

~BALAAM (590)

(Ba'laam) [possibly, One Swallowing Down]

- Son of Beor, of the **15th Century B.C.E.** He lived in the Aramaean town of Pethor in the upper Euphrates Valley and near the Sajur River. Though not an Israelite, **Balaam** had some knowledge and recognition of Yehowah as the true God, speaking of him on one occasion as Yehowah my God.
- He now sent messengers to **Balaam** the son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the River of the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying; Look! A people has come out of Egypt. Look! They have covered the earth as far as one can see, and they are dwelling right in front of me. (**Numbers 22:5**)
- But **Balaam** answered and said to the servants of Balak; If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I should not be able to pass beyond the order of Yehowah my God, so as to do something small or great. (**Numbers 22:18**)
- This may have been because devout worshipers of Yehowah, Abraham, Lot, and Jacob, formerly lived in the vicinity of Haran, not far from Pethor.
- At that Abram went just as Yehowah had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he went out from Haran. (**Genesis 12:4**)
- So Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot the son of his brother and all the goods that they had accumulated and the souls whom they had acquired in Haran, and they got on their way out to go to the land of Canaan. Finally they came to the land of Canaan. (**Genesis 12:5**)
- So the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master and proceeded to go with every sort of good thing of his masters in his hand. Then he rose and got on his way to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. (**Genesis 24:10**)
- So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he struck out for Paddanaram, for Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau. (**Genesis 28:5**)

- And he began driving all his herd and all the goods that he had accumulated, the herd of his acquisition that he had accumulated in Paddanaram, in order to go to Isaac his father to the land of Canaan. (**Genesis 31:18**)
- These twenty years I have been with you. Your female sheep and your she-goats did not suffer abortions, and the rams of your flock I never ate. (**Genesis 31:38**)
- **Balaam** turned down the offer of the first delegation from the Moabite king Balak, who brought with them payments for divination, saying, **Yehowah has refused to let me go with you.**
- He now sent messengers to **Balaam** the son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the River of the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, Look! A people has come out of Egypt. Look! They have covered the earth as far as one can see, and they are dwelling right in front of me. (**Numbers 22:5**)
- And now do come, please, do curse this people for me, for they are mightier than I am. Perhaps I may be able to strike them and I may drive them out of the land, for I well know that the one whom you bless is a blessed one and the one whom you curse is cursed. (**Numbers 22:6**)
- So the older men of Moab and the older men of Midian traveled with the payments for divination in their hands and went to **Balaam** and spoke to him Balak's words. (**Numbers 22:7**)
- At that he said to them; Lodge here tonight, and I shall certainly return you word just as Yehowah may speak to me. Accordingly the princes of Moab stayed with **Balaam**. (**Numbers 22:8**)
- Then God came to **Balaam** and said; Who are these men with you? (**Numbers 22:9**)
- So **Balaam** said to the true God; Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, has sent to me, saying; (**Numbers 22:10**)
- Look! The people who are coming out of Egypt, and they go covering the earth as far as the eye can see. Now do come, do execrate them for me. Perhaps I may be able to fight against them and I shall actually drive them out. (**Numbers 22:11**)

- But God said to **Balaam**; You must not go with them. You must not curse the people, for they are blessed. (**Numbers 22:12**)
- After that **Balaam** got up in the morning and said to the princes of Balak: Go to your country, because Yehowah has refused to let me go with you. (**Numbers 22:13**)
- So the princes of Moab got up and came to Balak and said, **Balaam** has refused to come with us. (**Numbers 22:14**)
- When other princes in greater number and more honorable came
- However, Balak sent again other princes in greater number and more honorable than the former. (**Numbers 22:15**)
- And **Balaam** again sought God's permission to go, Yehowah said, Get up, go with them. **But only the word that I shall speak to you is what you may speak.**
- In turn they came to **Balaam** and said to him; This is what Balak the son of Zippor has said; Do not be detained, please, from coming to me. (**Numbers 22:16**)
- For I shall without fail honor you greatly, and everything you may say to me I shall do. So do come, please. Do execrate this people for me. (**Numbers 22:17**)
- But **Balaam** answered and said to the servants of Balak; If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I should not be able to pass beyond the order of Yehowah my God, so as to do something small or great. (**Numbers 22:18**)
- And now you men also stay here, please, tonight that I may know what further Yehowah will speak with me. (**Numbers 22:19**)
- Then God came to **Balaam** by night and said to him; If it is to call you that the men have come, get up, go with them. But only the word that I shall speak to you is what you may speak. (**Numbers 22:20**)
- After that **Balaam** got up in the morning and saddled his she-ass and went with the princes of Moab. (**Numbers 22:21**)

- O my people, remember, please, what Balak the king of Moab counseled, and what **Balaam** the son of Beor answered him. From Shittim it was, all the way to Gilgal, to the intent that the righteous acts of Yehowah might be known. (**Micah 6:5**)
- On the way Yehowah's angel three times stood in the road, causing **Balaam's** ass first to turn into a field, then to squeeze **Balaam's** foot against a wall, and at last to lie down. Three times **Balaam** beat the animal, which then miraculously uttered a spoken protest.
- And the anger of God began to blaze because he was going, and Yehowah's angel proceeded to station himself in the road to resist him. And he was riding upon his she-ass, and two attendants of his were with him. (**Numbers 22:22**)
- And the ass got to see Yehowah's angel stationed in the road with his drawn sword in his hand, and the ass tried to turn aside from the road that she might go into the field, but **Balaam** began to strike the ass in order to turn her aside to the road. (**Numbers 22:23**)
- And Yehowah's angel kept standing in the narrow way between the vineyards, with a stone wall on this side and a stone wall on that side. (**Numbers 22:24**)
- And the she-ass kept seeing Yehowah's angel and began to squeeze herself against the wall and so to squeeze **Balaam's** foot against the wall, and he went beating her some more. (**Numbers 22:25**)
- Yehowah's angel now passed by again and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn aside to the right or the left. (**Numbers 22:26**)
- When the ass got to see Yehowah's angel she now lay down under **Balaam**, so that **Balaam's** anger blazed, and he kept beating the ass with his staff. (**Numbers 22:27**)
- Finally Yehowah opened the mouth of the ass and she said to **Balaam**; What have I done to you so that you have beaten me these three times? (**Numbers 22:28**)
- At this **Balaam** said to the ass; It is because you have dealt ruthlessly with me. If only there were a sword in my hand, for

now I should have killed you! (**Numbers 22:29**)

- Then the she-ass said to **Balaam**; Am I not your she-ass that you have ridden upon all your life long until this day? Have I ever been used to do to you this way? To which he said; No! (**Numbers 22:30**)
- Finally, **Balaam** himself saw Yehowah's angel, who announced: I have come out to offer resistance, because your way has been headlong against my will. Yet Yehowah once again allowed **Balaam** to continue in his chosen course.
- And Yehowah proceeded to uncover **Balaam's** eyes, so that he saw Yehowah's angel stationed in the road with his drawn sword in his hand. At once he bowed low and prostrated himself on his face. (**Numbers 22:31**)
- Then Yehowah's angel said to him; Why have you beaten your she-ass these three times? Look! I, I have come out to offer resistance, because your way has been headlong against my will. (**Numbers 22:32**)
- And the she-ass got to see me and tried to turn aside before me these three times. Supposing she had not turned aside from before me! For by now even you I should have killed, but her I should have preserved alive. (**Numbers 22:33**)
- At this **Balaam** said to Yehowah's angel; I have sinned, because I did not know that it was you stationed in the road to meet me. And now, if it is bad in your eyes, let me go my way back. (**Numbers 22:34**)
- But Yehowah's angel said to **Balaam**; Go with the men, and nothing but the word that I shall speak to you is what you may speak. And **Balaam** continued going with the princes of Balak. (**Numbers 22:35**)
- From start to finish God unalterably disapproved any cursing of Israel, insisting that if **Balaam** went he would have to bless, not curse.
- Then Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, got up and went fighting against Israel. So he sent and summoned **Balaam** the son of Beor to call down evil upon you. (**Joshua 24:9**)

- And I did not want to listen to **Balaam**. Consequently he blessed you repeatedly. Thus I delivered you out of his hand. (**Joshua 24:10**)
- However, God permitted him to go. It was as in the case of Cain, when Yehowah expressed his disapproval but at the same time allowed the individual personal choice, either to abandon his bad way or plunge ahead in his wicked course.
- At this Yehowah said to Cain; Why are you hot with anger and why has your countenance fallen? (**Genesis 4:6**)
- If you turn to doing good, will there not be an exaltation? But if you do not turn to doing good, there is sin crouching at the entrance, and for you is its craving, and will you, for your part, get the mastery over it? (**Genesis 4:7**)
- After that Cain said to Abel his brother; Let us go over into the field. So it came about that while they were in the field Cain proceeded to assault Abel his brother and kill him. (**Genesis 4:8**)
- **Balaam**, then, like Cain, was headstrong in disregarding Yehowah's will in the matter, and was determined to gain his own selfish objective. In **Balaam's** case it was greed of reward that blinded him to the wrongness of his way, as Jude writes.
- Too bad for them, because they have gone in the path of Cain, and have rushed into the erroneous course of **Balaam** for reward, and have perished in the rebellious talk of Korah! (**Jude 1:11**)
- Abandoning the straight path, they have been misled. They have followed the path of **Balaam**, the son of Beor, who loved the reward of wrongdoing. (**2 Peter 2:15**)
- But got a reproof for his own violation of what was right. A voiceless beast of burden, making utterance with the voice of a man, hindered the prophets mad course. (**2 Peter 2:16**)
- Upon reaching Moabite territory and meeting King Balak on the bank of the Arnon, **Balaam** wasted no time in going to work for these opposers of Yehowah's people the next day. **Balaam** together with Balak offered up sacrifices, and then **Balaam** withdrew, hoping to come upon any unlucky omens

- And **Balaam** went on to say to Balak; Station yourself by your burnt offering, and let me go. Perhaps Yehowah will get in touch and meet with me. In that case whatever he will show me, I shall certainly tell you. So he went to a bare hill. (**Numbers 23:3**)
- When **Balaam** got to see that it was good in the eyes of Yehowah to bless Israel, he did not go away as at the other times to come upon any unlucky omens, but he directed his face to the wilderness. (**Numbers 24:1**)
- But the only message received was a blessing for Israel from Yehowah. The same sacrificial procedure was again followed atop Pisgah, and again there was no unlucky spell against Jacob, only blessings. Finally, the performance was repeated atop Peor, and again for the third time God changed the malediction into a benediction.
- And it came about in the morning that Balak went taking **Balaam** and bringing him up to Bamoth-baal, that he might see from there the whole of the people. (**Numbers 22:41**)
- He bowed down, he lay down like the lion, and, like a lion, who dares rouse him? Those blessing you are the one's blessed, and those cursing you are the one's cursed. (**Numbers 24:9**)
- For they had not met the sons of Israel with bread and with water, but went hiring against them **Balaam** to call down evil upon them. However, our God changed the malediction into a benediction. (**Nehemiah 13:2**)
- At this turn of events, Balak's anger blazed against **Balaam**, and, clapping his hands in a rage, he exclaimed:
- At that Balak's anger blazed against **Balaam** and he clapped his hands, and Balak went on to say to **Balaam**; It was to execrate my enemies that I called you, and, look! You have blessed them to the limit these three times. (**Numbers 24:10**)
- And now run your way off to your place. I had said to myself I was without fail going to honor you, but, look! Yehowah has held you back from honor. (**Numbers 24:11**)
- **Balaam** tried to excuse himself, blaming Yehowah for his failure at cursing Israel, saying he was not able to pass beyond the order of Yehowah, and that whatever Yehowah said is what he had to speak. So

with a few more proverbial pronouncements against Israel's enemies, **Balaam** got up and went and returned to his place.

- In turn **Balaam** said to Balak; Was it not also to your messengers whom you sent to me that I spoke, saying; (**Numbers 24:12**)
- If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I should not be able to pass beyond the order of Yehowah so as to do something good or bad out of my own heart. Whatever Yehowah may speak is what I shall speak? (**Numbers 24:13**)
- And now here I am going away to my people. Do come, let me advise you what this people will do to your people afterward in the end of the days. (**Numbers 24:14**)
- So he took up his proverbial utterance and said; The utterance of **Balaam** the son of Beor, and the utterance of the able-bodied man with the eye unsealed. (**Numbers 24:15**)
- The utterance of the one hearing the sayings of God, and the one knowing the knowledge of the Most High. A vision of the Almighty he got to see while falling down with the eyes uncovered. (**Numbers 24:16**)
- I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not near. A star will certainly step forth out of Jacob, and a scepter will indeed rise out of Israel. And he will certainly break apart the temples of Moab's head and the cranium of all the sons of tumult of war. (**Numbers 24:17**)
- And Edom must become a possession, yes, Seir must become the possession of his enemies. While Israel is displaying his courage. (**Numbers 24:18**)
- And out of Jacob one will go subduing, and he must destroy any survivor from the city. (**Numbers 24:19**)
- When he got to see Amalek, he carried further his proverbial utterance and went on to say; Amalek was the first one of the nations, but his end afterward will be even his perishing. (**Numbers 24:20**)
- When he got to see the Kenites, he carried further his proverbial utterance and went on to say; Durable is your dwelling, and set

on the crag is your abode. (**Numbers 24:21**)

- But there will come to be one to burn Kain down. How long will it be till Assyria will carry you away captive?. (**Numbers 24:22**)
- And he carried further his proverbial utterance and went on to say; Woe! Who will survive when God causes it? (**Numbers 24:23**)
- And there will be ships from the coast of Kittim, and they will certainly afflict Assyria, and they will indeed afflict Eber. But he too will eventually perish. (**Numbers 24:24**)
- After that **Balaam** got up and went and returned to his place. And Balak also went his own way. (**Numbers 24:25**)
- When it says that **Balaam** returned to his place it does not necessarily mean he actually reached his home back in Pethor. The words themselves do not imply that **Balaam** left more than the immediate vicinity of Mount Peor. As **Cook's Commentary** observes on;
- After that **Balaam** got up and went and returned to his place. And Balak also went his own way. (**Numbers 24:25**)
- Returned to his own place. Not to his own land, for he remained amongst the Midianites to plot by new means against the people of God, and to perish in his sin. The phrase, which is of frequent recurrence;
- Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Bar-humite. (**2 Samuel 23:31**)
- However, Laban got up early in the morning and kissed his children and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban got on his way that he might return to his own place. (**Genesis 31:55**)
- At this Saul said to David; Blessed may you be, my son David. Not only will you without fail work but you will also without fail come off the winner. And David proceeded to go on his way, and as for Saul, he returned to his place. (**1 Samuel 26:25**)
- Is idiomatic, meaning merely that **Balaam** went away whither he would.

- **Balaam** still entertained hope of having that rich reward for which he had come so far and for which he had worked so hard. If he could not curse Israel, he reasoned, perhaps God himself would curse his own people, if only they could be seduced to engage in sex worship of the Baal of Peor. So **Balaam**, went teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.
- Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, that you have there those holding fast the teaching of **Balaam**, who went teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication. (**Revelation 2:14**)
- By **Balaam's** word, the daughters of Moab and Midian served to induce the sons of Israel to commit unfaithfulness toward Yehowah over the affair of Peor, so that the scourge came upon the assembly of Yehowah.
- Look! They are the ones who, by **Balaam's** word, served to induce the sons of Israel to commit unfaithfulness toward Yehowah over the affair of Peor, so that the scourge came upon the assembly of Yehowah. (**Numbers 31:16**)
- The result, 24,000 men of Israel died for their sin.
- Now Israel was dwelling in Shittim. Then the people started to have immoral relations with the daughters of Moab. (**Numbers 25:1**)
- And the women came calling the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people began to eat and to bow down to their gods. (**Numbers 25:2**)
- So Israel attached itself to the Baal of Peor, and the anger of Yehowah began to blaze against Israel. (**Numbers 25:3**)
- Hence Yehowah said to Moses; Take all the head one's of the people and expose them to Yehowah toward the sun, that the burning anger of Yehowah may turn back from Israel. (**Numbers 25:4**)
- Then Moses said to the judges of Israel; Each one of you kill his men who have an attachment with the Baal of Peor. (**Numbers**

25:5)

- But, look! A man of the sons of Israel came, and he was bringing near to his brothers a Midianite woman before Moses eyes and before the eyes of all the assembly of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (**Numbers 25:6**)
- When Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest caught sight of it, he at once got up from the midst of the assembly and took a lance in his hand. (**Numbers 25:7**)
- Then he went after the man of Israel into the vaulted tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her genital parts. At that the scourge was halted from upon the sons of Israel. (**Numbers 25:8**)
- And those who died from the scourge amounted to twenty-four thousand. (**Numbers 25:9**)
- Neither Midian nor **Balaam** escaped divine punishment. Yehowah commanded that all the men, women, and boys of Midian be executed, only virgins were spared. And they killed **Balaam** the son of Beor with the sword.
- Later Yehowah spoke to Moses, saying; (**Numbers 25:16**)
- Let there be a harassing of the Midianites, and you men must strike them. (**Numbers 25:17**)
- Because they are harassing you with their deeds of cunning that they committed against you cunningly in the affair of Peor and in the affair of Cozbi the daughter of a chieftain of Midian, their sister who was fatally struck in the day of the scourge over the affair of Peor. (**Numbers 25:18**)
- Yehowah then spoke to Moses, saying; (**Numbers 31:1**)
- Take vengeance for the sons of Israel upon the Midianites. Afterward you will be gathered to your people. (**Numbers 31:2**)
- So Moses spoke to the people, saying; Equip men from among you for the army, that they may serve against Midian to execute Yehowah's vengeance upon Midian. (**Numbers 31:3**)

- **A thousand of each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you will send into the army. (Numbers 31:4)**
- **Accordingly from the thousands of Israel a thousand were assigned of a tribe, twelve thousand equipped for the army. (Numbers 31:5)**
- **Then Moses sent them out, a thousand of each tribe, to the army, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the army, and the holy utensils and the trumpets for blowing calls were in his hand. (Numbers 31:6)**
- **And they went waging war against Midian, just as Yehowah had commanded Moses, and they proceeded to kill every male. (Numbers 31:7)**
- **And they killed the kings of Midian along with the others slain, namely, Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian, and they killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword. (Numbers 31:8)**
- **But the sons of Israel carried off the women of Midian and their little one's captive, and all their domestic animals and all their livestock and all their means of maintenance they plundered. (Numbers 31:9)**
- **And all their cities in which they had settled and all their walled camps they burned with fire. (Numbers 31:10)**
- **And they went taking all the spoil and all the booty in the way of human's and domestic animals. (Numbers 31:11)**
- **And they came bringing to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the assembly of the sons of Israel the captives and the booty and the spoil, to the camp, to the desert plains of Moab, which are by the Jordan at Jericho. (Numbers 31:12)**
- **Then Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the chieftains of the assembly went out to meet them outside the camp. (Numbers 31:13)**
- **And Moses grew indignant at the appointed men of the combat forces, the chiefs of the thousands and the chiefs of the hundreds**

- who were coming in from the military expedition. (**Numbers 31:14**)
- So Moses said to them; Have you preserved alive every female? (**Numbers 31:15**)
 - Look! They are the ones who, by **Balaam's** word, served to induce the sons of Israel to commit unfaithfulness toward Yehowah over the affair of Peor, so that the scourge came upon the assembly of Yehowah. (**Numbers 31:16**)
 - And now kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has had intercourse with man by lying with a male. (**Numbers 31:17**)
 - And preserve alive for yourselves all the little one's among the women who have not known the act of lying with a male. (**Numbers 31:18**)
 - As for the Moabites, they were barred from the congregation of Yehowah to the tenth generation.
 - No Ammonite or Moabite may come into the congregation of Yehowah. Even to the tenth generation none of theirs may come into the congregation of Yehowah to time indefinite. (**Deuteronomy 23:3**)
 - For the reason that they did not come to your aid with bread and water in the way when you were going out of Egypt, and because they hired against you **Balaam** the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia to call down evil upon you. (**Deuteronomy 23:4**)
 - And Yehowah your God did not want to listen to **Balaam**, but Yehowah your God in your behalf changed the malediction into a blessing, because Yehowah your God loved you. (**Deuteronomy 23:5**)
 - You must not work for their peace and their prosperity all your days to time indefinite. (**Deuteronomy 23:6**)