

## Welcome to 10 Minute Topics

### This week's topic is: Bilam

Bamidbar – Chapter 22

#### BILAM, PROPHET OF THE NATIONS

(1) And the children of Israel journeyed, and pitched in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. (2) And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. (3) And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many; and Moab was overcome with dread because of the children of Israel. (4) And Moab said unto the elders of Midian: 'Now will this multitude lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field.' - And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. - (5) And he sent messengers unto Bilam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the River, to the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying: 'Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt; behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. (6) Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me; perhaps I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.' (7) And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Bilam, and spoke unto him the words of Balak. (8) And he said unto them: 'Lodge here this night, and I will bring you back word, as the L-rd may speak unto me'; and the princes of Moab abode with Bilam. (9) And G-d came unto Bilam, and said: 'What men are these with thee?' (10) And Bilam said unto G-d: 'Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent unto me saying: (11) Behold the people that is come out of Egypt, it covers the face of the earth; now, come curse me them; perhaps I shall be able to fight against them, and shall drive them out.' (12) And G-d said unto Bilam: 'You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people; for they are blessed.' (13) And Bilam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak: 'Get you into your land; for the L-rd refuses to give me leave to go with you.' (14) And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said: 'Bilam refuses to come with us.' (15) And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honorable than they. (16) And they came to Bilam, and said to him: 'Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor: Let nothing, I pray you, hinder you from coming unto me; (17) for I will promote you unto very great honor, and whatsoever you say unto me I will do; come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.' (18) And Bilam answered and said unto the servants of Balak: 'If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the L-rd my G-d, to do anything, small or great. (19) Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the L-rd will speak unto me more.'

#### G-D'S AMBIGUOUS PERMISSION

(20) And G-d came unto Bilam at night, and said unto him: 'If the men are come to call you, rise up, go with them; but only the word which I speak unto you, that shall you do.' (21) And Bilam rose up in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. (22) And G-d's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the L-rd placed himself in the way for an adversary against him. - Now he was riding upon his donkey, and his two servants were with him. -

### G-D IMPEDES BILAM'S PATH

(23) And the donkey saw the angel of the L-rd standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and the donkey turned aside out of the way, and went into the field; and Bilam smote the donkey, to turn her into the way. (24) Then the angel of the L-rd stood in a hollow way between the vineyards, a fence being on this side, and a fence on that side. (25) And the donkey saw the angel of the L-rd, and she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Bilam's foot against the wall; and he smote her again. (26) And the angel of the L-rd went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. (27) And the donkey saw the angel of the L-rd, and she lay down under Bilam; and Bilam's anger was kindled, and he smote the donkey with his staff.

### BILAM'S SHE-DONKEY SPEAKS

(28) And the L-rd opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said unto Bilam: 'What have I done unto you, that you have smitten me these three times?' (29) And Bilam said unto the donkey: 'Because you have mocked me; if only there were a sword in my hand, I would have killed you.' (30) And the donkey said unto Bilam: 'Am not I your donkey, upon which you have ridden all thy lifelong unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto you?' And he said: 'Nay.'

### BILAM SEES THE ANGEL

(31) Then the L-rd opened the eyes of Bilam, and he saw the angel of the L-rd standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed his head, and fell on his face. (32) And the angel of the L-rd said unto him: 'Why have you smitten your donkey these three times? Behold, I am come forth for an adversary, because your way is contrary unto me; (33) and the donkey saw me, and turned aside before me these three times; unless she had turned aside from me, surely now I had even slain you, and saved her alive.' (34) And Bilam said unto the angel of the L-rd: 'I have sinned; for I knew not that you stood in the way against me; now therefore, if it displease you, I shall return.' (35) And the angel of the L-rd said unto Bilam: 'Go with the men; but only the word that I shall speak unto you, that you shall speak.' So Bilam went with the princes of Balak.

### BILAM'S REBUKE

(36) And when Balak heard that Bilam was come, he went out to meet him in the city of Moab, which is on the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost part of the border. (37) And Balak said unto Bilam: 'Did I not earnestly send unto you to call you? Why did you not go to me? Am I not able indeed to promote you to honor?' (38) And Bilam said unto Balak: 'Lo, I am come unto you; have I now any power at all to speak anything? The word that G-d puts in my mouth, that shall I speak.' (39) And Bilam went with Balak, and they came unto Kiriath-huzoth. (40) And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent to Bilam, and to the princes that were with him. (41) And it came to pass in the morning that Balak took Bilam, and brought him up into heights of Baal, and he saw from thence the utmost part of the people.

### Bamidbar – Chapter 23

#### BILAM'S ALTAR OFFERINGS

(1) And Bilam said unto Balak: 'Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams.' (2) And Balak did as Bilam had spoken; and Balak and Bilam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. (3) And Bilam said unto Balak: 'Stand by your burnt-offering, and I

will go; perhaps the L-rd will come to meet me; and whatsoever He shows me I will tell you.' And he went to a bare height. (4) And G-d met Bilam; and he said unto Him: 'I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered up a bullock and a ram on every altar.' (5) And the L-rd put a word in Bilam's mouth, and said: 'Return unto Balak, and thus you shall speak.' (6) And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt-offering, he, and all the princes of Moab.

#### BILAM'S FIRST BLESSING

(7) And he took up his parable, and said: From Aram Balak brings me, the king of Moab from the mountains of the East: 'Come, curse me Jacob, and come, execrate Israel.' (8) How shall I curse, whom G-d has not cursed? And how shall I execrate, whom the L-rd has not execrated? (9) For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. (10) Who has counted the dust of Jacob, or numbered the stock of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let mine end be like his!

#### BALAK'S ANGER

(11) And Balak said unto Bilam: 'What have you done unto me? I took you to curse mine enemies, and, behold, you have blessed them altogether.' (12) And he answered and said: 'Must I not take heed to speak that which the L-rd puts in my mouth?' (13) And Balak said unto him: 'Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence you may see them; you shall see but the utmost part of them, and shall not see them all; and curse me them from thence.' (14) And he took him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered up a bullock and a ram on every altar. (15) And he said unto Balak: 'Stand here by your burnt-offering, while I go toward a meeting yonder.' (16) And the L-rd met Bilam, and put a word in his mouth, and said: 'Return unto Balak, and thus shall you speak.' (17) And he came to him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him: 'What has the L-rd spoken?'

#### BILAM'S SECOND BLESSING

(18) And he took up his parable, and said: Arise, Balak, and hear; give ear unto me, you son of Zippor: (19) G-d is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: when He has said, will He not do it? Or when He has spoken, will He not make it good? (20) Behold, I am bidden to bless; and when He has blessed, I cannot call it back. (21) None has beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither has one seen perverseness in Israel; the L-rd his G-d is with him, and the shouting for the King is among them. (22) G-d who brought them forth out of Egypt is for them like the lofty horns of the wild-ox. (23) For there is no enchantment with Jacob, neither is there any divination with Israel; now is it said of Jacob and of Israel: 'What has G-d wrought!' (24) Behold a people that rises up as a lioness, and as a lion does he lift himself up; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

#### BALAK'S ANGER AND REQUEST

(25) And Balak said unto Bilam: 'Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.' (26) But Bilam answered and said unto Balak: 'Told not I thee, saying: All that the L-rd speaks, that I must do?' (27) And Balak said unto Bilam: 'Come now, I will take you unto another place; perhaps it will please G-d that you may curse me them from thence.' (28) And Balak took Bilam unto the top of Peor, that looks down upon the desert. (29) And Bilam said unto Balak: 'Build me here seven

altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams.' (30) And Balak did as Bilam had said, and offered up a bullock and a ram on every altar.

Bamidbar – Chapter 24

### BILAM'S THIRD BLESSING

(1) And when Bilam saw that it pleased the L-rd to bless Israel, he went not, as at the other times, to meet with enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. (2) And Bilam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling tribe by tribe; and the spirit of G-d came upon him. (3) And he took up his parable, and said: The saying of Bilam the son of Beor, and the saying of the man whose eye is opened; (4) The saying of him who hears the words of G-d, who sees the vision of the Almighty, fallen down, yet with opened eyes: (5) How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwellings, O Israel! (6) As valleys stretched out, as gardens by the river-side; as aloes planted of the L-rd, as cedars beside the waters; (7) Water shall flow from his branches, and his seed shall be in many waters; and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. (8) G-d who brought him forth out of Egypt is for him like the lofty horns of the wild-ox; he shall eat up the nations that are his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces, and pierce them through with his arrows. (9) He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a lioness; who shall rouse him up? Blessed be every one that blesses you, and cursed be every one that curses you.

### BALAK'S ANGER

(10) And Balak's anger was kindled against Bilam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Bilam: 'I called you to curse mine enemies, and, behold, you have altogether blessed them these three times. (11) Therefore now flee thou to thy place; I thought to promote you unto great honor; but, lo, the L-rd has kept you back from honor.' (12) And Bilam said unto Balak: 'Spoke I not also to thy messengers that you did send unto me, saying: (13) If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the L-rd, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; what the L-rd speaks, that will I speak?'

### BILAM'S LAST PROPHECY

(14) And now, behold, I go unto my people; come, and I will announce to you what this people shall do to your people in the end of days.' (15) And he took up his parable, and said: The saying of Bilam the son of Beor, and the saying of the man whose eye is opened; (16) The saying of him who hears the words of G-d, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, fallen down, yet with opened eyes: (17) I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh; there shall step forth a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite through the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of Seth. (18) And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also, even his enemies, shall be a possession; while Israel does valiantly. (19) And out of Jacob shall one have dominion, and shall destroy the remnant from the city. (20) And he looked on Amalek, and took up his parable, and said: Amalek was the first of the nations; but his end shall come to destruction. (21) And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his parable, and said: Though firm be thy dwelling-place, and though thy nest be set in the rock; (22) Nevertheless Kain shall be wasted; How long? Asshur shall carry you away captive. (23) And he took up his parable, and said: Alas, who shall live after G-d has appointed him? (24) But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, and they shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he

also shall come to destruction. (25) And Bilam rose up, and went and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way.

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Text based on “The Holy Scriptures” – Jewish Publication Society, 1917

\*The usage of G-d and L-rd is in compliance with the command to not take the Name of G-d in vain or to erase His Name. If you print out these pages, please treat them with respect. If you need to get rid of them, please take them to a synagogue and ask that they be reused or placed in a geniza.

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[rachel-esther@becomingjewish.org](mailto:rachel-esther@becomingjewish.org)