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בלק Balak

Numbers 22:2-25:9

- וַיֵּרָא בָלָק בְּרֹצְפּוֹר אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאַמֹּרִי: 2 Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.
- וַיִּגַּר מוֹאָב מִפְּנֵי הָעָם מְאֹד כִּי רַב־הָיָה וַיִּקֶּץ מוֹאָב מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 3 Moab was alarmed because that people was so numerous. Moab dreaded the Israelites,
- וַיֹּאמֶר מוֹאָב אֶל־זִקְנֵי מִדְיָן עֲתָה יִלְחָכוּ הַקָּהָל אֶת־כָּל־סְבִיבֵינוּ כְּלַחֹךְ הַשּׁוֹר אֶת יֶרֶק הַשָּׂדֶה וּבָלָק בְּרֹצְפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ לְמוֹאָב בָּעֵת הַהִוא: 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,
- וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים אֶל־בִּלְעָם בֶּן־בְּעוֹר* פֶּתוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַנָּהָר אֲרָץ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹ לְקִרְאֵהוּ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה עָם יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרָיִם הִנֵּה כֹסֵף אֶת־עֵין הָאָרֶץ וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב מִמְּלִי: 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.
- וַעֲתָה לְכֵהנָא אֲרֹה־לִי אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־עֲצוּם הוּא מִמֶּנִּי אוּלִי אוּכַל נִכְה־בּוֹ וְנִגְרֹשְׁנֻ מִן־הָאָרֶץ כִּי יִלְעָתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־תִּבְרַךְ מִבְּרַךְ וְאֲשֶׁר תָּאָר יוֹאָר: 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.”
- וַיֵּלְכוּ זִקְנֵי מוֹאָב וְזִקְנֵי מִדְיָן וַיִּקְסְמוּ בִּידָם וַיָּבֵאוּ אֶל־בִּלְעָם וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו דְּבַר בָּלָק: 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.
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם לִינוּ פֹה הַלַּיְלָה וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי אִתְּכֶם דְּבַר כֹּאשֶׁר יִדְבֹר יְהוָה אֵלַי וַיִּשְׁבּוּ שְׂרֵי־מוֹאָב עִם־בִּלְעָם: 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.
- וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־בִּלְעָם וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה עִמָּךְ: 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?”
- וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים בָּלָק בְּרֹצְפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב שָׁלַח אֵלַי: 10 Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message:
- הִנֵּה הָעָם יֹצֵא מִמִּצְרָיִם וַיִּקֶּס אֶת־עֵין הָאָרֶץ עֲתָה לְכֵה קְבַה־לִּי אֹתוֹ אוּלִי אוּכַל לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ וְנִגְרֹשְׁתִּיו: 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.”
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־בִּלְעָם לֹא תֵלֵךְ עִמָּהֶם לֹא תֹאֵר אֶת־הָעָם כִּי בְרוּךְ הוּא: 12 But God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them. You must not curse that people, for they are blessed.”
- וַיָּקָם בִּלְעָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־שְׂרֵי בָלָק לְכוּ אֶל־אַרְצְכֶם כִּי מֵאֵן יְהוָה לַתַּתִּי לְהֵלֵךְ עִמָּכֶם: 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.”

- 14 The Moabite dignitaries left, and they came to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."
- 15 Then Balak sent other dignitaries, more numerous and distinguished than the first.
- 16 They came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak son of Zippor: Please do not refuse to come to me.
- 17 I will reward you richly and I will do anything you ask of me. Only come and damn this people for me."
- 18 Balaam replied to Balak's officials, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, big or little, contrary to the command of my God הוהי.
- 19 So you, too, stay here overnight, and let me find out what else הוהי may say to me."
- 20 That night God came to Balaam and said to him, "If the agents (agents See note at 13.2; cf. note at Gen. 18.2.) have come to invite you, you may go with them. But whatever I command you, that you shall do."
- 21 When he arose in the morning, Balaam saddled his ass and departed with the Moabite dignitaries.
- 22 But God was incensed at his going; so a messenger of הוהי took a position in his way as an adversary. He was riding on his she-ass, with his two servants alongside,
- 23 when the ass caught sight of the messenger of הוהי standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. The ass swerved from the road and went into the fields; and Balaam beat the ass to turn her back onto the road.
- 24 The messenger of הוהי then stationed himself in a lane between the vineyards, with a fence on either side.
- 25 The ass, seeing the messenger of הוהי, pressed herself against the wall and squeezed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he beat her again.
- 26 Once more the messenger of הוהי moved forward and stationed himself on a spot so narrow that there was no room to swerve right or left.
- 27 When the ass now saw the messenger of הוהי, she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam was furious and beat the ass with his stick.
- וַיָּקֻמוּ שְׂרֵי מוֹאָב וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בָּלָק וַיֹּאמְרוּ מֵאֵן בָּלָעַם הָלַךְ.
עִמָּנוּ:
- וַיִּסַּף עוֹד בָּלָק שְׂלֹחַ שְׂרָיִם רַבִּים וְנִכְבָּדִים מֵאֵלֶּה:
- וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בָּלָעַם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ כֹּה אָמַר בָּלָק בֶּן־צִפּוֹר אֶל־נָא תִּמְנַע מִהָלֶךְ אֵלַי:
- כִּי־כִבַּד אֶכְבְּדְּךָ מְאֹד וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמַר אֵלַי אֶעֱשֶׂה וְלִכְהֲנֹא קְבֹה־לִי אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה:
- וַיַּעַן בָּלָעַם וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־עֲבָדָיו בָּלָק אִם־יִתְּנֵלִי בָּלָק מֵלֶא מֵבֵיתוֹ כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב לֹא אוֹכֵל לַעֲבֹר אֶת־פִּי יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהִי לַעֲשׂוֹת קִטְנָה אֹךְ גְּדוּלָּה:
- וַעֲתָה שִׁבּוּ נָא בָּזֶה גַּם־אַתֶּם הַלַּיְלָה וְאִדְעָה מִה־יִּסַּף יְהוָה דְּבַר עִמִּי:
- וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּלָעַם לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם־לִקְרָא לְךָ בָּאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים קוּם לְךָ אִתָּם וְאֵךְ אֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־אָדְבַר אֵלֶיךָ אֹתוֹ תַעֲשֶׂה:
- וַיָּקָם בָּלָעַם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחַבֵּשׁ אֶת־אַתָּנּוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ עִם־שְׂרֵי מוֹאָב:
- וַיִּתְּרֵאֲף אֱלֹהִים כִּי־הוֹלֵךְ הוּא וַיִּתְּצֵב מִלֵּאךְ יְהוָה בַּדֶּרֶךְ לִשְׁטֹן לוֹ וְהוּא רֹכֵב עַל־אַתָּנּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו עִמּוֹ:
- וַתֵּרָא הָאֲתָנָן אֶת־מִלְּאָךְ יְהוָה נֹצֵב בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַתִּרְבֹּב שְׁלוֹפָה בִּידּוֹ וַתֵּט הָאֲתָנָן מִדֶּרֶךְ הַדָּלֶךְ וַתֵּלֶךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה וְנֶךְ בָּלָעַם אֶת־הָאֲתָנָן לַהֲטִיחָהּ הַדֶּרֶךְ:
- וַיַּעֲמֵד מִלְּאָךְ יְהוָה בְּמִשְׁעוֹל הַכְּרָמִים גֶּדֶר מְזָה וּגְדֵר מְזָה:
- וַתֵּרָא הָאֲתָנָן אֶת־מִלְּאָךְ יְהוָה וַתִּלְחָץ אֶל־הַלִּיר וַתִּלְחָץ אֶת־רִגְלָ בָּלָעַם אֶל־הַקִּיר וַיִּסַּף לְהַכְתָּהּ:
- וַיִּוָּסֶף מִלְּאָךְ־יְהוָה עָבוֹר וַיַּעֲמֵד בְּמָקוֹם צָר אֲשֶׁר אֵין־דֶּרֶךְ לְנִטּוֹת יָמִין וּשְׂמָאוֹל:
- וַתֵּרָא הָאֲתָנָן אֶת־מִלְּאָךְ יְהוָה וַתִּרְבֹּץ תַּחַת בָּלָעַם וַיִּתְּרֵאֲף בָּלָעַם וַיִּךְ אֶת־הָאֲתָנָן בַּמֶּקֶל:

- 28 Then הוּדָה opened the ass's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?"
- 29 Balaam said to the ass, "You have made a mockery of me! If I had a sword with me, I'd kill you."
- 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."
- 31 Then הוּדָה uncovered Balaam's eyes, and he saw the messenger of הוּדָה 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.")
- 32 The messenger of הוּדָה 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.
- 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."
- 34 Balaam said to the messenger of הוּדָה, "I erred because I did not know that you were standing in my way. If you still disapprove, I will turn back."
- 35 But the messenger of הוּדָה 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.
- 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.
- 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?"
- 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."
- 39 Balaam went with Balak and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.
- 40 Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and had them served to Balaam and the dignitaries with him.
- וַיִּפְתָּח הַחֹדֶה אֶת־פִּי הָיוּדָה וַתֹּאמֶר לְבָלָעַם מַה־עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ כִּי הִכִּיתָנִי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ רָגָלִים:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם לַחֹדֶה כִּי הִתְעַלְלָתְ בִּי לֹא יִשְׁחָרֵב בְּיָדִי כִּי עָתָה הִרְגֵּתִיךָ:
- וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִתּוֹן אֶל־בָּלָעַם הֲלוֹא אֲנִכִּי אֶתְנֶנְךָ אֲשֶׁר־רִכַּבְתָּ עָלַי מִעוֹדְךָ עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הֲהִסְכֵּן הִסְכַּנְתִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ כֹּה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא:
- וַיִּגַּל הַחֹדֶה אֶת־עֵינָיו בָּלָעַם וַיֵּרָא אֶת־מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה נֹצֵב בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַחֲרָבָה שְׁלֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ וַיִּקַּד וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ וַאֲפָיו:
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה עַל־מָה הִלִּיתָ אֶת־אֶתְנֶנְךָ זֶה שְׁלוֹשׁ רָגָלִים הִנֵּה אֲנִכִּי יֵצְאתִי לְשִׁטָּן כִּי־יָרַט הַדֶּרֶךְ לְנִגְדִי:
- וַתִּרְאֵנִי הָאִתּוֹן וַתֵּט לִפְנֵי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ רָגָלִים אוֹלֵי נֹטָתָה מִפְּנֵי כִּי עָתָה גַּם־אֶתְּכָה הִרְגֵּתִי וְאוֹתָהּ הִחַיִּיתִי:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם אֶל־מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה חֲטָאתִי כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אַתָּה נֹצֵב לְקִרְאָתִי בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְעָתָה אֲסִירְךָ בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֲשׁוּבָה לִי:
- וַיֹּאמֶר מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל־בָּלָעַם לָךְ עַם־הָאֲנָשִׁים וְאַפֶּס אֶת־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ אֲתוֹ תְּדַבֵּר וַיֵּלֶךְ בָּלָעַם עִם־שָׂרֵי בָלָק:
- וַיִּשְׁמַע בָּלָק כִּי בָא בָלָעַם וַיֵּצֵא לִקְרָאתוֹ אֶל־עִיר מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־גְּבוּל אַרְנוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּקִצְהָ הַגְּבוּל:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בָּלָעַם הֲלֹא שָׁלַח שְׁלֹחַתִּי אֵלֶיךָ לְקִרְאָתְךָ לָמָּה לֹא־הֵלַכְתָּ אֵלַי הָאֲמַלְמֵם לֹא אוֹכַל כְּבֹדְךָ:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם אֶל־בָּלָק הִנֵּה־בִּאתִי אֵלֶיךָ עָתָה הֲיִכָּל אוֹכַל הַבָּר מִאֲוִמָּה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁוּם אֱלֹהִים בְּפִי אֲתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר:
- וַיֵּלֶךְ בָּלָעַם עִם־בָּלָק וַיָּבֹאוּ קִרְיַת חֲצוֹת:
- וַיִּזְבַּח בָּלָק בָּקָר וַיִּצְאֵן וַיִּשְׁלַח לְבָלָעַם וּלְשָׂרָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲתוֹ:

וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח בָּלָק אֶת־בִּלְעָם וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ בְּמוֹת בָּעַל וַיֵּרָא
מִשָּׁם קֶצֶה הָעָם:

41 In the morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth-baal. From there he could see a portion of the people.

23

וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל־בָּלָק בְּנֵה־לִּי בָּזָה שְׁבָעָה מִזְבְּחֹת וְהָכֵן לִּי בָּזָה
שְׁבָעָה פָּרִים וְשְׁבָעָה אֵילִים:

1 Balaam said to Balak, "Build me seven altars here and have seven bulls and seven rams ready here for me."

וַיַּעַשׂ בָּלָק כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בִּלְעָם וַיַּעַל בָּלָק וּבִלְעָם פָּר וְאֵיל
בְּמִזְבֵּחַ:

2 Balak did as Balaam directed; and Balak and Balaam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם לְבָלָק הֲתִיצֵב עַל־עֲלֹתָי וְאֵלֶכָה אוֹלִי יִקְרָה יְהוָה
לְקִרְאָתִי וְדִבֶּר מִה־יִּרְאָנִי וְהִנֵּדְתִּי לָךְ וְיִלְךְ שָׁפִי:

3 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offerings while I am gone. Perhaps הוֹדִי will grant me a manifestation, and whatever is revealed to me I will tell you." And he went off alone. (alone Others "to a bare height"; exact meaning of Heb. shephi uncertain.)

וַיִּקַּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־בִּלְעָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֶת־שְׁבָעַת הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת עֲלֹכְתִּי
וְאָעַל פָּר וְאֵיל בְּמִזְבֵּחַ:

4 God became manifest to Balaam, who stated, "I have set up the seven altars and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar."

וַיִּשֶׁם יְהוָה דְּבַר בְּפִי בִלְעָם וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוּב אֶל־בָּלָק וְכֹה תִּדְבֹּר:

5 And הוֹדִי put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, "Return to Balak and speak thus."

וַיָּשׁוּב אֵלָיו וְהִנֵּה נֹצֵב עַל־עֲלֹתָיו הוּא וְכָל־שָׂרָיו מוֹאָב:

6 So he returned to him and found him standing beside his offerings, and all the Moabite dignitaries with him.

וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר מִן־אֲרָם יָנֹחֲנִי בָלָק מֶלֶךְ־מוֹאָב מִהַרְרֵי־קָדָם
לֵכָה אֶרְהֶ־לִּי יַעֲקֹב וּלְכָה זַעֲמָה יִשְׂרָאֵל:

7 He took up his theme, and said: From Aram has Balak brought me, Moab's king from the hills of the East: Come, curse me Jacob, Come, tell Israel's doom!

מָה אֶקְלָב לֹא קִבָּה אֵל וּמָה אֶזְעַם לֹא זָעַם יְהוָה:

8 How can I damn whom God (God Heb El, as often in these poems.) has not damned, How doom when הוֹדִי has not doomed?

כִּי־מֵרָאשׁ צִרִים אֶרְאֶנּוּ וּמִגְבְּעוֹת אֲשׁוּרֵנּוּ הָרָעַם לְבָדֵד יִשְׁכְּן
וּבְגוֹיִם לֹא יִתְחַשֵּׁב:

9 As I see them from the mountain tops, Gaze on them from the heights, There is a people that dwells apart, Not reckoned among the nations,

מִי מִנָּה עֹפֵר יַעֲקֹב וּמִסֹּפֶר אֶת־רִבְעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּמָּת נַפְשֵׁי מוֹת יִשְׁוֹלִים
וְתִהְיֶי אַחֲרֵיתָי כְּמֹהוּ:

10 Who can count the dust (dust Cf. Gen. 13.16.) of Jacob, Number (Number Lit. "and the number of.") the dust-cloud of Israel? May I die the death of the upright, (upright Heb. yesharim, a play on yeshurun ("Jeshurun" in Deut. 32.15), a name for Israel.) May my fate be like theirs!

וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם מָה עָשִׂיתָ לִּי לְקַב אֶבְי לְקַחְתִּיךָ וְהִנֵּה
בִּרְכָתְךָ בֵּרַךְ:

11 Then Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? Here I brought you to damn my enemies, and instead you have blessed them!"

- 12 He replied, "I can only repeat faithfully what יהוה puts in my mouth."
- 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."
- 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.
- 15 And [Balaam] said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offerings, while I seek a manifestation yonder."
- 16 והיה became manifest to Balaam and put a word in his mouth, saying, "Return to Balak and speak thus."
- 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?"
- 18 And he took up his theme, and said: Up, Balak, attend, Give ear unto me, son of Zippor!
- 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?
- 20 My message was to bless: When [God] blesses, I cannot reverse it.
- 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.
- 22 God who freed them from Egypt Is for them like the horns (horns Lit. "eminences," used figuratively.) of the wild ox.
- 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.")
- ויען ויאמר הלא את אשׁר ישׁים יהוה בפי אתו אשׁמר לדבר:
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בִּלְקַם (לד) [לכה]—לֹא אֲתִי אֶל־מְקוֹם אֲחֵר אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶנּוּ מִשָּׁם אֶפְסָם קִצְּהוּ תִרְאֶה וְכָלּוּ לֹא תִרְאֶה וְקִבְּנוּ־לִי מִשָּׁם:
- וַיִּקְחֵהוּ שָׂדֶה צִפִּים אֶל־רֹאשׁ הַפִּסְגָּה וַיִּבֶן שִׁבְעָה מִזְבְּחֹת וַיַּעֲלֶה כֹּהֵן וְאֵיל בְּמִזְבֵּחַ:
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־בִּלְקַם הִתְיַצֵּב כֹּה עַל־עֲלִיתְךָ וְאֲנִי אֶקְרָה כֹּה:
- וַיֵּקֶר יְהוה אֶל־בִּלְעָם וַיִּשֶׁם דָּבָר בְּפִיו וַיֹּאמֶר שׁוּב אֶל־בִּלְקַם וְכֹה תִּדְבֹר:
- וַיָּבֹא אֵלָיו וְהִנֵּה נֹצֵב עַל־עֲלָתוֹ וְשָׂרֵי מוֹאָב אִתּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ בִּלְקַם מִה־דָּבָר יְהוה:
- וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר קוּם בִּלְקַם וְשִׁמְעַתְּ הָאֲזִינוּהָ עֲדֵי בְנוֹ צִפּוֹר:
- לֹא אִישׁ אֵל וַיִּכָּלֵב וּבֶן־אָדָם וַיִּתְּנָהּ הָהוּא אִמְרָה וְלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה וְדָבָר וְלֹא יִקְיִמְנָה:
- הִנֵּה בִרְךָ לִקְחֹתִי וּבִרְךָ וְלֹא אֲשִׁיבָנָה:
- לֹא־הִבִּיט אֵינֹן בִּיעֲקֹב וְלֹא־רָאָה עֲמָל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוה אֱלֹהֵיוֹ עֲמֹו וְתִרְוַעַת מֶלֶךְ בּוֹ:
- אֵל מוֹצִיאֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם כְּתוֹעַפֶּת רָאִם לוֹ:
- כִּי לֹא־נִחַשׁ בִּיעֲקֹב וְלֹא־קִסָּם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּלְעַת יֹאמֶר לִיעֲקֹב וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִה־פַּעַל אֵל:

- 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 prey And drunk the blood of the slain.
- 25 Thereupon Balak said to Balaam, “Don’t curse them and don’t bless them!”
- 26 In reply, Balaam said to Balak, “But I told you: Whatever הוה says, that I must do.”
- 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.”
- 28 Balak took Balaam to the peak of Peor, which overlooks the wasteland. (wasteland Cf. note at 21.20.)
- 29 Balaam said to Balak, “Build me here seven altars, and have seven bulls and seven rams ready for me here.”
- 30 Balak did as Balaam said: he offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.
- וְהָיָה כַּלְבִּיָּא יָלוּם וְכֹאֲרִי יִתְנַשֵּׂא לֹא יִשְׁכַּב עַד־יֵאָכֵל טָרֶף וְדָם־חַלְלִים יִשְׁתֶּה:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם גַּם־קֹב לֹא תִקְבְּנוּ גַם־בִּרְךָ לֹא תִבְרַכְנוּ:
- וַיַּעַן בִּלְעָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־בָּלָק הֲלֹא דִבַּרְתִּי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר כָּל אֲשֶׁר־יִדְבַּר יְהוָה אֶתּוֹ אֲעֲשֶׂה:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בִּלְעָם לְכֵה־נָּא אֶקְחֶךָ אֶל־מְקוֹם אַחֵר אוֹלֵי יִישׁוּר בְּעֵינֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְקִבְחוּ לִי מִשָּׁם:
- וַיִּקַּח בָּלָק אֶת־בִּלְעָם רֹאשׁ הַפְּעֹור הַנִּשְׁקָף עַל־פְּנֵי הַיַּשְׁמֹן:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בִּלְעָם אֶל־בָּלָק בְּנֵה־לִּי בָּזָה שִׁבְעָה מִזְבְּחוֹת וְהִכֵּן לִי בָּזָה שִׁבְעָה פָּרִים וְשִׁבְעָה אֵילִם:
- וַיַּעַשׂ בָּלָק כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר בִּלְעָם וַיַּעַל פָּר וְאֵיל בְּמִזְבֵּחַ:

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- 1 Now Balaam, seeing that it pleased הוה to bless Israel, did not, as on previous occasions, go in search of omens, but turned his face toward the wilderness.
- 2 As Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the spirit of God came upon him.
- 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.)
- 4 Word of one who hears God’s speech, Who beholds visions from the Almighty, Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled:
- 5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!
- וַיֵּרָא בִלְעָם כִּי טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְבַרְכָּךְ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא־הֵלֶךְ כַּפְּעִם־בַּפְּעִם לִקְרֹאת נְחֹשִׁים וַיִּשֶׁת אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר פָּנָיו:
- וַיֵּשֶׂא בִלְעָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל שֹׁכֵן לְשִׁבְטָיו וְתֹהִי עָלָיו רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים:
- וַיֵּשֶׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר נָאִם בִּלְעָם בְּנוֹ בְּעוֹר וְנָאִם הַגִּבֹּר שִׁתָּם הָעֵין:
- נָאִם שְׁמַע אֲמַר־יָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מִחֲזֵה שְׁדֵי יְחִזֶּה נָפֶל וְנִלְוִי עֵינָם:
- מִה־טֹּבוֹ אֹהֲלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

- 6 Like palm-groves that stretch out,Like gardens
beside a river,Like aloes planted by הוהי,Like
cedars beside the water;
- 7 Their boughs drip with moisture,Their roots (Their
roots Lit. “and its seed.”) have abundant
water.Their ruler shall rise above Agag,Their
sovereignty shall be exalted.
- 8 God who freed them from EgyptIs for them like the
horns (horns See note at 23.22.) of the wild
ox.They shall devour enemy nations,Crush their
bones,And smash their arrows.
- 9 They crouch, they lie down like a lion,Like a
lioness; (lioness Heb. lavi’; NJPS “king of
beasts.” See the first note at 23.24.) who dares
rouse them?Blessed are they who bless you,Accursed
they who curse you!
- 10 Enraged at Balaam, Balak struck his hands
together. “I called you,” Balak said to Balaam,
“to damn my enemies, and instead you have blessed
them these three times!
- 11 Back with you at once to your own place! I was
going to reward you richly, but הוהי has denied
you the reward.”
- 12 Balaam replied to Balak, “But I even told the
messengers you sent to me,
- 13 ‘Though Balak were to give me his house full of
silver and gold, I could not of my own accord do
anything good or bad contrary to הוהי’s command.
What הוהי says, that I must say.’
- 14 And now, as I go back to my people, let me inform
you of what this people will do to your people in
days to come.”
- 15 He took up his theme, and said:Word of Balaam son
of Beor,Word of the man (man See note at v. 3.)
whose eye is true,
- 16 Word of one who hears God’s speech,Who obtains
knowledge from the Most High,And beholds visions
from the Almighty,Prostrate, but with eyes
unveiled:
- 17 What I see for them is not yet,What I behold will
not be soon:A star rises from Jacob,A scepter
comes forth from Israel;It smashes the brow of
Moab,The foundation of (The foundation of
Samaritan “the pate of,” cf. Jer. 48.45; others
“breaks down.”) all children of Seth.
- כְּנַחְלִים נִטְּיוּ כִּגְנֹת עָלֵי נָהָר כְּאַהֲלִים נִטְּעַ יְהוָה בְּאַרְזֵיהֶם
עַל־יַמִּים:
- יִזְלִמִּלִּם מִדְּלִלוֹ וְזֹרְעוּ בְּמַיִם רַבִּים וְיִרְם מֶאֱגָג מְלָכּוֹ
וְתִנְשֵׂא מְלִכְתּוֹ:
- אֵל מוֹצִיאֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם כְּתוֹעֶפֶת רָאִם לוֹ יֹאכֹל גּוֹיִם צִלּוֹ וְעִצְמוֹתֵיהֶם
יִגְרֶם וְחִצָּיו יִמְחֹץ:
- כָּלַע שֹׁכֵב כְּאַרִּי וְכֹלְבִּיא מִי יִקְיֶמְנוּ מִבְּרִכְיָךְ בְּלוֹךְ וְאַרְרִיךְ אֲרוּרִי:
- וַיַּחְרֹאֲף בָּלָק אֶל־בָּלָעַם וַיִּסְפֹּק אֶת־כַּפָּיו וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל־בָּלָעַם
לִקְבֹּ אֶיְבִי קְרָאֲתִיךָ וְהִנֵּה בִּרְכַּת בְּלָךְ זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים:
- וַעֲתָה בִּרְחֹלְךָ אֶל־מְקוֹמְךָ אֲמַרְתִּי כְּבֹד אֶכְבֹּדְךָ וְהִנֵּה מְנַעַךְ
יְהוָה מִכְּבוֹדְךָ:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם אֶל־בָּלָק הֲלֹא גַם אֶל־מַלְאָכֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־שְׁלָחְתָּ אֵלַי
דִּבַּרְתִּי לֵאמֹר:
- אִם־יִתְּנִילִי בָלָק מָלֵא בֵּיתוֹ כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב לֹא אוּלַּם לַעֲבֹד אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה
לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹבָה אוֹ רָעָה מִלִּבִּי אֲשֶׁר־יִדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֹתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר:
- וַעֲתָה הֲנִנִּי הוֹלֵךְ לְעַמִּי לָכֵה אֵיעֶצְךָ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָעָם הַזֶּה לְעַמְּךָ
בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים:
- וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר נָאִם בָּלָעַם בְּנִי בְעֹר וְנָאִם הַגִּבֹּר שְׁתָּם
הָעֵין:
- נָאִם שְׂמַלְעַ אֲמַר־יָאֵל וַיִּדַּע דַּעַת עֲלִיּוֹן מִחֲזֵה שְׂדֵי יִחְזֶה נִפְלֵ
וְגִלּוֹי עֵינָיִם:
- אֲרָאֵנִי וְלֹא עָתָה אֲשׁוּרֵנִי וְלֹא קֶרֶב דֶּחַךְ כּוֹלֵב מִיַּעֲקֹב וְקָם
שֹׁבֵט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וּמִחֹץ פִּאֲתִי מוֹאָב וְקֶרֶךְ כְּלִבְנֵי־שֵׁת:

- 18 והיה אדום ירשה והיה ירשה שעיר איביו וישראל עשה תוֹלָדָה: Edom becomes a possession, Yea, Seir a possession of its enemies; But Israel is triumphant.
- 19 וירד מיעקב והאביד שריד מעיר: A victor issues from Jacob To wipe out what is left of Ir.
- 20 וירא את-עמלק וישא משלו ויאמר ראשית גוים עמלק ואחריתו עדי אבד: He saw Amalek and, taking up his theme, he said: A leading nation is Amalek; But its fate is to perish forever.
- 21 וירא את-הקניזי וישא משלו ויאמר איתן מושבך ושים בסלע קנך: He saw the Kenites and, taking up his theme, he said: Though your abode be secure, And your nest be set among cliffs,
- 22 כי אם-יהיה לבקר קין עד-מה אשור תשבך: Yet shall Kain (Kain I.e., the Kenites mentioned in v. 21.) be consumed, When Asshur takes you captive.
- 23 וישא משלו ויאמר אוי מי יחיה משמו אל: He took up his theme and said: Alas, who can survive except God has willed it!
- 24 וצִיִּים מִיַּד כְּתִים וְעֵנֹי אֲשׁוּר וְעֵנֹי-עֶבֶר וְגַם-הוּא עָדִי אָבָד: Ships come from the quarter of Kittim; They subject Asshur, subject Eber. They, too, shall perish forever.
- 25 ויקם בלעם וילך וישב למקומו וגם-בלק הלך לדרכו: Then Balaam set out on his journey back home; and Balak also went his way.

25

- 1 וישב ישראל בשטחים ויחל העם לזנות אל-בנות מואב: 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,
- 2 ותקראן לעם לזבחי אלהיהן ויאכל העם וישתחוו לאלהיהן: who invited the menfolk to the sacrifices for their god. The menfolk partook of them and worshiped that god.
- 3 ויצמד ישראל לבעל פעור ויחר-אף יהוה בישראל: Thus Israel attached itself to Baal-peor, and הוהי was incensed with Israel.
- 4 ויאמר יהוה אל-משה קח את-כל-ראשי העם והוקע אותם ליהוה נגד השמש וישב חרון אפי-יהוה מישראל: הוהי 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 הוהי, so that הוהי's wrath may turn away from Israel."
- 5 ויאמר משה אל-שפטי ישראל הרגו איש אנשיו הנצמדים לבעל פעור: 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."

- והִנֵּה אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּא וַיִּקְרָב אֶל־אֲחֵיו אֶת־הַמְדִּילִית לְעֵינָי מִשָּׁה וּלְעֵינָי כָּל־עֵדֶת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָמָּה בָּכִים פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:
- וַיֵּרָא פִּינְחָס בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וַיֵּקֶם מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה וַיִּקַּח רֶמֶחַ בְּיָדוֹ:
- וַיֵּבֶא אַחֲרָיו אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הַקֶּבֶה וַיִּדְקֹר אֶת־שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־קִבְתָּהּ וַתַּעֲצֹר הַמִּגֵּפָה מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
- וַיְהִיו הַמֵּתִים בַּמִּגֵּפָה אַרְבָּעָה וָעֶשְׂרִים אָלֶף:
- 6 Just then a certain Israelite man (man Lit. “participant whose involvement defines the depicted situation.”) came and brought a Midianite woman over to his companions, in the sight of Moses and of the whole Israelite community who were weeping at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.
- 7 When Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he left the assembly and, taking a spear in his hand,
- 8 he followed the Israelite man into the chamber and stabbed both of them, the Israelite man and the woman, through the belly. Then the plague against the Israelites was checked.
- 9 Those who died of the plague numbered twenty-four thousand.