

Part 7 Numbers 22.2-25.9 BALAK

"EMPTY" or "HOLLOW"

"DISCOURAGEMENT" GOES INTO REVERSE

INTRODUCTION

Balak means "empty" and is related to the Hebrew word BAKAK an onomatopoeic word for "emptying a bottle" producing in speech a type of gurgling sound. The king of Moab is "spiritually empty and despite the assistance of Balaam he is not profited. We find the "empty religion" of Balaam and Balak came into prominence when the true people of God appeared and were about to inherit their possessions. In the NT the church which had the great reality of the Risen Christ was plagued with Balaamite substitute religion. It became clear to Micah the prophet (6.8) that it was not "offerings" but righteousness mercy and humility that matter.

READING No.1 22.2-12

CURSE, EMPTY OR DISCOURAGE THE PEOPLE

And Balak son of Zippor [*Hebrew ZIPPOR "a bird that "circles" or stays around*] saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was afraid from the sight of many people for it was huge and Moab was aroused or awake from the very sight of the children of Israel. *The meaning seems to be "Moab was vigilant-unsleeping because of the fear of attack* And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This throng is going to lick up everything around it as an ass lick up the grass of the field. And Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at the time. He sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor [*"devouring the people" son of "lamp"*] who was in Pethor [*"interpretation of dreams" by the river, the land of his people, calling him and saying,*

"Behold a people has come from Egypt, behold they hide the beautiful look of the land [*literally, "the eye"*] and they have settled over against me. Please come now and "pluck off" [*aHARAH "Pull away" as a lion would*] this people from me for; perhaps I will be able to smite it and continue to drive it from the land for I know that what you bless is blessed and what you curse will be cursed."

The elders of Midian left taking the reward for divination with them and came to Balaam and told him Balak's message. He said, "Stay here overnight and I will bring back to you the word the LORD speaks to me and the princes of Moab stopped over with Balaam. And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" And Balaam said, "Balak, son of Zippor, king of Moab sent them to me". Behold the people has come from Egypt and hid the beauty of the land -you come and curse [*QABAB "take away their heart*] and I will be able to battle against them and expel them."

(148)**And God said to Balaam,** "Do not go with them nor curse the people for it is blessed".

Balak sought "a curse" which is a "taking away of the core" -an "emptying" of the Spirit of a people. But God advised Balaam that the blessed people could not be emptied like a bottle-they were led or indwelt by the Spirit and power of God. To recognise this principle is to live more assuredly.

READING No.2 13-20

LET NOTHING STOP YOU-EMPTY -DISCOURAGE THIS PEOPLE OUT FOR ME

IF BALAK EMPTIED HIS PALACE FOR ME I COULD NOT COME-wealth is nothing

And Balaam arose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your land for the LORD has refused to give me (permission) to go with you." And the princes of Moab arose and returned to Balak and said, "Balaam did not have permission to come." And Balak showed added persistence and sent more princes of greater distinction than these. Then these came to Balaam and said, "Thus says Balak son of Zippor, 'Please do not be hindered from coming to me; I will honour you with great reward and do anything you tell me so please come now and curse this people for me [*literally "empty them"*]' And Balaam said to the servants of Balak, "If Balak should give me his palace full of silver and gold I am not able to go against the word of the LORD my God to anything little or great." Now you stay overnight also like the others and I will know clearly what the LORD will add to communicate to me.

And God said to Balaam in the night and said to him, "Though these powerful men have come to call you to go with them yet you are definitely to do the thing that I said to you."

READING No.3 22 21-38

THE EMPTY PLACE OR DISCOURAGEMENT OF WRATH GRACE OF THE PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST

And Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his slow-stepping ass and went with the princes of Moab. And God was hot with anger because he went and

(A)CHRIST IS VICTOR

The Angel of the LORD **kept standing** as victor [*Hebrew Piel HITHYAZEB "stood on as firm conqueror"*] in the way to oppose him [*literally SATAN-to be devil's advocate*] and he rode upon the ass and two young men with him. And as the ass saw the Angel of the LORD with a sword that had been drawn in his hand it brought itself to a standstill and the ass branched off the road and went into a field. And Balaam made himself beat the ass to incline it to the road.

(B)CHRIST GOES AHEAD TO STIR OBEDIENCE

But the Angel of the LORD **had passed** (further along the road) was standing in a narrow place [*Hebrew SHhAUL "a hollow spot"*] of the vineyards. *The location is of interest. First the "hollow" nature of it meant at first the donkey would not see the angel -but more important it may have been not just a little path in a field of vines but the lower place probably leading to the winepress. It was a place of symbolising wrath.* There was a wall on one side and also on the other. When the ass saw the Angel of the LORD she pressed herself against the wall and pressed the foot of Balaam against the wall and he **added** to strike her again.

(C)CHRIST BY GRACE HEMS US IN TO HIS WILL

But the Angel of the LORD **added** to go ahead and stand in the way in a narrow place where there was no space to turn right or left. And the ass saw the Angel of the LORD and lay down as to rest under Balaam and Balaam was hot with rage and struck the ass with his staff. And the LORD continued to open the mouth of the ass and he said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have struck me on these three times I stepped along." And Balaam answered the ass, "Because you have continued to hurt me. Oh if there was a sword in my hand I would have killed you". And the ass said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey which you have ridden again and again [*Hebrew MEhAODH "repeatedly" or "daily"*] Has it been my habit to do anything like this to you? [*Literal Hebrew SAKAN "have I been sitting down out of weakness?"*] He said, "No.!"

(D) CHRIST BRINGS US BACK AGAIN

BALAAM RETURNS TO HIMSELF-CF THE PRODIGAL "HE CAME TO HIMSELF"

And the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the Angel of LORD standing as a conqueror in the way with a sword that had been drawn in His hand and he bowed and fell in worship before His face. And the Angel of the LORD said, "Why did you strike the ass these three times or "on these three movements". Behold I have come to be your Adversary [*Hebrew SATAN*] because your path is or "perverse" [*Hebrew YARAT "precipitate" or "headlong"*] before Me. You the ass saw me and turned because of my face these three times. If she had not turned from my face I would have killed you and I would have let her live. And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, "I have sinned for I did not know that You were standing as a conqueror to meet me in a hostile manner in the way and now if it is evil in your eyes **I will return to myself** Clearly Balaam had some sort of compromised understanding of God and he made a rather "empty" promise to get back to better ways-but it was a weak conditional promise

(E) CHRIST CHALLENGES US TO BE WITNESSES

And the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men and the word that I speak to you-say that and that alone. And Balaam went on with the princes of Balak. And Balak heard that Balaam was coming and he arose to meet him at a Moabite city which is at the boundary of Arnon which is at the extremity of his boundary. And Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not keep sending that you should come to me expeditiously? Why didn't you come to me? Am I not trustworthy to be able to make you glorious reward? Balaam said to Balak, "I have now come to you-but even so am I able -can I cause the mouthing of whatever I would. The word which the LORD sets in my mouth-that is what I will speak.

READING No.4 22.39-23.12

Then Balaam went with Balak and they came to Kerioth Hutzoth [Hebrew "city of broad streets"] and Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep and sent (food) to Balaam and the princes who were with him. Then it took place the morning (after) that Balak took Balaam and they went up in to the (town of) Bamoth Baal [*the high places of Baal-the centre of idolatrous culture*] and from there they viewed the extreme edge of the (camp of) the people (of Israel)

CHAPTER 23: PROPHECY No.1-PUTS HEART IN ISRAEL AND DOES NOT DISCOURAGE

And Balaam said to Balak, "Build me seven altars and prepare for me seven bulls and seven rams. And Balak did exactly as Balaam said. And Balak and Balaam offered a ram and a bull (as burnt offering) on the altar. And Balaam said to Balak, "You stand as a minister settled by your altar **and I will go for a walk** [*Hebrew QARAH quite differently or conversely*] peradventure the LORD will meet with me and speak and whatever he reveals to me I will explain that to you and he went along to a lofty eminence. *Balaam shows a considerable appreciation of the LORD:*

(1)*He knows his name*

(2)*He understands the nature of approach by burnt offering*

(3)*He is aware that God meets the seeker who looks for him in faith*

(4)*He separates his offerings from those of paganism*

(5)*He acts in honesty.*

(6)*He becomes aware that he must obey the word of the LORD*

(7)*He understands revelation is to be verbally honoured*

And the LORD walked [*Hebrew QARAH quite differently*] to Balaam and he (Balaam) said to Him, "I have extended out (a string of) seven altars and sacrificed a bull and a ram on each altar. Then the LORD set a word in Balaam's mouth and said, return to Balak and speak to him. And he returned and behold Balak was standing ministering at his altar and all the princes of Moab(were there) He took up his proverbial or parabolic saying and said, "Balak **GUIDED ME** (all the way) **FROM ARAM**(Syria) the King of Moab from the eastern mountains. 'Come' he said, 'Cut down' [*Hebrew AhARAH fleece or cull*] Jacob for me, 'Come curse Israel in foaming anger '[*Hebrew ZhAAM*] How can I pierce and curse [*Hebrew "hollow out" or "empty" as a gem from its socket or "perforate a skin bottle*] what the Mighty God has not curses and how can I foam with anger where Yahweh has not been angry? **For from the heights of the rocks I have seen him and from the lower hills I have looked round about them-a people dwelling separate who do not think of themselves as among the nations.** Who can weigh the dust of Jacob and by written calculation the quarter of Israel? Let my soul die the death of the righteous and my latter end or future be as theirs. And Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done for me? (It was) that I should take you to "hollow out" *or take the heart out of my enemies* and behold blessing you have blessed them. Answering he said, "Is it not what the LORD puts in my mouth to speak -is it not that I must watch and beware of or take heed to?" *Balaam witnesses to the absolute requirement of obedience*

READING No.5 13-26

PROPHECY No.2

HOLLOW OUT HIS LIFE FROM FURTHER AWAY

AGAIN PROPHECY HEARTENS AND DOES NOT HOLLOW OUT

And Balak said to Balaam, "Come with me to a **PLACE FURTHER ALONG** where you will see only his edge or limits and not all of the people and curse him [*Hebrew NAQAB "hollow out (his heart or life)" or "pierce"*] him for me from there. *Balak imagined that Balaam was over-awed by the sight of the ordered and immense camp of Israel from close up. Better see how small they were from a distance!* Then he took him to the plain of ZOPHIM [*Hebrew "watchmen" or "look-out"*] at the **SUMMIT OF PISGAH** and built seven altars there and offered a bull and a ram on each. *Some time later Moses made his last journey and climbed to the same location and viewed all of Canaan. He would have seen the altars of Balaam there. That gives rise to the question, "How did he get to know and write down all that Balaam said-even to the veriest detail?" Did one of Balaam's young servants (22.22) secede to Israel? Did Balaam himself get in contact with Moses-we cannot answer affirmatively but we do not know!* He said to Balak, "You stand at the ready here by your offering and I will meet (with Him) yonder." *Balaam, interestingly, was sure he could get in touch with God-and it would appear he had assurance on this matter. In the TALMUD this Hebrew word for "meet" QARAH in its shortened form QERE means a "chance or plausible rendering"-a "possible meaning". It is also used for a "misadventure in the night" so it is not a token of a stable or well grounded relationship.* Then the LORD met Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, "Return to Balak and speak 'Thus' to him". And he came to him (Balak) and behold he was standing by his altar and the princes of Moab with him and Balak said to him, "What has the LORD said? *The Hebrew is capable of three meanings. (a)What has the LORD kept on saying? (b) What has the LORD to say now? (c) What is the LORD promising?"* And he took up his parable and said, "Rise up O Balak and give careful ear to me [*literally ADI "to me as long as I speak" or "as long as you live"*] O son of Zippor, "God is not a man that he should **go on lying** or deceiving or a son of Adam that He should feel regret [*Hebrew NAHAM "sigh" or "grieve" over things*] He has spoken and will he not perform -He keeps on promising and will He not cause it to come about? [*Literally "rise"*] Behold I have continually received to go on blessing and He continues to bless and I cannot cause that to change! No iniquity can be caused to cling to Jacob and no mischief will be seen in prophecy in the house of Israel. The LORD his God is with him and the shout [*Hebrew TARUHAH "war-cry" or "joyful shout" or trumpet call"*] of the king in his house. He has the swiftness splendour of a wild buffalo or Oryx.[*Tristram-"unicorn" an animal extinct since the middle ages and formed as a one-horned bull with great speed and power and one which inexorably hunted man and beast*] There is no enchantment or serpent threat in Jacob and no divination (invoking spirits of the dead) against Israel. So now it will be said, "What has God in His strength undertaken?" [*Hebrew PhAAL "prepared" or performed"*] Behold a people who rise like a lioness and as a lion he has effectively kept lifting himself up not resting till he has consumed his prey and drunk the blood of those he has wounded.

IF YOU CANNOT EMPTY OR DISPIRIT JACOB-JUST DON'T BLESS HIM

And Balak said to Balaam, "As to cursing you will not curse him [*Hebrew "empty"*] and as to having to bless he will not be continually blessed." And Balaam answered and said to Balak, "Did I not promise you saying, 'All that the LORD spoke to me I would or must do!'"

READING No.6 23.27-24.13

PROPHECY No.3

FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT

And Balak said to Balaam, "Come now and I will take you to **ANOTHER PLACE** [*The effect of AHAR may be "further back or even "following" as if Balak as advocate of the devil was testing if going along further in history Israel could be blighted or ruined!*] And it may be **right** in the eyes of the God of strength to curse [*Hebrew "hollow out his spirit" or "pierce" him*] from there! Balak took him to the summit of Peor [*Hebrew "gap" or "Opening of the mouth"*] that overhangs the faces of Jeshimon-the

Dead Sea wilderness. And Balaam said to Balak, "Build me in this place seven altars and prepare in this place seven bulls and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam said and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

CHAPTER 24

And Balaam had seen that it was **good** in the eyes of YAHWEH to bless Israel and did not walk step by step that he might speak enchantments but he set his face towards the desert. *This third place mirrors what happened to Christ-who met Satan in the desert. The first event mirrors Israel in her journey from Aram in the patriarchal times and the second her pilgrimage under Moses. This third time Balaam is overlooking the "destruction of Sodom and all the plain" and being asked to contemplate the destruction of Israel. The prophetic period envisaged for this ruin of Israel begins with Christ's victory in the desert and ending with the destruction of Jerusalem and the long era that includes the holocaust. Yet Israel survives.* And Balaam lifted his eyes and saw Israel encamped in order of tribe and the Spirit of God came upon him and he lifted up his parable [*Hebrew MASHAL-* "similitude" or "comparison"] and he said, "**the low voiced murmur of Balaam the son of a sparrow and the low murmur of a warrior having his eyes opened**" *There is a pun on the quiet chirping of the sparrow but there is more here- there is a confession that Balaam is seeing the purposes of God and the light of the Holy Spirit is flooding in. His prophecy is now in what we might call New Testament mode.* The quiet murmur of the one who hears the words of God that one falling prostrate sees **a vision of Shaddai and the revealing of eyes.** [*The Hebrew hAYIN is often used of PANIM "face" I am inclined to take the construct "and disclosing" or "revealing" of eyes" to speak of the LORD, the subject of vision not the person of the visionary. The fact that he states this 3 times tends to put it beyond dispute.*

ISRAEL'S TENTS AND COMING MESSIAH 24.5ff

How pleasant [*Hebrew TOV "happy" "joyful"*] are your tents of Jacob and your dwellings O Israel. (a)As river valleys they spread out; (b) as gardens along by a river; (c) as lign aloes the LORD planted; [*or preferably -the Hebrew for "aloe" and "tent" AhAHALIM being the same word -hence tents the LORD pitched. The "lign (perfumed wood) aloe grew in China the Moluccas and in Arabia and some think Balaam could not have known of it yet it was probably known in fable as a perfumed wood of paradise*] (d) as cedars along the watercourses. (e)Water will flow from their buckets [*Hebrew DELI -of buckets used at wells*] and (f) **his Seed will be in the house of great waters; (g) his King will be great beyond Agag.** *A common name of the Amalakite kings as was the name "Pharaoh" of Egypt's kings (h) God caused them to get out of Egypt. (i)They have the swiftness of a wild buffalo or oryx [The Hebrew is AUROCH which great horned "reem" or unicorn according to Tristram "died out in the middle ages". In Caesar's Gallic Wars 4.29 we read, "These 'urus' are scarcely less than elephants in size; but in their nature colour and form are bulls. Great is their strength and speed; they spare neither man nor beast when once they have caught sight of them."* (j)They eat up Gentile adversary nations (k) and gnaw their bones (like lions) (l) their arrows dash to pieces *Clearly Israel possessed bowmen who were redoubtable soldiers.* (m)As a lion crouching he lies (n) as a lioness -who shall cause her to rise up? (o)Those who bless you are blessed and those who curse you are cursed! *The very considerable prophetic TORAH of this oracle is the reference to Christ who as the Seed of Israel or Jacob would be known worldwide and be a king far outdistancing the Agag's of Amalek.*

BALAK'S FURY AND BALAAM'S CONTINUED CHRIST-CENTRED FOURTH PROPHECY THE "HOLLOWING OUT" NEVER HAPPENED 10ff.

The anger of Balak grew hot against Balaam and he claps his hands together and says to Balaam, "I called you to "PIERCE" OR "TAKE THE CORE OUT OF" my enemy and look you have blessed them these three times [*these three "steps"*] Mow get away [*Hebrew BARAH "flee"*] I said I would glorify you but look, the LORD has held you back from glory. And Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not speak saying to the messengers you sent, 'If Balak should give me the full of his house of silver and gold I am not able to go against the mouth of the LORD to do good or evil' from my heart. What the LORD speaks, that I must speak!"

READING No.7 24.14-25.6

PROPHECY No.4

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE STAR PROPHECY

THE BIRTH OF JESUS AND THE VICTOR OF BOZRAH-cf ISA 63.1

Now watch me go back to my people. (a) Take your warning or counsel as to what this people will do to **your people** in the last days. And he took up his parable or prophecy and said, Balaam the son of Beor spoke in a murmur and the man whose eyes were opened said quietly, "The quiet saying of the one who heard the words of God and understood the intimate knowledge of Elyon; who beheld the vision of Shaddai falling down and the face was revealed. I saw Him but not at this present; I watched or lay in wait for Him but not close to Him. **A Star will tread its way form Jacob** *The Hebrew KOKAB is of vital interest since Saturn was the god of Moab and the confluence of Jupiter and Saturn hailed the birth of Christ to the Magi* and a sceptre will arise from Israel **He will dash in pieces the regions or beards of Moab** [*Hebrew PAhAH "whiskers" or "regions of"*] and Karkor [*an area east of Jordan*] all the sons of tumult or war. [*Jeremiah in 48.45 speaks of the "sons of tumult or devastation SHAON*] Edom will be occupied and Seir will be occupied and Israel will be made powerful. From Jacob He will subdue and take possession and will be the cause of destruction of the survivors from the city. (b) And Balaam saw Amalek and lifted up his parable or prophecy and said, "Amalek was leader of nations but his latter end is the abolition of destruction or the eternity of destruction. (c) Then he saw the Kenites [*Descendants of Hobab Moses' father-in-law-Canaanites*] and he took up his parable and said, "Your dwelling is constantly secure; your nest placed in Sela Rock. Except when it shall be for the consumption of fire until whenever Assyria takes you in captive possession.

PROPHECY No.5 24 23 -25

ENCOURAGEMENT OF END TIME PROVIDENCES

WESTERN NAVIES CONTROL IRANIAN WATERS

And he took up his parable or oracle and said, "Woe -Who can live when God sets this in array or imposes or directs it." *Balaam foresees a time of latter day woe such as we read of in the Apocalypse-a time under the direct compelling urgency of God's direction-a time of overwhelming of nations. Asshur are referred to-a nation which in the form of Babylon did take captives from Canaan 6 centuries later. In the last days it is represented by Iraq-Iran who were then unknown as we know them in the latter day. These nations are now represented in Palestine and effectively have gained control of the militancy in line with this prophecy. Ships "beyond the power" of the KITTIM [*Hebrew M'YADH "beyond the powers"*] of the "Mediterranean" nations will continually answer (the threat of) or humble Asshur. Balaam was allowed to see mighty navies which humble Iraq in the latter days. This prophecy also has to an extent been fulfilled in our time and they will subdue Eber- [*Hebrew for the "region beyond"*] This "sea-power" will effectively control the Gulf and seas at least as far as Persia in the latter days. How amazingly accurate is this **prophetic TORAH** of Balaam! He may not have been much use to Balak but he is a channel in God's hands and in His word to advise us of how Israel will dominate the Southern area of Jordan in the last of the last days and how "sea power" will be vital to the defence of Israel and the mid-east in the latter day. Then Balaam arose and was on his way to his place and also Balak went on his way. This statement about the "way" is a euphemism for his idolatrous "way".*

CHAPTER 25 MOAB'S SEDUCTION OF ISRAEL 25.1-6

When Israel dwelt in Shittim the people softened and fell sick of love to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. And they called them to the sacrifices of their gods and the people feasted and worshipped their gods. And Israel was fast bound [*Hebrew ZAMADH "bound as by a bracelet"*] to Baal Peor. *Peor was the high place where the Baalite priests served -to which Balak took Balaam* And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel. Hang them on a stake [*Hebrew YAQhA-virtually crucify*] belonging to the LORD in the sunshine that the burning anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel. *A most informative phrase occurs here which read in the light of the NT is a **prophetic TORAH** of the*

cross, namely "a stake belonging to the LORD". In days far in the future He himself would hang the just dying for the unjust on just such a wooden cross. And Moses said to the judges of Israel," You must slay each evil fleshly husband of those who are joined [by bracelet] to Baal Peor. And behold a man of Israel came and brought to his family a Midianite woman before Moses' very eyes and before the Congregation of the sons of Israel-and this while they were weeping at the door of the tent of meeting.

SUMMARY 25 7-9

And when Phineas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron saw this he left the midst of the assembly took a spear in his hand and went after the man of Israel to the bedchamber and thrust (it) through them both - the man of Israel and the woman upon the bed. The plague was stayed from the sons of Israel. Those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.

The End of Part 7 "Discouragement Reversed"