

- 2 Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.
- 3 Moab was alarmed because that people was so numerous. Moab dreaded the Israelites,
- 4 and Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this horde will lick clean all that is about us as an ox licks up the grass of the field.” Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time,
- 5 sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor in Pethor, which is by the Euphrates, (Euphrates Lit. “the River.”) in the land of his kinsfolk, to invite him, saying, “There is a people that came out of Egypt; it hides the earth from view, and it is settled next to me.
- 6 Come then, put a curse upon this people for me, since they are too numerous for me; perhaps I can thus defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed indeed, and whomever you curse is cursed.”
- 7 The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian, versed in divination, (versed in divination Lit. “with divination in their power (hand).”) set out. They came to Balaam and gave him Balak’s message.
- 8 He said to them, “Spend the night here, and I shall reply to you as הוהי may instruct me.” So the Moabite dignitaries stayed with Balaam.
- 9 God came to Balaam and said, “What do these men (men Lit. “participants whose involvement defines the depicted situation.” NJPS “people.” See the Dictionary under ‘ish.) want of you?”
- 10 Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message:
- 11 Here is a people that came out from Egypt and hides the earth from view. Come now and curse them for me; perhaps I can engage them in battle and drive them off.”
- 12 But God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them. You must not curse that people, for they are blessed.”
- 13 Balaam arose in the morning and said to Balak’s dignitaries, “Go back to your own country, for הוהי will not let me go with you.”
- וַיֵּרָא בָלָק בְּלֹק בְּרֻצְפּוֹר אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֻמּוֹתֵי:
- וַיִּגַּר מוֹאָב מִפָּנֵי הָעָם מֵאֵד כִּי רַב־הָיָה וַיִּקֶּץ מוֹאָב מִפָּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
- וַיֹּאמֶר מוֹאָב אֶל־זִקְנֵי מִדְיָן עֹתָהּ יִלְחֲקוּ הַקְהָל אֶת־כָּל־סִבִּיבֵיהֶינּוּ כִלְחָךְ הַשּׁוֹר אֶת יֶרֶק הַשָּׂדֶה וּבִלְקָה בְּרֻצְפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ לְמוֹאָב בָּעֵת הַהִיא:
- וַיִּשְׁלַח מֶלְאכִים אֶל־בִּלְעָם בֶּרְבֵּעַר* פְּתוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַנָּהָר אֲרָץ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן לִקְרֹאֵיהֶן לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה עָם יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרָיִם הִנֵּה כֹסֵף אֶת־עֵינֵי הָאָרֶץ וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב מִמֶּלִּי:
- וַעֲתִידָה לְכַהֵנָּה אֲרַחֲלִי אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־עֲצוּם הוּא מִמֶּנִּי אוֹלֵי אוֹכֵל נִכְהִיבוּ וְאֶנְהַשְׁנוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ כִּי יִזְעַתִּי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־תִּבְרָךְ מִבְּרָךְ וְאֲשֶׁר תֵּאָר יוֹאֵר:
- וַיָּלְכוּ זִקְנֵי מוֹאָב וְזִקְנֵי מִדְיָן וַקְּסָמִים בְּיָדָם וַיֵּבֵאוּ אֶל־בִּלְעָם וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו דְּבַר בָּלָק:
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם לִינוּ פֹה הַלַּיְלָה וְהִשְׁבַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם דְּבַר כְּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹר יְהוָה אֵלַי וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ שְׁרֵי־מוֹאָב עִם־בִּלְעָם:
- וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־בִּלְעָם וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה עִמָּךְ:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים בָּלָק בְּרֻצְפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב שֶׁלַח אֵלַי:
- הִנֵּה הָעָם הַיֵּצֵא מִמִּצְרָיִם וְיָקִם אֶת־עֵינֵי הָאָרֶץ עֹתָהּ לִקְה קִבְּהִילִי אֹתוֹ אוֹלֵי אוֹכֵל לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ וְנִגְרַשְׁתּוּ:
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־בִּלְעָם לֹא תֵלֵךְ עִמָּהֶם לֹא תֹאדֹר אֶת־הָעָם כִּי בְרוּךְ הוּא:
- וַיָּקִם בִּלְעָם בַּקֹּר וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־שְׂרָיִ בָּלָק לְכוּ אֶל־אַרְצְכֶם כִּי מֵאֵן יְהוָה לַתַּחֲתִי לְהֵלֵךְ עִמָּכֶם:

18	Edom becomes a possession,Yea, Seir a possession of its enemies;But Israel is triumphant.	והָיָה אֲדוֹם יְרֵשָׁה וְהָיָה יִרְשָׁה שְׁעִיר אִיבֵיו וְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשֵׂה תִּיל:
19	A victor issues from JacobTo wipe out what is left of Ir.	וַיֵּרָה מִן־עֵקֶב וְהָאֲבִיר שְׂרִיד מְעִיר:
20	He saw Amalek and, taking up his theme, he said:A leading nation is Amalek;But its fate is to perish forever.	וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עַמְלֵק וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר רֹאשִׁית גּוֹיִם עַמְלֵק וְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ עַד־י אֲבִד:
21	He saw the Kenites and, taking up his theme, he said:Though your abode be secure,And your nest be set among cliffs,	וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הַכִּנִּיזִי וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵיתָן מוֹשְׁבָךְ וְשֵׁים בְּסֻלַּע קִנָּה:
22	Yet shall Kain (Kain I.e., the Kenites mentioned in v. 21.) be consumed,When Asshur takes you captive.	כִּי אִם־יִהְיֶה לְבַעַר קִינוֹ עַד־מָה אֲשׁוּר תִּשְׁבָּה:
23	He took up his theme and said:Alas, who can survive except God has willed it!	וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אוֹי מִי יִחְיֶה מִשְׁמוֹ אֵל:
24	Ships come from the quarter of Kittim;They subject Asshur, subject Eber.They, too, shall perish forever.	נָצִים מִן־כְּתִים וָעֵנוֹ אֲשׁוּר וְעֶנְרַעְבָר וְגַם־הוּא עַד־י אֲבִד:
25	Then Balaam set out on his journey back home; and Balak also went his way.	וַיָּקָם בִּלְעָם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשָׁב לְמִקְוָמוֹ וְגַם־בָּלַק הָלַךְ לְדַרְכוֹ:

25

1	While Israel was staying at Shittim, the menfolk (menfolk NJPS "people"; cf. Exod. 14.6, Num. 21.33. See the Dictionary under 'am.) profaned themselves by whoring (profaned themselves by whoring Others "began to commit harlotry.") with the Moabite women,	וַיָּשָׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁטִיִּים וַיַּחַל הָעָם לִזְנוֹת אֶל־בָּנוֹת מוֹאָב:
2	who invited the menfolk to the sacrifices for their god. The menfolk partook of them and worshiped that god.	וַתִּקְרְאוּ לָעָם לְזִבְחֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶן וַיֹּאכַל הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶן:
3	Thus Israel attached itself to Baal-peor, and יהוהי was incensed with Israel.	וַיַּצְמַד יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָעַל פְּעוֹר וַיַּחֲרֹאֶף יְהוָה בִּישְׂרָאֵל:
4	יהוהי said to Moses, "Take all the ringleaders (ringleaders Lit. "heads of the people.") and have them publicly (publicly Others "in face of the sun.") impaled before יהוהי's wrath may turn away from Israel."	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קַח אֶת־כָּל־רֹאשֵׁי הָעָם וְהוֹקַע אוֹתָם לִפְנֵי הַנָּהָר הַשְּׁמֶשׁ וַיָּשָׁב חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל:
5	So Moses said to Israel's officials, "Each of you slay those of his men (his men I.e., those under each official's command when the militia is mustered. Lit. "his [salient] participants." See the Dictionary under 'ish.) who attached themselves to Baal-peor."	וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־שֹׁפְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲרֹגוּ אִישׁ אֶנְשֵׁיו הַנִּצְמָדִים לְבָעַל פְּעוֹר:

28	Then יהוה opened the ass's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?"	וַיִּפְתָּח יְהוָה אֶת־פִּי הָאֲתוֹן וַתֹּאמֶר לְבִלְעָם מַה־עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ כִּי הִכִּיתַנִּי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ רָגְלִים:
29	Balaam said to the ass, "You have made a mockery of me! If I had a sword with me, I'd kill you."	וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם לְאֲתוֹן כִּי הִתְעַלְלַת בִּי לֹי וְשִׂיחָרְבַּב בְּיָדִי כִי עָתָה הִרְגַּתִּיךְ:
30	The ass said to Balaam, "Look, I am the ass that you have been riding all along until this day! Have I been in the habit of doing thus to you?" And he answered, "No."	וַתֹּאמֶר הָאֲתוֹן אֶל־בִּלְעָם הֲלוֹא אֲנִכִּי אֶתְנַגֵּךְ אֲשֶׁר־רִכַּבְתָּ עָלַי מִיּוֹדֶךָ עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהִסְכַּנְו הַסִּכַּנְתִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ כֹּה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא:
31	Then יהוה uncovered Balaam's eyes, and he saw the messenger of יהוה standing in the way, his drawn sword in his hand; thereupon he bowed right down to the ground. (right down to the ground Lit. "and prostrated himself to his nostrils.")	וַיִּגַּל יְהוָה אֶת־עֵינָיו לְבִלְעָם וַיֵּרָא אֶת־מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה נֹצֵב בְּדַרְכְּו וְחַרְבּוֹ שֹׁלֶפֶה בְּיָדוֹ וַיִּיָּדָד וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶו לְאֶפְיוֹ:
32	The messenger of יהוה said to him, "Why have you beaten your ass these three times? It is I who came out as an adversary, for the errand is obnoxious (obnoxious Precise meaning of Heb. yarat uncertain.) to me.	וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה עֲלִמָּה הִלִּית אֶת־אַתְנַגְךָ זֶה שְׁלוֹשׁ רָגְלִים הֵנָּה אֲנִכִּי יִצְאָתִי לְשַׂטָּן כִּי־יָרֵט הִדְרָךְ לִנְגִחִי:
33	And when the ass saw me, she shied away because of me those three times. If she had not shied away from me, you are the one I should have killed, while sparing her."	וַתִּרְאֵנִי הָאֲתוֹן וַתֵּטַט לִפְנָי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ רָגְלִים אוֹלִי נָטוּתָה מִפְּנָי כִּי עָתָה גַם־אֲתֹכָה הִכְנָתִי וְאוֹתָהּ הִתְנַיִיתִי:
34	Balaam said to the messenger of יהוה, "I erred because I did not know that you were standing in my way. If you still disapprove, I will turn back."	וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל־מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה חֲטָאתִי כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אַתָּה נֹצֵב לְקִרְאָתִי בְּדַרְכְּו וְעָתָה אֲסִירַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲשׁוּבָה לִי:
35	But the messenger of יהוה said to Balaam, "Go with the men. (men (So NJPS.) See note to v. 9.) But you must say nothing except what I tell you." So Balaam went on with Balak's dignitaries.	וַיֹּאמֶר מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל־בִּלְעָם לֹךְ עִם־הָאֲנָשִׁים וְאָפַס אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ אֹתוֹ תְּדַבֵּר וַיֵּלֶךְ בִּלְעָם עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּלַק:
36	When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at Ir-moab, which is on the Arnon border, at its farthest point.	וַיִּשְׁמַע בָּלַק כִּי בָא בִלְעָם וַיֵּצֵא לְקִרְאוֹתוֹ אֶלְעִיר מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־גְּבוּל אַרְנוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶצֶה הַגְּבוּל:
37	Balak said to Balaam, "When I first sent to invite you, why didn't you come to me? Am I really unable to reward you?"	וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלַק אֶל־בִּלְעָם הֲלֹא שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ לְקִרְאוֹלְךָ לָמָּה לֹא־הִלַּכְתָּ אֵלָי הָאֲמַנְם לֹא אוּכַל בְּכַנְךָ:
38	But Balaam said to Balak, "And now that I have come to you, have I the power to speak freely? I can utter only the word that God puts into my mouth."	וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל־בָּלַק הֲנִהְיֵב־בָּאתִי אֵלֶיךָ עֹתָה הִזְכַּל אוּכַל דָּבָר מֵאוֹמֶה הַדֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁים אֱלֹהִים בְּפִי אֹתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר:
39	Balaam went with Balak and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.	וַיֵּלֶךְ בִּלְעָם עִם־בָּלַק וַיָּבֹאוּ קִרְיַת חֻצוֹת:
40	Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and had them served to Balaam and the dignitaries with him.	וַיִּזְבַּח בָּלַק בָּקָר וְצֹאן וַיִּשְׁלַח לְבִלְעָם וּלְשָׂרָיו אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ:

ויען ויאמר הלא את אשר ישים יהוה בפי אתו אשמר לדבר:	12	He replied, "I can only repeat faithfully what יהוה puts in my mouth."
ויאמר אליו בלק (לך) [לכה]נא אחי אלימקום אחר אשר תראנו משם אפס קצוה תראה וכלו לא תראה וקברילי משם:	13	Then Balak said to him, "Come with me to another place from which you can see them—you will see only a portion of them; you will not see all of them—and damn them for me from there."
ויקחהו שדה צפים אליראש הפסגה ויבן שבעה מזבחות ויעל פר ואיל במזבח:	14	With that, he took him to Sedehzophim, (Sedehzophim Or "Lookout Point.") on the summit of Pisgah. He built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.
ויאמר אליבלק התיצב כה עליעלתך ואנכי אקרה כה:	15	And [Balaam] said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offerings, while I seek a manifestation yonder."
ויקר יהוה אליבלעם וישם דבר בפי ויאמר שוב אליבלק וכה תדבר:	16	יהוה became manifest to Balaam and put a word in his mouth, saying, "Return to Balak and speak thus."
ויבא אליו והגו נצב עליעלתו ושקרי מואב אתו ויאמר לו בלק מהידבר יהוה:	17	He went to him and found him standing beside his offerings, and the Moabite dignitaries with him. Balak asked him, "What did יהוה say?"
וישא משלו ויאמר קום בלק ושמע האזינה עדי בנו צפר:	18	And he took up his theme, and said:Up, Balak, attend,Give ear unto me, son of Zippor!
לא איש אל יוכל ובראדם ויתנתם ההוא אמר ולא יעשה ודבר ולא יקימנה:	19	God is not human to be capricious,Or mortal to have a change of heart.Would [God] speak and not act,Promise and not fulfill?
הנה בך לקחתיו וברך ולא אשיבנה:	20	My message was to bless:When [God] blesses, I cannot reverse it.
לאיהביט אנן בייעלב ולאיראה עמל בישראל יהוה אלהיו עמו ותרועת מלך בו:	21	No harm is in sight for Jacob,No woe in view for Israel.Their God יהוה is with them,And their King's (King's A poetic figure; in the ancient Near East, this role ideally represented protection and caring help.) acclaim in their midst.
אל מוציאם ממצרים כתועפת ראם לו:	22	God who freed them from EgyptIs for them like the horns (horns Lit. "eminences," used figuratively.) of the wild ox.
כי לא נחש בייעלב ולא קסם בישראל כעת יאמר ליעקב ולישראל מהיפעל אל:	23	Lo, there is no augury in Jacob,No divining in Israel: (No divining in Israel Cf. Deut. 18.10–15.) Jacob is told at once,Yea Israel, what God has planned. (Jacob is told ... what God has planned Or, "Else would it be told to Jacob, / Yea to Israel, what God has planned.")

הרעם כלביא יקום וכארי יתנשא לא ישכב עדיאכל טרף ודסיחללים ישותה:	24	Lo, a people that rises like a lioness, (lioness So traditionally; NJPS "lion." Precise meaning of Heb. lavi' uncertain; see next note.) Leaps up like a lion, (lion So traditionally; NJPS "king of beasts." Heb. 'ari. Cf. previous note; this verse's two terms distinguish either sexes or breeds.) Rests not till it has feasted on preyAnd drunk the blood of the slain.
ויאמר בלק אליבלעם גסיקב לא תקבנו גסיברך לא תברכנו:	25	Thereupon Balak said to Balaam, "Don't curse them and don't bless them!"
ויען בלעם ויאמר אליבלק הלא דברתי אליך לאמר כל אשרידבר יהוה אתו אעשה:	26	In reply, Balaam said to Balak, "But I told you: Whatever יהוה says, that I must do."
ויאמר בלק אליבלעם לכהנא אקחך אלימקום אחר אולי יישר בעיני האללים וקבתו לי משם:	27	Then Balak said to Balaam, "Come now, I will take you to another place. Perhaps God will deem it right that you damn them for me there."
ויקח בלק אתיבלעם ראש הפעור הנשקף עליפני הישימן:	28	Balak took Balaam to the peak of Peor, which overlooks the wasteland. (wasteland Cf. note at 21.20.)
ויאמר בלעם אליבלק בנהילי בנה שבעה מזבחות והגו לי בנה שבעה פרים ושבעה אילים:	29	Balaam said to Balak, "Build me here seven altars, and have seven bulls and seven rams ready for me here."
ויעש בלק כאשר אמר בלעם ויעל פר ואיל במזבח:	30	Balak did as Balaam said: he offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

24

וירא בלעם כי טוב בעיני יהוה לברך אתישראל ולאיהלך כפעם־בפעם לקראת נחשים וישת אליהמדבר פניו:	1	Now Balaam, seeing that it pleased יהוה to bless Israel, did not, as on previous occasions, go in search of omens, but turned his face toward the wilderness.
וישא משלו ויאמר נאם בלעם בנו בער ונאם הנגבר שתם היין:	2	As Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the spirit of God came upon him.
וירא בלעם אתיעניו וירא אתישראל שכן לשבטיו ותהי עליו רוח אלהים:	3	Taking up his theme, he said: (Some of the poetic portions of this chapter are unclear.) Word of Balaam son of Beor,Word of the man (man Heb. gever; more precisely, a man who makes his presence felt.) whose eye is true, (whose eye is true Others "whose eye is (or, eyes are) open"; meaning of Heb. uncertain.)
נאם שמע אמריאל אשר מחזה שדי יחזה נפל וגלוי עינים:	4	Word of one who hears God's speech,Who beholds visions from the Almighty,Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled:
מהטבו אהליך יעקב משכנותיך ישראל:	5	How fair are your tents, O Jacob,Your dwellings, O Israel!