

BEMIDBAR (NUMBERS) 22:2-25:9 –BALAQ – DEVASTATOR

The name of this week's Torah portion is called בְּלֹקַח Balaq – Strong's H1111 which means, '*devastator, waster*', and, at its root, it means '*to waste, lay waste, devastate, annihilate*'.

Balaq was the king of Mo'ab, and now that Yisra'el had camped in the desert plains of Mo'ab, the Mo'abites were afraid of them and this king had one thing in mind and one thing only – and that was to see all Yisra'el destroyed, lay waste and devastated; and the only way he could see this happening is if these people, who were encroaching on his territory, were cursed.

Balaq was the son of צִפּוֹרִי Tsippor - Strong's H6833 which means, '*bird, sparrow*'.

Now, as we will see through this Torah portion, despite the enemies attempts at trying to 'curse' the children of Yisra'el, any curse that has no cause will not be able to have any effect whatsoever and while the curses of the devastator may fly around like a sparrow, it will not come to rest on a blessed people, for they are those who are walking under the shelter of the Most-High:

Mishlĕ/Proverbs 26:2 "*As a bird wanders, as a swallow flies about, so a curse without cause does not come.*"

We know that obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings a curse and so, while we can see from these accounts, that even when we are walking in obedience, the enemy will constantly be trying to curse us and this ought to make us realise, and understand, our need to remain 'in' Messiah (by walking as He walked, by walking 'in' the Torah), so that we are not found 'outside' of the protective boundaries of the Torah and have any flying curse find a home due to disobedience!

A curse aimed at someone who does not deserve it will not come upon them!

The Hebrew word that is translated as '*wanders*' in **Mishlĕ/Proverbs 26:2** comes from the primitive root word נָדַד *nuḏ* –Strong's H5110 which means, '*to move to and fro, wander, flutter, show grief*', and the Hebrew word that is translated as '*flies about*' comes from the root verb עָנַף *uph* – Strong's H5774 which means, '*to fly, brandish, fly away, swoop down, set*', and, in terms of flying, it is understood as, '*make linear movement through the air, usually by a self-directed use of wings by the object*'.

The picture given here in **Mishlĕ/Proverbs 26:2** is that just as a bird wanders and a swallow flies about, looking for food or a place to rest and does not find it, so too does a curse not find its intended source!

What we must take note here, is that this parable is a great comfort and assurance to those who are guarded in righteousness, under the shadow of the Wing of the Almighty.

The blessings of obedience secure the assurance that no curse will come to rest on you, however the curses for disobedience are clearly laid out in **Debarim/Deuteronomy** and we are therefore reminded how we are to keep our lives clean and free from compromise and sin, lest a curse finds its way into our lives.

Our Master gives us a parable of the man who cleaned his house and then ended up worse off, because he did not keep it clean:

Luqas/Luke 11:24-26 “**When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest. And finding none, he says, ‘I shall return to my house from which I came.’** 25 “**And when he comes, he finds it swept and decorated, 26 then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”**

This is a parable that teaches us about keeping ‘**our house clean**’ and we do that by guarding to do all His commands, for that is righteousness for us (**Debarim/Deuteronomy 6:25**)!

If we do not guard to do the commands of our Elohim we are, in effect, opening up our lives for the effect of curses that may find a home and have a right to take root, due to lawlessness or compromise and sin!

When we walk in righteousness and guard righteousness, then we shall not fear the many curses that may be flying about and looking for a home to ruin!

What is worth taking note of here, is that as part of the clear list of curses for disobedience, we see the following:

Debarim/Deuteronomy 28:26 “**And your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth, with no one to frighten them away.”**

Part of the curses for disobedience is that the disobedient will end up being devoured by the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth.

This imagery of the birds feasting on carcasses is one that is repeatedly found in Scripture, as a clear reference to the fate of the wicked.

When speaking of the Day of **יְהוּדָה** our Master gives us a clear parable in:

Luqas/Luke 17:31-37 “**In that day, he who shall be on the house-top, and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.** 32 “**Remember the wife of Lot.** 33 “**Whoever seeks to save his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it.** 34 “**I say to you, in that night there shall be two in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.** 35 “**Two shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.** 36 “**Two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other shall be left.”** 37 **And they answering, said to Him, “Where, Master?” And He said to them, “Where the body is, there also the eagles shall be gathered together.”**

While we are able to get some great encouragement from this parable of Shelomoh, in recognising that undeserved curses do not come to rest, we are to make sure that we are guarding righteousness and not be found to be in a place where the ‘birds’ have a right to rest and feast on our carcasses, due to lawlessness and sin!

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘curse’ in **Mishlĕ/Proverbs 26:2** is **קִלְלָה** qelalah – **Strong’s H7045** and comes from the root verb **קָלַל** qalal – **Strong’s H7043** which means, ‘**to be light, swift, trifling, cursed, despised**’; and the primary emphasis here is the absence (or reversal) of a blessed or rightful state and the lowering to a lesser state due to the absence of a blessing.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘without cause’ in **Mishlĕ/Proverbs 26:2** is **חִנָּם** **hinnam** – **Strong’s H2600** which means, ‘**out of favour, free, nothing, useless, vain, costs me nothing, without a cause, without pay**’, and comes from the root word **חָנַן** **hanan** – **Strong’s H2603** meaning, ‘**show favour, be gracious to, dealt graciously with, given to them voluntarily, shown favour**’.

I find the meaning of this Hebrew word for ‘without cause’, a very powerful lesson, in showing us the vain worship that many are rendering under the banner of a ‘false grace’, that assumes that the Torah is no longer applicable. And so, they are using their ‘false grace’ as a license to sin and be lawless and are, in many ways, finding themselves in a place of saying that are free from the curse of the Torah, which is death, while they stubbornly continue in their blatant refusal to walk in the Torah and are therefore lawless and while doing so, they think that they have nothing to worry about.

They do not recognise that the birds are hovering and will come to rest on those who are lawless and have cast the Torah of Elohim aside!

What we can also understand, from an allegorical perspective here in **Bemidbar/Numbers 22**, is that with Balaq (the devastator), being the son of Tsippor (sparrow), we can see that words can be more devastating than anything else, and he is now terrified of a people (Yisra’el) who are in fact doing what he has always been ‘talking’ about!

How often we see that ‘words’ can do more damage than physical actions and while we recognise that words can be a very destructive force, if used in the wrong way, we also take note that a good word, in season, is always able to bring forth joy; and we, as a set-apart and chosen people, are to be reminded to guard our lips from speaking evil.

Eph’siyim/Ephesians 4:29 “**Let no corrupt word come out of your mouth, but only such as is good for the use of building up, so as to impart what is pleasant to the hearers.**”

Mishlĕ/Proverbs 15:26 “**Evil thoughts are an abomination to יְהוָה, but pleasant words are clean.**”

Balaq only had evil thoughts towards Yisra’el and this was an abomination to יְהוָה, and He would not allow these abominable thoughts, which bring forth the desire to curse, to be used against His people!

Mo’ab went and spoke to the elders of Midyan, as they were in fear of being destroyed as Oğ sovereign of Bashan and Siḥon sovereign of the Amorites had been.

The name **מִדְיָן** **Midyan** – **Strong’s H4080** means, ‘**quarrelsome, strife**’ and here we are able to see a picture of how the devastator went to seek the help of some troublemakers.

We see the same today, by seeing how those who want to speak a negative and ill word toward you, and want to gripe and slander you, will find others who are mere troublemakers, that love to argue and fight, in order to cause some contention.

Those who seek to cause contention with the obedient children of the Most-High are those who are drinking a ‘mixed’ cup of wine – that is: those who are partaking of ‘mixed theologies’ and by being ‘drunk’ on a mixed cup of abominable practices of man, they speak out against the Truth by calling it a curse.

Mishlê/Proverbs 23:29-30 “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who feels hurt without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those staying long at the wine, those going in to search out mixed wine.”

Those who are drinking of mixed man-made theologies have constant contention with the Torah and all who walk in the Torah and, in effect, they curse the Torah by saying it is done away with and as we will see in this Torah portion, this is exactly what the delusion of Bil'am is all about, as clearly seen in the teaching that Christianity proclaims, in their claim that the Torah is a curse and it is done away with!

The major problem with 'quarrelsome troublemakers' is that they are fools who think that they are right!

Yisra'el is described here as **'the ox that is liking up all the grass'**, and what we can see from this is that, like the rough tongue of an ox pulls up the grass into its mouth and bites it off, so too was Yisra'el 'uprooting' the nations around them, uprooting those who were in rebellion against them!

We know that in Scripture, an ox is often a symbol strength and the ancient pictograph of the letter 'aleph' is that of a head of an ox, and pictures that of the strength that we get from יהוה who leads us by His yoke that is easy; and by being 'yoked' to the Torah, in Messiah, we are led in paths of righteousness and we need not fear any evil.

We are told in **Debarim/Deuteronomy 22:10**, that we are told to not plough with an ox and a donkey together.

A donkey is an interesting animal, as we find in Scripture various pictures that are expressed through the use of a donkey, however, in terms of stubbornness and rebellion, we find in Hoshĕa/Hosea that Ephrayim is referred to as a donkey, when describing the rebellion of Ephrayim:

Hoshĕa/Hosea 8:9 “For they themselves have gone up to Ashshur. A wild donkey alone by itself is Ephrayim, they have hired lovers.”

And what we see being pictured here is an unequal yoking, even recognised by the enemy!

Yisra'el was likened to an ox, speaking of faithfulness and strength found in יהוה of Hosts, while Balaq, being the opposite, is a picture of a rebellious donkey who stands against the Truth of the Torah and observance thereto and clearly these two cannot be yoked together.

Qorintiyim Bĕt/2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness? And what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 And what agreement has Messiah with Beliya' al? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever?”

All who disregard the Torah are lawless and are as unbelievers, whether they believe it or not, and as we walk in the Torah by belief-obedience in Messiah we come to realise that we are not ploughing with the same 'animal' so to speak and therefore we must guard not being unequally yoked with rebellion and stubbornness, lest the curse finds an opening to attack!

Verse 5 – Bil'am son of Be'or

Balaq sends messengers to Bil'am and the name בלעם Bil'am - Strong's H1109 means, **'not of the people'** which possibly stems from the two words:

1) בַּל bal – Strong’s H1077 which means, *‘not, cannot, never, fail’*, which comes from the primitive root בָּלַח balah – Strong’s H1086 which means, *‘to become old, wear out, consume, decaying, waste away’*; and

2) אָם am – Strong’s H5971 which means, *‘people, nation, citizens’*, hence the construction of בִּלְאָם Bil’am carrying the meaning of *‘not of the people’*.

It is also believed to be derived from the root word בָּלַע bala – Strong’s H1104 which means, *‘to swallow up, engulf, brought to confusion, consume, destroy’*.

From understanding the derivatives, or roots, of the name of Bil’am, we can further understand the picture that is being presented to us, in order to warn us from that which is happening in our day!

Bil’am could best be expressed in having the meaning of:

“one who is not of the people that wears down the people”.

We are warned in Scripture about the delusion of Bil’am – which is that delusion that wears people down and is a delusion that is brought by those who are not of the people of Elohim, yet they falsely claim to be and are simply false prophets!

Kěpha Bět/2 Peter 3:17 “You, then, beloved ones, being forewarned, watch, lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the delusion of the lawless”

Yehudáh/Jude 1:11 “Woe to them! Because they have gone in the way of Qayin, and gave themselves to the delusion of Bil’am for a reward, and perished in the rebellion of Qorah.”

Bil’am was the son of Be’or and the name בְּעוֹר Be’or – Strong’s H1160 which means, *‘a lamp (in the sense of burning)’* and comes from the root word בָּעַר ba’ar – Strong’s H1197 which means, *‘to burn, consume, purge, kindle by fire’*.

Bil’am’s home was at בְּתוֹר Pethor – Strong’s H6604 which is a word of foreign origin that means, *‘soothsayer’* which is the equivalent of the word ‘diviner’ or one who practices divination and we are again told in:

Yehoshua/Joshua 13:22 “And the sons of Yisra’ěl killed with the sword Bil’am son of Be’or, the diviner, among those who were killed by them.”

Bil’am was a **diviner**, which is translated in the KJV as **‘soothsayer’**, which is the Hebrew word בָּסַם qasam – Strong’s H7080 which means, *‘to practice divination, diviner, be a soothsayer, seek an omen’* – the very thing that is prohibited among the children of Yisra’ěl!

We are told in **Berěshith/Genesis 36:32** of another son of Be’or, who was a king in the land of Eđom, which is that of the descendants of Ęsaw; and so, it is clear that Bil’am knew יְהוּדָה and would have certainly preserved much of his unspiritual ancestors knowledge of יְהוּדָה.

Eđomites represents for us today ‘Christians’, who are ‘brothers’ to Yisra’ěl, with whom they have a dysfunctional relationship with, as a result of **‘selling their birth right’** (the Torah), and are classed as being ‘men of the field’, which יְהוּשָׁע says represents the world.

Such people are certainly seen as useful to the “**devastator**” who gathers the quarrelsome and seeks the divination of man’s traditions as a means to ‘curse’ the Torah and all who follow it!

Balaq is like many trouble makers we see today, who, by twisting the truth, try to gain support against the remnant who follow Messiah. And to do this they will even seek the help of the prophets of Elohim.

Verses 6-7 – Balaq, in his message, pleads with Bil’am to curse Yisra’el and makes it known that he trusted in the words of Bil’am, for he said he knew that whoever Bil’am cursed was cursed and whoever he blessed was blessed.

Is this because Bil’am had done some cursing and blessing before?

Balaq is a picture of one who is seeking results through divination and so he goes to a ‘prophet for hire’ – for that is exactly what Bil’am was!

Today, we see this very same thing happening in many churches as they will send for a well-known ‘**prophet for hire**’ who will come to bless them with so called prophetic insight and call down curses upon their enemies!

I remember a time when I was part of a charismatic church and, in preparation for a very big conference that would host speakers from all over the world, they approached a man, who was labelled as the prophet of this specific movement, or group of worldwide churches, to come and be the key note speaker and ‘highlight’ of the conference; and he demanded a fee!!!

A very large fee, as well, as the requirements that were laid down for his coming, involved having to fly first class only and be put up in a 5-star hotel!!!

This sounds crazy I know, but this is part of the modern-day delusion of Bil’am, which sees so called prophets exacting fees for their service of being a ‘prophet’!

By Balaq and the elders of Mo’ab and Midyan offering a fee for divination (**verse 7**), it is as though they were doing the divination of sorcery themselves, by becoming a part of the fee they are in fact engaged in the divination process and this is strictly prohibited and is an abomination in the eyes of יהוה.

Think of all the so-called “prophets for hire” that we see today, even being advertised on billboards and in the media and so many deluded people are flocking and are ‘paying’ their fees of divination, while they are all by participation in the process of advocating the nullification of the Torah, by being deluded into believing that what they are doing is right – delusion of the lawless!!!

The Greek word that is translated as ‘delusion’ in **Kēpha Bēt/2 Peter 3:17** and **Yehudah/Jude 1:11** comes from the word **πλάνη plane** – **Strong’s G4106** which means, ‘**wandering, deception, error, deluding, deceitful**’ and is simply understood in the Greek as ‘**wandering out of the right way**’ which is figuratively used to describe being in error!

A derivative of this word is **πλανάω planaō** – **Strong’s G4105** which means, ‘**to cause to wander, deceive, mislead, misled, led or gone astray**’, which is translated as ‘**led astray**’ in: **Galatyiim/Galatians 6:7** “**Do not be led astray: Elohim is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he shall also reap.**”

We see this word **πλανᾶω planaō** used in the Greek text in the account when, answering the Sadducees over their dispute about the resurrection, **יהושע** Messiah said to them:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 22:29 “... You go astray, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of Elohim.”

These words are so true for so many today, as they go astray, simply because they do not know the Scriptures, and if they do not know the Scriptures, it is impossible for them to know the power of Elohim!!!

Because of this sad reality, of most people who claim to know Elohim, yet do not know Scripture, we see that they are easily led astray, misguided and deceived, as they wander aimlessly away from the Truth, instead of running in the way of His commands as Dawid declared in:

Tehillah/Psalm 119:32 “I run the way of Your commands, for You enlarge my heart.”

We also see this word **πλάνη plane** – Strong’s **G4106** being translated as ‘leading astray’ is: **Eph’siyim/Ephesians 4:11-16 “And He Himself gave some as emissaries, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as shepherds and teachers ¹² for the perfecting of the set-apart ones, to the work of service to a building up of the body of the Messiah, ¹³ until we all come to the unity of the belief and of the knowledge of the Son of Elohim, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the completeness of Messiah, ¹⁴ so that we should no longer be children, tossed and borne about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men, in cleverness, unto the craftiness of leading astray, ¹⁵ but, maintaining the truth in love, we grow up in all respects into Him who is the head, Messiah, ¹⁶ from whom the entire body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the working by which each part does its share, causes growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”**

The reason for me quoting this passage from **verse 11-16** is to highlight the clear appointment of the Master, as He has given those who are to equip the body so that they are not being ‘led astray’ by every wind of teaching and the trickery and craftiness of evil men!

There are so many people today who are being tossed about by every wind of teaching, as they are not submitting to the ordered design of the body of Messiah and are not able to rightly discern between that which is set-apart and that which is not, as the deceit and craftiness of the delusion of the lawless grips them and leads them away from being properly built up in unity as they fall away from the responsibility and accountability that each one should have toward the other within the body of Messiah, that ought to be built up and knit together in love!

NO DIVINATION!

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘divination’ is **קֶסֶם qesem** – Strong’s **H7081** which means, ‘**divination, witchcraft**’, which is a practice that is strictly forbidden, as we see in: **Debarim/Deuteronomy 18:10-11 “Let no one be found among you who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practises divination, or a user of magic, or one who interprets omens or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.”**

We are also told in Scripture that rebellion is as divination:

Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 15:23 “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of יהוה, He also does reject you as sovereign.”

What יהוה makes very clear in His Word, is that the one who is in ‘rebellion’ is in no way different to one who uses magic, conjures spells or calls up the dead etc.

Verse 8 – stay the night

Bil'am tells the messengers to stay the night, while he would seek a word from יהוה.

The Hebrew word used here in this verse for ‘stayed’ is יָשַׁב *yashab* – Strong’s H3427 which means, ‘*sit, dwell, remain, abide, inhabit, sitting still*’ and a modern word derived from this word which is translated as school is ‘*yeshiva*’.

And ‘*sitting*’ in the Hebraic min-set is an idiom for learning.

The idea of sitting in the Hebrew mind-set here is to learn, and not to simply sit and vegetate but rather sit and pay attention to the instructions of their teacher, and so by implication, these messengers became ‘*students*’ of Bil'am and would feel indebted to him no matter what he did or said!

Bil'am is a picture of so many Christians today, who claim to have a relationship with יהוה, yet are not grounded in the Truth and unless they come out of the delusion, they will find out that what they have been standing on, for so long, is not a rock, but is simply a deadly and unsecure sinking sand!

Verse 9 – 12 – Conversation with Elohim

Bil'am tells the messengers of Balaq that he will inquire of יהוה, as he would certainly have expected to encounter His compassionate side, yet we find here that it is recorded as ‘Elohim’ came to Bil'am and spoke!

Now while many may not find this relevant, I do find it very interesting and see a picture of Bil'am who seeks to speak to “יהוה” and is answered by Elohim and encounters an aspect of Elohim that he may never have encountered before, as He finds Himself before the Judge asking him ‘who are these with him’. יהוה knew exactly who they were, yet he is wanting Bil'am to recognise what is going on here. יהוה wants Bil'am to see that he should not be keeping company with such men who seek gain through divination!

Bil'am obviously answers and does not realise that יהוה's question is a rhetorical question, and was being blinded by the love of money. I mean, what were they doing there – by letting them ‘stay’ and by making them his students, so to speak, he has just become a prophet for hire, instead of doing what he should have done at the door – turned them away!

After all he should have known that he could not curse a blessed people!

Verse 13

Bil'am then informs them in the morning that he will not be going with them.

However, he makes it clear that יהוה has refused to allow him to go.

And while this was certainly correct, the language and tense in which this is relayed, emphasises that despite this soothsayer listening to the clear instructions of **יהוה**, it was more a case of:

“I would really love to go, but I can’t, I am not allowed”.

He did not understand that the instructions of **יהוה** were good and beneficial, yet portrayed **יהוה** as being an oppressive dictator.

So many do the same today, when they view the instructions of **יהוה**, not as a life-giving source but rather as something that is restrictive and oppressive, yet they will do it because they know they have to – this is a picture of living according to the letter of the law without the spirit.

Just think about how this same attitude is seen by so many today – for instance, there are many who know that pork is not to be eaten and that shellfish is to be an abomination to us, yet they really wish they could eat them, instead of utterly hating it as a considered food source, because our father has said so.

“I would really love to but...” is a sad fleshly response given by many who wrestle with the need to be satisfied in the spirit, instead of standing up for the truth with joy and great boldness!

How many times have you said, **“I would really love to but...”** to something you know you are not permitted to do – if it is not permitted why would you love to do it!!!

Verse 14 – the report back to Balaq

Balaq’s messengers return without Bil’am!

And they tell Balaq that Bil’am refused to come with them!

This is how the world sees our obedience to following the instructions of **יהוה**!

The messengers did not tell Balaq that **יהוה** refused Bil’am to go, but that Bil’am refused, and often when we say no to the temptations of the world and say no to that which is not permitted in the Torah, yet is seen as ok in the world and in the church, we are often labelled as being **‘without options’** and are seemingly **‘restricted’** by being in subjection to the instructions of Elohim!

They cannot see our obedience and saying no as an expression of love, but rather as something that is seen as making us live under oppressive laws; and sadly, that is how Bil’am made it sound. We are to be careful how we express our commitment in the ‘way’ we say no to the things we should. If we bring it across as burdensome, as opposed to being a delight for being obedient, then we hinder our ability to shine the Truth in its fullness!

Verse 15 – the Devastator sends more!

Balaq does not give up – so he sends more important men this time to Bil’am hoping to impress Bil’am and buy him with that which was seen as more important. The enemy will not stop at our first no, especially if it is done with a reluctant heart!

Verse 16-19 – the second visit

More important leaders now come to Bil’am with the hope to persuade him to go to Balaq, and they use flattery in telling Bil’am how much he is esteemed by Balaq.

Flattery is one of the oldest tricks of the enemy – if he can make you feel good about yourself then he feels that he may have a means to get you to do what he wants.

This is exactly the danger of the modern ‘gospel’ that has become ‘culturally correct’ and tickles the ears so that the masses who get all warm and fuzzy will bend their knee to follow the delusion which flatters their ego!

We are warned of such ear tickling trickery:

Timotiyos Bět/2 Timothy 4:3 “For there shall be a time when they shall not bear sound teaching, but according to their own desires, they shall heap up for themselves teachers tickling the ear”

Here, Balaq thought that if he used flattery and tickled Bil’am’s ear then he would listen and in turn tickle their ears with what they wanted to “hear from Elohim” by the prophet!

Bil’am responds by saying that even if they were to give him Balaq’s house filled with silver and gold, he could not go beyond the Word of Elohim!

By him saying this, he was actually telling them that they had not offered him enough, and so he set the mark pretty high.

Once again, instead of saying no, he causes the reluctance to go, to sound as if he would really like the money but he was being restrained by Elohim.

So many today express the same thing – the world and its riches are constantly luring them and they feel restrained by the Word, instead of seeing יהוה’s choice as a continual blessing.

There are many today who will say the same thing as Bil’am in that no amount of money can buy them from their obedience, yet quickly break their word when an offer that is often hard to refuse comes knocking!

I mean, Bil’am must have thought about having all that Balaq had to offer, otherwise he would not have made such a statement – Bil’am loved money and used his seeming ‘religiosity’ as a crutch to attaining it, yet as we know he fell for it and went as the temptation to gain some wealth ate away at him, where he did not listen carefully to the Word of Elohim:

Timotiyos Aleph/1 Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some, by longing for it, have strayed from the belief, and pierced themselves through with many pains.”

Once again, he tells the leaders to ‘stay’ with him for the night, and so too we see how he makes them his students, as at the first visit. He honestly thinks that this time he would get a different response from יהוה, thinking that he will hear something different this time.

It is said that the definition of insanity is to keep doing the same thing over and over and expect a completely different result!

So many today do the same thing as they continue to seek an alternative answer from Elohim that would be favourable and beneficial to them, and in their seeking, they are not actually seeking for the Truth but rather for a loophole to get them out of obeying the Truth.

So many will twist Scripture and take various verses out of context and claim it to be a ‘loophole’ so to speak for not adhering to the clear instructions of יהוה as given through His Torah!

Bil'am is a picture of many who really claim to be a man or woman of Elohim, yet they simply love the way of unrighteousness, simply because it suits their lifestyle better, as opposed to living according to יהוה's prescribed lifestyle and find themselves straying from the Truth to satisfy the luring of the fleshly desires that call constantly with bigger and greater promises! **Kěpha Bět/2 Peter 2:15 "having left the right way they went astray, having followed the way of Bil'am the son of Be'or, who loved the wages of unrighteousness"**

When we are praying, we must take heed that we do not fall to temptation, but be watchful and awake, knowing the times!

Verse 20-21

Bil'am is told by Elohim that 'if' the men come to call him, then he was to rise and go – only 'if'; yet what we see here is that Bil'am saw this as a green light; and while he was given permission to go, we see that before anyone comes to call him to go, he had risen early and saddled his donkey and goes with the heads of Mo'ab!

He didn't wait to see if they would come to call him – now of course we know that they would have come, but the point of the matter here is that he went on ahead and in essence 'went on his own' and as we see in **verse 22** this angered יהוה.

So, by not waiting for the men to call him as he was instructed to do, by him going, just proved all along that he wanted to go anyway!

The Donkey and Bil'am

The word for 'donkey' here in the Hebrew is אֶתוֹן *athon* – Strong's H860 which means, '**female donkey**' and is thought to come from the word אֶתָן *ethan* – Strong's H386 which means, '**perennial, ever flowing, permanence**' and we understand that this word carries the essence of that which is faithful and reliable – something that lasts forever.

Having said that, it makes a wonderful picture for us as the donkey represents the Word of Elohim and even more particularly the Torah:

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 40:8 "Grass shall wither, the flower shall fade, but the Word of our Elohim stands forever."

Mattithyahu/Matthew 5:18 "For truly, I say to you, till the heaven and the earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall by no means pass from the Torah till all be done."

Mattithyahu/Matthew 24:35 "The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My words shall by no means pass away."

The Torah will not take us where יהושע does not want us to go, and we know that the Torah leads us to Messiah as a trainer:

Galatiyim/Galatians 3:24 "Therefore the Torah became our trainer unto Messiah, in order to be declared right by belief."

We also recognise that the life, death and resurrection of Messiah is the revelation of the Torah that was given through Mosheh; as we also see this being depicted by Him riding on a donkey when He came the first time as a picture of servanthood as prophesied in:

Zekaryah/Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Tsiyon! Shout, O daughter of Yerushalayim! See, your Sovereign is coming to you, He is righteous and endowed with deliverance, humble and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey."

There are two different words that are used here in **Zekaryah/Zechariah 9:9** for 'donkey':
The first one is חָמֹר hamor – Strong's H2543 which means 'male donkey' and comes from the primitive root חָמַר hamar – Strong's H2560 which means, 'red'.

Our Master יהושע 'יהושע' came riding on a 'male donkey' which was the 'foal' of a אֲתוֹן athon – 'female donkey'.

The Hebrew word for 'foal' is בֵּן ben – Strong's H1121 which means, 'son'.

In other words, as prophesied, He came riding of a male donkey, the son of a female donkey!!!
Yohanan/John 1:17 "for the Torah was given through Mosheh – the favour and the truth came through יהושע Messiah."

When we understand the etymology of the word 'Torah', this verse expresses it clearly and the Torah could accurately be defined as:

The instructions of Elohim for His set-apart people as given through Mosheh and revealed by the life, death and resurrection of the Messiah!

So, from understanding the picture of the donkey as being a representation of the Torah we can learn a great deal through this account of Bil'am and his donkey!

When the messenger of יהוה stood as an adversary in the way against Bil'am we see how so many today will try to use the Word to take them on their desired journey of seeking self-gain as opposed to simply being obedient to the clear instructions of Elohim, and those who persist in seeking their own way and using the Word to get it will be confronted by the very Living Word that they claim to be travelling upon!

Whenever we try to serve two masters, the messenger of יהוה will stand in our way as an adversary.

The donkey saw the messenger of יהוה with His drawn sword, and the donkey turned aside into the field and, in essence, is a picture of the donkey (Torah) that was trying to save Bil'am's life, by keeping him from walking against the Truth of יהושע, yet Bil'am did not see יהושע and so what did he do?

He struck the donkey to turn her back onto the way of his journey!

Verse 23 – the Hebrew word that is translated as 'turn' comes from the root word נָטָה natah – Strong's H5186 which means, '*stretch out, spread, out, extend, pervert, bend, defraud*' and we clearly see from this that we have here a classic picture of how he was like the many of Edom (Christianity), that will stretch out and pervert and bend the Word to suit themselves, in order to justify the way in which they walk, and in the process will even attempt to get the Word of Elohim to prove why they can go against His will and go against His instructions and so 'strike' His Torah that is given to protect us on the way!

Those who are blinded, by a 'Greek' concept and view of who Messiah, is will never recognise the True Messiah – the Living Torah – The Word made flesh; and those who do not recognise the True יהושע, will never expect the Torah to be in total agreement with יהושע, and as a result, they continue to strike the Word of Truth, as they pervert and twist it to get their own stubborn way, which in the end will be confronted by the Living Word, with His sword drawn!

Verse 24 – the narrow way

When we walk in the 'narrow' way, we must be prepared to be examined by the very Word we walk in, and be warned, that if we turn aside and let go of the Word, we will get hurt along the way!

The Messenger of יהוה stood in a narrow passage between the vineyards with a wall on either side and this speaks of יהושע being the Vine and the narrow way.

Mattithyahu/Matthew 7:14 "Because the gate is narrow and the way is hard pressed which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

The Greek word that is translated here as 'hard pressed' comes from the primitive verb θλίβω thlibō – Strong's G2346 which means, 'to press or afflict, to distress, suffer affliction', and in the literal sense can mean, 'to squash, press, hem in, rub, harassed', and can also be understood as being 'narrow or hard pressed', and the Greek word that is translated as 'narrow' comes from the word στενός stenos – Strong's G4728 which means, 'narrow (space or passage) as a result of obstacles standing close about)'.

In other words, the true path of life is very narrow, and it will often feel like the pressure of so many obstacles of destruction, that are pressing hard against us, are doing their best to cause us to not enter in, as we are continually hard pressed on every side – yet, as faithful followers of Messiah, we are not crushed!

A derivative of the root verb θλίβω thlibō – Strong's G2346 is θλίψις thlipsis – Strong's G2347 which means, 'tribulation, pressure, affliction, distress, persecution, trouble', which is used in the LXX in Shemu'el Bēt/2 Samuel 22:19 and is translated as 'calamity'

This word θλίψις thlipsis – Strong's G2347 is used in:

Yohanan/John 16:33 "These words I have spoken to you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you have pressure, but take courage, I have overcome the world."

The Word of Elohim is what we have, to recognise the True peace we have in our Messiah King; and while we certainly will have much pressure in the world, we are able to be strong and courageous as we stand firm on the Rock of our Salvation and hold fast to the Living Word, amēn!

In the world we have pressure....! How true is that statement!!!

Pressure, pressure and more pressure... is that how it feels at times for most of you?

We'll take heart ... because this is our lot, and our only means of enduring the sure pressure is to 'hear – guard – do' the Word of Elohim!

What is very clear to us is that we, who are walking faithfully in Messiah, will have pressure in this world – the question is how we are handling the pressure – with courage and joy, or do we find ourselves stumbling under pressure?

How do you handle times of distress?

Are you faltering because your strength is small or are you standing firm in the Truth, guarding the knowledge of our Master by actively doing what He commands?

Verse 25-29

His journey came to a place where there was no hiding and no escape from the Truth, and the donkey crushed Bil'am's foot and so he struck her again.

A clear picture of how so many will continue to 'strike' the Torah when they are shown that their way of worship is wrong, and the narrow place got so narrow where there was no way to turn, and so we also learn that eventually יהוה brings the lawless (sinners) to a place where they cannot hide and are then confronted with the Truth.

In **verse 27** we see that the donkey lay down and this angered Bil'am and we are told that he used his staff to strike the donkey. The 'staff' is a symbol of authority and here we see as a picture Bil'am using his own authority to beat the donkey (Torah).

This is exactly what has happened in Christianity, when the Pope changed or rather attempted to change the Sabbath to Sun-day to prove their authority to do so, and by the masses who follow this error of man-made authority are just as guilty of striking the Torah of יהוה with the assumed authority of Christianity as birthed by the Catholic Church and held fast to by all her daughters!

Verse 28 – the donkey speaks! – יהוה opens the mouth of the donkey!!! Picture the scene!

Kěpha Bět/2 Peter 2:16 “but he was rebuked for his transgression: a dumb donkey speaking with the voice of a man restrained the madness of the prophet.”

This may have been a temporary restoration of the original condition of the animals before Ađam's fall!

When the Torah is restored and comes alive again so to speak, it may shock many who have claimed that it no longer is a necessity for us.

The donkey asks why Bil'am has beaten her three times – in other words, “why have you chastised, punished, attacked or brought judgement upon me these three times?”.

The term/phrase “three times”, is very significant for us, in seeing what the false system of worship has struck!

This phrase literally means 'three paces or feet', as it is the same phrase used to describe “the three times a year” that each male was required to go and celebrate יהוה's Feasts at Yerushalayim:

Shemoth/Exodus 23:14 “Three times in the year you are to observe a festival to Me.”

“Three times in the year”, giving reference to when Yisra'el were instructed to keep the Feasts יהוה by every male having to appear before the Master יהוה.

The Hebrew word that is used for 'times' in **Shemoth/Exodus 23:14** and **Bemidbar/Numbers 22:28** is רגל regel – Strong's H7272 which means 'a foot or feet or to walk', and speaks of one's obedience to walking according to His commands and obeying his call to keep His feasts as commanded.

The Feasts were not limited to just 3 but rather all His Feasts were grouped in three – Pěsaḥ and Matzot were the one time you would celebrate in the 1st month; Shavuot the second time in the 3rd month and in the 7th month – Yom Teruah (Trumpets), Yom Kippur (Atonement) and Sukkot (Tabernacles) being the 3rd time.

The term ‘celebrate’, in the Hebrew, carries the implication of dancing and literally to dance in a circle or cycle – speaking that we keep this cycle every year with great rejoicing. ‘Three’ is also symbolic of stability as a 3-legged stool is the most stable.

We are again told in:

Shemoth/Exodus 23:17 “Three times in the year all your males are to appear before the Master יהוה.”

In verse 17, here in **Shemoth/Exodus 23**, the Hebrew root word that is translated as ‘times’ is פָּעַם pa’am – Strong’s H6471 which means ‘a beat, foot, step’ and can also be expressed as how one ‘conduct one’s life, formally – one’s walk, step or footstep, i.e., the patterns of behaviour as a figurative extension of a stepping of a foot forward’.

We keep these cycles with joy as we press on forward and do not turn back but always moving forward in His cycle.

His Feasts are our rehearsals and we are to be diligent in rehearsing according to His set forth instructions, for in it lies His complete plan of redemption for which we continue to walk in faithfully.

His feasts are in a way a sure roadmap that ensures the Bride’s complete preparation and are eternal appointments for every generation that are prophetic in nature helping the Bride be led in Truth to her wedding with the Master!

Coming into these celebrations, with *Mosheh’s writings and the Sabbath* as our guides, leads the Bride to her wedding, preparing her every step of the way to that special day.

These Feasts are also called **paths of right ways or righteousness**.

When the Feasts are not celebrated or honoured, the Bride can be unprepared and may even miss her own wedding day!

Bil’am struck the donkey ‘three times’ – in other words he is a picture of striking the Torah to keep the Feasts 3 times a year, which is exactly what Christianity has done and labelled the Feasts of יהוה as ‘Jewish Feasts’ which is twisted fabrication and lie, for **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 23** makes it very clear that they are יהוה’s Feasts which are to be kept for all generations – now as long as there are generations (that is as long as people are having children) we are to keep His Feasts and not ‘strike’ them down and nullify them!

Because Bil’am would not respect יהוה’s ‘Feet’, we then see how יהוה would then hurt his ‘feet’. This is very clear, in expressing to us that the Torah will not be bent to the will of Christianity or any other man-made system of worship, that ‘strikes’ and excuses away the need to keep יהוה’s Feasts.

The Torah will not be bent to the will of Christianity, which has changed the Sabbath of יהוה, to a keeping of a pagan rooted day of worshipping the sun!

We are to 'rest' when יהוה says so and not when the Pope has decreed so!

Bil'am is a picture of how the Church has struck and beaten down and chastised the Appointed Times of יהוה, and has stricken them from her worldly man-made calendar that simply serves mammon and in no way esteems יהוה, and so the church, like Bil'am, is totally missing what יהוה is saying and so as Bil'am's foot was crushed, so too must these man-made holidays based on pagan festivities be crushed!

Bil'am talks back to the donkey, possibly because being a soothsayer he was used to talking to animals and doing various witchcraft practices, and is more concerned about his reputation than the truth!

So many people today, when confronted by the Truth, ignore it as they do not want to be mocked and embarrassed for having followed a lie, and would try to use their own man-made 'staff' of authority to beat the Truth away while they wish to have a sword in their hand (a picture of the True Word) they find that what is in their hand is not the sharper double-edged sword of the Truth but simply a 'sorcerers wand'.

Verse 30 – the donkey asks Bil'am if she, as a faithful donkey, had ever mocked him and he said no! When we truly assess what the Torah says we cannot find it in any way mocking us, but rather it is proved to be a faithful tool that will sustain us on our sojourning!

Verse 31 – יהוה opens Bil'am's eyes and he sees the Messenger of יהוה. Up until this point Bil'am has only spoken to יהוה in the dark and now in broad daylight his eyes are opened. All these times he refused to go in the way of the (donkey)Torah until the (donkey) Torah spoke! **"Faith comes by hearing the Word!"**

The Hebrew word that is translated as 'opened' comes from the root word גָּלַח galah – **Strong's H1540** which means, '**uncover, remove**' and so, we see a picture here of the veil being taken away by the '**striking of the Torah**', and now the Truth was revealed, as Messiah Himself stood in front of Bil'am!

The same word used for open is used in:

Tehillah/Psalm 119:18 "Open my eyes, that I might see Wonders from Your Torah."

It is only when we turn to the master that the veil is taken away:

Qorintiyim Bēt/2 Corinthians 3:16 "And when one turns to the Master, the veil is taken away."

Verse 32 – The Messenger then asks Bil'am why he has struck his donkey these three times and as a result He has come out to stand against him, because his way is reckless!

This is a picture of the Word as given through Mosheh has spoken and is now revealed by Messiah, and The Messenger (Messiah) tells Bil'am that his way has been contrary to the Truth, and in **verse 33** The Messenger tells Bil'am that if it wasn't for these three times that the donkey turned aside, he would have been killed.

This is a powerful illustration of how the Appointed Times of יהוה are a great picture of his loving commitment and compassion for us, and how He has provided for us through His Appointed Times, which if they had not been in place as instructed through the Torah, then we would have had no chance of survival, as we were dead in our transgressions!

Verse 34 – Bil'am in the face of the Truth acknowledges that he has sinned and recognises that he has been off track, and he reveals that he clearly did not know the will of יהוה, which for a 'prophet' is totally unacceptable!

He says that if evil was in the eyes of The Messenger as to his way/path then he asked to be allowed to turn back.

This is a picture of someone who had not been listening; as the Torah makes it very clear what the will of יהוה is and we are to know it.

By now it should have displeased Bil'am to go, yet he has a warped perspective that was not based on the Truth!

He really still wanted to go, yet he asked that if it was not right then he would not go – he should have known it was not right!

So many people today have the same way of thinking, as they would, in effect, have the thought process of, "if it offends you I won't do it".

We should know what offends יהוה!

It is as if he was saying, "I would really like to do this, but if you are offended by it then I will not" ... Sound familiar?

Verse 35 – do not add or take away – here was then a further test for Bil'am – he was now permitted to go but he would not be allowed to speak that which is not of יהוה.

Verse 39 – Bil'am went with Balaq to קִירְיַת הַחֲצוֹת Qiryath Hütsoth - Strong's H7155 which means, 'city of streets'!

This is a clear picture of the 'broad way' or the picture of the 'many paths' doctrine!

This is how the devastator will attempt to wear down the people – by presenting them with many paths and open spaces to follow and feel secure in, yet as we know that broad is the way that leads to destruction – and it has many paths! There is only One way!

Verse 41 – Balaq took Bil'am to the high places of Ba'al – these were the high places of pagan worship and it would be from these places that Balaq hoped to let Bil'am see why it was important for him to curse Yisra'el and in a sense oppose the Torah!

This was a temptation of power, one which יהושע faced when taken up to a high place and shown the kingdoms of the world by Satan:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 4:8-9 "Again, the devil took Him up on a very high mountain, and showed Him all the reigns of the world, and their esteem, 9 and said to Him, "All these I shall give You if You fall down and worship me."

Balaq was trying what Satan tried to do to Messiah – get him to see from the heights how great Balaq was and fall down and do what he requires!

What was יהושע's response to Satan?

Mattithyahu/Matthew 4:10 “**Then יהושע said to him, “Go, Satan! For it has been written, ‘You shall worship יהוה your Elohim, and Him alone you shall serve.’”**”

Bil'am did not resist but continued on with Balaq and this was a place connected to Ba'al and there can be no agreement with Ba'al and יהוה and so we see clearly here how the curse is connected to Ba'al and Ba'al worship.
Ba'al worship is what Christianity is performing on their many 'high places' and has no agreement with the Torah of יהוה!

CHAPTER 23

In this chapter, we see 3 times how Bil'am instructs Balaq to build 7 slaughter places and offer up 7 bulls and 7 rams, from 3 different locations.

What is interesting to note here is how Bil'am tells Balaq in verse 1 to build the slaughter places for him (that is for Bil'am) and not for יהוה!

As we have said, that this is a Ba'al worship site and while we do see a pattern of 7 bulls and rams being offered up in Scripture we see some differences here:

Iyob/Job 42:8 “**And now, take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Iyob, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And let My servant Iyob pray for you – for I accept him – lest I punish you; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as did My servant Iyob.**”

Dibre haYamim Aleph/1 Chronicles 15:26 “**And it came to be, when Elohim helped the Lēwites who bore the ark of the covenant of יהוה, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams.**”

Dibre haYamim Bēt/2 Chronicles 29:21 “**And they brought seven bulls, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the reign, for the set-apart place, and for Yehudāh. And he said to the priests, the sons of Aharon, to offer them on the altar of יהוה.**”

All of the above occasions were at times of restoration and a time of making right with יהוה in acknowledgement of His presence being restored.

These 3 times the 7 bulls and 7 rams were offered up on one slaughter place, not 7.

And so, while we a great significance in the number 7 as speaking of completion and fullness, the place and procedure was all wrong!

In **Deḥarim/Deuteronomy 12** it is made clear that slaughterings to יהוה were to be done at the place where He chooses and not according to the nations, and not to do whatever is right in everyone's own eyes!

Bil'am was doing what was right in his own eyes (build me 7 slaughter places) and he was doing it on pagan worship sites!

Mishlē/Proverbs 15:8 “**The slaughtering of the wrong ones Is an abomination to יהוה, but the prayer of the straight is His delight.**”

With 7 being a unique number, it is here how we see just how crafty the enemy is, in trying to make their attempts at their false sacrifice system seem to appear as right and you also have to think about how they built the slaughter places.

Was it with cut stone, which was forbidden and why 7 slaughter places?

We see this as a picture of going over the top, just like many churches do today, when they have a worship conference and they will pull out all the bells and whistles (literally) and make a big show of their 'slaughterings', when יהוה says that to obey is better than sacrifice, for when you obey you will do the necessary sacrifices that He calls for and no more!

Shemu'el Aleph/1 Samuel 15:22 "Then Shemu'el said, "Does יהוה delight in burnt offerings and slaughterings, as in obeying the voice of יהוה? Look, to obey is better than an offering, to heed is better than the fat of rams."

Bil'am seeks יהוה and he is told by Elohim what to say and he returns to Balaq and takes up a proverb and declares that he is unable to curse whom Elohim has blessed!

From the heights, he looks and sees a people (that is Yisra'el) dwelling alone, not reckoning themselves among the nations!

A people not reckoning themselves among the nations – this is exactly what we are to be doing – we are not like the world, we are a chosen people, dwelling alone as sojourners here:

Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a set-apart nation, a people for a possession, that you should proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light"

Debarim/Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a set-apart people to יהוה your Elohim. יהוה your Elohim has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a treasured possession above all the peoples on the face of the earth."

When Balaq doesn't get what he is paying for, he takes Bil'am to another high place called

צִפִּים Tsophim – Strong's H6839 which means, '*watchers*' and this was a lookout point and

comes from the root word **צָפָה tsaphah** – Strong's H6822 which means, '*to look out, spy, keep watch*' – this was a lookout point where one could watch for approaching enemies and so Balaq takes his prophet for hire to a spot to get a better view of Yisra'el who they deemed as an encroaching enemy.

They once again built another 7 slaughter places and Bil'am again receives the word from

יהוה:

He makes it clear that no matter how many times you try to get a different answer, יהוה is not a man to lie nor the son of man to repent – HE does not change His mind!

We have great safety and assurance in the fact that His Word remains the same:

Romiyim/Romans 11:29 "For the gifts and the calling of Elohim are not to be repented of."

Titos/Titus 1:2 "in expectation of everlasting life which Elohim, who does not lie, promised before times of old"

Ib'rim/Hebrews 6:18 "so that by two unchangeable matters in which it is impossible for Elohim to lie, we might have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the expectation set before us,"

As mentioned earlier that a curse without cause does not come and no matter what the enemy tries, we are protected in Messiah, and even this prophet for hire cannot curse for a fee!

Bil'am tells Balaq the source of Yisra'el's blessing - It is the living presence of יהוה Himself among them.

When others attack יהוה's people, they attack יהוה! And no one can prevail against Him and He cannot be manipulated!

Balaq then takes Bil'am to another high place and so we can learn that the devastator will not stop at trying to get you cursed and in trying to deceive you he will always try to get you to see the truth from another angle or a different viewpoint, be it Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, Methodist etc.

They are all the same – just different hilltops of the same pagan rooted system of twisted worship that assumes to use aspects of the truth in an extravagant manner to try to look impressive yet lack true power in the Spirit!

CHAPTER 24

This third time that Bil'am was called to curse Yisra'el he finally sees that it pleased יהוה to bless Yisra'el, and so he finally stops trying to use his usual methods of sorcery and sets his face towards the wilderness!

It pleased יהוה to bless Yisra'el!!!

This is an important truth for us to not forget!

The phrase is written in the Hebrew as:

טוב בעיני יהוה לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל

From right to left, it is transliterated as: **Tob b'ayney יהוה l'barek et Yisra'el**

This could literally be rendered as **'good in the eyes of יהוה to bless Yisra'el'**

The Hebrew word for **good** is the primary verb טוב **tob** – **Strong's H2895** and carries the meaning, **'pleasant, good, agreeable, beautiful, to be pleasing, done well'**.

The Hebrew word **b'ayney** means **'in his eyes'**, with the letter 'בֵּי' - **'beyt'** at the front of the word, which renders **'in, in the'**, and the root word it is referring to being 'in' is עַיִן **ayin** – **Strong's H5869** which means **'eye'**.

The term **'to bless'** is לְבָרֵךְ with the letter 'ל' – **'lamed'** at the front of the word meaning, **'to'** and the word for **'bless'** is the root verb בָּרַךְ **barak** – **Strong's H1288** and means, **'to abundantly bless'** and literally carries the meaning, **'to kneel or bow down, to show respect, to bring a gift to another while kneeling out of respect'**.

Here, it is written here in the **'piel'** verb tense which usually expresses an intensive or intentional action.

The use of the word אֶת *eth*, which is an untranslated particle in Hebrew, is often described in grammars (somewhat superficially) as **the sign of the direct object** after a transitive verb; and the function of the word אֶת *eth* is to emphasize the word to which it is attached.

In other words – who is it good in the eyes of יהוה *YHWH* to bless? It is Yisra'el!

יהוה *YHWH* spoke to Mosheh and told him to tell Aharon how he was to bless the children of Yisra'el, and by this יהוה *YHWH* would put His Name on us as He Himself would bless us.

Bemidbar/Numbers 6:24-26 “יהוה *YHWH* bless you and guard you; 25 יהוה *YHWH* make His face shine upon you, and show favour to you; 26 יהוה *YHWH* lift up His face upon you, and give you peace.”

Below, is a picture of this blessing, written in the Hebrew text, along with the transliteration and translation:

YAHWEH bless you and guard you

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶכָּ:

Yebarek'ka YAHWEH veyishmereka

YAHWEH make His face shine upon you, and show favour to you

יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנְּךָ:

Ya'er YAHWEH panav eyleyka viyhanne'ka

YAHWEH lift up His face upon you, and give you peace

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּשֶּׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם:

Yissa YAHWEH panav eyleyka veyasem leka shalom

Let us take a closer look at the words of this 'blessing' and get a further understanding to its powerful meaning:

1 – BLESS – is the Hebrew word - בָּרַךְ *barak* – Strong's H1288 and means, ***'to abundantly bless'*** and literally carries the meaning, ***'to kneel or bow down, to show respect, to bring a gift to another while kneeling out of respect'***.

2 – GUARD/KEEP – in the Hebrew is שָׁמַר *shamar* – Strong's H8104 – ***'keep watch, preserve, guard, protect'***.

3 – FACE - comes from the root word - פָּנִים *paniyim* or פָּנֶה *paneh* – Strong’s 6441 – *‘face, faces, appearance, presence’* and can also carry the understanding of the presence or wholeness of being.

4 – SHINE - אֹרֶךְ ‘or’ – Strong’s H215 – *‘light (noun) and give light or shine (verb) – bring illumination’*.

5 – FAVOUR - חָנַן *hanan* – Strong’s H2603 – *‘merciful, favour’* and also carries the meaning of providing protection.

6 – GIVE - שָׂם *suwm* - Strong’s H7760 – *‘to put, to place, to set; set down in a fixed and arranged place’*

7 – PEACE - שָׁלוֹם *shalom* – Strong’s H7965 – *‘wholeness, completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, health, prosperity, well-being, safety, protection’*, and is from the primitive root שָׁלֵם *shalem* – Strong’s H7999 which means, *‘to be complete or sound, rewarded, make full restitution’*.

7 powerful words that are contained in this blessing, as commanded by יְהוָה, that not only blesses us and puts His Name upon us, but also wonderfully expresses His marvellous love and compassion for us and what He does for us through His blessing us as He in a sense has ‘bowed down/ come down and given us the gift of life through His own as he promises to guard and protect us and keep us safe in Him.

This blessing, in light of the understanding of the meaning of these 7, words could be expressed in English, as follows:

יְהוָה WILL KNEEL BEFORE YOU PRESENTING GIFTS AND WILL GUARD YOU WITH A HEDGE OF PROTECTION.

יְהוָה WILL ILLUMINATE THE WHOLENESS OF HIS BEING TOWARD YOU BRINGING ORDER AND HE WILL BEAUTIFY YOU.

יְהוָה WILL LIFT UP HIS WHOLENESS OF BEING AND LOOK UPON YOU AND HE WILL SET IN PLACE ALL YOU NEED TO BE WHOLE AND COMPLETE.

The ancient script has the Hebrew word for **ble~~s~~s** – בָּרַךְ *barak* – Strong’s H1288 pictured as:



Beyt – בֵּית:



The ancient script has this letter as , which pictures a tent floor plan and means, *‘house’* or *‘tent’*. It represents family and the importance of those who are inside the tent as opposed to the tent structure itself.

Resh – ר:



The ancient pictographic script has this letter pictured as , which is ‘**the head of a man**’ and carries the meaning of ‘**top, beginning, first, chief**’, as in being the top of the body or the head of a tribe and the one who rules; and also speaks of possession or inheritance that is decided by the chief.

Kaph – כ:



The ancient pictographic script has this letter pictured as  – which is a picture of an **open palm of a hand** and can symbolise that to which submission is given – ‘**under the hand**’

Once again, we are able to clearly see who it is who blesses us:

THE HOUSE/ASSEMBLY OF ELOHIM IS BLESSED AS THE HEAD/CHIEF, COMES DOWN AND EXTENDS HIS OPEN AND REVEALED HAND TO HIS OWN!

יהוה is very direct in His clear desire to bless Yisra’el, and it is good in His eyes to do so!

And when Bil’am saw this he did not do as he had done the previous times!

He did not set seek to use sorcery, and the Hebrew noun translated here as ‘**sorcery**’ is שִׁבְטֵי נַחַשׁ **naḥash** – Strong’s H5173 and means, ‘**divination, enchantments, omens, sorcery**’, and comes from the verb שִׁבַּט נַחַשׁ **naḥash** – Strong’s H5172 and means, ‘**to practice divination, observe signs, fortune telling**’.

This is the same word that is used for the serpent, in the garden of Eden, and its root meaning can also mean ‘**to hiss**’ which is the sound a snake makes and is also understood as ‘**one who whispers a magic spell or enchants**’.

This is exactly what Satan did to Hāwwah in the garden – he whispered a magic spell and enchanted her with his craftiness and trickery which led to her breaking the commands of יהוה.

Bil’am did not seek to be crafty in trying to practice divination, but now he set his face toward the wilderness!

The Hebrew word for ‘**wilderness**’ is מִדְּבָר **midbar** – Strong’s H4057 meaning, ‘**wilderness, desert**’ and can also mean ‘**mouth**’.

It is from this word that we get the term בְּמִדְּבָר **Bemidbar**, which means, ‘**in the wilderness**’.

The word מִדְּבָר **midbar** comes from the primitive root - דָּבַר **dabar** – Strong’s H1696 meaning, ‘**to speak, command, counsel, declare, proclaimed, converse, warn, threaten, promise**’ and a derivative of this word is also translated as ‘**speech, word, commandment/s, message**’.

The meaning of **Bemidbar**, as mentioned, means ‘**in the wilderness**’ and the literal meaning of this actually carries the concept of ‘**The place of words**’ or ‘**The place of speaking**’.

It is here, in the wilderness, where Yisra’el learnt to hear the ‘**voice**’ of **יהוה** and be in the necessary place to listen to what was spoken through Mosheh.

So, what we see happening here with Bil’am is the clear choice to no longer seek his answers through divination and sorcery, but now he set his face to hear the Word of **יהוה** – he realised that it was now time to hear.

We can learn a great deal from this, as we recognise how we too must set our faces to the wilderness so to speak, which metaphorically pictures for us the need to set our faces toward the attentive hearing of the Torah, and no longer turn to vain dogmas and twisted theologies of man that has nullified the Torah through methods of manipulative divination!

What we have come to learn, in our Torah studies, is that the Wilderness is the place where we, as a called out, redeemed and set-apart people, learn to hear the True voice of Elohim, as we turn away from the ‘noise’ of the world and its inherited lies and pay attention to hearing His Truth.

In **verse 2** when Bil’am lifted his eyes, we realise that in Hebrew to ‘**lift one’s eyes**’ is often seen as seeing prophetically to the latter days of what is to come – and what does Bil’am see?

He sees Yisra’el encamped according to their tribes!

This speaks of the time that is coming, and is now happening, where Ephrayim is coming back and being brought together under the order of the Torah; and this is a prophetic picture of the days that are coming when all Yisra’el will come together when Messiah comes to take up His Bride.

And while the enemy will do his utmost to curse Yisra’el, **יהוה**’s chosen are protected and sealed, and shall be gathered to Him during the period between Yom Kippur to Sukkoth!

In the last chapter (**23**), in **verse 21**, we see that there is a **SHOUT** of a Sovereign in Ya’aqob - and the word that is translated as ‘**shout**’ is the word **תְּרוּעָה** **Teruah** – **Strong’s H8643** which means, ‘**a shout, a blast of war, alarm or joy**’ and so, we see a prophetic pointing to Yom Teruah, when the Trumpets will sound and the wrath of Elohim will begin to be poured out; and this will certainly be the time when the most intense efforts of the enemy to curse Ya’aqob will be exercised.

We have the assurance of being under the shelter of the Most-High!

For though Yisra’el was in the ‘**valley of death**’ they need fear no evil!!!

Bil’am is now beginning to “get it”.

He had been a sorcerer for a long time, but like so many today, Bil’am was beginning to realize that **יהוה** was not finished with Yisra’el. He still has a covenant with Yisra’el, and is restoring the lost tribes to it: that is the true Besorah (Good News)!

And while this is happening, the Church is doing its best to counter this returning of the lost tribes, because they are losing business!

And so, what we see happening, on a wider scale, is the many teachings that are being produced and broadcast all over the world from pulpits to televangelism, in trying to ‘curse’ the return of the lost tribes of Yisra’el!

And so, we see how they will be teaching why they say that the Sabbath has been changed and why it is not necessary to keep the Feasts of יהודה, which they label as being ‘Jewish Feasts’! And while this is happening from the biggest names on the charismatic scene may we recognise that this is nothing more than twisted lies in an attempt to curse the people grafted in to the Covenants of Promise through the Blood of Messiah.

Verse 5 – how good are your tents, O Ya’aqob, your dwellings, O Yisra’el!

The Hebrew word used here for ‘tents’ is the plural of the root word אהל ohel – Strong’s H168 which means, ‘tent’ and is symbolic of wilderness life, and this is also the same word used for the Tabernacle; and the root word used here for ‘dwelling places’ is from the root word משכן mishkan – Strong’s H4908 which comes from the root word שכן shakan – Strong’s H7931 which means, ‘to settle down, abide, dwell, establish, make or cause to dwell’.

The term משכן mishkan is used here in the plural sense, and we take note that this is the same word used in the singular for ‘The Tabernacle’.

We take note that both these words - אהל ohel and משכן mishkan are used for the Tabernacle and there is often the question raised of whether one represents the inner part of the Tabernacle while the other the outer, yet this cannot be definitively shown.

What we do recognise however is that in the uses of these two words that are collectively used for the Tabernacle, we may be able to see that the אהל ohel is often the place where man/congregation meets with Elohim; whereas the משכן mishkan may be likened to the expression of Elohim dwelling amidst the nation of Yisra’el.

In Shemoth/Exodus 38:21 we see that the word משכן mishkan being used and linked to ‘the witness’ – ‘ha eduth’:

Shemoth/Exodus 38:21 “These were the appointments of the Dwelling Place, the Dwelling Place of the Witness, which was appointed by the command of Mosheh, for the service of the Lēwites, by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aharon the priest.”

The Hebrew word for ‘witness’ is עדות eduth – Strong’s H5715 which means, ‘testimony, witness, ordinance, warning’, and this is the word that is used for ‘The Ark of the Witness’.

In Wayyiqra/Leviticus 1:1 we see the word אהל ohel being used and linked to ‘Meeting’ or ‘Appointment’:

Wayyiqra/Leviticus 1:1 “And יהודה called to Mosheh, and spoke to him from the Tent of Appointment, saying”

The Hebrew word for ‘Appointment’ is מועֵד *moed* – Strong’s H4150 meaning, ‘**appointed time, place, meeting, appointed feast**’, from which we get the plural word for **Appointed Times** – מועֵדִים ‘*moedim*’, and right in the beginning, during the Creation Week, Elohim announces to us that He will have ‘**appointed times**’ and the way we are to know when these times are would be determined by the lights in the expanse of the heavens which were given for us to not only determine the season and day and night but also for His all-important Appointed Times.
His Appointed Times are clearly given to us in **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 23** (see Torah commentary notes on **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 23** for more on the Appointed Times of יְהוָה)

The first times that the Hebrew word מִשְׁכָּן *mishkan* is used is in:

Shemoth/Exodus 25:9 “**According to all that I show you – the pattern of the Dwelling Place and the pattern of all its furnishings – make it exactly so.**”

Mosheh was instructed to build the Dwelling Place exactly according to the pattern he was shown – that is the pattern of what he was shown in the heavenlies, where Elohim dwells!

The Hebrew word for ‘tents’ - אוֹהֶל *ohel* is used already in **Berēshith/Genesis 4** in describing man’s dwelling as being in ‘tents’.

What we can possibly understand, in these two words, is that the אוֹהֶל *ohel* pictures our sojourning here, ‘in the tents of Ya’aqob’, and how we have been given the Appointed Times/Feasts of יְהוָה for us to come and meet with Him, in the Tent of Appointment, whereas the מִשְׁכָּן *mishkan*, pictures for us the fullness of the Dwelling of Elohim in our midst.

The word used for ‘Dwelling Place’ in **Shemoth/Exodus 38:21**, as discussed, is מִשְׁכָּן *mishkan*, and in the LXX (Septuagint) the Greek word used here is σκηνή *skēnē* – Strong’s G4633 which means, ‘**tent, dwelling, tabernacle**’; and this word is used to describe the Dwelling Place of Elohim that will be with men, in:

Ḥazon/Revelation 21:3 “**And I heard a loud voice from the heaven saying, “See, the Booth of Elohim is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and Elohim Himself shall be with them and be their Elohim.”**”

This is the Tabernacle that Yoḥanan saw in:

Ḥazon/Revelation 15:5 “**And after this I looked and saw the Dwelling Place of the Tent of Witness in the heaven was opened.**”

Notice how this referring to the Tent of Witness.

The Greek word used here for ‘Dwelling Place’ is ναός *naos* – Strong’s G3485 which means, ‘**to inhabit, a temple, sanctuary**’.

While these words are interchangeably used for Tabernacle or Dwelling Place, we do take note that while we sojourn here, we must guard to keep the Appointed Times of our Master and Elohim, and gather as we should, for where two or three are gathered, there our Master is in our midst, and Sha’ul reminds us in:

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 3:16-17 “Do you not know that you are a Dwelling Place of Elohim and that the Spirit of Elohim dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys the Dwelling Place of Elohim, Elohim shall destroy him. For the Dwelling Place of Elohim is set-apart, which you are.”

The Greek word used here for ‘Dwelling Place’ is **ναός naos**, and we take note here in the Greek that the term ‘you’ is in the plural, while the Dwelling Place is written in the singular, which emphasises our need to be gathered together on His Appointed Times that we may be one in Him!

As we consider the words that Bil’am prophesied over Yisra’el by saying that the tents of Ya’aqob and the dwellings of Yisra’el are good, then we are able to see how good it is for us to gather on the Appointed Times as we look forward to the good dwelling of Elohim that is promised to be in our midst!

Verse 6 – like wadis that stretch out, like gardens by a river, like aloes planted by יהוה, like cedars beside waters!

The clear analogy of a perfectly cared for Yisra’el is being proclaimed here, and as we consider these words, we are further able to be reminded of our constant provision, protection and complete shalom we have in our Master and Elohim! Yehezqel

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘like wadis’ is **כִּנְחָלִים kinḥaliym**, which is from the root word **נַחֲלָה nahlah** – Strong’s H5158 which means, ‘**torrent, torrent valley, wadi, brook, ravine, stream**’, and this usually referred to a dry river bed or ravine, which in rainy season becomes a raging torrent.

It can also represent a permanent stream or river that flows like a torrent, as we see in Amos, with the call to let righteousness flow like a mighty stream:

Amos 5:24 “And let right-ruling roll on like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

This can also symbolically represent for us the pride of the nations, the strength of the invader and the power of the enemy which can destroy the parched and dry places.

When we are not being continually nourished in the Truth of the living word, and meditating on the Torah so that we are like a tree planted by the waters, we may become like a dry brook that the enemy can flood with his lies and confusion through ‘**mainstream traditions**’!

This word **נַחֲלָה nahlah** is also used in the positive sense in describing יהוה’s pleasure over His set-apart ones:

Tehillah/Psalm 36:8 “They are filled from the fatness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.”

Here in **Bemidbar/Numbers 24:6** the clear picture given is that the tents of Ya’aqob and the dwellings of Yisra’el are an abundant flow of the pleasure of יהוה.

The Hebrew word for the term ‘stretch out’ is **נָטָה natah** – Strong’s H5186 meaning, ‘**to stretch out, spread out, extend, incline**’.

This word can be also understood in Scripture as being a reference to the tribes of Yisra'el who 'spread out' their branches, as a derivative of this root verb is מַטֵּה **mattah** – Strong's H4294 meaning, '*a staff, rod, branch, a tribe, a branch of a vine*', and is translated as 'tribes' in **Bemidbar/Numbers 30:1**.

Bil'am is prophesying how Yisra'el will branch out in the nourishment of יהוה's pleasure!

The Hebrew word translated here in **verse 6** as 'gardens' is גַּנּוֹת **gannah** – Strong's H1593 which means, '*garden, orchard*', which is the feminine word from גַּן **gan** – Strong's H1588 which means, '*an enclosure, garden*', and this comes from the root verb גָּנַן **ganan** – Strong's H1598 which means, '*to cover, surround, defend, protect*', and the basic idea of the verb is to cover over and thus shield from danger, and is used only in reference to the protective guardianship of Elohim.

This root is used 8 times in 7 verses and six of them have to do with the Ashshurian crisis in the days of Hizqiyahu.

Yeshayahu assured the king that Elohim would care for Yerushalayim like a mother bird hovering with wings spread over her young in the nest (**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 31:5**).

Zekaryah uses this verb twice to describe the complete and might protection of יהוה over His people, in their battles against Greece (**Zekaryah/Zechariah 9:15**), and of the protection of the inhabitants of Yerushalayim in the last days (**Zekaryah/Zechariah 12:8**).

The reason for describing the root word here, is to help us understand the picture of the protection and peace that the tents of Ya'aqob have, as they are like a garden by a river that is free from worries and the stresses of the world!

A garden is typically a plot of ground that is protected by a wall or a hedge, and were often used to cultivate vegetables, fruits and flowers; and during the hot summer months they would provide nourishing protection from the heat.

In the stern rebuke and warning, in **Yeshayahu/Isaiah 1**, the prophet tells a wayward and corrupted Yisra'el, that they would be ashamed of the gardens that they had chosen, as they resorted to turning their gardens into pagan worship sites.

Herein lies the clear reality that many will choose for themselves 'false gardens', which are not the true 'gardens of nourishment and protection' that true followers of Messiah can be at rest in!

As we 'stay in' Messiah, we have assurance that our tents shall be good, as protected gardens that are full of nourishment and fruit bearing provision that is by a river, which symbolizes the continual flow of the source of the life we find in meditating upon the Torah day and night!

As we continue to understand the very powerful words that are contained here in **Bemidbar/Numbers 24:6**, in describing how good the tents of Ya'aqob are – or better put, how good and pleasant it is when we dwell together in unity, we further see the reference to the healing that we find in our Master.

The Hebrew word for 'aloes' is אֲהַלִּיִם **ahaliym** – **Strong's H174**, and is the name of a costly and sweet-smelling wood which is mentioned in the following verses:

Bemidbar/Numbers 24:6; Tehillah/Psalms 45:8; Mishlĕ/Proverbs 7:17; Shir HaShirim/Song of Solomon 4:14; Yoĥanan/John 19:39.

It is usually identified with the Aquilaria agallochum, which is an aromatic wood that is highly valued in India.

This tree sometimes grows to the height of 120 feet, being 12 feet in girth. The aloes of Syria are thorny shrubs, and the wood is used by perfumers after they have taken off the bark. There is also the aloe herb/plant that has very thick leaves.

The product taken from the aloes was used in embalming dead bodies, and was used to perfume beds.

The aloe plant, as we know today, has become a great source of healing; and herein lies a vital picture being given to us, as we recognise that we find our true healing and strength in our Master and Elohim, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ **Messiah**.

With aloes being by a river, we see the analogy of this representing a constant source of supply.

Like Alocs **planted** by יְהוָה!

The Hebrew word that is translated here as '**planted**' comes from the root word נָטַע **nata** – **Strong's H5193** which means, '**to plant, establish, fix, fasten**'.

When Messiah comes again and His reign is established here in earth, we who are in Him, shall be firmly planted and called trees of righteousness! As ambassadors of the Kingdom to come, we recognise how we are to be firmly planted in His word as strong trees of righteousness.

In Scripture, we find many agricultural word pictures that are used to describe man, and Dawid tells us what the faithful, who meditate on the Torah day and night, will be like:

Tehillah/Psalm 1:3 "For he shall be as a tree planted by the rivers of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither, and whatever he does prospers."

The word **cedar** in Hebrew is עֵרֶץ **erez** – **Strong's H730** which comes from the primitive root אָרַץ **araz** – **Strong's H729** that means, '**firm, strong**'.

In **Tehillah/Psalm 92** Dawid tells us that the righteous will grow like the cedars of Lebanon.

The Cedar is a strong and firm tree and a cedar tree is in itself a wonderful illustration of bringing us a picture of a person who is טוב **tob** (good) and fully functional in Messiah.

They have been known to grow up to 12 meters in circumference!

The roots grow down extremely deep and wrap around rocks for anchorage, and grow upwards in heights of up to 45 meters!!!

The fragrance of a cedar tree acts as a great defence against being attacked by insects and pests and it is '**knot**' free and rot resistant, known for their longevity and are **perennial evergreen trees**.

Cedar, as we know, is used in Scripture for the process of the cleaning of a leper – it is used in the Red Heifer sacrifice; Shelomoh used cedar wood to build the Temple.

The cedar speaks of us being strong and trustworthy in Messiah and being the fragrance of Messiah, which to some will be death and to others life. It also speaks of trusting in יהוה and obeying the command of יהושע Messiah to not worry!

The cedar also represents for us **‘storing up treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy’** and so as we do the good works prepared in advance for us, we repel the need to store up the fleshly desires that are like pests that cause rot!

As we consider this powerful and wonderful description, being given by Bil'am, of a good tent dwelling Ya'aqob, we can truly recognise what we have in the Master, and this should cause us to embrace His great shalom, as we sojourn here as faithful ambassadors of that which is to come!

Verse 7

Here Bil'am makes it very clear that the Sovereign of Ya'aqob – that is יהוה of Hosts – is higher than Aḡaḡ. אֲגָג Aḡaḡ – **Strong's H90** means, ***'I will overtop'***, and he was the king of Amalēq who was spared by king Sha'ul, but Shemu'el hew Aḡaḡ into pieces. This declaration of Bil'am was clear – the King of Yisra'el is greater than the king of Amalēq, and the arrogance of the proud will be brought low!

I am reminded of the victory that Yehoshua had over Amalēq in:

Shemoth/Exodus 17:147-16 “And יהוה said to Mosheh, “Write this for a remembrance in the book and recite it in the hearing of Yehoshua, that I shall completely blot out the remembrance of Amalēq from under the heavens.” 15 And Mosheh built an altar and called its name, יהוה Nissi, 16 for he said, “Because a hand is on the throne of Yah, יהוה is to fight against Amalēq, from generation to generation.”

It is יהוה who fights for us, and as we lift up the banner of praise, we exalt and proclaim His Reign that is coming!

Verse 8

Our Elohim, who delivered Yisra'el from Mitsrayim is alike the horns of a wild ox. This is a clear analogy of the mighty strength of our mighty Elohim.

The term **‘like the horns’**, in the Hebrew text, is written as כְּתוֹעֵפֹת k'toaphoth which comes from the root word תוֹעֵפָה toaphah – **Strong's H8443** which means, ***'strength, plenty, eminence, choice, horns, peak'***, and is only used 4 times in Scripture; twice here in this Torah portion, in reference to the strength of יהוה being likened to that of the horns of a wild ox; and is translated as **‘strength’** in **Iyob/Job 22:25**, and as **‘mountain peaks’** in **Tehillah/Psalm 95:4**.

The Hebrew word used here for **‘wild ox’** is רֵאֵם re'em – **Strong's H7214** and the exact meaning is unknown, but it is thought to be the great aurochs or wild bulls which are now extinct.

What is definitely being expressed here is the immense strength of the Elohim of Yisra'el; and Bil'am continues to say that the Elohim of Yisra'el 'devours' nations, and His enemies and breaks their bones, and with arrows He smites!

The Hebrew word for 'devours' is אָכַל *akal* – Strong's H398 and means '*eat, consume, devour or be devoured*'.

We see this word being used in:

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 1:19-20 "If you submit and obey, you shall eat the good of the land; 20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of יהוה has spoken."

The Hebrew word used for 'eat' and 'devoured' is the same word - אָכַל *akal* – Strong's H398 and means '*eat, consume, devour or be devoured*'.

So, in essence, what is being declared here is simply this: if you submit and obey then you will eat and enjoy the good of the land – if you rebel and refuse to submit and obey then you will be eaten by the sword – that is His Word that will consume you up and devour you in judgement according to His righteous right ruling!

We have a choice – eat His Word and walk in Him and be satisfied or eat all the junk that is on offer and neglect His Word and be eaten by the very Word that is rejected.

It is not a difficult concept to grasp – the question remains – how is your diet, and more importantly – what is filling you?

EAT RIGHT AND LIVE OR LIVE WRONG AND BE EATEN:

Hazon/Revelation 19:15 "And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations. And He shall shepherd them with a rod of iron. And He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Ēl Shaddai."

Hazon/Revelation 19:21 "And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

Elohim 'devours' His enemies!!!

He not only devours, but He cuts off and breaks the bones of his enemies, and with his arrows he smites!

The Hebrew word for 'arrows' is חֵטָו *hets* – Strong's H2671 which means, '*arrow, archer, shaft, wound*', and comes from the root word חָטַט *hatsats* – Strong's H2686 which means, '*to shoot arrows, to divide, cut off*'.

Tehillah/Psalm 11:2 "For look! The wrong bend a bow, they set their arrow on the string, to shoot in darkness at the upright in heart."

Tehillah/Psalm 64:7 "But Elohim does shoot at them with an arrow; their wounds shall be sudden."

We have the shield of faith in our Elohim that will extinguish the flaming arrows of the wicked one, and we have full assurance that He will smite our enemies with His arrows!

Verse 9

Here Bil'am continues to speak the great blessing that Ya'aqob has, and how with the presence of Elohim in their midst they shall be prosperous on the way, and any who would rise against him would be stricken! Here we have the full assurance of our protection in the Master, and the question here is very clear – who would rouse our Master!

As we consider the remnant of Ya'aqob being gathered in these last days we can see this verse being similar to that in:

Mikah/Micah 5:8 “**And the remnant of Ya'aqob shall be among the gentiles, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of a forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, who, if he passes through, shall both tread down and shall tear, and there is no one to deliver.**”

The words used here, in reference to the blessing that will be given to those who bless Ya'aqob and cursed be the one who curses him are the same words given to Abraham:

Bereshith/Genesis 12:3 “**And I shall bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you. And in you all the clans of the earth shall be blessed.**”

The Covenants of Promise that we are grafted into by the Blood of Messiah stand firm forever! These words were again spoken by Yits'haq to Ya'aqob, in:

Bereshith/Genesis 27:29 “**Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those cursing you, and blessed be those blessing you!**”

While we recognise the power in this great assurance of protection we have in Messiah, we must also hear His teaching

and instruction that commands us not to be the one who does the cursing!

Luqas/Luke 6:28 “**Bless those cursing you, and pray for those insulting you.**”

Let us leave the cursing of those who curse us to our Master!

Romiyim/Romans 12:14 “**Bless those who persecute you – bless and do not curse.**”

Even here, in these events in **Bemidbar/Numbers 24**, we see that Bil'am recognised that there was no way he could curse the people of Elohim.

Tas'loniqim Aleph/1 Thessalonians 5:15 “**See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.**”

Ya'aqob warns us about curses coming out of our mouth that are to bless:

Ya'aqob/James 3:10 “**Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brothers, this should not be so.**”

To sum up:

Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 3:8-12 “**To sum up, let all of you be like-minded, sympathetic, loving as brothers, tenderhearted, humble-minded, 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, in order to inherit a blessing. 10 For “He who wishes to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit, 11 let him turn away from evil and do good, let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 “Because the eyes of יהוה are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers, but the face of יהוה is against those who do evil.”**”

Verse 10

In this verse we see how angry Balaq is – after all, he hired and spent a great amount on sacrifices to get this prophet for hire to curse his enemies and it didn't work out, and while he tried to curse three times – which is a picture of trying to blot out the need to keep the Feasts of יהוה, we see that to keep His Feasts, as recorded in **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 23**, is a blessing and can never be a curse, despite the lies that the church teaches through the institution of pagan rooted Feasts of sun-worship that they have substituted for the Truth!

Balaq could not get Yisra'el cursed the way he wanted and so Bil'am taught him another way – join them and invite them to their slaughterings, which we see happening at the beginning of **Chapter 25!**

This is the teaching that we are constantly warned against from holding to – the teaching of Bil'am:

Hazon/Revelation 2:12-17 “**And to the messenger of the assembly in Pergamos write, ‘He who has the sharp two-edged sword, says this: 13 ‘I know your works, and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is. And you hold fast to My Name, and did not deny the belief in Me, even in the days in which Antipas was My trustworthy witness, who was killed near you, where Satan dwells. 14 ‘But I hold a few matters against you, because you have there those who adhere to the teaching of Bil'am, who taught Balaq to put a stumbling-block before the children of Yisra'el, to eat food offered to idols, and to commit whoring. 15 ‘So you also have those who adhere to the teaching of the Nikolaites, which teaching I hate. 16 ‘Repent, or else I shall come to you speedily and fight against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I shall give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I shall give him a white stone, and on the stone a renewed Name written which no one knows except him who receives it.’**”

“**If you want to harm Yisra'el**”, Bil'am counselled, “**you can do it another way**”.

The teaching of Bil'am was to get the sons of Yisra'el to marry foreign daughters.

This would cause Yisra'el to lose their distinctive definition as being the children of Abraham, Yitsḥaq, and Ya'aqob.

This would mix other customs with theirs and thus diminish the value of their heritage.

This would change the teaching so that Mosheh was seen as just one of their teachers and move them gradually to a different point of view.

In the end, the counsel was to assimilate Yisra'el and make them just like anyone else, by separating them from one another and removing their identity.

“**The teaching of Bil'am**” is to tell the sons of Yisra'el that they no longer have a covenant with יהוה as given through Mosheh. The teaching of Bil'am diminishes, and removes, the Torah (the teaching of Mosheh).

Today, the teaching of Bil'am is rampant in the church. It comes in the form of the following precept: “Jesus Christ” came with the purpose to do away with (fulfil?) the temple service, the Torah (Law), and alter the customs of Mosheh.

They have not only replaced the Truth with lies that were inherited from our forefathers but they changed the Name of our Saviour and in the process, have totally stripped away the means for many people discovering their true identity as they erroneously become attached to a Greek Hellenised name that has no meaning or substance behind it.

The teaching of the church is to replace Yisra'el's true identity and falsely claim their identity in the Saviour of Yisra'el while neglecting to follow the clear Torah (instructions) of Elohim and so have in their Bil'am teachings they altered the Appointed Times and customs of Sabbath. The church has done a pretty good job of doing this.

Today, a new believer will run right into these stumbling blocks with churchmen disputing יהוה's Sabbaths and Feasts, and the idea of keeping the Torah.

In fact, this is the focal point of discussion for many new torah observant brothers and sisters as they wrestle with the disappointment and shock of being rejected by church and friends for the so called 'sin' of seeking the truth being labelled as legalism.

In fact, walking in and guarding the Torah is in direct conflict with the teachings of Christianity and the Church at large.

In these last days, we need to hold firm to the Truth, and as Messiah tells us in **Hazon/Revelation2** (quoted above) to hold fast to His Name, not denying the belief, and He gives the example of Antipas who was a trustworthy witness.

What is interesting to take note of, is that Antipas is a name that can mean, 'against all' or 'against father and mother'!

Now, this speaks volumes, as Messiah also tells us in:

Marqos/mark 10:28-30 "And Kēpha began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and we have followed You." 29 יהושע said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for the sake of Me and the Good News, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come, everlasting life."

In **verse 17** we see in the proverb that Bil'am took up that he prophesies the coming of Messiah as being the Star that shall come out of Ya'aqob, and a Sceptre out of Yisra'el who will come and smite Mo'ab!

The Hebrew word for 'sceptre' is שֵׁבֶט shebet – Strong's H7626 and means, 'rod, staff, branch, shaft' and is a symbol of authority and rulership.

We know that in reference to the Authority and Rule of יהוה, that the sceptre would not depart from Yehudah until Shiloh (the sent One) came – and so Messiah came and took up the sceptre and rules forever in the order of Malkitseq - the Righteous King and High Priest!!! This was the promise that the true line of Messiah would come from the tribe of Yehudah, and he would be praised by all, and to Him is the obedience of all the peoples – for the Lin of the Tribe of Yehudah shall rule over all the earth!

שִׁלּוֹה **Shiloh** – **Strong's H7887** which was a city in Ephrayim can also mean *'place of rest'*, and further stresses how there still remains an entering into His rest for all the people of Elohim; yet those who are disobedient and lawless shall never enter His rest – and our King is coming to crush our enemies!

At the end of this chapter we see Bil'am getting up and returning to his place and Balaq going his way.

Though the man Bil'am did not ultimately repent and go to the place he clearly had seen was blessed, this is a prophecy that those he represents—some from the Church who do seek יְהוָה —will not just walk differently from the world, but return to recognizing who they really are: Yisra'el!

However, at the same time there are those who do recognise these truths yet return to their own ways and do not join themselves to the truth by walking in it, and choose to simply go back to what they know! Bil'am could have gone and joined Yisra'el, yet he went back to his own ways and during the time he spent with Balaq he taught the enemy how to capture and lure Yisra'el away from their security, and this is the teaching we must rebuke!

It is time to stand up and walk in the Truth, despite the persecutions that may come, even from close to us!

Which is what we see happening is **Chapter 25**:

CHAPTER 25

Yisra'el dwelt in Shittim - שִׁטִּים - **Strong's H7851** which means, *'place of acacias'* and it was here where they began to whore with the daughters of Mo'ab. Instead of being on their guard, they got too relaxed and this *'place of acacias'* and slacked off.

You would think that by now, that after all they had been through, all the victories they had won and all the disciplining that had gone on that they would have been more on their guard to not whore with foreign nations and especially Mo'ab.

Qorintiyim Aleph/1Corinthians 10:8 *"Neither should we commit whoring, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell"*

They were enticed by the women of Mo'ab – this is how the enemy is so very deceiving - through the lust of the flesh and Balaq sent his finest women to lure the men of Yisra'el in to joining them.

The enemy's motto is 'if you cannot beat them join them' and this was his plan to subdue this great nation.

The word for whore is זָנָה **zanah** – **Strong's H2181** meaning, *'to commit fornication, to be a harlot, commit adultery, play the harlot'*.

'Playing the harlot' can also be a term used to render being 'spiritually unfaithful' to יְהוָה, which is exactly what they were doing here!

How is that for a response to His blessing!!!

I think that it is the same for some nay today, who do not realise the great blessings we have in Messiah and too many take it for granted and end up 'playing the harlot' with the world that so easily lures them away, because they are found to be at a place of thinking that they have arrived and relax in their ability to be watchful and obedient. They were endangering their lives by befriending the world:

Ya'aqob/James 4:3-4 "You ask and do not receive, because you ask evilly, in order to spend it on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with Elohim? Whoever therefore intends to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of Elohim."

At Mount Sinai we were told to not do this, yet we must constantly be on our guard against the luring tactics of the enemy, and when we think that there is no way that these kind of tricks and whoring tactics can catch us then we had better be doubly alert:

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 10:12 "so that he who thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall."

Yisra'el went and ate with Mo'ab at the slaughterings of their mighty ones, when this is strictly forbidden.

We are told that we have the Appointed Times to come and Feast as a body together in Messiah and we also partake in the Pěsaḥ Meal which gives us our identity and seal in Him; and therefore, we cannot be found keeping other pagan rooted feasts as well such as Christmas and Easter which is nothing more that feast at the table of demons:

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 10:16-22 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Messiah? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Messiah? 17 Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Look at Yisra'el after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the offerings sharers in the altar? 19 What then do I say? That an idol is of any value? Or that which is offered to idols is of any value? 20 No, but what the gentiles offer they offer to demons and not to Elohim, and I do not wish you to become sharers with demons. 21 You are not able to drink the cup of the Master and the cup of demons, you are not able to partake of the table of the Master and of the table of demons. 22 Do we provoke the Master to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?"

This is a very serious warning, as we cannot allow ourselves to be lured into keeping the traditional pagan feasts of Christmas and Easter with other family members for the sake of 'peace' – we must flee such whoring and the 'playing the harlot' so to speak – we do not want be sharers with demons – because that is who these feasts are offering up to – not Elohim!

Ba'al Pe'or was a Mo'abite 'mighty one', which service included sexually immoral acts. The name Ba'al means '**husband, land owner**' and its general meaning and term as used in pagan idolatry and worship is '**lord**', which may be a little shocking to you if you have never realised this – the term **lord** is an inherited term from pagan worship used for thousands of years.

פְּעוֹר Pe'or – Strong's H6465 was the name of a mountain in Moab.

This name comes from the word **פָּעַר 'pa'ar'** – Strong's H6473 which is a verb meaning '**open wide**' and so in essence **Ba'al Pe'or** can be accurately rendered as '**lord of the opening**' or the '**lord that opens wide**'.

We know that **יהושע** says that wide is the way that leads to destruction and many find it!!!
The occurrences of this verb **'pa'ar'**, to **'open wide'**, indicate adjunction with the strong passion or feeling, usually not very positive and described the wide opening of the mouth, hence alluding to other body cavities!

Hoshĕa remarks on the Ba'al Pe'or event (**Hoshĕa 9:10**) and it is clear that the Yisra'ĕlites defiled themselves with abundant fornication and sexual perversion as the Ba'al worship rites were celebrated by the grossest obscenity.

So, here we can translate that being joined to Ba'al Pe'or meant being led on the wide path of destruction.

We are to be the joined body of Messiah – joined to Messiah **יהושע** – being led in His narrow way!

In essence, Ba'al worship is giving free reign to the carnal nature, which is the flesh, and is expressed in gluttony, drunkenness and sexual acts. This form of pagan worship comes from ancient Babelon as the worship of Nimrod was started by Semiramis, known as the Queen of heaven or Ishtar, today known as 'Easter' – who was the pagan goddess of fertility and mother of Tammuz, the worshipped son of Ba'al who would be reborn every year on December 25th.

You see, celebrating these pagan festivals, under the misguided lie of worship unto **יהושע**, is in fact a way people today are engaging in Ba'al worship!!!

By simply 'eating' or partaking in these pagan feasts, Sha'ul tells us that by doing this one become 'joined' to the foreign mighty one:

Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 6:15-18 **“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Messiah? Shall I then take the members of Messiah and make them members of a whore? Let it not be! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a whore is one body? For He says, “The two shall become one flesh.” 17 And he who is joined to the Master is one spirit. 18 Flee whoring. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits whoring sins against his own body.”**

By 'joining' ourselves to foreign pagan rooted worship practices and feasts will put us at war with Elohim, for He is a Jealous Elohim and we dare not 'cheat' on Him!

יהוה tells Mosheh to take all the leaders of the people and hang them!!!

This might sound like a very extreme measure but these leaders were not leading as they should and had not guarded the charge of staying faithful to **יהוה**, and this kind of leadership needed to be made an example of.

This was a death sentence on those who brought into the camp a mighty one that Yisra'ĕl had never known and they were warned not to whore and follow the mighty one's of other nations!

The judges were instructed to kill the men who had joined themselves to Ba'al Pe'or. Just as this instruction was given one of the Yisra'ĕlite men brought in a Midyanite women before Mosheh and before all those who were weeping at the door of the Tent of Appointment.

There wasn't even any 'secrecy' to their whoring – it was out in the open for all to see.

They had not only committed sexual acts of sin on the altars of Ba'al but now they had brought this sin into the Dwelling Palace of יהוה. This was no ordinary prostitute as she was the daughter of a head in the people of Midyan, just like Izebel and this is not to be tolerated in Yisra'el.

This called for some bold courage to stand up and put this idolatry and sexual sin to death, and this is where we see Pinehas, the grandson of Aharon stand up and take some much-needed action; and by his actions יהוה caused the plague of death to stop, which had taken 24 000 people!

The name of this brave priest was פִּינְחָס Pinehas – Strong's H6372 which means, '*mouth of brass*'; and he certainly lived up to his name, taking no nonsense as he took a spear in his hand and thrust the spear through both of those who were whoring in the camp!

In fact, he thrust the spear through the belly of the woman – that is her קֶבֶח qebah – Strong's H6896 which means, '*stomach or belly of a woman*'.

In essence, we see here that Pinehas thrust the spear through her reproductive organs and so, in effect, was putting to death the sin of adultery and the curse that comes with it, by thrusting the spear through the very part of a woman where the seed of life would come forth!

This word for belly comes from the root word קָבַח qabab – Strong's H6985 meaning, '*to utter a curse against, curse, blaspheme*'.

This just strengthens the very bold act of Pinehas, as he put to death any curse or blasphemy that was uttered against Yisra'el and while we saw that Bil'am could not curse Yisra'el as Balaq wanted, the cursing came another way – through the mode of luring the men away to whoring, and this Pinehas stood up against this whoring and acted in complete righteousness when no one else would.

Next week we will look a little more at Pinehas and dig a little more into the kind of zeal we are to have for יהוה.

As we consider this week's Torah portion we are continually reminded and warned not to fall to the delusion of Bil'am which the devastator uses as a tool to lure the people of Elohim away from staying true to the Covenants of Promise, but rather we must cling to what is good and stand up for righteousness as we hear, guard and do the commands of our King, declaring our steadfast love for Him, and flee all whoring and defilement of the body!

The devastator is always seeking ways to curse us and as long as we remain set-apart in Messiah, we can be sure of being safe under the refuge of His Mighty Name!

Shalom!