

Notes: Shabbat – July 5, 2014

Start: 10 am

### **Order of Service:**

Meet and Greet  
Liturgy – Ma Tovv  
Introduction (if new people)  
Liturgy – Sh'ma  
Announcements  
Prayer  
Praise Reports  
Praise and Worship Songs  
Message  
Aaronic Blessing  
Kiddush  
Oneg

### **Introduction:** What God Has Blessed Cannot Be Cursed

In this week's Parashah, Bil'am (Balaam) we read of many things that not only pertaining to this individual, but that of the one who hired him and his intentions.

The people of Mo'av, was fearful of this new nation that had just come out of Egypt and was camping in the area of Mo'av because of their sheer size.

Think of the area required to support over two million people, not to mention the Mishkan that would be at the center of the camp.

This was likely a site that could be seen from miles away in the desert.

It was not uncommon in pagan cultures to hire soothsayers for enacting curses against their enemies prior to going to war, in order to gain “an upper hand”

So, Balak's pursuit of Bil'am was not unusual.

I won't be talking about everything in this Parashah but offering some observations...

First, Bil'am consults directly with Adonai...

**Num 22:8** He said to them, "Stay here tonight, and I will bring you back whatever answer Adonai tells me." So the princes of Mo'av stayed with Bil`am.

**Num 22:9** God came to Bil`am and said, "Who are these men with you?"

**Num 22:10** Bil`am said to God, "Balak the son of Tzippor, king of Mo'av, has sent me this message:

**Num 22:11** 'The people who came out of Egypt have spread over the land; now, come and curse them for me; maybe I will be able to fight against them and drive them out.' "

**Num 22:12** God answered Bil`am, "You are not to go with them; you are not to curse the people, because they are blessed."

**Num 22:13** Bil`am got up in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Return to your own land, because Adonai refuses to give me permission to go with you."

Adonai goes to Bil'am, a pagan, someone who is not part of Israel, but is a “hired gun” and speaks with him directly.

This reminds me of how Adonai speaks with Moshe...

**Num 12:7** But it isn't that way with my servant Moshe. He is the only one who is faithful in my entire household.

**Num 12:8** With him I speak face to face and clearly, not in riddles; he sees the image of Adonai. So why weren't you afraid to criticize my servant Moshe?"

Yet as Lloyd Benson had responded to Dan Quayle in the 1988 Vice President debate who compared himself to John Kennedy...saying "I knew John Kennedy, and sir you are no John Kennedy"

Could we not say the same here..."Bil'am you are no Moshe"

Yet, Adonai speaks to him directly and with a specific response, not to go with these people.

A pagan outside of the Covenants being instructed by Adonai, who at first listened, but would succumb to enticement.

**Num 22:18** Bil`am answered the servants of Balak, "Even if Balak were to give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Adonai my God to do anything, great or small.

**Num 22:19** Now, please, you too, stay here tonight; so that I may find out what else Adonai will say to me."

The second thing that was surprising was how Adonai responded to Bil'am's response to go.

Keeping in mind that at first he was instructed not to go with these men...Adonai says to him...

**Num 22:20** God came to Bil`am during the night and said to him, "If the men have come to summon you, get up and go with them; but do only what I tell you."

Is this a case of free will being exercised or Adonai using a vessel to convey a message?

In this case both.

Adonai does not prevent Bil'am from going, but instructs him to only do what He tells him to do.

We have later examples of Adonai using a vessel such as Babylon to enact judgment against His people. (more later)

So in this case Bil'am is a willing representative of Adonai.

I believe Balak and his people thought they had succeeded because Bil'am had agreed to go with them. But his agreeing to go was conditional.

He would only say what he was instructed to say.

On the way there, this is where we witness Bil'am's donkey responding to the angel of Adonai in front of him. When it is revealed to Bil'am that the angel of Adonai is standing before him, yet he did not see him, he responded...

**Num 22:34** Bil`am said to the angel of Adonai, "I have sinned. I didn't know that you were standing on the road to block me. Now, therefore, if what I am doing displeases you, I will go back."

He was reminded of this by an angel of Adonai.

**Num 22:35** But the angel of Adonai said to Bil`am, "No, go on with the men; but you are to say only what I tell you to say." So Bil`am went along with the princes of Balak.

**Num 23:1** Bil`am said to Balak, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare me seven bulls and seven rams here."

**Num 23:2** Balak did as Bil`am said; then Balak and Bil`am offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

**Num 23:3** Bil`am said to Balak, "Stand by your burnt offering while I go off; maybe Adonai will come and meet me; and whatever he shows me I will tell you." He went off to a bare hill.

**Num 23:4** God met Bil'am, who said to him, "I prepared the seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar."

**Num 23:5** Then Adonai put a word in Bil'am's mouth and said, "Go on back to Balak, and speak as I tell you."

It was not uncommon to offer animals as sacrifices outside of Israel, but the issue is in whom you are offering them to...

Just prior we read of Balak offering cattle and sheep.

In this case, Bil'am was making an offering by fire to Adonai. We know this based on the response Bil'am received in terms of Adonai's response.

These are the words that Adonai gave to Bil'am...

**Num 23:7** he made his pronouncement: "Balak, the king of Mo'av, brings me from Aram, from the eastern hills, saying, 'Come, curse Ya'akov for me; come and denounce Isra'el.'

**Num 23:8** "How am I to curse those whom God has not cursed? How am I to denounce those whom Adonai has not denounced?"

**Num 23:9** "From the top of the rocks I see them, from the hills I behold them — yes, a people that will dwell alone and not think itself one of the nations.

**Num 23:10** "Who has counted the dust of Ya'akov or numbered the ashes of Isra'el? May I die as the righteous die! May my end be like theirs!"

The first "oracle" was intended to be a curse upon Israel, but is actually protection from curses imposed by others against Israel — a blessing.

This blessing by Adonai further emphasizes the following...

1. What Adonai has blessed cannot be cursed.

Because of the blessings made by Adonai to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, Adonai could not curse what He had already set apart and blessed.

**Gen 12:3** I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

One must wonder if Balak, was aware of this Covenant relationship?

If so, would he have every enacted a curse upon Israel, knowing that his curse would become a curse upon him and Mo'av?

2. Adonai's call is irrevocable.

We see this irrevocable nature of Adonai's blessing throughout scripture and

**Rom 11:29** for God's free gifts and his calling are irrevocable.

He called Israel to be a nation.

Like the first blessing, the second reaffirms that Adonai's gifts and calling are irrevocable.

**Num 23:18** Then Bil'am made his pronouncement: "Get up, Balak, and listen! Turn your ears to me, son of Tzippor!

**Num 23:19** "God is not a human who lies or a mortal who changes his mind. When he says something, he will do it; when he makes a promise, he will fulfill it.

**Num 23:20** Look, I am ordered to bless; when he blesses, I can't reverse it.

**Num 23:21** "No one has seen guilt in Ya'akov, or perceived perversity in Isra'el; Adonai their God is with them and acclaimed as king among them.

**Num 23:22** "God, who brought them out of Egypt, gives them the strength of a wild ox;

**Num 23:23** thus one can't put a spell on Ya`akov, no magic will work against Isra'el. It can now be said of Ya`akov and Isra'el, 'What is this that God has done?!

**Num 23:24** "Here is a people rising up like a lioness; like a lion he rears himself up — he will not lie down till he eats up the prey and drinks the blood of the slain."

Adonai's promises cannot be changed and His presence with them continues...

He is the one who called them, placed His name upon them, called them His first born...

Because Israel is blessed by Adonai, doesn't mean that we are immune from curses associated with the Covenant we are under. It means we are immune from the curses that others attempt to place on us.

**Mat 28:18** Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

**Mat 10:1** Yeshua called his twelve talmidim and gave them authority to drive out unclean spirits and to heal every kind of disease and weakness.

It is our obedience and faith in the one we have placed our trust that protects us from all things that come against us.

Regarding the third and fourth oracles...

**Num 24:3** and he made his pronouncement: "This is the speech of Bil`am, son of B`or; the speech of the man whose eyes have been opened;

**Num 24:4** the speech of him who hears God's words; who sees what Shaddai sees, who has fallen, yet has open eyes:

**Num 24:5** "How lovely are your tents, Ya`akov; your encampments, Isra'el!

**Num 24:6** They spread out like valleys, like gardens by the riverside, like succulent aloes planted by Adonai, like cedar trees next to the water.

**Num 24:7** "Water will flow from their branches, their seed will have water aplenty. Their king will be higher than Agag and his kingdom lifted high.

**Num 24:8** God, who brought them out of Egypt, gives them the strength of a wild ox. They will devour the nations opposing them, break their bones, pierce them with their arrows.

**Num 24:9** "When they lie down they crouch like a lion, or like a lioness — who dares to rouse it? Blessed be all who bless you! Cursed be all who curse you!"

Verse 9 recounts Adonai's promise to Avraham.

This blessing further emphasizes whoever curses Israel will be cursed.

In the final oracle, Bil'am speaks of the downfall to ensue on Moav, and the neighboring nations

As it turns out, the pendulum swings both ways. In the case of Bil'am, we read of his fate...

**Num 31:1** Adonai said to Moshe,

**Num 31:2** "On behalf of the people of Isra'el, take vengeance on the Midyanim. After that, you will be gathered to your people."

**Num 31:3** Moshe said to the people, "Equip men from among yourselves for war. They are to go and fight Midyan, in order to carry out Adonai's vengeance on Midyan.

**Num 31:4** You are to send to the war a thousand men from every one of Isra'el's tribes."

**Num 31:5** So out of the thousands of people in Isra'el, a thousand armed men from each tribe, 12,000 altogether, were mustered for war.

**Num 31:6** Moshe sent them, a thousand from each tribe, to the war; he sent them and Pinchas the son of El`azar the cohen to the war, with the holy utensils and the trumpets for sounding the alarm in his care.

**Num 31:7** They fought against Midyan, as Adonai had ordered Moshe, and killed every male.

Even though he responded in obedience, uttering every word Adonai would speak. His initial act was of disobedience.

He wasn't supposed to go with the men.

Could Adonai still use Him. Certainly.

Moshe again comes to mind.

He was unlike any servant Adonai had, yet by one ill-timed action he lost a blessing, not all that Adonai had blessed him with, but the privilege of leading Israel into the Land.

We can only speculate as to what Bil'am's fate would have been had he first listened.

I had mentioned Babylon earlier. Adonai used Babylon as a vessel that would enact judgment upon Israel for their actions.

It wasn't what Israel had lost but what they were reaping for what they had sowed.

Babylon would be judged for the severity of their action, not the action itself. (Jeremiah 51 & 52)

To whom Bil'am spoke, was the same source we have for our journey.

**Joh 16:13** However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own initiative but will say only what he hears. He will also announce to you the events of the future.

The same authority that spoke to Bil'am we have as believers...

**Luk 12:11** "When they bring you before the synagogues and the ruling powers and the authorities, don't worry about how you will defend yourself or what you will say;

**Luk 12:12** because when the time comes, the Ruach HaKodesh will teach you what you need to say."

Bil'am like Kefa, received unrefutable information from the same source.

**Mat 16:17** "Shim`on Bar-Yochanan," Yeshua said to him, "how blessed you are! For no human being revealed this to you, no, it was my Father in heaven.

**Jas 3:7** For people have tamed and continue to tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures;

**Jas 3:8** but the tongue no one can tame — it is an unstable and evil thing, full of death-dealing poison!

**Jas 3:9** With it we bless Adonai, the Father; and with it we curse people, who were made in the image of God.

**Jas 3:10** Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing! Brothers, it isn't right for things to be this way.

**Jas 3:11** A spring doesn't send both fresh and bitter water from the same opening, does it?