

Balaam and His Prophecies

“There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.”
Proverbs 19:21

“There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.”
Proverbs 21:30

“Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.”
Isaiah 8:8-9

Preliminary Reading: Numbers chapters 22-24; 31:1-18; Deuteronomy 23:3-6; Joshua 13:21-22; 24:8-10; Nehemiah 13:1-3; Micah 6:1-5; II Peter 2:12-19; Jude 1:10-13; Revelation 2:12-14.

Who was Balaam?

- A. Father was Beor (Nu 22:5; 24:3,15; 31:8; Deut 23:4; Josh 13:22; 24:9; Mic 6:5).
- B. Balaam and father were Syrians by location of their home city of Pethor on the Euphrates in Aram of Mesopotamia (Num 22:5; 23:7; Deut 23:4); recall how Bethuel and Laban were called Syrians from the same area (Gen 25:20; 31:20).
- C. He was a false prophet that used sorcery and witchcraft to bless or curse others.
- D. Balak sent him rewards of *divination*, pay for sorcery and witchcraft (Nu 22:7).
 - 1. **Diviner.** One who practices divination; a soothsayer, prophet, seer; a magician, sorcerer. [OED].
 - 2. **Divination.** The action or practice of divining; the foretelling of future events or discovery of what is hidden or obscure by supernatural or magical means; soothsaying, augury, prophecy. [OED].
 - 3. See Bible references for divination (Deut 18:10; II Kings 17:17; Jer 14:14; Ezek 12:24; 13:6-7; 21:21-23; Acts 16:16).
- E. Balaam used *enchantments* to communicate with Jehovah initially (Num 24:1).
 - 1. **Enchant.** To exert magical influence upon; to bewitch, lay under a spell. To endow with magical powers or properties. [OED].
 - 2. **Enchantment.** The action or process of enchanting, or of employing magic or sorcery. [OED].
 - 3. See Bible references for enchantment (Ex 7:11,22; 8:7,18; Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10; II Kgs 17:17; 21:6; II Chr 33:6; Eccl 10:11; Isaiah 47:9,12; Jer 27:9).
- F. Balaam is identified later by the inspired writer as a *soothsayer* (Joshua 13:22).
 - 1. **Soothsay.** To make predictions, to foretell future events; to predict, prophesy, prognosticate. [OED].
 - 2. **Soothsayer.** One who claims or pretends to the power of foretelling future events; a predictor, prognosticator. [OED].

3. See Bible references for soothsaying (Isaiah 2:6; Daniel 2:27; 4:7; 5:7,11; Micah 5:12; Acts 16:16).
- G. He had a soothsaying reputation a king 400 miles away respected (Num 22:6).
1. But so did Pharaoh's magicians, who duplicated Moses (Ex 7:11,22; 8:7,18).
 2. But so did Simon the sorcerer, the "great power of God" man (Acts 8:9-24).
 3. But so do the priests of Rome by the inspired description (II Thess 2:9-10).
- H. Balaam was a sorcerer, using the devil to make money like the soothsayer in Philippi (Acts 16:16-24). He was not like Melchisedec, a priest of Jehovah.
1. Balaam normally used enchantments and divination for curses (Num 23:23).
 2. It is highly unlikely or impossible that Balak would have sought to a true prophet of Israel's God Jehovah, especially with gifts of pagan divination.
- I. Balaam was covetous and greedy for gain, thus negotiated with Balak and God.
1. Peter by the Holy Spirit identified his covetousness (II Pet 2:15; Jude 1:11).
 2. Bishops and deacons may not be greedy of filthy lucre (I Tim 3:3,8; Tit 1:7).
 3. He likely got cash for cursing Israel through whoredom (Nu 31:16; 25:1-3).
- J. How could Balaam converse with Jehovah and obtain prophecy from Jehovah?
1. There is no evidence he was a priest of Jehovah like Melchisedec or Jethro, so do not foolishly or presumptuously imagine a confused, regenerate elect!
 2. The news of Israel and their God had no doubt arrived in Aram, if Balaam had not already known about Jehovah from the Syrian relatives of Bethuel.
 3. It was no more difficult for Balaam to prophesy than for his ass to speak.
 4. Surely Balaam knew that none but Israel's God could curse or destroy them, for even witches know they cannot curse another witch with greater power.
 5. There is Bible precedent for men to mingle worship of Jehovah and idols and get results, as the immigrants from Assyria show (II Kings 17:24-41).
 6. Pharaoh's priests knew when the finger of Jehovah God arrived (Ex 8:19).
 7. Philistine priests knew what sacrifice Israel's Jehovah wanted (I Sam 6:1-9).
 8. Saul obtained audience with Samuel by the witch of Endor (I Sam 28:7-19).
 9. Caiaphas prophesied of salvation, though Jesus' bitter enemy (Jn 11:49-52).
 10. Compare Judas Iscariot and his powerful ability to preach, do miracles, etc.
 11. Balaam called Jehovah his God by flattery or to impress Balak (Nu 22:18).
 12. Other things he said in his parables should be ascribed to God (Num 23:21).
 13. Many will say to Jesus in the last day about their miracles (Matt 7:21-23).

What should we know about Balaam and his ass?

- A. You should know this hilarious exchange is recounted in the N.T. (II Pet 2:16).
- B. God allowed Balaam to go in judgment (22:12) and on a condition (22:20).
1. Do not be confused by God denying Balaam's request and then allowing it.
 2. Balaam went in greed, as scripture tells, and without the condition (22:21).

3. God was angry for he went for the two reasons: his greed and no condition.
- C. God was angry and sent His angel as an adversary to impress him with his sin.
1. The ass saw the angel and made three different attempts to avoid him.
 3. Each time Balaam beat his ass for not taking the road for proper travel.
 4. God opened the ass's mouth to state a complaint to him for such treatment.
 5. Balaam's eyes are closed to the angel and his mind closed to the talking ass.
 6. He may have experienced or known such things by earlier enchantments.
 7. Revealing the humor of God, the foolish soothsayer debates with his ass.
 8. God told Balaam that his perverse way had drawn the angel of the Lord.
 9. If it had not been for his ass, God would have killed him and kept the ass!
- D. Balaam's confession, in the face of such power, is ridiculously inadequate.
1. He is only sorry for smiting his ass due to not seeing the angel of the Lord.
 2. He still questioned God's displeasure, for his mind fully desired to go.
 3. God let him go under a condition, allowing him the lusts of his evil heart.
 4. He should have learned the lesson clearly that God can overrule the mouth.
 5. It took as least much power for Balaam to prophesy as for the ass to speak.
- E. How often have you been convicted or faced the word of God and ignored it?
1. God sends his dumb asses of all kinds to warn you about your perversity.
 2. Let us learn the lesson once and for all – repent, beg for mercy, and obey.
 3. Do not ... do not ... think that God's silence means approval (Ps 50:21-22).

What did Balaam do to help Balak against Israel when he could not curse?

- A. Here is where you should grasp well the real character of this very wicked man.
- B. Here is where you should grasp that the love of money is the root of all evil.
- C. Balaam taught Balak to ruin Israel by women (Num 31:16; 25:1-18; Rev 2:14).
1. Baalpeor was Baal sex worship on Peor, Balaam's location for his third and fourth prophecies, where Israel committed whoredom with Moabite women (Num 23:28; 25:3,5,18; Deut 4:3; Josh 22:17; Ps 106:28; Hos 9:10).
 2. The women offered sex for mutual idol worship, so God killed 24,000.
 3. This sordid event and its harsh consequences were used by Paul (I Cor 10:8).
 4. After killing Balaam, Moses had every non-virgin killed (Numbers 31:1-18).
- D. Christian men should hate worldly women or carnal Christian women, and if reminding them of the women of Moab might help, then use the terminology.
1. Many men have been seduced and ruined by attractive women to compromise truth, for we can easily recall Adam, Samson, Solomon, etc.
 2. Fathers should only let sons have an interest in very spiritually-minded girls.

What was Balaam's end? Israel killed him in battle with Midian (Num 31:8,16).

What can we learn from the events?

- A. See the conclusion to this outline where there are many good lessons to learn.
- B. Though the history unusual and long ago, we all face choices similar to Balaam.
- C. Though the history unusual and long ago, friends and sex have corrupted many.

What can we learn from the prophecies?

- A. God first put a word in his mouth; then He sent His Spirit (Num 23:5,16; 24:2).
 - 1. The prophecies are glorious not only in content but in creative use of words.
 - 2. They ascend and increase in power, details, and distance as Balaam spoke.
- B. Balaam prepared three fitting offerings on seven altars (Num 23:1-2,14,27-30).
- C. Balaam called them parables, meaning obscure (Num 23:7; 23:18; 24:3; 24:15), very consistent with how God reveals things to prophets (Hos 12:10; Rev 1:1).
- D. A view of the future should see Jesus Christ and His kingdom fully victorious.
- E. In time, God perfectly fulfilled every word of Balaam's blessings on His Israel.
- F. There will be several opportunities for double or triple fulfillments of his words.
 - 1. We reject double fulfillments when either one contradicts scripture or points to an event not taught in the Bible or does not end with Jesus Christ.
 - 2. We see double fulfillments when the literal fulfillment is in the Old Testament and the second, spiritual fulfillment is in Jesus and His kingdom.
 - 3. There must be strong Bible basis for the double fulfillment, which there is plenty of to support a spiritual fulfillment of O.T. king, kingdom prophecies.

PROPHECY #1 (Num 23:7-10)

7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

- A. A parable is an obscure, metaphorical, or proverbial form of speech needing interpretation.
 - 1. Parables are clearly not earthly stories with heavenly meanings to make the truth simple!
 - 2. Disciples knew Jesus' parables kept men from understanding (Matt 13:10-17; Jn 10:6).
 - 3. Parables, like proverbs and riddles, are dark sayings (Ps 49:4; 78:2; Pr 1:6; Ezek 17:2).
 - 4. Balaam used "parable" seven times for his prophecies (Num 23:7,18; 24:3,15,20,21,23).
- B. The Moabites, a bitter and long-term enemy of Israel, were children of Lot (Gen 19:36-38).
- C. Balaam lived in Pethor in an area of Mesopotamia called Aram (Numbers 22:5; Deut 23:5).
- D. The conspiratorial attempt by the rich king Balak was to curse and defy the church of God.

8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?

- A. The people of God should take great comfort by the very true words of a very false prophet.
- B. No matter the power, sorcery, or wealth used, there is no counsel against Jehovah (Pr 21:30).
- C. We may speak boldly about our safety from the devil himself (I John 4:4; Romans 8:35-37).
- D. If the devil himself were to conspire against you, he will flee, if you will resist (James 4:7).

E. No matter the ability or power of a sorcerer, he cannot do anything against the will of God.

9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

- A. Balaam prophesied from a high place of Baal to view the utmost of Israel (Num 22:41; 23:3).
 - 1. He had not met these people before and did not know their present, let alone their future.
 - 2. They had not even yet developed the character that would later identify them as foretold.
 - 3. But by the word that God gave him, he spoke of their future as an expert about Israel.
- B. The nation of Israel, or church of God, was unlike any other nation and depended on none.
 - 1. Israel had God among them and laws superior to other nations (Deu 4:5-8; Ps 147:19-20).
 - 2. Their nation, religion, and culture did not mix with the pagan cultures of their neighbors.
- D. Nations adore and crave the United Nations for confederate power, but not God's people.
- E. God's children are a peculiar people above all others (Ex 19:5; 33:16; Lev 20:26; Tit 2:14).
- F. The only way you can truly be exceptional is by God's grace through a godly, righteous life.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

- A. Israel would be a great nation like dust of the earth innumerable (Gen 13:16; 28:14; Rev 7:9).
 - 1. With prophetic hyperbole, no man could number even one-quarter of the church of God.
 - 2. The camp of Israel was divided into four quarters of three tribes each (Nu 2:9,16,24,31).
- B. Not only is Jacob and Israel numerous, but their death and last end are unlike all other men.
 - 1. While blessed on earth as described, their pleasure does not end at death but is increased!
 - 2. The righteous die, are with the Lord, and gathered to their people (II Cor 5:8; Gen 25:8).
 - 3. Job, David, and all saints knew their bodies would be with God (Job 19:23-27; Ps 49:15).
 - 4. This is a word God put in Balaam's mouth and told him he was to speak it (Num 23:5).
 - 5. Balaam did not have a life or a death like Israel, and he is likely in hell (II Pet 2:12-19).
 - 6. No matter the situation here, the future for the children of God trumps all (Ps 73:15-24)!
 - 7. For those heretics that doubt the immortality of the soul, what does the prophet say?

PROPHECY #2 (Num 23:18-24)

18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:

- A. Balaam used the third person in his first parable to address Balak, but the second person here.
- B. As his prophecies increased in glory, God thus made them more painful for Balak to hear.

19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

- A. You may count on the promises or prophecies of God more than any fact or rule you know.
 - 1. Balak altered circumstances for this second attempt (Num 23:13), but it did not matter.
 - 2. We often use this text as an attribute of God, but its context helps its sense (Num 23:20).
 - 3. Though the earth be removed – a great change indeed – God is very present (Ps 46:1-3).
- B. Men may lie intentionally or ignorantly of what they will do, but not Jehovah! He performs!

- C. Men may reverse their answers with sufficient solicitation or compensation, but not Jehovah!
 - 1. Men may choose to change plans or be forced to change by difficulties, but not Jehovah!
 - 2. The word of a king has great power – what of the King of kings (Eccl 8:4; Dan 4:35).
- D. Pagan gods may reverse their answers to men with sufficient solicitation, but not Jehovah!
 - 1. After all, pagan gods and their declarations are only the imaginations of their priests!
 - 2. And if the pagan gods be devils themselves, they have been liars from the beginning.

20 Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

- A. Balak altered circumstances for this second attempt (Num 23:13-14), but it did not matter.
- B. Balaam was ordered to bless, and God had blessed already, and Balaam could not change it.
- C. No matter what wisdom, understanding, or counsel is sought, the LORD will have His way.

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

- A. God views His church differently than He sees the world, forgiving their sins and trespasses.
 - 1. He surely will chasten them in love for their sins, but He does not utterly cast them off.
 - 2. Balaam knew Israel had sins before a holy and just Jehovah, but insufficient for a curse.
 - 3. God knows all sins of His people, but He is longsuffering, merciful, and pitiful to them.
 - 4. The mercy of God is so great with and without repentance that it can cause consternation, because His thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts and ways like the heavens.
 - 5. Why did God allow polygamy? High places ignored? Why did He forgive David? Jonah?
 - 6. God forgave Israel many times for the very sins they had punished in the Canaanites.
- B. God is betrothed to His people, and He cannot and will not forsake them utterly as by a curse.
 - 1. Israel's God was Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, and His presence is within His church.
 - 2. They sin against greater privileges than others, but He says, "Nevertheless" (Ezek 16:60).
- C. God is the King of His people and is worshipped as such, the Blessed and Only Potentate!
 - 1. Like a nation rejoicing in a public display by their monarch, so the Israelites with God.
 - 2. The worship of God by Israel was so personal and locational that it made the earth echo!
 - 3. Any study of public worship under David, Asaph, or Solomon will bring meaning here.

22 God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

- A. Jehovah had delivered His church Israel out of Egypt, of which Balak knew well (Num 22:5).
 - 1. The exodus from Egypt was only a few years removed and still a contemporaneous event.
 - 2. It was still well-remembered nearly 500 years later by the Philistine armies (I Sam 4:5-9).
- B. The mightiest nation on earth, far greater than Moab, was no problem for the LORD Jehovah.
- C. Make this unicorn either metaphorical or the rhinoceros, in either case it exalts God's power.
 - 1. Read a little about the white rhino to get an appreciation for size and strength [here](#).
 - 2. Balak thought Israel like an ox to lick up the grass of Canaan. No, a rhinoceros instead!
- D. Israel had the strength of an unicorn, able to push their way into Canaan and throughout it.

23 Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

- A. Balaam used two terms for sorcery and witchcraft, neither of which could harm Israel at all.
 - 1. For further understanding and Bible use of the two terms, see *Who Was Balaam?* above.
 - 2. Balaam was a false prophet mixing knowledge of Jehovah and enchantments (Num 24:1).
 - 3. Balak knew some power of the devil, but there is no power against the God of Israel.
 - 4. Any study of the devil, devil worship, or the occult may be frightening ... but not really!
 - 5. Let the world's greatest witches convene their greatest worship of Satan ... so what!
 - 6. Jesus or Paul never had a problem with any devil or any number of devils (Acts 13:6-12).
 - 7. The church suffered, with great joy, but overcame by the blood of Christ (Rev 12:9-17).
- B. Balaam told Balak to mark his calendar – the effort to curse was now bringing His blessings!
 - 1. The time at hand was the presence of Israel east of Jordan with Balak paying for curses.
 - 2. Israel's success would increase to justify the glorious words – *What hath God wrought!*
 - 3. The Jordan River piled up, and Israel annihilated the seven nations of Canaan quickly.
 - 4. From Jericho's walls falling down to the sun and moon standing still. Glory to God!
- C. Do you know this God? Hath He not wrought in your life? Hath he not done great things?
 - 1. Jesus sent the Gadarene home to tell how great things the Lord had done (Mark 5:19).
 - 2. It is the pleasure of God's people to make their boast in the LORD (Ps 66:16; 34:1-3).

24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

- A. The people of Israel, the church of God of the Old Testament, would rise up like a great lion.
 - 1. A great lion is afraid of nothing and resisted by nothing, and so the people of Israel.
 - 2. A young lion has greater boldness and energy than an old one, and so the people of Israel.
 - 3. To fully appreciate this section of scripture, you need to review current facts about [lions](#).
- B. They would not retire from their war on Canaan until they had killed and eaten their prey.
- C. The martyrs in heaven cry for similar revenge on their persecutors, which shall be fulfilled.

PROPHECY #3 (Num 24:3-9)

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:

- A. This is the first prophecy by the Spirit upon him rather than a word in his mouth (Num 24:2).
- B. Prophets in the Bible were seers, for they saw things other men could not see (I Samuel 9:9).
- C. God first opened the eyes of this false prophet and sorcerer to see the angel scaring his ass.
- D. God opened the eyes of this treacherous man to know the word and will of God about Israel.
- E. By natural means of any man there is no way to know the word and will of God about Israel.

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:

- A. This was not a dream that one has at night but rather the words and view of God in a trance.
- B. The revelation of God is more certain with the eyes open than in the confusion of dreams.
- C. God let Balaam hear and see the words and will of God concerning Balak's enemy, Israel.
- D. Blessed be God for giving His word to His people to hear His words and to see the Almighty.

E. What Balaam saw and heard did him no good, but it gives us great delight and profit. Glory!

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

- A. Here is a blessing! The dwelling of Jacob, or Israel, is goodly, with all a nation could desire.
- B. A time of prosperity and relaxation is described by the blessed home life of God's people.
- C. God blesses His people with a comfortable home life (I Kgs 4:25; Ps 128:1-6; Micah 4:4).
- D. A happy, peaceful, prosperous family is a great blessing of God on good men (Ps 112:1-10).

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.

- A. Extensive and fruitful, Israel's tents and tabernacles are compared to prosperity of valleys.
- B. Gardens by a river's side, as Balaam had seen by the Euphrates, described Israel's prosperity.
- C. Lign aloes, even those growing wild, yield a fragrant and precious spice (Ps 45:8; Prov 7:17).
- D. Mighty cedars well watered were magnificent trees, like Israel (Ps 92:12-14; Ezek 31:3-4).

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.

- A. We understand this pouring water out of buckets metaphorically as a very numerous progeny.
 - 1. We know this is a scriptural figure of speech (Prov 5:15-18; Isaiah 48:1; Psalm 68:26).
 - 2. We choose a metaphor: the Spirit called them parables (Nu 23:7,18; 24:3,15,20,21,23).
 - 3. We choose a metaphor, for the blessing progresses upward to a king, not to agriculture.
 - 4. God rewards His church with families (Ps 107:41; 112:1-2; 127:3-5; 128:1-6; 144:11-15).
- B. The seed of Israel is in many waters, especially blessing all nations of the earth in Christ.
- C. Though Saul and Samuel destroyed Agag, and David was greater, yet Christ was greater yet.
 - 1. Agag, the title of the king of the Amalekites, was the area's highest ruler (Num 24:20).
 - 2. Caesars, their appointees, and their successors, thought vainly to stop Christ as king.
 - 3. Israel's power over Amalek extends to king Hezekiah (I Sam 15:2; II Sam 1:1; Chr 4:43).
- D. We cannot continue with Saul, for his kingdom was weak, but we see David and Christ.
- E. We know that our King rules over all, no matter how high (Eccl 5:8; I Tim 6:15; Rev 1:5).
- F. If you will be an overcome with Christ, you shall rule the nations with Him (Rev 2:26-27).

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.

- A. Here is a repetition, clearly for emphasis, of God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (23:22).
 - 1. If Jehovah delivered His church from Egypt, then Moab or Amalek would be nothing.
 - 2. The power of Israel to push and take what it wants will not be hindered by Canaanites.
- B. This great unicorn, depicting God's church, would consume all enemy nations with ease.
 - 1. When you break the bones of an enemy, you have thoroughly defeated and crushed him.
 - 2. Switching from a beast to military results, Israel would pierce his enemies with arrows.
- C. Do you hear the prophecy of Jesus Christ that the gates of hell shall not prevail (Matt 16:18)?

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.

- A. The lion here, unlike rising up before (23:24), is lying down after killing and eating its prey.
 - 1. Israel entered into a wonderful periods of peace after annihilating all their enemies.
 - 2. The language here is similar to that of Jacob blessing Judah with the throne (Gen 49:9).
- B. Not only is God's blessing on Israel, but His blessing is also on them that will favor Israel.
 - 1. This prophecy is identical to that God gave through Isaac to Jacob (Genesis 27:29).
 - 2. God would not curse Israel, but He would curse those that will presume to oppose Israel.

PROPHECY #4 (Num 24:15-24)

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:

- A. This is the first prophecy by the Spirit upon him rather than a word in his mouth (Num 24:2).
- B. Prophets in the Bible were seers, for they saw things other men could not see (I Samuel 9:9).
- C. God first opened the eyes of this false prophet and sorcerer to see the angel scaring his ass.
- D. God opened the eyes of this treacherous man to know the word and will of God about Israel.
- E. By natural means of any man there is no way to know the word and will of God about Israel.

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:

- A. This was not a dream that one has at night but rather the words and view of God in a trance.
- B. The revelation of God is more certain with the eyes open than in the confusion of dreams.
- C. God let Balaam hear and see the words and will of God concerning Balak's enemy, Israel.
- D. This introduction here includes the new words, *And knew the knowledge of the most High*.
- E. Blessed be God for giving His word to His people to hear His words and to see the Almighty.
- F. What Balaam saw and heard did him no good, but it gives us great delight and profit. Glory!

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

- A. Similar to Job's prophecy of seeing his Redeemer, Balaam prophesied of the resurrection.
 - 1. Job knew in a latter day in his resurrected body he would see Jesus Christ (Job 19:23-27).
 - 2. Balaam knew a future day of the Son of God, which was not now or near (I Tim 6:14-16).
 - 3. This should not surprise us, for the prophecy is the Spirit's, similar to earlier (Nu 23:10).
 - 4. Remember Caiaphas' prophecy of Jesus Christ's substitutionary death (John 11:49-52).
 - 5. Jesus Christ's visible coming is a prophetic fact (II Thess 1:7-10; Jude 1:14-15; Rev 1:7).
 - 6. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, including Balaam's (Philippians 2:9-11).
 - 7. Like Abraham, Balaam saw the day of Christ, but unlike Abraham, without joy (Jn 8:56).
- B. The Star coming out of Jacob is Jesus Christ (Matt 2:2-9; Luke 1:78; II Pet 1:19; Rev 22:16).
- C. The Sceptre rising out of Israel is Jesus Christ (Gen 49:10; Ps 45:6; Heb 1:8; Re 12:5; 19:15).
- D. All scripture and especially prophecy points to Jesus Christ (Ge 3:15; Jn 5:39; Lu 24:27,44).
- E. David and his Son Jesus defeated these enemies both literally and spiritually. It is a parable!
 - 1. The great enemies of Israel of the Old Testament are used for the enemies of the church.

2. David is such a type of Jesus Christ that He has the name David (Eze 37:24-25; Hos 3:5).
3. The borders of Moab are smitten first, the king and land closest; David defeated them literally, Jesus spiritually (II Sa 8:2; Ps 108:9-10; Mat 28:18-20; Amo 9:11-12; Re 12:5).
- F. The children of Sheth is the most difficult expression to identify in seven parables of Balaam.
 1. Sheth is found in I Chronicles 1:1 as an alternative spelling for Seth, the son of Adam.
 2. Doubters of the KJV use the RV and alter Sheth to shaon, “tumultuous ones” (Jer 48:45).
 3. We know all men came from Seth as much as from Adam, all others cut off in the Flood.
 4. We conclude all natural and worldly men, nations, and kingdoms, including Moab, as taught throughout scripture about the extent of the reign of this king (Ps 72:8-11; 148:7-14; Isaiah 25:6-12; Dan 7:14; Micah 4:5; Rev 1:5; 11:15).
 5. With the use of parable seven times, we should expect even more obscurities than this.

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

- A. Edom, the hated son of Isaac, would be a possession of the loved son, Jacob (Malachi 1:1-5).
- B. Seir, a mountain in Edom and Esau’s choice home, would not stand against its enemies.
- C. By God’s grace and power, David and his mighty men did valiantly against the Edomites.
- D. By God’s grace and power, the Maccabees did exploits against the Seleucids (Dan 11:32).
- E. Prophecies like these are in part fulfilled literally and fully spiritually (Amos 9:12; Ob 1:18), for we must not fall short of their fullness, since it is Christ the Star and Sceptre in context.

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

- A. By this parable of Balaam, we see David and Christ, both of Jacob with victorious dominion.
- B. Either a collective noun of all cities or a particularly strong city in Moab or Edom (Ps 60:9)
- C. As before, David fulfilled these prophecies literally and our Lord fulfilled them spiritually.

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.

- A. Balaam looked in the direction of the Amalekites and issued a short parable for them only.
- B. He had already acknowledged indirectly that the king of Amalek was a high standard (24:7).
- C. There is reference elsewhere to the antiquity of the Amalekites in this area (I Sam 27:8).
- D. The Amalekites were in some respects the greatest of the nations neighboring upon Israel.
- E. God annihilated the haughty Amalekites (Ex 17:8-16; I Sam 15:1-3; 27:8; I Chr 4:41-43).
- F. Where are the Amalekites today? God fulfilled His oath and confirmed the word of Balaam.

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.

- A. Close at hand were Kenites, who used mountain strongholds for their protection from armies.
- B. These people from Bible evidence appear to have been a warlike branch of the Midianites.
- C. Their natural fortress, as the coney (Pr 30:26), and better than Moab, would not save them.

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

- A. Though they had a natural stronghold, they could not resist Israel's God destroying them.
- B. They were diminished over about 1000 years, and then Assyria and Babylon took them away.
- C. The seeing seer looks far into the future and sees the great Assyrian invasion of Canaan.
 - 1. Asshur is Assyria with its capital at Nineveh by a descendant of Shem (Gen 10:11-12,22).
 - 2. Assyria is closely related to the kingdom of Babylon, founded by Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10).
 - 3. A glorious prophecy is made of victory over both kingdoms by the Christ (Micah 5:1-15).
 - 4. Both these nations and empires are representative of the world's kingdoms against Christ.

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

- A. Balaam sums up the military success and victorious kingdom of Israel with total annihilation.
 - 1. He had condemned Moab, Sheth, Edom, Seir, Amalek, and the Kenites. All glory to God!
 - 2. He took up his parable again (24:15), for he now summarized total conquest and victory.
 - 3. The last mention was of Assyria carrying Kenites away (24:22). But what of Assyria?
 - 4. Rather than these small nations, Balaam saw upheaval of large empires in the future.
 - 5. His words here are looking forward to his final prophecy, not looking back the previous.
- B. When God judges in fury unto death, who shall survive His almighty power and vengeance?
- C. All enemies of God and church shall be destroyed, even the people of the covenant, Israel.
- D. Do you see the Lord Jesus Christ on His white horse in glorious victory (Rev 19:11-21)?
- E. Do you hear Him foretelling the worldwide preaching of His kingdom gospel before the end?

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.*

- A. What a summary of world history! *Who shall live when God doeth this!* Compare Daniel 7!
- B. If this prophecy is obscure to you, recall seven *parables* here and *similitudes* (Hosea 12:10).
- C. We understand the ships of Chittim to summarize the Greeks and Romans from the west.
 - 1. The first reference to this name is found in the genealogies (Genesis 10:4; I Chron 1:7).
 - 2. The most specific definition of Chittim held by many is the island of Cyprus, or Citium.
 - 3. The Bible refers to islands of Chittim in two of the six references (Jer 2:10; Ezek 27:6).
 - 4. The name evolved beyond mere Cyprus, including all Mediterranean islands and coasts.
 - 5. In I Maccabees 1:1 and 8:5, Chittim refers to Macedonia of Greece, home of Alexander.
 - 6. In Daniel 11:30, the ships of Chittim carried Roman ambassadors to challenge Antiochus.
- D. We understand Asshur to summarize Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians from the east.
 - 1. The first reference to Asshur is in the genealogies (Genesis 10:11-12,22; I Chron 1:17).
 - 2. Asshur was overthrown by Babylonians without ships, thus a summary, just as Messiah's kingdom broke in pieces all these kingdoms, though only Rome existed (Dan 2:44-45).
 - 3. Alexander the Great, from the west, defeated Persia, the last and great empire of the east.
 - 4. The Romans, from the west, overthrew anything that was left of Persian/Greek power.
- E. We understand Eber to summarize the Jews and their persecutions by Greeks and Romans.
 - 1. The first reference to Eber is in the genealogies (Genesis 10:21,24-25; I Chron 1:18-19).
 - 2. Shem is identified conspicuously as father of children of Eber, but indirectly (Gen 10:21).
 - 3. From Eber comes Abram the Hebrew, father of the Israelites (Gen 14:13; 39:14; Ex 2:6).
 - 4. We choose a summary prophetic parable since Alexander did not persecute the Jews.
 - 5. The Seleucid kingdom from Alexander, especially Antiochus, severely afflicted the Jews.

6. The Romans were the final foe to crush Israel, destroy Jerusalem, and scatter all the Jews.
 7. Eber was afflicted for killing God's Star and Sceptre (Mat 21:41; 22:7; Luk 19:27,41-44).
 8. The language is obscure, similar to II Thess 2, to avoid diluting the blessings of Balaam.
- F. But Greeks and Romans, the great empires of the west, would also be destroyed forever.
1. Alexander cannot be ignored, for God did destroy him, though he did not afflict Israel.
 2. Yet one of Alexander's successors, Antiochus Epiphanes, did great afflict the Jews.
 3. A comparison should be made with Daniel 7 and with Revelation chapters 12,13,17,18.
 4. The Visigoths overthrew the western Empire in A.D. 476. – the beast's deadly wound.
 5. The papacy, sometimes called the Holy Roman Empire, revived but was also destroyed.
 6. Jesus Christ, the Star and Sceptre (24:17), set up a kingdom to destroy all these other kingdoms to last forever (Dan 2:44-45; 7:12-14,17-18,21-22,26-27; Rev 17:14-18).

Conclusion:

1. No amount of confederacy or conspiracy can work against God (Pr 21:30; Isaiah 8:9-10).
2. God your Father can alter the mind, eyes, or mouths of both man and brute beasts. Glory!
3. Balak, a king, was entirely frustrated about Balaam, though powerful, rich, and creative.
4. Regardless of enemies, God's love and righteousness wins the day (Deut 23:4-5; Mic 6:5).
5. God may allow you to do something sinful for you to ruin your own life (Ps 106:13-15).
6. When you are convicted or see the power or truth of God, you had better follow it, now.
7. The love of money is the root of all evil, as Balaam shows from his beginning to his end.
8. Numbers 31:8,16 tells the proper end to this wicked man. Be sure your sin will find you out.
9. Ministers must be found and ordained that are not given to filthy lucre (I Tim 3:3,8; Tit 1:7).
10. Do you personally know in your life the inspired exclamation, *What hath God wrought!*
11. Do you see world history affected by the words, *Alas, Who shall live when God doeth this!*
12. A man may sound good, like Balaam, but all that matters is God's words in the scriptures.
13. God will protect you from threats outside your power to resist like Israel from Balaam.
14. But God may not protect you from sins you assume in lust like Israel with Moabite women.
15. Jesus defeated the devil at the cross; he knows it; you overcome him by resisting in Christ.
16. But you give the devil of witchcraft both place and leverage in your life by your sinful lusts.
17. Anytime you meet God, by any means or anywhere, worship Him in humility and obey Him.
18. The righteous die better and have a more glorious end than the wicked can even imagine.
19. Balaam's four prophecies made up of many parables, reminding us of prophetic similitudes.
20. His parables and prophecies reach to Rome, Jesus, the resurrection, and death of His saints.
21. The future includes total victory for the church of God through Jesus the Son of David.
22. Any view of the future must see and emphasis what the Blessed and Only Potentate will do.
23. Jesus Christ your Saviour is the great Star and Sceptre of any prophecy of the future.
24. God your Father planned and knows the future and can bring it to pass accurately and easily.
25. When overt witchcraft will not work by the Lord's protection, carnal lasciviousness will.
26. Numbers 25:1 tells how Balaam did curse Israel. Many men have been ruined by women.
27. Numbers 31:15-17 tells Moses' righteous anger and wisdom in dealing with worldly women.
28. What is the greatest danger to you? Witchcraft, the devil, idolaters, or your carnal living?

For Further Study:

1. The sermon, "Fulfilled Prophecies" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/prophecy/glory-of-fulfilled-prophecy/sermon.php>.
2. The sermon outline, "Prophecy of Caiaphas," ... www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/prophecy-of-caiaphas.pdf.
3. The web document, "Making Sense of Daniel," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/prophecy/daniel.php>.
4. Thomas Newton, pgs 81-103 ... <http://books.google.com/books?id=8hctAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=true>.
5. See commentaries, especially for 24:24 ... John Calvin, John Gill, JFB, Matthew Henry, Matthew Poole, Trapp.