

בַּלַּק

Balaq

(Balak)

B'midbar [Numbers] 22:2-25:9

פִּינְחָס

Pinchas

(Phinehas)

B'midbar [Numbers] 25:10-29:40

Wrong Motives Leads One in the Wrong Direction

B'midbar (Numbers) 22:19

"Now therefore, I pray you, tarry also here this night, that I may know what YHWH will speak to me more."

Balaq king of Moav had already sent one group of emissaries to Bala'am to bid him to come and curse the Israelites. When Bala'am sought YHWH to see what He wanted him to do, YHWH told him in no uncertain terms that he was not to go with them. They returned to Balaq without Bala'am.

Balaq would not take no for an answer and sent more emissaries to Bala'am with the promise of more treasures. Now Bala'am had already been told by YHWH that he was not to go to Balaq. However, this promise of wealth was just too much for Bala'am to just simply pass it up. So he sought YHWH again. Herein lies the very problem in this whole situation as recorded for us to instruct us how to live our lives in a manner that is completely pleasing to YHWH.

When YHWH has already told us the answer to what we are seeking, to seek Him again concerning the same matter is risky. Why? Inevitably we will receive the answer that we want, which will not be for our own good. The answer that we received first is for our own good. To seek a different answer and then to receive a different answer is to receive an answer that is not for our good, but it will most assuredly be for one's harm and ultimately for his destruction.

Let us prayerfully consider several other passages in this story to get the full impact of what YHWH desires to teach us.

B'midbar (Numbers) 22:22

And Elohim's anger was kindled because he went; and Malak of YHWH placed Himself in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.

Now this is a rather intriguing passage as we find this verse shortly before this one.

B'midbar (Numbers) 22:20

And Elohim came to Bala'am at night, and said to him, "If the men are come to call you, rise up, go with them; but only the word which I speak to you, that shall you do."

It seems that YHWH gave Bala'am permission to go with this second group of emissaries. However, since we find that YHWH came out against Bala'am to kill him because he did go with them, then we should be able to discern something very important from this. Namely, we should discern that Bala'am made a grave error in seeking to go with these men the second time when YHWH had already told him that he was not to go with them. We do not want to miss that the promise of wealth was what was driving Bala'am's actions at this point, rather than the instructions which YHWH had already given him.

Matithyah (Matthew) 6:24

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve Elohim and money."

This truth is aptly illustrated for us in the life of Bala'am. More of YHWH's servants have gone astray because of this than perhaps any other thing. When one begins to seek after anything other than the will of our heavenly Father, then it is nearly a given that when seeking an answer in prayer, that he will receive the wrong answer.

I know of a man who was in the process of opening a restaurant. He was interested in YHWH's Shabbat. He came and sought YHWH's truth and became convicted of the truth of Shabbat. However, the lure of money swayed him to pray and ask YHWH if he should open on Shabbat. When a person does this the answer will always be the wrong answer. Why? It will be the wrong answer because the prayer itself is a self-serving prayer. It is not seeking after the will of YHWH. YHWH has already told us what He expects in this regard concerning Shabbat, that we are not to buy or sell. It is plainly spelled out in His written word. For a person to seek a different answer than what YHWH has already commanded us is to ask Him to change His Torah. That is not going to happen. But what will happen is that He will allow a person to go his own way and to depart from the safeguards of Torah.

This same man also prayed about whether he should serve pork in his restaurant or not. He told me himself that "God" told him that it was okay for him to be open on Shabbat and it was okay for him to serve pork in his restaurant. It is not surprising to me in the least that he got this answer. In fact, he could not have gotten any other answer. The truth is that he had no business praying either one of those prayers, just as Bala'am should not have sought YHWH in the second instance because he had already been instructed not to go with those men from Balaq. But Bala'am was more interested in gaining some easy wealth than he was in obeying YHWH's personal instructions to him. Thus we find that after YHWH gave him permission to go with the men, He came out against Bala'am as Satan (adversary). Yes, the text really does read in the Hebrew that He came out against Bala'am as Satan. YHWH was clearly upset and angry with Bala'am.

We need to pay very close attention to this lesson. When YHWH gives us an answer and we don't like that answer, then we need to consider very carefully why it is that we would want YHWH to change the answer that He has already given to us. The first answer is His perfect will for us and for our good and will bring many blessings. To ask for something other than that is to forfeit all the good and blessings that the first answer would have brought.

B'midbar (Numbers) 22:32-33

32 And Malak of YHWH said to him, "Why have you struck your ass these three times? Behold, I have come as Satan, because your way is contrary before Me;

33 and the ass saw Me, and turned aside before Me these three times; unless she had turned aside from Me, surely now I would have even killed you, and let her live."

Let us make one thing clear at this point. YHWH is NOT Satan. What the Scripture is saying when it records this and makes this statement twice is that YHWH was so angry with Bala'am that He came out to kill him. This is what Satan would do to every one of us if YHWH would give him permission. Satan hates us and his desire is to kill us. YHWH was so angry with Bala'am that He wanted to kill him Himself. And in fact, He came out to do that very thing; and had it not been for the faithful ass of Bala'am, YHWH would indeed have killed him. YHWH states as much.

B'midbar (Numbers) 22:34

And Bala'am said to Malak of YHWH, "I have sinned; for I did not know that you stood in the way against me; now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back."

Bala'am was at least honest enough to admit that he had sinned against YHWH. However, he was still seeking after the wealth that had been promised to him. This is why Bala'am says, "if" YHWH is displeased with him. Hello! YHWH had just gotten through telling Bala'am that He was going to kill him and the only reason that he was not already dead was because his ass turned aside to protect him. It is not a matter of "if" YHWH was displeased; YHWH was angry! He was angry enough to kill him. Bala'am was not being very wise at this point.

Just exactly why was YHWH so angry with Bala'am? Please consider a couple of passages.

B'midbar (Numbers) 22:8

And he said to them, "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as YHWH shall speak to me"; and the princes of Moav stayed with Bala'am.

There is not anything in the text of this account or other places which show at this point that Bala'am was anything but a genuine prophet of YHWH. That being the case, he should have known certain things. Scripture clearly teaches us that the more that YHWH gives to us, the more accountable we become before Him. In this case, Bala'am was a prophet of YHWH. By his own words he states to the emissaries of Balaq that he can only do what YHWH instructs him to do. Then he has the audacity to ask YHWH to change those instructions. That is certainly flirting with death.

Luqa (Luke) 12:48

“But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.”

Bala’am prophesies over Israel three times. The first two times Bala’am rightly goes apart to seek YHWH and His instructions. However, the third time we find something different.

B’midbar (Numbers) 24:1-2

1 And when Bala’am saw that it pleased YHWH to bless Israel, he went not, as at the other times, to meet with enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

2 And Bala’am lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling according to their tribes; and the Spirit of Elohim came upon him.

The first two times Bala’am simply retold what YHWH had told him. This third time however, the Spirit of Elohim came upon Bala’am and he spoke directly in the Spirit. As Bala’am continues to speak he even foretells of the coming of Mashiach. This is a good indication that he was truly speaking in the Spirit of YHWH.

What is it that we should learn from all this?

Yochanan (John) 14:17

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholds Him not, neither knows Him; you know Him; for He abides with you, and shall be in you.”

When we come to Mashiach Yeshua through repentance and He gives us His Spirit and then later His Spirit fills us, all who have been filled with His Spirit have a higher degree of accountability before YHWH. As such we need to be very careful concerning how we walk before YHWH. We need to be careful what it is that we seek after. We are clearly instructed to seek His kingdom and to work at building His kingdom. If a person is seeking to build his own kingdom, then he will travel the way of Bala’am. The way of Bala’am will only end in death as it did for Bala’am for the error of the prophet caught up with him and there was surely a day of reckoning.

ABBA YHWH, teach us to pray according to Your Spirit and according to Your will and not our own; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

www.onetorahforall.com