to hear from Ba'al a message that he could use to **“override”** what YHVH had said and then curse Yisra'el, as Balaq desired. But, YHVH came to Bil'am, in disguise so to speak, and restated His blessing, these two times.

Now, for a third time, Balaq will take Bil'am to a **“high place”**. In fact, this time they go to the top of Pe'or, the very mountain of Ba'al. **“Pe'or”** is another name for the deity known as Ba'al, the Mo'abites chief mighty one. **Pe'or** is the Chaldean or Babylonian name and means **“cleft”** or **“rest”**. But, in Hebrew, it means **“mouth of light”** or **“opening of light”**. It's interesting how many names of the false mighty ones and high places of the pagans have to do with light, or the promise to provide light or truth. Remember where Bil'am is from, **Pethor** or **“speaker of light”**. Remember what Sha'ul wrote in **2 Corinthians 11:12-14**; ***And I shall go on doing as I do, in order to cut off the occasion from those desiring an occasion, so that in that which they boast, they might be found also as we are. For such are false emissaries, deceptive workers, masquerading as emissaries of Messiah. And no wonder! For Satan himself masquerades as a messenger of light!***

So, let's read **B'midbar / Numbers 23:27-24:9**; ***And Balaq said to Bil'am, “Please come, let me take you to another place. It might be right in the eyes of Elohim that you curse them for me from there.” And Balaq took Bil'am to the top of Pe'or, that overlooks (ha midbar) the wilderness. And Bil'am said to Balaq, “Build seven alters for me here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me here.” And Balaq did as Bil'am had said, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar. And when Bil'am saw that it pleased YHVH to bless Yisra'el, he did not go as at other times, to seek to use sorcery, but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Bil'am lifted up his eyes and saw Yisra'el encamped according to their tribes. And the Spirit of Elohim came upon him. And he took up his proverb and said, “The saying of Bil'am, son of Be'or, and the saying of the man whose eyes are opened, the saying of him who hears the words of El, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, with eyes opened wide: How good are your tents, O Ya'aqob, your dwellings, O Yisra'el! Like wadis that stretch out, like gardens by a river, like aloes planted by YHVH, like cedars beside waters. He makes water flow from his buckets, and his seed is in many waters. His sovereign is higher than Agag, and his reign is exalted. El who brought him out of Mitsrayim is for them like the horns of a wild***

ox; he devours nations, his enemies; and he breaks their bones, and with his arrows he smites. He bowed down, he lay down like a lion. And, like a lion, who would rouse him? Blessed is he who blesses you, and cursed is he who curses you.”

Here in **Chapter 24:1**, we read that Bil’am sees that it pleased Hashem for him to bless Yisra’el. You see, he didn’t know that these “**blessings**” were indeed coming from Elohim. He thought they came from Ba’al. He reckoned that this pleased Elohim, because he didn’t encounter the “**Messenger of YHVH**” with sword in hand, as before, on the way to Mo’ab. Except for having a dissatisfied client that was getting angrier with every disappointment, things were going well for the Prophet Bil’am, Esquire. He had to feel that he was at least impressing Hashem. So, this time, he doesn’t seek to use “**sorcery**” or “**nachash**” in Hebrew, as before. “**Nachash**” means “**divination**”, “**omens**” or “**spells**”. Instead, he looks to the wilderness (**ha midbar**) and looks upon B’nei Yisra’el encamped according to their tribes and “**Ruach Elohim comes upon him**”. This time the word for “**comes**” or “**comes upon**” is “**ala’eev**” and is a variation of “**aliyah**” meaning “**to ascend**” or “**go up**”. In this case, the connotation is to “**lift up**”. In other words, as Ruach Elohim came upon Bil’am, he was lifted up, or spiritually elevated, in the process. The rabbis teach that because he did not attempt divination, Hashem actually revealed Himself to Bil’am in the fullness of His spirit.

And, as the anger of Balaq burns against Bil’am, he is compelled to finish speaking what he has seen, in **B’midbar / Numbers 24:10-25**; ***Then the displeasure of Balaq burned against Bil’am, and he struck his hands together. Balaq then said to Bil’am, “I summoned you to curse my enemies, and see, you have kept on blessing, these three times! And now flee to your place. I said I would greatly esteem you, and see, YHVH has kept you back from esteem.” And Bil’am said to Balaq, “Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, ‘If Balaq should give me his house filled with silver and gold, I am unable to go beyond the word of YHVH, to do either good or evil of my own heart. What YHVH speaks, that I speak’? And now, see, I am going to my people. Come, let me advise you what this people is going to do to your people in the latter days.” And he took up his proverb and said, “The saying of Bil’am, son of Be’or, and the saying of the man whose eyes are opened, the saying of him who hears the words of El, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, with eyes opened wide: I see Him, but not now; I observe Him, but not near. A Star shall come out of Ya’aqob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Yisra’el, and shall smite the corners of Mo’ab, and shall destroy all the sons of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession; and Seir shall be a possession – enemies – and Yisra’el is doing mightily. And out of Ya’aqob One shall rule and destroy the remnant from Ar.” He then looked on Amaleq, and he took up his proverb and said, “Amaleq was first among the nations, but his latter end is to perish forever.” He then looked on the Qeynites, and he took up his proverb and said, “Firm is your dwelling place, and your nest is set in the rock, but Qayin is to be burned. Till when does Ashshur keep you captive?” And he took up his proverb and said, “Oh, who does live when El does this? And ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, and they shall afflict Ashshur and afflict E’ber, and it also perishes.” And Bil’am arose and left, and returned to his place. And Balaq also went his way.***

Here, no matter what his intentions and motives, Bil’am is given a prophecy speaking of the “**End of Days**”, when Mashiach will conquer and judge His enemies, the enemies of Yisra’el. Beginning in **verse 17**, Bil’am sees Him and beholds Him but, not now; speaking of the future. Who’s the “**Him**”? Well, as we read on, Bil’am say that “**a Star shall come out of Ya’aqob**”. The Hebrew word here is

“koekab” which is no ordinary star. It is a **“shooting star”** or **“meteor”** that is seen all across the heavens. Yahshua said of Himself in **Revelation 22:16**; **“I, Yahshua, have sent My messenger to witness to you these matters in the assemblies. I am the Root and the Offspring of Dawid, the Bright and Morning Star.”** And, as Yahshua said in **Mattityahu 24:26-27**; **“So if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe. For as the lightning comes from the east and shines to the west, so also shall the coming of the Son of Adam be.”**

Bil’am goes on to say that **“a Scepter shall rise out of Yisra’el”**. This is interesting in that the Hebrew word here is **“shebet”**, which means **“tribe”** as well as **“rod”** or **“staff”**. We know that the **“Tribe of Yehudah”** would one day rule, and that rule will be for all generations. And, it is Yahshua (from the Tribe of Yehudah), whom **Revelation** speaks of three times (**2:27, 12:5 & 19:15**) as **shepherding** all nations with a **“rod of iron”**. So, this **“tribe”** or **“rod”** that rises up out of Yisra’el and will **“smite the corners of Mo’ab”**. King David did that in part. However Mashiach will conquer and judge Mo’ab. Yisra’el has been forbidden by Adonai to destroy Mo’ab, as he was a son of Lot. Bil’am also prophesied that Mashiach would **“destroy”** the sons of **“Sheth”** or **“Seth”**. This is really a poor translation and is only defined this way here, in this verse, by christian translators. The Hebrew word here for **“destroy”** is **“quwr”** (kof-vav-reish) and means to **“undermine”** or **“break down”**. The **“sons of Sheth”** is a reference to Adam’s son Seth; and is referring to all mankind. Mashiach will **“break down”** or **“undermine”** the authority of all mankind with His rod. Edom and Seir, both sons of Esaw, will be a possession. Then, He shall **“destroy”** (**abad = destroy**) the remnant from **“Ar”**, which is, in the Hebrew **“Ayr”** or Balaq’s fortified city within Mo’ab. This part of the prophecy is restated in **Yeshayahu / Isaiah 11:10-16**; **And in that day there shall be a Root (Sheresh = root or descendant) from the root of Yishai (David’s father = kingly line), standing as a banner (nes = flag or sign lifted up) to the people. Unto Him the nations shall seek, and His rest (menuwchah = place of rest – Israel) shall be glorious. And it shall be in that day that the Master sets His hand twice (yacaph Adonai sheneet yadee = Adonai sets His hand a second time or twice again) to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Ashshur and from Mitsrayim, from Pathros and from Kush, from Eylam and from Shin’ar, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. And He shall raise a banner for the nations, and gather the outcasts of Yisra’el, and assemble the dispersed of Yehudah from the four corners of the earth. And the envy of Ephraim shall turn aside, and the adversaries of Yehudah be cut off. Ephraim shall not envy Yehudah, and Yehudah not trouble Ephraim. But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they plunder the people of the east, their hand stretching forth on Edom and Mo’ab, and the children of Ammon shall be subject to them. And YHVH shall put under the ban the tongue of the Sea of Mitsrayim, and He shall wave His hand over the River with the might of His Spirit, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and shall cause men to tread it in sandals. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of His people, those left from Ashshur, as it was for Yisra’el in the day when he came up from the land of Mitsrayim.** If these verses are indeed chronological, then the defeat of Gaza and Jordan will be before the ingathering of all the exiles of the 10 Tribes.

Now, Ruth suggested that if we look at these last verses, allegorically we might see still another fulfillment in the making. **Verses 15 -16** read; **And YHVH shall put under the ban the tongue of the Sea of Mitsrayim, and He shall wave His hand over the River with the might of His Spirit, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and shall cause men to tread it in sandals. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of His people, those left from Ashshur, as it was for Yisra’el in the day when he came up from the land of Mitsrayim.** Since rivers represent the **“Mayim Chaim”**

or “**Living Waters**” or “**Waters of Life**”; then, if Elohim smites Egypt (representing the places of the world’s oppressors and bondage) and dries up the “**waters**” those who were trapped and remained behind, would be free to leave, just as their forefathers (*B’nei Yisra’el*) did in the first exodus. It’s interesting that Yah smites the “**river**” in the “**seven streams**” or perhaps “**seven continents**” of the earth. It’s food for thought and midrash.

Next, Bil’am looked upon Amaleq and prophesied in **B’midbar / Numbers 24:20**; “**Amaleq was first among the nations, but his latter end is to perish forever.**” Amaleq, the grandson of Esaw, was the first to attack Yisra’el in the wilderness, by first picking off the elderly and infirmed stragglers. So, because of their evil attack, YHVH had Moshe write in **Shemot / Exodus 17:14**; **And YHVH said to Moshe, “Write this for a remembrance in the book and recite it in the hearing of Yehoshua, that I shall completely blot out the remembrance of Amaleq from under the heavens.”** Then he turned to the **Qeynites**, a tribe in Midyan of Moshe’s father in-law; and decreed that **Qayin** (*their capital*) shall be burned, **verses 21-22**; **He then looked on the Qeynites, and he took up his proverb and said, “Firm is your dwelling place, and your nest is set in the rock, but Qayin is to be burned. Till when does Ashshur keep you captive?”** A study of the maps of both Biblical times and today will show that this city of “**Qayin**” is today **Riyadh**, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Riyadh will be burned and taken captive by Ashshur (Assyria), made up of what is today Iraq and parts of Iran, Syria and Turkey. Then, ships come in from “**Kittim**” or “**Cypress and Greece**”, representing an invasion from Europe and shall afflict (*make war with*) Ashshur (*Iraq, Iran and the others*) and “**E’ber**” (“**the region beyond**”, *speaking of both sides of the Mediterranean Sea*) But, it (*Kittim*) also ultimately perishes. **Verses 24-25**; **And he took up his proverb and said, “Oh, who does live when El does this? And ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, and they shall afflict Ashshur and afflict E’ber and it also perishes.”** I need to state here that, while Strong’s and Brown, Driver, Briggs indicate that “**Kittim**” was a kingdom in Greece and Cypress; Gesenius’ Lexicon states that was part of Greece and all the islands along the European side of the Mediterranean Sea; and thus, represents all of Europe.

Then, Bil’am and Balaq each went their own way. As I said, I’m sending out “**The Teaching of Bil’am**” with this *parsha*. It covers, in some detail, what Bil’am also told Balaq, about how to have Elohim curse B’nei Yisra’el, since he was prevented from doing so. This proves that Bil’am was an adversary to Yisra’el the entire time. In two weeks, as we study **Parsha Matot (Tribes)**, we’ll then see the end of Bil’am.

Our *parsha* ends with the what happened next in the camp of Yisra’el, after Bil’am shared his deadly plan for Yisra’el with Balaq, in **B’midbar / Numbers 25:1-9**; **And Yisra’el dwelt in Shittim, and the people began to whore with the daughters of Mo’ab, and they invited the people to the slaughterings of their mighty ones, and the people ate and bowed down to their mighty ones. Thus Yisra’el was joined to Ba’al Pe’or, and the displeasure of YHVH burned against Yisra’el. And YHVH said to Moshe, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang them up before YHVH, before the sun, so that the burning displeasure of YHVH turns away from Yisra’el.” And Moshe said to the judges of Yisra’el, “Each one of you slay his men who were joined to Ba’al Pe’or.” And see, one of the children of Yisra’el came and brought to his brothers a Midyanite woman before the eyes of Moshe and before the eyes of all the congregation of the children of Yisra’el, who were weeping at the door of the Tent of Meeting. And when Pinehas, son of El’azar, son of Aharon the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation and took a spear in his hand, and he went after the man of Yisra’el into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Yisra’el, and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague among the**

children of Yisra'el came to a stop. And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

So, the people began to “**zanah**” or “**play the harlot**” with the daughters of Mo'ab. They invited Yisra'el to the ceremonies of their mighty ones and many bowed down to them. Yisra'el had “*joined themselves*” to **Ba'al Pe'or** (*the lord speaking light*), the mighty one that Bil'am and Balaq sought to have curse the Children of Yisra'el. This extended into leadership as well. In **verse 14**, which is in the beginning of next week's *parsha*, we see that the one who brought the Midyanite woman to his brothers (*his tribe*), in the face of Moshe and the entire congregation, was **Zimri**, a prince of the Tribe of Shim'on. In order to stop the plague that ensued in Hashem's wrath, Moshe had the judges take all of the leaders of the people and “**hang**” them up before Him and in the face of the “**rising sun**”. This indicates that the sun, the light of day, is to bear witness to the actions and punishment of these leaders for not keeping their people from sin. The word for “**hang**” here is “**yaqah**” which means to “**hang on a stake**”. Here we see yet another picture of Mashiach's death on a stake, as the atonement for our harlotry with “**Ba'al Pe'or**”, or whatever mighty one “*spoke light*” to you.

We're told that the number who perished by this plague was 24,000. The gematria for a “**thousand**” which is “**aleph**” equals “**strength**” and “**multiplication**”. Twenty-four equals the number of “**Ha Goy**” or “**the nation**” and “**v'chata**”, “**and they sinned**” as well as “**dach**” or “**crushed**”. The nation sinned and they were crushed.

YHVH desires and demands a faithful bride. His bride, who is now “*coming to her senses*”, is in dispersion; but, not for long. **The promise of Debarim / Deut. 12:28-32** is for us, here and now, just as much as for our fathers in the wilderness; “**Guard, and obey all these words which I command you, that it might be well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the eyes of YHVH your Elohim. When YHVH your Elohim does cut off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, guard yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire about their mighty ones, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their mighty ones? And let me do so too.’ Do not do so to YHVH your Elohim, for every abomination which YHVH hates they have done to their mighty ones, for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their mighty ones. All the words I am commanding you, guard to do it – do not add to it nor take away from it.**”

Let me end here with the Scripture I quoted last year; for the message hasn't changed. It's only more urgent. As the prophet Yirmeyahu was prophesying about the “**House of Yisra'el**”, Ephraim, who were taken into captivity for their following after (*whoring with*) other mighty ones. We read in **Yirmeyahu / Jeremiah 3:1-15**; **Elohim said, “If a man puts away his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man's, does he return to her again? Would not that land be made greatly unclean? But you have committed whoring with many lovers. And would you return to Me?” declares YHVH. Lift up your eyes to the bare heights and see: where have you not lain with men? Besides the ways you have sat for them like an Arabian in the wilderness. And you made the land unclean with your whorings and your evil. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain. You have had a whore's forehead, you refuse to be ashamed. Shall you not from now on cry to Me, ‘My father, You are the guide of my youth? ‘Does one bear a grudge forever? Does one keep it to the end?’ See, you have spoken and done the evils that you could.” And YHVH said to me in the days of Yoshiyahu the sovereign, “Have you seen what backsliding Yisra'el has done? She has gone up on every high mountain**

and under every green tree, and there committed whoring. And after she had done all these, I said 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Yehudah saw it. And I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Yisra'el had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Yehudah did not fear, but went and committed whoring too. And it came to be, through her frivolous whoring, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and wood. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Yehudah has not turned to Me with all her heart, but falsely," declares YHVH. And YHVH said to me, "Backsliding Yisra'el has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Yehudah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, 'Return, O backsliding Yisra'el,' declares YHVH, 'I shall not look on you in displeasure, for I am kind,' declares YHVH, 'and I do not bear a grudge forever. 'Only, acknowledge your crookedness, because you have transgressed against YHVH your Elohim, and have scattered your ways to strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,' declares YHVH. "Return, O backsliding children," declares YHVH, "for I shall rule over you, and shall take you, one from a city and two from a clan, and shall bring you to Tsiyon. And I shall give you shepherds according to My heart, and they shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Let he who has an ear, hear (**Sh'ma**), what Elohim is saying to His people.

Baruch HaShem YHVH!