

Parsha QA



Parshas Balak

For the week ending 14 Tammuz 5757
18 & 19 July 1997

Parsha Questions

1. Why did the Moabites consult the Midianites regarding the best strategy to use against the Jewish people?
2. What was Balak's position before he became king of Moav?
3. Bilaam was an evil person. Why, then, did Hashem grant him prophecy?
4. On what basis did Balak think that Bilaam's curse would be effective?
5. Why didn't the elders of Midian remain overnight with Bilaam?
6. When did Bilaam receive his prophecies?
7. Hashem opened his conversation with Bilaam by asking, "Who are these men with you?" What did Bilaam deduce from this question?
8. How do we know that Bilaam hated the Jewish People more than Balak?
9. What is evidence of Bilaam's greed?
10. In his conversation with his donkey, how did Bilaam shame himself in front of the princes?
11. Why was Bilaam's donkey slain by the *malach*?
12. Bilaam compared his encounter with an angel to someone else's encounter with an angel. Who was the other person and what was the comparison?
13. What does the word '*shefi*' mean?
14. Why did Bilaam tell Balak to build seven altars?
15. What tragedy befell the Jewish People at Rosh Hapigah?
16. Why are the Jewish People compared to lions?
17. On Bilaam's third attempt to curse the Jewish People he changed his strategy. What did he do differently?
18. What were Bilaam's three primary characteristics?
19. What did Bilaam see that made him decide not to curse the Jewish People?
20. In verse 24:19, Bilaam stated that a king, "shall rule and destroy the remnant of the city." Who is the king and which city?

BONUS

Q:

And Hashem put speech into the mouth of Bilaam...(23:4)

Why didn't Hashem allow Bilaam to curse the Jewish People? Hashem could simply ignore Bilaam's curse, so what bad affect would the curse have had?

I Did Not Know That!

"...May my soul die the death of the righteous, and my end by like theirs." (23:10)

The word "righteous" — *yesharim* — has the same numerical value as "*Avos Haolam*" — "the universal Patriarchs." Add the last letters of the names of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and you get 142, the same numerical value as the name "Bilaam." This is what Bilaam referred to when he said "May my end be like theirs"! (i.e., the end of their names)

Ba'al Haturim

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Parshas Balak — 14 Tammuz 5757, 18 & 19 July 1997

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

22:5	Balak's Rise to Power
22:20	Bilaam's Mission
22:23	The Donkey
23:16	Bilaam's Prophecy
24:20	Amalek

Sforno

22:2	What Balak Saw
22:6	Bilaam's Power
23:22	Jewish Conquest

Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

- 22:4 - Since Moshe, the leader of the Jewish people, grew up in Midian, the Moabites thought the Midianites might know wherein lay Moshe's power.
- 22:4 - He was a prince of Midian.
- 22:5 - So that the Gentile world could not say "If we also had prophets, we would also return to be good."
- 22:6 - He knew that Bilaam had helped Sichon to defeat Moav.
- 22:7 - They set for themselves a sign that if Bilaam didn't come right away, he would not be of help to them.
- 22:8 - Only at night.
- 22:9 - That Hashem isn't omniscient.
- 22:11 - Balak wanted to drive the Jewish People from the land. Bilaam sought to exterminate them.
- 22:18 - He told the princes that Balak should give him all of his gold, since otherwise Balak would need to hire many armies.
- 22:29 - He told his donkey, "Were there a sword in my hand, I would slay you." He was hired to destroy an entire nation through his power of speech, yet for a donkey he needed a sword!
- 22:33 - So that people should not point to it and say, "This is the donkey that silenced Bilaam." Hashem is concerned with human dignity.
- 22:34 - Avraham. Bilaam said, "Hashem told me to go, but later sent an angel to stop me. The same thing that happened to Avraham: Hashem commanded Avraham to sacrifice his son Yitzchak, and later He rescinded the command through an angel."
- 23:3 - Alone, silent.
- 23:4 - Corresponding to the seven altars built by the Avos. Bilaam said to Hashem, "The ancestors of the Jewish People built seven altars, but I alone have built a number equal to all of them."
- 23:14 - Moshe died there.
- 23:24 - They arise in the morning, and 'strengthen' themselves to perform *mitzvos*.
- 24:1 - He realized that enchantments wouldn't convince Hashem to allow him to curse the Jewish People. He hoped that by calling attention to their sins, he would be permitted to curse them.
- 24:2 - An evil eye, pride, and greed.
- 24:2 - He saw each Tribe dwelling without intermingling. He saw the tents arranged so that no one could see into his neighbor's tent.
- 24:19 - The king is the *Mashiach* and the city is Rome.

Bonus

A:

The surrounding nations had faith in Bilaam's power of speech — as Balak said "*I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed.*" Therefore, Bilaam's curse would have nullified their fear of the Jewish people, and given them courage to wage war against them.

(Abarbanel)