

# Numbers 24 Commentary

PREVIOUS Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	<a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere ( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> )			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

**Numbers 24:1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness.**

BGT Numbers 24:1 καὶ ὃν Βαλααμ τὴν καλὴν σὺν ναντὶ κυρίου ἐλογεῖν τὴν Ἰσραὴλ ὁ κτηνοπορεθὴς κατὰ τὸ εὐθεῖον ἐστὼς ἐστὼς συναντήσας τὸ ὄριον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀστρέψας τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἄρῃον

NET Numbers 24:1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at the other times to seek for omens, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

NLT Numbers 24:1 By now Balaam realized that the LORD was determined to bless Israel, so he did not resort to divination as before. Instead, he turned and looked out toward the wilderness,

ESV Numbers 24:1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness.

NIV Numbers 24:1 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not resort to sorcery as at other times, but turned his face toward the desert.

KJV Numbers 24:1 And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

YLT Numbers 24:1 And Balaam seeth that it is good in the eyes of Jehovah to bless Israel, and he hath not gone as time by time to meet enchantments, and he setteth towards the wilderness his face;

LXE Numbers 24:1 And when Balaam saw that it pleased God to bless Israel, he did not go according to his

custom to meet the omens, but turned his face toward the wilderness.

ASV Numbers 24:1 And when Balaam saw that it pleased Jehovah to bless Israel, he went not, as at the other times, to meet with enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

CSB Numbers 24:1 Since Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go to seek omens as on previous occasions, but turned toward the wilderness.

NKJ Numbers 24:1 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times, to seek to use sorcery, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

NRS Numbers 24:1 Now Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, so he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness.

NAB Numbers 24:1 Balaam, however, perceiving that the LORD was pleased to bless Israel, did not go aside as before to seek omens, but turned his gaze toward the desert.

NJB Numbers 24:1 Balaam then saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel. He did not go as before to seek omens but turned towards the desert.

GWN Numbers 24:1 When Balaam saw that the LORD wanted to bless Israel, he didn't look for omens as he had done before. He turned toward the desert,

- **saw:** Nu 22:13 23:20 31:16 1Sa 24:20 26:2,25 Rev 2:14
- **at other times:** Nu 23:3,15
- **to seek** Nu 23:23
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PREPARATION FOR DISCOURSE #3

This section is tied with the previous description of seven altars and sacrifices (Nu 23:29-30+). **Allen** comments that "Again the sevens of altars and sacrifices are prepared (vv.29–30), but this time there is a significant change. Balaam does not go about his normal routine of sorcery (Nu 25:1). This time "the Spirit of God came upon him" (Nu 25:2). This unexpected language is used to prepare the reader for the heightened revelation that is about to come from the unwitting messenger. The oracles are building in intensity and in their depth of meaning." (EBC)

**Jensen** - By this time the experiences of meeting God on the two previous occasions, and hearing in detail God's blessings on Israel, had convinced Balaam that God would have the last word. "When Balaam perceived that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel" (24:1, Berkeley Version), he did not look for omens as on the previous occasions, but turned his face in the direction of Israel, and saw their camp in order by tribes. At this moment the Spirit of God came upon him. (EvBC-Nu)

**When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD**(Lit - "That it was good in the eyes of Jehovah") **to bless Israel** - Balaam already understood before this point in the account that the LORD wanted to bless Israel. **NLT** - "By now Balaam realized that the LORD was determined to bless Israel, so he did not resort to divination as before. Instead, he turned and looked out toward the wilderness."

**Bush** - The Most High always esteems it good to abide by his purposes and promises. This fact respecting the Lord it is said that Balaam "saw," by which we are to understand that he became assured of it from the internal consciousness of being overruled in his utterance by a superior power which he could not resist.

**He did not go as at other times to seek**(lit - to meet) **omens** - **At other times** is literally "as time after time" or "as time on time." This refers to the two previous **discourses**. Recall that Balaam was offered **fees for divination** (Nu 22:7+) (which he did not refute as an abomination) and here he seeks omens, which it says he **did at other times**. Were any of the times he sought omens described? Most likely these were the two times that he separated himself from Balak (Nu 23:3+, Nu 23:15+ and also Nu 22:8+ when he separated from Balak's emissaries).

**NN** on **omens** - The word נְחָשִׁים (néchashim) means "omens," or possibly "auguries." Balaam is not even making a pretense now of looking for such things, because they are not going to work. God has overruled them.

**Bush** - **He went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments** Heb. "Not at (this) time as the time (before)." Gr. "According to his custom." Seeing there was no likelihood of obtaining leave from God to curse his people, he resolves no more to seek for enchantments, but sets his face towards the wilderness, that is, towards the place where Israel lay encamped, apparently giving himself up to the influence which had proved too strong for his wicked will, and perhaps disposed in his own mind to make a virtue of

the necessity that he felt laid upon him. His object in retiring on the former occasions, while Balak was left standing by his altars, was not expressly stated, but here we are informed in effect that it was to practise in private those cabalistic and magical arts which were common to sorcerers, and which he was in hopes might have made him master of his impious purpose, wherein, however, he was disappointed. These devices he now abandoned, because he saw they were fruitless, although his heart was in reality no better than before, as we infer from the sequel of the narrative. The original word for "enchantments" (nehâshim) is closely related to the Heb. term for serpent (nahash) and the relation between the ideas conveyed by serpent and divination or augury is undoubtedly recognized in more places than one in the original Scriptures. The literal rendering in the present instance is "to meet enchantment or magic-omens." The phrase undoubtedly implies the meeting, or seeking an interview with the Lord, for the purpose of making him propitious to his design by certain ceremonies of a cryptic or mysterious nature known as divinations or auguries.

Balaam was inspired by the Spirit to declare God's will, but that does not necessarily mean that Balaam was a true believer in Yahweh.

**Omen** (05173) [nachash](#) from verb [nachash](#) - see **Divine** below) means divination, enchantment. Only found in [Nu 23:23](#) and [Nu 24:1](#). The [Septuagint](#) translates [nachash](#) with the noun **oionos** which Liddell-Scott says literally means "a large bird, bird of prey, such as a vulture or eagle, and so distinguished from a common bird, Homer, etc. II. a bird of omen or [augury](#), Homer, etc.:the flight to (not from) the right, i.e. towards the East, was fortunate, and vice versa. 2. an **omen**, presage, drawn from these birds, Lat. auspicium or augurium, according as taken from seeing their flight or hearing their cry, II., etc.; dechomai ton oionon = accept the omen, hail it as favourable, Hdt."

**Divine** (05172)([nachash](#) not to be confused with Hebrew word for serpent [nachash](#) = "Because of the similarity of nachash to nâchâsh meaning "snake," some make a connection to [snake charming](#). More contend that there is a similarity of hissing sounds between enchanter and serpents and hence the similarity of words." - TWOT) means to practice divination, observe signs and is only in the Piel intensive stem. First use of Laban to Jacob " I have **divined** that the LORD has blessed me on your account." (Ge 30:27). "Both in Genesis 44:5, 15 the doubly intensive form (infinitive absolute plus finite verb) occurs. There we learn that Joseph claimed for his brothers' benefit that he could "divine" with a special cup and so knew secret things such as that his brothers, still unaware of who he was, had his cup in their possession. But divination is outlawed in Leviticus 19:26 and is spoken of with condemnation in 2 Kings 17:17 and 2 Kings 21:6 (cf. 2 Chron. 33:6). It is in the list of forbidden occult practices of Deut. 18:10. (TWOT)

**Gilbrant** - The practice of divination was widespread throughout the ancient Near East. Omens were taken before attempting a wide variety of significant events, such as engaging in warfare or building projects. Further, omens were used at Mari as a check against individuals who made claims that a god was communicating through them. Omens stem from observation of the natural world with the assumption that anything which deviates from the natural order does so under the influence of the divine realm as a means of communication. Unusual events in the political order could be tied to unusual events in the natural order, the subject of omens. An unusual sheep liver, discovered in the course of ritual sacrifice, was understood by the peoples surrounding the Israelites as the announcement of a coming event. There existed long lists of the significance of particular omens in Akkadian literature, and a number of liver models (for learning divination) have been discovered throughout Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine. Though an integral part of other ancient societies, the practice was banned among the ancient Israelites, who were to communicate legitimately with God through prayer and prophetic utterances (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10). One of the causes for the captivity of the northern tribes was the practice of divination (2 Ki. 17:17). Among his many other occultic practices, King Manasseh likewise was guilty of practicing divination (2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Chr. 33:6). Laban divined that the Lord had blessed him because of Jacob (Gen. 30:27). Joseph gave the impression that he practiced divination with the cup he had hid in Benjamin's saddlebag (Gen. 44:5, 15). When king Ahab defeated the Syrian army, the officers of Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, carefully watched Ahab for an omen of mercy (1 Ki. 20:33) and interpreted Ahab's use of the term "brother" as a good sign; on the basis of this sign, they negotiated a favorable peace treaty with Ahab. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

The word for **Divination** (07081) is **qesem** in Nu 22:7 ("fees for divination")

**Nachash** - 10x - divination(1), divined(1), enchantments(1), indeed practice divination(1), indeed uses(1), interprets omens(1), practice divination(1), took as an omen(1), used divination(2). Ge 30:27; Ge 44:5; Ge 44:15; Lev. 19:26; Dt. 18:10; 1 Ki. 20:33; 2 Ki. 17:17; 2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Chr. 33:6

**Omens** (05173)([nachash](#) from verb [nachash](#) - see above) means divination, enchantment. Only found in Nu 23:23 and Nu 24:1.

The **Septuagint** translates **nachash** with the noun **oionos** which Liddell-Scott says literally means "a large bird, bird of prey, such as a vulture or eagle, and so distinguished from a common bird, Homer, etc. II. a bird of omen or **augury**, Homer, etc.:the flight to (not from) the right, i.e. towards the East, was fortunate, and vice versa. 2. an **omen**, presage, drawn from these birds, Lat. auspicium or augurium, according as taken from seeing their flight or hearing their cry, II., etc.; dechomai ton oionon = accept the omen, hail it as favourable, Hdt."

**But he set his face toward the wilderness** - The Septuagint has **apostrepho** indicating that he first turned away from, rejected or repudiated and in context would refer to his turning from omens and enchantations and **toward the wilderness** where the Israelites were camped. Was he looking at the **Shekinah glory cloud** ? We cannot say for certain, but it is possible he saw the cloud over the Tabernacle. In any event at this point Balaam finally saw the entire encampment of Israel. He now knew that there was to be a blessing on Israel and he commences with one of the most comprehensive blessings of Israel in the Old Testament! Prior to this time, Balak had allowed him to see only the very edges of the people of God; now he sees them in their full force.

**Milgrom** - The meaning here is clear: Rather than timorously catching a glimpse of the edge of the Israelite camp, Balaam now boldly steps forward so that he can see all of Israel.

**NN on set his face** - The idiom signifies that he had a determination and resolution to look out over where the Israelites were, so that he could appreciate more their presence and use that as the basis for his expressing of the oracle.

**Bush** - "He set his face toward the wilderness. Heb. el hammidbar, the usual term to denote the dreary desert through which Israel had wandered after leaving Egypt, but implying in this connection a region which could only be comparatively denominated a desert or wilderness, as they were encamped in the valley of the Jordan, while Balaam was beholding them from the heights above."

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**Thomas Constable** notes that "Several types of divination were common in the ancient Near East."

1. **Extispicy (Haruspex)** was the examination of the entrails of a sacrificed sheep by a trained specialist to determine messages from the gods. The intricate arrangements of the internal organs are what believers in this form of divination regarded as indicative of divine revelation.
2. **Astrology** studied the arrangements of the moon, sun, meteors, planets, and fixed stars to discover the future. Eclipses were particularly significant.
3. **Augury** was the study of the appearance, movements, and behavior of birds. The seers supposed the direction and manner of flight of birds was revelatory.
4. **Kleromancy (Cleromancy)** was divination by means of lots. The various configurations of symbolic objects, actors, and areas yielded a binary ("yes" or "no") answer to a given question.
5. **Oneiromancy** was revelation by dreams that sometimes contained verbal communication from a god or non-verbal communication. In the latter type certain colors, animals, or activities corresponded to types of misfortune, happiness, or success.

In all the types of divination, **fortunetellers** used tricks to deceive and impress their clients. They often clothed their predictions in mysterious ambiguous language to cover possible error. Devout Israelites were to reject divination as a way of discovering the likely outcome of events and to rely on God to make known what He wanted them to know.

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**G Michael Hagan - DIVINATION** - Communication with a deity for the purpose of determining the deity's knowledge, resulting in clarification of a decision or discernment of the future. Two forms of divination developed in the ancient Near East, one using inductive manipulation of natural or human phenomena and the other taking intuitive forms of inner revelation.

**The History of Divination** . In Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Egypt, and Canaan, people communicated with their deities by means of divination, both on a personal and public level. From the Old Babylonian period (ca. 2000 b.c.) on in Mesopotamia, the reading of livers helped determine the actions of commoners and kings. A sheep was slaughtered, its liver removed, and the markings of the organ "read" for an answer. Other inductive types of divination included the analysis of stars, moon, entrails, lungs, weather, birds, and fetuses. Human-produced phenomena studied included casting lots, shooting arrows, dropping oil in water, drinking wine, calling the dead, and sprinkling water on an ox. Intuitive types of divination in the ancient Near East involved oracles, prophecies, and dreams.

In Israel, an official position on divination limited its uses to forms that did not reflect the practices of surrounding cultures. Most inductive forms were forbidden (Leviticus 19:26 ; Deuteronomy 18:11 ), although the use of Urim and Thummim and lots supposes some inductive approaches. Most ancient practices, however, were used by both the populace and the officials. The Bible alludes to

the use of omens (Isaiah 44:25 ), arrows (Hosea 4:12 ), animal actions (1 Samuel 6:7-12 ), the reading of livers (Ezekiel 21:21-22 ), budding plants (Numbers 17:1-11 ), [necromancy](#) (1 Samuel 28), and prophetic utterances, called false (Micah 3:7,11 ) or "lying divinations" (Isaiah 44:25 ; Jeremiah 14:14 ; 27:9-10 ; Ezekiel 12:24 ; Zechariah 10:2 ). References to the "soothsayers' tree" (Judges 9:37 ), the "sons of a sorcerer" (Isaiah 57:3 ), and the girl with a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16-19 ) are evidence of widespread practice.

**Theology of Divination** . Divination presupposes that the divine communicates with the human. This communication takes both human and divine initiative. Inductive techniques depend on human initiation. The Bible supposes that a priority rests on revelatory forms (dream, vision, oracle) rather than on inductive ones (Urim/ Thummim, ephod). Although natural phenomena may communicate God's will, their interpretation must be scrutinized and may be helped by the verbal. It seems clear that God is not limited to the use of any one means of revelation.

Why would the Bible record such strong negative injunctions against inductive divination? Deuteronomic law especially attacks everything connected with pagan religions. Foreign deities may have attached themselves to these methods. Even then, most of Israel's approved methods display parallels with the surrounding cultures. The question of veracity may be involved because they prove difficult to interpret. For this reason, verbal forms take precedence over inductive methods. Yet even prophecies need to stand the test of whether they come true (Deuteronomy 18:21-22 ).

Human need requires discernment of divine desires. God chooses to communicate in a variety of ways, including divination techniques, but always in the clearest, most unambiguous way possible. (Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Divination](#))

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#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about divination? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Divination](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Divination](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Divination](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Divination Magic, Divination, and Sorcery](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Divination and Magic](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Divine; Diviner](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Divination](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Divination Arrows divination by](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Divination](#)

#### Numbers 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

BGT Numbers 24:2 κα ξ ρας Βαλααμ το ς φθαλμο ς α το καθορ τ ν Ισραηλ στρατοπεδευκ τα κατ φυλ ς κα γ νετο πνε μα θεο ν α τ

NET Numbers 24:2 When Balaam lifted up his eyes, he saw Israel camped tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

NLT Numbers 24:2 where he saw the people of Israel camped, tribe by tribe. Then the Spirit of God came upon him,

ESV Numbers 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him,

NIV Numbers 24:2 When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came upon him

KJV Numbers 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.

YLT Numbers 24:2 and Balaam lifteth up his eyes, and seeth Israel tabernacling, by its tribes, and the Spirit of God is upon him,

LXE Numbers 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and sees Israel encamped by their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

ASV Numbers 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling according to their tribes; and the

Spirit of God came upon him.

CSB Numbers 24:2 When Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him,

NKJ Numbers 24:2 And Balaam raised his eyes, and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

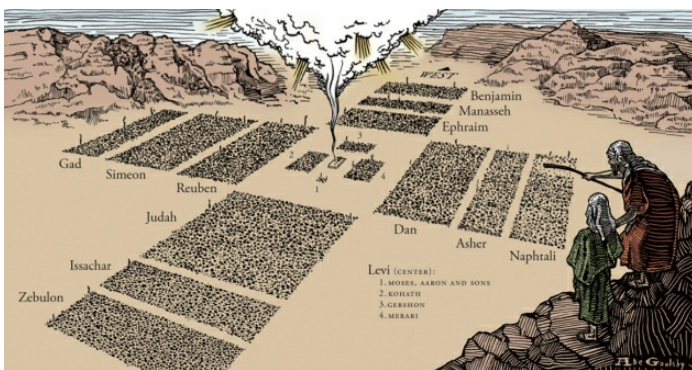
NRS Numbers 24:2 Balaam looked up and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. Then the spirit of God came upon him,

NAB Numbers 24:2 When he raised his eyes and saw Israel encamped, tribe by tribe, the spirit of God came upon him,

NJB Numbers 24:2 Raising his eyes Balaam saw Israel settled tribe by tribe; the spirit of God came on him

GWN Numbers 24:2 looked up, and saw Israel's camp grouped by tribes. The Spirit of God entered him,

- **camping tribe by tribe:** Nu 24:5 2:2-34 23:9,10 Song 6:4,10
- **the Spirit:** Nu 11:25-29 1Sa 10:6-10 1 Sa 19:20,23 2Ch 15:1 Mt 7:22 10:4,8 Lu 10:20 Joh 11:49-51
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



THE SONS OF ISRAEL CAMPING TRIBE BY TRIBE

**And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe-** On this occasion Balaam was able to visualize all 12 tribes with the tabernacle in the center. **Camping** is [shakan](#) (the root of [Shekinah](#)) and is used in Ex 29:45+ "I will **dwell** ([shakan](#)) among the sons of Israel and will be their God."

**Bush** notes that "The order (enlarge the picture above to see the orderly arrangement of each tribe around the [Shekinah](#)) prescribed for the disposition of the several tribes was always observed during their encampment, and this exact and beautiful order seems to have made a profound impression upon the spirit of Balaam, as may be inferred from his language in vs. 5–7.

**And the Spirit of God came upon him-** (cf Saul in 1Sa 10:6-10, other examples = Jdg 3:10+, Jdg 11:29+, Jdg 14:6+, Jdg 6:34-see comments on Spirit coming upon someone) As previously noted in Nu 23:7+ the **Septuagint** has almost the identical Greek as in this passage (*egeneto pneuma theou*) and is translated the same (in the Lexham Septuagint English translation). These are the only two places in the entire Pentateuch (except Ge 1:2 and Ge 41:38, close but not exact is 2 Chr 15:1 = *egeneto ep auton pneuma kuriou*) where this exact phrase **Spirit of God came upon** occurs. Interesting to be sure! I would submit that in some way undoubtedly the Spirit was active in the previous discourses because the Word of God had been placed in Balaam's mouth (Nu 23:5 = "the LORD **put a word in Balaam's mouth**" Nu 23:16 = "the LORD met Balaam and **put a word in his mouth**"), so that he could not speak curses even if he tried to do so! Conversely he was able to speak only blessings, surely a reflection of the influence (? control) of the Spirit of Truth. (See also [What was the role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? | GotQuestions.org](#)) Some commentators say this marks the beginning of Balaam as a bona fide prophet. While he is a prophet in one sense, he is a false teacher in another sense (Rev 2:14, Jude 1:11).

**Bush** notes that "In like manner the Spirit of God came upon [Saul](#), converting him temporarily into a new man, but not making any permanent change in his character (ED: THAT IS BUSH'S INTERPRETATION AND CERTAINLY IT IS POSSIBLE AS YOU LOOK AT SAUL'S LIFE- see [Was King Saul saved?](#)), 1 Sa 19:19–23.

**Bush** goes on to quote **John Calvin** - "It is said 'the Spirit of God was upon him,' not as if it had begun to inspire him at that particular moment when he cast his eyes upon the camp of Israel; but because it prompted him to look in that direction, in order that the impulse of prophecy might be stronger in him, as respecting a thing actually before his eyes. But after the Spirit had thus

affected his senses, or at any rate had prepared them to be fit instruments for the execution of his office, it then also directed his tongue to prophesy; but in an extraordinary manner, so that a divine majesty shone forth in the sudden change, as if he were transformed into a new man. In a word, 'the Spirit of God was upon him,' showing by manifest token that He was the author of his address, and that Balaam did not speak of his own natural intelligence. To the same intent it is said that 'he took up his parable,' because the character of his address was marked with unusual grandeur and magnificent brilliancy." **Dr. Chalmers** also speaks in a similar vein of this prophecy. "He is made the involuntary instrument of further revelations; and what he now utters when the Spirit of God came upon him, is in the very highest style and strain of lofty inspiration. We cannot fix on any portion of Scripture that bears a nobler or more sustained elevation than these effusions poured forth by Balaam from the mountains, as he looked down on the tents of Israel stretched out in full and far perspective before him."—Bib. Readings in loc. Still the rhetorical or poetical merit of the utterance is comparatively of very little consequence when viewed in relation to its spiritual import.

### **Recall a similar passage earlier in Numbers**

Numbers 11:25-29+ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and **He took of the Spirit** who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And **when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied**. But they did not do it again. 26 But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And **the Spirit rested upon them** (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), **and they prophesied in the camp**. 27 So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them." 29 But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, **that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!**"

Compare also passages like the following in Genesis 20:3

Genesis 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married."

Genesis 31:24 God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad."

In Jeremiah 1:4 we read "Now the word of the LORD came to me saying."

Ostensibly Balaam's experience here was more like that of God's true prophets, who received their message by way of the Spirit without omens, enchantations, etc. Was Balaam a prophet of God? Yes and no (in my opinion). He spoke inspired by the Spirit. He spoke the Words God had placed in his mouth. But he was a diviner and **loved the wages of unrighteousness** (2 Peter 2:15+) and a false teacher (Rev 2:14+). It seems highly unlikely that we will see Balaam in heaven, but we have to be honest and agree that only God knows one's heart! (1 Sa 16:7).

**Jensen** - The discourse itself described by means of many striking figures a prosperous and victorious Israel under the hand of God, blessed for the ages to come. It ended with a reference to the original covenant given to Abraham: "Blessed be every one that blesseth thee, and cursed be every one that curseth thee" (24:9; cf. Gen. 12:3; 27:29). This third discourse, with its almost twenty blessings declared on Israel, was the breaking point for Balak's persistence. His anger kindled, he rebuked Balaam and sent him back to his country. But Balaam, very likely still inspired by the Spirit of God to speak as he had done in his third discourse, had the last word; and so, unsolicited, he recited what Israel would do to Moab and other surrounding nations at a later time (24:14). (Ibid)

**NIVSB** - This unexpected language indicates that God has overpowered the pagan prophet for his own purposes. Cf. note on Jdg 3:9,10.

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### **F B Meyer - Numbers 24:2 The Spirit of God came upon him.**

This is a solemn warning for us all. Balaam said truly, but he perished miserably. He heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty; but because he loved the wages of unrighteousness, and taught Balak to cast the stumbling-block of licentiousness before the children of Israel, he was slain in battle by the people whom he had blamed. He wished to die the death of the righteous, but was overtaken in that of the apostate. How near we may come to the gates of salvation, and yet perish miserably without!

**Distinguish between unction and union** — Hooper, the greatest of English divines, says: "We are not to confuse the grace of union with the grace of unction." It is possible to be united to the Lord Jesus in regeneration, without receiving the endowment of the Holy Spirit for service; and it is possible, like Saul, to be anointed for high office, without being truly regenerate. Official position may be worthily filled, and yet the heart be all awry.

**Distinguish between gift and grace.** — We may be able to speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have the gift of

prayer, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and yet be without love. The most gifted souls are by no means the most gracious. Desire earnestly the greater gifts, if you will; but be very sure that your heart is established with grace.

**Distinguish between vision and realization.** — To see the fair land from afar, as Balaam did, is not enough; we must place our foot down on its soil, and go into it to possess. It is not enough to have an intellectual appreciation of the blessed life and the way to enter it; not enough to extol or proclaim it. We must make it ours by humility and faith.

**Wenham** ([TOTC-Nu](#)) has an excellent summary of the time sequence and Balaam's encounters with God

Nu 22:2-14		<b>DAYS 1-2</b>
	Nu 22:2-6	Introduction
	Nu 22:7-14	Balaam's First Encounter with God
Nu 22:15-35		<b>DAYS 3-4</b>
	Nu 22:15-20	Balaam's Second Encounter
	Nu 22:21-35	Balaam's Third Encounter
		Nu 21:22-23 Donkey sees Angel - 1
		Nu 21:24-25 Donkey sees Angel - 2
		Nu 21:26-35 Donkey sees Angel - 3
Nu 22:36-24:25		<b>DAYS 5-6</b>
	Nu 22:36-40	Introduction
	Nu 22:41-23:12	First Blessing of Israel
	Nu 23:13-26	Second Blessing of Israel
	Nu 23:27-24:25	Third Blessing
		Nu 24:3-9 Blessing #3
		Nu 24:15-19 Blessing #4
		Nu 24:20-24 Three Curses

**Numbers 24:3** He took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened;

BGT Numbers 24:3 καὶ ναλαβ ν τ ν παραβολ ν α το επεν φησ ν Βαλααμ υ ς Βεωρ φησ ν νθρωπος ληθιν ς ρ ν

NET Numbers 24:3 Then he uttered this oracle: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor; the oracle of the man whose eyes are open;

NLT Numbers 24:3 and this is the message he delivered: "This is the message of Balaam son of Beor, the



message of the man whose eyes see clearly,

ESV Numbers 24:3 and he took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,

NIV Numbers 24:3 and he uttered his oracle: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one whose eye sees clearly,

KJV Numbers 24:3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

YLT Numbers 24:3 and he taketh up his simile, and saith: 'An affirmation of Balaam son of Beor -- And an affirmation of the man whose eyes are shut --

LXE Numbers 24:3 And he took up his parable and said, Balaam son of Beor says, the man who sees truly says,

ASV Numbers 24:3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor saith, And the man whose eye was closed saith;

CSB Numbers 24:3 and he proclaimed his poem: The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eyes are opened,

NKJ Numbers 24:3 Then he took up his oracle and said: "The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor, The utterance of the man whose eyes are opened,

NRS Numbers 24:3 and he uttered his oracle, saying: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is clear,

NAB Numbers 24:3 and he gave voice to his oracle: The utterance of Balaam, son of Beor, the utterance of the man whose eye is true,

NJB Numbers 24:3 and he declaimed his poem, as follows: The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor, the prophecy of the man with far-seeing eyes,

GWN Numbers 24:3 and he delivered this message: "This is the message of Balaam, son of Beor. This is the message of the man whose eyesight is clear.

- he took up: Nu 23:7,18
- whose eyes are open hath said: Heb. who had his eyes shut, but now opened, Nu 24:4,16 22:31
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DISCOURSE #3

**He took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor** - The Septuagint translates **discourse** (mashal) with the Greek noun [parabole](#). which is a rhetorical figure of speech, setting one thing beside another to form a comparison or illustration. The word **oracle** ([neum](#)) is used most often of divine utterances and this is the third of some 385 uses of neum in the Bible (first 2 uses - Ge 22:16, Nu 14:28)

**NN** adds on **oracle** - The word נְאוּם (né'um) is an "oracle." It is usually followed by a subjective genitive, indicating the doer of the action. The word could be rendered "says," but this translation is more specific.

**Bush** on **oracle** - The term is applied for the most part to divine oracles or declarations, which are "faithful sayings," worthy of all confidence and acceptance. It is of very emphatic import, and its use in this [exordium](#) is no doubt to be referred to the Spirit who spoke through Balaam, and thus put a seal upon the prophecy as a truly divine revelation. The Most High was greatly magnified in thus ratifying His blessing upon His people through Balaam, a sorcerer and corrupt prophet who fain (gladly, willingly) would have cursed them. And this circumstance, tending so much to the divine glory, Balaam himself is made an instrument of proclaiming!!! He is virtually made to say, "Even the man whose power to curse was so much relied on, and who leaned so strongly to compliance with Balak's suit—even he must and will affirm it, and vigorously stand to it, that Israel shall be blessed." The language of David, 2 Sa 23:1-2, is strikingly analogous, as the same word which occurs there also conveys clearly the intimation that what he said is not said from himself, but from the inspiration of the Lord's Spirit, though uttered by his organs. "*Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue."*

**Discourse** ([04912](#))([mashal](#)) from the verb **mashal** - to rule e.g., Ge 1:18 or more generally indicates idea of

comparison, likeness) usually conveys the meaning of a wise saying, but in two occurrences of the connotation of **parable** or **allegory** (as defined above) is clearly evident (viz. Ezek 17:2ff = a parable centering on two eagles, Ezek 17:12 representing Babylon and Ezek 17:15 representing Egypt, as well as centering on a vine Ezek 17:6), both in indictments against Israel for her sin. In Nu 23: 7, 18, 24:3ff. **mashal** refers not to a popular or common saying but to Balaam's prophetic oracles (the first 7 uses in Scripture). In Isa 14:4 the context is after Israel's return to the land and the song is one of contempt or taunting (mashal) directed at the king of Babylon. A proverb is a truth expressed in brief and striking words, like "Pride cometh before a fall." **John Phillips** noting that the root verb means **to rule** says "**Mashal** therefore are words and sayings that are supposed to rule and govern life. The book of Proverbs then is not simply a collection of bits of human wisdom. It contains God's rules." (Proverbs Commentary)

**UBS** - The Hebrew term for **discourse** is mashal, which normally refers to a brief proverb, wisdom saying, artistically structured poetic expression (formulated in parallelisms; see 1 Kgs 4:32). It can also refer to a longer discourse (see Job 27:1). Here in Num 23–24 it may be rendered "prophecy," "oracle," or "oracle speech

**Mashal** - 40v - Num. 23:7; Num. 23:18; Num. 24:3; Num. 24:15; Num. 24:20; Num. 24:21; Num. 24:23; Deut. 28:37; 1 Sam. 10:12; 1 Sam. 24:13; 1 Ki. 4:32; 1 Ki. 9:7; 2 Chr. 7:20; Job 13:12; Job 27:1; Job 29:1; Ps. 44:14; Ps. 49:4; Ps. 69:11; Ps. 78:2; Prov. 1:1; Prov. 1:6; Prov. 10:1; Prov. 25:1; Prov. 26:7; Prov. 26:9; Eccl. 12:9; Isa. 14:4; Jer. 24:9; Ezek. 12:22; Ezek. 12:23; Ezek. 14:8; Ezek. 17:2; Ezek. 18:2; Ezek. 18:3; Ezek. 20:49; Ezek. 24:3; Joel 2:17; Mic. 2:4; Hab. 2:6

**And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened- Opened** = LXX reads true ("the man who sees clearly declares") ; Vulgate reads closed The Spirit of God is upon him and has opened his spiritual eyes to see into the future. While some read the verb as shut rather than opened, the context of one "who sees the vision" and "having his eyes uncovered" (Nu 24:4) would suggest open is reasonable. Alternatively, if he were asleep (or in a trance) he could be seeing in a vision even though his eyes were shut. It is a moot point because the fact is Balaam's "saw" things which were prophecies that have come to pass or are yet future and will come to pass.

**NN** - The Greek version reads "the one who sees truly." The word has been interpreted in both ways, "shut" or "open." (ED: shut or closed is used only in YLT and ASV - KJV and most modern translations have **opened** or a synonym).

### **Numbers 24:4 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered,**

BGT Numbers 24:4 φησιν κωων λγια θεο σις ρασιν θεο εδεν ν πν ποκεκαλυμμ νοι ο φθαλμο α το

NET Numbers 24:4 the oracle of the one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, although falling flat on the ground with eyes open:

NLT Numbers 24:4 the message of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who bows down with eyes wide open:

ESV Numbers 24:4 the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered:

NIV Numbers 24:4 the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:

KJV Numbers 24:4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

YLT Numbers 24:4 An affirmation of him who is hearing sayings of God -- Who a vision of the Almighty seeth, Falling -- and eyes uncovered:

LXE Numbers 24:4 he says who hears the oracle of the Mighty One, who saw a vision of God in sleep; his eyes were opened:

ASV Numbers 24:4 He saith, who heareth the words of God, Who seeth the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, and having his eyes open:

CSB Numbers 24:4 the oracle of one who hears the sayings of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls into a trance with his eyes uncovered:

NKJ Numbers 24:4 The utterance of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Who falls down, with eyes wide open:

NRS Numbers 24:4 the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, but with eyes uncovered:

NAB Numbers 24:4 The utterance of one who hears what God says, and knows what the Most High knows, Of one who sees what the Almighty sees, enraptured, and with eyes unveiled:

NJB Numbers 24:4 the prophecy of one who hears the words of God. He sees what Shaddai makes him see, receives the divine answer, and his eyes are opened.

GWN Numbers 24:4 This is the message of the one who hears the words of God, has a vision from the Almighty, and falls into a trance with his eyes open:

- saw: Nu 12:6 Ge 15:12 Ps 89:19 Da 8:26,27 Ac 10:10,19 22:17 2Co 12:1-4
- falling: Nu 22:31 1Sa 19:24 Eze 1:28 Da 8:17,18 10:15,16 Rev 1:10,17
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAAM HEARS WORDS AND SEES VISION OF GOD

**The oracle of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of the Almighty-** Almighty is [Shaddai](#) (see full study of [EL Shaddai - God Almighty](#))

**Bush - He hath said which heard the words of God** Heb. neum, the assured saying,—the same form of expression with that occurring v. 3, and implying a degree of emphasis and asseveration such as pertains to a divine oracle rather than to a human utterance.

**Falling down** - Various rendered = **CSB** = "who falls into a trance" **KJV** = "falling into a trance"; **NET** = "falling flat on the ground"; **NIV** = "falls prostrate." English of Lxx = "saw a vision of God in sleep." "The falling may simply refer to lying prone; and the opened eyes may refer to his receiving a vision." (NN)

**CBC** - Lit., "falls down." Some think this refers to ecstatic trance (Budd 1984:269; Noth 1968:190) or to a state of sleep to receive a dream, as the LXX understands it; however, Milgrom thinks it merely refers to homage to God (Milgrom 1989:203), as the NLT takes it.

**Bush - Falling** (into a trance). The words "into a trance," it will be observed, are supplied in our version, their equivalents not occurring in the original. This gives occasion to a twofold diversity of rendering. One class of expositors, agreeing with our translators, understand it of his falling into a trance-state on the occasion mentioned ch. 22, while on his way to Moab. Another takes the term "falling" as having reference to the frequent effect of the prophetic influx, which was to cause the subjects of it to fall down prostrate to the earth, as was the case with Saul, 1 Sam. 19:24. Compare also Gen. 15:12, Dan. 8:17, 18, Rev. 1:17, Ezek. 1:28, 3:23, 43:3, 44:4.

**Yet having his eyes uncovered** - The Septuagint translates uncovered with [apokalupto](#) which means to reveal as when one takes the lid off and uncovers (so to speak) truth that previously was not known and in so doing to cause it to be fully known, which is a good description of the great prophecies that follow, prophecies that include revelation of the Messiah's coming and future kingdom.

### Numbers 24:5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!

BGT Numbers 24:5 ζ καλο σου ο ο κοι Ιακωβ α σκηνα σου Ισραηλ

NET Numbers 24:5 'How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, and your dwelling places, O Israel!

NLT Numbers 24:5 How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob; how lovely are your homes, O Israel!

ESV Numbers 24:5 How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel!

NIV Numbers 24:5 "How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!

KJV Numbers 24:5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

YLT Numbers 24:5 How good have been thy tents, O Jacob, Thy tabernacles, O Israel;

LXE Numbers 24:5 How goodly are thy habitations, Jacob, and thy tents, Israel!

ASV Numbers 24:5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, Thy tabernacles, O Israel!

CSB Numbers 24:5 How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, your dwellings, Israel.

NKJ Numbers 24:5 "How lovely are your tents, O Jacob! Your dwellings, O Israel!

NRS Numbers 24:5 how fair are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel!

NAB Numbers 24:5 How goodly are your tents, O Jacob; your encampments, O Israel!

NJB Numbers 24:5 How fair your tents are, Jacob, how fair your dwellings, Israel,

GWN Numbers 24:5 How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, and the places where you live, Israel.

- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE BEAUTY OF ISRAEL

**How** - "Here הַ (mah) has an exclamatory sense: "How!" (see Gen 28:17)." (NN) This word introduces this verse as an exclamation of admiration and introduces a section filled with highly poetic language

**Fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!**- ESV = "How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel!" Balaam has just seen the orderly encampment with his own eyes including the central figure, the [Shekinah glory cloud](#) symbolizing the presence of Yahweh! Fair is the Hebrew verb [tob](#) which means to be pleasing, to be favored or to be acceptable. The Greek Lxx is [kalos](#) which means beautiful, handsome, lovely (cf use in Lk 21:5). **Dwelling** is [mishkan](#) which is translated tabernacle 109/129 uses and from Balaam's vantage point now, he would be able to see the central Tabernacle surrounded by all the other tents. In short, Israel's encampment is beautiful because of the presence of the Beautiful One!

**Bush** - How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, etc. Heb. "How good!" but the original term has frequently the import of that good which is recognized in beauty, joy, delight, etc.

**Numbers 24:6 "Like valleys that stretch out, Like gardens beside the river, Like aloes planted by the LORD, Like cedars beside the waters.**

BGT Numbers 24:6 σε ν παι σκι ζουσαι κα σε παρ δεισοι π ποταμ ν κα σε σκηνα ς πηξεν κ ριος σε κ δροι παρ δατα

NET Numbers 24:6 They are like valleys stretched forth, like gardens by the river's side, like aloes that the LORD has planted, and like cedar trees beside the waters.

NLT Numbers 24:6 They spread before me like palm groves, like gardens by the riverside. They are like tall trees planted by the LORD, like cedars beside the waters.

ESV Numbers 24:6 Like palm groves that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the LORD has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters.

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

KJV Numbers 24:6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.

YLT Numbers 24:6 As valleys they have been stretched out, As gardens by a river; As aloes Jehovah hath planted, As cedars by waters;

LXE Numbers 24:6 as shady groves, and as gardens by a river, and as tents which God pitched, and as cedars by the waters.

ASV Numbers 24:6 As valleys are they spread forth, As gardens by the river-side, As lign-aloes which Jehovah hath planted, As cedar-trees beside the waters.

CSB Numbers 24:6 They stretch out like river valleys, like gardens beside a stream, like aloes the LORD has planted, like cedars beside the water.

NKJ Numbers 24:6 Like valleys that stretch out, Like gardens by the riverside, Like aloes planted by the LORD, Like cedars beside the waters.

NRS Numbers 24:6 Like palm groves that stretch far away, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the LORD has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters.

NAB Numbers 24:6 They are like gardens beside a stream, like the cedars planted by the LORD.

NJB Numbers 24:6 like valleys that stretch afar, like gardens by the banks of a river, like aloes planted by Yahweh, like cedars beside the waters!

GWN Numbers 24:6 Your tents spread out like rivers, like gardens by a river, like aloes planted by the LORD, like cedars by the water.

- as gardens: Ge 2:8-10 13:10 Song 4:12-15 6:11 Isa 58:11 Jer 31:12 Joe 3:18
- as the trees: {Ahalim,} "lign-aloe trees." This tree, which grows in the East Indies, is described as being eight or ten feet in height, with a stem the thickness of a man's thigh. At the top grows a large tuft of jagged and thick leaves, thick and indented, broad at the bottom, but growing narrower towards the point, and about four feet in length. The blossoms are red, intermingled with yellow, and double like cloves; from which comes a red and white fruit, of the size of a pea, oblong and triangular, with three apartments filled with seed. The tree has a very beautiful appearance; and a forest of them is said to bear a resemblance to a numerous encampment. Ps 1:3 Jer 17:18
- which the: Ps 104:16 Isa 41:19
- as cedar: Ps 92:12-14 Eze 31:3,4 47:12
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## METAPHORS OF A BLESSED PEOPLE AND LAND

Note four rapid fire [terms of comparison](#), specifically four [similes](#). Ask the Spirit of Truth to open the eyes of your heart to what each of these [similes](#) might be describing about the land of Israel. Stay within the bounds of your "sanctified imagination" and don't go too far off. You will be blessed as you meditate before reading any commentaries.

**Like valleys that stretch out** - Literally "as valleys they spread forth." Valleys could be "palm trees" and so it would be "rows of palms." The Hebrew for valleys (nahalah) refers to streams or rivers including wadis that turn into raging torrents in rainy season. The picture is of lush and the Lxx actually translates it with pale which is a wooded valley overshadowing or covering (Lxx skiazo - used of [Shekinah glory cloud](#) covering the tabernacle - Nu 9:18).

**Like gardens beside the river, Like aloes planted by the LORD Like cedars beside the waters**- These are poetic prophecies of a prosperous nation. The Lxx for **gardens** is the word paradeisos which is from an Old Persian word (pairidaēza) for garden; park, paradise. It was the word used to describe the Garden of Eden (Ge 3:1-3+).

**NN** - The language seems to be more poetic than precise. N. H. Snaith notes that cedars do not grow beside water; he also connects "aloes" to the eaglewood that is more exotic, and capable of giving off an aroma (Leviticus and Numbers [NCB], 298).

**Bush- As the valleys are they spread forth.** The sentiment contained in the preceding verse is here farther amplified; the loveliness of the tents of Israel being exhibited in a succession of comparisons. First, they are spread out like valleys, implying both length and breadth, and conveying an idea of the large extent of Israel's habitations. The original nahal denotes primarily a brook; then a valley, through which a brook runs. That here the latter meaning is intended, as our translators have taken it, is to be obviously inferred from the following comparisons, in which the tents of Israel are not compared to waters, but to objects by the side of waters, such as gardens, trees, etc. The scenery wrought into the picture is such as would be most charming to an Oriental eye, and such as would stand in most marked contrast with the wild, barren, rocky, and dreary desert through which Israel had passed, and in which they had so long abode. Here the images are those of fertility and beauty, and thus in accordance with the frequent strains of prophecy

**Numbers 24:7 "Water will flow from his buckets, And his seed will be by many waters, And his king shall be higher than Agag, And his kingdom shall be exalted.**

BGT Numbers 24:7 Ξελεσεται νθρωπος κ το σπρματος ατο κα κυριεσει θν ν πολλν κα ψωθσεται  
Γωγ βασιλεαατο κα αξηθσεται βασιλεαατο

NET Numbers 24:7 He will pour the water out of his buckets, and their descendants will be like abundant water; their king will be greater than Agag, and their kingdom will be exalted.

NLT Numbers 24:7 Water will flow from their buckets; their offspring have all they need. Their king will be greater than Agag; their kingdom will be exalted.

ESV Numbers 24:7 Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters; his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

NIV 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.

KJV Numbers 24:7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

YLT Numbers 24:7 He maketh water flow from his buckets, And his seed is in many waters; And higher than Agag is his king, And exalted is his kingdom.

LXE Numbers 24:7 There shall come a man out of his seed, and he shall rule over many nations; and the kingdom of Gog shall be exalted, and his kingdom shall be increased.

ASV Numbers 24:7 Water shall flow from his buckets, And his seed shall be in many waters, And his king shall be higher than Agag, And his kingdom shall be exalted.

CSB Numbers 24:7 Water will flow from his buckets, and his seed will be by abundant water. His king will be greater than Agag, and his kingdom will be exalted.

NKJ Numbers 24:7 He shall pour water from his buckets, And his seed shall be in many waters. "His king shall be higher than Agag, And his kingdom shall be exalted.

NRS Numbers 24:7 Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall have abundant water, his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

NAB Numbers 24:7 His wells shall yield free-flowing waters, he shall have the sea within reach; His king shall rise higher than.... and his royalty shall be exalted.

NJB Numbers 24:7 A hero arises from their stock, he reigns over countless peoples. His king is greater than Agag, and his kingship held in honour.

GWN Numbers 24:7 Water will flow from their buckets, and their crops will have plenty of water. Their king will be greater than Agag, and their kingdom will be considered the best.

- pour: Ps 68:26 Pr 5:16-18 Isa 48:1
- many waters: Ps 93:3,4 Jer 51:13 Rev 17:1,15
- his king: Ezr 4:20 Ps 2:6-10 18:43 Joh 1:49 Php 2:10,11 Rev 19:16
- Agag: 1Sa 15:8,9,32,33
- his kingdom: 2Sa 5:12 1Ki 4:21 1Ch 14:2 Isa 2:2 9:7 Da 2:44 Rev 11:15
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Water will flow from his buckets, And his seed will be by many waters** - Water was like "gold" in the arid middle east and here Israel is described as having an abundance.

**NN** - "These two lines are difficult, but the general sense is that of irrigation buckets and a well-watered land. The point is that Israel will be prosperous and fruitful."

**Bush** - He shall pour the water out of his buckets. Or, Heb. "Water shall flow out of his buckets." That is, he shall be an instrument and a medium of imparting an abundance of spiritual blessings to others. As thirsty plants or fields are refreshed and fertilized by copious irrigation, so shall the barren moral wastes be beautified. His seed (shall be) in many waters. The primary idea conveyed to the mind of an oriental by this language would probably be very nearly the same with that received from the kindred words of the prophet, Is. 32:20, "Blessed are they that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." "This," says Sir John Chardin, "exactly answers the manner of sowing rice; for they sow it upon the water; and before sowing, while the earth is covered with water, they cause the ground to be trodden by oxen, horses, and asses, who go mid-leg deep; and this is the way of

preparing the ground for sowing.” This then is doubtless the image couched under the letter of the text, but the spirit gives us a richer meaning grafted on the literal sense. The effusion of water, mentioned in the preceding clause, denotes the impartation of that scriptural or doctrinal truth which goes to prepare the mind for a fructifying process, as water which irrigates and saturates the earth prepares it for bringing forth an abundant crop of the grain sown. The “seed in many waters,” or the seed-corn sown in moist, watery, and fruitful fields, points to that higher spiritual element which is implanted in the instructed mind, and results in the production of the fruits of a holy life; for fruits are from seeds, and seeds are fruitful in proportion as the ground in which they are sown is well watered. The water and the seeds, therefore, denote different degrees of divine influence.

**And his king shall be higher than Agag** - Israel's king will be greater than Agag, apparently a well known dominant king, probably not the King Agag described in 1 Samuel 15 who got hacked in two by Samuel!

**NN** - "Many commentators see this as a reference to Agag of 1 Sa 15:32–33, the Amalekite king slain by Samuel, for that is the one we know. But that is by no means clear, for this text does not identify this Agag. If it is that king, then this poem, or this line in this poem, would have to be later, unless one were to try to argue for a specific prophecy. Whoever this Agag is, he is a symbol of power."

**Bush** - And his king shall be higher than Agag. Our divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is undoubtedly here intended to be designated, by the spirit of prophecy, under the title of “his king.” Of him it is said, Ps. 89:27, that “he is higher than the kings of the earth;” and one of these kings, or perhaps rather a line of kings, is here specified under the name of “Agag.” This was the name of the king of the Amalekites, who were subdued by Saul, king of Israel, 1 Sam. 15:8. But it is supposed that the name was common to the Amalekite kings, like Pharaoh in Egypt, Abimelech in Philistia, and Cesar in Rome. The nation of the Amalekites was at this time powerful and formidable, as may be inferred from their bold assault upon a people so numerous as the Israelites, and from the declaration, v. 20, that they were “the first of the nations.” This was probably the reason why they were specified in preference to any other. He announces that the King of Israel should be the greatest of kings, inasmuch as no greater than Agag was then known.

**And his kingdom shall be exalted** - This goes from the human kings of Israel (Saul, David, Solomon, et al) but when compared with the passages below that speak of a **star** with a **scepter** undoubtedly are Messianic and predictive of Jesus Christ, the King of kings over the exalted kingdom.

Isaiah 2:2+ Now it will come about that **In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills;** And all the nations will stream to it.

Daniel 2:44+ “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up **a kingdom which will never be destroyed,** and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

Revelation 11:15+ Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.**”

**Numbers 24:8 "God brings him out of Egypt, He is for him like the horns of the wild ox. He will devour the nations who are his adversaries, And will crush their bones in pieces, And shatter them with his arrows.**

BGT Numbers 24:8 θες δ̄ γησεν ατν ξα γ̄ ππου ς δ̄ ξα μονοκρωτος ατ̄ δεται θνη χθρ ν ατο κατ̄ π̄ χη ατν κμυελιε κατα ς βολσιν ατο κατατοξεσει χθρ ν

NET Numbers 24:8 God brought them out of Egypt. They have, as it were, the strength of a young bull; they will devour hostile people and will break their bones and will pierce them through with arrows.

NLT Numbers 24:8 God brought them out of Egypt; for them he is as strong as a wild ox. He devours all the nations that oppose him, breaking their bones in pieces, shooting them with arrows.

ESV Numbers 24:8 God brings him out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them through with his arrows.

NIV 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.

KJV Numbers 24:8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.

YLT Numbers 24:8 God is bringing him out of Egypt; As the swiftness of a Reem is to him, He eateth up nations his adversaries, And their bones he breaketh, And with his arrows he smiteth,

LXE Numbers 24:8 God led him out of Egypt; he has as it were the glory of a unicorn: he shall consume the nations of his enemies, and he shall drain their marrow, and with his darts he shall shoot through the enemy.

ASV Numbers 24:8 God bringeth him forth out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox: He shall eat up the nations his adversaries, And shall break their bones in pieces, And smite them through with his arrows.

CSB Numbers 24:8 God brought him out of Egypt; He is like the horns of a wild ox for them. He will feed on enemy nations and gnaw their bones; he will strike them with his arrows.

NKJ Numbers 24:8 "God brings him out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox; He shall consume the nations, his enemies; He shall break their bones And pierce them with his arrows.

NRS Numbers 24:8 God who brings him out of Egypt, is like the horns of a wild ox for him; he shall devour the nations that are his foes and break their bones. He shall strike with his arrows.

NAB Numbers 24:8 It is God who brought him out of Egypt, a wild bull of towering might. He shall devour the nations like grass, their bones he shall strip bare.

NJB Numbers 24:8 God has brought him out of Egypt, is like the wild ox's horns to him. He devours the corpses of his enemies, breaking their bones, piercing them with his arrows.

GWN Numbers 24:8 The God who brought them out of Egypt has the strength of a wild bull. He will devour nations that are his enemies, crush their bones, and pierce them with arrows.

- God: Nu 21:5 Nu 23:22
- shall eat: Nu 14:9 23:24 De 7:1
- break: Ps 2:9 Isa 38:13 Jer 50:17 Da 6:24
- pierce: De 32:23,42 Ps 21:12 45:5 Jer 50:9
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PROPHECIES BALAK DOES NOT WANT TO HEAR

**God brings him out of Egypt, He is for him like the horns of the wild ox**- God was Israel's powerful covenant Defender. This repeats Nu 23:22 - "God brings them out of Egypt, He is for them like the horns of the wild ox." The comparison to **horns of the wild ox** gives a reason for the previous intimation (**his kingdom shall be exalted**) respecting the final victory of Israel.

**Bush** - These words are here repeated from Nu 23:22, and as it was the Most High himself, their divine vindicator, guide, and king, who with a strong arm brought them forth out of Egypt, so that same God would make them victorious over all their enemies, so that consequently every form of opposition would be vain. This would constitute an appeal to Balak to halt in the dangerous path in which he was treading.

**He will devour the nations who are his adversaries**- This was to soon be fulfilled in part by Joshua as Israel conquered the promised land but will one day (SOON) be fully fulfilled when Messiah returns **to devour the nations** who are His and Israel's **adversaries!** "It implies such an effectual weakening of their forces and resources that they should never be able to recover." (Bush)

**And will crush their bones in pieces, And shatter them with his arrows** - God will make good on His promise to give Israel the land of the Canaanites, not just in Joshua's day but in the greater Joshua's day when Messiah will reign over the land as King of kings and Lord of lords. The verbs crush and shatter recall the prophecy of Daniel of the Stone, the Messiah who would return and crush His enemies and all of Israel's enemies...

"You continued looking until a **STONE** was cut out without hands, and it **struck the statue** on its feet of iron and clay **and crushed them**. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were **crushed all at the same time** and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the **STONE** that **struck the statue** became a great mountain (= KINGDOM) and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:34-35+)

**Numbers 24:9 "He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him? Blessed is everyone who blesses**



BGT Numbers 24:9 κατακλιθε ς νεπα σατο ς λων κα ς σκ μνος τς ναστ σει α τν ο ε λογο ντ ς σε ε λ γηνται κα ο καταρ μενο σε κεκατ ρανται

NET Numbers 24:9 They crouch and lie down like a lion, and as a lioness, who can stir him? Blessed is the one who blesses you, and cursed is the one who curses you!"

NLT Numbers 24:9 Like a lion, Israel crouches and lies down; like a lioness, who dares to arouse her? Blessed is everyone who blesses you, O Israel, and cursed is everyone who curses you."

ESV Numbers 24:9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you."

NIV Numbers 24:9 Like a lion they crouch and lie down, like a lioness--who dares to rouse them? "May those who bless you be blessed and those who curse you be cursed!"

KJV Numbers 24:9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

YLT Numbers 24:9 He hath bent, he hath lain down as a lion, And as a lioness: who doth raise him up? He who is blessing thee is blessed, And he who is cursing thee is cursed.'

LXE Numbers 24:9 He lay down, he rested as a lion, and as a young lion; who shall stir him up? they that bless thee are blessed, and they that curse thee are cursed.

ASV Numbers 24:9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up? Blessed be every one that blesseth thee, And cursed be every one that curseth thee.

CSB Numbers 24:9 He crouches, he lies down like a lion or a lioness-- who dares to rouse him? Those who bless you will be blessed, and those who curse you will be cursed.

NKJ Numbers 24:9 `He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?' "Blessed is he who blesses you, And cursed is he who curses you."

NRS Numbers 24:9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed is everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone who curses you."

NAB Numbers 24:9 He lies crouching like a lion, or like a lioness; who shall arouse him? Blessed is he who blesses you, and cursed is he who curses you!

NJB Numbers 24:9 He has crouched, he has lain down, like a lion, like a lioness; who dare rouse him? Blessed be those who bless you, and accursed be those who curse you!

GWN Numbers 24:9 His people lie down and rest like a lion. They are like a lioness. Who dares to disturb them? Those who bless you will be blessed! Those who curse you will be cursed!"

- couched: Ge 49:9 Job 38:39,40
- who shall: Nu 23:24 Job 41:10 Ps 2:12
- Blessed: Ge 12:3 27:29 Ps 122:6 Mt 25:40,45 Ac 9:5
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD BLESSES THOSE WHO BLESS ISRAEL

**He couches, he lies down as a lion** - NLT = "Like a lion, Israel crouches and lies down." (See also Nu 23:24)

**Bush** - This verse, as well as Nu 23:24, refers primarily to the entire course of conquest of Israel over their enemies the Canaanites, and their subsequent perfect and quiet possession of the land promised

**And as a lion, who dares rouse him?** - NET = "and as a lioness, who can stir him?" NLT = "like a lioness, who dares to arouse her?" NIV = "like a lioness--who dares to rouse them?"

Do these passages about a lion sound familiar? They should for they were part of the Messianic prophecy by Jacob...

Genesis 49:9-10 "Judah is a **lion's** whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. **Hecouches**, he **lies**

**down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up?** "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

And so we see that again after over 450 years, the words are applied to the future king from the house of Jacob.

**Blessed is everyone who blesses you, And cursed is everyone who curses you**- Balaam repeats Yahweh's prophetic promise to Abram in Genesis 12:3+ "And **I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse.** And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

**Bush** - It is observable that the Lord here puts into the mouth of Balaam the same language with that which Isaac applies to Jacob in closing his benediction, Gen. 27:29, and with which also God crowns Abraham, the father of the faithful, Gen. 12:3. The Lord herein confirms the assurance of his favor to the righteous and their seed forever, and gives them to understand how profound and permanent shall be the peace

**Hobbs** - **Blessed** is [barak](#), which means "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity." **Cursed** translates ['arar](#), which means "to bind with a spell, hem in with obstacles, render powerless to resist." These words of verse 9b are fulfilled in responses to Jesus. People's responses to Him determine whether they receive eternal life or condemnation (John 3:17-21). Ironically, Balaam himself was cursed. He was compelled by the God's Spirit to bless Israel with his words, but he later led Israel into sin and was punished for his sin. The biblical account of Balak and Balaam shows how God turns the evil intentions of enemies into blessings for His people. It also shows us that while we do not need a king in our republic, we do need a King in our lives. Only such a King can work all things together for good to them that love Him (Rom. 8:28).

The responses of people to this King  
would determine whether the people themselves would be **blessed** or **cursed**  
-- Herschel Hobbs

**Numbers 24:10 Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!**

BGT Numbers 24:10 κα θυμθη Βαλακ π Βαλααμ κα συνεκρησεν τα ς χερσ ν α το κα επεν Βαλακ πρ ς Βαλααμ καταρσθαι τ ν χθρ ν μου κ κληκ σε κα δο ε λογ ν ε λ γησας τρ τον το το

NET Numbers 24:10 Then Balak became very angry at Balaam, and he struck his hands together. Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have done nothing but bless them these three times!

NLT Numbers 24:10 King Balak flew into a rage against Balaam. He angrily clapped his hands and shouted, "I called you to curse my enemies! Instead, you have blessed them three times.

ESV Numbers 24:10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them these three times.

NIV Numbers 24:10 Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to him, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them these three times.

KJV Numbers 24:10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.

YLT Numbers 24:10 And the anger of Balak burneth against Balaam, and he striketh his hands; and Balak saith unto Balaam, 'To pierce mine enemies I called thee, and lo, thou hast certainly blessed -- these three times;

LXE Numbers 24:10 And Balac was angry with Balaam, and clapped his hands together; and Balac said to Balaam, I called thee to curse my enemy, and behold thou hast decidedly blessed him this third time.

ASV Numbers 24:10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.

CSB Numbers 24:10 Then Balak became furious with Balaam, struck his hands together, and said to him, "I

summoned you to put a curse on my enemies, but instead, you have blessed them these three times.

NKJ Numbers 24:10 Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times!

NRS Numbers 24:10 Then Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. Balak said to Balaam, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, but instead you have blessed them these three times.

NAB Numbers 24:10 Balak beat his palms together in a blaze of anger at Balaam and said to him, "It was to curse my foes that I summoned you here; yet three times now you have even blessed them instead!

NJB Numbers 24:10 Balak flew into a rage with Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to Balaam, 'I brought you to curse my enemies, and you have insisted on blessing them three times over!

GWN Numbers 24:10 Balak became angry with Balaam. He clapped his hands and said, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, and now you have blessed them three times.

- he smote: Job 27:23 Eze 21:14,17 22:13
- I called: Nu 22:6,11,17 23:11 De 23:4,5 Jos 24:9,10 Ne 13:2
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAK IS FURIOUS AT BALAAM'S TRIPLE BLESSING

**Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together** - Heb. "Clapped the palms of his hands"—a token of indignation, and at the same time of contempt (Lev 14:26, Lam 2:15). It is surprising that Balak did not kill Balaam at that moment.

**Bush** - And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam. This unexpected termination of the affair exhausted the last remains of the patience of Balak, and led to mutual recriminations between himself and the hireling prophet. His predictions on this occasion had the air of a voluntary benediction pronounced upon a hated people, and nothing is so repugnant to the feelings of wicked men as the assured prosperity of the righteous.

**And Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!** - Bush comments "He proceeds to charge Balaam with putting upon him a base affront and an intolerable cheat. Though he had called the prophet to curse his enemies, yet he had virtually shown himself in league with them, although by his altars, and sacrifices, and other rites, he had made him believe that he would certainly curse them; instead of which he had three times blessed them, and that too in a very plenary and emphatic manner."

**Seth Postell** compares the donkey with Balaam - Typically, a donkey is not reliable for spiritual guidance nor would its words be dependable even if it could speak. But if God opens the donkey's mouth, its words are trustworthy regardless of the mouthpiece. Similarly, when Balaam finally arrives to do Balak's bidding, Balak tries to force Balaam to curse Israel three times, just as Balaam had tried to force the donkey to go around the angel three times. In spite of Balak's pleas, Balaam blesses them (Nu 22:41–23:12; 23:13–26; 23:27–24:9). In his exasperation, Balak's words to Balaam echo Balaam's earlier frustration with his donkey.

Numbers 24:10 Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!	Nu 22:28-29 And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" 29 Then Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now."
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The parallels between the two stories suggest that Balak, like Balaam in the earlier narrative, blindly and perilously attempted to go against the Lord. And Balaam, like the donkey in the earlier narrative, supernaturally spoke the words God put in his mouth (Nm 22:28; 23:5, 16). Typically, the discourses of a wicked pagan enchanter are unreliable, but if God puts words in his mouth, those words are trustworthy regardless of the mouthpiece. Balaam is God's donkey! ([The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy](#) -

**Numbers 24:11 "Therefore, flee to your place now. I said I would honor you greatly, but behold, the LORD has held you back from honor."**

BGT Numbers 24:11 ν ν ο ν φ ε γ ε ς τ ν τ π ο ν σου ε πα τι μ σω σε κα ν ν σ τ ρ η σ ν σε κ ρ ι ο ς τ ς ὀ ξ η ς

NET Numbers 24:11 So now, go back where you came from! I said that I would greatly honor you; but now the LORD has stood in the way of your honor."

NLT Numbers 24:11 Now get out of here! Go back home! I promised to reward you richly, but the LORD has kept you from your reward."

ESV Numbers 24:11 Therefore now flee to your own place. I said, 'I will certainly honor you,' but the LORD has held you back from honor."

NIV Numbers 24:11 Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the LORD has kept you from being rewarded."

KJV Numbers 24:11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.

YLT Numbers 24:11 and now, flee for thyself unto thy place; I have said, I do greatly honour thee, and lo, Jehovah hath kept thee back from honour.'

LXE Numbers 24:11 Now therefore flee to thy place: I said, I will honour thee, but now the Lord has deprived thee of glory.

ASV Numbers 24:11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, Jehovah hath kept thee back from honor.

CSB Numbers 24:11 Now go to your home! I said I would reward you richly, but look, the LORD has denied you a reward."

NKJ Numbers 24:11 "Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the LORD has kept you back from honor."

NRS Numbers 24:11 Now be off with you! Go home! I said, 'I will reward you richly,' but the LORD has denied you any reward."

NAB Numbers 24:11 Be off at once, then, to your home. I promised to reward you richly, but the LORD has withheld the reward from you!"

NJB Numbers 24:11 So now go home as fast as your legs can carry you. I promised to load you with honours. Yahweh himself has deprived you of them.'

GWN Numbers 24:11 Get out of here! Go home! I said I'd reward you richly, but the LORD has made you lose your reward."

- I thought: Nu 22:17,37
- the Lord: Mt 19:28-30 Ac 8:20 Php 3:8 Heb 11:24-26 1Pe 5:2,3 2Jn 1:8
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NO HONOR FOR BLESSING ISRAEL

**Therefore, flee to your place now.** - Lxx has **flee**, [pheugo](#), in the [present imperative](#), keeping fleeing! Not a happy camper! Balak is frustrated and denounces Balaam. He commands Balaam "Get out of town, for you are a prophet of loss (pun intended) not of gain!"

**I said I would honor you greatly, but behold, the LORD has held you back from honor** - NLT = "I promised to reward you richly, but the LORD has kept you from your reward." Balak's theology is not far off, for indeed YAHWEH has not allowed Balaam to be honored by this pagan king who was ready to honor him if he cursed Israel.

Bush - The God with whom you profess to be so familiar, and to whom you render such a dutiful obedience, has now rewarded you

as you might have expected. He has deprived you of the best post in my court for the service you have done him. Thus it is that they who appear to be losers by obeying God rather than man, are apt to be rebuked by the worldly-minded as having foolishly thrown away the highest proffered advantages. We cannot, indeed, say much for the motives by which Balaam was governed in yielding compliance to the Divine impulse, but we can still affirm, that if he had been voluntary and sincere in his obedience, whatever honor he lost thereby at the hands of Balak, it would have been more than made up to him by that remunerating Providence which never forgets its own promises to those who devoutly trust in it.

The wicked earns deceptive wages,  
But he who sows righteousness gets a true reward.  
-- Proverbs 11:18

### **Numbers 24:12 Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell your messengers whom you had sent to me, saying,**

BGT Numbers 24:12 κα ε πεν Βαλααμ πρ ς Βαλακ ο χ κα το ς γγ λοις σου ο ς π στειλας πρ ς με λ λησα λ γων

NET Numbers 24:12 Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also tell your messengers whom you sent to me,

NLT Numbers 24:12 Balaam told Balak, "Don't you remember what I told your messengers? I said,

ESV Numbers 24:12 And Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me,

NIV Numbers 24:12 Balaam answered Balak, "Did I not tell the messengers you sent me,

KJV Numbers 24:12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying,

YLT Numbers 24:12 And Balaam saith unto Balak, 'Did I not also unto thy messengers whom thou hast sent unto me, speak, saying,

LXE Numbers 24:12 And Balaam said to Balac, Did I not speak to thy messengers also whom thou sentest to me, saying,

ASV Numbers 24:12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers that thou sentest unto me, saying,

CSB Numbers 24:12 Balaam answered Balak, "Didn't I previously tell the messengers you sent me:

NKJ Numbers 24:12 So Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying,

NRS Numbers 24:12 And Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me,

NAB Numbers 24:12 Balaam replied to Balak, "Did I not warn the very messengers whom you sent to me,

NJB Numbers 24:12 Balaam retorted to Balak, 'Did I not tell the messengers you sent me,

GWN Numbers 24:12 Balaam answered Balak, "I told the messengers you sent me,

- Nu 22:18,38
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BALAAM REMINDS BALAK**

**Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell your messengers whom you had sent to me, saying** - Balaam is simply reminding Balak of what he had told him in Numbers 22:18; "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God." and Numbers 22:38 " "Behold, I have come now to you! Am I able to speak anything at all? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak."

**Bush** - Balaam makes the best of his case in vindicating himself from the charges alleged against him. He excuses the disappointment by referring to the restraining and constraining power of the Most High, who had irresistibly controlled his utterance. He pleads, moreover, that he could not be charged with deception, inasmuch as he had told him from the outset what he must depend upon. He had forewarned him of the contingency which had now actually occurred, and therefore it would be unjust to lay

upon him the blame of what he could not help, of an inability which he had expressly announced as possible.

**Numbers 24:13 'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the LORD speaks, that I will speak'?**

BGT Numbers 24:13 ν μοι δ Βαλακ πλ ρη τ ν ο κον α το ρ γυρ ου κα χρυσ ου ο δυν σομαι παραβ ναι τ μα κυρ ου ποι σαι α τ πονηρ ν καλ ν παρ μαυτο σα ν ε π θε ς τα τα ρ

NET Numbers 24:13 'If Balak would give me his palace full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD to do either good or evil of my own will, but whatever the LORD tells me I must speak'?

NLT Numbers 24:13 'Even if Balak were to give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I would be powerless to do anything against the will of the LORD.' I told you that I could say only what the LORD says!

ESV Numbers 24:13 'If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will. What the LORD speaks, that will I speak'?

NIV Numbers 24:13 'Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I could not do anything of my own accord, good or bad, to go beyond the command of the LORD--and I must say only what the LORD says'?

KJV Numbers 24:13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak?

YLT Numbers 24:13 If Balak doth give to me the fulness of his house of silver and gold, I am not able to pass over the command of Jehovah, to do good or evil of mine own heart -- that which Jehovah speaketh -- it I speak?

LXE Numbers 24:13 If Balac should give me his house full of silver and gold, I shall not be able to transgress the word of the Lord to make it good or bad by myself; whatsoever things God shall say, them will I speak.

ASV Numbers 24:13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; what Jehovah speaketh, that will I speak?

CSB Numbers 24:13 If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the LORD's command, to do anything good or bad of my own will? I will say whatever the LORD says.

NKJ Numbers 24:13 `If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD, to do good or bad of my own will. What the LORD says, that I must speak '?

NRS Numbers 24:13 'If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will; what the LORD says, that is what I will say'?

NAB Numbers 24:13 'Even if Balak gave me his house full of silver and gold, I could not of my own accord to anything, good or evil, contrary to the command of the LORD'? Whatever the LORD says I must repeat.

NJB Numbers 24:13 "Even if Balak gave me his house full of gold and silver I could not go against Yahweh's order and do anything of my own accord, whether for good or ill; whatever Yahweh says is what I shall say"?

GWN Numbers 24:13 'Even if Balak would give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I couldn't disobey the LORD's command no matter how good or bad the request might seem to me. I must say only what the LORD says.'

- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **BALAAM REITERATES ONLY THE WORDS OF YAHWEH**

**Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary**(Lit "I am not able to go beyond") **to the command** (Lit - "mouth") **of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord** (Lit - "from my heart.") - NET = "I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD to do either good or evil of my own wil." Balaam essentially repeats Nu 22:18 to

Balak.

Bush - I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord. Heb. "Beyond the mouth of the Lord." Gr. "Cannot transgress the word of the Lord;" implying not only the divine decree, but the divine dictate within the prophet's bosom, which he would fain have suppressed if he could. But he indicates that he was bound by the power of the Spirit to declare, even against his own will, whatever revelation he received. To do **either good or bad, of my own accord** (Lit - "from my heart.") The word "heart" is here contrasted with the operation of the Lord's Spirit, as impostors are said to speak "out of their own heart," when they falsely use the name of God to cover their own inventions. Being under a divine prompting, he did not feel at liberty to speak "of his own heart."

**What the LORD speaks, that I will speak** - NET = "whatever the LORD tells me I must speak' Here Balaam states what he had said in Nu 22:38 = "m I able to speak anything at all? **The word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak**"

**Numbers 24:14 "And now, behold, I am going to my people; come, and I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the days to come."**

BGT Numbers 24:14 κα ν ν δο ποτρ χω ε ς τ ν τ πον μου δε ρο συμβουλε σω σοι τ ποι σει λα ς ο το ς τ ν λα ν σου π σχ του τ ν μερ ν

NET Numbers 24:14 And now, I am about to go back to my own people. Come now, and I will advise you as to what this people will do to your people in the future."

NLT Numbers 24:14 Now I am returning to my own people. But first let me tell you what the Israelites will do to your people in the future."

ESV Numbers 24:14 And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days."

NIV Numbers 24:14 Now I am going back to my people, but come, let me warn you of what this people will do to your people in days to come."

KJV Numbers 24:14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

YLT Numbers 24:14 and, now, lo, I am going to my people; come, I counsel thee concerning that which this people doth to thy people, in the latter end of the days.'

LXE Numbers 24:14 And now, behold, I return to my place; come, I will advise thee of what this people shall do to thy people in the last days.

ASV Numbers 24:14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

CSB Numbers 24:14 Now I am going back to my people, but first, let me warn you what these people will do to your people in the future."

NKJ Numbers 24:14 "And now, indeed, I am going to my people. Come, I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the latter days."

NRS Numbers 24:14 So now, I am going to my people; let me advise you what this people will do to your people in days to come."

NAB Numbers 24:14 "But now that I am about to go to my own people, let me first warn you what this people will do to your people in the days to come."

NJB Numbers 24:14 Now that I am going back to my own folk, let me warn you what this people will do to your people, in days to come.'

GWN Numbers 24:14 Even though I'm going back to my people, I'll give you some advice. I'll tell you what these people will do to your people in the days to come."

- I will advertise: Nu 24:17 31:7-18 Mic 6:5 Rev 2:10,14
- the latter: Ge 49:1 Isa 24:22 Jer 48:47 49:39 Da 2:28 10:14 Ho 3:5 Ac 2:17 2Ti 3:1
- [Numbers 24:14-25 Skywatch '85: Halley's Comet, or Jacob's Eternal Star](#) - S Lewis Johnson
- [Numbers 24:14-25 Jacob's Awesome Star](#) - S Lewis Johnson

- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PROPHECY FOR THE LATTER DAYS

**And now, behold ([hinneh](#)), I am going to my people** - Balak does not ask for this one! Balaam has a parting salvo for Balak.

**NN** - "The construction is the particle הִנֵּה ([hinneh](#)) suffixed followed by the active participle. This is the *futur instans* use of the participle, to express something that is about to happen: "I am about to go."

**Come, and I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the days to come**(Lit = "in the latter days") - ESV = "I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days." As best we can discern Balaam is still under the influence of the Holy Spirit (cf Nu 24:15 "whose eye is opened") as he speaks these final set of discourses, which is why I personally doubt that it was at this time he gave Balak the counsel of Nu 31:16+.

### Related Resource:

- The Last Days

**Bush** comments advise "inform, usually signifies to counsel, to advise, and some have supposed it was on this occasion that Balaam gave the infamous counsel mentioned Nu 31:16, by which Israel was seduced into a fatal transgression with the Midianitish women....But the weight of evidence is in favor of the present rendering, to wit, that he would inform Balak, in the exercise of his prophetic gift, what the people of Israel should eventually do to the people of Moab, whom, for the present, they were not to disturb, but in respect to whom we learn that in a subsequent age, in the reign of David, the prediction went into accomplishment, 2 Sam. 8:2, "And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts." Again, in Jer. 48:1-47 ("Moab" mentioned 34x in Jeremiah 48), there is an extended prophecy of Moab's destruction, with a promise of the returning of their captivity "in the latter days." (Jer 48:47).

**Guzik** quips - Since Balak was not going to pay Balaam, Balaam would get back at him with a "free" prophecy, one that would show just how blessed Israel will be – both now and in the latter days.

**Jensen** summarizes Nu 24:14-25 - Whereas the third discourse was predominantly positive in describing the blessed state of Israel, the last of Balaam's sayings was predominantly negative with reference to the heathen nations, in that it foretold their ultimate destruction at the hands of the Israelites. Moab would be smitten by a "star" that would come forth out of Jacob, one of the great Old Testament prophecies, heralding in its ultimate fulfillment the coming of Christ. Edom and Seir would also fall. Amalek, the first of nations, would eventually be destroyed. The Kenites, Asshur, and Eber would also see destruction. "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?" (Nu 24:23). Although, as noted earlier, Israel was apparently not aware of Balaam's messages at the time of their delivery, they were to become acquainted with them eventually, since Moses would be incorporating them in the Torah. Balaam's messages therefore were used eventually to instruct the Israelites as to their victorious future in the face of insurmountable opposition.(Ibid)

**Numbers 24:15 He took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,**

BGT Numbers 24:15 καὶ ναλαβ ν τ ν παραβολ ν α το ε πεν φησ ν Βαλααμ υ ς Βεωρ φησ ν νθρωπος ληθιν ς ρ ν

NET Numbers 24:15 Then he uttered this oracle: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor; the oracle of the man whose eyes are open;

NLT Numbers 24:15 This is the message Balaam delivered: "This is the message of Balaam son of Beor, the message of the man whose eyes see clearly,

ESV Numbers 24:15 And he took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,

NIV Numbers 24:15 Then he uttered his oracle: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one whose eye sees clearly,



KJV Numbers 24:15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

YLT Numbers 24:15 And he taketh up his simile, and saith: 'An affirmation of Balaam son of Beor -- And an affirmation of the man whose eyes are shut --

LXE Numbers 24:15 And he took up his parable and said, Balaam the son of Beor says, the man who sees truly says,

ASV Numbers 24:15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor saith, And the man whose eye was closed saith;

CSB Numbers 24:15 Then he proclaimed his poem: The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eyes are opened;

NKJ Numbers 24:15 So he took up his oracle and said: "The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor, And the utterance of the man whose eyes are opened;

NRS Numbers 24:15 So he uttered his oracle, saying: "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is clear,

NAB Numbers 24:15 Then Balaam gave voice to his oracle: The utterance of Balaam, son of Beor, the utterance of the man whose eye is true,

NJB Numbers 24:15 He then declaimed his poem, as follows: The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor, the prophecy of the man with far-seeing eyes,

GWN Numbers 24:15 Then Balaam delivered this message: "This is the message of Balaam, son of Beor. This is the message of the man whose eyesight is clear.

- Nu 24:3,4 23:7,18 Job 27:1 Mt 13:35
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DISCOURSE #4 A MESSIANIC PROPHECY

This last prophecy actually has 4 separate discourses, which give us a total of 7 discourses.

**He took up his discourse and said** - **Discourse** ([04912](#)) see notes above on [mashal](#) (used 7x in Nu 23-24 - Nu 23:7, 18, Nu 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23)

I will open my mouth in a **parable** ([mashal](#)); I will utter dark sayings of old.  
-- Psalm 78:2

**The oracle** ([neum](#)) of Balaam the son of Beor, **And the oracle** ([neum](#)) of the man whose eye is opened - **Eye is opened** is a claim to his being able to see spiritual truth, in this case truth that would apply in part to the future of Moab, Balak's kingdom. The word **oracle** ([neum](#)) is used most often of divine utterances and this is the third of some 385 uses of [neum](#) in the Bible (first 2 uses - Ge 22:16, Nu 14:28)

**NN** adds on **oracle** - The word [נְאֻם](#) ([neum](#)) is an "oracle." It is usually followed by a subjective genitive, indicating the doer of the action. The word could be rendered "says," but this translation is more specific.

**Numbers 24:16 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, And knows the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered.**

BGT Numbers 24:16 κοων λγια θεο πιστμενος πιστμην παρ ψ του κα ρασιν θεο δ v v πν ποκεκαλυμμ νοι ο φθαλμο α το

NET Numbers 24:16 the oracle of the one who hears the words of God, and who knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, although falling flat on the ground with eyes open:

NLT Numbers 24:16 the message of one who hears the words of God, who has knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who bows down with eyes wide open:

ESV Numbers 24:16 the oracle of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered:

NIV Numbers 24:16 the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who has knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:

KJV Numbers 24:16 He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

YLT Numbers 24:16 An affirmation of him who is hearing sayings of God -- And knowing knowledge of the Most High; A vision of the Almighty he seeth, Falling -- and eyes uncovered:

LXE Numbers 24:16 hearing the oracles of God, receiving knowledge from the Most High, and having seen a vision of God in sleep; his eyes were opened.

ASV Numbers 24:16 He saith, who heareth the words of God, And knoweth the knowledge of the Most High, Who seeth the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, and having his eyes open:

CSB Numbers 24:16 the oracle of one who hears the sayings of God and has knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls into a trance with his eyes uncovered:

NKJ Numbers 24:16 The utterance of him who hears the words of God, And has the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Who falls down, with eyes wide open:

NRS Numbers 24:16 the oracle of one who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, but with his eyes uncovered:

NAB Numbers 24:16 The utterance of one who hears what God says, and knows what the Most High knows, Of one who sees what the Almighty sees, enraptured and with eyes unveiled.

NJB Numbers 24:16 the prophecy of one who hears the words of God, of one who knows the knowledge of the Most High. He sees what Shaddai makes him see, receives the divine answer, and his eyes are opened.

GWN Numbers 24:16 This is the message of the one who hears the words of God, receives knowledge from the Most High, has a vision from the Almighty, and falls into a trance with his eyes open:

- Nu 24:4 2Sa 23:1,2 1Co 8:1 13:2
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The oracle of him who hears the words of God, And knows ([yada](#) - intimately knows) the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty** - In Nu 24:15 Balaam's eye is opened and now it is his ear. Balaam is claiming supernatural insight and knowledge (**knowledge of the Most High**) from Yahweh. Note that in this single verse this pagan prophet/diviner/false teacher (Rev 2:14+, Jude 1:11+) amazingly mentions three great names of Yahweh - [Elohim: My Creator](#); [El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All](#); [Shaddai - Almighty](#)

**Falling down yet having his eyes uncovered** - This suggest though prostrate, he still has spiritual vision and what a vision he has! The Septuagint translates with the noun hupno which means sleep.

**Numbers 24:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.**

BGT Numbers 24:17 δε ξω α τ κα ο χ ν ν μακαρ ζω κα ο κ γγ ζει νατελε στρον ξ Ιακωβ κα ναστ σετα νθρωπος ξ Ισραηλ κα θρα σει το ς ρχηγο ς Μωαβ κα προνομε σει π τας υ ο ς Σηθ

NET Numbers 24:17 'I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not close at hand. A star will march forth out of Jacob, and a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the skulls of Moab, and the heads of all the sons of Sheth.

NLT Numbers 24:17 I see him, but not here and now. I perceive him, but far in the distant future. A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel. It will crush the foreheads of Moab's people, cracking the skulls of the people of Sheth.

ESV Numbers 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a

scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.

NIV Numbers 24:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.

KJV Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

YLT Numbers 24:17 I see it, but not now; I behold it, but not near; A star hath proceeded from Jacob, And a sceptre hath risen from Israel, And hath smitten corners of Moab, And hath destroyed all sons of Sheth.

LXE Numbers 24:17 I will point to him, but not now; I bless him, but he draws not near: a star shall rise out of Jacob, a man shall spring out of Israel; and shall crush the princes of Moab, and shall spoil all the sons of Seth.

ASV Numbers 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh: There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, And shall smite through the corners of Moab, And break down all the sons of tumult.

CSB Numbers 24:17 I see him, but not now; I perceive him, but not near. A star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel. He will smash the forehead of Moab and strike down all the Shethites.

NKJ Numbers 24:17 "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.

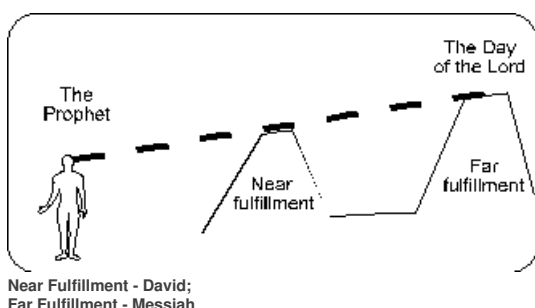
NRS Numbers 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near-- a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites.

NAB Numbers 24:17 I see him, though not now; I behold him, though not near: A star shall advance from Jacob, and a staff shall rise from Israel, That shall smite the brows of Moab, and the skulls of all the Shuthites,

NJB Numbers 24:17 I see him -- but not in the present. I perceive him -- but not close at hand: a star is emerging from Jacob, a sceptre is rising from Israel, to strike the brow of Moab, the skulls of all the children of Seth.

GWN Numbers 24:17 I see someone who is not here now. I look at someone who is not nearby. A star will come from Jacob. A scepter will rise from Israel. He will crush the heads of the Moabites and destroy all the people of Sheth.

- **I shall see him:** The marginal references will direct the reader to the fulfilment of these remarkable prophecies. Job 19:25-27 Zec 12:10 Jude 1:11,14,15 Rev 1:7
- **a Star:** Mt 2:2-9 Lu 1:78 2Pe 1:19 Rev 22:16
- **a Sceptre:** Ge 49:10 Ps 45:6 78:70-72 110:2 Isa 9:7 Lu 1:32,33 Heb 1:8
- smite the corners of Moab: or, smite through the princes of Moab, 1Sa 14:38 Zec 10:4
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## PROPHECY OF A STAR FROM JACOB

**New American Commentary** – The fourth oracle (DISCOURSE) required no journey to a sacred observation point, no sacrificial preparations, no standing by the sacrificial altars, and no performing of special rituals of divination. The Lord spontaneously prompted the prophet to commence his utterance against his former employer, from whom he never would receive his due compensation.

**I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near**- This is a Messianic prophecy. See more on [Messianic Prophecy](#). Like most prophets, Balaam saw through a glass darkly. He saw visions of future things although he probably had little idea of the time or the full glory of the actual fulfillments. Peter described the OT prophets looking dimly through a mirror writing

As to this salvation, **the prophets who prophesied** of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.(1 Peter 1:10-11+)

The [Targum of Onkelos](#) translates this passage in the following manner: "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but he is not near. When a king shall arise from the house of Jacob, and **the Messiah be anointed from the house of Israel**; he shall slay the princes of Moab, and rule over all the children of men."

**Bush** - The prevailing consent of commentators here determines in favor of rendering the verbs in the present instead of the future, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh." A similar change of tenses is of frequent occurrence in Hebrew. The idea is, that he had a view in dim perspective of the event or the personage which constituted the main theme of his prophecy. As if he should say, "The person of whom I am now prophesying does not at present exist among the Israelites, nor shall he appear in this generation. His manifestation is reserved to after-times." He sees him not now, for he is rapt in spirit out of the present into the future, to the "end of the days," and there he sees him. He beholds him not nigh, for a great distance lies between the seer and the seen. His vision of Him is therefore like that of Abraham, who saw Christ's day afar off, John 8:56.

Messiah is the Star and is described as such in Revelation

Revelation 22:16+ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the **bright morning star**." (see Rev 2:28+, 2 Peter 1:19+ )

**A star shall come forth from Jacob**- That is this future **star** comes from Israel. This is a [Messianic Prophecy](#). Note "**him**" in previous verse so this is not a literal **star**. Note parallel with **scepter** which would identify the **star** as a king. **Merrill** adds that "This has now been strikingly confirmed in prophetic [texts from Mari](#) which describe various kings by the epithet "**star**."" (BKC)

**Bush on come forth** - Heb. dârak, which has the import of stepping onward, coming forth, proceeding, and sometimes of walking in a stately manner, like a king. From dârak, as a root, comes the derivative derek, a way. It is however, on the whole, an unusual word to bear the signification of coming, and doubtless involves an interior recondite sense in the present connection. What that sense is, we think, may be ascertained by bringing the passage into parallelism with the evangelical history of Christ's birth, which we hold to be a perfectly legitimate mode of treating it. On that occasion we learn that a mysterious Star appeared to the Wise Men of the East, and guided their steps to the stable in Bethlehem where the Saviour was born. This was the moving, proceeding, or going forth of the Star which the prophet now beheld in anticipative vision. "They departed, and lo the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." A star has always been regarded in the East as a symbol of distinction, as the herald of any great and glorious birth among men, and this fact enables us to perceive the connecting link between seeing a star and concluding, as the wise men did, that a "King of the Jews" was born. It is no objection to this that the Star seen by Balaam was a symbol of Christ himself, whereas that seen by the Wise Men was a mere concomitant of his birth. In either case the Star was the ensign of an august personage, and Hengstenberg remarks that "it is not simply a literal star that is meant by Balaam. He uses the 'star' metaphorically, as is customary among all nations, to designate a great and illustrious ruler." Nor is the objection to the proposed parallelism of any weight, that the Star prophetically seen by Balaam is said to "come out of Jacob," whereas that seen by the Magi appeared first in the Eastern world remote from Judea, the birth-place of the Saviour. It is sufficient that He who was represented by the Star did originate, as to his earthly humanity, in the midst of the nation collectively denominated "Jacob," and nothing in the local relations or aspects of the Star will avail to weaken the force of the symbolical coincidence to which we have alluded. The language describing the prophetic imagery sets before us a star proceeding, and such a star marshalled the way of the Wise Men to the birth-place of our Lord. Can we doubt then that, viewed in this light, the Star of the Eastern Magi stands in the closest relation to the star which Balaam saw in spirit, especially when our Lord expressly speaks of himself, Rev. 22:16, as "the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning Star." This view is confirmed by the fact, that the Jews understood this prophecy as referring to the Messiah or Christ. The false Christ who, under Hadrian, took up arms against Rome, gave himself out as the Messiah whom Balaam had foretold, and assumed the name of Bar-chocab, or the Son of the Star, for the purpose of placing himself in nearer connection with that prophecy, although after being slain in battle the Jews, finding themselves deceived, called him Bar-coziba, the son of a lie. We are well aware of the dissenting opinions of many of the modern German critics, as it regards the designed application of this oracle to the stellar phenomenon which distinguished our Lord's nativity, or even to the Lord himself; but we deem it not expedient to advert to them, as the above interpretation is satisfactory to us, and will probably commend itself to those who are prepared to believe that the Sacred Volume has proceeded from an intelligence which "sees the end from the beginning." So also in regard to a secondary application both of the Star and the Sceptre to David. As we see no evidence of any such intended application, we pass it by without remark. To the "Sceptre" we assign substantially the same symbolical significance

as to the Star. They differ only as Jacob differs from Israel, which is merely in certain phases of representative import. The original may be rendered literally a rod or a staff, and denotes a badge or emblem of government. Gr. "A man shall rise out of Israel." Chald. "Messiah (or Christ) shall be anointed of the house of Israel," i. e., shall assume the sovereign power. As David and other kings bore the sceptre as an ensign of power, so it is said of Christ, that he should have a rod or sceptre. Ps. 45:7, "The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." Heb. 1:8, "Thou shalt rule them with a rod (or sceptre) of iron." The emblem of regal authority and supremacy, becomes him who is King of Zion and the Prince of Peace. But his kingdom is not of this world. He received it not by any earthly appointment. It is not an outward and visible kingdom, but a kingdom established in men's hearts, and its sceptre is swayed over the thoughts and emotions of the soul, softening, subduing, and sweetly controlling them. His kingdom is a government of religious and heavenly influence, a system of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. To this kingdom, established near thirty centuries after the days of Balaam, does the immense reach of this prophecy extend.

**NN** - This is a figure for a king (see Star of the morning in Isa 14:12 - describing Satan!) not only in the Bible but in the ancient Near Eastern literature as a whole. The immediate reference of the prophecy seems to be to David (**NEAR FULFILLMENT**), but the eschatological theme goes beyond him. There is to be a connection made between this passage and the sighting of a **star** in its ascendancy by the magi, who then traveled to Bethlehem to see the one born King of the Jews (Matt 2:2+). The expression "son of a star" ([Aram Bar Kochba](#) = "Son of the Star") became a title for a later claimant to kingship, but he was doomed by the Romans in A.D. 135.

**Holman Old Testament Commentary** - The star (Heb. Kokab), once used by Isaiah to describe the king of Babylon whom some say represented Satan (Isa. 14:12), also depicted the "Root and the Offspring of David" (Rev. 22:16). Such a "ruler will come out of Jacob" and "rule in the midst of her enemies (Ps. 110:2).

**Life Application Study Bible.** The star that will rise from Jacob is often thought to refer to the coming Messiah. It was probably this prophecy that convinced the astrologers to travel to Israel to search for the baby Jesus (see Matthew 2:1, 2). It seems strange that God would use a sorcerer like Balaam to foretell the coming of the Messiah. But this teaches us that God can use anything or anyone to accomplish his plans. By using a sorcerer, God did not make sorcery acceptable; in fact, the Bible condemns it in several places (Exodus 22:18; 2 Chronicles 33:6; Revelation 18:23). Rather, God showed his ultimate sovereignty over good and evil.

**A scepter shall rise from Israel - Scepter** ([shebet](#)) speaks of authority and in context is [metonymy](#) for a coming king ("star"). This coming One from the lineage of Israel will have authority to wage war victoriously.

Genesis 49:10 (A CLEAR MESSIANIC PROPHECY) "The **scepter** ([shebet](#)) shall not depart from Judah (cf "Lion of the tribe of Judah" Rev 5:5+), Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples (cf Ps 2:12).

**And shall crush through the forehead of Moab And tear down all the sons of Sheth** ([note](#)) - **NLT** = "It will crush the foreheads of Moab's people, cracking the skulls of the people of Sheth." Now Balak would begin to be disturbed, for this language is very clear to him.

**NN** - The prophecy begins to be fulfilled when David defeated Moab and Edom and established an empire including them. But the Messianic promise extends far beyond that to the end of the age and the inclusion of these defeated people in the program of the coming King (**ED**: And the [Day of the Lord](#))..

**Hobbs** has an interesting note on **Sheth** - the Hebrew word translated Sheth is the same word as that for the name of Adam's son who became the ancestor of all humankind (Ge 4:25; Ge 5:3-4). Thus the Jewish interpretation of the words all the children of Sheth is that they refer to all the people on the face of the earth and predict the extent of the Messiah's rule.

**Nelson's NKJV Study Bible** - The pagan Balaam had a vision of the coming of the Hebrew Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ! He was visible from afar. He was like a Star, radiant and beautiful. He was like a **Scepter**, majestic and powerful. And He is the victor over His enemies, including Moab — the nation that hired Balaam to curse Israel!

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## Wishing On Stars

A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel. —Numbers 24:17

Today's Scripture: Matthew 2:1-10

On the night Jesus was born, the bright light of a single star announced His birth. It was an announcement that many had hoped and prayed for, yet many missed.

Perhaps they were like me. Perhaps their hopes were more like dreams and their prayers were more like wishes. Maybe they were looking for a star that would grant every whim, not a light that would reveal their sin.

Every Christmas when I sing in our church's annual Festival of Lights program, I wish for several things. I wish for those few magic moments when the choir is so perfectly in tune that I can't hear anyone, yet I can hear everyone. I think that's what the music of heaven will be like.

Every night when people are laughing at the drama, I wish that I could see what's so funny. But I always get stuck in a part of the choir loft that's behind the set.

Yes, I wish for these things, but I know that instead of wishing to hear the pure strains of a few songs, I ought to pray that I will hear God when He speaks.

Instead of wishing I could see the drama, I should pray that my eyes would see Jesus and not be distracted by the world.

Wishing is hoping I'll get what I want from God. A prayer is a plea that God will get what He wants from me. By: Julie Ackerman  
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What Does God Want From Me?

Trust (Psalm 37:3; Proverbs 3:5-6)

Praise (Psalm 67:3; 100:3-4)

Obedience (John 15:8-14; James 1:22-25)

Christmas is a time to think of what God gave to us and what we can give to Him.

**Numbers 24:18 "Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, While Israel performs valiantly.**

BGT Numbers 24:18 κα σταί Εδωμ κληρονομ α κα σταί κληρονομ α Ησαυ χθρ ς ατο κα Ισραηλ πο ησεν ν σχ ι

NET Numbers 24:18 Edom will be a possession, Seir, his enemies, will also be a possession; but Israel will act valiantly.

NLT Numbers 24:18 Edom will be taken over, and Seir, its enemy, will be conquered, while Israel marches on in triumph.

ESV Numbers 24:18 Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed. Israel is doing valiantly.

NIV Numbers 24:18 Edom will be conquered; Seir, his enemy, will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong.

KJV Numbers 24:18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

YLT Numbers 24:18 And Edom hath been a possession, And Seir hath been a possession, for its enemies, And Israel is doing valiantly;

LXE Numbers 24:18 And Edom shall be an inheritance, and Esau his enemy shall be an inheritance of Israel, and Israel wrought valiantly.

ASV Numbers 24:18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession, who were his enemies; While Israel doeth valiantly.

CSB Numbers 24:18 Edom will become a possession; Seir will become a possession of its enemies, but Israel will be triumphant.

NKJ Numbers 24:18 "And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, While Israel does valiantly.

NRS Numbers 24:18 Edom will become a possession, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly.

NAB Numbers 24:18 Till Edom is dispossessed, and no fugitive is left in Seir. Israel shall do valiantly,

NJB Numbers 24:18 Edom too will be a conquered land, Seir too will be a conquered land, when Israel exerts his strength,

GWN Numbers 24:18 Edom will be conquered, and Seir, his enemy, will be conquered. So Israel will become wealthy.

BHT Numbers 24:18 wūhāyâ ´édôm yūrēšâ wūhāyâ yūrēšâ Sē`îr ´öybāyw wūyiSrā´ēl `ö°Sè Hä°yil

- Ge 27:29,40 2Sa 8:14 Ps 60:1 \*title Ps 60:8-12 Isa 34:5 63:1 Am 9:12
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PROPHECIES AGAINST EDOM AND SEIR

**Edom shall be a possession. Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession** - NLT = "Edom will be taken over, and Seir, its enemy, will be conquered" Recall that Edom had rejected the request of Moses for safe passage (Nu 20:14-21). They would pay for their rejection! Seir was another name for Edom (Ge 32:3 = "land of Seir, the country of Edom", cf Dt 2:4).

**NN - Seir** is the chief mountain range of Edom (Dt 33:2), and so the reference here is to the general area of Edom.

**Bush on Seir** - That is, shall be or become a possession of Israel. Seir is the name of the mountain, or mountainous region, where Esau dwelt, Gen. 36:7, 8, for which reason the Gr. renders it, "And Esau his enemy shall be a possession (or inheritance)." Edom and Seir are here used on the principle of parallelism so common in Hebrew poetry. They differ not more than Jacob and Israel.

**While Israel performs valiantly** - NLT = "while Israel marches on in triumph." NIV = "but Israel will grow strong." The Hebrew word [chayil](#) has the basic idea of strength and influence and is translated in the Lxx with [ischus](#) which describes the capability to function effectively, strength, might.

Through God we shall do **valiantly** ([chayil](#)), And it is He who will tread down our adversaries.

-- Psalm 60:12

**Bush** - And Edom shall be a possession. This was primarily fulfilled in David, of whom it is said, 2 Sam. 8:14, that "he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants." So also David himself in two of his psalms, Ps. 60:8, 108:9, mentions together his conquest of Moab and Edom, as they are also joined together in this prophecy; "**Moab** is my wash-pot, over **Edom** will I cast out my shoe." But the ulterior reference of this prophecy to Christ and his victory over a spiritual Edom is evident from Isa 63:1-6+, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" etc.

**Hobbs on Edom and Seir** - In another pairing, Balaam used two terms to refer to those who lived just south of Moab. Seir and Edom are two names for Esau's descendants (see Jdg. 5:4). The Edomites were the people and Seir was the mountainplace where they lived (Deut. 33:2). Throughout its history, Edom remained an implacable foe of Israel. Later prophets announced God's final judgment on Edom (see, for example, Isa. 63:1-6). Under David, temporary victories were won over these enemies. But like the other passages in this lesson, this prophecy refers to the ultimate victory and reign of the Lord Jesus as Messiah-King. In fact, in prophecies of the end-time judgment words such as Edom and Seir stand for any enemies of God's people and their Messiah-King.

### Numbers 24:19 "One from Jacob shall have dominion, And will destroy the remnant from the city."

BGT Numbers 24:19 κα ξεγερθ σεται ξ Ιακωβ κα πολε σ ζ μενον κ π λεωσ

NET Numbers 24:19 A ruler will be established from Jacob; he will destroy the remains of the city."

NLT Numbers 24:19 A ruler will rise in Jacob who will destroy the survivors of Ir."

ESV Numbers 24:19 And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities!"

NIV Numbers 24:19 A ruler will come out of Jacob and destroy the survivors of the city."

KJV Numbers 24:19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

YLT Numbers 24:19 And one doth rule out of Jacob, And hath destroyed a remnant from Ar.'

LXE Numbers 24:19 And one shall arise out of Jacob, and destroy out of the city him that escapes.

ASV Numbers 24:19 And out of Jacob shall one have dominion, And shall destroy the remnant from the city.

CSB Numbers 24:19 One who comes from Jacob will rule; he will destroy the city's survivors.

NKJ Numbers 24:19 Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, And destroy the remains of the city."

NRS Numbers 24:19 One out of Jacob shall rule, and destroy the survivors of Ir."

NAB Numbers 24:19 and Jacob shall overcome his foes.

NJB Numbers 24:19 when Jacob tramples on his enemies and destroys the last survivors of Ar.

GWN Numbers 24:19 He will rule from Jacob and destroy whoever is left in their cities."

- **Of Jacob:** Ge 49:10 Ps 2:1-12 72:10,11 Isa 11:10 Mic 5:2,4 Mt 28:18 1Co 15:25 Eph 1:20-22 Php 2:10,11 Heb 1:8 1Pe 3:22 Rev 19:16
- **destroy:** Ps 21:7-10 Mt 25:46 Lu 19:12,27
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PROPHECY OF DOMINION OF ONE RISING UP FROM JACOB

**One from Jacob shall have dominion** - NLT = "A ruler will rise up in Jacob." The Septuagint translates "**One from Jacob**" with the verb [exegeiro](#) which means to "raise up" or to "cause to appear" [exegeiro](#) is used in the same way in Zech 11:16 = "I am going to **raise up** a shepherd [MESSIAH] in the land" and of Pharaoh in Ro 9:17). [Exegeiro](#) is in the future passive (power exerted from without), which would support the premise that the One caused to appear here in Nu 24:19 will be the Messiah.

The Hebrew verb for **have dominion** also supports the Messianic character of this passage. **Have dominion** is [radah](#) (see below) conveys the picture of one exercising domain over those under Him or subjugated to Him. See [use below](#) of [radah](#) in Messianic Psalms Ps 72:8 and Ps 110:2. Balaam is prophesying of a ruler who would rise up in Israel and exercise dominion, which is almost certainly a description of the future dominion of the Messiah as John describes " Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." (Rev 11:15+) (See [Messianic Prophecy](#))

**Bush - Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion.** This is little more than a repetition of the announcement, v. 17, under the figure of the "Star" and the "Sceptre." The verb in the original has no subject expressed, but it is easily supplied from the tenor of the context. It is observable, however, that our translators have here relaxed somewhat of their usual scrupulousness in regard to Italics, according to which they should have rendered:—"Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion." The Lord the Messiah is evidently the personage intended, and thus has it been understood from the earliest periods by the Jews. Thus Chald. "And there shall descend one from the house of Jacob and shall destroy him who escapes from the city of the peoples." Targ. Jon. "And a ruler shall rise up out of the house of Jacob." So Sol. Jarchi, "And yet there shall be another ruler out of Jacob, and he shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. Of the King Christ he speaketh thus, of whom it is said (Ps. 72:8), 'He shall have dominion from sea to sea.' "

**Henry Morris** - The reference to the "sceptre" (Numbers 24:17) and "dominion" also remind us of Jacob's Messianic prophecy regarding the coming Lion of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:9, 10; Revelation 5:5). (DSB)

**Seth Postell** writes that "Two of Balaam's seven discourses, the third (Nu 24:5–9) and the fourth (Nu 24:17–19), are particularly significant passages in the history of interpretation, and have long been interpreted messianically. Though some scholars continue to espouse messianic interpretations of Nu 24:7–9 and Nu 24:17–19, the non-messianic interpretation of these passages has become far more common. (**ED: NOT ON PRECEPTAUSTIN! THESE PROPHECIES ARE CLEARLY MESSIANIC!**) ([The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy](#) - excellent resource)

**Dominion** ([07287](#))([radah](#)) means to have dominion, to rule, to dominate. To exercise authority over priests in Jer 5:31, slave owners in Lev 25:43, supervisors in 1Ki 9:23, a king in 1 Ki 4:24. . First used in Genesis for man to "rule over" the animal kingdom (Ge 1:26, 28). [Radah](#) is used in Messianic passages in Nu 24:19, Ps 72:8 (below), Ps 110:2.

**Radah** - 23x in 23v - dominated(1), had dominion(1), have dominion(1), prevailed(1), rule(12), ruled(4), ruling(1), subdued(1), subdues(1). Gen. 1:26; Gen. 1:28; Lev. 25:43; Lev. 25:46; Lev. 25:53; Lev. 26:17; Num. 24:19; 1 Ki. 4:24; 1 Ki. 5:16; 1 Ki. 9:23; 2 Chr. 8:10; Neh. 9:28; Ps. 49:14; Ps. 68:27; Ps. 72:8; Ps. 110:2; Isa. 14:2; Isa. 14:6; Isa. 41:2; Jer. 5:31; Lam. 1:13; Ezek. 29:15; Ezek. 34:4

Here are 3 uses of [radah](#) in the context of the future dominion of the Messiah...

Psalm 72:8 May he also **rule** from sea to sea And from the River to the ends of the earth.



Psalms 110:2 "The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, '**Rule** ([radah](#) - a command; Lxx = [katakuriuo](#) in [present imperative](#)) in the midst of Your enemies.'

Isaiah 41:2 "Who has aroused one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him And **subdues** kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow.

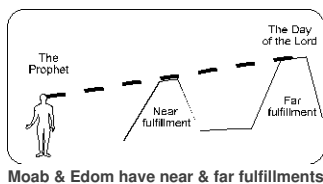
**One from Jacob shall have dominion** also recalls Daniel's vision

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven **One like a Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given **DOMINION**, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His **DOMINION** is an everlasting **DOMINION** Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14+)

**And will destroy the remnant from the city**- ESV = "and destroy the survivors of cities"

**MacDonald** - This prophecy (Nu 24:19) was partially fulfilled by King David, but will enjoy its complete fulfillment at the Second Coming of Christ. (**ED**: THIS NEAR AND FAR FULFILLMENT FROM THE PROPHET'S PERSPECTIVE IS SHOWN SCHEMATICALLY BELOW) (BBC)

**HCSB Study Bible**. - In the early Israelite monarchy, David fulfilled this prophecy by defeating and subjugating both Moab and Edom (2 Sa 8:1-12). But as later Israelite kings failed to obey God's instructions and as oppression and exile followed, this passage would be interpreted messianically to refer to a coming glorious king. The model of a just and righteous king was brought to ultimate fulfillment in Jesus' establishment of the kingdom of God.



**Merrill** - Fulfillment of these prophecies about Moab and Edom have already come to pass in **some respects** (cf., e.g., 1 Kings 11:15-18) but they still have prophetic overtones (**ED**: AKA "FAR FULFILLMENT"). **Moab** and **Edom** must yet suffer the judgment of the King of Israel, Jesus Christ (cf. Isa. 15-16; Isaiah 21:11-12; Jer. 48:1-47; Jer 49:7-11; Obadiah 1:15-18, 21). (BKC)

**Bush** - **Shall destroy him that remaineth of the city**. A clause of extreme obscurity. Eusebius says, "Who can this be but the **divine Logos, the Messiah**, foretold by the prophets; who did indeed destroy that which remained of the city, i. e. of the city of Jerusalem, which in the conclusion forfeited and lost its polity and its inhabitants." Calvin gives another turn to the expression:—"He shall destroy him that remaineth of the cities, i. e. all enemies whom he shall find incorrigible." As the closing scenes of prophecy in the Revelation present to view two cities in antagonism with each other, to wit, Babylon and the New Jerusalem, one of which is to be utterly destroyed, it may be that it is to this catastrophe that the Spirit alludes, implying that every lingering inmate should perish in the city's overthrow.

**Numbers 24:20** And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first of the nations, But his end shall be destruction."

BGT Numbers 24:20 καὶ ὄψας τὴν Ἀμαλῆκ καὶ ναλαβὼν τὴν παραβολὴν αὐτοῦ ἐπέειπεν ῥηθὲν τὴν Ἀμαλῆκ καὶ τὸ σπρμα αὐτῶν πολεταί

NET Numbers 24:20 Then Balaam looked on Amalek and delivered this oracle: "Amalek was the first of the nations, but his end will be that he will perish."

NLT Numbers 24:20 Then Balaam looked over toward the people of Amalek and delivered this message: "Amalek was the greatest of nations, but its destiny is destruction!"

ESV Numbers 24:20 Then he looked on Amalek and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first among the nations, but its end is utter destruction."

NIV Numbers 24:20 Then Balaam saw Amalek and uttered his oracle: "Amalek was first among the nations,

but he will come to ruin at last."

KJV Numbers 24:20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.

YLT Numbers 24:20 And he seeth Amalek, and taketh up his simile, and saith: 'A beginning of the Goyim is Amalek; And his latter end -- for ever he perisheth.'

LXE Numbers 24:20 And having seen Amalec, he took up his parable and said, Amalec is the first of the nations; yet his seed shall perish.

ASV Numbers 24:20 And he looked on Amalek, and took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; But his latter end shall come to destruction.

CSB Numbers 24:20 Then Balaam saw Amalek and proclaimed his poem: Amalek was first among the nations, but his future is destruction.

NKJ Numbers 24:20 Then he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said: "Amalek was first among the nations, But shall be last until he perishes."

NRS Numbers 24:20 Then he looked on Amalek, and uttered his oracle, saying: "First among the nations was Amalek, but its end is to perish forever."

NAB Numbers 24:20 Upon seeing Amalek, Balaam gave voice to his oracle: First of the peoples was Amalek, but his end is to perish forever.

NJB Numbers 24:20 Balaam then looked at Amalek and declaimed his poem, as follows: Amalek, the earliest of nations! But his posterity will perish forever.

GWN Numbers 24:20 Then Balaam saw the Amalekites and delivered this message: "Amalek was first among the nations, but in the end it will be destroyed."

- the first of the nations: or, the first of the nations that warred against Israel, Ex 17:8,16
- his latter end: Jud 6:3 1Sa 14:48 15:3-8 27:8,9 30:1,17 1Ch 4:43 Es 3:1 Es 7:9,10 9:14
- shall be that he perish for ever: or, shall be even to destruction, Ex 17:14 1Sa 15:3,8
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DISCOURSE #5 PROPHECY AGAINST AMALEK

**And he looked at Amalek** - Clearly **he looked** is figurative (for Amalek's dwellings were far away) or perhaps he saw in a vision but not literally from his spot on the mountain.

**Bush - When he looked on Amalek.** Heb. "And he looked upon Amalek." That is, looked with the eyes of his mind; fixed his mental vision and regards upon. He saw the Amalekites, as he saw the Star out of Jacob, in prophetic contemplation.

**and took up his discourse and said, "Amalek was the first of the nations-** NLT = "Amalek was the greatest of nations, but its destiny is destruction!" The first could be a reference to time or to their strength. They also had another notable "first" which would result in this utter destruction. They were the "first" to attack Israel coming out of Egypt (see comments on Ex 17:8-16) The Amalekite people would be subdued under Saul, Samuel, and David.

**Discourse** ([04912](#)) see notes above on [mashal](#) (used 7x in Nu 23-24 - Nu 23:7, 18, Nu 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23)

**Bush - Amalek (was) the first of the nations** Or, Heb. "The beginning of the nations," in allusion at once to the antiquity of their origin and to the pre-eminence which they attained, as may be inferred from what is said of them Gen. 14:7, and from their daring assault upon the chosen people during their march in the wilderness, Ex. 17:8-16. The sense of beginning is specially supported by the contrast of end in the next clause. It is not necessary to interpret this expression as implying the absolute priority of the Amalekites among the nations of the earth, but simply that of all the adjacent heathen races with which Israel came in contact, no one was more conspicuous than this, which dated back at least to the time of Abraham. We think, too, that their own estimate of themselves may be properly included in the import of the phrase, and that Calvin's remark is well-founded:—"Poor and unsatisfactory is the view of some commentators, who think that Amalek is called 'the first of the nations,' because they first took up arms against Israel, and encountered them in order to prevent their advance. Rather is the pride of Amalek indirectly rebuked, because they claimed superiority for themselves over other nations, and this on the score of their antiquity, as if they had been created together with the sun and moon. There is, then, a pointed comparison between this noble origin, and the slaughter which

awaited them at their end.”

**But his end shall be destruction** (lit - to destroying) - **NET** = "his end will be that he will perish." They would be utterly destroyed. Destruction is a rare Hebrew word **obed** (only other use Nu 24:24) rendered in **Septuagint** with [apollumi](#) meaning to destroy.

Balaam's Amalekite prophecy parallels the promise Yahweh made in Ex 17:14+ = "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that **I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven**"

**New American Commentary** – The Amalekites with help from the Canaanites defeated the Israelites when they first tried to enter the Promised Land after they had rejected it at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin (Num 14:43–45). Several centuries later both Saul and David conquered the Amalekites in the tenth century bc (1 Sam 15:1–33; 30:1–19) followed by Hezekiah's victories in the late eighth century (1 Chr 4:43).

**Numbers 24:21 And he looked at the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said, "Your dwelling place is enduring, And your nest is set in the cliff.**

BGT Numbers 24:21 καὶ ὄντων Καινῶν καὶ ναλαβόντων παραβολῶν αὐτοῦ ἐπεὶ σχυρὸν κατοικῆσόν σου καὶ ἄθρονον πτῶνον ὀσσεῖν σου

NET Numbers 24:21 Then he looked on the Kenites and uttered this oracle: "Your dwelling place seems strong, and your nest is set on a rocky cliff.

NLT Numbers 24:21 Then he looked over toward the Kenites and delivered this message: "Your home is secure; your nest is set in the rocks.

ESV Numbers 24:21 And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said, "Enduring is your dwelling place, and your nest is set in the rock.

NIV Numbers 24:21 Then he saw the Kenites and uttered his oracle: "Your dwelling place is secure, your nest is set in a rock;

KJV Numbers 24:21 And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

YLT Numbers 24:21 And he seeth the Kenite, and taketh up his simile, and saith: 'Enduring is thy dwelling, And setting in a rock thy nest,

LXE Numbers 24:21 And having seen the Kenite, he took up his parable and said, thy dwelling-place is strong; yet though thou shouldst put thy nest in a rock,

ASV Numbers 24:21 And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, And thy nest is set in the rock.

CSB Numbers 24:21 Next he saw the Kenites and proclaimed his poem: Your dwelling place is enduring; your nest is set in the cliffs.

NKJ Numbers 24:21 Then he looked on the Kenites, and he took up his oracle and said: "Firm is your dwelling place, And your nest is set in the rock;

NRS Numbers 24:21 Then he looked on the Kenite, and uttered his oracle, saying: "Enduring is your dwelling place, and your nest is set in the rock;

NAB Numbers 24:21 Upon seeing the Kenites, he gave voice to his oracle: Your abode is enduring, O smith, and your nest is set on a cliff;

NJB Numbers 24:21 He then looked at the Kenites and declaimed his poem, as follows: Your dwelling was firm, Kain, your nest perched high in the rock.

GWN Numbers 24:21 Then he saw the Kenites and delivered this message: "You have a permanent place to live. Your nest is built in a rock.

- the Kenites: Ge 15:19 Jdg 1:16 Job 29:18
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DISCOURSE #6 PROPHECY AGAINST KENITES

And he looked at the [Kenite](#), and took up his discourse and said, "Your dwelling place is enduring (eytan = speaks of permanence, they had lived there continually) , And your nest is set in the cliff- The Kenites thought themselves to be impregnable by virtue of their geographic location. Balaam describes their **nest** like a bird whose brood of chicks is safe from predators on the ground.

**NAC** says "The [Kenites](#) (haqqênî, or qayin = "smith") by name seem to have originated in the southern Negev or northeastern Sinai regions, areas that were also inhabited by the Midianites and Amalekites (Exod 2:16; Num 10:29; Judg 1:16; 4:11; 1 Sam 15:6; 27:10)."

**Bush on Kenites** - We here again encounter a dubious passage. It is difficult to determine precisely what people is meant by the Kenites. There is mention in the Old Testament of a twofold people by this name, one of which may be termed Canaanitish, the other Midianitish. Of the former, see Gen. 15:19, where they are enumerated among the Kenizzites, Hittites, Perizzites, etc., which were afterwards devoted to destruction, although we do not subsequently find the Kenites expressly mentioned. The other branch was intimately associated with the Midianites. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, is called, Ex. 3:1, "the priest of Midian," and in Judg. 1:16, "the Kenite." Of these Kenites a part followed Israel; but the greater part, we may presume, remained among the Midianites and Amalekites, and that to these last the prophecy applies, inasmuch as its tone of announcement is severe and threatening. That portion of the Kenite race with which the family of Jethro is identified, appears always to have lived in friendly relations with Israel, and thus were not regarded as obnoxious to the prophetic curse. It is the Canaanitish tribe of Kenites who fall under the anathema.....**your nest is set** - There is in this and the next verse a striking paranomasia, or play upon words, which cannot well be preserved in a translation. The Heb. Kên, Kenite, is also the word for nest, and the Kenites are in effect nestlers, as if it were said, "Looking towards the Nestler, he said, Although thy nest thou hast fixed in a rock," as eagles, ravens, and other birds of prey are wont to do. Under this figurative mode of speech there is perhaps an allusion to their fixing their strong habitations among the Amalekites

[Kenites](#) - 12x in 10v - Gen. 15:19; Num. 24:21; Jdg. 1:16; Jdg. 4:11; Jdg. 4:17; Jdg. 5:24; 1 Sam. 15:6; 1 Sam. 27:10; 1 Sam. 30:29; 1 Chr. 2:55

Recall that the [Kenites](#) were mentioned in the promise of land to Abraham in Genesis 15

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "**To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:** 19 the [Kenite](#) and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite." (Ge 15:18-21+)

**HCSB Study Bible.** - The Kenites were a nomadic clan from the eastern Sinai region whose roots are traced biblically to the descendants of Cain and who are associated with metallurgical craftsmanship (Ge 4:17-24). In Jdg 1:16 the association is made between the Kenites and Moses' Midianite in-laws, Jethro, Reuel, and Hobab, whose descendants settled in the Negev near Arad. Later Kenites lived as far north as the territory of Naphtali. The present text notes a group of Kenites who, like some Midianites, had become enemies of Israel and would eventually be subdued. Then the Asshurite people would in turn be conquered by the Kittim, a reference to the Mediterranean peoples such as the Philistines. They too would then see their demise.

**Discourse** ([04912](#)) see notes above on [mashal](#) (used 7x in Nu 23-24 - Nu 23:7, 18, Nu 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23)

### Numbers 24:22 "Nevertheless Kain will be consumed; How long will Asshur keep you captive?"

BGT Numbers 24:22 καὶ ἄνεσται τὸ Βαβυλωνίον ὅταν ἄσσοι ἀπαγάγωσιν σε

NET Numbers 24:22 Nevertheless the Kenite will be consumed. How long will Asshur take you away captive?"

NLT Numbers 24:22 But the Kenites will be destroyed when Assyria takes you captive."

ESV Numbers 24:22 Nevertheless, Kain shall be burned when Asshur takes you away captive."

NIV Numbers 24:22 yet you Kenites will be destroyed when Asshur takes you captive."

KJV Numbers 24:22 Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

YLT Numbers 24:22 But the Kenite is for a burning; Till when doth Asshur keep thee captive?"

LXE Numbers 24:22 and though Beor should have a skillfully contrived hiding-place, the Assyrians shall carry thee away captive.

ASV Numbers 24:22 Nevertheless Kain shall be wasted, Until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

CSB Numbers 24:22 Kain will be destroyed when Asshur takes you captive.

NKJ Numbers 24:22 Nevertheless Kain shall be burned. How long until Asshur carries you away captive?"

NRS Numbers 24:22 yet Kain is destined for burning. How long shall Asshur take you away captive?"

NAB Numbers 24:22 Yet destined for burning-- even as I watch-- are your inhabitants.

NJB Numbers 24:22 But the nest belongs to Beor; how long will you be Asshur's captive?

GWN Numbers 24:22 But it is destined to be burned, you descendants of Cain, when Assyria takes you as prisoners of war."

- the Kenite: Heb. Kain, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. or, how long shall it be ere Asshur carry thee away captive? Ge 10:11 Ezr 4:2 Ps 83:8 Ho 14:3
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Nevertheless-** In spite of their seemingly impregnable status, they were in fact NOT impregnable.

**Kain will be consumed** - The name [Kenites](#) (qeni) derives from Kain (qayin). The [Kenites](#) would be gradually depleted in number until the Assyrians would finally take them captive.

**How long will Asshur keep you captive** - NLT = "when [Assyria](#) takes you captive."

**Bush - Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, et.** Heb. Kain, a word varying slightly from the original as it occurs elsewhere in this connection, but probably rendered correctly, and designating the name of the founder of the Kenites. This name is employed to denote the nation his descendants. This people appear to have thought, by reason of their high and scarcely accessible dwelling-place, they were secure from every danger. The Spirit of prophecy here grants them the distinction of which they boast, but assures them that it will not be sufficient to ward off from them the doom which their hostility against Israel, the people of the Lord, would bring upon them. This doom is, that they shall be gradually wasted, and finally carried captive to Babylon by the Assyrians. Their lot, in this respect, seems to have been milder than that of Amalek, as that people was to be utterly destroyed, whereas the Kenites were to be carried captive. That such was their fate there is no reason to doubt, as we find some of them mentioned among the Jews after their return from captivity, 1 Chron. 2:55. Ashur, in this connection, is equivalent to Assyrians.

### Numbers 24:23 He took up his discourse and said, "Alas, who can live except God has ordained it?"

BGT Numbers 24:23 καὶ ὄντων ὧν καὶ ναλαβὼν τὴν παραβολὴν αὐτοῦ ἐπεὶ τὸ ζῆσεται τὰν θὰ τὰ θεῶν

NET Numbers 24:23 Then he uttered this oracle: "O, who will survive when God does this!

NLT Numbers 24:23 Balaam concluded his messages by saying: "Alas, who can survive unless God has willed it?"

ESV Numbers 24:23 And he took up his discourse and said, "Alas, who shall live when God does this?"

NIV Numbers 24:23 Then he uttered his oracle: "Ah, who can live when God does this?"

KJV Numbers 24:23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

YLT Numbers 24:23 And he taketh up his simile, and saith: 'Alas! who doth live when God doth this?'

LXE Numbers 24:23 And he looked upon Og, and took up his parable and said, Oh, oh, who shall live, when God shall do these things?

ASV Numbers 24:23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?

CSB Numbers 24:23 Once more he proclaimed his poem: Ah, who can live when God does this?"

NKJ Numbers 24:23 Then he took up his oracle and said: "Alas! Who shall live when God does this?"

NRS Numbers 24:23 Again he uttered his oracle, saying: "Alas, who shall live when God does this?"

NAB Numbers 24:23 Upon seeing.... he gave voice to his oracle: Alas, who shall survive of Ishmael,

NJB Numbers 24:23 He then declaimed his poem, as follows: The Sea-people are gathering in the north,

GWN Numbers 24:23 He delivered this message: "Oh no! Who will live when God decides to do this?"

- when God: Nu 23:23 2Ki 5:1 Mal 3:2
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAAM'S DISCOURSE # 7

**He took up his discourse and said, "Alas, who can live except God has ordained it - ESV - ""Alas, who shall live when God does this?"**

Yahweh controls all life. He gives and He takes away. Daniel 5:23+ reminds Belshazzar that God is "the God **in Whose hand are your life-breath** and all your ways, you have not glorified." (See Ge 2:7, Job 12:10, 34:14,15 Ps 104:29 Ps 146:4 Isa 42:5 Acts 17:25,28,29 )

**Bush** has an interesting comment - **Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?** Heb. "When God putteth or disposeth this." The general idea is plainly that of extreme distress and tribulation. Who, amidst the impending general destruction, shall preserve his life? Who shall be accounted worthy to escape? Chald. "Woe to the sinners who shall live when God doeth these things." It would be a momentous crisis in human affairs, and as the period to which this train of prophecies reaches is that of the grand consummation mentioned by our Lord in the Gospels, therefore his words come into striking parallelism with those of Balaam:—Mat. 24:21, 22, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

**Discourse** ([04912](#)) see notes above on [mashal](#) (used 7x in Nu 23-24 - Nu 23:7, 18, Nu 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23)

**Numbers 24:24 "But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, And they shall afflict Asshur and will afflict Eber; So they also will come to destruction."**

BGT Numbers 24:24 κα̅ ξ̅ε̅λ̅ε̅ σ̅ε̅τ̅αι̅ κ̅ χ̅ε̅ι̅ρ̅ ς̅ Κ̅ι̅τ̅ι̅α̅ ω̅ν̅ κα̅ κ̅α̅κ̅ σ̅ο̅υ̅σ̅ι̅ν̅ Α̅σ̅σ̅ο̅υ̅ρ̅ κα̅ κ̅α̅κ̅ σ̅ο̅υ̅σ̅ι̅ν̅ Ε̅β̅ρ̅α̅ ο̅υ̅ς̅ κα̅ α̅ τ̅ο̅ μ̅ο̅θ̅υ̅μ̅α̅δ̅ ν̅ π̅ο̅λ̅ο̅ ν̅ τ̅αι̅

NET Numbers 24:24 Ships will come from the coast of Kittim, and will afflict Asshur, and will afflict Eber, and he will also perish forever."

NLT Numbers 24:24 Ships will come from the coasts of Cyprus; they will oppress Assyria and afflict Eber, but they, too, will be utterly destroyed."

ESV Numbers 24:24 But ships shall come from Kittim and shall afflict Asshur and Eber; and he too shall come to utter destruction."

NIV Numbers 24:24 Ships will come from the shores of Kittim; they will subdue Asshur and Eber, but they too will come to ruin."

KJV Numbers 24:24 And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

YLT Numbers 24:24 And -- ships are from the side of Chittim, And they have humbled Asshur, And they have humbled Eber, And it also for ever is perishing.'

LXE Numbers 24:24 And one shall come forth from the hands of the Citians, and shall afflict Assur, and shall afflict the Hebrews, and they shall perish together.

ASV Numbers 24:24 But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, And they shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber; And he also shall come to destruction.

CSB Numbers 24:24 Ships will come from the coast of Kittim; they will afflict Asshur and Eber, but they too will come to destruction.

NKJ Numbers 24:24 But ships shall come from the coasts of Cyprus, And they shall afflict Asshur and afflict

Eber, And so shall Amalek, until he perishes."

NRS Numbers 24:24 But ships shall come from Kittim and shall afflict Asshur and Eber; and he also shall perish forever."

NAB Numbers 24:24 to deliver his people from the hands of the Kittim? When they have conquered Asshur and conquered Eber, He too shall perish forever.

NJB Numbers 24:24 the vessels from the coasts of Kittim. They will bear down on Asshur, bear down on Eber; he too will perish forever.

GWN Numbers 24:24 Ships will come from the shores of Cyprus. They will conquer Assyria and Eber. But they, too, will be totally destroyed."

- **coast of Kittim:** Ge 10:4 Isa 23:1 Da 7:19,20 8:5-8,21 10:20 11:30
- **and shall afflict Eber:** Ge 10:21-25 14:13 Da 9:26,27 Mt 24:15 Lu 20:24 23:29-31 Joh 11:48
- **they also will come to destruction:** Da 2:35,45 7:23-26 11:45 Rev 18:2-24
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PROPHECY OF SHIPS TO KITTIM

**But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim** - [Holman Bible Dictionary](#) on [Kittim](#) - Tribal name for the island of Cyprus, sometimes spelled Chittim. This name was derived from Kition, a city-state on the southeastern side of the island. Long associated with maritime lore, the island was ruled first by Greece, then the Assyrians, and finally, Rome. Genesis 10:4 traces the people's roots to Noah's son Japheth. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both mention it in their prophecies ( Jeremiah 2:10 ; Ezekiel 27:6 ; compare Isaiah 23:1 ,Isaiah 23:1,23:12 ). ([See also ISBE](#))

**And they shall afflict Asshur** - "Ashur, according to general usage, denotes the descendants of Ashur, or the Assyrians. The prophecy was fulfilled primarily in the conquest of Alexander, who overthrew the Persian empire that then held in subjection the Chaldeans and Assyrians." (Bush)

**and will afflict Eber** - **Bush** - This, like Ashur, is no doubt to be understood as a collective name for the posterity of Eber (or Heber), of whom it is said, Gen. 10:21, that "Shem was the father of all the children of Eber," and as Abraham was directly descended from Eber, and in him the nation of Israel, so we gather that the power denoted by Chittim should oppress and afflict the Jews, which was done by the Seleucidæ, the successors of Alexander, and especially by Antiochus Epiphanes, and also by the Romans, who not only subdued and oppressed them, but eventually "took away their place and nation," and dispersed them over the face of the earth.

**So they also will come to destruction** - Bush has an interesting note - The phraseology here is the same with that in the final clause of v. 20, on which we have already remarked. The original has nothing to answer to "forever," and the undoubted import is that of some subject, some "perishing one," entirely independent of that which goes before, but with which that is in some way compared, or to be associated. He or they shall perish, even as shall the perishing one. The allusion is to some devoted power, some power emphatically doomed, which though wholly unknown to Balaam, was well known to the spirit of prophecy speaking through him, and which, in our view, is no other than the Man of Sin, or the Antichrist of the last times. "Thus Balaam, as he began with the blessing of Israel, endeth with the destruction of their enemies; God by his mouth confirming the promises made unto Abraham and to his seed forever, the accomplishment of all which is in Christ."—Ainsworth.

**Henry Morris** - In Numbers 24:21 and 24 Balaam prophesies the eventual disappearance of the nations of Assyria, the descendants of the Kenites and the descendants of Eber. The Kenites are long forgotten, of course, and the mighty Assyrian Empire eventually died, even though remnants may exist in modern Iraq. Eber was an ancestor of Israel, (Genesis 11:16-26), but since Balaam was not directing his prophecy against Israel, it may have been against the descendants of Eber's other son, Joktan (Genesis 10:25-30). These have all vanished or been assimilated by other nations long ago. The same apparently applies to other descendants of Eber, at least down to the time of Terah. (DSB)

**Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam arose and departed and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way.**

BGT Numbers 24:25 κα ναστ ς Βαλααμ π λθεν ποστραφε ς ε ς τ ν τ πον α το κα Βαλακ π λθεν πρ ς αυτ ν

NET Numbers 24:25 Balaam got up and departed and returned to his home, and Balak also went his way.

NLT Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam and Balak returned to their homes.

ESV Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam rose and went back to his place. And Balak also went his way.

NIV Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam got up and returned home and Balak went his own way.

KJV Numbers 24:25 And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

YLT Numbers 24:25 And Balaam riseth, and goeth, and turneth back to his place, and Balak also hath gone on his way.

LXE Numbers 24:25 And Balaam rose up and departed and returned to his place, and Balak went to his own home.

ASV Numbers 24:25 And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way.

CSB Numbers 24:25 Balaam then arose and went back to his homeland, and Balak also went his way.

NKJ Numbers 24:25 So Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; Balak also went his way.

NRS Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam got up and went back to his place, and Balak also went his way.

NAB Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam set out on his journey home; and Balak also went his way.

NJB Numbers 24:25 Balaam then got up, left and went home, and Balak too went his way.

GWN Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam got up and went back home, and Balak also went on his way.

- Nu 24:11 Nu 31:8 Jos 13:22
- [Numbers 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAAM LEAVES BALAK

**Then Balaam arose and departed and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way** - Sadly before Balaam left Balak, he set the wheels in motion for the horrible events in Numbers 25.

Nu 31:16+ says "Behold, these (MIDIANITE WOMEN) caused the sons of Israel, **through the counsel of Balaam**, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the LORD."

**COMMENT** - Balaam was killed with the Midianites so clearly he had come back from "his place" in Pethor and had counseled the Midianites as to how to weaken or defeat Israel. He came to receive the wages of unrighteousness from the pagans, but what he received was the wages of unrighteousness from Jehovah! (Ro 6:23+).

**Jensen** - This was enough. The word of God had spoken, and there was none to deny it. Even the mouthpiece of God, Balaam, left the scene with the intention to return to his place, and Balak, who despised the word of God, "also went his way" (24:25). In the earlier chapters of Numbers God vindicated His leaders in the midst of rebellion from within. **Now God had vindicated His people and protected them from enemies from without.** No man can thwart His sovereign purposes. The nation of Israel, about to enter the land of plenty, had much more to learn about their gracious and omnipotent protector, even in experiences of trouble unknown to them. (Ibid)

Balaam may have left without succeeding in cursing Israel, but he did not leave before he offer evil counsel to Balak which would bring great harm to Israel. We learn about this from Revelation 2:14+ where Jesus says to the church at Pergamum "But I have a few things against you, because you have there some **who hold the teaching of Balaam**, who kept teaching Balak to put a **stumbling block** ([skandalon](#)) before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality."

**THOUGHT** - What was the teaching of Balaam? Seduce the Israelites with your Moabite women, enticing them to commit idolatry and immorality. Note these two "I" words are intimately linked together throughout the Bible! If you are practicing immorality, you have placed something in your vision as your substitute god and you are worshipping it instead of the true God! **FLEE** immorality (1 Cor 6:18+) could also be coupled with the warning "**FLEE** idolatry" (1 Cor 10:14+) where both uses of flee are [pneugo present imperative](#). Why do we need to continually "**FLEE**?" Because both are very seductive/enticing and will appeal to our flesh and draw us



down before can even take another breath!!! So at the first enticing sight or sound, we must immediately **FLEE!** But praise God, He does not leave it totally up to our power to FLEE, but He has provided His Holy Spirit Who will give us the desire and the power to **FLEE!** (Php 2:13NLT+). See [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) commands like **FLEE!**

**Bush** - There is an apparent contradiction between this passage, which seems to say that Balaam, after fulfilling his mission, immediately, and without tarrying on the road, returned and reached his home in safety, and Num. 31:8, 16 (comp. Josh. 13:22), according to which Balaam was killed by the Israelites in the war which they undertook against the Midianites, as a righteous punishment for the counsel given to that people with a view to lead Israel into sin. In the solution of this difficulty, which has been long since remarked, some have supposed that Balaam returned home, but made a second journey to the Midianites, though it is no easy matter to find sufficient time for this double journey. A far preferable mode of reconciling the apparent discrepancy is to understand the words in an inchoative sense, implying that he started with the purpose of returning home, but was detained by the Midianites. For instances of this phraseology see Ex. 8:18, Num. 14:40. This construction is favored by the fact that the original shoob properly signifies to turn from, to turn back, while the reaching the object aimed at is not included in the meaning of the word itself. So in like manner, Gen. 18:33, "And the Lord went his way as soon as he had left communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned back to his place," where not so much the arrival as the direction is meant; he set out on his return. They parted each one his own way. So here also the parallelism leads us to suppose that not the end, but the direction, the course, is intended. Whether he reached the end of his journey or not, is indifferent to the object which the inspired historian had in view in relating the incidents. He could let him journey without troubling himself how it fared with him, and what he did further. This is intimated in the sequel quite incidentally. The writer began with telling how Balak had sent for the prophet in order to destroy Israel, and he closes his narrative with simply telling how the parting took place without the object being attained.

## BALAAM NON-PROFIT "PROPHET" FOR HIRE

Warren Wiersbe in [Be Counted - Living a Life that Counts for God](#) (recommended resource for numbers) gives us an excellent summary -

### Balaam and Today's Church

As God's people today, we must not think that the Old Testament narratives are past history and simply interesting stories for us to read. Until the New Testament was written, the only Scriptures the first-century church had was the Old Testament; and from it they were able to get encouragement and enlightenment. These events in Jewish history serve as warnings to us not to disobey the Lord (1 Cor. 10:1–13, 14) as well as encouragements to build our faith (Heb. 11:1–40) and hope (Ro 15:4). Balaam is mentioned by three different New Testament writers: Peter (2 Peter 2:15–16), Jude (v. 11), and John (Rev. 2:14).

Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

#### "The way of Balaam" (2 Peter 2:15–16+).

The second chapter of 2 Peter focuses on the danger of false teachers secretly entering the church and leading people astray. Peter promises that God will judge these deceivers (v. 3), but he also warns the believers to exercise spiritual discernment lest they be taken captive by false doctrine. These false teachers are like Balaam in that they knew the right way but turned from it, they were covetous, and they led people into immorality (2 Peter 2:14). In fact, as you read the chapter, you will see the characteristics of Balaam exposed.

The "way of Balaam" is Balaam's lifestyle as a **soothsayer and false prophet**. His motive was to make money and he used his opportunities, not to serve God and His people, but to satisfy his craving for wealth. In other words, he was a hireling who sold himself to the highest bidder. He used "religion" only to make money and to cover up his sinful cravings. He also used "religion" to entice people to sin.

Balaam knew that God didn't want him to go with the delegation and serve King Balak, but he maneuvered around God's declared will and went to Moab. The British minister F.W. Robertson said, "**He went to God to get his duty altered, not to learn was his duty was.**" No matter what he said with his lips, **Balaam had a hidden agenda that really wasn't hidden from God at all.** If God isn't allowed to rule in a person's life, He

overrules and accomplishes His purposes just the same, but the disobedient servant is the loser.

God used the “dumb animal” to rebuke Balaam and try to get him on the right track, but **Balaam’s heart never changed**. The sight of the [Angel of the LORD](#) may have frightened him, but it didn’t bring him to surrender and faith. Balak had promised him great wealth and he was going to get it one way or another.

**When are we walking on “the way of Balaam”?** When we deliberately rebel against the revealed will of God and try to change it. When we have selfish motives and ask, “What will I get out of it?” When we cause other people to sin so we can profit from it. Paul may have had Balaam in mind when he wrote 1 Timothy 6:9–10, words that need to be taken seriously today. “Religion” is “big business” today and it’s easy for preachers, musicians, executives, writers, and others in Christian service to become more concerned with money and reputation than spiritual values and Christian character.

1 Timothy 6:9-10+ But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

#### **“The error of Balaam” (Jude 11+).**

Like Peter, Jude wrote to warn the church about false teachers (Jude 3–4). In fact, Jude’s letter is an echo of what Peter wrote in 2 Peter 2, so the Lord has given us a double warning. This shows us how serious the danger is and how great is our responsibility to detect and defeat these insidious false teachers. Unfortunately, many professed believers care little about Bible doctrine and easily fall prey to heretical influences. It’s a known fact that many members of false cults were once members of orthodox churches. Cultists don’t try to win lost souls, because they have no salvation message for the lost. Instead, they capture new converts and bring them into bondage (vv. 18–19).

Balaam’s error was not only thinking that he could disobey God and get away with it, but also in thinking that those he enticed to sin would get away with it. The false teachers in the days of Peter and Jude preyed upon ignorant people and tried to lead them into sin (vv. 10, 13, 18; Jude 4, 8, 18–19), all the time covering everything over with a cloak of “religion.” If the greatest evil is the corruption of the highest good, then these false teachers were indeed the greatest of sinners, for they used the Christian faith as a cloak for their wicked deeds.

Of course, “reward” was the motivation behind what they did (Jude 11), and this could mean a number of things: money, power over people, popularity, and personal sensual pleasure. Judas Iscariot used ministry for personal gain (John 12:6) but ended up a suicide.

#### **“The doctrine of Balaam” (Rev. 2:14+).**

This is the doctrine Balaam followed when he enticed Israel to attend the idolatrous feast at Baal Peor and commit immorality with the Midianites (Nu 25:1-18). The world would express it, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Don’t be a ‘holier than thou’ isolationist. Be a good neighbor and a good sport. After all, you live in a pluralistic society, so learn to respect the way other people believe and live.” But from God’s point of view, what Israel did was compromise and a violation of their covenant made at Sinai.

The problem at Pergamos was that the false teachers had gotten into the church and were enticing people to attend the feasts at the idol temples. (The Jerusalem Conference tried to settle this problem Acts 15:19–29, and Paul dealt with it in 1 Corinthians 8–10. The cheapest meat was sold at the pagan temples, and the guilds (ancient labor unions) often had their meetings and dinners there, so it was tempting to Christians to go along with the crowd.) As at Baal Peor, their sin was a combination of idolatry and immorality, but the false teachers didn’t present it that way. They taught that God’s grace gave His people the freedom to sin, but Jude called it “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4; and see Ro. 6:1ff).

The Jews were God’s chosen people, set apart from the rest of the nations to serve and glorify Him. They were not to worship the gods of their neighbors or share in their pagan festivities. When they entered the Promised Land, they were to tear down the pagan temples and altars and destroy the idols (Deut. 7; Josh. 23), lest Israel be tempted to turn from the true and living God and start imitating the heathen neighbors. Unfortunately, that’s exactly what happened after the death of Joshua (Jud. 2:10–3:6).

Num. 22:5; Num. 22:7; Num. 22:8; Num. 22:9; Num. 22:10; Num. 22:12; Num. 22:13; Num. 22:14; Num. 22:16; Num. 22:18; Num. 22:20; Num. 22:21; Num. 22:23; Num. 22:25; Num. 22:27; Num. 22:28; Num. 22:29; Num. 22:30; Num. 22:31; Num. 22:34; Num. 22:35; Num. 22:36; Num. 22:37; Num. 22:38; Num. 22:39; Num. 22:40; Num. 22:41; Num. 23:1; Num. 23:2; Num. 23:3; Num. 23:4; Num. 23:5; Num. 23:11; Num. 23:16; Num. 23:25; Num. 23:26; Num. 23:27; Num. 23:28; Num. 23:29; Num. 23:30; Num. 24:1; Num. 24:2; Num. 24:3; Num. 24:10; Num. 24:12; Num. 24:15; Num. 24:25; Num. 31:8; Num. 31:16; Deut. 23:4; Deut. 23:5; Jos. 13:22; Jos. 24:9; Jos. 24:10; Neh. 13:2; Mic. 6:5; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14

Numbers 31:8; 16

(8) They killed the kings of Midian along with the rest of their slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, the five kings of Midian; they **also killed Balaam the son of Beor** with the sword.

(16) **"Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam,** to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 23:3-6

"No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD, 4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because **they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia,** to curse you. 5 "Nevertheless, the LORD your God was not willing to listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the LORD your God loves you. 6 "You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days.

Joshua 13:22

The sons of Israel also killed **Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner,** with the sword among the rest of their slain.

COMPARE - Dt 18:10 - "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, **one who uses divination,** one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

Joshua 24:9-10

Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel, and **he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you.** 10 'But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his hand.

Nehemiah 13:1-3

On that day they read aloud from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and there was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, 2 because they did not meet the sons of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing. 3 So when they heard the law, they excluded all foreigners from Israel.

Micah 6:5

"My people, remember now What **Balak king of Moab counseled And what Balaam son of Beor answered him,** And from Shittim to Gilgal, So that you might know the righteous acts of the LORD."

My people, recall how King Balak of Moab planned to harm you, how Balaam son of Beor responded to him. *Recall how you journeyed* from Shittim to Gilgal, so you might acknowledge that the LORD has treated you fairly." (Micah 6:5NET)

2 Peter 2:1-3, 15-16

2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 **Many will follow their sensuality,** and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and **in their greed** they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

15 Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, **having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;** 16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

Jude 1:11

Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Revelation 2:14

'But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.