

Numbers 24 - Balaam's 3rd/4th Prophecies

II. Failure of the first generation (Num 11:1—25:18)

(5) Failure at Moab (Num 22:1—25:18)

(B) Balaam's seven oracles blessing Israel (Num 23:1—24:24)

(c) Circumstances of third Oracle (23:27—24:14)

(d) Circumstances of fourth Oracle (24:15-19)

(e) Circumstances of fifth Oracle (24:20)

(f) Circumstances of sixth Oracle (24:21-22)

(g) Circumstances of seventh Oracle (24:23-24)

Numbers 24

(c) Circumstances of third Oracle (23:27—24:14) (cont'd from Num 23)

1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens, rather he turned his attention toward the wilderness.

1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness.

1 When Balaam noticed that the LORD was pleased that Balaam was blessing Israel, he didn't behave as he had time after time before, that is, to practice divination. Instead, he turned with his face to the wilderness,

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 raised his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

2 looked up, and saw Israel encamped in their respective tribal order. Just then, the spirit of God came upon him.

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.

- Then, invested with the Spirit of God he uttered his 3rd oracle

- This coming of the Spirit no more proves that Balaam was a true prophet than the coming of the Spirit on Saul (1 Sam 10:6,10-11) or the disciples (John 20:22) made them prophets

of the Lord

— There is a difference between the Spirit's coming on individuals to empower them supernaturally and His coming into them to abide (Cf. John 7:39)

3 Then he took up his discourse and said, "The declaration of Balaam the son of Beor, And the declaration of the man whose eye is opened;

3 He took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened;

3 Balaam uttered this prophetic statement: "A declaration by Beor's son Balaam, a declaration by the strong, blind man.

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:

- Balaam, having understood by now the futility of sorcery against the people God had determined to bless, forsook his usual techniques and looked out over the host of Israel arranged in its prescribed tribal order

4 The declaration of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered,

4 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered,

4 A declaration from one who hears what God has to say, who saw the vision that the Almighty revealed, who keeps stumbling with open eyes.

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 pleasant are your tents, Jacob, Your dwelling places, Israel!

5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!

5 Jacob, your tents are so fine, as well as your dwelling places, O Israel!

5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

6 "Like valleys that stretch out, Like gardens beside a river, Like aloes planted by the LORD, Like cedars beside the waters.

6 "Like valleys that stretch out, Like gardens beside the river, Like aloes planted by the LORD, Like cedars beside the waters.

6 They're spread out like valleys, like gardens along river banks, like aloe planted by the LORD, or like cedars beside water.

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 "Water will flow from his buckets, And his seed *will be* by many waters, And his king shall be higher than **Agag**, And his kingdom shall be exalted.

7 "Water will flow from his buckets, And his seed *will be* by many waters, And his king shall be higher than Agag, And his kingdom shall be exalted.

7 He will pour water from his buckets, and his descendants will stream forth like abundant water. His king will be more exalted than Agag when he exalts his own kingdom.

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.

- Agag: this Amalekite king first appears in the story of Samuel and Saul, more than 300 years after Balaam (Cf. 1 Sam 15:8)

- However, Agag was a title, such as Pharaoh, of a long line of Amalekite kings

- Parallels to this may be seen in Abimelech (Gen 20:1-2; 26:1) and Jabin (Josh 11:1; Judges 4:2)

- The prophecy that Israel would have a king is in line with earlier revelation (Gen 17:6; 35:11; 49:10)

8 "God brings him out of Egypt, *He is* for him like the horns of the wild ox. He will devour the nations *who are* his adversaries, And will crush their bones, And smash *them* with his arrows.

8 "God brings him out of Egypt, He is for him like the horns of the wild ox. He will devour the nations *who are* his adversaries, And will crush their bones in pieces, And shatter *them* with his arrows.

8 God is bringing them out of Egypt with the strength of an ox. He'll devour enemy nations, break their bones, and impale them with arrows.

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 crouches, he lies down like a lion, And like a lioness, who dares to rouse him? Blessed is *everyone* who blesses you, And cursed is *everyone* who curses you."

9 "He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him? Blessed is everyone who blesses you, And cursed is everyone who curses you."

9 He crouches, laying low like a lion. Who would awaken him? Those who bless you are blessed, and those who curse you are cursed."

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.

- By this statement Balaam knowingly or unknowingly repeated God's promise to Abraham and the patriarchs concerning Israel's special redemptive role (Gen 12:3)

The third oracle, a vision from the Almighty, the name by which God appeared to Abraham, confirmed that Israel will inherit the land promised. The predicted defeat of Agag, the Amalekite king shows that Canaan is in mind here (Cf. 1 Sam 15:8). Finally, the prediction that Israel would devour hostile nations fulfils the promise that they would possess their enemies' cities (Gen 22:17). That the Abrahamic covenant is in mind is further indicated by the last words of v9, May those who bless you be blessed and those who curse you be cursed! (Cf. Gen 12:3).

10 Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!

10 Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!

10 Balak flew into a rage and he started hitting his fists together. "I called you to curse my enemies," he yelled at Balaam. "But look here! You've blessed them three times!

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 So flee to your place now. I said I would honor you greatly, but behold, the LORD has held you back from honor."

11 Therefore, flee to your place now. I said I would honor you greatly, but behold, the LORD has held you back from honor."

11 Now get out of here! I had promised you that I would definitely honor you, but now the LORD has kept me from doing that!"

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.

12 And Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not in fact tell your messengers whom you had sent to me, saying,

12 Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell your messengers whom you had sent to me, saying,

12 But Balaam replied to Balak, "I told your messengers,

12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying,

13 'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do *anything* contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the LORD speaks, I will speak'?

13 'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the LORD speaks, that I will speak'?

13 'Even if Balak gives me his palace full of silver and gold, I won't double-cross the command of the LORD and do anything—whether good or evil—on my own initiative, because I'm going to say whatever the LORD says.'

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 So now, behold, I am going to my people; come, *and* I will advise you of what this people will do to your people in the days to come."

14 And now, behold, I am going to my people; come, *and* I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the days to come."

14 Meanwhile, since I have to return to my people, come and listen while I tell you what this people will be doing to your people in the last days."

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.

(d) Circumstances of fourth Oracle (24:15-19)

15 Then he took up his discourse and said, "The declaration of Balaam the son of Beor, And the declaration of the man whose eye is opened,

15 He took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,

15 Then Balaam uttered this prophetic statement: "The declaration by Beor's son Balaam, a declaration by the strong, blind man.

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 The declaration of him who hears the words of **God**, And knows the knowledge of **the Most High**, Who sees the vision of **the Almighty**, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered:

16 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, And knows the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered.

16 A declaration from one who hears what God has to say, who knows what the Most High knows, who saw the vision that the Almighty revealed, who keeps stumbling with open eyes.

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:

- The pagan mentioned three names or epithets of God:

- "...God" - *el* - "the powerful One"

- "...the Most High" - *elyôn* - "the uplifted One"

- "...the Almighty" - *šaddai* - "the abundant One" or "the Almighty One"

17 I see him, but not now; I look at him, but not near; A star shall appear from Jacob, A **scepter** shall rise from Israel, And shall smash the forehead of Moab, And overcome all the sons of Sheth.

17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.

17 I can see him, but not right now. I observe him, but from a distance. A star streams forth from Jacob; a scepter arises from Israel. He will crush Moab's forehead, along with all of Seth's descendants.

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 Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

- The truth Balaam saw concerned primarily a star and a scepter that would originate in Israel in the future

- "...A star shall appear from Jacob" - a prophecy that the Messiah must be Jewish or from the line of Jacob

- "...scepter" - denotes authority

18 "And Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, While Israel performs valiantly.

18 "Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, While Israel performs valiantly.

18 Edom will be a conquered nation and Seir will be Israel's defeated foe, while Israel performs valiantly.

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

19 "One from Jacob shall rule, And will eliminate the survivors from the city."

19 "One from Jacob shall have dominion, And will destroy the remnant from the city."

19 He will rule over Jacob, annihilating those who survive in the city."

19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

- Edom also was threatened with conquest by Israel

— Seir was another name for Edom as the parallel construction indicates (Cf. Gen 32:3; Deut 2:4)

- Balaam said a ruler would come from Israel and destroy the survivors of the city

— The city is probably Sela, Edom's capital, known later as Petra

- Fulfillment of these prophecies about Moab and Edom have already come to pass in some respects (1 Kings 11:15-18) but they still have prophetic overtones

- Moab and Edom must yet suffer the judgment of the King of Israel, Jesus Christ (Cf. Is 15-16; 21:11-12; Jer 48; 49:7-11; Obadiah 15-18,21)

The fourth oracle was the most remarkable: from the Most High (24:16), by whom Melchizedek blessed Abraham (Gen 14:18-20). Melchizedek is himself associated with Christ (Heb 7:1-17; Ps 110:4); promises a king in who will defeat Israel's enemies (v17-19): "crush the foreheads of Moab (v17) anticipates David's victories (2 Sam 8:2). However, the promise to Abraham (Gen 12:3; 22:18), the promise of the Messiah whom the Gentiles will obey (Gen 49:10). Thus, Balaam confirmed God's promises to Abraham.

Balaam's Oracles

- 1st Oracle (23:7-12) - confirmed Israel will be like the dust of the earth
- 2nd Oracle (23:13-26) - confirmed that God is among his people
- 3rd Oracle (23:27—24:14) - confirmed that Israel will inherit the land
- 4th Oracle (24:15-19) - confirmed that Israel would have a king who would possess

(e) Circumstances of fifth Oracle (24:20)

20 And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first of the nations, But his end *shall be* destruction."

20 And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first of the nations, But his end *shall be* destruction."

20 Next, Balaam looked directly at Amalek and then uttered this prophetic statement: Even though Amalek is an international leader, his future is permanent destruction."

20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.

- Balaam had previously mentioned Agag (v7), the Amalekite king

- The Amalekites also had attacked Israel just after the Exodus (Ex 17:8-16) and so were placed under the judgment of the Lord (Cf. 1 Sam 15:1-3)
- They were first among the nations in the sense that their ancestry could be traced back to Esau (Cf. Gen 36:16)

(f) Circumstances of sixth Oracle (24:21-22)

21 And he looked at the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said, "Your dwelling place is enduring, And your nest is set in the cliff.

21 And he looked at the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said, "Your dwelling place is enduring, And your nest is set in the cliff.

21 Balaam also uttered this prophetic statement about the Kenites: "Your dwelling places are stable, because your nest is carved in solid rock.

21 And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

22 "Nevertheless Kain will suffer devastation; How long will Asshur keep you captive?"

22 "Nevertheless Kain will be consumed; How long will Asshur keep you captive?"

22 Nevertheless, Kain will be incinerated. How long will it take until Asshur takes you hostage?"

22 Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

- The reference to Asshur (Assyria) is a prediction of the conquests of the west by Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V

- Mention of the Assyrians as early as Balaam: by then the Middle Assyrian Kingdom period was under way and Assyria was on the way to becoming a mighty international power

(g) Circumstances of seventh Oracle (24:23-24)

23 Then he took up his discourse and said, "Oh, who can live unless God has ordained it?"

23 Then he took up his discourse and said, "Alas, who can live except God has ordained it?"

23 Finally, he uttered this prophetic statement: "Ah, who can live, unless God makes it happen?"

23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

24 "But ships *shall come* from the coast of **Kittim**, And they shall oppress Asshur and oppress **Eber**; So **they also will come to destruction.**"

24 "But ships *shall come* from the coast of Kittim, And they shall afflict Asshur and will afflict Eber; So they also *will come* to destruction."

24 Ships under control of Kittim will devastate Asshur and Eber, until they are permanently destroyed."

24 And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

- "...Kittim" - the countries lying on the Mediterranean, particularly Greece and Italy (Dan 11:29-30)

- The Assyrians were themselves to be overthrown—first, by the Greeks under Alexander the Great and his successors; secondly, by the Romans

- "...Eber" - the posterity of the Hebrews (Gen 10:24)

- "...they also *will come* to destruction" - that is, the conqueror of Asher and Eber, namely, the Greek and Roman empires

25 Then Balaam arose, and he departed and returned to his place, and Balak also went on his way.

25 Then Balaam arose and departed and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way.

25 Then Balaam got up, returned to his country, and Balak went on his way.

25 And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.