

Balak Numbers 22:2-25:9

(Num 22:2 CJB) Now Balak the son of Tzippor saw all that Isra'el had done to the Emori.

(Num 22:3 CJB) Mo'av was very afraid of the people, because there were so many of them; Mo'av was overcome with dread because of the people of Isra'el.

(Num 22:4 CJB) So Mo'av said to the leaders of Midyan, "This horde will lick up everything around us, the way an ox licks up grass in the field." Balak the son of Tzippor was king of Mo'av at that time.

(Num 22:5 CJB) He sent messengers to Bil`am the son of B`or, at P'tor by the [*Euphrates*] River in his native land, to tell him, "Listen, a people has come out of Egypt, spread over all the land and settled down next to me.

(Num 22:6 CJB) Therefore, please come, and curse this people for me, because they are stronger than I am. Maybe I will be able to strike them down and drive them out of the land, for I know that whomever you bless is in fact blessed, and whomever you curse is in fact cursed."

(Num 22:7 CJB) The leaders of Mo'av and Midyan left, taking with them the payment for divining, came to Bil`am and spoke to him the words of Balak.

(Num 22:8 CJB) 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 CJB) God came to Bil`am and said, "Who are these men with you?"

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

(Num 22:11 CJB) '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 CJB) 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 CJB) 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."

(Num 22:14 CJB) The princes of Mo'av got up, returned to Balak and said, "Bil`am refuses to come with us."

(Num 22:15 CJB) Balak again sent princes, more of them and of higher status than the first group.

(Num 22:16 CJB) They went to Bil`am and said to him, "Here is what Balak the son of Tzippor says: 'Please don't let anything keep you from coming to me.

(Num 22:17 CJB) I will reward you very well, and whatever you say to me I will do. So please come, and curse this people for me.' "

(Num 22:18 CJB) 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 CJB) Now, please, you too, stay here tonight; so that I may find out what else Adonai will say to me."

(Num 22:20 CJB) 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."

(Num 22:21 CJB) So Bil`am got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Mo'av.

(Num 22:22 CJB) But God's anger flared up because he went, and the angel of Adonai stationed himself on the path to bar his way. He was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

(Num 22:23 CJB) The donkey saw the angel of Adonai standing on the road, drawn sword in hand; so the donkey turned off the road into the field; and Bil`am had to beat the donkey to get it back on the road.

(Num 22:24 CJB) Then the angel of Adonai stood on the road where it became narrow as it passed among the vineyards and had stone walls on both sides.

(Num 22:25 CJB) The donkey saw the angel of Adonai and pushed up against the wall, crushing Bil`am's foot against the wall. So he beat it again.

(Num 22:26 CJB) The angel of Adonai moved ahead and stood in a place so tight that there was no room to turn either right or left.

(Num 22:27 CJB) Again the donkey saw the angel of Adonai and lay down under Bil`am, which made him so angry that he hit the donkey with his stick.

(Num 22:28 CJB) But Adonai enabled the donkey to speak, and it said to Bil`am, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

(Num 22:29 CJB) Bil`am said to the donkey, "It's because you've been making a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand; I would kill you on the spot!"

(Num 22:30 CJB) The donkey said to Bil`am, "I'm your donkey, right? You've ridden me all your life, right? Have I ever treated you like this before?" "No," he admitted.

(Num 22:31 CJB) Then Adonai opened Bil`am's eyes, so that he could see the angel of Adonai standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, and he bowed his head and fell on his face.

(Num 22:32 CJB) The angel of Adonai said to him, "Why did you hit your donkey three times like that? I have come out here to bar your way, because you are rushing to oppose me.

(Num 22:33 CJB) The donkey saw me and turned aside these three times; and indeed, if she hadn't turned away from me, I would have killed you by now and saved it alive!"

(Num 22:34 CJB) 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."

(Num 22:35 CJB) 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 22:36 CJB) When Balak heard that Bil`am had come, he went out to meet him in the city of Mo'av at the Arnon border, in the farthest reaches of the territory.

(Num 22:37 CJB) Balak said to Bil`am, "I sent more than once to summon you! Why didn't you come to me? Did you think I couldn't pay you enough?"

(Num 22:38 CJB) Bil`am replied to Balak, "Here, I've come to you! But I have no power of my own to say anything. The word that God puts in my mouth is what I will say."

(Num 22:39 CJB) Bil`am went with Balak. When they arrived at Kiryat-Hutzot,

(Num 22:40 CJB) Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, then sent to Bil`am and the princes with him.

(Num 22:41 CJB) In the morning Balak took Bil`am and brought him up to the high places of Ba`al; from there he could see a portion of the people.

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

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

(Num 23:3 CJB) 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 CJB) 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 CJB) Then Adonai put a word in Bil`am's mouth and said, "Go on back to Balak, and speak as I tell you."

(Num 23:6 CJB) He went back to him, and there, standing by his burnt offering, he with all the princes of Mo'av,

(Num 23:7 CJB) 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 CJB) "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 CJB) "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 CJB) "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!"

(Num 23:11 CJB) Balak said to Bil`am, "What have you done to me?! To curse my enemies is why I brought you; and, here, you have totally blessed them!"

(Num 23:12 CJB) He answered, "Mustn't I take care to say just what Adonai puts in my mouth?"

(Num 23:13 CJB) Balak said to him, "All right, come with me to another place where you can see them. You will see only some of them, not all; but you can curse them for me from there."

(Num 23:14 CJB) He took him through the field of Tzofim to the top of the Pisgah Range, built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

(Num 23:15 CJB) Bil`am said to Balak, "Stand here by your burnt offering, while I go over there for a meeting."

(Num 23:16 CJB) Adonai met Bil`am, put a word in his mouth and said, "Go on back to Balak, and speak as I tell you."

(Num 23:17 CJB) He came to him and stood by his burnt offering, with all the princes of Mo'av. Balak asked him, "What did Adonai say?"

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

(Num 23:19 CJB) "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 CJB) Look, I am ordered to bless; when he blesses, I can't reverse it.

(Num 23:21 CJB) "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 CJB) "God, who brought them out of Egypt, gives them the strength of a wild ox;

(Num 23:23 CJB) 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 CJB) "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."

(Num 23:25 CJB) Balak said to Bil`am, "Obviously, you won't curse them. But at least don't bless them!"

(Num 23:26 CJB) However, Bil`am answered Balak, "Didn't I warn you that I must do everything Adonai says?"

(Num 23:27 CJB) Balak said to Bil`am, "Come, I will take you now to another place; maybe it will please God for you to curse them for me from there."

(Num 23:28 CJB) Balak took Bil`am to the top of P`or, overlooking the desert.

(Num 23:29 CJB) Bil`am said to Balak, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare me seven bulls and seven rams."

(Num 23:30 CJB) Balak did as Bil`am said and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

(Num 24:1 CJB) When Bil`am saw that it pleased Adonai to bless Isra'el, he didn't go, as at the other times, to make use of divination, but looked out toward the desert.

(Num 24:2 CJB) Bil`am raised his eyes and saw Isra'el encamped tribe by tribe. Then the Spirit of God came upon him,

(Num 24:3 CJB) 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 CJB) the speech of him who hears God's words; who sees what Shaddai sees, who has fallen, yet has open eyes:

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

(Num 24:6 CJB) 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 CJB) "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 CJB) 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 CJB) "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!"

(Num 24:10 CJB) Balak blazed with fury against Bil`am. He struck his hands together and said to Bil`am, "I summoned you to curse my enemies. But here, you have done nothing but bless them — three times already!

(Num 24:11 CJB) Now you had better escape to your own place! I had planned to reward you very well, but now Adonai has deprived you of payment."

(Num 24:12 CJB) Bil`am answered Balak, "Didn't I tell the messengers you sent me

(Num 24:13 CJB) that even if Balak would give me his palace full of silver and gold, I could not of my own accord go beyond the word of Adonai to do either good or bad? that what Adonai said is what I would say?

(Num 24:14 CJB) But now that I am going back to my own people, come, I will warn you what this people will do to your people in the acharit-hayamim.

(Num 24:15 CJB) So 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 24:16 CJB) the speech of him who hears God's words; who knows what `Elyon knows, who sees what Shaddai sees, who has fallen, yet has open eyes:

(Num 24:17 CJB) "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not soon — a star will step forth from Ya`akov, a scepter will arise from Isra'el, to crush the corners of Mo'av and destroy all descendants of Shet.

(Num 24:18 CJB) His enemies will be his possessions — Edom and Se`ir, possessions. Isra'el will do valiantly,

(Num 24:19 CJB) From Ya`akov will come someone who will rule, and he will destroy what is left of the city."

(Num 24:20 CJB) He saw `Amalek and made this pronouncement: "First among nations was `Amalek, but destruction will be its end."

(Num 24:21 CJB) He saw the Keini and made this pronouncement: "Though your dwelling is firm, your nest set on rock,

(Num 24:22 CJB) Kayin will be wasted while captive to Ashur."

(Num 24:23 CJB) Finally, he made this pronouncement: "Oh no! Who can live when God does this?

(Num 24:24 CJB) But ships will come from the coast of Kittim to subdue Ashur and subdue `Ever, but they too will come to destruction."

(Num 24:25 CJB) Then Bil`am got up, left and returned to his home; and Balak too went his way.

(Num 25:1 CJB) Isra'el stayed at Sheetim, and there the people began whoring with the women of Mo'av.

(Num 25:2 CJB) These women invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, where the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

(Num 25:3 CJB) With Isra'el thus joined to Ba`al-P`or, the anger of Adonai blazed up against Isra'el.

(Num 25:4 CJB) Adonai said to Moshe, "Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them facing the sun before Adonai, so that the raging fury of Adonai will turn away from Isra'el."

(Num 25:5 CJB) Moshe said to the judges of Isra'el, "Each of you is to put to death those in his tribe who have joined themselves to Ba`al-P`or."

(Num 25:6 CJB) Just then, in the sight of Moshe and the whole community of Isra'el, as they were weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting, a man from Isra'el came by, bringing to his family a woman from Midyan.

(Num 25:7 CJB) When Pinchas the son of El`azar, the son of Aharon the cohen, saw it, he got up from the middle of the crowd, took a spear in his hand,

(Num 25:8 CJB) and pursued the man from Isra'el right into the inner part of the tent, where he thrust his spear through both of them — the man from Isra'el and the woman through her stomach. Thus was the plague among the people of Isra'el stopped;

(Num 25:9 CJB) nevertheless, 24,000 died in the plague.

Haftarah Balak: Mikhah (Micah) 5:6-6:8

(Mic 5:7 CJB) (5:6) Then the remnant of Ya`akov, surrounded by many peoples, will be like dew from Adonai, like showers on the grass, which doesn't wait for a man or expect anything from mortals.

(Mic 5:8 CJB) (5:7) The remnant of Ya`akov among the nations, surrounded by many peoples, will be like a lion among forest animals, like a young lion among flocks of sheep — if it passes through, tramples and tears to pieces, there is no one to rescue them.

(Mic 5:9 CJB) (5:8) Your hand will be raised over your enemies; all your adversaries will be destroyed.

(Mic 5:10 CJB) (5:9) "When that day comes," says Adonai, "I will cut off your horses from among you and destroy your chariots.

(Mic 5:11 CJB) (5:10) I will cut off the cities of your land and lay waste your strongholds.

(Mic 5:12 CJB) (5:1) I will cut off sorceries from your land; you will no longer have soothsayers.

(Mic 5:13 CJB) (5:2) I will cut off your carved images and standing-stones from among you; no longer will you worship what your own hands have made.

(Mic 5:14 CJB) (5:3) I will pull up your sacred poles from among you and destroy your enemies.

(Mic 5:15 CJB) (5:4) I will wreak vengeance in anger and fury on the nations, because they would not listen."

(Mic 6:1 CJB) So listen now to what Adonai says: "Stand up and state your case to the mountains, let the hills hear what you have to say."

(Mic 6:2 CJB) Listen, mountains, to Adonai's case; also you enduring rocks that support the earth! Adonai has a case against his people; he wants to argue it out with Isra'el:

(Mic 6:3 CJB) "My people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me!

(Mic 6:4 CJB) I brought you up from the land of Egypt. I redeemed you from a life of slavery. I sent Moshe, Aharon and Miryam to lead you.

(Mic 6:5 CJB) My people, just remember what Balak the king of Mo'av had planned, what Bil`am the son of B`or answered him, *[and what happened]* between Sheetim and Gilgal — so that you will understand the saving deeds of Adonai."

(Mic 6:6 CJB) "With what can I come before Adonai to bow down before God on high? Should I come before him with burnt offerings? with calves in their first year?

(Mic 6:7 CJB) Would Adonai take delight in thousands of rams with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Could I give my firstborn to pay for my crimes, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

(Mic 6:8 CJB) Human being, you have already been told what is good, what Adonai demands of you — no more than to act justly, love grace and walk in purity with your God.

Brit Hadashah suggested readings for Parashah Balak: 2 Kefa (2 Peter) 2:1-22; Y'hudah (Jude) 11; Revelation 2:14-15

(2Pe 2:1 CJB) But among the people there were also false prophets, just as there will be false teachers among you. Under false pretenses they will introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and thus bring on themselves swift destruction.

(2Pe 2:2 CJB) Many will follow their debaucheries; and because of them, the true Way will be maligned.

(2Pe 2:3 CJB) In their greed they will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their punishment, decreed long ago, is not idle; their destruction is not asleep!

(2Pe 2:4 CJB) For God did not spare the angels who sinned; on the contrary, he put them in gloomy dungeons lower than Sh'ol to be held for judgment.

(2Pe 2:5 CJB) And he did not spare the ancient world; on the contrary, he preserved Noach, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, and brought the Flood upon a world of ungodly people.

(2Pe 2:6 CJB) And he condemned the cities of S'dom and `Amora, reducing them to ashes and ruin, as a warning to those in the future who would live ungodly lives;

(2Pe 2:7 CJB) but he rescued Lot, a righteous man who was distressed by the debauchery of those unprincipled people;

(2Pe 2:8 CJB) for the wicked deeds which that righteous man saw and heard, as he lived among them, tormented his righteous heart day after day.

(2Pe 2:9 CJB) So the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and how to hold the wicked until the Day of Judgment while continuing to punish them,

(2Pe 2:10 CJB) especially those who follow their old natures in lust for filth and who despise authority. Presumptuous and self-willed, these false teachers do not tremble at insulting angelic beings;

(2Pe 2:11 CJB) whereas angels, though stronger and more powerful, do not bring before the Lord an insulting charge against them.

(2Pe 2:12 CJB) But these people, acting without thinking, like animals without reason, born to be captured and destroyed, insult things about which they have no knowledge. When they are destroyed, their destruction will be total —

(2Pe 2:13 CJB) they will be paid back harm as wages for the harm they are doing. Their idea of pleasure is carousing in broad daylight; they are spots and defects reveling in their deceptions as they share meals with you —

(2Pe 2:14 CJB) for they have eyes always on the lookout for a woman who will commit adultery, eyes that never stop sinning; and they have a heart that has exercised itself in greed; so that they seduce unstable people. What a cursed brood!

(2Pe 2:15 CJB) These people have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Bil`am Ben-B`or, who loved the wages of doing harm

(2Pe 2:16 CJB) but was rebuked for his sin — a dumb beast of burden spoke out with a human voice and restrained the prophet's insanity!

(2Pe 2:17 CJB) Waterless springs they are, mists driven by a gust of wind; for them has been reserved the blackest darkness.

(2Pe 2:18 CJB) Mouthing grandiosities of nothingness, they play on the desires of the old nature, in order to seduce with debaucheries people who have just begun to escape from those whose way of life is wrong.

(2Pe 2:19 CJB) They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption; for a person is slave to whatever has defeated him.

(2Pe 2:20 CJB) Indeed, if they have once escaped the pollutions of the world through knowing our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah, and then have again become entangled and defeated by them, their latter condition has become worse than their former.

(2Pe 2:21 CJB) It would have been better for them not to have known the Way of righteousness than, fully knowing, to turn from the holy command delivered to them.

(2Pe 2:22 CJB) What has happened to them accords with the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit." Yes, "The pig washed itself, only to wallow in the mud!"

Jud 1:11 Woe to them, in that they have walked the road of Kayin, they have given themselves over for money to the error of Bil`am, they have been destroyed in the rebellion of Korach.

(Rev 2:14 CJB) Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: you have some people who hold to the teaching of Bil`am, who taught Balak to set a trap for the people of Isra'el, so that they would eat food that had been sacrificed to idols and commit sexual sin.

(Rev 2:15 CJB) Likewise, you too have people who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.