

Numbers

31 January 2024

Lesson: 16

Numbers 23-24

For our admonition. I Corinthians 10:11

The Failure of Israel en route to Moab

Once again, the main outline is from the Open Bible, slightly edited.

Balaam Blesses Israel

Balak's first attempt to have Israel cursed (23:1-10).

The location of this first sacrifice was at Kirjathhuzoth. Some claim that this location was near Mount Pisgah.

Balaam requested that they build seven altars and prepare seven oxen and seven rams. They offered these as burn offerings.

Balaam got by himself and sought the Lord's word (23:3-5). He returned and spoke God's blessing on Israel (23:6-10). He could not curse what God had not cursed.

Balak's second attempt to have Israel cursed (23:11-24).

Balak was not impressed. Balaam answered that he must speak that which the LORD put in his mouth. They went up on Mount Pisgah (see map).

After Balaam prayed again, he spoke what God told him to say. Note the great truth about God found in 23:19.

Another amazing fact is what God told him to say about Israel in 23:21. What a blessing it is to know that when we are truly right with God, He has forgiven us and does not hold our past failures against us.

He predicted that Israel would rise up as a great lion and be victorious over his enemies (23:24).

Balak's third attempt to have Israel cursed (23:25-30).

This time, Balak took Balaam to the top of Mount Peor (see map). Somehow, he hoped that the different vantage point would cause God to change his mind.

Were all these sacrifices to some Moabite god or were they to Jehovah? I am not sure. To Balak's disappointment, nothing changed in God's word about Israel.

Balaam's third blessing on Israel (24:1-9).

This time, Balaam did not go to seek enchantments. He seems to be mixing occult with his prayers to

God. He was an odd fellow. However, this time he looked toward the desert eastward and fell into a trance (i.e., prostrate on the ground) with his eyes open when God spoke to him (24:4).

Once again, God told him to bless Israel.

Balak's Anger

Balak commanded Balaam to flee (24:10-11).

In anger, Balak rebuked him for three times blessing Israel.

He sent him home with no honour and blamed it on the LORD.

Balaam's answer (24:12-14).

Balaam's Parable

He uttered a final parable (24:15-24).

Ryrie states, "Before Balaam left for home, he made four predictions: (1) the coming of the Messiah-Ruler of Israel (24:17) – the *Star* and *Sceptre* referring to the coming Messiah (Rev 22:16) and the *children of Seth* a general reference to tumult; (2) victory over Moab, Edom, and Amalekites, and the Kenites (24:17-21); (3) the Assyrian (=Asshur) captivity of Israel (24:22); (4) the affliction of Assyria and *Eber* (the Hebrews) by people from the Mediterranean area (*Chittim*, 24:24)." The Ryrie Study Bible, formatted

He returned home (24:25)

Principles for Us Today

Our God is unchangeable. He never lies. His promises are sure. He is forgiving when we confess sin. He sees and knows the future as well as He knows the past.

God sometimes chooses to use odd men like Balaam to fulfil His will.

