

BIBLE CLASS 04.07.2024. BALAK AND BALAAM NUMBERS 22

Dear Brothers and Sisters

In our study of the book of Numbers thus far we have come to the point where Israel has come out of the waste howling wilderness (Deut. 32:10) and are marching northward on the right side of the River Jordan having overcome the people of Sihon who endeavoured to block their way. Israel however defeated them and possessed their land from Arnon to Jabbok. They totally defeated the Amorites and took their land and it was given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh.

The fear of Israel frightened the nation of Moab and their King Balak consulted with the elders of Midian who were descendants of Abraham and Keturah, but apparently received no help so he appealed to a well-known diviner, Balaam, who claimed the ability to prophecy and achieve spectacular results. Balak requested Balaam to curse Israel, but Yahweh forbids permission for him to give help to Balak, but then allows him to go upon condition, namely **if** Balak's men called for him. But Balaam decided to go anyway, and he saddled his Donkey and made his way to Moab. This angered Yahweh who sent an angel to stand in the way with a drawn sword. Balaam could not see the angel but the donkey or ass could see him and it turned aside out of the way and walked into a field. This made Balaam very angry and he beat the ass with a rod to turn it back into the way. But as they went they passed through a vine yard with a wall on either side of the pathway and seeing the angel standing in the way the ass fell down under Balaam who set about beating the animal with a staff again. This time Yahweh enabled the ass to speak and it asked Balaam what it had done to endure such a beating three times. Balaam was so incensed that he seems not to realise that this dumb animal was speaking! He asked Balaam why he was so mad with his own ass. ²⁹ And Balaam said unto the ass, 'Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee'.

³⁰ And the ass said unto Balaam, *Am* not I thine ass, upon which you hast ridden ever since *I was* thine unto this day? was I ever inclined to do so unto thee? And he said, No.

³¹ Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. (Num 22:29) The angel of Yahweh explained to Balaam how his ass had saved his life and Balaam admitted his sin and offered to go back home again, but the angel of Yahweh instructed him to go with the men.

Compare Balaam's behaviour with that of Abraham when Yahweh instructed him, "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham **rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass**, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. (Gen 22:2-3 KJV)

The apostle Peter refers to this incident when he writing of the danger of false "believers" corrupting the Ecclesias, "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; ¹³ And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; ¹⁴ Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: ¹⁵ Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶ But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷ These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. (2Pe 2:12-17)

However Yahweh had another work for Balaam to fulfil. So the angel of Yahweh said unto Balaam, Go with the men: **but only the word**

that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. (Num. 22:35)

So Balaam went with Balak and they came to Kirjath-Huzoth which signifies a “City of Streets”. It is located not far from Mount Nebo in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is the mountain considered to be where Moses saw the Promised Land before he died, according to the Old Testament. At around 1,000 meters high, Mt. Nebo sits 10 km northwest from Madaba

The Book of Revelation also mentions a “city of streets” (Rev.11:18) that has cursed the people of God, naming it Babylon the Great. In its existence it has slaughtered innumerable saints of the Most High, but the time is coming when “a mighty angel takes up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. (Rev 18:21)