

Parasha Balak (Destroyer)
July 3, 2004/14 Tammuz 5764

Torah: Numbers 22:2-25:9

Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8

Brit Chadashah: 1 Cor. 1:20-31(L)

Romans 11:25-32(F)

Blessed to Be A Blessing

Balaam was a prophet chosen from the Nations by G-d. He had the ability to curse, and King Balak of Moab convinced him to attempt to curse the Nation of Israel, which was growing and becoming stronger, and which was blessed by G-d.

Numbers 24:6: "Like valleys they spread out,
like gardens beside a river,
like aloes planted by the LORD,
like cedars beside the waters."

Numbers 24:7: "Water will flow from their buckets;
their seed will have abundant water."

"Their king will be greater than Agag;
their kingdom will be exalted."

Numbers 24:8: "God brought them out of Egypt;
they have the strength of a wild ox.
They devour hostile nations
and break their bones in pieces;
with their arrows they pierce them."

Numbers 24:9: "Like a lion they crouch and lie down,
like a lioness--who dares to rouse them?" (NIV)

The bottom line is that the plan did not work, although Balaam did manage to convince the Israelites to do some immoral things. Even still, when a nation is blessed by G-d, there is little anyone can do to shake that.

The connection that the Haftarah portion has with this Parasha is that the prophet Micah mentions Balak's plot to have Balaam curse Israel. Micah lists ways in which G-d protected Israel during the 40-year journey in the wilderness. The portion concludes with the simple truth of what G-d seeks from us in our lives:

Micah 6:7: "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,

with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

Micah 6:8: "He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God." (NIV)

The Brit Chadashah portion shows that G-d's blessing is still with Israel, and His covenant remains and is fulfilled by Yeshua:

Romans 11:26: And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob."

Romans 11:27: "And this is my covenant with them
when I take away their sins." (NIV)

We continue to see G-d's blessing of Israel continuing today. Such a small country, surrounded by hostile nations, with conflicts that in all reality should have decimated the country time and time again. But yet these wars have been overcome, and despite continuing conflicts and terrorism, she remains.

Those of us who are part of Israel, both who live in the Holy Land and who live away from the nation here in the Diaspora, we have survived through centuries of persecution, inquisitions, the Holocaust – and yet we're still here.

The Messianic movement is an integral part of this, and I believe is blessed by G-d because it, as our slogan says, bridges the gap. We have Jewish people who, for whatever reason, were not connected with the Jewish community or culture, raised in the church, coming back into the fold. We have Christians who have discovered that they have Jewish roots and want to learn about their heritage. We have Christians who have no Jewish blood to speak of, but who want to know the foundations of their faith, while showing their love for Israel and her people. And, we have Jewish people who have come to the understanding of Yeshua as Messiah, and want to continue their cultural and religious practices as Jews, and to be part of a community that supports them. It is a growing movement that already consists of a rich and colourful tapestry of backgrounds.

What a blessing!