



**“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> and upon finding a single pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Mathew 13:45**

30/06/2018

## Balak

Numbers 22:2–25:9  
Micah 5:6–6:8  
Romans 11:25–32  
I Corinthians 1:20–31

In this week’s Parsha we will look at Balaam, Balak and the sin of Baal-Peor. As we look at this account recorded in Numbers, we need to understand that these events were not known by Moses, as the children of Israel were oblivious to these events. So, how did they become part of scripture? The Rabbis write regarding this fact, stating this proves the Torah was given by YHVH to Moses and reveals the prophetic aspect and the Divine revelation of the Torah.

Numbers 22:2-6

***<sup>2</sup> Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, <sup>3</sup> and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites.***

***<sup>4</sup> The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, “This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.”***

***So Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, <sup>5</sup> sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, who was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River, in his native land. Balak said:***

***“A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me. <sup>6</sup> Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed.”***

We see in the above passage how Moab was terrified and was filled with dread of the children of Israel. Therefore, because of fear, Balak the king of Moab sent messengers to Balaam, seeking his aid in dealing with the Israelites. Yet why did he choose to bring a prophet to curse the people, instead of fighting them in a physical battle?

*The sages argue that Moab and Midian were erstwhile enemies, as it is written (Genesis 36:35) “...who smote Midian in the field of Moab”; but out of fear of Israel, they made peace between them.*

*And why did Moab seek the advice of Midian? When they saw that Israel was victorious beyond the norm, they thought: "The leader of this people rose to greatness in Midian; we shall ask them what his measure is." Said they: "His power is entirely in his mouth." Said Moab: "We, too, shall bring a person whose power is in his mouth against them." (Rashi) <sup>[1]</sup> therefore, it was because they perceived Balaam to be equal to Moses why they enlisted his support.*

We also read in verse 6 as it states ***Therefore, please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat 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.*** Numb. 22:6 NKJV

However, in the Hebrew, it states something else, as instead of for they are too mighty for me, it states "He is mighty." This makes a great difference as the Rabbis teach regarding this that the Hebrew phrase, Atzum hu mimeni ("He is mightier than me") can also be translated as, "He is mightier from me." For in truth, the might of the people of Israel is Moshiach, who is descendant of Balak! (Ruth the Moabite, ancestress of King David, is descendant of Balak). <sup>[2]</sup>

Regarding what the Rabbi teach it is clear in the above passage, that Balak wanted Balaam to curse the children of Israel because he understood that they could not win a physical battle against them, unless they first dealt with it spiritually. ***Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed.***

This concept is something we see in the writings of Paul, regarding how Christians should wage war. For we do not wage war against flesh and blood but against principalities in the heavens (Eph. 6:12). That once we have engaged the spiritual strongholds in a given situation, we will see victory in the physical manifestations of the spiritual attacks. For we will not gain the victory by merely dealing with the physical manifestations of the enemy, but, only as we engage the spiritual forces, will what is being manifest in the natural be dealt with.

However, back to Balak. Balak did not realise that the God of the Hebrews, YHVH was the one who defends His people Israel, as He who watches over Israel neither slumbers or sleeps (Ps 121:4). That no weapon formed against the people of Yah can prosper (Isaiah 54:17) if they are walking in His will and have made YHVH their habitation and refuge. For the angle of YHVH encamps around those that fear him (Ps 34:7). Yet, what we must grasp is that when our enemies seek to curse us, which they do and will, is that no curse can align itself/take hold of us, without a course (Prov. 26:2). Therefore, if we are seeking to live a life set apart in obedience to the word of YHVH, and His Torah, then no curse can harm us. But, if we are not doing so, then it can. Therefore, we must check ourselves, and keep a short account, as we confess our sin to God, He is faithful to forgive us.

What we see in the subsequent events, as they unravel, is that YHVH does not permit Balaam from speaking any curse against Israel. Instead, Balaam declares profound blessings and prophetic utterances over them regarding the Messiah and end of days, which YHVH gave him to pronounce.

Numbers 22:7-13 The first time the elders go to speak with Balaam

***<sup>7</sup> The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said.***

***<sup>8</sup> "Spend the night here," Balaam said to them, "and I will report back to you with the answer the LORD gives me." So the Moabite officials stayed with him.***

***<sup>9</sup> God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?"***

<sup>10</sup> **Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message: <sup>11</sup> ‘A people that has come out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them and drive them away.’”**

<sup>12</sup> **But God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.”**

<sup>13</sup> **The next morning Balaam got up and said to Balak’s officials, “Go back to your own country, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you.”**

We see in the above passage that the group of elders from Moab and Midian went to speak with Balaam in an endeavour to purchase his services to curse Israel. Yet, when Balaam enquired of YHVH, God instructed him saying **“Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.”** Therefore, Balaam the next day informed the delegation that he cannot help them, as God has forbidden him to go with them.

### **Numbers 22:14-20 The second time the elders visit Balaam**

Balak responds to Balaam’s rejection by sending a further delegation to persuade him to come and assist him, in his endeavour to overcome the children of Israel. This delegation was more numerous than the previous, and the delegates were of higher ranking and more distinguished than the prior. They came and said to Balaam **“This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Do not let anything keep you from coming to me, <sup>17</sup> because I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say. Come and put a curse on these people for me.”** Balaam responds saying, **“Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the LORD my God. <sup>19</sup> Now spend the night here so that I can find out what else the LORD will tell me.”**

What we see in the two encounters is that Balaam, does communicate with YHVH and YHVH speaks with him. Therefore, Balaam is not a false prophet who is speaking from his own heart. However, that does not mean his heart is pure. You see someone can have a relationship with God and speak and hear from God, but their heart can still be corrupt, as they have not surrendered all their desires and thoughts to YHVH. This can be true for us, that unless we submit our desires, our thoughts, our everything to God, as we bring our all into submission to the word of God, we too can be led not by the Holy Spirit, but by our own desires. It is only when our hearts are circumcised, will we fully submit to the word of YHVH and His will. Therefore, as we continue in this study, let us not be quick to judge Balaam, but let us learn from what he did, then let us check ourselves, to ensure that we have not got any areas in our lives that have not been brought into submission to the word of God. If we are honest, there will be areas; we need to work on, but praise YHVH, He will complete the good work He has started in us all! But, it does require us to surrender our all to Him.

Let, me posse a question, if you had enquired of YHVH and He had clearly spoken and informed you to do something, would you inquire a second time, especially if God does not change His mind? Furthermore, why did God change His mind with Balaam?

We read that after the delegates come, Balaam enquired a second time, to see what YHVH instructed. <sup>20</sup> **That night God came to Balaam and said, “Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you.”**

So, why did YHVH permit Him to go this second time? It is because YHVH knows our hearts, for it is our hearts. He searches and looks at to judge our character. This is because it is our hearts that the Torah is written upon. Therefore, YHVH saw Balaam’s heart and knew that he sought the riches and

the wealth He would receive. Yet, Yah used this encounter, between Balak and Israel to declare profound blessings upon them, while at the same time revealing to Balaam his hearts condition. Furthermore, God allows us free choice, to make our own decisions, even if they will result in us bringing harm upon ourselves. God always informs us what He wants for us, but then it is up to us if we adhere to it or reject it, either in full or in part.

We also see that the enemy can seek to do whatever he can to stop what God is doing, but whatever the enemy does, it will NOT stop the purposes of YHVH from being done. This is a theme we see running throughout scripture, that God's purposes will not be thwarted by Hasatan.

Can you remember a time when God has asked you to do something, but you have not done it how God asked? Or when God has instructed you not to do something you have wanted to do? So, because you haven't liked what God has said, you have questioned God's instruction by searching out a legitimate excuse to do what you want.

Within the Body of Messiah, it is possible to find liberal answers that excuse and permit everything the Torah/the word of God admonishes us not to do. However, as believers in Messiah, we are instructed to follow His example. We are to submit our own thoughts and desires to the word of God. As we do this, we are rejecting the characteristics of this world and taking on the character of Messiah, as we seek to set ourselves apart unto YHVH.

#### **Numbers 22:21-35 Balaam's donkey**

***21 Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the Moabite officials. 22 But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, it turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat it to get it back on the road.*** We read here that Balaam went on the journey with his two servants, yet the passage commences with informing us that Balaam got up that morning and saddled his own donkey and left with the officials. This shows us that Balaam was keen to go with them, that eager that he prepared and got his own donkey and belongings ready to leave. What do you think was his driving force for going? Was it to do the will of God or his own desires?

We further read that YHVH was angry with him for going, even when God had that night instructed him to go with them. So, why was YHVH angry with Balaam? What we see is that Balaam's heart was eager to go with the delegation and do the bidding of the King and not the bidding of YHVH. Thus, the one who watches over Israel, the Angel of YHVH who encamps around them, was already ensuring that Balaam would not come against His people. If Balaam did, he would be coming against YHVH.

Furthermore, who was this angel who is appearing to Balaam? Whenever we read in scripture the angel of YHVH, it is always a reference to Messiah, who is the commander of the heavenly army. The one who defends His people, because He is the King of Israel, He is there Redeemer, Saviour and Judge.

***24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path through the vineyards, with walls on both sides. 25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat the donkey again.***

The Rabbis write regarding Balaam's foot being crushed against a wall, that this was the very heap of stones which Laban and Jacob had erected as a testament "***I will not pass over this heap to you, and that you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm***" (Genesis 31:52). Balaam, who

is Laban, was now violating this covenant by crossing the heap to come to curse the descendants of Jacob. Therefore, the wall was punishing him, for it was the witness for the oath, and it is written (Deuteronomy 17:7): "***The hand of the witnesses should be first in [punishing] him.***" (Midrash Tanchuma) <sup>[3]</sup>

***26 Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. 27 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat it with his staff. 28 Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"***

***29 Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."***

***30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?"***

***"No," he said.***

Can you imagine an animal speaking to you? Let's say you're taking your dog for a walk and all of a sudden it drags you in a different direction to what you want to go. Then as you try to take it the way you want to go, it speaks to you, and you have a conversation with it. Personally, that would be enough for me to stop what I was doing, God would have got my attention.

***31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.***

***32 The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. 33 The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared it."***

***34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back."***

***35 The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's officials.***

We see above the discussion between Balaam and the angel of YHVH, yet what we must note is that the angel of YHVH, has His sword drawn. This is significant, as we see that the commander of heavens army, Messiah is ready to battle against anyone who comes against His people. That whoever seeks to harm Israel, will face the forces of YHVH and thus will be defeated by His might.

At the end of this encounter Messiah who is the angel of the LORD, instructs Balaam, "***Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you.***" ***So Balaam went with Balak's officials.***

Here He is ensuring that Balaam only does what YHVH instructs him to do, nothing else. That he is not to add or take away from the words YHVH gives him to speak. This is the same for us that we are not to add or take away from the word of YHVH. That whatever God gives us to say and do we have to do it, as God instructs.

Numbers 22:36-41 Balaam meets Balak.

<sup>36</sup> *When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite town on the Arnon border, at the edge of his territory.*<sup>37</sup> *Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?"*

<sup>38</sup> *"Well, I have come to you now," Balaam replied. "But I can't say whatever I please. I must speak only what God puts in my mouth."*

Here we see that Balak is displeased with Balaam's late arrival, due to his rejection the first time. As Balak perceives this to be because Balaam doesn't think he can give him a high reward for what he has asked. Yet, Balaam informs Balak that he is here now, but he can only speak what YHVH puts into his mouth.

<sup>39</sup> *Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.* <sup>40</sup> *Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and gave some to Balaam and the officials who were with him.* <sup>41</sup> *The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, and from there he could see the outskirts of the Israelite camp.*

Numbers 23:1-12 Balaam's first message

*Balaam said, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."*<sup>2</sup> *Balak did as Balaam said, and the two of them offered a bull and a ram on each altar.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offering while I go aside. Perhaps the LORD will come to meet with me. Whatever he reveals to me I will tell you." Then he went off to a barren height.*

<sup>4</sup> *God met with him, and Balaam said, "I have prepared seven altars, and on each altar, I have offered a bull and a ram."*

We see that prior to Balaam proclaiming his first message that Balaam seeks to make an offering to YHVH to enquire of God regarding what to say. Rashi states regarding the seven altars that it doesn't say, "I have prepared seven altars," but "I have prepared the seven altars." Balaam said to G-d: The ancestors of this people built You seven altars, and I have prepared the equivalent of them all. Abraham built four (Genesis 12:7, 12:8, 13:18 and at Mount Moriah [22:9]); Isaac built one (ibid. 26:25); and Jacob built two--on at Shechem (ibid. 33:20) and one at Beth-El (ibid. 35:7).<sup>[4]</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *The LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this word."*

<sup>6</sup> *So he went back to him and found him standing beside his offering, with all the Moabite officials.* <sup>7</sup> *Then Balaam spoke his message:*

*"Balak brought me from Aram,  
the king of Moab from the eastern mountains.*

*'Come,' he said, 'curse Jacob for me;  
come, denounce Israel.'*

<sup>8</sup> *How can I curse  
those whom God has not cursed?*

*How can I denounce  
those whom the LORD has not denounced?*

<sup>9</sup> *From the rocky peaks I see them,  
from the heights I view them.*

*I see a people who live apart  
and do not consider themselves one of the nations.*

<sup>10</sup> *Who can count the dust of Jacob  
or number even a fourth of Israel?  
Let me die the death of the righteous,  
and may my final end be like theirs!"*

<sup>11</sup> *Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them!"*

<sup>12</sup> *He answered, "Must I not speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?"*

The above words which YHVH gave Balaam to declare over Israel are applicable today. However, they are not just for Judah, who live in the land of Israel today, but for the Body of Messiah, those who are grafted into the commonwealth of Israel. It is crucial, that as we study scripture, we don't just think of the Jewish people, but of the Body of Messiah as well. For the day is coming when the people of YHVH will be one people, as the two sticks the House of Judah and the House of Israel become one in the hand of Messiah when He returns.

Numbers 23:18-16 Balaam's second message

<sup>18</sup> *Then he spoke his message:*

*"Arise, Balak, and listen;  
hear me, son of Zippor.*

<sup>19</sup> *God is not human, that he should lie,  
not a human being, that he should change his mind.*

*Does he speak and then not act?  
Does he promise and not fulfill?*

<sup>20</sup> *I have received a command to bless;  
he has blessed, and I cannot change it.*

<sup>21</sup> *"No misfortune is seen in Jacob,  
no misery observed in Israel.  
The LORD their God is with them;  
the shout of the King is among them.*

<sup>22</sup> *God brought them out of Egypt;  
they have the strength of a wild ox.*

<sup>23</sup> *There is no divination against Jacob,  
no evil omens against Israel.*

*It will now be said of Jacob  
and of Israel, 'See what God has done!'*

<sup>24</sup> *The people rise like a lioness;  
they rouse themselves like a lion  
that does not rest till it devours its prey  
and drinks the blood of its victims."*

<sup>25</sup> *Then Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all!"*

<sup>26</sup> *Balaam answered, "Did I not tell you I must do whatever the LORD says?"*

Numbers 24:2-9 Balaam's third message

***2 When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him<sup>3</sup> and he spoke his message:***

***"The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor,  
the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly,  
4 the prophecy of one who hears the words of God,  
who sees a vision from the Almighty,  
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:***

***5 "How beautiful are your tents, Jacob,  
your dwelling places, Israel!***

***6 "Like valleys they spread out,  
like gardens beside a river,  
like aloes planted by the Lord,  
like cedars beside the waters.***

***7 Water will flow from their buckets;  
their seed will have abundant water.***

***"Their king will be greater than Agag;  
their kingdom will be exalted.***

***8 "God brought them out of Egypt;  
they have the strength of a wild ox.***

***They devour hostile nations  
and break their bones in pieces;  
with their arrows they pierce them.***

***9 Like a lion they crouch and lie down,  
like a lioness—who dares to rouse them?***

***"May those who bless you be blessed  
and those who curse you be cursed!"***

Numbers 24:10-19 Balaam's fourth message

***10 Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to him, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them these three times.<sup>11</sup> Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the Lord has kept you from being rewarded."***

***12 Balaam answered Balak, "Did I not tell the messengers you sent me,<sup>13</sup> 'Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not do anything of my own accord, good or bad, to go beyond the command of the Lord—and I must say only what the Lord says'?<sup>14</sup> Now I am going back to my people, but come, let me warn you of what this people will do to your people in days to come."***

<sup>15</sup> ***Then he spoke his message:***

***“The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor,  
the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly,  
<sup>16</sup> the prophecy of one who hears the words of God,  
who has knowledge from the Most High,  
who sees a vision from the Almighty,  
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:***

***<sup>17</sup> “I see him, but not now;  
I behold him, but not near.  
A star will come out of Jacob;  
a scepter will rise out of Israel.  
He will crush the foreheads of Moab,  
the skulls of all the people of Sheth.  
<sup>18</sup> Edom will be conquered;  
Seir, his enemy, will be conquered,  
but Israel will grow strong.  
<sup>19</sup> A ruler will come out of Jacob  
and destroy the survivors of the city.”***

Numbers 24:20 Balaam’s Fifth Message

<sup>20</sup> ***Then Balaam saw Amalek and spoke his message:***

***“Amalek was first among the nations,  
but their end will be utter destruction.”***

Numbers 24:21-22 Balaam’s Sixth Message

<sup>21</sup> ***Then he saw the Kenites and spoke his message:***

***“Your dwelling place is secure,  
your nest is set in a rock;  
<sup>22</sup> yet you Kenites will be destroyed  
when Ashur takes you captive.”***

Numbers 24:23-24 Balaam’s Seventh Message

<sup>23</sup> ***Then he spoke his message:***

***“Alas! Who can live when God does this?  
<sup>24</sup> Ships will come from the shores of Cyprus;  
they will subdue Ashur and Eber,  
but they too will come to ruin.”***

<sup>25</sup> ***Then Balaam got up and returned home, and Balak went his own way.***

We read that after pronouncing the 7 blessings ***Balaam got up and returned home, and Balak went his own way.*** However, what we do not read in this account is if Balaam received his pay. Yet, we read in the letter to the ecclesia in Pergamum Revelation 2:14 ***Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to***

**entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.** Furthermore, we read in Numbers 31:16 which also informs us that Balaam instructed Balak how to subdue the Israelites **“Look, these women caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to turn unfaithfully against the LORD at Peor -, so that the plague struck the congregation of the LORD.**

Josephus a Jewish historian writes regarding this event, *"But Balak being very angry that the Israelites were not cursed, sent away Balaam without thinking him worthy of any honor. Whereupon, when he (Balaam) was just upon his journey, in order to pass the Euphrates, he sent for Balak, and for the princes of the Midianites, and spake thus to them: "O Balak, and you Midianites that are here present (for I am obliged even without the will of God to gratify you), it is true no entire destruction can seize upon the nation of the Hebrews, neither by war, nor by plague, nor by scarcity of the fruits of the earth, nor can any other unexpected accident be their entire ruin; for the providence of God is concerned to preserve them from such a misfortune; nor will it permit any such calamity to come upon them whereby they may all perish; but some small misfortunes, and those for a short time, whereby they may appear to be brought low, may still befall them; but after that they will flourish again, to the terror of those that brought those mischiefs upon them. So that if you have a mind to gain a victory over them for a short space of time, you will obtain it by following my directions; Do you therefore set out the handsomest of such of your DAUGHTERS AS ARE MOST EMINENT FOR BEAUTY, and proper to force and conquer the modesty of those that behold them, and these decked and trimmed to the highest degree you are able. Then do you send them to be near the Israelites' camp, and give them in charge, that when the young men of the Hebrews desire their company, they allow it them; and when they see that they are enamored of them, let them take their leaves; and if they entreat them to stay, let them not give their consent till they have persuaded them to leave off their obedience to their own laws and the worship of that God who established them, and to worship the gods of the Midianites and Moabites; FOR BY THIS MEANS GOD WILL BE ANGRY AT THEM.'* Accordingly, when Balaam had suggested this counsel to them, he went his way" [5]

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that because Balaam informed Balak how to seduce the children of Israel that Balak paid him. It was because Balaam, sort the riches of this life and praises of men that he counselled Balak in how to overcome Israel. Peter writes in his letter regarding this, that Balaam loved the wages of wickedness, ***They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness.*** (2 Peter 2:15). Jude also warns against those who take such path. ***Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.*** (Jude 1:11)

It is because of this advice that the children of Israel committed sin before YHVH and therefore received God's judgement.

Numbers 25

***While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, <sup>2</sup> who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods. <sup>3</sup> So Israel yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor. And the Lord's anger burned against them.***

We read in the above verse how the men of Israel began to commit sin before YHVH, as they indulged in sexual immorality with the Moabite women and worshipped the Baal of Peor. Therefore, because of this sin, God brought judgment upon the people of Israel. Hosea the prophet writes ***“When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your ancestors, it***

***was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree. But when they came to Baal Peor, they consecrated themselves to that shameful idol and became as vile as the thing they loved.*** Hosea 9:10

Hosea here is stating that when the children of Israel worshipped Baal Peor, they became as vile as the thing they worshipped because of the acts they committed, but what were the acts they did? We do not need to look far to comprehend these practices, as what we see in the world today is similar to what was going on then.

What took place in the worship of Baal Peor is nothing but perverse and the indulgence of everything abominable before YHVH. Baal-Peor means god of the opening, another name for Baal-Peor is Belphegor, who was depicted either as a beautiful naked woman or a bearded demon with an open mouth, horns and sharply pointed nails. The open mouth is an indicator of the sexual rites used to worship him. Jerome, an early church father, reported that statues of Baal-Peor he encountered, depicted the god with a phallus in his mouth. Thus, depicting the sexual acts which were performed during the worship of this god.

Today, the practices of Baal-Peor are taught in our schools, as children are instructed in the practices of sexual perversions. As teachers discuss all manner of sexual practices, informing children that they are permitted to express their sexuality in whatever way they seek, be it oral, anal, male with male, or female with female, or even multiple sexual partners. As long as they take precautions and it is consensual, it is ok. We further need to remember that God, does not want us to imitate what the pagans do in their worship of false gods. Therefore, believers in Messiah even if marred should not practice deviant sexual behaviour, as done in the worship of Baal-Peor.

Other worship rites included defecating from all bodily openings upon the altar of Baal-Peor, along with gratifying every sexual desire that could be thought of. It is told, that on one occasion a strange ruler came to the place where Peor was worshipped, to sacrifice to him; but when he heard of the practise, he caused his soldiers to attack and kill the worshipers of the god (Sifre, Num. 131; Sanh. 106a)[6]

It is because of his deception in teaching others how to ensnare Israel in this sin, and because the depravity of the worship of this god, Israel later killed Balaam (Joshua 13:22) and he is set forth as an example of a false prophet. What we must understand is that Balaam did speak the word of YHVH. However, he was seduced by the things of this world, as his heart desired the wealth promised him if he cursed Israel.

We see this in the Body of Messiah today, as many prophets, pastors' teachers and so-called apostles, profit from what they speak and do. As they seek the wealth of this world, which as they do, they mislead the people and allow them to sin, as they propagate a liberal prosperity gospel. Therefore, the sin of Balaam and Baal-Peor are present within the Body of Messiah, as the people of YHVH indulge in sexual perversions because the shepherds have accepted the riches of this world and did not challenge or correct the flock. However, God states in His word that because the shepherds have not looked after the sheep, He would shepherd them Himself. What we are witnessing in this move within the shepherds is a further sign that Messiah's return is at hand, as He will come and shepherd His people, as He delivers them from the sneer of the false prophets/teachers.

Yet, just as the heart of Balaam was revealed in this account, so too are the hearts of God's people, as they eagerly rejected YHVH to worship Baal-Peor to fulfil the lusts of the flesh. So to today are the hearts of the people being revealed, as God gives the people over to their sinful desires and to the soothsayer in the pulpits so that they can gratify their own desires.

Numbers 25:4-9

***<sup>4</sup> The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the LORD'S fierce anger may turn away from Israel."***

***<sup>5</sup> So Moses said to Israel's judges, "Each of you must put to death those of your people who have yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor."***

***<sup>6</sup> Then an Israelite man brought into the camp a Midianite woman right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel while they were weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting. <sup>7</sup> When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand <sup>8</sup> and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear into both of them, right through the Israelite man and into the woman's stomach. Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped; <sup>9</sup> but those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.***

What we see in this parsha is the revealing of Balaam's and the peoples' hearts, as God searches them and reveals what it is they desire. However, if we give in to the desires of the flesh, rather than bring them into submission to the word of God, it will result in judgment.

We see in the seven utterances of Balaam, how YHVH through Balaam spoke profound blessings over Israel, some of which relate to Messiah. Yet, because Balaam sought the rewards promised him and the praise of men, he instructed Balak how to entice the men of Israel, so that he could prevail over them.

What is clear is that Balaam heard from YHVH, yet his heart was not circumcised, as he did not submit everything to YHVH. However, Yah still used and spoke with him. This confirms that the gifts that God bestows upon us are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29). Yet, we should not be quick to judge Balaam, but should take stock and check ourselves, how are we living, what is the state of our heart? just as scripture says. ***"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*** Matthew 7:3-5

We are called to bring correction within the body of Messiah, however, before we do we MUST check ourselves, as we ensure that we are right with God. Then we can bring correction out of Love and humility. Otherwise, we will not be righteous in our actions, nor useful in our correction.

As we study the Torah each week, it is essential that this is not just an academic, intellectual process but that it is also one of reflection as we look into the mirror of the word of God to reveal the condition of our hearts. Therefore, I urge you to as you draw close to YHVH, that you seek Him to work in your life as the Holy Spirit reveals areas of our lives we need to submit to God. Then as the Holy Spirit speaks to us let us humble ourselves before YHVH as we give thanks for His goodness and mercy.

It is only as we walk humbly before God can we stand firm on His word and see victories in our lives.

I pray that this week's parsha will bless and encourage you.

Shabbat Shalom

Nathan

## Reference

1. Chabad, Parshah in a nut shell, [Balak](#)
2. Ibid
3. Chumash Bemidbar, the book of Numbers, Parashat Chukat/Balak
4. Ibid
5. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book IV, Chapter 6
6. Jewish encyclopaedia, article 2246 Baal-Peor

Midrash: In Judaism, the **Midrash** is the genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (*Aggadah*) and occasionally the Jewish religious laws (*halakha*), which usually form a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (*Tanakh*)

Targum: **Targum Onkelos** (or **Onqelos**), is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum (Aramaic translation) to the Torah. However, its early origins may have been western, in Israel. Its authorship is attributed to Onkelos, a famous convert to Judaism in Tannaic times (c. 35–120 CE)

Targum Jonathan: **Targum Jonathan**, otherwise referred to as **Targum Yonasan/Yonatan**, is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum to the Nevi'im/Prophets. Its early origins, however, are western (i.e. from the Land of Israel), and the Talmudic tradition attributes its authorship to Jonathan ben Uzziel of Jerusalem in the time of King Herod

Tannaim: Tannaim were the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE. The period of the Tannaim, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 210 years.

Talmud: The **Talmud** means "instruction, learning", "teach, study") is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism. The term "Talmud" normally refers to the collection of writings named specifically the **Babylonian Talmud** (*Talmud Bavli*), although there is also an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*) or Palestinian

The Talmud has two components:

1. The Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law;
2. The Gemara (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible

Jubilees: The Book of Jubilees claims to present "the history of the division of the days of the Law, of the events of the years, the year-weeks, and the jubilees of the world" as revealed to Moses (in addition to the Torah or "Instruction") by angels while he was on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. The chronology given in Jubilees is based on multiples of seven; the jubilees are periods of 49 years, seven "year-weeks", into which all of time has been divided

Vulgate: This is the Latin Bible. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382 and 405 CE, this text became known as the 'versio vulgata', which means 'common translation'.