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THE PROPHECIES OF BALAAM

A thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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INTRODUCTION

Balaam is known largely because of his connection with the story of the ass that spoke, and, while critics point the skeptical finger and rant against the incredible nature of the narrative, they make the usual mistake of drawing attention away from the important part, the prophecies, and centering it on one incident, which is perhaps more striking, although merely incidental.

Most of the material presented in Scripture concerning Balaam is found in Numbers 23 - 25, while a few other passages afford additional bits of information.

Balaam is called "the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia" in Deut. 23, 4, and in Numbers 23, 7 Balaam himself says he was brought "from Aram, out of the mountains of the East." Sayce asserts that in the vicinity of Pethor the people called themselves the sons of Ammo or Ammi, "and Dr. Neubauer is doubtless right in explaining the name of Balaam as a compound of Baal and Ammi. The seer's name would thus of itself declare that he belonged to a tribe whose 'Lord' was Ammi." ¹ This is only a suggestion with little recommendation and no Scriptural proof, but it is not in disagreement with what else is known of Balaam.

The inconsistencies of Balaam's conduct give rise to varying opinions regarding his religious convictions. Some hold that at first he was a thoroughly pious man, a true prophet, but that later, seduced

¹ Sayce, The Higher Criticism and the Monuments, p. 275

by covetousness, he fell away.¹ Others regard Balaam as an idolator, given to false worship, whose prophecies were made much after the fashion of the speaking of his ass, against his will, forced.²

That Balaam did consider himself in some close connection with God is shown in Num. 22, 8, where Balaam told the elders of Moab and Midian:³ "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me." From this it would appear that it was customary for Balaam to come to the LORD in difficult situations, to ask for and receive from Him information and advice.⁴ The divine name here used is יהוה, revealing that Balaam was acquainted with the true God. Without some fear of God Balaam would have accompanied the elders of Moab without taking the trouble to seek permission first, or, having made the request for permission as a matter of form, he would have fabricated some excuse and invented a favorable answer.⁴ Instead he told the princes of Balak: "Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."⁵

When Balak sent his second mission of "more honorable" princes,⁶ telling Balaam to name his own price, Balaam answered: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord My God, to do less or more."⁷ In these words, יהוה אלהי, יהוה אלהי

1 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams und seine Weissagungen, p.5, lists among those who hold this view Tertullian, Hieronymus, Buddeus, Deyling, Benzel, although Hengstenberg himself does not hold to this idea.

2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.5, lists among the proponents of this idea Philo, Ambrosius, Augustine, Theodoret, Gregory of Nyssa, and many Roman, Lutheran, and Reformed theologians, although Hengstenberg himself opposes this view.

3 Hengstenberg, loc.cit., says the fact that Balaam stood in a close relation to the God of Israel is attested by the fact that only by this could Balak have been moved to come to him who lived such a distance away.

4 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.6.

5 Numbers 22, 13

6) Numbers 22, 15

7) Numbers 22, 18

he calls Jehovah his God, and his statement showed that he had respect for this God. Without such a fear of God he would have accepted this tempting offer without hesitation. ¹

Hengstenberg offers as another indication of Balaam's fear of God the fact that he understood the warning imparted to him on his journey by the angel of the Lord, and that he took this warning to heart. ¹ This does not necessarily show any esteem for God on Balaam's part, as any human being under similar circumstances might have acted as Balaam did, motivated by terror. A modern gunman could produce much the same reaction.

Hengstenberg points also to Balaam's defense against Balak in Ch. 23, 12: "Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?" claiming that this indicates that the necessity to speak God's word was moral, rather than physical, which presupposes a certain amount of the fear of God. ² This fear could well have been a terror caused by the memory of his recent encounter with the angel of the Lord, which would no doubt induce him to speak as God dictated.

The assumption that Balaam worshipped the true God, therefore, is to be based rather on his appealing to the Lord in Numbers 22, 8 and his calling the Lord his God in verse 18. ³ In the light of these two passages the actions of Balaam on meeting the angel of the Lord and his defense before Balak can well be considered those of a God-fearing man.

In this Balaam has been compared to Melchizedek, Job, and other non-Israelites who worshipped the true God. ⁴ The mere fact that he

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.6

2 Ibid., pp. 6-7

3 Newton, Dissertations on the Prophecies, pp.59-60

4 Ibid., p.59

was not one of the chosen people cannot be taken as a proof that he could not have worshipped Jehovah, especially since Scripture reveals unmistakably his knowledge of the God of Israel.

Balaam did express some pious thoughts and inclinations, as in Numbers 23, 10: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." ¹ Hengstenberg claims that this statement fails to fit the view which ascribes to Balaam an absolute opposition to the divine will which he proclaimed. ² These words are included in that which God put into the mouth of Balaam, but it can be assumed that they are not contrary to Balaam's own sentiments, as they are subjectively spoken, even though the primary significance is with regard to Israel.

In spite of his occasional manifestations of piety, "his heart was unsound, was mercenary, was corrupt." ¹ Peter writes that Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness." ³ Jude, speaking of false teachers, says they "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." ⁴ "His inclinations were contrary to his duty." ¹ He was told to stay, but he wanted to go. He was told to bless, but he wanted to curse. When he was "overruled" and was unable to harm Israel as a prophet, he "contrived to do it as a politician." ¹ He "taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." ⁵

Balaam conducted himself as a heathen and showed himself an immoral

1 Newton, op.cit., p.60
2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.7
3 2 Pet. 2, 15
4 Jude 11
5 Rev. 2, 14

man,¹ but this fails to detract from the value of his prophecies. In Chapter 23, 5 it is stated that "the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth," and this is repeated in Verse 16. In Chapter 24, 2 it is said that "the spirit of God came upon him." These were divine prophecies, and Hengstenberg asserts that a contrast exists between these and all the previous speeches of Balaam.² There is no proof for this, but it can reasonably be assumed.

His worship was mixed with superstition,³ as is shown by his having seven altars built and sacrificing on each of them,⁴ and by his going to seek for enchantments.⁵ According to Hengstenberg the claim of those who maintain that Balaam was a thoroughly pious man are refuted by the designation of "the soothsayer," ׀׀׀׀׀׀, which is applied to him in Joshua 13, 22.⁶ Some, on the other hand, maintain that the designation "soothsayer" has reference only to the time after the fall of Balaam, when he no longer possessed the prophetic gift,⁷ but the wide reputation of Balaam and the request that he curse Israel suggest that he was known as a soothsayer already before this time.

Others insist that ׀׀׀׀׀׀ appears also with a favorable meaning and that it is to be taken so here when applied to Balaam.⁸ In

1 Newton, op.cit., p. 59, says that Balaam was a prophet who was a heathen, a prophet who was an immoral man.

2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 7.

3 Newton, op.cit., p. 60

4 Numbers 23, 1-2

5 Numbers 24, 1

6 Hengstenberg, op.cit., pp. 7-8

7 Ibid., p. 8.

8 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 8, opposes this view, claiming that, even if ׀׀׀׀׀׀ had such a significance, this meaning is here precluded by the apparent connection in which the designation of Balaam as a soothsayer stands to the circumstances mentioned in his history, that he made use of divination to fathom the will of Jehovah.

Isaiah 3, 1-2, where it is threatened that God would take "from Jerusalem and Judah the stay and the staff," $\square\text{ֹיִן}$ ¹ is specifically mentioned, along with אֲבָנִים and other supports of the state. ²

In Proverbs 16, 10 the word $\square\text{ֹיִן}$ is used of a king described as one "whose mouth transgresseth not in judgment." ³ Hengstenberg asserts that a closer examination of the passages adduced in an attempt to prove that $\square\text{ֹיִן}$ can have also a good meaning will reveal the fact that they cannot furnish this proof. ⁴ Any favorable meaning of the word is ruled out by its use in Deut. 18, 10-12:

"There shall not be found among you any one that ... useth divination, ... For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." The term used for the diviner here is

$\square\text{ֹיִן}$ $\square\text{ֹיִן}$, and God's displeasure at the practice is revealed in unmistakable terms.

Divination is presented as a grave sin in 1 Sam. 15, 23, as Samuel tells Saul that "the sin of divination is rebellion". ⁵

1 The AV translates the $\square\text{ֹיִן}$ with "the prudent"; and Alex R. Gordon, in the Smith-Goodspeed American Translation, with "diviner."
 2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.8, says that these words, אֲבָנִים and $\square\text{ֹיִן}$, are obviously not synonymous, but $\square\text{ֹיִן}$ supplies the contrast to אֲבָנִים , as the prophet threatens the removal of both the real supports of the state, which were gladly surrendered because they were not recognized, and of the imaginary supports, which were only believed to be such. This explanation, however, appears to be prejudiced and unwarranted, as the text gives no indication of such a distinction, and the parallelism itself speaks against it.
 3 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.8, states that the use here in Proverbs 16, 10 is figurative, in a shortened comparison, for sagacity, penetrating glance, as that in which the soothsayers gloried, and claims that this poetic use of the word cannot be employed as a means of determining the proper meaning which occurs in a historical book.
 4 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.8.
 5 This is the rendition of the Smith-Goodspeed American Translation, better here than the A.V. The Hebrew is $\text{תַּעֲבֹדֶת -- קַסָּם מְרִי}$.

In 2 Kings 17, 17 divination is ascribed ¹ to those who "sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger." God says in Ezekiel 13, 9: "And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of my people." Here those "that divine lies" and called **הַקְּסָמִים פְּזֹבִי**, thus intimately associating the falsehood with the divination. A similar combination appears in Ezekiel 22, 28,

לְהִקְסֵם לָהֶם פְּזֹבִי "divining lies unto them." Jeremiah 14, 14 uses **קְסָפִי** as a part of a general condemnation of false prophets: "The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart." Balaam himself, in Numbers 23, 23, mentioned the absence of divination in Israel and indicated its opposition to true prophecy as it was found only with God's chosen people. ²

The East was infamous for diviners and soothsayers, ³ and Balaam was from the East. It was his custom to use divination to learn secret things, and on this occasion he was exalted by a divine inspiration, as God "put a word in his mouth," ⁴ and as "the spirit of God came upon him." ⁵ Chapter 24, 1 mentions that he went "at other times," **בְּיָמַי בְּעֵשֶׂה (בְּ)**, "to seek for enchantments," **לְקַבֵּאת נְחָשִׁים**. Peter ⁶ referred to Balaam as "the prophet,"

1 Hebrew: **וַיִּקְסְמוּ הַקְּסָמִים**
 2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.9.
 3 Newton, op.cit., p.59. Cf. Isaiah 2, 6.
 4 Numbers 23, 16
 5 Numbers 24, 2
 6 2 Peter 2, 16.

τοῦ προφήτου, while at the same time mentioning his madness, iniquity, and love of the wages of unrighteousness. From Chapter 22, 8. 19 it appears that Balaam was accustomed to receive information from God, as his words express a confidence that God would advise him, a confidence which is best accounted for as being based on past experience.

From all this it would seem that there was at least some good in Balaam. Hengstenberg asserts that the view regarding Balaam, with regard to religion, as a crude and customary deceiver, cannot offer a suitable explanation of the prophecies. An influence of the Spirit of God, he says, is inconceivable without at least a partial searching into divine truth, a meeting, a consenting of the subject. The Spirit then can cause the better element to rule, though only for a minute, while the baser element is still present, even predominating, but never, says Hengstenberg, where the Spirit finds no inner confederate to develop His efficacy. ¹

Newton takes the contrary, and more acceptable, view that "unworthy persons may sometimes be possessed of spiritual gifts." ² He refers to Abimelech in Genesis 20, Pharaoh in Genesis 41, and Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2, all of them heathen kings. In I Kings 13 two prophets are mentioned, one inspired and later disobedient, the other first a liar

¹ Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.6, says that, if, in opposition to this, an appeal is made to the prophesying of the godless Saul and his servants, 1 Sam-19, 20.24, it must be presupposed without proof that the godlessness was total.

Scripture, however, furnishes such examples. In John 11, 49-52 Caiphas is described as unwittingly prophecying that Christ should die for the nation. See also examples in the following paragraph.

² Newton, op.cit., p.59

and later inspired. ¹

Hengstenberg points to a striking similarity between Balaam and his New Testament counterpart, Simon Magus, mentioned in Acts 8, 13-24. Simon was brought to faith and was baptized. He was dissatisfied with the previous success of his sorcery. He wanted a part in the miraculous working of the Spirit. Peter warned him that his heart was not right in the sight of God and that repentance was in order. Another New Testament analogy adduced by Hengstenberg is that of the exorcists mentioned in Luke 9, 49 who used the name of Jesus, and yet were not in the company of the disciples. ²

The view that Balaam was a definitely godless and false prophet and also that which regards him as a man of deep piety and a true prophet are both rejected as untenable by Hengstenberg, who asserts that the only correct view is one between these two extremes. According to this view there were in Balaam the beginnings of fear and knowledge of God, but no more than the beginnings. There was no thorough conversion. He had glimpses of light, but no dependable gift of prophecy that would warrant his being classed with the prophets. ³

As to the source of Balaam's fear of God there are several conjectures. One view holds that his religious nature, developed on heathen ground, was stimulated by primeval monotheistic traditions and individual sayings from patriarchal revelations which had come over into the heathen world and been preserved. ⁴ This assumption Heng-

1 Newton op.cit., p.59, mentions in connection with this Matth. 7,22.23 He offers Jonah as another example of a prophet who was disobedient, but Jonah repented and obeyed.

2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 15

3 Ibid., p. 11

4 Ibid., p. 12

stenberg rejects, because it attributes to the heathen world an inclination to accept and preserve the individual sayings which had come to them, an assumption without definite proof. ¹

According to the other view it was at the time of Moses that the knowledge of the God of Israel spread from the covenant people to the heathen peoples living in the surrounding territory, and from this Balaam is assumed to have derived his knowledge of God. ² This latter view is the one embraced by Hengstenberg, who offers several arguments in support of it.

The first of these arguments is Balaam's use of יהוה, which never appears with those outside the covenant relation. Comparison is made to Melchizedek, "the priest of the most high God," who, according to Hengstenberg, knew nothing of Jehovah. ³ Melchizedek is not reported to have used this divine name, but the mere absence of a definite, positive statement cannot be taken as a proof even that Melchizedek failed to use this name, much less that he lacked any acquaintance with the name.

The claim is made that Balaam's knowledge of God was not restricted, like that of Melchizedek, to the "most high God, Possessor of heaven and earth," but that Balaam knew at the same time the God of Israel, what He had done for His people, ⁴ and what He would do in the future. The only plausible source of this information would be Israel itself, it is argued. ⁵ The claimed distinction between the knowledge of God

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.13

2 Ibid., p. 12

3 Ibid., p. 12: "Melchisedek weiss ... doch nichts von Jehovah."

4 Numbers 23, 22

5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.13

Res Shammah
Tues

possessed by Balaam and that of Melchizedek is untenable, as the restriction of Melchizedek's divine knowledge finds no proof in the mere omission of a more detailed statement, nor is there any other support, outside the fact that Israel as a nation, God's covenant people, had no individual existence at that time. Israel had no past history for Melchizedek to know. Any knowledge of Israel's future possessed by Balaam was the result of revelation, rather than rumor.

Balaam's prophecies are said to rest thoroughly on the fundamental promises in Genesis,¹ and the argument is brought up that Balaam could have known about these promises only from the people who had preserved them.² This argument fails to consider divine revelation. A definite knowledge by Balaam of the earlier promises is not necessary. Balaam's allusions to them, and the mentioned similarities, can be accounted for by the fact that his utterances were here

1 Num. 23, 10: "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?"
Genesis 13, 16: "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."

Num. 23, 24: "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain."

Num. 24, 9a: "He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up?"

Gen. 49, 9: "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"

Num. 23, 17: "... a Scepter shall rise out of Israel."

Gen. 49, 10a: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

² Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 13

inspired by God, the Author of the earlier promises. ¹

That Balaam might have learned about the God of Israel from reports spreading at the time of Moses is suggested by such passages as mention the strong impression which the great deeds of God produced on the surrounding people, ² especially such as Jethro ³ and Rahab. ⁴

No doubt, suggests Hengstenberg, Balaam had followed the trade of his father and practiced it among his people, for purposes of greed. Bitter experience must have showed him its futility. The reports of what God had done for Israel came to him. He did all in his power to obtain a better knowledge of the God of Israel and His revelations. He longed to partake of these powers, his object being gain. He called Jehovah his God, and the Lord did reveal Himself to Balaam. ⁵

1 This is not to be taken as a denial of the possibility that Balaam knew the earlier promises or that he received them directly or indirectly from Israel, but only a denial of the validity of the proof offered in support of the claim that his knowledge of God was based on that which spread from Israel at the time of Moses.

2 Exodus 15, 14; Joshua 5, 1.

3 Exodus 18, 1 ff., esp. 9-11: "And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them."

4 Hengstenberg, op.cit., pp. 13-14.
Joshua 2, 9 - 11

5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.14 (All this is the suggestion of Hengstenberg)

The best explanation for the apparent inconsistencies in the narrative concerning Balaam is the assumption that he was a sooth-sayer, who had heard reports of the mighty deeds of Jehovah in behalf of Israel. Balaam himself then sought Jehovah, and that this was not entirely for gain is indicated by the fact that the Lord did reveal Himself and His will to Balaam. Greed, however, remained a powerful force in Balaam, and it was this which led him astray, as it has others throughout human history.

The generation of Israel that had been in Egypt had to die off before the people were ready to enter the land of promise. During the forty years' journey in the wilderness the Israelites encountered several hostile nations, who tried to halt them. When they approached the territory of the Amorites, they sent messengers to Sihon, the Amorite king, requesting permission to pass through the land peacefully, promising to do no damage. The request was emphatically denied, as Sihon mobilized his people and opposed Israel with force. The result was a victory for Israel. Next they were opposed by Og, king of Bashan, and the result was another victory for Israel.

By this time Israel was camping "in the plains of Moab," and king Balak, having heard reports of Israel's past victories, was no more optimistic about the outcome of a battle with Israel than were the rest of the Moabites. "And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel." ¹ A conference with Midian, Moab's confederates, took place, and the general attitude was one of woe. A plan was adopted, whereby it was hoped to remedy the apparently hopeless situation.

¹ Numbers 22, 3

Balak, king of the Moabites, "sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people: for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." ¹ The messengers were "the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian," ² and these, bearing "the rewards of divination", came to Balaam. ³

The name of Balaam "must have been in high credit and estimation, that the king of Moab and the elders of Midian should think it worth their while to send two honorable embassies to him at a considerable distance, to engage him to come and curse the people of Israel." ⁴

It was a common superstitious ceremony among the heathens "to devote their enemies to destruction at the beginning of their wars, as if the gods would enter into their passions, and were as unjust and partial as themselves." ⁴ Thus, since Balaam was a "prophet of great note and eminence," it was assumed "that he was more intimate than others with the heavenly powers, and consequently that his imprecations would be more effectual," ⁴ as is expressed in Chapter 22, 6, "for I wot that

1 Numbers 22, 5-6

2 Wobersin, Die Echtheit der Bil'amsprüche, pp. 14-15.
According to Wobersin it is to be assumed that אֱלֵדִי was a title among the Midianites, as אֱלֵדִי with the Moabites (v-8), and that אֱלֵדִי מוֹאָב in verse 7 is an accommodation to the

3 Numbers 22, 7.

4 Newton, op.cit., p. 60.

אֱלֵדִי מוֹאָב

he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed."

Some of the arguments usually brought up to show the mercenary greed of Balaam are opposed by Cox, who then himself brings up arguments to prove the same fact, that Balaam was mercenary.¹ The rewards of divination are mentioned as a proof of the mercenary character of Balaam.² Cox defends Balaam against this attack, claiming that this was the custom, and pointing to 1 Samuel 9, 7. 8, where Saul and his servant debated as to what they could give the prophet.³ The claim is made that the gift was the customary one of esteem with no implication of reward, but the "rewards of divination," $\square \cdot \text{ב} \text{ד} \text{ו} \text{ר}$, are not mentioned in the passage in Samuel, the argument thus being invalidated. Since, however, the request was for Balaam to accompany the messengers, the $\square \cdot \text{ב} \text{ד} \text{ו} \text{ר}$ might better be regarded as a retainer fee, rather than a complete payment, which latter would probably depend upon the efficiency of his work.

The repetition of Balaam's appeal to God for permission, at the return of the mission from Moab with Balak's second offer, is said to indicate Balaam's greed, in that he was thoroughly aware of God's displeasure,⁴ and thus the only motive that could prompt this second appeal for divine permission was the desire for the rich rewards offered

1 Cox, Balaam an Exposition and a Study, pp. 40 ff.

2 Ibid., p. 40

3 Ibid., p. 41

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 10, offers as an indication that Balaam was far different from the true servants of God the fact that he, tempted by greed, did not immediately reject those that were sent by Balak, even though he was aware that Israel was the people of God; and at the second invitation, although he had received the command not to curse them, and while he knew God was unchangeable, he again came to God for permission.

See also footnote 2 on page 19.

by Balak. Cox mentions the repeated requests of Paul and Abraham's persistent appeals in behalf of Lot, stating that with these men the repetition is regarded as a sign of faith.¹ Yet Abraham and Paul were not in a position to gain materially by a granting of their requests, nor would such a granting bring evil or sorrow to anyone. In the case of Balaam the accession to the wishes of the king would have meant great material rewards and would have involved an efficacious curse on Israel.

The presence of evil motives in Balaam is obvious, and Cox admits it. Balaam's will was contrary to that of God. He wanted to curse Israel,² and he was disappointed at the refusal of God. Deuteronomy 23, 5 states that "... the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, ..." Balaam's inclinations were clearly revealed by the words and actions recorded of him. His words in Numbers 22, 13, announcing God's refusal of permission, "the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you," suggest the disappointment that was his as his ambitions for evil were blocked by the divine prohibition.

Verse 18 is claimed to be another indication of greed, as Balaam makes the assertion: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." Cox finds in these words a tinge of regret, as Balaam perceives all this wealth just beyond his reach, but Cox tries to lighten the condemnation resting on Balaam by asserting that the fault of attaching too great an importance to money is a weakness common to many

1 Cox, op. cit., p. 42

2 Ibid., p. 44

otherwise decent people.¹ The prevalence of a certain vice, however, does not nullify nor lighten its evil character.²

As Balaam waited the second time for divine sanction, God told him, "If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them,"³ but the prohibition was appended: "but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do."⁴ Now Balaam saw a trace of hope. He might accompany the messengers. If he was once this far, there might still be some chance of his cursing Israel.

Scripture supplies little information regarding the circumstances of his departure. "And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab."⁵ Nothing is said as to whether or not the men had called Balaam. The A.V. translation of the following verse, "And God's anger was kindled because he went,"⁶ states that the fact that Balaam was on his way displeased God. This displeasure could only be the result of disobedience, and making the journey was not an act of disobedience unless it was forbidden. The

1 Cox, op. cit., p. 46.

2 Cox, op. cit., pp. 46-47. Balaam protests repeatedly that he can do nothing but what God tells him. Cox suggests that Balaam appears to be protesting too much, and he points to the fact that Balaam did fall.

3 The Smith-Goodspeed American Translation has here: "If it is to summon you that the men have come, be off and go with them," which is preferable, unless the אם is taken in the sense of future perfect. If the אם is taken as past, the conditions had already been fulfilled. The A.V. rendition makes it a condition to be fulfilled in the future, and thus in the "because" in verse 22 (A.V.) the suggestion is that it was not fulfilled.

4 Numbers 22, 20.

5 Numbers 22, 21.

6 Smith Goodspeed American Translation: "The anger of God blazed at his going."

implication is thus that Balaam went, though the stipulated conditions were not fulfilled. It has been suggested that Balaam, in his eagerness, rose early and prepared for the journey, without waiting to be called by the messengers. God's displeasure at the fact of Balaam's departure is not stated in the text. God's anger was kindled כִּי הִלֵּךְ הָאֱלֹהִים and there is no indication that the וְ must be taken causally rather than temporally. The causal significance attached to it by the A.V. suits the A.V.'s "if the men come," of verse 20, the Hebrew being וְאִם יָבֹאוּ. The A.V. thus implies that the stipulated conditions were not fulfilled, and thus permission was not given. For this reason Balaam's departure would in itself be an act of disobedience. While this interpretation is possible, it is not the best view, as it imposes a strain on the Hebrew text.

The וְאִם יָבֹאוּ in verse 20 is better taken in the common sense, that of completed action, "If they have come ...," The condition then would have been already fulfilled, and Balaam's permission to accompany the messengers would be effective without additional stipulation. In this case the fact of his departure would not constitute a violation of God's prohibition, and the divine anger was kindled not "because," but "as" Balaam was on his way.

God is not angry without cause, and the cause of divine anger is unrighteousness. ¹ While Balaam was on his way, it can well be assumed that his mind was at work, trying to devise some method of evading God's command without violating his conscience too severely, perhaps fulfilling the letter and neglecting the spirit. ² He took advantage

¹ Newton, op. cit., p. 53

² Ibid., p. 52

of the permission to make the trip, with the secret intention of avoiding the divine restrictions placed upon him.¹ He was plotting rebellion, and it was not without cause that God's anger was aroused against him. The fact that it was necessary for the angel to appear to Balaam with drawn sword to warn him² shows adequately that Balaam needed such a warning.

It was in connection with the appearance of the Angel of the Lord that there occurred the event which has attracted, perhaps, more attention than any other incident in the history of Balaam. The ass on which he was riding saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, with drawn sword, and the ass turned aside. In its efforts to avoid the Angel, the ass crushed Balaam's foot against a wall and finally sank to the ground beneath him. "Balaam's anger was kindled," and he continued to beat the ass with a staff.

"And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

"And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

"And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay."³

"Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way." The angel rebuked Balaam: "...

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.10

2 Ibid., p.10. The necessity of the angel's appearance with drawn sword as a warning; the fact that Balaam, blinded by passion, for some time failed to be aware of the closeness of the Angel of the Lord, thus manifested to him; Hengstenberg takes these as indications of the wide difference between Balaam and the true servants of God.

See also note 4 on page 15.

3 Numbers 22, 28 - 30.

behold I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me." ¹

"And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I know not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

"And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak." ²

The text fails to state at exactly which stage of the journey this encounter with the Angel and the speaking of the ass occurred, whether near the beginning or near the end, ³ but this lack of information cannot disprove the historicity of the events described.

The Gentiles, as Newton points out, believed such phenomena as a speaking ass to be possible, and so they could have no objection to the historicity of this story. Philo omitted the story of Balaam, probably in order not to give offense to the Gentiles. The Gentiles, however, had similar narratives, not only the poets and mythologists, but also the "gravest historians, such as Livy and Plutarch, who frequently affirm that oxen have spoken." ⁴

The New Testament affirms the historicity of this event, as Peter states that Balaam "was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet." ⁵

The fact that the ass is not capable of rational thought fails to speak strongly against this narrative, as an actual speaking of the ass does not demand its knowledge or understanding of what it was

1 Numbers 22, 31-32

2 Numbers 22, 34-35

3 Wobersin, op. cit., p. 13

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 61

5 2 Peter 2, 16 (A.V.)

uttering.¹

Maimonides and others² have suggested that this speaking of the ass may have been a vision, as prophets often beheld things in visions, which were as strongly impressed in their minds as realities.³ Comparison is made to Peter, who had to learn through a vision at Joppa, against his will, and similarly, says Wobersin, Balaam had to learn through a vision, against his will.⁴ The case of Peter's vision, however, differs from this incident in the narrative of Balaam, as Acts 10, 10 specifically states that Peter "fell into a trance,"⁵ and in verse 17 it is distinctly called a "vision."⁶ The speaking of the ass in this incident is treated as a historical fact. Scripture nowhere calls this a vision, nor is it stated that Balaam fell into a trance in order to witness these happenings. If it were a vision, Newton points out, the statement that "the Lord opened the mouth of the ass" would not be necessary.⁷

The objection is raised that the mouth of the ass is not so

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 61

2 Milman, The History of the Jews, Vol. I, p. 175, footnote:

"The interpretation of this scene as a vision, or a struggle in the mind of Balaam, which took this wild form, is as old as Maimonides, if not much older. 'Ita dico, in negotio Balaam, totum illud quod in via ei contigisse dicitur, et quomodo asina locuta fuerit, in visione prophetica factum esse, quod in fine historiae explicatur, quod Angelus Dei locutus fuerit..'
More Nevochim, p. 11, c. 42."

3 Newton, loc. cit.

4 Wobersin, op. cit., p. 12

5 The Greek text has ἐγένετο ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔκστασις (the textus receptus has ἐπέπεσεν for ἐγένετο), ecstasy fell upon him. The A.V. and the Smith Goodspeed American Translation both translate this with "fell into a trance."

6 The Greek here has ὄραμα ὃ εἶδεν and the A.V. and the Smith Goodspeed American Translation both translate this with "vision."

7 Newton, loc. cit.

constructed as to be capable of articulate speech. To this it can be mentioned that "an adequate cause is assigned for this wonderful effect, for it is said expressly that 'the Lord opened the mouth of the ass.'" ¹ God, who had made the ass in the first place, cannot now be denied to have the power to cause it to speak.

Josephus accepts this as a historical fact, stating that, "when the ass, upon the angel's continuing to distress her, and upon the stripes which were given her, fell down, by the will of God, she made use of the voice of a man, and complained of Balaam as acting unjustly to her." ² Josephus states further that Balaam "was disturbed by reason of the voice of the ass, which was that of a man, ... " ³

Milman treats this incident very briefly, intimating that the report of the happenings on the journey came through Balaam. "Strange prodigies, he related, had arrested him on his journey; an angel had appeared in his way; the beast on which he rode had spoken with a human voice, ... " ⁴ Scripture fails to mention a reporting of these events by Balaam, and, since they fail to show him in a highly favorable light, a reluctance on the part of Balaam to mention them would not be unthinkable, although the question of whether he did or

1 Newton, op.cit., p.62

2 Josephus, Antiquities, 4, 6, 3. (Whiston Translation)

Iosephi, Opera Omnia, Vol. I, p.201 (Ant. 4, 6, 3)

... κατὰ βούλησιν θεοῦ φωνὴν ἀνθρωπίνην λαροῦσα
κατεκέρμετο τὸν Βάλαμον, ...

3 Josephus, Antiquities, 4, 6, 3. (Whiston Translation)

Iosephi, Opera Omnia, Vol. I, p.202 (Ant. 4, 6, 3)

παραττομένου δ' αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν τῆς ὄνου
φωνὴν ἀνθρωπίνην οὔσαν, ...

4 Milman, op. cit., Vol. I, p.175.

Without definitely denying the historicity of this narrative,

Milman appears to take this rather as a vision than a fact.

See page 21, footnote 2.

not is of little importance. No other witnesses are mentioned, nor are they necessary, as the divinely inspired writer was preserved from inaccuracy.

Objection is made to Balaam's lack of surprise at this speaking of the ass, which was not a common everyday occurrence. Newton mentions the highly improbable suggestion that perhaps he believed "the eastern doctrine of transmigration of human souls into the bodies of brutes," and so might "think such a humanized brute not incapable of speaking."¹ Another suggestion to account for the lack of astonishment is the anger of Balaam, who may have been too angry to pay attention to the wonder. Peter mentions the "madness" of Balaam.² Yet great astonishment often is sufficient to overcome other emotions. Perhaps the best solution, if a solution is necessary, is the assumption that any surprise Balaam may have felt³ was omitted by Moses.⁴ The omission of a direct reference to it cannot be taken as a proof that it did not exist.

The claim is made that Balaam, being a diviner, interpreted the groans of the animal as words and thus assumed that it spoke, or that the one who originally wrote the chronicle interpreted it so.⁵ This view militates against the inspiration of the Scriptures. The text states that the ass spoke, and Moses was preserved, by divine inspiration, from incorporating into the Scriptural writings any errors in whatever

1 Newton, op.cit., p. 62

2 2 Peter 2, 16: παραφρονία (variations in a few less important manuscripts)

3 Josephus, loc.cit., suggests such perturbation on Balaam's part.

4 Newton, op.cit., p.62: "Moses ... in his short history might omit this circumstance."

5 Cox, op. cit., p. 57, reports this claim.

sources he may have employed.

The conversation between Balaam and the ass, wherein Balaam admitted that the animal had indeed served him well, is taken to show that Balaam was not as true to God, his Master, as the lowly ass was to his master, Balaam. ¹ It was a rebuke, and not a needless one, as is sometimes claimed. It served a worthy purpose in convincing Balaam that "the mouth and tongue were under God's direction," and that the same divine power which made the ass speak, contrary to its nature, could also cause him to speak blessings, even though he was not so inclined. ² The contrast here shows that Balaam's speeches of blessing were a greater manifestation of God's beneficence and power than the speaking of the ass, because Balaam resisted, ³ while the ass was only passive. ⁴

The prophecies of Balaam render the speaking of the ass more believable. "It was not more above the natural capacity of the ass to speak, than it was above the natural capacity of Balaam to foretell so many distant events." ⁵

The ultimate fulfilment of these prophecies is a strong testimony in their favor. If the objections raised against the speaking of the ass are permitted to stand, the Scriptures in general are discredited, and the section concerning Balaam in particular. If the lesser wonder,

1 Cox, op.cit., p.66

2 Newton, op.cit., p.62

3 Newton, op.cit., p.62. That Balaam spoke contrary to his inclinations is apparent, says Newton, from the fact that, after prophesying, although ordered in anger to depart and "flee to his place," Num. 24, 10. 11; "yet he had the meanness" to remain "and gave that wicked counsel, whereby the people were enticed 'to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab,'" Num. 25, 1; 31, 16; and 24, 000 died, Num. 25.

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 62

5 Ibid., p. 63

that of the ass, is successfully attacked, the greater, that of the prophecies, is weakened accordingly. Thus the objections to the speaking animal cannot be dismissed with a mere word of derogation. on the other hand, the testimony offered by the fulfilment of the prophecies, supporting the greater wonder, support indirectly also the truth of the speaking of the ass, for, if the greater miracle is true, the lesser can likewise be assumed to be true. The one who holds to the inspiration of the Scriptures, without prejudice, experiences little difficulty in accepting the narrative as it stands, as well as the prophecies that follow.

THE FIRST PROPHECY OF BALAAM

Numbers 23, 7 - 10

"And he took up his parable, and said, Balak, the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?

For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations

Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

(Authorized Version)

When he heard that Balaam was coming, king Balak showed his eagerness by going out to meet the soothsayer, and even the statement by Balaam that he could say nothing but what the Lord told him failed to dampen the king's ardor appreciably. Balaam announced: "Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." Balak, however, was optimistic in spite of this.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people." ¹ Balaam then had the king build seven altars and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for offering. Balaam then offered a bull ² and a ram on each altar, a costly offering, but one which suited the nature of the king's demands.

The king was told to stand by the burnt offering, while Balaam went to meet God, telling Balak: "whatsoever he sheweth me I will

1 Numbers 22, 41

The קצוה קצוה , rendered by the A.V. with "the utmost part of the people" is translated by Theophile J. Meek in the Smith Goodspeed American Translation with "the nearest of the people." The view that this signifies the "utmost end," all the people, to the farthest extremity, is here to be preferred.

See page 54

2 Hebrew בול , A.V. "bullock."

In verse 1, Hebrew אֲרָא , A.V. "oxen."

tell thee." He went to an unoccupied place. ¹ Here God met with Balaam, and "the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak." ² It was a definite message that Balaam received from God. This definitely stamps the following utterance of Balaam as God's Word, and nullifies the objections of those who try to weaken the force of the speech by pointing to the evil character of Balaam. The personal unwillingness of Balaam to bless, inspite of which he did bless, points to the working of God.

After God had given Balaam the words which he was to say, Balaam returned to the burnt offerings, around which stood Balak and the princes, waiting for the curse that would wither the strength of the Israelites and make them a helpless prey for Moab.

And he took up his parable, and said, "Balak the king of Moab has brought me from Aram, from the mountains of the east: 'Come, curse Jacob for me; and come, execrate Israel.'"

"And he took up his parable" ³ is rendered by Meek in the Smith Goodspeed American Translation with: "Then he gave utterance to his oracle." The LXX translates יִשְׁבַּח with $\text{τὴν παραβολὴν αὐτοῦ}$, and the Vulgate, similarly, has "parabola sua." ⁴ Newton takes it

1 A.V.: "an high place." רֵם is bareness or a bare place, and this might be bare of vegetation or bare of humanity, the latter being implied in the Smith Goodspeed American Translation, "So he went off by himself." Balaam was already at a high place, and for his purposes he would naturally choose to go to some place where he could be alone without distractions.

2 Numbers 23, 5

3 A.V. Hebrew: $\text{יִשְׁבַּח מִשְׁבַּח}$

4 The meaning of שְׁבַח is properly that of a comparison or parable, a "Gleichnis," according to Keil (German, 1870 edition, p. 326), and then also a "Sprichwort," (Keil, loc.cit.) a proverb, as this consists of comparisons and pictures; and finally a sentence or speech. (Keil, loc.cit.)

as a "weighty and solemn speech delivered in figurative and majestic language," and asserts that this applies remarkably to the prophecies or parables of Balaam. ¹ The same word is used in the same manner in Job 27, 1 and 29, 1: "Job continued his parable." ²

Orelli says this oracle is called a זְּשִׁירָה "chiefly on account of its symmetrical form and beautiful finish, which comport well with its lofty inspiration." ³

The term זְּשִׁירָה , the designation of all the announcements of Balaam, ⁴ is never used of the prophecies of the true prophets of Jehovah, with the exception only of the interpolated songs and parables. ⁵

The use of זְּשִׁירָה here with Balaam's utterances, says Keil, is to be explained partly by the poetic form of Balaam's speech, the prevalence of poetic pictures, the strictly observed parallelism of members, the movement of the speech in short, pointed sentences, and other characteristics of poetic speech. ⁶

1 Newton, op.cit., p. 63, concerning זְּשִׁירָה : "Le Clerc translates it 'figurata orationem' and thereby is meant a weighty and solemn speech delivered in figurative and majestic language. Such, remarkable such are the prophecies or parables of Balaam."

2 Newton, op.cit., p.63

3 Orelli, The Old Testament Prophecy, p.145, Note A

4 Numbers 23, 7. 18; 24, 3.15.20.21.23.

5 Keil, Biblischer Commentar "über Die Bücher Mose's, zweiter Band, Leviticus, Numeri, und Deuteronomium, zweite, verbesserte Auflage, 1870. p.327: e.g. Is. 14,4; Ez.17,2; 24,3; Mic.2,4.

6 Keil, op.cit., p.327: e.g. זְּשִׁירָה , Ch-24, 3. 15.

In addition, says Keil, the designation זְּשִׁירָה points to the real difference existing between the speaking of Balaam and the prophecies of the prophets. The latter are intended for the congregation, having developed in accord with the peculiar position of Israel with relation to the Lord and His law.

Balaam begins his speech by recounting the circumstances which led to his present position. "Balak the king of Moab is bringing me ¹ from Aram, ² from the mountains of the East, מן־אֲרָם יִנְחֵנִי בָּלַק מִהַר־רֵי־קִדְדָּם . ³ Balaam here refers to the mountains of his home ⁴ in contrast to the mountains of the Moabite land where he now finds himself. ⁵

Next Balaam states the purpose for which Balak had brought him this great distance, recounting the demands of the king. ⁶ "Come, curse me Jacob," לָכֵן אָרָה־לִי יַעֲקֹב . ⁷ Jacob here is a poetic designation of the people, with the same meaning as Israel, ⁸ as is shown by the parallelism in this verse. The purpose of the king was to have Israel cursed. In this and the following verse three different verbs of cursing are used. The verb אָרָה is a common expression of

1 Hiph'il imperfect, יִנְחֵנִי , expresses progressive action.

2 Here מן־אֲרָם . In Deut. 23, 5: מִפֶּתַח אֲרָם נִחְרָם , from Pethor of Aram Naharayim or of Mesopotamia.

3 LXX: Ἐκ Μεσοποταμίας κατεπέμψατό με Βαλακ βασιλεὺς Μωαβ ἐς ὁρέων ἀπ'ἀνατολῶν λεγῶν

Vulgate: De Aram adduxit me Balac rex Moabitarum, de montibus orientis

Luther: Aus Syrien hat mich Balak, der Moabiter König, holen lassen, von dem Gebirge gegen dem Aufgang:

S.-G. Am. Tr.: "From Aram has Balak brought me, The king of Moab, from the mountains of the east:"

4 The term קִדְדָּם is another designation of Mesopotamia. In Gen. 29, 1 Mesopotamia is "the land of the people of the east."

5 Keil, op.cit., 1870 edition, p. 327

6 The "saying" of the A.V. is not in the original, although the Vulgate also inserts 'inquit,' and the Lxx has λεγῶν .

7 LXX: Δεῦρο ἄρασαί μοι τὸν Ἰακωβ

Vulgate: Veni, inquit, et maledic Jacob,

Luther: Komm, verfluche mir Jacob,

S.-G. Am. Tr.: "'Come, curse Jacob for me, '"

8 Keil, loc. cit.

cursing. The parallel member, "and come, curse Israel," **וַיִּזְעַק וַיְעַרְרָא לֵאמֹר** ¹ uses another verb, **וַיְעַרְרָא**, to be angry, and here to utter the wrath of God, with the meaning of curse, ² which meaning is suggested also by the parallelism in this verse with **וַיְעַרְרָא** ³ and in the following verse with **וַיִּנְקַב** ⁴ or **וַיִּקְבַּב**, ⁵ both verbs of cursing. ⁶

Balaam leaves no room for doubt as to the nature of Balak's request, and in the following verse he makes it plain that he is powerless to fulfil the demands of the king. "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" **מִיָּה אֶקְבַּב לֹא קִבְּהָ אֱלֹהִים**. ⁷ Here a different verb is used, **וַיִּקְבַּב**. ⁸ The LXX and the Vulgate translate this with **ἀράσωμαι** ⁹ and *maledicam*, the same verbs used to

1 LXX: **καὶ δεῦρο ἐπικατάρασαί μοι τὸν Ἰσραηλ.**
 Vulgate: *propera et detestare Israel.*
 Luther: *komm, schilt Israel.*
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "Come, execrate Israel."

2 Keil, op.cit., 1870 ed., p. 327.

3 The LXX renders the **וַיְעַרְרָא** with *ἀράσαι* and the **וַיִּזְעַק** with *καταράσασθαι*. The Vulgate has *maledicam* and *detestare*.

4 The verb **וַיִּנְקַב** has the meaning of 'pierce,' and thence curse in the sense of 'deflate.'

5 Keil, loc.cit., mentions both verbs.

6 Luther translates **וַיְעַרְרָא** with *verfluchen* and **וַיִּקְבַּב** with *fluchen*. The verb **וַיְעַרְרָא** he takes as *shelten*.

7 LXX: **τί ἀράσωμαι ὃν μὴ καταράται κύριος.**
 Vulgate: *Quomodo maledicam, cui non maledixit Deus?*
 Luther: *Wie soll ich fluchen, dem Gott nicht fluchet?*
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "How can I curse one whom God has not cursed?"

8 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.84, states that from the root **קָבַב** is to be derived not only the **וַיִּקְבַּב**, but also the **וַיִּזְעַק**. He says further that the incorrectness of the customary view, according to which the **וַיִּזְעַק** is the future of **וַיִּקְבַּב**, is shown not only by this passage, wherein a change of the verb (**וַיִּקְבַּב** to **וַיִּזְעַק**) would be unsuitable, but also the fact that **וַיִּזְעַק**, where it appears in the past, participle, active and passive, imperative, has never the meaning "curse."

9 LXX translates **וַיִּזְעַק** with *ἀράσωμαι*, but **וַיִּקְבַּב** with *καταράται*.

translate the אָרַר in the preceding verse.

In the parallel member אָרַר is again used, "And how shall I execrate whom God has not execrated,"¹ וַיִּמְדָּה אֱזוּלָם לֹא אֶעְרַם יְהוָה :²

While the parallelism and the LXX speak for the meaning "curse," Hengstenberg raises objections, asserting that the verb אָרַר, like the noun אָרַר, stands for violent wrath and has never the meaning of "Verwünschen," which many try to attach to it here.³ The idea of anger, he continues, is suitable also here in these verses, when it is considered that the curse could result only from a great inward agitation against the object of the curse, the efficacy⁴ of the curse then depending on the anger to which the curser aroused himself.⁵ This necessitates a distinction between the emotion motivating the curse and the curse itself, a difficult distinction to make in any particular case, since in human beings anger is usually accompanied by some degree of malevolence. Here the use of אָרַר and קָבַר show that something more than mere anger is being considered, although אָרַר may be taken as laying its principal stress on the anger that brings about the curse.

The meaning: "How shall I curse one whom God does not curse?"

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- 1 The A.V. takes אָרַר in both this and the preceding verse as "defy." Meek, in the Smith-Goodspeed American Translation, translates with "execrate."
 - 2 LXX: ἢ τί καταρώσωμαι ὃν μὴ καταράται ὁ θεός;
 Vulgate: Qua ratione detestatur?
 Luther: wie soll ich schelten, den der HERR nicht schilt?
 S.-G. Am.Tr.: "How can I execrate one whom the Lord has not execrated?"
 - 3 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.81, mentions as examples Proverbs 22, 14 (אָרַר יְהוָה) and Proverbs 24, 24
 - 4 "Wirksamkeit"
 - 5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.82

is rejected by Hengstenberg, since, if this were the meaning, Balaam would be uttering a general sentence, and the application to the present case would be thus left to Balak. The suffix on קִבְּהָ¹ is to be referred to Israel,² and the statement thus becomes a definite assertion that God does not curse Israel.³ The failure of the article to appear with אֵלֹהִים in the latter part of the verse, Hengstenberg declares, is apparently to be attributed to the fact that Balaam was reluctant to employ for the second time the boldness⁴ of the construction of this verb with the accusative.⁵ This explanation is mere conjecture. The suffix with אֵלֹהִים is not necessary, as the sense is sufficiently clear without it.

This rhetorical question in the affirmative is equivalent to a strong negation. Balaam could not curse Israel, because Israel was not cursed by God. With these words he indicated the futility of Balak's hopes for an effective curse.

Balak, like all heathen believed that Balaam, according to his own will, could dispense blessing or curse and inflict the power of God as he chose.⁶ He had told Balaam by his messengers: "I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."⁷

1 Gesenius Kautzsch Grammar, 58 g designates this as a rare form of the 3rd singular masculine suffix.

2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 83

3 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 83: "... das Suff. in קִבְּהָ ist auf Israel zu beziehen: wie könnte ich ihn verfluchen, den Gott nicht verflucht."

In the Hebrew the suffix is attached to the second verb, the cursing by God, not that by Balaam, which is without the suffix.

4 "Kühnheit"

5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 84, takes this absence of the suffix as another testimony against the view that tries to give אֵלֹהִים the meaning of "wish evil." ("verwünschen")

6 Keil, op.cit., 1870 edition, p. 327

7 Numbers 22, 6 (Smith Goodspeed American Translation)

According to the king's idea the blessing or curse depended on Balaam, and his God was bound to follow in whatever way Balaam chose to lead Him. ¹

Balaam himself knew otherwise. According to Hengstenberg, Balaam's knowledge of God's decree to bless Israel, and not curse, he had received in an outward manner at first, through the revelations to the patriarchs, and he alludes to these revelations with definite premeditation in order to point to them as the basis of his proclamations. ² Then this externally received knowledge had become, by the Spirit of God, an inner certainty, ³ and all doubt was removed. ⁴

Balaam could not supply an effective curse while God's decree, by which Balaam was bound, was one of blessing. Balak recognized no absolute, binding divine decree. ⁵ He assumed that Balaam could exert authority over God, that the curse depended on Balaam's own free will, that the curse of God must necessarily follow that of Balaam. ⁶ The falsity of this opinion was now obvious to Balaam. God's unchangeable decree was one of blessing, and there was nothing he could do to turn it into a curse. God's decree was one of blessing, and the following verses give the reason. ⁷

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 82

2 This is possible, and even probable, but remains a mere assumption without definite proof.

3 Numbers 22, 12: "thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed."

Numbers 23, 5: "the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth."

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 83

5 Ibid., p. 82

6 Ibid., p. 83

7 Keil, op.cit., 1870 edition, p. 327

"For from the top of the rocks I see him," פִּי מֵרֹאשׁ צְרִיִם
 אֶרְאֶנּוּ .¹ Some claim that the פִּי is superfluous, probably
 because of the Vulgate, which omits it entirely. The LXX has ὅτι .
 The פִּי here introduces the reason for the previous sentence, as
 Luther expresses this with "Denn ..."

This phrase is followed by the parallel member: "And from the
 hills I behold him," וּמִגְּבֻעוֹת אֲשֶׁר־נָה .² The verbs
 אֶרְאֶנּוּ and אֲשֶׁר־נָה , both imperfect, are translated in the
 LXX and the Vulgate with the future.³ Luther translates these
 verbs with the present tense,⁴ as does the A.V. The present is
 more acceptable, as Balaam at the time was on the mountain, where he
 could see the utter extremity of the population of Israel.

The suffixes on these verbs refer to Israel, treating the people
 as a unit.⁵ This is fitting in connection with the latter part of
 the verse, which treats of Israel as a separate people, distinct from

- 1 LXX: ὅτι ἀπὸ κορυφῆς ὄρεων ὄψομαι αὐτὸν
 Vulgate: De summis silicibus videbo eum,
 Luther: Denn von der Höhe der Felsen sehe ich ihn wohl,
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "For from the top of the rocks I see them,"
- 2 LXX: καὶ ἀπὸ βουνῶν προσνοήσω αὐτόν
 Vulgate: et de collibus considerabo illum.
 Luther: und von den Hügeln schaue ich ihn.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "From the hills I behold them —"
- 3 אֶרְאֶנּוּ LXX: ὄψομαι αὐτόν
 Vulgate: videbo eum.
 אֲשֶׁר־נָה LXX: προσνοήσω
 Vulgate: considerabo illum
- 4 Luther: אֶרְאֶנּוּ , sehe ich ihn
 אֲשֶׁר־נָה , schaue ich ihn
- 5 Thus the Smith Goodspeed Am. Tr. translates "them."

the other nations. ¹

"Behold, a people living alone," הִרְיֵעַם לְבַדָּד יִשְׁכֹּן . ²

This living alone is expanded in the following phrase, "and does not reckon itself among the nations," וַיִּבְגְּרוּם לֹא יִתְחַשְׁבוּ : ³

"Living alone" according to commentators, signifies a quiet and preserved seclusion, ⁴ a dwelling undisturbed, apart from others, ⁵ with no one interfering in Israel's affairs. ⁶ Separated from the world by a wall of divine preservation, ⁷ they were freed from the great catastrophies by which the form of the world was changed. ⁸

The later history of Israel fails to corroborate these statements

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.85, suggests two ways to take this verse: a) "for from the tops of the mountains I behold him as a people who lives alone, etc.," or b) with a period after the "I see him," the following being taken as a continuation and closer designation. There is little difference between the two, however.

2 LXX: ἴδού λαὸς μόνος κατοικήσει
Vulgate: Populus solus habitabit,
Luther: Siehe, das Volk wird besonders wohnen,
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Lo, a people living by themselves, "

3 LXX: καὶ ἐν ἔθνεσιν οὐ συλλογισθήσεται
Vulgate: et inter gentes non reputabitur.
Luther: und nicht unter die Heiden gerechnet werden.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Not accounting themselves as one of the nations."

4 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.86

5 Cook, Bible with Commentary, p.740

6 Hengstenberg, loc.cit.

7 Keil and the Bible Commentary mention Deut. 33, 28: "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone" (טַרְטַר , "alone," is here used with טַרְטַר , "safe." [Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.86]); Jeremiah 49, 31: "Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the Lord, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone" (apparently referring, says Hengstenberg, to our passage. God leads His people like a shepherd) ; Micah. 7, 14: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel."

Keil, on the Pentateuch, Vol. III, English translation, p.179

Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 740

Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.86

8 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.87

of the commentators, as later Israel was repeatedly oppressed by other nations and after the division of the kingdom both the southern and the northern kingdoms were taken into captivity, from which the northern kingdom, Israel, never returned.

"Dwelling alone does not denote a quiet and safe retirement," says Keil, "... but according to the parallel clause 'it is not reckoned among the nations' it expresses the separation of Israel from the rest of the nations."¹ That Israel was separate was apparent, but this was a symbol of the inward separation by which Israel was saved from the fate that overtook the heathen nations. As long as the Israelites maintained their separation from the heathen peoples and adhered to Jehovah, they could not be conquered by the heathen.

The use of the hithpa'el : פָּרַדְתָּ is significant. The reflexive sense expresses the nature of the separation more accurately than the passive sense as found in the LXX, Vulgate, Luther,² A.V., and the Smith Goodspeed American Translation. This inner separation was to be maintained by Israel.

There was a "general intercommucity amongst the gods of Paganism," but not between the God of Israel and the gods of the heathen nations.³ "The Jews, in their religion and laws, their rites and ceremonies, their manners and customs, were so totally different from all other

1 Keil, op.cit., English translation, p. 179

2 LXX: $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$
Vulgate: reputabitur
Luther: wird gerechnet werden

3 Newton, op. cit., p.64, points out also that there is no fellowship between God and Belial, but there may be between Belial and Dagon.

nations, that they had little intercourse or communion with them." ¹

The striking fact about this is "that they should differ from all the people in the world, and should dwell by themselves among the nations, without mixing and incorporating with any." Furthermore, the time when this was stated "increases the wonder, it being before the people were well known in the world, before their religion and government were established, and even before they had obtained a settlement anywhere." ² "And how could Balaam by a distant view only of a people, whom he had never seen or known before, have discovered the genius and manners not only of the people then living, but of their posterity to the latest generations?" ² The wonder here is no greater than the wonder that Balaam was at all constrained to speak words of blessing over against Israel, and both wonders have the same divine cause.

The tranquility of Israel lasted only as long as Israel adhered to God for protection. ³ The inner "dwelling alone" was the condition on which the outer was based. ⁴ As long as, and in such measure as, they maintained their inner separation, they were kept outwardly separated and their independence preserved. ⁵

It was God's will that Israel was to be a nation separated from all others, as He told them: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." ⁶ "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 64

2 Ibid. loc. cit.,

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 740

4 Cook, Op. cit., p. 740
Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 87

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 88

6 Exodus, 19, 5. 6. The term *שִׁדְדָה* implies separation.

like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency,¹ and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."¹

Israel does not share the lot of the other nations, as it has a different God and Protector from the heathen peoples.²

Since this protection, the outward separation, depended on the inner separation, the neglect of the latter invited a loss of the former, and this forfeiture of Israel's security is amply illustrated in the subsequent history of Israel. When heathen influence had its internal effect on the chosen people, it prevailed also externally.³

When Israel neglected to preserve the inner separation, God sent them troubles in order to call them back to Him.⁴ The book of Judges offers repeated examples of this fact, as the cycle of fall, oppression, repentance, and deliverance was repeated again and again. In their captivities the Jews were often "more bigotted to their own religion," "more tenacious of their own rites and customs, than at other times."⁵

While other nations fell, Israel was preserved. "And what one nation is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For

1 Deut. 33, 29 (A.V.)

2 Keil, op. cit., English translation, p. 179

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 740 : Balaam later made use of this fact in tempting Israel to sin. (taken from Hengstenberg)

4 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 88

5 Newton, op.cit., p. 64. In some cases it was stubbornness, and in others it was sincerity and obedience.

thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their god." ¹ Other nations have perished, but spiritual Israel, as God's people, continues in the Church of the New Testament. ² Just as Israel, when lost in heathen ways, lost its independence, so also the New Testament Church, by falling into heathenism, forfeits its divine preservation. The application can be made to the Church of God of all ages. ³ All history, from ancient Israel up to the present day, demonstrates the truth of this. ⁴

In this verse we have a manifestation of the blessing of God that made it impossible for Balaam to curse God's people. Israel was both inwardly and outwardly separate from other peoples. ⁵ The following verse points to another aspect of the divine blessing on Israel.

"Who has counted the dust of Jacob," מִי מִנָּה עֵפֶר יַעֲקֹב . ⁶ The מִי with the perfect "rather expresses a rhetorical question, i.e. a denial." ⁷ Hengstenberg takes the מִנָּה as "determine", rather than "count," claiming that it is always used in this sense in the Pentateuch, and never as "count." The word for "count" in the Pentateuch is סָפַר , and appears not infrequently in this sense. ⁸

1 2 Samuel 7, 23. 24.

2 Keil, op.cit., English translation, p.180

3 Ibid., p. 179

4 Newton, op.cit., p.64

5 Keil, German edition of 1870, p.327

6 LXX: τίς ἐσηκρίβασατο τὸ σπέρμα Ἰακώβ

Vulgate: Quis dinumerare possit pulverem Jacob

Luther: Wer kann zählen den Staub Jacob

S.G. Am. Tr.: "Who can count Jacob's masses, "

7 Gesenius Kautzsch Grammar, 151 a

8 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 92, says no less than twelve times. Gen. 41, 49; Lev. 15, 13. 28; Deut. 16, 9.

The meaning "determine" is supported by the LXX reading: *τις ἐξηκριβάσατο*, who has determined? The meaning "count" is supported by the Vulgate "dinumerare" and Luther's "Wer kann zahlen ..." The A. V. and the Smith Goodspeed American Translation likewise have "count." Gesenius also supports the meaning "count" in this passage. ¹

The Massoretic text has simply the *מִי מִנָּה*, "who has counted," and the force of the rhetorical question is stressed by the addition of such verbs as "possit" in the Vulgate, "kann" in Luther's translation, and "can" in the A. V. and the American Translation. "As the dust cannot be numbered, so is the multitude of Israel innumerable." ²

Israel is compared to dust. The LXX has *σπέρμα*, seed, issue, or offspring, which, although not a correct translation, portrays the meaning without the figure of speech. So also the American Translation, "who can count Jacob's masses," gives the general meaning. Israel is praised for the countless numbers to which it had grown. In Genesis 13, 16 God promised Abram: "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number ³ the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." The allusion to this passage in Genesis, according to Hengstenberg, is not merely a reminiscence, but a definite attempt, as in Balaam's other prophecies, to connect these revelations with the earlier fundamental revelations. Such an attempt, he continues, to have the later lean on the earlier, permeates all prophecy, being found even in the most original and

1 Gesenius, Hebrew-English Lexicon, sub *מִנָּה*

2 Keil, op.cit., English translation, p.180

3 The words for numbering in this verse are *לְמִנּוֹת* and *יִמְנֶה*, both from *מִנָּה*.

independent prophets.¹ As has been pointed out, however, there is no proof that Balaam was acquainted with the earlier prophecies, nor is there any necessity for holding this view, as the fact that Balaam was speaking the words of God can account for any such allusions.²

The reference to the great number of Israel is made again later, In Deut. 10, 22: "Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude," where the promise to Abram is regarded as already fulfilled. The number of Israel was like that of the stars or the dust, too great to be determined.

The parallel member again expresses the great numbers of Israel, "and the number of the fourth part of Israel," יִמְסַפֵּר אֶת-רַבֵּעַ
לְאֵלֹהִים,³ The יִמְסַפֵּר is an accusative of definition, the subject and verb to be repeated from the first clause.⁴

There is no necessity⁴ to change the יִמְסַפֵּר to מִן סִפֵּר, as Dillmann suggests.⁵ His view heightens the parallelism.⁶ The LXX, with ἑσαριθμήσεται, likewise supports this claim.⁷ In

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 90

2 Page 34, footnote 2

3 LXX: καὶ τὴς ἑσαριθμήσεται ὀμήρους Ἰσραὴλ
 Vulgate: et nosse numerum stirpis Israel?
 Luther: und die Zahl des vierten Theils Israel?
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "or number Israel's myriads?"

4 Keil, op.cit., English Translation, p. 180

5 Wobersin, op.cit., p. 25

6 Who has counted the dust of Jacob?
 Who has numbered the fourth part of Israel?

7 The Vulgate appears at first to support this contention by adding the infinitive "nosse," which is dependent upon the "possit" in the first phrase. The "numerum," however, being equivalent to the Hebrew יִמְסַפֵּר, indicates rather that the "nosse" is a mere addition, than that it is a product of the separation of יִמְסַפֵּר into מִן סִפֵּר.

opposition to this contention there is first of all the Hebrew text as it stands, and this is supported by Luther, Hengstenberg, and Keil. Since the $\text{רַב־עַ$ of the text can be well understood as it stands, and, since the meaning of the verse would not be changed, the reading of the text is to be preferred. An alteration of the text for such inconsequential reasons as those advanced in favor of this change would open the gates to more vicious changes in other passages, and the meaning of Scripture would be subjected to the arbitrary whims of unscrupulous critics. For this reason the words of the text are to be retained.

The רַב־עַ , fourth part, is changed in the LXX and the Vulgate. Cook's Bible Commentary suggests "progeny" as a better rendition, following the "stirpis" of the Vulgate.¹ The LXX, similarly, has $\delta\eta\mu\omicron\nu\varsigma$, population, and it is suggested that the reading of רַב־ת for רַב־עַ was responsible for this translation. The American Translation, rendering this with "myriads," appears to accept a similar reading.

Hengstenberg refers this mention of the quarter of Israel to the arrangement of the camp, with the sanctuary in the center and four groups, with three tribes in each group, surrounding it. This arrangement ended with the time of Moses, being used only during the trip through the wilderness. Thus the use of רַב־עַ speaks for an early date of writing, and being merely a casual reference, it opposes any supposition that a later writer was responsible, for, if this thought had at all occurred to a later writer who was attempting to give his work the appearance of antiquity, he would hardly have passed over this

¹ Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 743. The support of Rashi is also claimed here.

indication of antiquity without laying additional stress on it. ¹

This expression again testifies to the greatness of Israel. So great had the nation grown, that not even a fourth part of it could be numbered. ² God had promised to make Abram's seed "as the dust of the earth," ³ and the verse before us testifies to the remarkable fulfilment of the promises, using an illustration taken from the promises, ⁴ the comparison to dust.

The fulfilment of the prophecies continues also in the Christian era. In the Old Testament times other individuals could, by submitting to circumcision, be adopted as members of the covenant people. That this happened throughout Israel's history is a demonstrable fact. Physical descent from Jacob was not necessary. Similarly, the growth of the Church in the Messianic times is also to be considered in connection with this prophecy. The fulfilment still continues. The Church is assured of growth, and any decline, the cause of which can lie only in the Church itself, is only temporary. The New Testament Israel is blessed for eternity.

The eternal blessedness of Israel is indicated in the latter half of the verse, as Balaam says: "Let my soul die the death of the righteous," תָּמַת נַפְשִׁי מוֹת יְשָׁרִים . ⁵

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 91

2 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III of the O.T., on Numbers and Deuteronomy, p. 132
Calov, Biblia Illustrata, p. 543

3 Genesis 13, 16; 28, 14.

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 741

5 LXX; ἀποθάνοι ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν ψυχᾷς δικαίων

Vulgate: Moriatur anima mea morte justorum.

Luther: Meine Seele müsse sterben des Todes der Gerechten.

S.G. Am. Tr.: "Let me die the death of the righteous."

(Authorized and Revised Versions the same as the S.G. Am. Tr.)

The rendition of $\square\text{ } \text{ר} \text{שׁ}$ with "fortunate" is opposed by Hengstenberg, who stresses the meaning of uprightness or integrity, this being the meaning of the Hebrew. This uprightness is the basis for the difference between the Israelites and others. ¹

Hengstenberg likewise opposes Calvin's view that the righteousness involved is imputed, rather than inherent. ² Hengstenberg's contention is that $\text{ר} \text{שׁ}$ always means inherent uprightness, being so used frequently in the Psalms. ³ The righteousness is that of the Israelites, although it could not have proceeded from their own volition. Their righteousness is represented as pleasing to God, and this is possible only for one who has been cleansed by faith in the Messiah. It can result only from faith and a love to God, which in turn can result only from God's grace. Thus God is finally the cause of the righteousness.

The term $\square\text{ } \text{ר} \text{שׁ}$, upright or righteous, is applied to Israel because of Israel's divine calling. ⁴ The God of the Israelites was "a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right." ⁵ God was holy, and He sanctified them, ⁶ as He told them, "I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." ⁷ The righteousness of Israel was not by their own choice, but a blessing of God.

The name Jeshurun, $\text{י} \text{שׁוּרֹן}$, is applied to Israel in Deut. 32, 15; 33, 5. 26. Both this and the $\square\text{ } \text{ר} \text{שׁ}$ in the passage under

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 97

2 Ibid., loc.cit.

3 Ibid., p. 98

4 Keil, op. cit., English translation, p. 180

5 Deut. 32, 4

6 Keil, loc.cit.

7 Exodus 31, 13; similarly Leviticus 20, 8.

consideration are derived from יְשׁוּרִן , which in Deut. 32, 4 is applied to God Himself. ¹ Jeshurun appears to be a descriptive term, with the meaning "upright," used as a proper noun, $\text{יְ-$ being the ending designating it as a proper noun. ²

Similarly, in this verse, צְדִיקִים , "righteous ones," is employed as a proper name. The צְדִיקִים is without the article, as though only certain צְדִיקִים out of Israel are intended. The absence of the article is explained by the use of צְדִיקִים as a proper noun. The nation as a whole is meant, and the name itself is a description of the kind of people found in Israel. ⁵

Israel was not only blessed outwardly by increase, but in addition was exalted into a nation of righteous and upright men, a nation of Jesharim. ³ That Israel should be called upright is apparently opposed by Israel's own history, but in general Israel was upright. After their darker moments a more or less complete reformation usually followed. In general the lot of Israel was enviable. ⁴

Cook's Bible Commentary applies צְדִיקִים not to Israel itself, but to "the righteous" ancestors of Israel. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, ..." ⁶ The death of Israel,

1 Jeshurun is said by some to be a diminutive, meaning little pious ones. Since the ending יְ- would have to carry this diminutive significance, the assumption is refuted by the absence of any indication of such a use of יְ- as a diminutive ending. The assumption is further opposed by the failure of this meaning to fit the above mentioned passages where Jeshurun appears. (Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.98)

Luther fails to translate צְדִיקִים in Deut. 32, 15 or 33, 5, but in Deut. 33, 26 he translates it with Gerechten.

2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 99.

3 Keil, English Translation, p.180

4 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.100

5 "Let me die a death of righteous ones," such as are found in Israel.

6 Hebrews 11, 13

it is claimed, could not suitably be intended here. ¹ It must be admitted that not every individual Israelite could be properly designated as upright, but even in times of general apostasy there was always a chosen group of righteous ones in Israel. ²

"Let my soul die the death of the righteous," says Balaam, elaborating in the parallel phrase, "and may my end be like him,"

: וְתֵהוּ אַחֲרַי כְּמֹהוּ . ³

The versions in general take the כְּמֹהוּ as plural, apparently in view of the great number of the Israelites. The LXX has σπέρμα, "seed," for אַחֲרַי, and ὡς τὸ σπέρμα τούτων, "like their seed," for כְּמֹהוּ. The substitution of "seed" for "end" fails to fit the parallelism, nor can it be reconciled with the Massoretic Text. The Vulgate, "and may my last things be like theirs," follows the Hebrew very closely, except for the plural "horum" for the singular in the Hebrew.

The כְּמֹהוּ, "like him," signifies "like his end." ⁴ The parallelism with the מוֹת of the previous phrase gives אַחֲרַי here the meaning of the end of life, claims Hengstenberg. ⁵ Keil likewise takes the death as merely the completion of life, the seal of the blessedness of the life. ⁶

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 741

2 1 Kings 19, 18.

Keil, op. cit., English Translation, p. 180

3 LXX:

καὶ γένοιτο τὸ σπέρμα μου ὡς τὸ σπέρμα τούτων.

Vulgate: et fiant novissima mea horum similia.

Luther: und mein Ende werde wie dieser Ende.

S.G. Am.Tr.: "Let my end be like theirs."

A.V. and R.V.: "And let my last end be like his!"

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 94

5 Hengstenberg, loc. cit.

6 Keil, English Translation, p. 181

Cook's Bible Commentary takes the end as referring not so much to the death itself as to what follows.¹ Gosman comments: "The Hebrew word refers not so much to the dying as to that which follows death, the futurity, the last estate."² Reference is also made to Ps. 37, 37. 38: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off." The Hebrew word for "end" in these verses is אַחֲרָיִת .

Balaam wanted his end to be like that of Israel. The older interpreters find in this a reference to the immortality that awaits the members of God's congregation after death. Hengstenberg asserts that Balaam could have wanted to die the death of the chosen ones in still a different connection. This, he says, is shown by a comparison of the death of Balaam with that of Abraham.³ Balaam suffered a violent death by the avenging sword of Israel,⁴ tormented by the knowledge of a lack of God's grace.⁵ Abraham was told: "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age."⁶ Scripture describes the fulfilment by stating that "Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people."⁷ Comparison also with the deaths of Isaac, Jacob, and Moses are mentioned,

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 741

2 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Volume III, Numbers and Deuteronomy, p. 132

3 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 95

4 Numbers 31, 8.

5 Hengstenberg, loc.cit.

6 Genesis, 15, 15.

7 Genesis, 25, 8.

to lend additional weight to the claim.¹

That the manner of death lends no adequate support to this claim is shown by the examples of Abel and of the thousands of God fearing people who subsequently died similar deaths of violence, especially the apostles and the other martyrs of the Christian Church.²

Furthermore, there is no indication that Balaam at this time was at all aware of the nature of the circumstances that were to accompany his own death.³

The torments that Balaam must have experienced at his death in the knowledge that he was without the grace of God presuppose a dread of what was to follow his death. Without some thought of a post-mortal existence the lack of peace with God would be without its terrors, as death would end all relation between Balaam and anyone else, ending also any possibility of retribution. The influence of such thoughts of a life after death could well explain his mental and spiritual anguish at his death, but this is what was meant to be avoided by the comparison made between the death of Abraham and that of Balaam. A certainty of punishment on Balaam's part was not necessary, as a mere uncertainty of what was to come, an inescapable expectation of punishment after death, would suffice to cause his mental torment. Uncertainty is here a terrifying thing in itself, and no

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.95

2 This mention of others who died after Balaam is rendered legitimate by Hengstenberg's mention of the death of Moses.

3 Newton, op. cit., p.65, states: "he had in all probability some forebodings of his own coming to an untimely end, as he really did afterwards, being slain with the five kings of Midian by the sword of Israel." Numbers 31, 8.

Newton, however, fails to give any authority for this assumption.

certain knowledge of what is to follow death for either the righteous or the ungodly is here required of Balaam.

The Hebrew jussives תָּמַת and יָהָר are rendered by the LXX in the optative, with $\alpha\pi\omicron\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\iota$ and $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$, and by the Vulgate in the subjunctive, with *moriatur* and *fiant*. Balaam was expressing a wish. He wanted to die a death neither violent nor immature, the kind of death to which the righteous Israelites could look forward.¹ He was aware of his own unworthiness, yet any good effects of the working of God's Spirit in him were not lasting, and Balaam's own attitude brought about his fearful end.²

Hengstenberg offers a threefold reason³ why the death of the chosen ones was worth envying. Their death was happy with respect to the present, the past, and the future. They died in the grace of God, in the consciousness of His love. A glance at the past gave them satisfaction, as all about them they could see the signs of God's grace. Prayers had been answered. God had defended them from their enemies and from other dangers. He had granted them forgiveness. They rejoiced in their death, says Hengstenberg, because of the clear prospect of the future of the family and people. The patriarchs regarded their descendants as the continuation of their own being. The hidden future, with its promise of divine blessing, took the bitterness from death.⁴ a L

Keil mentions that the pious Israelite could, as death approached, look forward to his descendants' taking part in the promises and his

1 Calov, *Biblia Illustrata*, p. 543

2 Hengstenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 96

own being gathered to his fathers in Sheol, ¹ as Abraham was gathered to his fathers. ²

Gosman states that, even though Israel had no complete knowledge of the future state, it cannot be stated that they had no knowledge at all of a blessed hereafter. ³

It was a privilege to belong to this people and share in the blessings that were theirs. Balaam could well desire the salvation that was promised to those who remained faithful. Like blessings are promised to the faithful in the Church of the New Testament. They need have no fear at the approach of death. Instead they rejoice at its coming in the assurance of salvation and eternal life, ⁴ to which death is only the introduction.

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 181

2 Gen. 25, 8.

3 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p.132

4 Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, Vol. I, p. 281

THE SECOND PROPHECY OF BALAAM

Numbers 23, 18-24

"And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:

God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

God brought them out of Egypt: he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain."

(Authorized Version)

The nature of Balaam's first utterance was not at all satisfactory to king Balak. He complained: "What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether." The emphasis laid on this blessing is shown by the construction with the infinitive absolute, בִּרְכָה בְרַךְ . Here was definite, thorough blessing, in the fullest sense of the term. ¹

Balaam answered this charge with a reiteration of his previous statements: "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?" ² The reason for his inability to curse he had mentioned to the messengers, and more than once to Balak himself. ³

The king's false assumption regarding Balaam's power persisted in spite of this first disappointment. In his mind the blame for the failure was to be laid solely on Balaam, who apparently was not sufficiently sincere in his efforts. God's disinclination to curse was to be attributed to the failure of Balaam's persuasive efforts. Balak, however, had not given up hope. If God could be made to curse, Balaam was the one who could persuade Him. Perhaps Balaam had not been thoroughly in the mood for cursing. Perhaps he had been influenced in the wrong direction by the apparent might, by the great numbers of Israel, which he had mentioned in his first utterance. If so, this could be remedied. He might not be so strongly impressed by their might if, instead of the entire nation, he could see only

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 103

2 Numbers 23, 12

3 Numbers 22, 18; 22, 38; 23, 3; 23, 12.

a few straggling Israelites.¹

Balak said: "Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence."² Balaam was to see the "end of his extremity," אֶפְסוֹ

כְּלוֹ לֹא תִרְאֶה , but was not to see all of Israel, כְּלוֹ לֹא תִרְאֶה .

Some commentators insist that Balaam was to see Israel in its entirety, not merely a part of the people,³ but the definite "thou ... shalt not see them all" indicates that this was Balak's purpose here. The Israelites were not all to be seen, but only a part of them.⁴ Balak had the idea that God might change His mind,⁵ and these preparations were made with this object in view.

Balaam knew that Israel was blessed by God, but he was ready to make another attempt to curse. An offering was prepared, similar to that which preceded his first prophetic utterance. Again the king stood by the offering, while Balaam went out to meet the Lord. "And the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus."⁶ With these words the second of Balaam's prophecies is designated as divine truth, the ^wword of God, which He put in Balaam's mouth.

As Balaam returned to the spot where the king and his princes

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 741

2 Numbers 23, 13.

3 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 134, attributes this view to Keil.

4 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 134.

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 103

6 Numbers 23, 16.

stood by the offering, the king asked, probably with extreme agitation and eagerness, "What hath the Lord spoken?"

Balaam announced what he had received from the Lord. The first part of his proclamation was a rejection of Balak's demand for a retraction of the blessing and substitution of a curse. The second part, beginning with verse 21, repeats the blessing and expands on it. ¹

The introduction to the second speech is like that of the first, "And he took up his parable, and said, ..." This phrase, וַיִּקַּח בַּלָּק אֶת-פָּרָבִּי וַיֹּאמֶר , appears seven times, introducing each of the first three prophecies and each of the four sections of the fourth. ²

Balaam addressed the king: "Rise up, Balak, and hear," וַיֹּאמֶר בַּלָּק קוּמָה וְשָׁמָע . ³ The קוּמָה here, says Hengstenberg, does not denote a physical rising. One who desires God's word must put off his natural dullness and preoccupation. ⁴ Balak is exhorted to give earnest heed to what is being said. The Vulgate expresses this by the verb "ausculta," not an ordinary hearing, but a hearing with due attention. The ordinary verb for hearing appears in the Vulgate in the parallel member, while in the Hebrew text the simple

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 111.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 107, asserts that this arrangement is not accidental.

3 LXX: Ἀνάστηθι, Βαλακ, καὶ ἄκουε:
Vulgate: Sta, Balak, et ausculta,
Luther: Stehe auf, Balak, und hore.
S.G. Am.Tr.: "Come, Balak, and hear."
A.V. and R.V.: "Rise up, Balak, and hear;"

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 108

verb of hearing is in the first phrase, and the emphatic designation is in the parallel.

"Hearken to me, son of Zippor," : הַאֲזִינָה עֲדֵי בְנוֹ צִפּוֹר .¹
The construction of אֲזַן in the hiph'il with אֲזַן , says Keil,
denotes a hearing which presses to the speaker, in keen attention.²
The LXX expresses this by the addition of μάρτυς , which word is
designated in Thayer as "etymologically one who is mindful, heeds."³

Hengstenberg likewise applies this הַאֲזִינָה עֲדֵי not only
to outward hearing, but to inward as well, carrying with it not only
the meaning of the אֲזַן , but at the same time also that of the
קוּ .⁴

The form אֲזַן appears also in Chapter 24, 3. 15. According
to Wobersin it has in the אֲ - an ancient case ending,⁵ which is said
to be a sign of the great age of the speech.⁶ Gesenius explains that
this form is used only to emphasize the construct state.⁷

Balaam here addresses himself to the king, designating him in
two different ways, and calling his strict attention to the words
that are to follow.

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- 1 LXX: ἐνώτισαι μάρτυς, υἱὸς Σεπφωρ.
Vulgate: audi, fili Sephor.
Luther: Nimm zu Ohren, was ich sage, du Sohn Zipor.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Give ear unto me, son of Zippor!"
R.V.: "Hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor."

- 2 Keil, English Translation, p. 182, refers to Job 32, 11 as an
example.
3 Thayer, Greek - English Lexicon, sub μάρτυς, p. 392
4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 108.
5 Wobersin, op. cit., p. 25.
6 Ibid., p. 26.
7 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 90 o, 96.

"God is not a man, that he should lie," בִּלְבַד לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֱלֹהִים .¹
 The לֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֱלֹהִים, says Gesenius, is probably intended as a jussive,²
 and the connection is by a simple copulative waw.³ The LXX
 expresses this by the infinitive διαρτηθῆναι, and the Vulgate
 by ut with the subjunctive mentiatur.

The same is true of the parallel phrase, "and a son of man, that
 He should repent," וְאִם יִשְׁכַּח אֱלֹהִים .⁴ The Smith Goodspeed
 American Translation gives the sense of the verb וְאִם יִשְׁכַּח אֱלֹהִים⁵ cor-
 rectly. God is not a son of man, "that He should change His mind."

With these words Balaam pointed out the falsity of the idea
 that still lingered in the mind of the king. Balak persisted in the
 idea that God might be persuaded to alter His decree. Such a change
 could result from one of two conditions. Either the decree would not

- 1 LXX: οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ὁ θεὸς διαρτηθῆναι
 Vulgate: Non est Deus quasi homo, ut mentiatur.
 Luther: Gott ist nicht ein Mensch, dass er lüge.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "God is not a man, that he should break his word."
 A.V. and R.V.: "God is not a man, that he should lie."
- 2 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 109 i. Originally voluntative;
 if something is so, then something must happen as a consequence.
- 3 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 166 a: "Consecutive clauses are added
 by means of simple waw copulative with the jussive, especially
 after negative and interrogative sentences." Numbers 23, 19
 is given as an example.
- 4 LXX: οὐδὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἀπειλειθῆναι
 Vulgate: nec ut filius hominis, ut mutetur.
 Luther: noch ein Menschenkind, dass ihn etwas gereue.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "Nor a human being, that he should change his mind."
 A.V. and R.V.: "Neither the son of man, that he should repent:"
 (A.V. and R.V. differ only in that the R.V. capitalizes the initial
 letter of the phrase)
- 5 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 64 d: Virtual strengthening in the
 intensives of middle gutturals, especially ה, ח, ע.
 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 27 p.q.: Instead of pathah seghol
 often appears "as a modification of ā:" Regularly before a
 guttural with qamets or hateph qamets.

have been made in earnest, in which case God would have been guilty of deliberate deception, or the one who made the decree must have experienced a change of mind, and changed the decree accordingly. Both of these suppositions are here rejected by Balaam. God neither lies deliberately, nor does He change His mind. These are human characteristics, and Balaam states definitely that God is not a human being.

antidivine

Since God neither lies nor changes His opinion, His promises cannot be frustrated, nor His threats avoided. This is mentioned in the last half of verse 19: "Has He said, and will He not do it?"¹

הֲוָיָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁפָּט , and the parallel, "or spoken, and will not bring it to pass?" וְדַבָּר וְלֹא יִקְרַמְפָּה :² The strong negative force is expressed by the use of the rhetorical questions in the affirmative.

No one can change God's decrees, nor can anyone prevent their fulfilment. The very name יהוה expresses the unchangeableness of God.³ He never changes His decrees, whether absolute or conditional (if the condition is fulfilled). All possible causes for such a failure are absent from God.⁴ "With regard to His own counsels,

1 LXX: αὐτὸς εἶπας οὐχὶ ποιήσει;
 Vulgate: Dixit ergo, et non faciet?
 Luther: Sollt er etwas sagen, und nicht thun?
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "When he has said something, will he not do it?"
 A.V. and R.V.: "Hath he said, and shall he not do it?"

2 LXX: λαλήσει, καὶ οὐχὶ ἐμμενεῖς;
 Vulgate: locutus est, et non implebit?
 Luther: Sollt er etwas reden, und nicht halten?
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "When he has asserted something, will he not make it good?"
 A.V. and R.V.: "Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

3 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 109, refers to James 1, 17; Ex. 3, 13-16; Malachi 3, 6.

4 Calov, op. cit., p.543.

God repents of nothing; but this does not prevent the repentance of God, understood as an anthropopathic expression, denoting the pain experienced by the love of God, on account of the destruction of its creatures." ¹

The futility of the attempt to persuade God to change His mind is shown also by the failure of Saul's efforts in this direction, which brought from Samuel an answer in almost the very words of this verse. Samuel told him: God "is not a man, that He should repent." ² Saul had been told that God had decided to take the kingdom from him. This decision Saul wished to have changed. He would have rejoiced at some assurance that God would disregard the threat, but any such assurance would have had to come from God Himself, thus amounting to an altered decree. Saul was powerless to frustrate God's plans. He could neither change God's plans nor escape their execution. If God had spoken, He could and would perform what He threatened. "Hath He spoken, and shall He not bring it to pass?"

Hengstenberg takes the verbs, אָמַר and דִּבֶּר, both in the perfect, as indicating that the reference here is not to the sayings of God in general, but to a particular saying of God. ³ Some refer this to the promises to the patriarchs, while others take it as a reference to the first prophecy of Balaam. This is the view accepted by Hengstenberg. It is supported by the reference to Balak's desire and hope of altering God's decrees. It is supported also by

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 183: Genesis 6, 6; Exodus 32, 14.

2 1 Samuel 15, 29.
Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 108.

3 Ibid., p. 109.

the following verse, where the words of God that had been spoken by Balaam are clearly indicated. ¹ Keil also, while stating that these clauses are of universal application, asserts that here they relate to the specific occasion, as is shown by the following verse. ²

"Behold, I have received to bless," הִנֵּה בָרַךְ לִקְרָתִי .³

The Vulgate, with "adductus sum," and Luther, with "bin ich hergebracht," take the לִקְרָתִי as passive. According to this view Balaam was led to bless, and in such a case God must have been the one leading him. ⁴ This is not in complete agreement with the Hebrew text, according to which Balaam says, "I have received to bless." The A.V. adds "commandment," as an explanation. Balaam could not resist what the Bible Commentary calls the "divine overruling impulse." ⁵ The blessing itself was from God, Balaam being merely the instrument.

This Balaam himself indicates in the next phrase, as he ascribes the blessing to God. "And He has blessed, and I am not reversing

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 110

2 Keil, English Translation, p. 183

3 LXX: ἰδοὺ εὐλογεῖν παρείλλημαι.

Vulgate: Ad benediciendum adductus sum.

Luther: Siehe, zu segnen bin ich hergebracht;

S.G. Am-Tr.: "See, it is a blessing that I have received."

A.V. and R.V.: "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: "

4 This contrasts with the opening verse of Balaam's first prophecy, wherein he states that Balak had brought him from Mesopotamia to curse.

5 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 741.

it," : וְלֹא יִשְׁבֹּבֶנָהּ .¹ The sense is that of a condition. If God has blessed, Balaam cannot change the blessing.² The hiph'il of שֹׁבֵב is to "lead back, to make a thing retrograde,"³ hinder.⁴ It was Balak's earnest desire to hinder the fulfilment of the divine blessing by having Balaam induce God to change His mind. It was appropriate and necessary for Balaam to point out the foolishness of this desire.⁵ The words of God are never retracted.⁶ This passage concerns the altering of the decree, rather than the hindering of its fulfilment.⁷ Either of these methods would have satisfied Balak, but, since the attempt that he made was to have the decree changed, it is appropriate that the stress should be laid on the certainty and immutability of the divine pronouncements. In this case the divine decree was a blessing on Israel, and now, after rejecting the suggestion to have it retracted, Balaam enlarged on his first speech of blessing.

1 LXX: εὐλογήσω καὶ οὐ μὴ ἀποστρέψω
 Vulgate: benedictionem prohibere non valeo
 Luther: ich segne, und kanns nicht wenden.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "He has given a blessing, so I cannot change it."
 A.V. and R.V.: "And he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it."

2 Gesenius, Kautzsch, Grammar, 159 g, for the imperfect in the apodosis, separated from the waw by כִּל .

3 Comparison is made to Isaiah 43, 13: : וְלֹא יִשְׁבֹּבֶנָהּ .
 Keil, English Translation, p. 183

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 110, also refers to Isaiah 43, 13.

5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 110.

6 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 111: Isaiah 45, 23: "... the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall return."

7 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 111: Isaiah 14, 27: "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back." This and similar passages are not parallel.

"He has not beheld iniquity in Jacob," לֹא-הִבִּיט אֵינָן
 כִּי-רָעָקֹב .¹ The subject of this first sentence, according to both Keil and Hengstenberg, is God.² The LXX has οὐκ ἔσται, "there will not be." The Vulgate has 'non est,' "there is not." Luther and the American Translation both employ verbs of seeing, but these are taken impersonally.³ The verb רָאָה, in the parallel, corresponding to the טִּבַּח in the first member, is to be taken in the same way, "one has seen," or "He has seen." The LXX and Vulgate, both of which render the טִּבַּח with a verb of being, translate the רָאָה with the impersonal passive of "see."

God has not seen אֵינָן in Jacob. This word can signify not only iniquity, idolatry, worthlessness, or vanity, but it can stand also for distress or hardship.⁴ The LXX, translating אֵינָן with μόνος, takes this latter sense of אֵינָן, as hardship or misery. Luther, translating אֵינָן with "Mühe," follows this rendition of the LXX, as does the American Translation with "misfortune."

This meaning, says Keil,⁵ belongs in the next part of the

- 1 LXX: οὐκ ἔσται μόνος ἐν Ιακωβ
 Vulgate: Non est idolum in Jacob.
 Luther: Man siehet keine Mühe in Jacob.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "No misfortune is to be observed in Jacob."
 A.V. and R.V.: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob."
- 2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.112.
 Keil, English Translation, p.183
 Both Hengstenberg and Keil refer to Habakkuk 1, 3.13: "why dost thou show me iniquity," etc.
 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol.III, p.134, also refers to Hab. 1, 3.13.
- 3 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol.III, p.134, also prefers to take the רָאָה and the טִּבַּח impersonally.
- 4 Langenscheidt, Hebrew-English Lexicon, sub אֵינָן .
- 5 Keil, English Translation, p.183.

verse, the parallel member, "and has not seen oppression in Israel,"

וְלֹא-רָאָה אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל .¹ God sees neither the wickedness and worthlessness (לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל) nor the tribulation and misery (אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה)

"as the consequence of sin, and therefore discovers no reason for cursing the nation."² Keil and Hengstenberg both make this dis-

tinction, but without the support of the versions, which take לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל

and אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה as having like meanings. Some take them both as signifying malignance,³ or wickedness.⁴ Some take them both as meaning

suffering.⁵ The view that the words differ in meaning is pre-

ferable, says Hengstenberg, the לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל being the wickedness,⁶ and

the אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה the suffering that results from it.⁷

That אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה means toil or suffering is attested by Gesenius.

A similar meaning is attached to לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל in certain indisputable

passages,⁸ but this usage is no indication that this is the only

sense in which לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל appears. In Jeremiah 4, 15 it appears to

be a further designation of that which in the previous verse is called

וְהָיָה כִּי-יִשְׁמַח אֱלֹהִים בְּאֵת-הַיְשׁוּבָה .⁹ Passages in which these two words, אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה and לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל ,

1 LXX: οὐδὲ ὀφθῆσεται πόνος ἐν Ἰσραὴλ
 Vulgate: nec videtur simulacrum in Israel.
 Luther: und keine Arbeit in Israel.
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "No trouble is to be seen in Israel."
 A.V. and R.V.: "Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel:"

2 Keil, English Translation, p. 183.

3 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 112

4 A.V.: "iniquity" and "perverseness."
 Vulgate, similarly, has "idolum" and "simulacrum."

5 LXX, Luther, S.G. American Translation.

6 Habakkuk 1, 3: לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל and אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה used parallel.
 1, 13: אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה and לְבַיְשָׁרָאֵל used parallel.

7 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 113.

8 Ibid., p. 114

9 Ibid., p. 113

appear together, permit the meanings of suffering and wickedness.¹
The Bible Commentary takes this as "wickedness together with that
tribulation which is its proper result."²

Since God has seen no iniquity in Jacob, no trouble in Israel,
"there are no points to which the curse can attach itself."³

This statement, that God has not beheld wickedness in Israel, is
not intended as a denial of the sins of individuals, but it applies
only to the people in view of their calling as the holy nation,
chosen by the Lord.⁴ It applies to the people in their covenant
relation to Jehovah.⁵

The thought expressed negatively in this first section of the
verse is expressed positively in the second hemistich.⁶ "The Lord
his God is with him," יהוה אֱלֹהָיו עִמּוֹ .⁷ Jehovah, the
God of the covenant, is with Israel.

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 115.

Job 5, 6, 7; Ps. 90, 10; 55, 10, 11; Is. 59, 4; 10, 1,
Job 4, 8; Ps. 10, 7; Hab. 1, 3.

2 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 742: "iniquity" "perverseness"
Reference is also made to Ps. 10, 7; 90, 10; et alt.

3 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 134.

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 183.

5 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, p. 134.

6 Keil, English Translation, p. 183: Thus
"Jehovah his God is with him."
corresponds to "He beholds not wickedness."
and "The shout of a king is in it."
corresponds to He has not seen suffering.

7 LXX: κύριος ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ.
Vulgate: Dominus Deus ejus cum eo est, ...
Luther: Der Herr, sein Gott, ist bei ihm.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "The Lord their God is with them."
A.V. and R.V.: "The Lord his God is with him, "

"And a shout of a king is in him," : וְתִרְיַעַת מֶלֶךְ בּוֹ :¹

"The 'shout of a king' in Israel is the rejoicing of Israel at the fact that Jehovah dwells and rules as King in the midst of it."²

The reference is to the "jubilant sounds by which the presence of the Lord as their king amongst them was celebrated by Israel."³

The Vulgate adds the idea of victory, that of the king mentioned, which is not foreign to the idea contained in the Hebrew. The King is the Lord, who is victorious over the adversaries of His people. The shout is not necessarily one emanating from the king himself, but it is one which he has called forth. The shout is one of joy at the presence of such a King who is God and who proves it.⁴

Hengstenberg calls attention to the Scriptural mention of such shouting. At the attack on the city of Jericho "the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city."⁵ Later, at the time of Samuel, "when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a

1 LXX: τὰ ἑνδοξα ἐρχόντων ἐν αὐτῷ.
Vulgate: et clangor victoriae regis in illo.
Luther: und das Trommeten des Königs unter ihm.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "The King is pleased with them."
A.V. and R.V.: "And the shout of a king is among them."

2 Keil, English Translation, p. 184.
of. Deut. 33, 5; Ex. 15, 18.

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 742.

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 117.

5 Joshua 6, 5. 20.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 117.

great shout, so that the earth rang again. ... And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp."¹ Later it is stated that David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet."² The word תְּרַגְּעָה is the one that appears in all these passages. The shouts heralded victory for Israel, by God's might. Shouting marked the presence of God. Israel was safe from the power of the world as long as it remained "faithful to the idea of its divine calling, and continued in covenant fellowship with the Lord."³

The divine blessing on Israel is shown by what God had already done and was still doing in behalf of His people. "God (is) bringing them from Egypt," אֵל מוֹצִיאֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם.⁴ This refers back⁵ to the complaint of Balak in Chapter 22, 5: "Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me." Balaam mentions an important fact that Balak had not stated. God was leading Israel. The use of the participle מוֹצִיאֵם⁵ designates the leading out as still going on.⁶ God still leads them,⁷ and the leading

1 1 Samuel 4, 5 ... 7.
Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 118.

2 2 Samuel 6, 15.
Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 118.

3 Keil, English Translation, p. 183-184.

4 LXX: θεὸς ὁ ἐξαγαγὼν αὐτοὺς ἐξ Αἰγύπτου.
Vulgate: Deus eduxit illum de Aegypto.
Luther: Gott hat sie aus Egypten geführet,
S.G. Am-Tr.: "God, who brought them out of Egypt
Is like the horns of a wild-ox for them."
R.V.: "God bringeth them forth out of Egypt:"

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 118.

6 Keil, English Translation, p. 184: The plural suffix ׁ, as Keil says, refers to Israel as a people ad sensum.

7 Keil, English Translation, p. 184

8 Wobersin, op. cit., p. 35.

continues ¹ until the entrance into Canaan. ²

"Powers as of a buffalo are his," : קֹּחַ הַיּוֹעֵפֹת רֵאִים לוֹ . ³

Comparison is made to the exertions of an animal. The word הַיּוֹעֵפֹת , from יָעַף , weary, "signifies that which causes weariness, exertion, the putting forth of power; hence the fulness of strength, ability to make or bear exertions." ⁴ It "denotes the stirring, restless, unwearied efforts with which the animal forces his way upwards." ⁵ The versions differ widely in their interpretation of this word. The LXX takes it as "glory," the Vulgate as "courage," Luther as "joyfulness," and the American Translation as "horns." None of these agree with the interpretation of Keil, Hengstenberg, and other commentators.

One basis for the assertion that הַיּוֹעֵפֹת signifies struggles or manifestations of strength or vigor is the etymology, already mentioned, ⁶ according to which the meaning "that which tires" is indicated. ⁷ This meaning is corroborated by the meaning of רֵאִים , which appears by its usage to be a strong, intractable

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 118.

2 Keil, English Translation, p. 184.

3 LXX: ὡς δόξα μονοκέρωτος αὐτόν
 Vulgate: cujus fortitudo similis est rhinocerotis.
 Luther: seine Freudigkeit ist wie eines Einhorn.
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "God, who brought them out of Egypt
 Is like the horns of a wild-ox for them."
 R.V.: "He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox."

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 184.

5 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol.III, p.135.

6 Hengstenberg, op.cit., pp.119-120, explains that this is derived from the 3 f.s. fut. Hiph., (like 3 f.s. fut. qal. הַשׁוֹבֵה , that which returns), so here "that which tires" from יָעַף .

7 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.121, claims that this meaning is suitable also in both other cases where it appears, Ps. 95, 4 and Job 22, 25.

beast. The plural form of הוֹעֵפָה , says Hengstenberg, is appropriate, signifying individual acts taken together. ¹ Such passages as Chapter 24, 18 point to the meaning of great power rather than that of swiftness. ² The context also agrees with this interpretation. ³

The word רֵאֵם , in connection with which הוֹעֵפָה here appears, is used of a strong beast. The A.V. translates it "unicorn," following the μονοκέρας of the LXX. The "rhinoceros" of the Vulgate is similar to this, ⁴ and Luther, with "Einhorn," follows the crowd. The translation "wild ox," of the Revised Version and the American Translation, is to be preferred.

That רֵאֵם is not necessarily a unicorn is shown by Deut. 33, 17, which speaks of קַרְנֵי רֵאֵם , "horns of a רֵאֵם . ⁵ It is a symbol of the strength of Israel, and in other passages it appears as an appropriately fierce and mighty beast. ⁶ According to Keil " רֵאֵם is the buffalo or wild ox, an indomitable animal, which is especially fearful on account of its horns." ⁷ Its "tall horns represent exaltation and established prosperity." ⁸

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.121.

2 Ibid., Loc.cit.

3 Ibid., lpc.cit.

4 "rhinoceros," "horn nose," from ῥίς , "nose."
White, Latin Dictionary, sub rhinoceros.

5 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 743:
This is not the "wild-ox" in Deut. 14, 5, nor the
"wild bull" in Isaiah 51, 20.

The words used, קַרְנֵי and רֵאֵם , are equivalent in
meaning. (Langenscheidt Lexicon)

6 Isaiah 34, 7; Job, 39, 9-12; et alt.

7 Keil, English Translation, p. 184:

Deut. 33, 17: "... his horns are like the horns of
unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the
ends of the earth." Ps. 22, 22.

8 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.743.

Intractable and untameable, it is characterized by "unsparing fierceness of enemies." ¹

The suffix on *יב* might refer either to God or to Israel. The reference to God is suggested by the grammar, since the first part of the verse refers to Israel in the plural, and to God in the singular. The AV. translates in this manner. The LXX has a similar construction. The Vulgate makes no numerical distinction, and the *ejus* might refer to either God or Israel, both of which the Vulgate treats in the singular. The American Translation, except for the change in number, is acceptable. God, who brings them out of Egypt, "is like the horns of an ox for them." Here the *יב*, while singular, is referred to Israel, which in the former part of the verse is mentioned in the plural. The *יב* in this translation is taken as an indication of the recipient of benefit, rather than the possessor of the characteristics mentioned, as most interpreters take it.

The characteristic comparable to the wild buffalo is referred by some to God, because of His strength and His mighty acts in helping Israel. Although Israel's power comes from God, the comparison to a buffalo is more suitably referred to Israel. The change in number from the plural to the singular is explained by the fact that there were a great number of Israelites, while the comparison to a buffalo is more appropriate also if Israel is taken as a unit. ²

"Because God leads them, they go forward with the strength of a buffalo." ³

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 743.

2 Numbers 24, 9.

3 Keil, English Translation, p. 184.

The difference between Israel and the heathen nations is indicated again in the following verse. "For there is not incantation in Jacob," $\text{כִּי לֹא־נִחַן בְּיַעֲקֹב}$, ¹ "neither divination in Israel," $\text{וְלֹא־נִחַן בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל}$. ² The כִּי here has a causal significance. ³

The word נִחַן has the meaning of augury. The Vulgate translation, "augurium," agrees with the οἰωνισμός of the LXX. According to Keil נִחַן "was the unfolding of the future from signs in the phenomena of nature, and inexplicable occurrences in animal and human life." ⁴ The verb נִחַן , Hengstenberg claims, generally appears in the sense of divination or augury. ⁵ That this was not in accord with God's will is shown by Leviticus 19, 26, where it is distinctly forbidden. ⁶

The other term, נִחַן , translated μαντεία in the LXX and "divinatio" in the Vulgate, is "prophesying from a pretended or

1 LXX: $\text{οὐ γάρ ἐστιν οἰωνισμὸς ἐν Ἰακώβ}$
 Vulgate: Non est augurium in Jacob.
 Luther: Denn es ist kein Zauberer in Jacob.
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "For there can be no enchantment against Jacob."
 R.V.: "Surely there is no enchantment with Jacob,"

2 LXX: $\text{οὐδὲ μαντεία ἐν Ἰσραὴλ}$
 Vulgate: nec divinatio in Israel.
 Luther: und kein Wahrsager in Israel.
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "And no divination against Israel."
 R.V.: "Neither is there any divination with Israel."

3 Keil, English Translation, p.184.

4 Keil, Loc. cit.

5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.123: Genesis 44, 5. 15; 30, 27, "learned by experience." Deut. 18, 10; Lev. 19, 26.

6 Leviticus 19, 26:

supposed revelation of the Deity within the human mind." 1

Hengstenberg insists that neither שׁוֹחֵט nor מַדְבֵּיר has the meaning of sorcery and malevolence. The meaning is divination and augury, or soothsaying, and these do not constitute a weapon. 2

If there is no hostile intention in שׁוֹחֵט or מַדְבֵּיר , there is no adequate basis for attributing a hostile significance to the preposition בְּ . Hengstenberg states that, while בְּ does have a hostile sense, like the Latin "in" with the accusative, this is true only with words which themselves indicate hostility. 3

The Authorized Version and the American Translation both translate with "enchantment against Jacob" and "divination against Israel."

The context might here be taken as lending weight to the hostile interpretation of this passage. Balaam had recently attempted soothsaying against Israel, and, having been overruled, he knew that God interfered in behalf of Israel, and against this divine intervention all human attempts are futile. 4 The fact is undeniable, and there is no reason to doubt that Balaam was aware of it, but there is no binding necessity for Balaam to mention this in every verse of his speech.

A preceding verse states: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel," and this statement is followed by the mention of a blessing. Here in verse 23 the situation is somewhat similar. "There is not incantation in Jacob, neither divination in Israel," and this again is followed by

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 184.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 122.

3 Ibid., p. 123.

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 742.

the mention of a blessing. The nature of the blessing itself speaks for this interpretation. The latter part of the verse treats of divine revelation. It was not by soothsaying that Israel was guided, but by revelation from God. ¹

"According to time it will be told to Jacob and to Israel what God has done," פְּעֻמַּת הַזְמַן לְיַעֲקֹב וְלִישְׂרָאֵל כִּי-פָעַל אֱלֹהִים: ² For פְּעֻמַּת the meaning "at the present time" has been suggested, but this is not satisfactory. The best interpretation is that suggested by Keil, Hengstenberg, and others, "in due time," ³ at the proper time, ⁴ "whenever it was needed." ⁵

Two meanings are suggested for the preposition -? . The LXX takes this as introducing the indirect object, "it will be told to Jacob and to Israel." The American Translation follows this interpretation. The other interpretation is that found in Luther's translation, "... wird man von Jacob sagen, und von Israel," which is adopted by the Authorized Version: "... it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel." ⁶

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., pp. 123-124.

2 LXX:

κατὰ καιρὸν ῥηθήσεται Ἰακωβ
καὶ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ, τί ἐπιτελέσει ὁ θεός.

Vulgate:

Temporibus suis dicetur Jacob et Israeli,
quid operatus sit Deus.

Luther:

Zu seiner Zeit wird man von Jacob sagen, und
von Israel, welche Wunder Gott thut.

S.G. Am.Tr.:

"Since the times are declared to Jacob,
And what God shall do, to Israel."

R.V.:

"Now shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel,
what hath God wrought!"

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.742.

4 Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, p.282.

Keil, English Translation, p. 184.

Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 125.

5 Kretzmann, op. cit., p.282.

6 Similarly the Revised Version

Hengstenberg advances several arguments in opposition to Luther's translation. The first of these is a comparison with Deuteronomy 18,¹ which contrasts divination and prophecy. This argument seems to be based on the assumption that Deuteronomy 18, 15, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken," refers to prophets and prophecy in general. Even this interpretation is not sufficient in itself to warrant the rejection of Luther's translation. The curse attached to divination and the like in Deuteronomy 18 agrees with the statement that these evils are not to be found in Israel. This statement, made in the first half of the verse under consideration, does argue against the translation of Luther² and the A.V. Israel and Jacob do not learn by augury and divination, and the latter part of the verse points to divine revelation as the source of Israel's knowledge. It is told "to Israel," rather than to others "concerning Israel."

The פֶּטַח also speaks against the interpretation of Luther.³ At the proper time, when it was necessary, God's will was revealed to Israel. The mention of the definite time is more suitable to God's revelation to Israel than to the spread of facts concerning Israel.

Finally, the Hebrew text itself fails to favor the interpretation of Luther. The construction of אָמַר with the preposition לְ means "speak to" someone, rather than "speak about" someone.

To Israel it is said what God does. This is illustrated by the

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.127.

2 Ibid., loc.cit.

3 Ibid., loc.cit.

events mentioned in Exodus 3; 4, especially 4, 30-31, "And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

By His own means God would make known to Israel His will and His purposes. ¹ He revealed His will first to the patriarchs, then through Moses and the prophets. ² When it was necessary, God's word came to His people. ³ He revealed the truth to His people, while the heathen tried to learn by augury and divination. ⁴ "For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do." ⁵

These statements concerning Israel apply also to the Church of all ages ⁶ and to each believer individually. ⁷ From God's word the Church knows His will ⁸ and what He does and is yet to do. ⁹ The wisdom of the world resembles augury and divination, ¹⁰ and it is this to which the mention of these practices directs the atten-

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- 1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 742.
 - 2 Keil, English Translation, p. 184.
 - 3 Kretzmann, op.cit., p.282.
 - 4 Keil, loc.cit.
 - 5 Deuteronomy 18, 14.
 - 6 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.127.
Keil, loc.cit.
 - 7 Keil, loc.cit.
 - 8 Keil, English Translation, pp.184-185.
 - 9 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.127.
 - 10 Keil, English Translation, p. 185.

tion. ¹ Worldly wisdom leads its followers to destruction. It fills no need in the Church and can never take the place of God's Word. ²

essentially?

The absence of divination and the like is not, as some say, the cause of the blessing. The blessing is the result of grace. ³ The fact that Israel was not, as were other nations, directed by the uncertainty and deceitfulness of augury, being guided instead by divine revelation, proved that Israel had God's blessing "and was guided and endowed with power by God Himself." ⁴

The power of the people Balaam then compares to that of a lion. "Behold a people rises up like a lion," . 5 קָרַעַם כְּלִבְיַא יְלִוִּי The versions vary in the rendition of אֲלִיָּא. The LXX has "whelp," and Luther, similarly, has a "young lion." The American Translation has an "old lion," and the Authorized Version translates with a "great lion." The Vulgate has "lioness," as has the Revised Version, which might be explained by the fact that the same consonants appear in אֲלִיָּא, "lioness." The אֲלִיָּא itself can be either a lion or a lioness.

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.128.

2 Hengstenberg, loc.cit.

Keil, English Translation, p.185.

Keil here, in footnote, refers to Hengstenberg.

3 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 124.

4 Keil, English Translation, p.184.

5 LXX: ἰδοὺ λαὸς ὡς σκύμνος ἀναστήσεται

Vulgate: Ecce, populus ut laena consurget,

Luther: Siehe, das Volk wird aufstehen wie ein junger Löwe.

S.G. Am.Tr.: "Here is a people that rises like an old lion,"

R.V.: "Behold, the people riseth up as a lioness, "

A different word is used in the parallel: "And lifts himself like a lion," וַיִּשְׂרָף לִיּוֹן . 1 Here the versions in general agree on simply "lion," for לִיּוֹן , although the Authorized Version has a "young lion."

Since the lion is described here as rising up, an animal of potential might, one possessing power, but not using it at the very moment, while in the latter part of the verse the actual exercise of the might is suggested, the lion intended would not be a mere whelp, depending on an older animal for food and protection, nor, on the other hand, would he be an aged, toothless, feeble, and weatherbeaten specimen. The lion suggested by the verse itself is one that is full grown and young, in the prime of life.

"He does not lie down until he eats prey," אֵלֶּיךָ יְהוָה עַד-יִשְׁבֹּת . 2 The lion is vigorous, capable of taking care of himself, able to secure his own prey. This prey is not that which lies about, ready to be eaten without trouble. Here it is fresh meat, that which the lion himself captures and tears apart. This is indicated by the last part of the verse: "And drinks blood of the

- 1 LXX: καὶ ὡς λέων γαυρωθήσεται
 Vulgate: et quasi leo erigetur;
 Luther: und wird sich erheben wie ein Löwe
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "That rears itself like a lion."
 R.V.: "And as a lion doth he lift himself up:"
- 2 LXX: οὐ κοιμηθήσεται, ἕως φάγη θήραν,
 Vulgate: non accubabit, donec devoret praedam
 Luther: es wird sich nicht legen, bis es den Raub fresse
 S.G. Am.Tr.: "It never lies down, until it devours prey."
 R.V. and A.V.: "He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey,"

wounded¹ ones," וְשָׂהָה וְשָׂהָה וְשָׂהָה וְשָׂהָה .² The blood flows
from the wounds of the torn creatures that are prey for the lion.

This verse, as also Chapter 24, 9, points back to Genesis
49, 9: "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art
gone up: He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion;
who shall rouse him up?" God here put into Balaam's mouth a picture
similar to that which had been stated by Jacob concerning Judah.³

Jacob here compares Judah first of all to a lion cub, then to a
full grown lion with prey. As a cub the power exists, but is not
yet developed. The cub is not yet able to acquire prey. When full
grown it is so formidable, that, having feasted, it rests in ease,
no one daring to disturb it.⁴ This verse points back especially
to the first part of Genesis 49, 9, describing the young lion in
his vigor, feasting on his prey. The peaceful repose of the resting
lion after the banquet is mentioned in the following prophecy,
Chapter 24, 9.

This passage, treating of the rearing up of the lion and his
going out and capturing prey points to the victories that Israel
would win over its enemies,⁵ especially over the Canaanites.⁶

1 Gesenius Kautzsch, 124 n.: וְשָׂהָה, blood, singular when con-
sidered as organic unity, here used of the blood gushing from
wounds.

2 LXX: και αἷμα τραυματιῶν πίεται.
Vulgate: et occisorum sanguinem bibat.
Luther: und das Blut der Erschlagenen saufe.
S.G. Am.Tr.: "And drinks slain creatures' blood."
A.V. and R.V.: "And drink the blood of the slain."

3 Newton, op.cit., p.65, mentions also Genesis 27, 29.

4 Comparison to lions is often found in Scripture. Nahum 2, 11.12,
speaks of Nineveh, as young lions resting unprotected and yet
unmolested. Ezekiel 19 applies the comparison to the princes
of Israel. Hos. 5, 14; Rev. 5,5.

5 Israel's possession and enjoyment of the land is pointed to in
Chapter 24, 9.

6 Newton, op.cit., p.65

"What the patriarch Jacob prophesied of Judah, the ruler among his brethren, in Genesis 49, 9, Balaam here transfers to the whole nation, to put to shame all the hopes indulged by the Moabish king of the conquest and destruction of Israel." ¹

The entire prophecy worked toward this end, beginning with a statement of the immutability of the divine pronouncements and an assertion of their certainty. Balaam indicated the internal conditions in Israel. God beheld no iniquity among the people. He was with them, as their King, and against Him no one could prevail. Israel was not guided by divination, but by the Word of God Himself, which came to them whenever it was necessary. He had shown in the past that He was with Israel, He had led them out of Egypt, and He was still leading them. Because of this Israel was a mighty people, and Israel is here compared to a wild ox, fierce and unyielding, and to a lion who goes out to secure prey. The blessing of the first prophecy was reiterated and augmented. There could be no doubt that Israel was divinely blessed.

¹ Keil, English Translation, p. 185.

THE THIRD PROPHECY OF BALAAM

Numbers 24, 3 - 9.

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

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:

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

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.

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.

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.

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."

(Authorized Version)

At the completion of Balaam's second prophecy it had become sufficiently clear to Balak that he was not witnessing the fulfilment of his hopes and ambitions. It was obvious that Israel was not being cursed, but this was not the most irritating aspect of the situation. Had this been the only result of the efforts of the king, he might have considered himself in no worse a position than before. Now, however, he not only found that the curse was not forthcoming, but instead of it he heard a blessing spoken on Israel's behalf.

All this was, to say the least, distasteful to the king. "And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all."¹ If a curse was not possible, Balaam should at least refrain from an actual blessing. He did not content himself with failing to do what Balak desired, but he did what Balak definitely did not want.

Balaam's answer to this rebuke was similar to that which he gave at the first rebuke. "Told I not thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?"²

These repeated statements to the effect that he could speak nothing but what he received from God should have been enough to discourage Balak thoroughly, especially in view of Balaam's emphatic testimony to the unchangeableness of God's decrees and the certainty of their fulfilment. In spite of these statements, however, Balak persisted in his attempts to secure an effective curse against Israel.

1 Numbers 23, 25

2 Numbers 23, 26.

"And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence,"¹ and he brought Balaam to another place, as though with a mere change of scenery he could reverse God's disposition by changing the disposition of Balaam.

As before, Balaam instructed the king to build seven altars, and prepare the bullocks and rams for sacrifice. "And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar."² The disappointing experience of the first two attempts had failed to convince the king that it was all useless.

The lesson contained in the failure of the two previous attempts was not lost on Balaam. He was now even more certain than previously "that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel."³ He was convinced that Israel was the people of God.⁴ Thus "he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments." At former times⁵ he had gone out to call for or invite auguries,⁶ but this time "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."⁷ He merely looked over Israel and let himself be influenced.⁸ Of both the other utterances it is said that Jehovah put a word into his mouth,⁹

1 Numbers 23, 27.

2 Numbers 23, 30.

3 Numbers 24, 1.

4 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 136.

5 "as time after time," קַפְּעַם אַחַר קַפְּעַם Keil, Eng. Tr., p. 186.

6 קִרְאָה לְשׂוֹמְרֵי הַבְּרִית

7 Numbers 24, 2.

8 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 743.

9 Numbers 23, 5. 16.

but here it is stated that "the spirit of God came upon him." ¹ He was placed in a state of ecstasy. The Spirit opened his inner mental eye. ²

"And he took up his parable, and said," ³ introduces this utterance, just as it introduced the former and introduces the subsequent ones. It is what here follows this introduction that demands the attention. "His latter prophecies Balaam ushers in with a remarkable preface: 'Balaam the son of Beor hath said ...,'"⁴ ⁵

The use of ⁶ attracts the attention here. Orelli contrasts Balaam's method with that of the prophets, who use ⁷. The word ⁸ is rare in the Pentateuch, appearing outside this chapter only in Genesis 22, 16 and Numbers 14, 28, ⁹ both times with the Tetragrammaton. This chapter is one of the few places where it is not followed by a divine name, but with another genitive. ¹⁰ In

1 Bible Commentary (edited by Cook), p. 740, claims that not until the inner visions in Chapter 24 does Balaam tell the future.

This cannot be maintained, as predictions of the future do occur in the former prophecies.

2 Keil, English Translation, p.186.

3 LXX: καὶ ἀναλαβὼν τὴν παραβολὴν αὐτοῦ εἶπεν

Vulgate: assumpta parabola ait.

Luther: Und er hub an seinen Spruch und sprach

S.G. Am.Tr.: "and he gave utterance to his oracle, saying "

A.V. and R.V.: "And he took up his parable, and said, "

4 Newton, op.cit., p.67.

5 LXX: φησὶν Βαλααμ υἱὸς Βεωρ.

Vulgate: " Dixit Balaam, filius Beor.

Luther: Es saget Bileam, der Sohn Beor.

S.G. Am.Tr.: "The oracle of Balaam, the son of Beor."

R.V.: "Balaam the son of Beor saith, "

For the construct form ¹¹ see p.

Gesenius, Kautzsch, Grammar, 90 o, 96.

6 Orelli, The Old Testament Prophecy, p.146.

7 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.133.

8 Wobersin, op.cit., p.26.

Psalm 36, 2, "The transgression of the wickedness saith ...," $\square \times \eta$
 $\text{עַל שִׁבְטֵי עַל פִּשְׁעוֹ}$, "a $\square \times \eta$ is ascribed to the personified wicked-
 ness."¹ Aside from its use here with Balaam, $\square \times \eta$ is used with
 human beings only in 2 Samuel 23, 1 and Proverbs 30, 1.² In 2 Samuel
 23, 1 the word is used to introduce the last words of David, $\square \times \eta$
 $\text{וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה}$ and $\text{וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה}$. In Proverbs 30, 1, "the
 man spake," $\text{וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה}$, the word is not used with a proper name,
 but, as in 2 Samuel 23, 1, with a definite common noun. In both these
 passages the words are those of God. David states that his are the
 words of God, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in
 my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me."
 In Proverbs the words constitute what the text calls $\text{וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה}$,
 which the Authorized Version translates "prophecy." Luther translates
 it "Lehre." The Vulgate has "visio."³ That $\text{וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה}$ is used also of
 divine prophecy is shown by its use in the initial verses of Nahum and
 Habakkuk, which the Authorized Version translates as "burden." Luther
 has "last." The Vulgate translates "onus." The American Translation,
 which in Proverbs 30, 1 and 31, 1 takes it as a proper name, here in
 Nahum and Habakkuk translates $\text{וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה וְהָיָה}$ as "oracle."

In every case of its use with a person other than God, $\square \times \eta$ is
 used of a divine pronouncement. Yet, even if this is denied, the fact
 must be admitted that $\square \times \eta$ is applied also by Balaam, even though

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 187.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 187.

Wobersin, op. cit., p. 26.

3 The LXX has no recognizable translation in this verse, but in
 Proverbs 31, 1 the same word is translated $\chi\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$.
 The American Translation transliterates both in Proverbs 30, 1
 and 31, 1, taking "Massa" as the name of a place.

with his own name attached, to a divine utterance. The use of the word by David in 2 Samuel 23 shows that it is not merely an expression of boasting vanity.¹ Orelli says "the last solemn oracle of David agrees in form with Balaam's *mashal*."² David's form of speech, says Hengstenberg, is evidently an adaptation of Balaam's introductory words.³ "Hence, when Balaam calls the following prophecy a $\square \text{אָפֵן}$, this is done for the purpose of designating it as a divine revelation received from the Spirit of God."⁴

Balaam continues with a description of his present state, "and the declaration of the man whose eye is shut," $\square \text{אָפֵן הַגִּבּוֹר שֶׁרְאָהוֹ}$: $\square \text{אָפֵן}$.⁵ The Authorized Version translates $\square \text{אָפֵן}$ "open," following the translation of Luther. The LXX, with $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\omega\varsigma$,⁶ might be taken to lean rather to this translation⁷ than to that of the Vulgate, which, with "obturatus," takes $\square \text{אָפֵן}$ as "closed." The American Translation sidesteps the difficulty entirely by rendering "... the man who had evil designs." While some commentators prefer the sense of "open," the majority adopt the meaning "shut."⁸

The Bible Commentary states that this is a rare word, occurring only here and in the parallel passage, verse 15. The LXX

1 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 135.

2 Orelli, op.cit., p. 146.

3 Hengstenberg, op.cit., pp. 134-135.

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 187.

5 LXX: $\phi\eta\sigma\iota\nu\ \delta\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\omega\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\rho\omega\tau\eta$

Vulgate: dixit homo cujus obturatus est oculus.

Luther: es saget der Mann, dem die Augen geöffnet sind.

S.G. Am.Tr.: "The oracle of the man who had evil designs."

R.V.: "And the man whose eye was closed saith:"

6 This word carries the idea of sincerity.

7 Hengstenberg, op.cit., pp. 135-136.

8 Ibid., p. 135.

ἀλθινῶς ὄρω is taken as "unclosed," and said to be the better meaning.¹ In support of its view this commentary refers to the mishna,² wherein, it is stated, אָרַשׁ and אָרַס "are repeatedly used together to express the unstopping and closing again of a wine jar."³ The use of the term in the mishna would not be sufficient to prove that this is the meaning here intended. The prophecies of Balaam are of known and demonstrable antiquity, while the Hebrew of the mishna is late, and the possibility of a change of meaning cannot be definitely denied.⁴

Newton suggests the translation, "the man whose eye was shut," claiming that the word אָרַשׁ is used only here and in Lamentations 3, 8, where the meaning is "shut,"⁵ "... he shutteth out my prayer." Newton adds also that the word אָרַס, "which is very near of kin to it, I think, hath always that signification."⁶ For additional support he calls on the obturatus of the Vulgate.

Newton's conclusion regarding the meaning of the word is correct, although the argument from the use of the verb in Lamentations 3, 8 carries little weight, since it is not the same word. Lamentations 3, 8 uses אָרַשׁ, spelled with שׁ, while Balaam uses אָרַשׁ, spelled with שׁ. ⁷ Gesenius identifies the verb in Lamentations,

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 749.

2 Bible Commentary, p. 749, gives the definite reference.

3 Bible, Commentary, p. 149.

4 Gesenius, Lexicon, mentions the use of the verb in the Talmud in the sense of perforate.

5 Newton, op.cit., p. 67.

6 Ibid., loc.cit.

7 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 136, appears to take the אָרַשׁ as a different spelling of אָרַשׁ, and a connecting link between אָרַשׁ and אָרַס. He suggests that the use of אָרַשׁ in Lamentations 3, 8 might indicate that the original form was אָרַשׁ and the softening to אָרַס was later.

an hapaxlegomenon, with $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$, rather than $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$, to which it is more similar in appearance, although the meaning of "shut" is predicated of both $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$ and $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$.¹

Keil likewise takes the $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$ as "close," comparing it to the use of $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$ in Daniel 8, 26² and of $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$ in Lamentations 3, 8, with the ו softened into ו or ו .³

Gesenius takes the word as meaning "shut," although he mentions the fact that some rabbis accept the opposite meaning taking this as equivalent to the $\text{לָּלַךְ עֵינָיו} : \square$ in the following verse.⁴ Hengstenberg argues that this meaning of "open" would involve tautology,⁵ but this claim alone would not preclude the possibility of the meaning "open." Yet the weakness of this individual argument is no point against the meaning "shut," which is sufficiently well established without this argument.

Some, contrasting the $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$ here and the $\text{לָּלַךְ} \text{ עֵינָיו}$ in the following verse, claim that the $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$ refers to Balaam's former blindness, when his eyes "had been shut" to God's will.⁶

Some take $\square \text{ט} \text{ו}$ as an indication that the one so described was one who looked into hidden things,⁷ but there is little to support this view.

Another suggestion that comes closer to the generally accepted view is that quoted by Hengstenberg, referring to a common custom of

1 Gesenius, Hebrew English Lexicon
2 "wherefore shut thou up the vision."
3 Keil, English Translation, p.187.
4 Gesenius, Hebrew English Lexicon.
5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.136
6 See on the following verse
7 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.137.

human beings, that of closing their eyes, and even their ears, when they are attempting to concentrate. ¹

Orelli says that the man of "closed eye" is the one "whose bodily eye is withdrawn from the sensuous, whilst from his inner one the veil is lifted, which hides secrets from human vision." ² Hence he is also called : □ עֵינָיו נִסְתָּרוּ . ³

"Balaam describes himself as the man with closed eye with reference to his state of ecstasy, in which the closing of the outer senses went hand in hand with the opening of the inner." ⁴

Keil points out that cessation of perception by the external senses was a common characteristic of both visions and dreams, two forms in which the prophetic gift manifested itself. ⁵ "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." ⁶ Keil, however, adds:

"In the case of prophets whose spiritual life was far advanced, inspiration might take place without any closing of the outward senses. But upon men like Balaam, whose inner religious life was still very impure and undeveloped, the Spirit of God could only operate by closing their outward senses to impressions from the lower earthly world, and raising them up to visions of the higher and spiritual world." ⁷

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 138, quoting Steinbeck, *der Dichter ein Seher*, Leipz. 1836, p. 121 ff.

2 Orelli, op. cit., p. 145.

3 Ibid., p. 146.

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 187, referring to Hengstenberg-Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 137.

5 Keil, English Translation, p. 187.

6 Numbers 12, 6.

7 Keil, English Translation, p. 187.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., pp. 138-139, also suggests that for a person like Balaam it would be preferable that the eyes be shut, since his spiritual character was not all that could be desired.

This contrast is further elucidated by Gosman, who says, with regard to the closing of the bodily eyes, "with men like Balaam, whose inner eye was darkened by lusts and passions, it seems necessary; but with those who were spiritually minded, who were not sunken in the world of the senses and of self, it was not necessary, and probably did not occur." ¹

That such a closing of the eyes was not necessary is shown by the prophesying of the High Priest Caiphas, previously mentioned, ² and also by the fact that Balaam had already proclaimed the Word of God in the former two utterances, in connection with which no mention is made of this phenomenon.

Balaam, having "passed now into prophetic ecstasy," ³ went on with the description of his new state. "The declaration of the one hearing the words of God," וְנָאֵם אֲשֶׁר עָאָמַר אֱלֹהִים. ⁴ Hengstenberg asserts that the difference between his present condition and his former condition, however great it was, was still only one of degree. ⁵

With regard to this section, "He hath said, which heard the words of God," Newton says that "in this story we read several times, that 'God came unto Balaam and said unto him;' and possibly he might

1 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 137.

2 John 11, 49-52.

3 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 136.

4 LXX: φησὶν ἀκούων λόγια θεοῦ.

Vulgate: dixit auditor sermonum Dei,

Luther: Es saget der Hörer göttlicher Rede,

S.G. Am. Tr.: "The oracle of him who hears the words of God,"

R.V.: "He saith, which heareth the words of God."

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 142.

allude to former revelations." ¹ Balaam may well have been alluding to the former revelations, but not exclusively. The participle שָׂמַע implies continual and habitual hearing, designating the person concerned as such a hearer, and thus it can include the former revelations along with the present, but the chief reference is to the words forming the קִיָּן , the "declaration" or "utterance." The קִיָּן had not yet been proclaimed, and the "hath said" of the Authorized Version, and also the similar rendition by the Vulgate and Luther, fail to give the proper sense of the word, which, being a noun, contains no indication of time. The American Translation, "The oracle of him who hears the words of God," expresses the sense adequately. The אֲמַרְי־אֵל refers in particular to the words which Balaam was about to proclaim.

Balaam describes his condition further with the words, "seer of the vision of the Almighty," $\text{אֲשֶׁר מַחְזֶה שְׂדֵי יְהוָה}$.² Balaam is here characterized as a person who had such visions. The claim that all this was merely an idle boast cannot be substantiated. The fact that the Spirit came over Balaam, as is stated in verse 2, explains such statements as these descriptions of the ecstatic condition.³ He heard the אֲמַרְי־אֵל and saw the מַחְזֶה שְׂדֵי .⁴

1 Newton, op.cit., p. 67.

2 LXX: $\text{ὁσους ὀρασιν θεου εἶδεν}$
 Vulgate: qui visionem omnipotentis intuitus est.
 Luther: der des Allmächtigen Offenbarung siehet.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "Who has a vision of the Almighty."
 R.V.: "Which seeth the vision of the Almighty,"

3 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 143.

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 187.

A distinction is made between רָאָה , the common word for see, and חָזָה , the word used here. The former, it is said, "indicated primarily physical or material (objective) sight." ¹ While חָזָה , it is claimed, was sometimes used in this sense, ² the real meaning is shown by the use of the cognate word מַחְזֶה . ³

The meaning is rather that of prophetic vision. That this was not an ordinary physical seeing is shown by the fact that Balaam had his eyes shut, and also by the fact that he was in a trance.

This state is indicated by a single word, "Falling," נָפַל . ⁴ The LXX, ἐν ὄπνυω , takes this as a trance. Orelli explains the נָפַל as "He who falls down unconscious in the manner of the Shamans, in order then to speak in a clairvoyant state." ⁵ It shows the force of the inspiration, which Hengstenberg compares to an armed man as it came upon him and threw him to the ground. ⁶ The falling "is not that of one awestruck by the surpassing glory revealed to him,"

1 Anglican Theological Review, Vol.II, Dec. 1919, Number 3, p.233. Genesis 16, 13 and 1 Samuel 9, 9 are cited as examples.

2 Anglican Theological Review, Vol.II, Dec. 1919, Number 3, P.233. Reference to Exodus 24, 11; Job. 19, 26.

The object in both cases is the deity. Comparison of Exodus 24, 11 with Exodus 24, 10 shows that both words can be employed in the same sense.

3 Anglican Theological Review, Vol.II, Dec. 1919, Number 3, p.233, referring to Habakkuk 1, 1; Ezekiel 13, 6.

4 LXX:	ἐν ὄπνυω
Vulgate:	qui cadet
Luther:	... wenn er niederkniet
S.G. Am. Tr.:	"Prostrate,..."
R.V.:	"Falling down, "
A.V.:	" falling into a trance, "

5 Orelli, op.cit., p.146.

6 Hengstenberg, op. cit ., p. 140.

as was that of Ezekiel and others. ¹ It indicates, rather, "the force of the Divine Inspiration overpowering the seer," ² as in the case of Saul, who was similarly prostrated. ³ The inspiration took such a spectacular form only when an appropriately immature condition presented itself. It would not be expected in the case of Samuel, for example, says Hengstenberg. ⁴ It appears that the faithful prophets were not subjected to this violence, but in such people as Balaam and Saul the "alien will" had to be put down, and then also the physical actions controlled by it. ⁵

The falling was "the condition under which the inward opening of his eyes took place," ⁶ Balaam ended the description of his condition by describing himself as "falling, and uncovered of eyes,"

נִפֹּל וְנִשְׁכַּח עֵינָיו . 7

Newton takes this, in connection with the former statement that

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.743.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.141, lists the instances in Genesis 15, 12; Ezekiel 1, 28; 3, 23; 43, 3; Daniel 8, 17. 18; 10, 15; Revelation 1, 17 as not being parallel, heaving as the cause of the falling the majesty of that which appears.

2 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 743.

3 1 Samuel 19, 24, taken as a parallel case by both Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.140. and Cook, Bible Commentary, p.743.

4 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.141.

5 Cook, Bible Commentary, pp. 743-744.

This would naturally not apply in a case where the prophecy is made by one who is not aware of the fact that he is prophesying, e.g., John 11, 51.

6 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.743, referring to Vulgate.

7 LXX: ἐν ὕπνῳ , ἀποκεκαλυμμένοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ
 Vulgate: cadet et sic aperiuntur oculi ejus.
 Luther: dem die Augen geöffnet werden, wenn er niederkniet.
 S.G. Am-Tr.: "Prostrate, but with eyes open: "
 R.V.: "Falling down, and having his eyes open: "
 A.V.: " falling into a trance, but having his eyes open."

Balaam's eyes were shut, as a reference to a past event. He "had his eyes shut, but now open." This statement, a marginal reading, he says "plainly alludes to Balaam's not seeing the angel of the Lord, at the same time that the ass saw him." ¹ Accordingly, then, the falling is referred to the past events. Newton points to the fact that the original contains no mention of a trance, and asserts that the translation should be: "falling, and his eyes were opened," this "alluding to what happened in the way - to Balaam's falling ass, and then having his eyes opened." ² He epitomizes this view with the statement, "A contrast is intended between having his eyes shut, and having his eyes opened; The one answers to the other." ³ There is just such a contrast, but it is not a reference to what has gone before. There is nothing to designate this as a past event, while the most natural interpretation places it in the time being, while Balaam was speaking.

Some take this as indicating that Balaam's eyes had previously been shut to God's purpose, but at this time are open. The Bible Commentary, which prefers the meaning of "open" for $\square\tau\omega$ and

$\square\tau\omega$, says they are "opened in inward vision, to discern things that were hidden from ordinary beholders." ⁴

There is no great difficulty attached to the condition of the uncovered eyes, even in view of the previous statement regarding the

1 Newton, op. cit., p.67.

Gesenius Kautzsch 116 k for the construction of $\square\tau\omega$

2 Newton, loc.cit.

3 Newton, loc.cit.

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 743.

closed eye. The eyes here uncovered are those of the heart or the understanding.¹

Thus, although Balaam's physical eyes were shut, his inner eyes were uncovered. He beheld a vision of the Almighty. He heard the words of God. He made his declaration.

This speech of Balaam has two main divisions. Verses 5 to 7 treat of "the glorious prosperity of Israel, and the exaltation of its kingdom." The last two verses, 8 and 9, deal with "the terrible power, so fatal to all its foes, of the people which was set to be a curse or a blessing to all the nations."²

"How goodly are your tents, Jacob," מַה יְטִיבוֹ אֹהֲלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב.³ The מַה, originally interrogative, is used also to introduce exclamations of wonder or indignation.⁴ The outpouring of the blessing on Israel had already begun.

The parallel phrase is almost identical, "your dwellings, Israel," מַה יְטִיבוֹ אֹהֲלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל.⁵ These dwellings, along with the tents in the first hemistich, are the subject of the verb טִיב.

1 Calov, op. cit., p.544.

Ephesians 1, 17.18; 3, 18. 19.

2 Keil, English Translation, p. 188.

3 LXX: Ὡς καλοὶ σου οἱ οἴκοι, Ἰακώβ.
Vulgate: Quam pulchra tabernacula tua, Jacob.
Luther: Wie fein sind deine Hütten, Jacob.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "How fine your tents are, O Jacob."
A.V. and R.V.: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, "

4 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 148 b.

5 LXX: οἱ σκηναὶ σου, Ἰσραὴλ.
Vulgate: et tentoria tua, Israel!
Luther: und deine Wohnungen, Israel.
S.G. Am.Tr.: "Your dwellings, O Israel."
R.V.: "Thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

Hengstenberg asserts that, while this statement applies primarily to that time, it cannot be restricted thereto, but holds true for all time. ¹ The goodliness applies now to the Christian Church, ² the continuation of the congregation of Israel.

Balaam goes on to describe this goodliness in figurative language. "Like valleys are they spread out," ³ פְּנִינֵי אֲרָצֵי . The suggestion has been offered that this might refer to the four parallel brooks running into Jordan, which must have influenced to some extent the locations of the parts of the camp. ⁴ Although this is possible, it would be difficult to prove.

The LXX has *βάπαι*, "wooded dells," for *אֲרָצֵי*. The word *אֲרָץ* is used first for a brook, and also for a valley through which a brook flows. This latter meaning is suggested by Hengstenberg because of the comparisons that follow. ⁵ Keil also takes the *אֲרָצֵי* as valleys watered by brooks. ⁶

The form of the verb *פָּנְיָה* is a pausal form, which accounts for the retention of the yodh. ⁷ The form is from the root *פָּנָה*, with the meaning of "expand." ⁸ The niph'al has the passive

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 144.

2 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p.137.

3 LXX: *ὡς εἰ βάπαι ἐκτάσσουσαι*
Vulgate: *et valles nemorosae*
Luther: *Wie sich die Bäche ausbreiten*
S.G. Am.Tr.: "Like far stretching valleys,"
R.V.: "As valleys are they spread forth."

4 Bible Commentary, p. 744, suggests this.

5 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.144. Isaiah 58, 11.

6 Keil, English Translation, p. 188.

7 Gesenius, Kautzsch, Grammar, 75 x Niph'al in *פָּנְיָה* in pause with ' retained (*פָּנְיָה*).

8 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.145.

meaning, "be extended," equivalent to the reflexive sense, "to extend oneself, to stretch or spread out far and wide." ¹ The meaning of the word offers little difficulty. It is the subject of the verb that is a matter of dispute. Most interpreters take the valleys as the subject, as does Luther, but Hengstenberg offers the better suggestion that the tents are spread out. ² This agrees with the Authorized Version: "As the valleys are they spread forth."

"Like gardens by a river," כַּגַּנֹּת עַל־נְהַר . ³ This continues the picture of peaceful beauty, a picture of blessing elsewhere employed in Scripture, as Isaiah 58, 11: "... thou shalt be like a watered garden." The tents of Israel are spread forth like gardens by a river, with serenity and an adequate supply of water. The river here is a נְהַר, rather than the less dependable נַחַל. The specific reference to the water indicates the intended blessing. The latter part of this verse and the following verse employ a similar figure of blessing.

"As aloes the Lord planted," כַּאֲלוֹתִים נִטַּע יְהוָה . ⁴ The LXX, the Vulgate, and Luther all take the אֲלוֹתִים as tents, which would have the same consonantal spelling. The use of the word in the preceding verse, and also the fact that the same word is the

1 Keil, English Translation by Martin, p.186, gives this meaning.

2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p.145.

3 LXX. καὶ ὡσεὶ παράδεισος ἐπὶ ποταμῶν

Vulgate: ut horti juxta fluvios irrigui

Luther: wie die Gärten an den Wassern

S.G. Am.Tr.: "Like gardens beside a river."

R.V.: "As gardens by the river side, "

4 LXX: καὶ ὡσεὶ σκηνῶν ἃς ἔπησεν κύριος,

Vulgate: ut tabernacula quae fixit Dominus

Luther: wie die Hütten, die der Herr pflanzet,

S.G. Am.Tr.: "Like aloes planted by the Lord."

R.V.: "As lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, "

subject of this verse, might suggest this interpretation. Opposed to this view is the Massoretic pointing, according to which the meaning is "aloes," and this is the interpretation of the Authorized Version and the American Translation. Commentators appear to prefer "aloes."

Aloe trees grew in the far East,¹ and the product, a precious spice,² used for incense, and valued for its fragrance,³ was imported from the far East.⁴ Gosman suggests that Balaam might have been influenced not only by what he saw before him, but also by thoughts of his home by the Euphrates.⁵ Although such an influence cannot be definitely ruled out, it is unnecessary, since his words were those of God. Not even the fact that his eyes were shut can prove that what lay before him had no connection with his words. God could bring just such a connection for the benefit of Balak and whoever else might have been listening.

Hand the spirit of economy of means.

The Bible Commentary finds in this planting of aloes by the Lord an "apparent reference to Paradise." Reference is made to Genesis 2, 8, which states that "the Lord God planted a garden in Eden from the East," וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גַּן-בְּעֵדֶן מִקְדָּם.⁶ Hengstenberg indicates the important factor, the divine planting. Trees which the Lord plants have a favorable location.⁷ "The trees of the Lord are full ... ; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 188.
 2 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.747.
 Psalm 45, 8; Prov. 7, 17.
 3 Keil, loc.cit.
 4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.744.
 5 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p.137.
 6 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.744.
 7 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.145.

planted." ¹ Thriving growth is the result of divine planting. ²
To these advantageously situated and thriving trees the tents of
Israel are compared.

The final comparison in the verse likens Israel's tents to
"cedars by water." : אֲרְזֵי עַל־יַם . ³ The mention of
cedars, the "noblest of trees," offers a picture of majesty and
beauty, ⁴ climaxing the similar descriptions contained in the
verse.

Israel is compared to watered valleys, or, as the LXX has it,
"wooded glens," to gardens by a river, to aloe trees planted by
the Lord, and to cedar trees beside water. All these comparisons
show peace, divine care, blessing.

The next verse again refers to water as a picture of blessing.
"Water overflows from his buckets." וַיִּזְלַח מִן הַבַּקְעָלִים . ⁵
The LXX has, "a man will come out of his seed," which bears little
resemblance to the sense of the Massoretic text.

The picture here is one of a man carrying water buckets. The

1 Psalm 104, 16.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 145.

3 LXX: ὡσεὶ κέδροι παρ' ὕδατα.
Vulgate: quasi cedri prope aquas.
Luther: wie die Cedern an den Wassern.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Like cedars beside a stream."
R.V.: "As cedar trees beside the waters."

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

5 LXX: ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ
Vulgate: Fluet aqua de situla ejus
Luther: Es wird Wasser aus seinem Eimer fliessen.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Water shall flow from their buckets."
R.V.: "Water shall flow from his buckets,"

form of the noun, יָדָיִם , is the dual with suffix. ¹ The dual is generally used of objects "arranged in pairs, either naturally or artificially." ² The use here is explained by the fact that there were two buckets carried by the water - carrier. ³ Balaam's native soil was ordinarily irrigated by water fetched from the neighboring Euphrates, and carried in buckets suspended from the two ends of a pole." ⁴ The dual is used also for more than two such objects customarily appearing in pairs, but here the dual seems rather to apply to two buckets carried by the people personified as an individual. ⁵ "The nation is personified as a man carrying two pails overflowing with water." ⁶ The one whose water overflows can be assumed to possess an abundance of water. ⁷ The Bible Commentary expresses this with "he shall stream with water." ⁸ Israel was to prosper. It was to have an abundance of water. ⁹ Water is essential to fertility, and this in itself makes water a great blessing. Israel thus "should have his own exuberant and unfailling channels of blessing and plenty." ¹⁰ The proximity to an abundant supply of water is expressed also in the preceding verse.

According to the general explanation the water from the buckets

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- 1 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 93 z: יָדָיִם dual with suffix (from יָד for יָדָיִם)
 - 2 Keil, English Translation, pp. 188-189. (reference made to Gesenius 88 z.)
 - 3 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 146.
 - 4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.
 - 5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 146.
 - 6 Keil, English Translation, p. 188.
Hengstenberg, loc.cit.
 - 7 Hengstenberg, loc.cit.
 - 8 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.
 - 9 Keil, loc. cit.
 - 10 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

signifies a great number of descendants. That this view is untenable is shown by a comparison with the previous verse, where water is used as a symbol of blessing and salvation. The parallel member, "his seed in many waters" also indicates the falsity of this view that the seed or progeny is meant by the reference to water. In the parallel member the idea of blessing and salvation is far more suitable.¹ The assertion that water is not used in this way,² to signify human descendants, cannot be urged as a proof, nor is such proof necessary, as there is ample indication without this claim. The words picture "the delights of the spiritual Israel of all ages."³

The Bible Commentary mentions the suggestion that the preposition γ in $\gamma \gamma \gamma \gamma$ signifies comparison, as the $\gamma \gamma \gamma \gamma$ in the latter part of the verse. "He shall flow with water more plentifully than his buckets." Israel would give to others beyond what it received, and thus future blessings would come to the world through Israel.⁴ Gosman likewise states that out of the fulness of blessing Israel was to distribute to others.⁵ Gosman refers to God's words to Abram: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."⁶

That the water flowing over is a sign of blessing is shown by Isaiah 44, 3: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.147.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 147, makes the claim, denying this meaning also in the apparently contested Isaiah 48, 1.

3 Kretzmann, op. cit., p.283.

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

5 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 137.

6 Genesis 12, 3, referred to by Gosman, Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p.137.

floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." In accordance with this the "many waters" in the parallel member must be taken to signify the fulness of blessing. ¹

The blessing extends also to the descendants of Israel.

"And his seed in many waters," וַיְזַרְעוּ בְּמַי רַבִּים. ²

The seed, says Keil, is obviously "posterity," as a reference to planting seed would be weak here. ³ A similar blessing is found in Isaiah 44, 4, as God, speaking of Jacob's offspring (וְיִשְׂרָאֵל), says, "And they shall spring up among grass, like willows by streams of water." This is similar to the comparison of Israel's tents to trees growing beside water, and suggests a similar meaning. The water in both cases is a sign of blessing. Israel's offspring is to abound in blessings. "... they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." ⁴

It has been suggested that the "seed in many waters" is an indication that the seed will spread itself abroad. ⁵ This view stretches the comparison, and, while it is true that the descendants of Israel have spread all over the world, this is not in the text,

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 146.

2 LXX: καὶ κυριεύσει ἐθνῶν πολλῶν,
Vulgate: et semen illius erit in aquas multas.
Luther: und sein Same wird ein Gross Wasser werden.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "And their seed shall have abundant water."
R.V. and A.V.: "And his seed shall be in many waters."

3 Keil, English Translation, p. 189.

4 Isaiah 65, 23.

5 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 137.

except inasmuch as it might be included in the general blessings that can be understood under the picture of water.

The "many waters" signifies the enjoyment of rich blessings.¹ Some take it literally, that Israel would have the benefit of an abundant water supply.² This they assume from Deuteronomy 8, 7, "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills."³ The occupancy of such a land by Israel was included in the "many waters," but the blessing is not to be restricted to this literal abundance of water. The reference is to blessings in general.

In the second hemistich the worldly might of Israel is treated. "His king is higher than Agag," וְיָרֵם מֵאַגַּג מֶלֶכּוֹ.⁴ Keil takes the וְיָרֵם as an optative, "his king be higher than Agag."⁵ This interpretation is not required by the text, nor is it suggested by the context.

Some versions, as the LXX, have Gog instead of Agag,⁶ but the testimony of the versions in general favors Agag.⁷ Gog, according

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 189.

2 Hengstenberg, op.cit., p. 147.

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744. Reference made also to Jer. 10, 13.

4 LXX: ὑψωθήσεται ἡ Γωγ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ
Vulgate: Tolleitur propter Agag rex ejus.
Luther: sein König wird höher werden, denn Agag.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Their king shall be taller than Agag."
R.V. and A.V.: "And his king shall be higher than Agag."

5 Keil, English Translation, p. 189.

6 Newton, op. cit., pp. 65-66. Newton offers the claim that Gog appears also in the Samaritan, Syriac, and Arabic, (p. 65) but he denies the truth of this claim. He states that the Syriac and Arabic do not read Gog, but that the reading Gog appears only in the Samaritan, LXX, and Symmachus (according to Grotius). (p. 66)

7 Newton, op. cit., p. 66, claims that the Syriac and Arabic have Agag, as also do the Targum of Onkelus and the Vulgate (this, however, with a different sense and construction of the words).

to Newton, generally signifies the Scythians and northern nations,¹ but there is no proof "that Gog was a famous king at that time, and much less that the king of Israel was ever exalted above him; and indeed the Scythians and northern nations lay too remote to be the proper subject of a comparison."²

Agag is not an individual name. An individual name would not be in harmony with the context, which is general.³ Newton says,

"We must either suppose that Agag was prophecied of by name particularly, as Cyrus and Josiah were several years before they were born, or we must say ... that Agag was the general name of the kings of Amalek, which appears very probable, it being the custom of those times and of those countries to give one certain name to all their kings, as Pharaoh was the general name for the kings of Egypt, and Abimelech for the kings of the Philistines."⁴

Hengstenberg mentions also Melchizedek and Adonizedek as names of Jebusite kings and Jabin for the kings of Hazor.⁵ Agag, the fiery one,⁶ he says, "is not a proper name, but a surname of all Amelekite kings."⁷ Newton asserts that "... according to Moses Gerundensis, every king of the Amalekites was called Agag, the name of the first king being transmitted to all his successors on the throne; as from the first Caesar all the Roman emperors were called Caesars."⁸

The Bible Commentary likewise takes this as a hereditary name

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 65.

2 Ibid., p. 66.

3 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 137.

4 Newton, loc. cit.

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 151.

6 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I, p. 101.

7 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I, p. 101.

Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams ... , p. 149.

8 Newton, op. cit., p. 66.

for the chieftains of Amalek, but understands the meaning as "high." ¹
Gesenius mentions an obsolete Arabic root, אגג, meaning to
"burn," or "flame," from which the name Agag is derived. ²
According to this Hengstenberg's suggestion, "the fiery one," is to
be preferred.

The following context shows the individual reference to be
untenable. ³ Mention of one particular king would not be in keeping
with the context, nor with the general character of the utterances of
Balaam. His predictions of the benefits coming to Israel are
general. ⁴ Even the fourth prophecy, although it is more specific
than the former utterances, is stated in general terms, without
specific details. ⁵ This passage, however, does offer a transition
from the general to the particular, binding the first three prophecies
to the fourth. ⁶

The king of the Amalekites is mentioned ⁷ because he "was
selected as the impersonation of the enmity of the world against the
kingdom of God." ⁸ Exodus 17, 18 presents the historical reason
why the Amalekites represent the hostility of the world to God's
kingdom. ⁹ Amalek was "the first heathen tribe that attacked the

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

2 Gesenius, Hebrew English Lexicon, sub אגג.

3 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams usw., p. 149.

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 149.

5 Keil, loc.cit.

6 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 137.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 150.

7 Newton, op. cit., p. 66, says that Amalek, being a neighboring
country, is therefore "fitly introduced upon the present
occasion."

8 Keil, English Translation, p. 188.

9 Lange Schaff Commentary, p.137, Vol. III.

Israelites on their journey to Canaan." ¹

The mention of the Amalekites, says Hengstenberg, must mean that they were the strongest that opposed Israel, ² and Israel's superiority over them would imply also such superiority over the other nations. ³ In Mosaic times, according to Hengstenberg, the Amalekites were the strongest that made war on Israel, but Exodus 17, which is here cited, ⁴ fails to prove this claim, although it does show that at the time of Moses they did wage active warfare against Israel. Later they used guerilla-like tactics, but not active warfare, says Hengstenberg. ⁵ Newton also assumes the superior might of Amalek, taking as a proof verse 20, where Amalek is called "first of nations." "Therefore," he adds, "for the king of Israel to be exalted above the king of Amalek was really a wonderful exaltation," ⁶ yet, wonderful as it was, "it was accomplished by Saul." ⁷

Not all commentators are agreed that Amalek was the mightiest of the nations, ⁸ but that they were a foe to be reckoned with is shown by the narrative in Exodus 17, 8 ff., where their defeat at the hands of the Israelites under Joshua is described. At that time God pronounced a curse on them, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Moses stated that the Lord

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 188.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 151.

Hengstenberg adds that otherwise Moab would have been mentioned, p. 152.

3 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 151.

4 Ibid., p. 152.

5 Ibid., loc. cit.

6 Newton, op. cit., p. 66.

7 Newton, op. cit., p. 66.

8 See on verse 20.

would have "war with Amalek from generation to generation." ¹ The Amalekites were defeated by Saul, as 1 Samuel 15, 7. 8 states. "And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah, until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword." The Amalekites did not greatly trouble the Israelites at the time of Saul, but he was to exterminate them because of what they had done to Israel when the Israelites were on their journey from Egypt. ² Keil here remarks that Agag is not necessarily the proper name of this Amalekite king defeated by Saul, but merely his title as a king of Amalek. ³

Newton takes the defeat of the Amalekites by Saul as fulfilment of this prophecy, so that by virtue of Saul's victory it could be said truly "and properly" that "'his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted,' as it was afterwards greatly by David and Solomon." ⁴

Although the Amalekites never thoroughly recovered from the defeat by Saul, they returned to war and plunder. They appeared again as enemies at the time of David, and this time David put them down. ⁵ Later, at the time of Hezekiah, ⁶ the Amalekites were again defeated. ⁷

1 Exodus 17, 14. 16.

2 Keil, English Translation, p. 190.

3 Ibid., p. 189.

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 67.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 152 (and preceding), also points to Saul as the one who defeated Amalek.

5 1 Samuel 27, 8; 30; 2 Samuel 8, 12.

6 1 Chronicles 4, 43.

7 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

Keil, English Translation, p. 190.

Hengstenberg takes the "king" that was to be higher than Agag, not as any individual king, but as Israel's kings in general, idealised, as Balaam does not mention individuals in his prophecies. ¹ This view does not exclude a reference to the Messiah, but regards Him as the culmination, the one in whom the prophecy first reached its true fulfilment. ² Keil says, "The king of Israel, whose greatness was celebrated by Balaam, was therefore neither the Messiah exclusively, nor the earthly kingdom without the Messiah, but the kingdom of Israel which was established by David, and was exalted in the Messiah into an everlasting kingdom, the enemies of which would all be made its footstool." The מלכוּהוּ he applies not to a particular king, but "quite generally the king whom the Israelites would afterwards receive." ³ Substantially, he says, it is the same as the מלכותו in the parallel member. ⁴ We differ with both men.

"And his kingdom will be exalted," וְתִשָּׂא מַלְכוּתוֹ. ⁵
 The meaning of the hithpa'el ⁶ is usually reflexive, and Luther takes it in this sense. The LXX, the Vulgate, the Authorized Version, the Revised Version, and the American Translation take it in the passive sense, and, while the effect is the

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 149.
 2 Ibid., p. 154.
 3 Keil, English Translation, p. 190.
 4 Ibid., Loc. cit. See also following page, 107.
 5 LXX: καὶ ἀυσηθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ
 Vulgate: et auferetur regnum illius.
 Luther: und sein Reich wird sich erheben.
 S.G. An. Tr.: "And their kingdom shall be exalted."
 A.V. and R.V.: "And his kingdom shall be exalted."
 6 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 54 c. The form מִשְׁתַּבֵּחַ results from the assimilation of ט to ל. In the hithpa'el ט is often assimilated to ך and ם.

same, the reflexive would indicate that the cause is within, while the passive permits an external cause. This is to be preferred here, as Israel's might and prominent position was not the result of anything is Israel itself, but purely the result of God's grace.

Keil points to the fact that "the development of any people generally culminates in an organized kingdom."¹ This, while appearing to take the kingdom purely in an earthly sense, is explained by Hengstenberg, as quoted by Gosman: "For as Israel only attains the complete realization of its idea in the erection of the kingdom, so the kingdom reaches its destination only, with the appearance of the Messiah. In him first the king of Israel is truly higher than Agag, the representative of the hostile world-power."²

While the purely physical aspects of this prophecy were fulfilled in the kings of Israel who defeated the Amalekites, and the kingdom of Israel was in this way exalted, the spiritual fulfilment came only with the Messiah.

Since a mere partial fulfilment cannot be regarded as a complete fulfilment, this prophecy cannot be restricted to the earthly kings of Israel, they then being taken as types of the coming Messiah. This prophecy thus refers to the Messiah, Himself, under whom the world power symbolized by Agag and the Amalekites is subdued. The Christian Church, the continuation of Israel, the spiritual Israel, is

¹ Keil, English Translation, p. 190.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., pp. 152-153, says the rise of the kingship in Israel goes back to Genesis 17, 6; 35, 11. The kingship is regarded as in the future.

² Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 138.

exalted. God's people, because of their relation to Him, are secure. This exaltation is the work of God, not of the Church itself, just as the might of Israel's earthly kingdom lasted only as long as God was supporting it.

In the following verse Balaam again mentions Israel's divine guidance, as he repeats Chapter 23, 22 and adds a further explanation. "God is bringing him out of Egypt. Powers as of a buffalo are his." $\text{לֹא מוֹצִיאֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם כִּתְּוֵעַת רַאִם לוֹ}$.¹ This is identical with Chapter 23, 22, with the exception of the suffix to מוֹצִיאֵם , which in the earlier passage is plural. The context makes this appropriate here. The Vulgate, Luther, the Revised Version, the Authorized Version, and The American Translation all translate exactly as 23, 22 except for this pronoun. The LXX here uses $\omega\delta\eta\gamma\eta\sigma\epsilon\upsilon$ instead of the more accurate $\epsilon\sigma\alpha\gamma\alpha\gamma\omega\upsilon$. The participle מוֹצִיאֵם is durative, as has been stated, expressing the fact that God still leads the Israelites. As God leads Israel, it manifests power comparable to that of the buffalo, or wild ox.²

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- 1 LXX: $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma \omega\delta\eta\gamma\eta\sigma\epsilon\upsilon \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu \epsilon\varsigma \text{ } \dot{\text{A}}\gamma\upsilon\pi\tau\omicron\upsilon$
 $\omega\varsigma \delta\acute{\omicron}\sigma\alpha \mu\omicron\nu\omicron\kappa\epsilon\rho\omega\tau\omicron\varsigma \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$.
- Vulgate: Deus eduxit illum de Aegypto
cujus fortitudo similis est rhinocerotis.
- Luther: Gott hat ihn aus Egypten geführet
seine Freudigkeit ist wie eines Einhorns.
- S.G. Am. Tr.: "God, who brought them out of Egypt
Is like the horns of a wild ox for them."
- R.V.: "God bringeth him forth out of Egypt;
He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox: "

² See on Chapter 23, 22.

"He will devour nations, his adversaries," יאכל גוים □

יָרִיֵץ .¹ The Bible Commentary takes יָרִיֵץ literally as "those that beset him round,"² but there is no necessity to restrict it to this. The suffix here refers to Israel, although the adversaries of Israel are at the same time the adversaries of God. The devouring of Israel's adversaries is described more fully in the following expressions.

"And he will crush their bones," יַגְרֵם יְעִצְמוֹתֵיהֶם □³

The pi'el of יָרַץ is here taken by Gesenius as "crunch," but he gives the pi'el also the meaning of "gnaw,"⁴ which many commentators adopt in this passage. The LXX and older interpreters take the sense of "gnaw," or "suck," to empty the bones of their marrow.⁵ Keil prefers the meaning "crush."⁷ He will "crush" the bones of his enemies⁶ would thus be the meaning." There is little difference in the effect, as sucking, gnawing, or crushing would result in the destruction of the bones, but crushing is an acceptable

1 LXX: ἔδεται ἔθνη ἐχθρῶν αὐτοῦ
 Vulgate: Devorabunt gentes hostes illius.
 Luther: Er wird die Heiden, seine Verfolger, fressen.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "They shall devour nations that are their adversaries."
 R.V.: "He shall eat up the nations his adversaries."

2 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

3 LXX: καὶ τὰ πύχνη αὐτῶν ἐκμυελίει
 Vulgate: ossaque eorum confringent.
 Luther: und ihre Gebeine zermalmen.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "And break their bones in pieces."
 R.V.: "And shall break their bones in pieces."

4 Gesenius, Hebrew English Lexicon, sub יָרַץ □

5 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

6 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 138. The meaning "gnaw" is here expressly rejected.

7 Keil, English Translation, p. 190. The pi'el of יָרַץ, he says, which is from יָרַץ, "bone," is to crush the bones, as "root out," שָׁרַץ.

interpretation of this verb, which signifies specifically destruction of the bones without indicating the exact method by which this is to be done.

"And he will split his arrows." : יָרָם יִצְרָן .¹ Versions differ on this, the LXX, Vulgate, Luther, and the Authorized and Revised Versions taking the יִצְרָן as the means by which the יָרָם is accomplished. This is in harmony with the parallel, although the Massoretic Text, gives no indication of such a sense.

The simplest interpretation would take יִצְרָן as the object of the verb יָרָם , "he will destroy his arrows."² Keil denies that יִצְרָן is the object of יָרָם , claiming that יָרָם , dash to pieces, does not apply to arrows, which may be broken in pieces but not dashed to pieces.³ The restriction of the sense of the verb, however, is unnecessary, as the exact method of destruction is not implied therein to the exclusion of any other method that might be applicable ^{the use of} to arrows.

The suffix on יִצְרָן is referred by some to the enemies, while many refer it to Israel.⁴ This latter view is supported by the suffix itself, which, being singular, applies to Israel, as

1 LXX: $\text{καὶ ταῖς βολίσις αὐτοῦ κατατοξεύσει ἔχθρον.}$
 Vulgate: et perforabunt sagittis.
 Luther: und mit seinen Pfeilen zerschmettern.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "And shatter their loins."
 R.V.: "And smite them through with his arrows."
 2 Wobersin, op. cit., p. 27, mentions different meanings of Habakkuk 3, 11; Deuteronomy 32, 42; Ezekiel 5, 16; Job 6, 4; Job 34, 6. (lightning, scourge, hunger, wound)
 3 Keil, English Translation, p. 190.
 4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 154.

Israel is treated in the singular, while the enemies are mentioned in the plural. ¹

Thus, according to the most natural interpretation the arrows, those of Israel, would be the object of the verb $\gamma\beta\gamma$, the subject of which, in the singular, is also Israel. After crushing the bones of his enemies Israel would then "break his own arrows, because the instruments of warfare have become useless." ²

This, although grammatical, is not in harmony with the parallelism, which suggests a reference to the adversaries. The better interpretation is that of the LXX, the Vulgate, Luther, and others, ³ regarding the arrows or weapons ⁴ as that by which the destruction of the adversaries is to be accomplished.

The resulting peace is mentioned in the concluding verse of the prophecy, where Balaam again employs the picture of a lion. "He has sunk down. He has lain down as a lion, yes, as a lion," $\text{פֶּרַע שֶׁכָּב כְּאֵלֶּי וּכְלָבִיא}$. ⁵ This again, as Chapter 23, 24, points back to Genesis 49, 9, but, while Chapter 23, 24 alludes to the first part of Genesis 49, this verse alludes rather to the latter

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 155.
Keil, English Translation, pp. 190-191.

2 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 138.

3 Also the Authorized and Revised Versions.

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 191, interprets the arrows as representing weapons in general.

5 LXX: $\text{κατακλιθεὶς ἀνεπαύσατο ὡς λέων καὶ ὡς σκύμνος.}$
Vulgate: Accubans dormivit ut leo, et quasi laena,
Luther: Er hat sich niedergelegt wie ein Löwe
und wie ein junger Löwe;
S.G. Am. Tr.: "They crouch, they lurk like a lion.
Like an old lion;"
R.V.: "He couched, he lay down as a lion,
And as a lioness;"

part of Genesis 49, 9, where mention is made of the undisturbed resting of the lion. The following phrase is identical with the end of Genesis 49, 9.

"Who will rouse him?" וְיִקְרָא אֹתוֹ .¹ Hengstenberg contrasts this with Chapter 23, 24, stating that, while the other was fulfilled in David, this which speaks of the finished conflict, was fulfilled by Solomon.² The former looks forward to Israel's victories over the enemies, especially the Canaanites, while the latter points to their "secure possession and quiet enjoyment of the land, especially under David and Solomon."³ Again, however, the fulfilment under David and Solomon was only partial, the complete fulfilment coming under the reign of the Messiah.

Keil states that Balaam here quotes from Jacob's blessing to show that, as Jehovah had said through the patriarchs, His people were to subdue their enemies thoroughly.⁴ This significance, however, would most likely be lost on Balak, who would not necessarily be acquainted with the blessing of Jacob. A better suggestion is that this is to apply to Israel that which Jacob in his blessing had applied only to Judah.⁵

1 LXX: τὸς ἀναστήσει αὐτόν;
Vulgate: quam suscitare nullus audebit.
Luther: wer will sich wider ihn auflehnen?
S.G. Am. Tr.: " who dare disturb them? "
R.V.: " who shall rouse him up? "

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 155.

3 Newton, op. cit., p. 65.

4 Keil, English Translation, p. 191.

5 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 138, suggests for the typical meaning of the kingdom of Israel conquering and destroying all heathen power, see Psalm 2; 110; Isaiah 9; 11; Daniel 2, 34. 35.

The comparison of Israel's power to that of a buffalo and the mention of Israel's future victories and security should have suggested to Balak the folly of opposing such a divinely blessed nation. The latter half of the verse amounts virtually to a curse on Balak and his people for their attitude toward Israel.

"Blessed are your blessers, and cursed are your cursers,"

מְבַרְכֵיךָ וְאֹרְרֵיךָ אֶרְוֶה .¹ The subjects of both phrases are in the plural, while the predicates are in the singular. Hengstenberg explains this change in number by the fact that the blessers and cursers are drawn into a unit, and thus blessed and cursed as one man.²

Here again Balaam uses the language of an earlier prophecy, this time pointing back to the blessings which God pronounced on Abram in Genesis 12, 3, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee," and Genesis 27, 29, "... cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."³

As has been stated, there is no conclusive proof, nor is there any necessity to assume, that Balaam did know the earlier promises, and any similarity to them can be accounted for by the fact that

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- 1 LXX: οἱ οἰλογούντες σε εὐλόγηται,
καὶ οἱ καταρώμενοί σε καταθήρηνται
Vulgate: Qui benedixerit tibi, erit et ipse benedictus;
qui maledixerit, in maledictione reputabitur.
Luther: Gesegnet sey, der dich segnet,
und verflucht, der dir flucht.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Blessed are they who bless you,
And cursed are they who curse you."
R.V.: "Blessed be every one that blesseth thee,
And cursed be every one that curseth thee."

² Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 156.

³ Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 138, mentions also Matthew 10, 40-42.

God was speaking through Balaam.

This was a warning to Balak, who himself was one of Israel's cursers. By his insistent demand for an effective curse he was inviting the divine curse on himself. On the other hand, the suggestion has been made that Balaam may have considered himself blessed, having blessed Israel, but Gosman, who mentions this suggestion, says it is unlikely, since he was not blessing from the heart.¹ Balaam himself, especially now that he was speaking under the influence of the Spirit, would not include himself among the sincere blessers of Israel, as his blessing was far from sincere. It was not his own blessing, but God's.

Israel, whose tents are spread forth like the valleys, was to have countless blessings, and also the progeny of Israel was to be similarly blessed. Even the Gentile nations were to receive blessings from Israel, but those that were hostile to Israel, the enemies of God and His people, were to be destroyed by the might of this people, who again is compared in fierceness and power to a wild bull and to a lion.

¹ Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 138.

THE FOURTH PROPHECY OF BALAAM

Numbers 24, 15-24

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

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:

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.

And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

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.

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.

Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

And ships shall come from the coast of Chittin, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever."

(Authorized Version)

The third prophecy convinced Balak that his desire for an effective curse on Israel was futile. His "anger was kindled against Balaam," and he expressed his disgust and resentment. "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times."¹ This time, instead of demanding that Balaam make another attempt, as on the former occasions, he dismissed the soothsayer. "Therefore now flee thou to thy place." Then, as though to complain of the injustice and ingratitude of Balaam over against his own lavish offer and his patience, he complained, "I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." There was in this a tinge of rebuke, a veiled accusation against Balaam for having permitted God to overrule him and prevent him from accepting the rich rewards and honor. Balak seems to have held tenaciously to his idea that Balaam was responsible for his disappointment, that had Balaam made a more serious effort, he could have produced an effective curse.

Balaam offered the same excuse that he gave after the other two blessings. "Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, 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!" He had announced repeatedly that he could pronounce only what he received from the Lord, but Balak had disregarded this stipulation and insisted in spite of it. His

¹ Numbers 24, 10.

disappointment was the result of his own insistence.

Balaam himself was not innocent. He had submitted to Balak's demands that he attempt a curse. Now, however, he made a proclamation without being requested to do so. "And now, behold, I go to my people;¹ come, and I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the latter days,"

וְעַתָּה הֵנְנִי הוֹלֵךְ לְעַמִּי
לְכֹה אֲדַעְצֶנּוּ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָעַם הַזֶּה לְעַמֶּךָ
בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים:

The verb *וְעַתָּה* is used for giving counsel, but here it refers to information concerning the future.² Some claim that this refers to the counsel of Balaam in Chapter 31, 16,³ claiming support from the Vulgate, "I will give you counsel as to what your people may do to this people." This interchange of the *וְעַתָּה* and *הָעַם הַזֶּה* violates the text. There is no valid reason for altering the Hebrew text, especially since the immediately following prophecy, being a warning to the Moabites,⁴ suits the meaning of the Hebrew text as it stands, but it fails to agree with the translation of the Vulgate.

This fourth prophecy concerns the enemies of Israel, both those that had been hostile in the past and those who would be hostile to

1 It has been suggested that the *הוֹלֵךְ לְעַמִּי* signifies that Balaam intends first of all to speak against Mesopotamia, (Calov, op. cit., p.544) but this is not required by the language, nor is it corroborated by the subsequent utterance.
2 Orelli, op. cit., p. 140 footnote, (reference made to Isaiah 41,28)
3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 745, quoting the Vulgate: "dabo consilium quid populus tuus populo huic faciat."
4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 161.

Israel in the future. ¹ While alluding to Israel's superiority over its enemies, it differs from the former utterances in being more specific. ² Although specific, it is not detailed, the fine details being unnecessary. ³

The events that Balaam was to describe were to transpire in the "end of days," : בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים . The claim that this must mean merely "future" is without foundation. In many passages where the word אַחֲרֵי occurs the meaning "future" is not suitable. ⁴ That the time referred to here is in the distant future is shown by the "not now" and the "not near" in verse 17. ⁵

Orelli states that, while to Jacob the "end of days" meant the time when the sons would grow into tribes, ⁶ to Balaam it signifies the time when the whole heathen world should feel the powerful superiority of the kingdom of Israel. ⁷ This is true in a spiritual sense.

Gosman says, quoting Kurtz, "'The end of days' denotes the horizon of a prophetic utterance. It begins when the prophecy enters upon its actual fulfilment." Thus it differed with different prophets and prophecies. ⁸ In the Messianic prophecies this is therefore "the ordinary prophetic designation for the time of the

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 161.

2 Ibid., pp. 160-161.

3 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I., p. 102: More detail would have been important only for those vitally concerned.

4 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 159.
Isaiah 46, 10.

5 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 160.

6 Orelli, op. cit., p. 140.

7 Ibid., p. 141.

8 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 140.

Messiah." ¹

In this prophecy the words $\text{יְלֹמַד אֶת־עֵצֵי־חַיִּים}$ appear four times (verses 15. 20. 21. 23), thus dividing the prophecy into four parts.² The first of these sections contains an introductory formula similar to that of the third prophecy. In addition this first section, verses 17-19, deal with the two peoples related to Israel, these being Moab and Edom.³ The second section, verse 20, concerns Amalek, the archenemy of Israel.⁴ The third section, verses 21 and 22, concerns the Kenites, who were friendly to Israel.⁵ The closing section of the prophecy, verses 23 and 24, "proclaims the overthrow of the great powers of the world."⁶

The introduction in verses 15 and 16 is similar to that of the former speech,⁷ except that the relative כִּי־יָדַע is here dropped, and "knower of the knowledge of the most high," $\text{יָדַע־עַד־עֵצֵי־חַיִּים}$,⁸ is added. Keil takes this as an indication that

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 746.

2 Keil, *Biblischer Commentar uber Die Bücher Mose's, zweiter Band, Leviticus, Numeri, und Deuteronomium*, 1862, p 321.

3 *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

4 *Ibid.*, loc. cit., "Erzfeind"

5 *Ibid.*, loc.cit., (translated "allied" in the English Translation by Martin, p.192)

6 Keil, English Translation, p. 192.

7 The LXX here omits φησιν from the opening of verse 16. The Vulgate here translates visiones in the plural, visiones , instead of the singular as in verse 4. The intuitus is here translated *videt*, instead of *intuitus est* as in verse 4. The last phrase is here translated "qui cadens apertos habet oculos."

8 LXX: $\text{ἐπιστάμενος ἐπιστήμην παρὰ ὑψίστου.}$
 Vulgate: qui novit doctrinam altissimi
 Luther: und der die Erkenntnis hat des Höchsten. High.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "And is acquainted with the knowledge of the Most
 R.V.: "And knoweth the knowledge of the Most High. "

Balaam was in possession of such knowledge, that the Word of God which was about to be published had already been communicated to him, rather than that it was now being imparted, and yet that it was not given Balaam along with the divine word which he proclaimed in the preceding prophecy.¹ The participle וְיָדָע merely implies that Balaam was one who was in possession of such knowledge, although no indication of exactly when this knowledge had been imparted to him is contained in the participle.

This phrase follows the וְיָדָע אֶת־כָּל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה, and Wobersin interprets this as an intention on Balaam's part to indicate that he understood what he heard.² A thorough understanding of the divine word is not necessarily implied in the words.

The importance, however, is not so much in the וְיָדָע as in the וְיָדָע אֶת־כָּל־דְּבַר־יְהוָה. The words of the phrase "point to the greater importance and the more distinctly predictive character of what follows."³

The prophecy itself opens with a vision of the "end of days," a vision which springs up before the mind's eye of the seer.⁴

1 Keil, *Biblischer Commentar uber Die Bücher Mose's, zweiter Band. Leviticus, Numeri, und Deuteronomium*, Leipzig, 1862, pp. 321-322.

Keil, *Volume III on the Pentateuch. English Translation by James Martin*, p. 192.

2 Wobersin, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

3 Cook, *Bible Commentary*, p. 745.

4 Keil, *German edition of 1862*, p. 321.

"I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near." אֶרְאֶה וְלֹא

קִרְבֵּי אֵלָּא עֵתָּה אֶשְׂכַּח וְלֹא קִרְבֵּי. ¹ The Bible Commentary suggests the translation: "I see him, though he be not now: I behold him, though he be not nigh." ² Balaam is not describing something or someone that has already appeared, ³ but that which is before him "in inward vision." ⁴ It was not to occur even in the near future, but at a time in the far distant future. ⁵

The suffixes on אֶרְאֶה and אֶשְׂכַּח are referred by some to a neuter indefinite object, but, if this were true, the suffixes should be feminine, rather than masculine. Others apply the suffixes to Israel, ⁶ which elsewhere is frequently treated in the masculine singular. ⁷ The "not now" and "not near" speak against this interpretation, as Israel was definitely present at the time.

The correct view, that of conservative interpreters and others,

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- 1 LXX: Δείσω αὐτῶ, καὶ οὐχὶ νῦν.
μακαρίσω, καὶ οὐκ ἐγγίσει.
 - Vulgate: Videbo eum, sed non modo; intuebor illum, sed non prope.
 - Luther: Ich werde ihn sehen, aber jetzt nicht; ich werde ihn schauen, aber nicht von Nahe.
 - S.G. Am. Tr.: "I see them, but not as they are now, I behold them, but not as they are at present."
 - R.V.: "I see him, but not now: I behold him, but not nigh: "

2 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

3 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 322.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.167: Also the versions designate him as a future one:

- LXX: δείσω αὐτῶ
- Aquila ὄψομαι αὐτὸν.
- Luther: Ich werde ihn sehen.

The Vulgate likewise: videbo eum.

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

5 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 283.

6 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.164.

7 The American Translation offers an example of this: "I see them ... I behold them ... "

is that the suffixes refer to the one mentioned in the following, to the Star which Balaam beheld "in spirit." ¹ Sayce claims that the reference cannot be to the Star, since the Star is mentioned subsequently. This argument is without proof, but from it Sayce concludes that, since there is nothing else to which the suffix can refer, the words must have been taken from elsewhere, the preceding words, including the antecedent, being omitted. ² The Bible Commentary states that the use of the pronoun for a person not yet named is common in Oriental poetry, especially Arabic, ³ which is closely related to the Hebrew. Sayce admits that, after the Star is excluded, there is nothing else suitable to which the suffixes can refer. Since his rejection of the Star is unwarranted, the Star remains the only thing to which the suffixes can properly refer. ⁴

Cook's Bible Commentary refers the suffixes to "the prince, represented in the succeeding words by the star and sceptre." ⁵ Since the Star and Sceptre both signify the same person, the Messiah, this is correct.

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.166.
Keil, German edition of 1862.
Keil, English translation, p.192.

2 Sayce, Balaam's Prophecy and the God Sheth, in *Hebraica*, Vol. IV, Oct., 1887, No. I, p.1. Sayce also compares this to Isaiah 2, 2.

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 745.

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p- 166, says that the rising star is such a natural and fitting object of the beholding, that one must naturally refer the suffixes to it, if it is fitting. Also Balaam's astonishment, he says, indicates this.

5 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 745.

"A Star comes out of Jacob," .1 הַרְרָה כֹּכָב מִיַּעֲקֹב
"The star is, in Scripture, the symbol of the splendour of power,"
says Hengstenberg. ² It appears "as the symbol of the power and
majesty of a great ruler." ³ Here it is explained also by the
parallel mention of the sceptre that rises from Israel. ⁴

The star appears also in the New Testament as a Messianic
emblem. ⁵ Jesus calls Himself "the bright and morning star." ⁶
The wise men came from the East, asking "Where is he that is born
King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are
come to worship him." ⁷

"A star is so natural an image and symbol of imperial greatness
and splendour, that it has been employed in this sense in almost
every nation. And the fact that this figure and symbol are so

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- 1 LXX: ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον ἐς Ἰακώβ
Vulgate: Orietur Stella ex Jacob.
Luther: Es wird ein Stern aus Jakob aufgehen,
S.G. Am-Tr.: "A star has come forth from Jacob."
R.V.: "There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, "
- 2 Hengstenberg, *Christology*, Vol. I, p. 99.
Hengstenberg, *Die Geschichte Bileams*, usw., p. 180, states that
there is no other passage in the Old Testament in which the
Messiah is designated as a star.
- 3 Aretzmann, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
- 4 Orelli, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
- 5 Delitzsch, *Messianische Weissagungen*, Zweite Auflage, p. 54.
- 6 Revelation 22, 16. Hengstenberg, *Die Geschichte Bileams*, usw.,
p. 180, offers this as support for the Messianic interpretation.
- 7 Matthew 2, 2.
Orelli, *op. cit.*, p. 141: "Among the most diverse nations the
star is a common symbol of ruling greatness and glory. Hence
the prevalent faith in the ancient world, that the birth or
coronation of great kings is announced by the appearance of
stars to which belief Mt. 2, 2 alludes."
Cook, *Bible Commentary*, p. 745: "The star has amongst all nations
served as a symbol of regal power and splendour." "The birth
and future glory of great monarchs were believed to be heralded
by the appearance of stars or comets."

natural, may serve to explain the belief of the ancient world, that the birth and accession of great kings was announced by the appearance of stars." ¹ According to Newton "a star, in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, denoted God." ²

In accord with this symbolism attached to stars, and especially the star mentioned by Balaam, the false, self-styled messiah of the time of Hadrian adopted the surname Barcochba, Son of the Star, ³

בַּר כּוֹכְבָּא .

The star seen by the wise men was the symbol of the Ruler signified by the star in Balaam's vision. Its appearance showed that the fulfilment had come. ⁴ According to Newton both Origen and Eusebius claim that it was because of this prophecy that the Magi came to worship the King when they saw the new star. ⁵

Since the advent of Christ was the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the Star that was to rise out of Jacob, the star which guided the wise men from the East to the new-born "King of the Jews," going before them until it stood over the manger at Bethlehem can be

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 192, quoting Hengstenberg.

Keil refers also to

Justin, Hist. 37, 2.

Pliny, h. n. 2, 23.

Sueton, Jul. Caes. c. 78.

Dio Caes. 45, p. 273.

Orelli, loc. cit. (page 123, footnote 7)

Cook, Bible Commentary, loc. cit. (page 123, footnote 7)

Reference made in the Bible Commentary to Isaiah 14, 12;

הֵילֵל, brightness, brilliant star (A.V. "lucifer")

Daniel 8, 10; Revelation 1, 16-20; 2, 1; 9, 1.

2 Newton, op. cit., p. 72, refers to Amos 5, 25-26 (כּוֹכְבָּא
(הֵילֵל הַיְמָנִי)).

3 Keil, zweite, verbesserte Auflage, 1870, p. 344.

Keil, English Translation, p. 200, footnote.

Because of this name the nickname בַּר כּוֹכְבָּא, "Lügensohn," was applied to him when he and his followers were put down by the Romans.

4 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 177.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 71.

assumed to be related to Balaam's prophecy. Yet it is not to be assumed that Balaam beheld that very star which shone for the wise men, announcing the birth of the Savior and directing them to Him. ¹ It was a visible sign whereby God revealed to them the fact that Balaam's prophecy concerning the Star out of Jacob had been realized in the birth of Christ. ²

Hengstenberg states that the appearance of the wise men from the East ³ points back especially to Numbers 23, 7, ⁴ "Balak ... hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east." Through association with the Jews of the dispersion the wise men may have become acquainted with God's revelations to Israel. It is not too much to suppose that the magi would feel attracted to the prophecies of this seer ⁵ who came from their own country, ἐς ὁρέων ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν, and that his speech would become the focus of their hope for salvation. ⁶ Members of the Israelite nation had been scattered into all parts of the inhabited world, and with them also the knowledge of Balaam's prophecies, as well as the patriarchal prophecies, had been spread. ⁷ Since this prophecy concerns the heathen peoples, the wise men might well have been acquainted with it. It is sufficiently probable, says the Bible Commentary, that

1 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 344.

Keil, English Translation, p.200.

2 Keil, German edition, of 1870, p. 344.

Keil, English Translation, p. 200.

3 Matthew 2, 2: μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο

4 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p.180.

5 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, p. 143.

6 Keil, German edition of 1870, pp.344-345.

Keil, English Translation, p.201.

7 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.178.

these magi were fellow-countrymen, if not actual descendants, of Balaam. ¹ Hengstenberg suggests that, like Balaam, as their name μάγοι indicates, they were possessors of secret knowledge. ²

Keil states that, because of their earnest desire for the Star out of Jacob, God revealed to them the fact that the birth of the King of the Jews was the event proclaimed and announced by a star that this King had now been born. ³

Any doubt that the rising star out of Jacob represents the appearance of the glorious Ruler is removed by the parallel. ⁴

"And a sceptre rises from Israel." וְקִם יָבֵט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל. ⁵

The mention of the sceptre points back to Genesis 49, 10, ⁶ "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor a ruler's staff from between his feet." Hengstenberg remarks: "As in the fundamental passage, so here also, the sceptre, the symbol of dominion, stands for dominion

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 747.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.178.

3 Keil, German edition of 1870, p.345 (taken from Hengstenberg) Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.178.

As Balaam had announced, "I see him," "I behold him," the wise men could say with joy, "We saw his star,"

4 Keil, German edition of 1862, p.322.

Keil, English Translation, p. 192.

5 LXX: καὶ ἐναστήσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ Ἰσραὴλ

Vulgate: et consurget virga* de Israel

Luther:- und ein Scepter aus Israel aufkommen

S.G. Am. Tr.: "A comet has risen from Israel."

R.V. and A.V.: "And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

(* primarily a twig or shoot, Harper's Latin Dictionary, 1895)

6 Christology (Hengstenberg), Vol. I, p.99.

Orelli, op. cit., p. 144: "That Balaam knew of those promises to Abraham and Judah (Hengstenberg), is not indeed to be supposed."

There is no available proof to indicate that Balaam had not such a knowledge, while the possibility exists that he did. The mere fact, however, that his words here allude to the former promise, do not demand such a knowledge, as he was speaking not from his own mind, but by inspiration.

itself." ¹ The sceptre here represents not so much the dominion, as the one possessing it. Thus Keil's statement is preferable, that the sceptre, which in the blessing on Judah appeared as a sign of dominion here appears as a symbol of the future Ruler in Israel. ²

Although this has been referred to such men as David and Maimonides ³ and others, the Messianic interpretation remains the only suitable one. Like the rising star, this is "also a picture of a future mighty King in Israel, namely, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Lord." ⁴

Newton also refers the star and sceptre to earthly kings, as he says, "The star and the sceptre are probably metaphors borrowed from the hieroglyphics which much influenced the language of the East; and they evidently denote some eminent and illustrious king or ruler, whom he particularizes in the following words: 'And shall smite the corners of Moab,' or 'the princes of Moab,' according to other versions." ⁵ This smiting does not preclude a Messianic interpretation, but is a description of the deeds of the Ruler.

1 Hengstenberg, Christology. Vol. I, , p. 99.

2 Keil, German edition of 1862, p.322.

Keil, English Translation, p.192.

Delitzsch, op. cit., p.53: Both the Star and Sceptre are pictures of a ruler who, like a star, rises out of Israel. Delitzsch adds: "ein "Herrscher irdischer Abkunft und himmlischen Glanzes."

Delitzsch, op. cit., p.54.

Revelation 12, 5, concerning the one "who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron," delitzsch does not trace back immediately to Numbers 24, 17, but to Psalm 2, 8 f.

3 Calov, op. cit., p. 544: reference made to 2 Samuel 8, 2; Psalm 60, 10; 108, 10.

4 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 283.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 68.

"And He will cleave the sides of Moab," וְנִחַץ צַדַּיִם מוֹאָב
 כְּאַתְרֵי מוֹאָב .¹ The LXX, Vulgate, and Luther take the
 as the princes of Moab, but this is not the strict sense of the
 Hebrew. The meaning is "side" or "corner," and the form is dual,
 as two opposite sides form a pair.² Smiting the two corners or
 sides of Moab means smiting Moab from both sides, the length and
 breadth of the land.³ Hengstenberg interprets this as smashing
 the jurisdiction of Moab.⁴ What is involved here is the destruction
 of Moab, and this was to be the work of the Ruler represented by the
 Star and Sceptre.

Some⁵ apply this to David, as he did smite the Moabites,
 destroying two thirds of them, and keeping one third alive,⁶ but
 David's triumph over the Moabites was only temporary⁷ and not
 thorough, while that mentioned in the prophecy is complete and
 decisive.

The Moabites here signify the enemies of God's people.⁸ Thus

- 1 LXX: καὶ θραύσει τοὺς ἀρχηγούς Μωαβ
 Vulgate: et percutiet duces Moab
 Luther: und wird zerschmettern die Fürsten der Moabiter.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "And has shattered the temples of Moab."
 R.V.: "And shall smite through the corners of Moab,"
- 2 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., pp.169.170.
- 3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.745.
 Keil, German edition of 1862, p.322.
 Keil, English Translation, p. 193.
 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 283: "strike down its people on both sides."
- 4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 170. Reference made to Nehemiah 9, 22.
- 5 So Newton, op. cit., p. 68.
- 6 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 172. 2 Samuel 8, 2; of Psalm 60, 8; 108, 9.
- 7 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 174.
- 8 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I, p. 103, refers to Isaiah 11, where the complete destruction of Moab is likewise assigned to the time of the Messiah.

the fact that the Moabites had disappeared from the scene by the time that Christ appeared cannot disprove the Messianic interpretation. For this it must be shown that all the enemies of God's people had been exterminated, which no one will dare to assert.¹

A similar significance is attached to the parallel member, "and destroy all the sons of confusion." וְקִרְקַר כָּל-בְּנֵי-יָֿ .² The meaning of קִרְקַר, infinitive pilpel of קִיר,³ is fully established by the parallel קִרְקַר,⁴ and by Isaiah 22, 5, the only other passage in which it appears, where it is used in the sense of breaking down or destroying.⁵ Jeremiah 48, 45 appears to quote from this verse, but for קִרְקַר, "destroy," Jeremiah has קִרְקַד, crown of the head.⁶ This change cannot prove an error in the text, as no critics have the authority to dictate the word which the inspired Scriptures should use in any particular passage.

1 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams usw., pp. 176-177.

2 LXX: καὶ προνομήσει πάντας υἱοὺς Σηθ
Vulgate: vastabitque omnes filios Seth.
Luther: und verstören alle Kinder Seth.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "And the skulls of all the sons of Seth."
R.V.: "And break down all the sons of tumult."

3 Gesenius Kautzsch, Grammar, 55 c: "With קִיר is connected the formation of quadrilaterals by the insertion of a consonant between the first and second radicals."

55 f: pilpel with strengthening of the two essential radicals in stems ע"ג, ע"ג, and ע"ג; e.g., ... with a in both syllables, owing to the influence of ק, קִרְקַר, from קִיר, (cf parallel Jer. 48, 45, קִרְקַד).

4 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 322.

Keil, English translation, p. 193.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 68.

6 Watson, The Book of Numbers, (The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll), p. 309.

Orelli, op. cit., p. 146: "Jeremiah (48, 45) read קִרְקַד instead of קִרְקַר."

Hengstenberg and Keil both offer the same satisfactory explanation for the difference with its remarkable similarity. Jeremiah frequently uses the older writings in a free fashion, changing the expressions and substituting for unusual words the more common ones, which are similar in sound or are written similarly.¹ By making such changes Jeremiah was not corrupting the text, as he was, by inspiration, preserved from error. It is, apparently, from this passage in Jeremiah that the American Translation derives its "'skulls' of all the sons of Sheth."

The identity of "all the sons of Sheth," קָל בְּנֵי שֵׁת, is much disputed. If Sheth is here the proper name² of the son of Adam, the "sons of Sheth" would include all mankind,³ as the posterity of the other sons of Adam perished in the flood.⁴ Hengstenberg points out that, if all mankind were intended, the name of Adam or Noah would have been used, not that of Sheth.⁵ Mankind is nowhere called by the name of Seth. Another argument that has been raised against the inclusion of all humanity under the "sons of Sheth" is that it would be exceedingly harsh to ascribe to any one king the destruction of all mankind.⁶ Thus some versions change the "destroy"

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 171.

Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 322.

English Translation, p. 192.

2 LXX, Vulgate, and Luther translate as a proper name.

3 Onkelos: קָל בְּנֵי שֵׁת (Heb. Publ. Co., N.Y. "חרום")

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 68.

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 171.

6 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 322.

Keil, English Translation, p. 193.

Keil, who accepts this as Messianic, says this idea, that the Ruler who is to rise out of Israel should destroy all men, would be fully unsuitable.

to "subdue" or "rule over." ¹

A better argument is that which Newton bases on the context, that, since particular places, Moab and Edom, are mentioned in both the preceding and following phrases, it is "reasonable to conclude that not all mankind in general, but some particular persons were intended by the expression of 'the sons of Sheth.'" ²

Keil mentions a claim that $\text{כָּל־בְּנֵי־יָשָׁר}$ means "all the sons of the drinker," by which Lot is meant, ³ but he brands this view as untenable. The fact mentioned in Genesis 19, 32 fails to warrant the assumption that Lot ever received or retained the nickname "Drinker." Furthermore, the verb יָשָׁר fails to appear in Genesis 19, יָשָׁר being used. Keil also argues that, as Balaam here proclaims the destruction only of those people who had opposed Israel, as had Moab, Edom, and Amalek, Ammon does not belong in the same category, for up to that time the Ammonites had assumed neither a friendly nor a hostile attitude. The customary synonymous parallelism also speaks against this view, as Ammon and Moab are not synonymous. The Ammonites were not descended from any branch of the Moabites, nor was their territory included in that of the Moabites. ⁴

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 68, gives the Syriac and Chaldee:
" that he shall subdue all the sons of Sheth "
and " rule over all the sons of men."

2 Newton, loc. cit.

3 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 322, footnote, attributes this idea to Hiller, stating that it was revived by v. Hofmann and Kurtz. The idea is taken from Genesis 19, 32.

4 Keil, German edition of 1862, pp. 322-323, footnote.
Keil, English Translation, p. 193, footnote.

It has been suggested that the "sons of Sheth" are the Idumeans, this conjecture being based on an unfounded supposition that "sheth" means a "foundation" or "fortified place," "because they trusted greatly in their castles and fortifications."¹ Against this Newton argues that the reason given applies as well to the Moabites as to the Idumeans, and also, that, as the Idumeans are mentioned subsequently, and, as two hemistichs deal with them, it is probable that also two hemistichs relate to the Moabites.²

The Jerusalem Targum is said to translate this "the sons of the east," as the Moabites lived east of Judea.³

Newton quotes a statement that Sheth "seems to be the name of some then eminent, though now unknown, place or prince in Moab, where there were many princes, as appears from Numb. 23, 6; Amos 2, 3: there being unnumerable instances of such places or persons, sometimes famous, but now utterly lost as to all monuments and remembrances of them."⁴ The passages referred to speak of a number of Moabite princes, but they fail to lend any support to this highly indefinite and unfounded argument. Another similar suggestion mentioned by Newton and attributed by him to Rabbi Nathan is that Sheth is the name of a city in the border of Moab.⁵ Still another suggestion, this one attributed to Grotius, is that Sheth is the name of some famous king among the Moabites.⁶ All these suggestions are too

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 69, citing Vitringa's Commentary on Isaiah.

2 Newton, Loc. cit.

3 Ibid., p. 68, cites the Targum.

4 Newton, p. 69, quoting Poole.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 68.

6 Ibid., pp. 68-69.

indefinite and uncertain to serve as arguments, and all appear to result from a previously formed opinion that the people here intended are Moabites.

The view that by the "sons of Sheth" the Moabites are meant is the best attested, and, no doubt, the correct interpretation.

It is customary in these prophecies that the latter hemistich is "exegetical of the former." ¹ Thus in this verse Israel is parallel with Judah, and in the following verse Seir is parallel to Edom. Accordingly the מְבִיטֵי here would be Moab. ²

The word מְבִיטֵי, contracted from מְבִיטֵי מְבִיטֵי, is derived from מְבִיטֵי ³ and, says Keil, is correctly rendered by Jeremiah with מְבִיטֵי מְבִיטֵי. Thus the "sons of Sheth" are the "sons of tumult" or "confusion." ⁴ According to the usual parallel structure these "sons of tumult" represent the Moabites, as men of "wild, warlike confusion," ⁵ whose "valor and fierceness is often elsewhere referred to." ⁶

The text speaks of "all" the sons of confusion, and this, while

1 Newton, op. cit., p.69, refers as examples to the first part of this verse and also to the following verse. Yet from this he derives the assumption that Sheth is the "name of some eminent place or person among the Moabites."

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p.171.

3 Orelli, op. cit., p. 142, footnote 2.
Keil, German edition, of 1862, p. 322. In connection with the contraction of מְבִיטֵי to מְבִיטֵי Keil refers to Lamentations 3,47. For the derivation from מְבִיטֵי he refers to Hengstenberg, Verschuir, et alt.

4 Keil, German edition of 1862, p.322.
Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 139.

5 Keil, loc.cit.
English Translation, p. 193.

6 Cook, Bible Commentary, p.745. (Reference is here made to Ex. 15, 15; Isaiah 15, 4; 16, 6.)
Amos 2, 2: "Moab shall die with tumult." מְבִיטֵי מְבִיטֵי מְבִיטֵי מְבִיטֵי

referring to the Moabites, refers to those whom the Moabites represent, the enemies of God's people, thus the entire heathen world. ¹

Hengstenberg ascribes a twofold symbolic nature to the kingly sceptre. On the one hand it points to the shepherd's staff, and on the other to the rod of the disciplinarian. ² This is comparable to the distinction made between Christ's kingdom of grace and His kingdom of power. It is this latter function that is here presented. ³

Here Hengstenberg applies the verbs יָרַק and קָרַק only to the sceptre, claiming that they are not appropriate for the star. ⁴ He points to Psalm 2, 9, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron," where שֶׁבֶט appears as the instrument of destruction. It must be admitted that a rod is a more suitable agent for an act of destruction than is a star, but, since שֶׁבֶט and קָרַק refer to the same individual, to whom these deeds are ascribed, it is not the sceptre that is here intended, but the King represented by the sceptre. This King is to God's people a Star of hope, and to God's enemies a punitive rod.

The King was to destroy all the enemies of God's people. ⁵ Of

1 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I, p. 102

2 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 169.

3 Ibid., loc. cit.

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 169, here refers what follows after יָרַק and קָרַק to both Star and Sceptre, as both refer to the same thing.

The following, however, being largely punitive, would be fully as unsuitable for the Star as יָרַק and קָרַק .

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 180: The fulfilment is the destruction of the enemies of the Messiah's kingdom, not their salvation. Psalm 2; 110.

Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 181: The reference is only to the enemies of the congregation of God.

these enemies Moab is mentioned first, not only because Balaam had stated that he would announce to Moab's king what Israel was to do to his people in the future, but also because in the contemplated cursing of Israel the hostility of the heathen against God's people had been most vividly revealed. ¹ Moab and Edom, the first enemies named, were both related to Israel by descent, and both had already exhibited hostility against Israel. ²

Objections to the Messianic interpretation are based on these statements of victory over Israel's enemies, according to which the application is made to earthly kings. ³ Thus The Bible Commentary states that Star and Sceptre, like the sceptre and lawgiver in Genesis 49, 10, "point naturally rather to a line of princes than to an individual; or rather are emblems of the kingdom of Israel generally." ⁴

Watson, in the Expositor's Bible, claims: "Of spiritual power and right there is not a trace in this prediction. It is unquestionably the military vigor of Israel gathered up into the headship of some powerful king Balaam sees on the horizon of his field of view." ⁵

1 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 322.

Keil, English Translation, p.193.

These two reasons are bound together by the circumstances, the former resulting from the latter.

2 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 322.

Keil, English Translation, p.193.

3 Orelli, op. cit., p. 142: "It is characteristic of the heathen conception ruling in these oracles, that the only effect of the ideal kingdom described is the hostile one on surrounding nations."

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 746.

The sceptre and ruler's staff in Genesis 49 refer only to leadership, which was Judah's. The leaders themselves were not always from Judah. (Joshua, Saul, et al.)

5 Watson, The Book of Numbers (The Exp. Bible), p. 310.

Orelli refers this to "the rise of a human dominion, which, it is true, must stand in close relation to the divine one." ¹

Commentators generally apply this to kings of Israel, and some of them, as though granting a concession, admit that also the Messiah is or may be included. Thus Newton declares that "the Messiah might be remotely intended, yet we cannot allow that he was intended solely, because David might be called a star by Balaam, as well as other rulers or governors are by Daniel, 8, 10, and by St. John, Rev. 1, 20: and we must insist upon it, that the primary intention, the literal meaning of the prophecy, respects the person and actions of David." ² The mention of the Messiah here is apparently a pious thought intended to pacify those who hold the Messianic view.

Some interpreters take the Messiah as the culmination of the fulfilment of the prophecy. Thus the Bible Commentary states that the victories of David and his successors are "recurring progressive accomplishments" of this prophecy, but it culminates in "the latter days." ³

The announcement of Balaam, that he would reveal what "this people" would do to Balak's people, indicates that the effects of Israel's might were to be noticeable on Moab, as was indeed the case. Moab was defeated by Israel, but this was only a part of the punitive justice that was to be executed on the enemies of God's people.

1 Orelli, op. cit., p. 141. This (24, 15-24), he says speaks "like 24, 7, of the rise ..."

2 Newton, op. cit., p. 72.

The chief basis for his claim here is Balaam's stated intention to tell what Israel would do to Balak's people.

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 746.

"Although this prophecy, in type, was fulfilled when Israel gained dominion over this and other heathen nations, its ideal fulfilment came in Jesus Christ." ¹ That the Moabites were not completely defeated at the time of David is shown by the fact that post-Davidic prophets repeat the announcements of Moab's destruction, ² which is to come at the time of the Messiah. ³ The complete fulfilment comes in the "end of days," when men of every nation accept the rule of the King out of Israel and the enemies of the Church are destroyed. Thus Keil, comparing this with the prophecy of Jacob concerning the sceptre which was not to depart until Shiloh comes, whom the nations would obey, says it is apparent that Balaam is not merely revealing the relation of Israel to the nations of the world and the victory of God's people over all hostile worldly peoples, but that he also tells of the peacebringer who was to come at the end of days, revealed as a mighty Ruler whose sceptre would smash and annihilate the enemies of God's people. ⁴

Somewhat similar to this is the view of Hengstenberg, who declares that no single Israelitish king is here designated, but "an ideal person - the personified Israelitish kingdom." In favor of this view he offers the claim that reference to any certain

1 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 283, adds, "whose spiritual power has been extended to include also heathen nations everywhere, for men from all nations have bowed their heads under His sceptre."

(The punitive aspect is here passed over.)

2 Isaiah 15; 16, 1-5; Amos 2, 1; Zephaniah 2, 8-9.

3 Isaiah 16, 5; Zephaniah 2, 8-9.

4 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 345.

Israelitish king, with the exception of the Messiah is against the analogy of the other prophecies in the Pentateuch. This is correct, but fails to prove his contention, as an exclusive reference to the Messiah is not thereby excluded. He claims that a reference to an individual king would be against the analogy of the prophecies of Balaam who nowhere refers to a single individual. The preceding two arguments are not binding, as anything unprecedented might thus be considered untenable for that very reason, and anything new automatically ruled out. The statement itself is true,¹ but again it fails to prove his contention, as an exclusive Messianic interpretation is still permissible.

Hengstenberg claims further that the sceptre does not designate a ruler, but dominion itself.² Genesis 49, 10, he says, does not promise a single king, but a kingdom to be consummated in the Shiloh.³ The fact that in Genesis 49 the $\omega \delta \psi$ signifies dominion or leadership cannot be taken to preclude the reference here to the One possessing the dominion or leadership. The deeds here ascribed to the Sceptre show that it must refer to a person.⁴ Hengstenberg offers verse 19, "They shall rule out of Jacob," as a commentary on the Sceptre out of Israel.⁵ The section quoted from verse 19, however, is in the singular,⁶ and opposes Hengstenberg's

1 Mention of Balak is only in the introductory remarks. Mention of Agag is to represent Amalekite kings in general.

2 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I, p. 100.

Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., pp. 172-173.

3 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I, p. 101.

4 LXX, $\alpha \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \omicron \varsigma$, takes it as an individual.

5 Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. I, pp. 99-101.

Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 173.

6 $\tau \omicron \nu \tau \alpha$

interpretation instead of supporting it.

Hengstenberg adds: "The arguments which thus prove the reference of Balaam's prophecy to an Israelitish kingdom, disprove also, not only the exclusive reference to David, but also the exclusive reference to Christ; although they imply at the same time that the prophecy, in its final reference, has Christ for its subject." ¹

Many of the commentators who take the Messiah as the final fulfilment still give the impression that this is merely a concession, the real reference being to the deeds of a king or kings of Israel in the Old Testament times. The main objection to many interpretations is that they attach only a minor importance to Christ and stress the deeds of the earlier kings, instead of recognizing the fact that the prime reference is to the Messiah, and that any reference to human kings or their deeds is merely incidental.

This cannot be said of Hengstenberg, who declares concerning Balaam: "It is with intention that he does not speak of a plurality of Israelitish kings. The Israelitish kingdom, on the contrary, appears to him in the form of an ideal king, because he knows that, at some period, it will find its full realization in the person of one king." ² The Israelitish kingship without the Messiah he calls "ein Rumpf ohne Kopf." ³

Watson, stating that, while the view that this is fulfilled

1 Hengstenberg, *Christology*, Vol. I, p. 101.

Hengstenberg, *Die Geschichte Bileams*, usw., p. 173.

2 Hengstenberg, *Christology*, Vol. I, p. 101: "That Balaam knew that the Israelitish kingdom would centre in the Messiah, is shown by the reference which his prophecy has to that of dying Jacob, in Genesis 49, 10, from which the figure of the sceptre is borrowed."

3 Hengstenberg, *Die Geschichte Bileams*, usw., p. 174.

preliminarily in David and finally and completely only in Christ is the belief of the Jews and Christians, claims that David did not fulfil the prophecy, nor can it be said that Christ fulfilled it.¹ He rejects any spiritual significance, as is shown by a subsequent statement that Balaam is a political prophet, and to say that he testified of Christ "is to exalt far too much his inspiration and read more into his oracles than they naturally contain."² This view is founded on an arbitrary limitation of the power of divine inspiration, coupled with a preformed opinion as to the nature of Balaam's prophecies. The objection that a Messianic prophecy would not be given by such a person as Balaam is nullified by the statement that "the Spirit of God came upon him," as well as by Balaam's introductory words in verses 5-6.³

The Messianic interpretation was the common one among the Jews. Onkelos paraphrases with "... when a king shall rise out of Jacob, and out of Israel Messiah shall be anointed."⁴ Jonathan renders this "... when a valiant King shall rise out of the house of Jacob, and out of Israel, Messiah, and a strong sceptre shall be anointed."⁵ "From the Jews," Hengstenberg explains, "this interpretation very

1 Watson, op. cit., pp. 310-311.

2 Ibid., p. 312.

3 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 177.

4 This is Hengstenberg's translation (Christology, Vol. I, p. 99) Onkelos (in חומש , Hebrew Publishing Company, New York) has
פד יקום מלכא מן יעקב ויתרבה משנתא מן ישראל

The translation of Hengstenberg is better than that offered by Newton: "When a prince shall arise of the house of Jacob, and Christ shall be anointed of the house of Israel, he shall both slay the princes of Moab, and rule over all the sons of men."
(Newton, op. cit., p. 70)

5 Translation of Hengstenberg, Christology, Vol. 1, p. 99.

soon passed over to the Christians, who rightly found a warrant for it in the narrative of the star of the wise men from the East." ¹ The church fathers held the Messianic interpretation. Cyril of Jerusalem defended this view against Julian. ² Origen stated that, although in the law there were a number of typical and enigmatic references to Christ, he found none clearer than this. ³

The announcement of the destruction of the enemies of God's people, which was to come through the King represented by the Star and Sceptre continues with the mention of Moab's southern neighbor, Edom. ⁴ "And Edom will be a possession," יְהִי־אֶדוֹם יְרֵשָׁה. ⁵

According to Orelli, "The Edomites always belonged to the 'sons of revolt;' hence they are mentioned next to Moab." ⁶ This is shown by Genesis 27, 40, where God tells Esau: "By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; but when you become restive, you shall break his yoke off your neck." ⁷

The statement concerning Edom is followed by its parallel, "And a possession will Seir become, his enemy," יְהִי־רֵשָׁה שְׂעִיר. ⁸ Seir is the older name for the mountainous region

1 Hengstenberg, Christology, p. 99, Vol. I.

2 Hengstenberg, loc. cit., states this.

3 Newton, op. cit., p. 71, reports this.

4 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 325.

5 LXX: καὶ ἔσται Ἰδουμαία κληρονομία.

Vulgate: Et erit Idumaea possessio ejus.

Luther: Edom wird er einnehmen.

S.G. Am. Tr.: "Edom has become a possession."

A.V. and R.V.: "And Edom shall be a possession;"

6 Orelli, op. cit., p. 142, footnote 1.

7 Quoted from the American Translation.

8 LXX: καὶ ἔσται κληρονομία Σειρ ἧσθε ὁ ἐχθρὸς αὐτοῦ.

Vulgate: haereditas Seir cedet inimicis suis.

Luther: und Seir wird seinen Feinden unterworfen sein

S.G. Am. Tr.: "Seir has become a possession." (the אִיבִיר untranslated.)

R.V.: "Seir also shall be a possession, which were his enemies."

south of Moab, and east of the Arabah, the territory inhabited by the Edomites. ¹

Edom and Seir are parallel, ² Edom being the name of the people and Seir the name of the country. ³ Keil points out that Seir here does not signify the people who dwelt there before Edom, but had lost their independence. The descendants of Esau had subjugated the former inhabitants and occupied the land. ⁴

The text fails to state definitely whose possession Edom and Seir are to be, but this is evident from the context, as well as from the אֶת־בְּנֵי־אֱדוֹם , which is not a genitive, as some take it, but stands in apposition to Edom and Seir. ⁵ The suffix on אֶת־בְּנֵי־אֱדוֹם , therefore, does not refer to Edom or Seir, since these would not be their own enemies. The suffix could refer to Seir, if אֶת־בְּנֵי־אֱדוֹם is taken as a genitive, the meaning being that Seir should be a possession of its enemies, but this construction would be awkward. The most natural view is that Seir and Edom are "his enemies," the enemies of Israel, to whom the suffix refers. This interpretation also attributes the hostility, correctly, to Edom and Seir. At the time

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 745.

Newton, op. cit., p. 70.

Genesis 36, 8: "Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir; Esau is Edom."

2 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 182.

3 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.

Keil, English Translation, p. 194.

Genesis 32, 3: "And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom."

4 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.

5 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.

Keil, English Translation, p. 194.

Comparison is here made to verse 8, where אֶת־בְּנֵי־אֱדוֹם is in apposition to אֶת־בְּנֵי־אֱדוֹם .

of Moses Israel was not permitted to enter battle against Edom,¹ even when the Edomites refused Israel a peaceful passage through their land.² Instead of attacking, Israel turned away,³ for God had told them, "Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession."⁴

Edom was more closely related to Israel than any of the other nations, and yet, in spite of Israel's brotherly status and friendliness, Edom had risen in enmity already at that time, and the future was to bring an even greater change in their relationship, as Edom's hostile attitude developed into stubborn and malicious enmity, breaking the bonds of brotherly love that had restrained Israel in the past.⁵

The enmity proceeds from Edom⁶ against Israel, rather than from Israel against Edom, as God said of Edom, Amos 1, 11: "... he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever." It was this enmity that brought on Edom's downfall. Edom and Seir, being Israel's enemies, were to be conquered by the Ruler who was to rise out of Israel.⁷

1 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.
Keil, English Translation, p. 192.

2 Numbers 20, 14-21.

3 Verse 21

4 Deuteronomy 2, 5.

5 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 182.
Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.
Keil, English Translation, p. 194.

6 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 183.

7 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.
Keil, English Translation, p. 194.

The following words form the antithesis, "But Israel is performing might," וְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֹשֶׂה כֹחַ :¹ While the enemies are destined for subjugation, Israel is to do mightily.²

The words עֹשֶׂה כֹחַ mean to "do valiantly,"³ and this is sometimes applied to God,⁴ in which case the power is His own. When applied to human beings, the power is derived from God, and some apply the words in many such cases to the acquisition of power,⁵ or the exhibition of might.

Newton, who prefers the reference to earthly kings, applies this valiant performance to Israel under the command of David, when Israel won a number of victories,⁶ as 2 Samuel 8 reveals.

Scripture states that "all they of Edom became David's servants."⁷

It was under David that Joab "had cut off every male in Edom."⁸ Yet at the time of Solomon "the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite," who had escaped the campaign under David.⁹ While "the fulfilment of this prophecy began with the

1 LXX: καὶ Ἰσραὴλ ἐπιόνησεν ἐν ἰσχυί
 Vulgate: Israel vero fortiter aget.
 Luther: Israel aber wird Sieg haben.
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "Israel has performed valiantly."
 R.V.: "While Israel doeth valiantly."

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 183.
 Keil, German edition, of 1862, p. 324.
 Keil, English Translation, p.195: Israel will "acquire power."

3 A-V. Translation .

4 Psalm 60, 14; 108, 14; 118, 15. 16.

5 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324, "Kraft schaffen," but in the translation by Martin, p.195, "acquire power."
 Keil here (1862 edition, p. 324) quotes Onkelos in Latin "prosperabitur in opibus;" and Jonathan, "praevallebunt in opibus et possidebunt eos."

So Kretzmann, p. 283, "shall gain strength and dominion."

6 Newton, op. cit., p. 70.

7 2 Samuel 8, 14; see also I Chronicles 18, 12. 13.

8 I Kings 11, 15.

9 I Kings 11, 14-17.

conquest of Edom at the time of David," it "was not fully completed until the coming of the most majestic Ruler, at whose footstool God has laid all His enemies." ¹

The subjugation of the Edomites is repeatedly announced in Scripture. ² That the Edomites were not completely and permanently subjugated at the time of David is shown by the fact that a later recurrence of active hostility on the part of the Edomites is announced. Neither David nor his successors carried out a complete conquest over Edom. ³ The Edomites rebelled repeatedly. Under Joram they freed themselves. ⁴ They were defeated again under Amaziah. ⁵ At the time of Ahaz they invaded Judah and carried away captives. ⁶ Later they ^{Ed}siezed every opportunity to manifest their enmity toward the Jews, as at the time of the conquest of Judah when they showed their joy ⁷ and aided in the plundering. ⁸ Again at the time of the Maccabees they were defeated by Judas on more than one occasion. ⁹ They were finally conquered by Hyrcanus, in

1 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 283-284.

2 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

Keil cites Amos 9, 12; Obadiah 17 ff. as indications that the possession of the rest of Edom is to come through the kingdom of Israel.

He refers to Isaiah 34; 63, 1-6; Jeremiah 49, 7 ff.; Ezekiel 25, 12 ff.; 35; cf. Psalm 137, 7; Lamentations 7, 21f. to show that Edom, as the principal enemy of God's kingdom, is to be completely overcome only with the complete victory of God's kingdom over the inimical world power.

3 This is shown also by the statements of later prophets. Isaiah 34, 5; Amos 9, 11. 12.

4 2 Kings 8, 20.

5 2 Kings 14, 7; 2 Chronicles 25, 11.

6 2 Chronicles 28, 17.

7 Ezekiel 35, 15; 36, 5.

8 Obadiah 10, 13.

9 I Maccabees 5, 3. 65; 2 Maccabees 10, 15.

129 B. C., ¹ compelled to submit to circumcision, ² and incorporated into the Jewish state. ³ In spite of this defeat, however, their ascendancy over the Jews was regained through Antipater and Herod. Their disappearance from history came only with the defeat of the Jewish state at the hands of the Romans. ⁴

Scripture places the final subjugation and possession of the Edomites in the time of the Messiah. ⁵ The same is true of Moab, mentioned in the previous verse. ⁶ The Moabites seem to have disappeared from history by the time of Christ, but here they, as well as the Edomites, ⁷ are mentioned as representatives, in attitude and spirit, of the enemies of the kingdom. ⁸ In the wider sense they still existed ⁹ in the enemies and persecutors of the Church, ¹⁰ and as such they still exist at the present time.

The fulfilment of this prophecy begins with the subjugation of these people at the time of David, but its complete fulfilment is to be reached only at the "end of days," when the conflict between God's kingdom and the hostile power of the world comes to

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- 1 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.
Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 746.
 - 2 Keil, loc. cit.,
 - 3 Keil, loc. cit.
Cook, loc.cit.
 - 4 Josephus, Wars, IV, v, 5; Antiquities XIII, ix, 1; XV, vii, 9.
 - 4 Keil, loc.cit.
 - 5 Ezekiel 35, 14; Isaiah 34, 5; Amos 9, 11. 12.
 - 6 Isaiah 16, 5; Zephaniah 2, 8. 9.
 - 7 Psalm 60, 8 and 108, 9 mention Moab and Edom together.
 - 8 Bible Commentary (edited by Cook), p. 746, cites Isaiah 11, 14.
Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. I¹, p. 142.
 - 9 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 143.
 - 10 Newton, op. cit., p. 71.

This is the form ascribed to the preparation of this and similar prop in which the coming of the Messiah is described as a coming to judgment. It leaves out account the purpose which is the purpose of N.T. prop and judgment on all who resist it.

an end, with a victory for God's kingdom, as all the enemies of Christ and His Church are completely and permanently subdued and destroyed. ¹

The victory of the coming Ruler over the enemies of the kingdom is followed by the announcement of His reign, "And He will rule out of Jacob," ²

Keil attributes a jussive force to the shortened verb form ³ , denying that it stands for the future but this sense is required neither by the form of the verb nor by the context itself.

Sayce, with his customary willingness to alter the text, suggests that the form of the verb should be ⁴ , "one shall descend from Jacob," which, he claims, agrees with the LXX and with Onkelos. This change is suggested by the preposition ⁵ , he claims, ⁴ but, while this is not a great change in form, it involves a wide change in meaning, weakening arbitrarily the force of the verb itself from "rule" to "descend." The LXX has ἐσερεθῆσεται "he shall arise," but the LXX reading is not enough to warrant the

1 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 184.
Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 323.
Keil, English Translation, p. 194.
Keil quotes Psalm 110, 1 ff.

2 LXX: καὶ ἐσερεθῆσεται ἐς Ιακωβ
Vulgate: De Jacob erit, qui dominetur.
Luther: Aus Jacob wird der Herrscher kommen
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Jacob has conquered his enemies."
R.V.: "And out of Jacob shall one have dominion,"

3 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.
Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

4 Sayce, Balaam's Prophecy and the God Sheth, in Hebraica, Vol. IV, October, 1887, No. I, p. 2.

alteration of the text, nor is that of Onkelos.¹ The verb as it stands is more in harmony with the context, which speaks of subjugation of enemies, than is the suggested change.

The subject of וְיִשְׁרָף is not stated, but is contained in the verb itself. Thus Hengstenberg asserts that the kingship is meant, rather than an individual.² This does not follow from the mere omission of a definitely stated subject. Keil correctly takes as the subject the Ruler foretold as the Star and Sceptre.³

The one having dominion was to come out of Jacob, from Israel, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."⁴

The work of this Ruler is again mentioned in the second hemistich: "And He will destroy a remnant from the city," $\text{וְיִשְׁרָף רֵשֶׁת$

מִן־הַעִיר .⁵ The רֵשֶׁת , Keil says, is equivalent to the שְׂאֵרֵת אֲדוֹם in Amos 9, 12,⁶ "remnant of Edom."

Since the preceding verse of this prophecy concerned Edom, who was to symbolize the enemies of God's people, these enemies are no doubt the ones here intended by the רֵשֶׁת .

The explanation of מִן־הַעִיר as "out of the holy city"

1. Onkelos: (From חומש , Hebrew Publishing Company, New York)

$\text{וְיִשְׁרָף מִן־הַעִיר מִן־בְּיַת יְצֻק}$

2. Hengstenberg, *Die Geschichte Bileams*, usw., p. 187.

3. Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

4. Romans 9, 5.

5. LXX:

$\text{\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\eta\tau\ \sigma\omega\theta\acute{\eta}\mu\epsilon\nu\ \epsilon\kappa\ \pi\omicron\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega\varsigma}$.

Vulgate: *et perdat reliquias civitatis*

Luther: und umbringen, was übrig ist von den Städten.

S.G.-Am.-Tr.: "And has exterminated any survivors from Ar."

R.V.: "And shall destroy the remnant from the city."

6. Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

introduces a limiting factor which is not in the text and which cannot be sustained by the parallelism. ¹

The קַעֲרִי is a collective general term, as Keil explains it. ² The remnant of Edom was to be exterminated from each city that still harbored such a remnant. ³ This "tersely describes a conqueror who first defeats his enemies in battle, and then hunts out the fugitives till he has cut off all of every place." ⁴ He destroys them even in their strongholds. ⁵ The universality of the judgment is indicated. None can escape it. There is no place where they can hide to escape Him. Those who refuse to accept Him face eternal punishment. The enemies of the Church are destroyed eternally and permanently.

This first section of Balaam's fourth prophecy foretells primarily the coming of the Messiah and the destruction of His enemies, while the victories of Israel over Moab and Edom marked only the beginning of the judgment on the enemies of the kingdom. The complete fulfilment is to occur only at the final judgment, when the opposition to Christ's Church is permanently silenced and the enemies destroyed.

1 Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

2 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

(Like the use of קַעֲרִי in Psalm 72, 16)

3 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 746.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 70.

Among the peculiarities characteristic of Hebrew prophecy is that of combining the revelations concerning events of the far distant future with those concerning events comparatively close at hand. ¹

Thus Balaam turns from the destruction of the enemies of the Church, which is to achieve its complete fulfilment at the end of time, to the future of the neighboring heathen nations. ²

The first of these nations is Amalek. "And he saw Amalek,"

וַיִּרְאֵהוּ אֶת-עַמֵּי קִי . ³ It was not with his physical eyes that Balaam saw Amalek, but with his inner eyes, his bodily eyes being closed. He beheld Amalek while in the state of ecstasy, as he had seen the Star out of Jacob. ⁴

As he beheld Amalek in his inner vision, "He took up his parable and said, ... " וַיִּקַּח מִשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁר-לֵיהּ . ⁵ The introductory

1 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284.

2 Orelli, op. cit., p. 142: "As Balaam continues with vv. 20 ff. it seems all the nations are heading for destruction"

Hengstenberg, Christology, Volume I, p. 102:

"From the victory over Moab and Edom (even this is lasting) he passes on to the "total overthrow of the hostile world's power."

3 LXX: καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν Ἀμαληκ
Vulgate: cumque vidisset Amalec
Luther: Und da er sahe die Amalekiter
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Then he looked at Amalek."
R.V.: "And he looked on Amalek, "

4 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 187-188.

Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

5 LXX: καὶ ἀναλαβὼν τὴν παραβολὴν αὐτοῦ εἶπεν.
Vulgate: assumens parabolam ait.
Luther: hub er an seinen Spruch, und sprach:
S.G. Am. Tr.: " and gave utterance to his oracle, saying. "
R.V.: " and took up his parable, and said, "

formula is the same as that which introduced the former utterances. It is this formula which divides the fourth prophecy into four parts. This situation gives rise to the suggestion on the part of Sayce "that successive prophecies have been attached one by one to the original prophecy in verses 17-19, or else that the passages they introduce have been taken from other documents of various age and ancestry. An examination of the original prophecy makes the latter view the more probable." ¹ Sayce here brings in the editor or compiler, who is absolutely unnecessary. There is nothing whatever to prohibit the acceptance of the Scriptural narrative, that these prophecies were given successively by Balaam while in his ecstatic state.

The introduction indicates sufficiently clearly that there is here a new section. This section concerns a nation not yet mentioned in this prophecy, but indicated in the third speech by the name of Agag the king. "Beginning of nations is Amalek," אֲרָמֵיִת גּוֹיִם
רָשׁוּן הָיָה . ² The Amalekites dwelt chiefly to the south of the mountains of Judah. ³

That Amalek was the first of nations in respect to antiquity

1 Sayce, Balaam's Prophecy and the God Sheth, in Hebraica, Vol. IV, October, 1887, No. I, p.1.

2 LXX: Ἀρχὴ ἐθνῶν Ἀμαληκ.
Vulgate: Principium gentium Amalec.
Luther: Amalek, die ersten unter den Heiden.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "The first of the nations was Amalek."
R.V. and A.V.: "Amalek was the first of the nations;"

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 190.
Numbers 13, 29; 14, 43. 45; 1 Samuel 15, 2. 3. 7; 27, 8;
Judges 12, 15 (some had penetrated into Canaan).

cannot be maintained, ¹ as it was definitely not the oldest. The Amalekites were descended from Amalek, the grandson of Esau, and therefore were a branch of the Edomites. The Amalekites "probably at an early period separated themselves from the rest of the Edomites and formed a distinct and powerful tribe." ²

Newton holds to the antiquity of Amalek. Most good critics, he says, prefer as the easier and more natural interpretation that Amalek was the first and most powerful of the neighboring nations,

"and for a very good reason, because the Amalekites appear to have been a very ancient nation. They are reckoned among the most ancient nations thereabouts, 1 Sam. 27, 8. They are mentioned as early as in the wars of Chedorlaomer, Gen. 14, 7; so that they must have been a nation before the times of Abraham and Lot, and consequently much older than the Moabites, or Edomites or any of the nations descending from these patriarchs. And this is a demonstrative argument, that the Amalekites did not descend from Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, and grandson of Esau, as many have supposed only from the similitude of names, Gen. 36, 12; but sprung from some other stock, and probably, as the Arabian writers affirm, from Amalek, or Amalak, the son of Ham and grandson of Noah." ³

Newton here sums up the arguments for this interpretation, none of which are conclusive. The mention of the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 27, 8 as one of the nations who were "of old the inhabitants of the land" ⁴ proves little, as in this case the מְעוֹלָם is a relative term, with no indication given as to the length of time involved. ⁵ Furthermore, the other nations mentioned with

1 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 188.

2 Cook, Bible Commentary, pp. 189-190. (on Gen. 36, 12)

3 Newton, op. cit., p. 73.

4 כִּי הָיָה יְשׁוּבוֹת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר מְעוֹלָם

5 The fact that it is used of human nations shows that it cannot here mean eternity, as it does in Micah 5, 1, referring to Christ. Any meaning less than eternity would be relative.

Amalek are not known to be of great antiquity. Newton's claim that Genesis 14, 7 mentions the Amalekites is no proof that the nation existed at the time, as the mention is made of the "country of the Amalekites," rather than the people themselves. The land existed at the time of Abraham but no statement is made that the people existed. "The name," explains the Bible Commentary, "is probably given by anticipation, not because the country was so called in Abraham's time, but because it had become known by that title before the time of Moses and the Exodus."¹ This passage is the only semblance of Scriptural authority for the existence of an early tribe of Amalekites. Other support is derived from legends. The suggestion that the Amalekites descended from Amalek, a son of Ham, is without Scriptural support, as the Bible mentions no son of Ham with that name.

The best assumption is that the Amalekites descended from Amalek, the grandson of Esau, this being the only Amalek mentioned in Scripture. The fact that the Bible fails to state definitely that the Amalekites were descended from this person is no indication that such was not the case.²

Amalek was not the most ancient of the nations, but some, adhering to the time element, take the $\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square$ as signifying that Amalek was the first to wage war against Israel, inaugurating

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 190.

2 Keil, Hengstenberg, and the Bible Commentary take this Amalek as the ancestor of the Amalekites.

Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 188.

Cook, Bible Commentary, pp. 189-190.

the conflict of the heathen nations against God's people. ¹ This view is accepted by some conservative commentators, among them Keil, Kretzmann, ² and others. ³ In some Bibles this view is presented in a marginal note. ⁴ It has the support of the targums, ⁵ but this is not decisive. Newton states that Onkelos ⁶ and other Jews say Amalek was the first to war against Israel probably "because they would not allow the Amalekites to be a more ancient nation than themselves." ⁷ This bears little weight, as the Jews did not consider themselves among the גוים . This is shown by Chapter 23, 9, "the people ... will not consider itself ⁸ among the nations." The term גוים , as Hengstenberg points out, usually implies hostility to Israel, ⁹ as is indicated by the use of the term in Chapter 24, 8, where mention is made of "the nations, his enemies," גוים וְאֵלֵיהֶם .

That Amalek was the first to wage war against Israel is not denied, but that this is the meaning of הַאֲשֵׁרִית גוים is not even remotely suggested by the text itself.

The simpler and less awkward interpretation takes the הַאֲשֵׁרִית

1 Keil, German edition, of 1862, p. 324.
Keil, English Translation, p. 195.
Exodus 17, 8 ff.

2 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284: " ... first of the nations' namely, to take up weapons of warfare against Israel."

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 747, mentions Herzheimer as a modern commentator holding this view.

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 72.
Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 747.

5 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 747.

6 Onkelos (in חומש , Hebrew Publishing Company, New York):
הַיֵּשׁ קָרַבְיָא דְּאֵשְׁרִית

7 Newton, op. cit., p. 72-73.

8 hith. : יִתְחַשְׁבּוּ

9 Hengstenberg, op. cit., pp. 188-189.

as first in importance. ¹ Keil opposes this view, claiming that in might and renown this tribe was surpassed by many other nations. ² Chapter 24, 7, "his king shall be higher than Agag," seems to regard Amalek as a nation of power and importance. ³

The fact that Amalek was the first to bear arms against Israel suggests that it was a powerful people. Thus Newton states that the Amalekites "must certainly have been more powerful, or at least more courageous, than the neighboring nations, because they ventured to attack the Israelites, of whom the other nations were afraid." ⁴

Hengstenberg likewise holds that Amalek is here designated as ^{by repetition, of "Hun" during 1st world war.} the most powerful of the heathen nations and states that the Amalekites were at that time the most powerful of the nations that were hostile to Israel. Newton says: "According to Arabian historians too, they were a great and powerful nation, subdued Egypt, and held it in subjection several years." ⁵

Amalek was predominant among the nations, "but his end is unto

1 Orelli, op. cit., p. 142, takes it in the abstract, as he says, citing Job 40, 19.

Bible Commentary, (edited by Cook) takes the ^{אמלק} as signifying that Amalek was "pre-eminent amongst the neighboring nations."

2 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

3 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 189.

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 73.

Wobersin, op. cit., p. 41, likewise points to the fact that Amalek was the only people to oppose Israel in open conflict.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 73.

destruction," : נֶאֱמַר יָתוּ עַד־אֲבִד .¹ Amalek's might and majesty were to prove useless.² Balaam had before declared that Israel's king should be exalted over Amalek's king. Here "Amalek is consigned to utter destruction."³

God had announced to Moses: "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."⁴ Here Balaam reiterates this threat.⁵ As Amalek's beginning had been enmity against Israel, so his end was to be annihilation.⁶

The execution of this sentence against Amalek was started at the time of Saul,⁷ who "smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword."⁸ Even this was not permanent. The Amalekites recovered from this defeat, and David attacked them.⁹ He "smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive."¹⁰

1 LXX: καὶ τὸ σπέρμα αὐτῶν ἀπολείται.

Vulgate: *cujus extrema perdentur.*

Luther: *aber zuletzt wirst du gar unkommen.*

S.G. Am. Tr.: "But in the end he shall perish forever."

R.V.: "But his latter end shall come to destruction."

2 Orelli, *op. cit.*, p. 142: Amalek "can boast of high rank and age as no other can; what does that avail it?"

3 Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

4 Exodus 17, 14.

5 Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 73, claims that Balaam confirmed it "unwittingly."

6 Keil, German edition of 1862, p. 324.

Keil, English Translation, p. 195.

עַד־אֲבִד arriving at the condition of a perishing one.

7 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.

8 1 Samuel 15, 7-8.

9 Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

10 1 Samuel 27, 8-9.

Later the Amalekites again invaded Judah and plundered, seizing many captives. David inquired of God whether or not he should pursue them, and God answered, "Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." David pursued and "smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled." ¹ At the time of Hezekiah the destruction of Amalek was completed. ² A group of men "of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, ... And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped." ³ This is the last mention of the Amalekites in Scripture. ⁴ The prophecy of Amalek's utter destruction was remarkably fulfilled. "And where is the name of the nation of Amalek subsisting at this day? What history, what tradition concerning them is remaining any where? They are but just enough known and remembered to shew, that what God had threatened he hath punctually fulfilled." ⁵

Hengstenberg claims that this points to Christ, in whom alone a lasting victory over the enemies is to be obtained. ⁶ This is not necessarily contained in the text itself, but it cannot be denied. While the Amalekites themselves disappeared some time before the coming of Christ, the enemies of God and the Church, of

1 1 Samuel 30.

2 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.

3 1 Chronicles 4, 41-43.

4 Psalm 83, 7, a psalm of Asaph, mentions Amalek along with other nations as enemies of God.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 74.

6 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 190

whom the Amalekites are highly suitable examples, continue until the end of time, when all the unbelievers together are visited with eternal destruction.

... being friendly to Israel...
... The identity of the tribes mentioned
... is in dispute.

The first mention of the Kenites in Scripture is in Genesis 15, 16, where they appear as one of the tribes which territory was given to Abraham.¹ Engelberg makes a distinction between these Kenites, who are mentioned among the Semites, and the descendants of Jethro, who appear first in Judges 1, 16, "the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law," and again in Judges 4, 11, where mention is made of Heber, the Kenite, "of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses." Comparison with Genesis 2, 16 ff., where the father in law of Moses is designated as the priest of Midian, indicates that the Kenites were a branch of the Midianites,² a Semitic tribe descended from Shimon through Deborah.³

Heil denies that there is sufficient basis for the distinction that Engelberg and others make between the Semitic and Midianite Kenites, as, with the exception of the Kenites mentioned in Genesis 15, 16, whose identity and origin are in doubt, there were

1. Gen. 15:2
2. Gen. 2:16
3. Gen. 1:16

The third section of the fourth prophecy concerns the Kenites, a tribe which differed from those mentioned in the other prophecies in being friendly to Israel. Balaam "looked on the Kenites, "

וַיִּבְרַח בָּלָאָם מִן הַקְּנִיזִים .¹ The identity of the tribe here mentioned is in dispute.

The first mention of the Kenites in Scripture is in Genesis 15, 19, where they appear as one of the tribes whose territory was promised to Abraham.² Hengstenberg makes a distinction between these Kenites, who are mentioned among the Canaanites, and the descendants of Jethro, who appear first in Judges 1, 16, "the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law," and again in Judges 4, 11, where mention is made of Heber, the Kenite, "of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses." Comparison with Exodus 2, 15 ff., where the father in law of Moses is designated as the priest of Midian, indicates that the Kenites were a branch of the Midianites,³ a Semitic tribe descended from Abraham through Keturah.⁴

Keil denies that there is sufficient basis for the distinction that Hengstenberg and others make between the Canaanite and Midianite Kenites, as, with the exception of the Kenites mentioned in Genesis 15, 19, whose identity and origin are in doubt, Scripture makes

1 LXX: καὶ ἰδὼν τοὺς Κανιζαῖον
Vulgate: Vidit quoque Cinaeum
Luther: Und da er sahe die Keniter.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Then he looked at the Kenites."
R.V.: "And he looked on the Kenite, "

2 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 747.

3 Cook, loc. cit.

4 Genesis 25, 2.

mention of no other Kenites than those descended from the father in law of Moses, who went along into Canaan. ¹

Hengstenberg admits that some identify, or at least relate, the two groups of Kenites, Canaanite and Midianite, ² but he maintains the distinction, claiming that the Canaanite Kenites are undoubtedly intended here, and not the Midianites. He bases this contention on the fact that the Midianite Kenites were friendly toward Israel. ³ He claims support also from the fact that the Canaanites were hostile toward Israel at that very time, ⁴ a fact which is shown by Chapter 21, 1-3. He fails, however, to show any necessary connection between the Canaanites, כְּנַעֲנִים, in Chapter 23, and the Kenites, כְּנִזִּי in this prophecy, nor does he show ⁵ that there were any Canaanite Kenites. The fact that the Midianite Kenites were friendly toward Israel does not preclude a reference to them here, as the prophecy itself suggests a friendly tribe, rather than a hostile one.

Keil opposes the view that Canaanite Kenites are here meant, branding it a hypothesis just as unfounded as the suggestion that by the Kenites the Midianites are to be understood, ⁶ or the supposition that the Kenites here and in Genesis 15, 19 are a branch of

1 Keil, German edition of 1870., p.341.

Keil, English Translation, p. 191.

2 Kenites mentioned in 1 Samuel 15, 6; 27, 10; 30, 29 are apparently this same tribe.

2 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 191.

3 1 Samuel 27, 10.

4 Hengstenberg, loc. cit.

5 Hengstenberg, loc. cit.

6 Orelli, op. cit., p. 143, suggests that the Kenites, being a branch of the Midianites, represent them here.

the supposedly ancient Amalekites. ¹

The Kenites here meant are those of Midianite extraction, the family of Jethro, who joined themselves to Israel. As Balaam, still in his state of ecstasy, looked upon these Kenites with his inner vision, "he took up his parable and said ... " ² The recurrence of the introductory formula designates this as a new and separate section of the prophecy. This is shown also by the statement that Balaam beheld the Kenites, which statement separates the two distinct sections.

This section begins with a statement of the security of the Kenites: "Strong is your dwelling, your nest set on a cliff,"
: אִתּוֹ מוֹשְׁבֵי קַיִן וְשֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל קִנְיָתוֹ . ³ The Kenites are mentioned in 1 Samuel 15, 6 as dwelling among the Amalekites, who lived in the mountains forming the southern boundary of Canaan. ⁴ Their situation is thus strong and secure. ⁵

Hengstenberg points to Numbers 14, 25. 43. 45 to show that

1 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.
English Translation of Keil, p. 196.

2 Vulgate: assumens parabolam ait.
LXX, Massoretic Text, Luther, the Revised Version, and the American Translation all have the same as in the corresponding phrase of verse 20.

3 LXX: Ἰσχυρὰ ἡ κατοικία σου
καὶ ἐν θῆσι ἐν πέτρῃ τὴν νοστίαν σου.
Vulgate: Robustum quidem est habitaculum tuum;
sed si in petra posueris nidum tuum.
Luther: Fest ist deine Wohnung,
und hast dein Nest in einen Fels gelegt.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Though your dwelling place is enduring,
And your nest set on a rock, ... "
R.V.: "Strong is thy dwelling place,
And thy nest is set in the rock."

4 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Balaams, usw., p. 192.

5 Newton, op. cit., p. 75.

the Canaanites and the Amalekites lived together in the mountains, but the connecting link between Canaanites and Kenites is still lacking. That the Midianite Kenites, according to 1 Samuel 15, 6; 30, 29, lived near the Amalekites he attributes to chance.¹ His insistence that the Canaanites are here intended appears to result from prejudice, as the Kenites satisfy the requirements better than the Canaanites and bear the name used in the prophecy.

Newton accepts this passage as referring to the Midianite Kenites, claiming that, according to Bochart, the Kenites mentioned in Genesis 15, 19, as well as the Kenizzites, became extinct in the interval between Abraham and Moses. This is assumed from the failure of Joshua to mention them in the division of the land or the catalog of nations conquered.² While the argumentary steps here may be questioned, he regards the Kenites as identical with, or at least a part of, the Midianites.³ This latter view is to be preferred.

The fact that the Midianites joined with the Moabites in opposing Israel is said to suggest that the Kenites here represent the Midianites,⁴ being called Kenites from the similarity of קניז, a rock dwelling, to קניזי, the Kenites.⁵ There is no evidence that the Midianites themselves were ever called Kenites, nor is there any necessity for all the enemies of Israel to be specifically mentioned. Those who are mentioned "appear in their representative

1 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 193.

2 Newton, op. cit., p. 74.

3 Newton, loc. cit.

4 Ibid., loc. cit.

5 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 140 (attributed to Kurtz)

character. " 1

Here the Kenites do not appear as enemies of Israel, but as a tribe "which had shown itself friendly to Israel." 2 They were not to be rooted out, as were the Canaanites, but were to continue as long as the Israelites themselves, until Israel was taken captive. 3

The Bible Commentary offers the suggestion that the Kenites mentioned in Genesis 15, 19 were Canaanite people, who derived their name from the name of their city, Cain, which later fell to Judah, and that the descendants of Hobab took this city and also the name Kenite. The following verse is said to prove that the city is meant. 4 The fact that the following verse speaks of קַיִן might indicate that a place is meant, as this name is used in Judges 4, 11 in such a manner as to permit reference to a city. 5 This, however, is improbable, as it involves an anachronism. If the Kenites derived their name from the city, which they occupied after the death of Moses, they would not have had the name at the time the Pentateuch was written.

That there were two groups of Kenites is indicated in Judges 4, 11, as Heber separated himself from the others of his tribe and settled in North Palestine, while his tribesmen occupied southern Canaan. This distinction is purely local, not genealogical, as both

1 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 141.

2 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284.
Numbers 10, 29-32.

3 Newton, op. cit., p. 74.

4 Cook, Bible Commentary, 747.

5 Orelli, op. cit., p. 143, states that in Judges 4, 11 the tribe is called Kain. In the Hebrew this is קַיִן.

(The same verse uses also קַיִן)

had the same ancestry and past history.

Newton assumes from Judges 1, 16 that some of the Kenites followed Israel, but that others, apparently the greater part, remained among the Midianites and Amalekites.¹ A better view would be that the Kenites accompanied Judah into the wilderness of Judah, and "dwelt among the people," not with Judah, but with the people dwelling south of Arad, in the vicinity of Shur, where dwelt the Amalekites. Heber then left the rest of the Kenites and journeyed north, settling in North Palestine. There may have been some Kenites who settled with Judah, but these can be considered as individuals rather than a unified group. The Kenites intended in this prophecy would be those in southern Palestine, dwelling by the Amalekites.²

Their nest is set on a cliff. The verb form $\square\text{'}\psi$ might be infinitive or passive participle. Hengstenberg takes it as infinitive,³ but admits that others accept it as a passive participle,⁴ referring to its use in Obadiah 4.⁵

Keil adopts the more satisfactory view and takes this as a passive participle, referring to 1 Samuel 9, 24,⁶ 2 Samuel 13, 32,⁷

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 75.

2 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284; "Their habitations were chiefly in the mountainous regions of the Sinaitic Peninsula."

3 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 193.

4 Ibid., p. 194.

5 "If your nest is set between stars."

אִם-בַּיִן כּוֹכְבִים שִׁים קָנָה

6 "What is left is set before you; eat."

הַגִּשְׁאֵר שִׁים לְפָנַי אֲכַל

7 The form $\square\text{'}\psi$ fails to appear, but $\square\text{'}\psi$ with the marginal $\square\text{'}\psi$ signifies "it has been determined."

and Obadiah 4. ¹

It has been suggested that the cliff whereon the Kenites had their nest is that which rises perpendicularly from the level of the western shore of the Dead Sea. ² Though such a location would be appropriate, the Kenites seem to have been dwelling more to the south and west of the Dead Sea, among the Amalekites. According to Orelli, the mention of the mountain-nests ³ suggests that the Kenites lived in the rocky territory of south Judah. ⁴ This view is acceptable, although Keil opposes it on the grounds that neither the Kenites nor the Midianites can be shown to have lived in inaccessible mountain regions. This is mentioned of the Edomites, ⁵ who dwelt "in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high," ⁶ but the mere fact that this is stated of Edom does not deny its applicability to the Kenites.

The dwelling place of the Kenites is of lasting permanence, because their nest is laid on a rock. Keil takes this figuratively and states that the picture is probably derived from the rocky mountains of Horeb, in the vicinity of which the Kenites had been leading a nomad life before they joined Israel. ⁷ He suggests

1 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.

For Obadiah 4 see p. 164, footnote 5.

2 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.

3 Orelli, op. cit., p. 143. (The Edomites had cities on heights)

4 Orelli, loc. cit. But carrying away by Assur, he says, suggests that some of them lived in north Palestine. Judges 4, 11.

5 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.

Keil, English Translation, p. 196.

6 Obadiah 3 f.

Jeremiah 49, 16.

7 Exodus 3, 1.

Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.

Keil, English Translation, p. 196.

that, having left Horeb, the rocky mountain home surrounded by wilderness, in order to join a nation of people who were still migrating in search of a home, the Kenites, by this very act, first really laid their nest on a secure rock. ¹ Gosman also accepts this figurative interpretation that the Kenites, by joining God's people, gained a secure refuge, safe from destruction until Israel itself fell into captivity. ²

This, Keil says, is proved by the following verse, which indicates that the Kenites were not to be vanquished until Assyria led them away captive. ³ "For the Kenite shall not be destroyed," ⁴

קִיָּן ⁵ לְבַעַר . ⁶ כִּי אֵם - יִהְיֶה . The verb ⁷ בַּעַר implies destruction or extermination. The use of ⁷ יִהְיֶה with the infinitive

- 1 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341, quoted from v. Hofman.
 - 2 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, p. 141.
Newton, op. cit., p. 75, claims that the departure of the Kenites from among the Amalekites showed that they were "wasted, and reduced to a low and weak condition."
 - 3 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.
 - 4 Literally, 'for if the Kenite is for destruction, ...'
 - 5 Gesenius, Kautzsch, Grammar, 29 f. Tsere can remain in a closed ultima which has lost its tone, in which case it is not to be regarded as a long vowel.
 - 6 LXX: καὶ ἐὰν γένηται τῷ Βεωρ νεοσσία παραουχίας.
Vulgate: et fueris electus de stirpe Cin,
Luther: Aber, o Kain, du wirst verbrannt werden,
S.G. Am. Tr.: "Nevertheless it shall be annihilated, O Kain."
R.V.: "Nevertheless Kain shall be wasted."
 - 7 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 342.
Keil, English Translation, p. 197.
So used in Deut. 13, 6: "thou shalt put away the evil."
בַּעַרְתָּ הָרָע
Deuteronomy 17, 7 (same as Deut. 13, 6)
2 Samuel 4, 11: "and I shall exterminate you from the earth."
וּבַעַרְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ:
1 Kings 22, 47: "he exterminated from the land."
בַּעַר מִן־הָאָרֶץ:
- Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 195, agrees with this meaning.

and וְ is not uncommon in Scripture,¹ and the meaning is a definite assertion of what is in store for the subject of the וְהָיָה . As Wobersin reveals, some change the וְלִבְעַר to וְלִעֲבֹר , translating, "And yet Cain will belong to Eber." Later, however, in verse 24, Eber stands with Assyria.²

The particle וְ , as in Numbers 14, 23,³ and elsewhere, here has "the strong negative sense which it bears in oaths."⁴ Keil takes it as the introduction of an indirect question with a negative sense, "Is it that Cain will fall to destruction ... ?"⁵

The וְ might better be taken as the introduction to the protasis of a condition with the apodosis omitted, the force being that of an oath. A positive protasis in such a construction is equivalent to a strong negation.

Hentzenberg takes the וְכִי as "sondern,"⁶ and the meaning would then be "but Cain shall be destroyed," even though the Kenites have a secure dwelling. Hengstenberg, however, takes the Kenites as the Canaanites, and, if these were intended, a sentence of destruction might be fitting. His assumption, however,

- 1 Deut. 31, 17: וְהָיָה לְאֵשׁ he will be devoured.
 Isaiah 5, 5: וְהָיָה לְסֹרְקָס it will be trodden down.
 Isaiah 6, 13: וְהָיְתָה לְבַעַר it will be consumed
 (these passages referred to in Wobersin, op. cit., p. 28)
- 2 Wobersin, op. cit., p. 28.
- 3 "Surely they shall not see the land."
 $\text{אִם יִרְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ}$
- 4 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 749.
 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284: "Should the Kenite be destroyed, until Assur shall lead thee away captive? The answer is an emphatic 'No.'"
- 5 Keil, German edition of 1870, pp. 341-342.
 Keil, English Translation, p. 197.
 וְ is so used in 1 Kings 1, 27.
- 6 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 194.

is unwarranted, and the sentence of extermination is not required. The words are not, as they appear in the Authorized Version, a prediction of evil to the Kenites, but a promise, on the contrary, of safety to be long continued to them. ¹

The Kenite is not to be destroyed "until Assyria leads you into captivity." : אֲשׁוּרִים תִּלְכָּדוּ . ² The words אֲשׁוּרִים might mean "how long?" or "until." The better meaning here is "until." ³ The destruction of the Kenites was to come at the hand of Assyria.

Hengstenberg applies the אֲשׁוּרִים , "will lead you into captivity," to Israel, basing this first on the fact that the Kenites had just been mentioned in the third person and also on his interpretation of the foregoing as announcing the destruction of the Kenites, as a destroyed people cannot be led away. ⁴ The fact that a destroyed people cannot be led away might be admitted, but the application of this to the Kenites is based on a misinterpretation of what precedes. The previous mention of the Kenites in the third person already marked a change in number, as they had just been mentioned in the second person, and another shift, back to the second person would not be unthinkable.

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- 1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.
- 2 LXX: Ἀσσυρίοι σε ἀιχμαλωτεύσουσιν.
Vulgate: quamdiu pot eris permanere? Assur enim capiet te.
Luther: wenn Assur dich gefangen wegführen wird.
S. G. Am. Tr.: "How long will Ashur make captives of you?"
A.V. and R.V.: "Until Asshur shall carry thee away captive."
- 3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 749, refers to Balaam's use of in Chapter 23, 23 in a non-interrogative sense, and so probably here also. The meaning "until" is to be preferred.
- 4 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 195.

The fact that in this section of the prophecy no mention has been made of Israel argues against a reference to it here, yet a reference to Israel here would be suitable. In this case Balaam would be announcing a new enemy of Israel, as the enmity of others¹ toward Israel was then known, while Assyria at that time had not yet assumed any definite attitude over against Israel.² Hengstenberg holds also that Israel is the one who is to destroy the Kenites until Israel itself is taken by Assyria, with nothing stated as to whether or not they would recover.³ This again is based on his interpretation of this view as an announcement of the destruction of the Canaanites. The Kenites, however, were not enemies, but friends of Israel, and it is perfectly fitting that these receive a promise of security as long as Israel itself lasts.

Moses had told Hobab: "... if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee."⁴ The Kenites "shared the fortune of God's chosen people until the captivity."⁵ The "fate of the Kenites was bound up with that of the Israelites," and they were to "continue to share in the good fortune of the men to whom they had committed themselves, until, at last even these should be conquered and enslaved by the

1 Hengstenberg, *Die Geschichte Bileams*, usw., p. 196, mentions the enmity of the Amalekites and the Kenites toward Israel as being known at the time. By Kenites he no doubt means the Canaanites.

2 Hengstenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197. In the last section of the prophecy Assyria is taken to represent the Asiatic world power.

3 Hengstenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

4 Numbers 10, 32.

5 Cook, *Bible Commentary*, p. 748.

fierce and hasty Assyrians,"¹ who would end the independence of the small tribes.²

The antithetical association of Amalekites and Kenites in this prophecy is fitting in view of the different attitudes which these two peoples adopted over against Israel.³

Newton states that, while the Amalekites were to be completely destroyed, the Kenites were to be taken captive,⁴ but there is no statement denying the destruction of the Kenites. This verse states merely that the Kenites are not to be destroyed "until" a certain time, with no information offered as to the future of the Kenites.

While the captivity was for God's people only transitory, for the Kenites it was a captivity of judgment, since, as Keil asserts, their fellowship with Israel was not real, but only outward.⁵ Although friendly to Israel, and outwardly associated with them, they did not enter into spiritual fellowship with Israel, but strove to maintain their own independence apart from God's people, thus forfeiting the divine blessing enjoyed by Israel.⁶

There is no evidence that the Kenites ever recovered after the captivity. Even these were destroyed, except for the comparatively few who had become a part of God's people⁷ and thus shared the divine blessing.

1 Cox, Balaam, an Exposition and a Study, p. 128.

2 Orelli, op. cit., p. 143.

3 This is shown by Exodus 17, 8 - 18, 12.

Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 341.

Keil, English Translation, p. 196.

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 75, citing 1 Samuel 15, 16.

5 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 141, referring to Keil.

6 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 342.

Keil, English Translation, p. 197.

7 1 Chronicles 2, 55.

Having indicated the conquerors of Israel and the Kenites, Balaam showed in these last verses "that the conquerors of the Kenites should fare no better than the Kenites themselves." ¹ Even the Assyrian conquerors were to be vanquished.

The introduction is identical with that of the other utterances. He "took up his parable, and said, ... " ² The LXX has an interpolation ³ which is not in the original text, nor does it appear in the other versions. Sayce seizes upon this to claim that there is a corruption in the text, pointing to what he calls the imperfect condition of the introductory formula. ⁴ Nothing more than this is necessary. This formula stands alone in five out of the seven verses in which it appears in these prophecies. Furthermore, there is no particular people mentioned immediately in this section for which an additional introductory phrase would be required.

The speech itself opens with an exclamation of woe. "Woe, who will live when God does it?" : אֵי יִחְיֶה מִי יִחְיֶה מִשְׁמֵנו אֵל . ⁵

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.

2 Massoretic Text same as verses 20. 21.

Vulgate: assumptaque parabola iterum locutus est.

Luther: und hub abermal an seinen Spruch, und sprach

S.G. Am. Tr.: "Then he gave utterance to his oracle, saying "

R.V. and A.V.: "And he took up his parable, and said."

3 The LXX interpolates καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν ὄγρον before καὶ ἀναλαβῶν, κ.τ.λ.

4 Sayce, Balaam's Prophecy and the God Sheth, in Hebraica, Vol. IV, October 1887, No. I, p.2.

5 LXX: ὦ ὦ, τίς ἠΐσαται, ὅταν θῆ, ταῦτα ὁ θεός;

Vulgate: Heu quis victurus est, quando ista faciet Deus?

Luther: Ach, wer wird leben, wenn Gott solches thun wird?

S.G. Am. Tr. "Alas, who can live longer than God has appointed him?"

A.V. and R.V.: "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?"

This points to the fearfulness of the judgment that is to come. ¹
Keil states that it affected Balaam deeply, because this judgment
was to fall upon the sons of his own people. ² He was grieved that
destruction was in store not only for others, but also for his
people. ³

Although there is sufficient justification for Balaam's personal
concern over what is to occur, this exclamation is not to be
restricted to Balaam's own emotions. "The judgment of God upon the
disobedient and idolatrous enemies of His people would be so
terrible that men would despair of their lives in seeing its
severity." ⁴

The מִי יִחְיֶה, "who will live?" is given two possible
meanings by Hengstenberg. Referring to Revelation 9, 6, "And in
those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall
desire to die, and death shall flee from them," he allows the meaning,
"who wants to live?" Referring to Matthew 24, 21-22, Christ's
description of the "great tribulation, such as was not since the
beginning of the world ...," he offers the meaning, "who will
live?" ⁵ This latter is the meaning of the Hebrew text, favored also
by verse 24, ⁶ where the destruction of the world powers is men-
tioned. Who would be able to preserve his life in the universal

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 75: "The 'exclamation implies, that he
is now prophesying of very distant and very calamitous times."

2 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 342.

Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

(referring to Chapter 22, 5)

3 Gosman, in Lange Schaff Commentary, p. 141.

4 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284.

5 Hengstenberg. Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., pp. 197-198.

6 Ibid., p. 198.

catastrophe that was to come? ¹

The positive rhetorical question introduced here with 'ק is equivalent to a strong negative statement. The obvious answer is the negative. No one would be able to survive.

Sayce mentions the suggestion that the meaning is, "who shall survive Sammel?" ² This is not in accord with the Massoretic Text, nor is it suitable to the context. There is no reason why Samuel should be chosen as a criterion for survivors.

The verb קָוַם is applied elsewhere to that which is brought about by God. ³ Thus the קָוַם might mean either "from the time of God's bringing it about" or "because of God's bringing it about." ⁴ In most cases the temporal significance of קָוַם would involve also the causal, as here. None will survive when God brings this to pass, because God brings it to pass.

The suffix on קָוַם is not to be applied to Assyria, as Assyria is not the mighty one who crushes and destroys. Another power from the West was to come and crush Assyria. ⁵

Some refer the suffix to God and take קָוַם as a shortened form

1 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 342.
English Translation of Keil, p. 198.

2 Sayce, Balaam's Prophecy and the God Sheth, in Hebraica, Vol. IV, October, 1887, No. I, p. 2.
(Sayce attributes the suggestion to Geiger)

3 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 342.
Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

Isaiah 44, 7: "from My appointing ... " קָוַם
Habakkuk 1, 12: you have ordained them for judgment.
קָוַם יְהוָה

4 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 342.
Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

5 Keil, German edition of 1870, pp. 342-343.
Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

of the demonstrative: "who will live when He does this?"¹ Hengstenberg takes his stand against this view, stating that לֵּךְ is used in this way eight times in the Pentateuch and only once otherwise.² In the Pentateuch it always appears with the article,³ and only in 1 Chronicles 20, 8 does it appear in this sense without the article.⁴

The לֵּךְ is the subject of the מִשְׁפָּט , and the object is designated by the suffix.⁵

Some refer the suffix to what precedes, but, as Newton points out, the use of the introductory formula, "and he took up his parable and said," argues against this. "This preface is used when he enters upon some new subject."⁶

The suffix relates rather to the substance of the following verse, and is to be taken in a neuter sense.⁷ God was to bring it about, making use of great human forces as agents.

The agents are mentioned in the following verse, "ships from

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- 1 The meaning would be the same, but the other construction is to be preferred.
 - 2 Hengstenberg, *Die Geschichte Bileams*, usw., p. 198. 1 Chronicles 20, 8.
 - 3 Keil, German edition of 1870, lists the passages in which appears in this sense. Genesis 19, 8. 25; 26, 3. 4; Leviticus 18, 27; Deuteronomy 4, 42; 7, 22; 19, 11.
(In each case the Leteris edition has a marginal note calling attention to the word)
 - 4 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343. Hengstenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 198, attributes the absence of the article in 1 Chronicles 20, 8 to a mistake on the part of the writer, who was trying to use the language of the Pentateuch.
 - 5 Gesenius, *Kautzsch. Grammar*, 115 k: "In Nu. 24, 23 the subject follows an infinitive which has a noun-suffix in place of the object."
 - 6 Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
 - 7 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343. Keil, *English Translation*, 198.

the side of Kittim,"¹ קִיטִים בְּיַם הַיָּם .² The form
 קִיטִים , "ships," derived from יָם ,³ is an "extraordinary"
 plural, the customary form being יָמִים ,⁴ the form appearing in
 Daniel 11, 30, קִיטִים בְּיַם הַיָּם , which appears to refer back to
 this prophecy.⁵ Hengstenberg argues that, since יָם appears
 only four times, Daniel undoubtedly had this passage in mind,⁶ and,
 while there is no conclusive proof that Daniel refers to this
 passage, the mention of "ships of Kittim" seems to indicate that
 there is some connection.

Sayce points to the καὶ ἐξελεύσεται of the LXX and suggests
 that the Hebrew form should be קִיטִים(ר) or קִיטִים(ר) , but he
 admits that the "come forth" would then be without antecedent.⁷
 This is to be rejected also because it violates the consonantal text.

The ships are to come "from the side of Kittim." That יָם has
 this meaning is shown by its use in Exodus 2, 5,⁸ Deuteronomy
 2, 37,⁹ and elsewhere.¹⁰

1 The קִיטִים , "and ships," might better be rendered, "for ships,"
 as this is not foreign to the conjunction ו .
 (Newton, op, cit., p. 75.)

2 LXX: καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ἐκ χειρὸς Κιτταίων.
 Vulgate: Venient in trieribus de Italia.
 Luther: Und Schiffe aus Chittim
 S.G. Am. Tr.: "Ships shall come from the coast of Kittim."
 R.V.: "But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, "

3 Isaiah 33, 21.

4 Gesenius Kautzsch, 93, y.

5 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343.

Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

6 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 201.

7 Sayce, Balaam's Prophecy and the God Sheth, in Hebraica,

Vol. IV, October, 1887, No. I, p. 3.

8 "by the river's side," עַל יַד הַיָּם

9 "any bank of the river," כָּל יַד הַיָּם

10 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343.

Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

Sayce claims that τ is not used for a sea coast, but only the bank of a river, and, while τ would be more fitting for river banks, which occur in pairs, than for sea coasts, Sayce's assumption that possibly the $\square \tau \square$ should be read $\square \tau \square$ ¹ is totally unjustified and unwarranted.

The word τ is often used for that which appears in pairs, as in Exodus 2, 5 for the banks of a river, and in Isaiah 45, 9 for the handles on a piece of pottery. It can be assumed also that the sides of anything appear in pairs, and this is true also of a piece of land, in this case the island Kittim.

It is generally assumed that Kittim is the island Cyprus, although it is also applied to Macedonia in 1 Maccabees 1, 1, which speaks of "Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chetim."²

The Bible Commentary takes Kittim as "Cyprus, the nearest of the western Islands, the only one visible from Palestine, and so the representative to Balaam and to Israel of all those unknown western regions across the Mediterranean Sea, from which were at length to come the conquerors of the mighty empires of the East."³

Hengstenberg asserts that there is no proof that Kittim is Cyprus. He mentions the question that has been raised as to whether this is the only meaning, or whether it can be used in a wider sense for the islands and coast of the Mediterranean, especially the northern

1 Sayce, Balaam's Prophecy and the God Sheth, in Hebraica, Vol. IV, October, 1887, No. I, p. 3.

2 Orelli, op. cit., p. 143, footnote 4, refers to this passage.

3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.

Genesis 10:15. This "the isles" then is a reference to the Westland.

coast, at Greece and Italy. This suggestion, however, he rejects.

Keil takes $\square \sim \text{ק} \text{צ}$ as Cyprus, with the capital Citium or Kition,² which was the chief station in the Phoenician shipping lanes, so that all fleets going between east and west took their course by way of Cyprus.³

Newton points out that, according to Genesis 10, 4. 5, "Chittim was one of the sons of Javan, who was one of the sons of Japheth, by whose posterity 'the isles of the Gentiles were divided.'" This he says refers to "Europe, and the countries to which the Asiatics passed by sea, for such the Hebrews called islands." Chittim, he states, "is used for the descendants of Chittim, as Asshur is put for the descendants of Asshur, that is, the Assyrians." Newton admits, however, that the identity of the descendants of Chittim is difficult to determine. He suggests that probably the "sons of Chittim settled first in Asia Minor, where were a people called Cetēi, and a river called Cetium, according to Homer and Strabo."⁴ The descendants of Chittim might easily cross from Asia Minor to the island Cyprus.

Josephus says:

"Cethimus possessed the Island Kethima; it is now called Cyprus; and from that it is that all the islands, and the greatest part of the seacoasts, are named Cethin by the

1 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 199.
2 Genesis 10, 4.
3 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343.
Keil, English Translation, p. 198.
Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 200.
(Both Keil and Hengstenberg refer to Isaiah 23, 1)
4 Newton, op. cit., p. 76.

Hebrews; and one city there is in Cyprus that has been able to preserve its denomination; it is called Citius by those who use the language of the Greeks, and has not, by the use of that dialect, escaped the name of Cethim." 1

From Cyprus the descendants of Chittim "might send forth colonies into Greece and Italy. This plainly appears, that wherever the 'land of Chittim' or the 'isles of Chittim' are mentioned in Scripture, there are evidently meant some countries or islands in the Mediterranean." 2

Isaiah 23, 1, prophesying the destruction of Tyre, states that the "news is brought first to the countries and islands in the Mediterranean, and from thence it is conveyed to Spain." 3 In verse 12 of the same chapter, "arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest," Chittim appears as an island or islands in the Mediterranean.

In Jeremiah 2, 10 the prophet, addressing the Jews with regard to their revolt, suggests that they "pass over the isles of Chittim, and send unto Kedar," and inquire whether there is any similar example of such apostasy. As Kedar was east of Judea, 4 Chittim appears to be in the opposite direction, the direction of the Mediterranean.

According to these passages Chittim may well be the island of Cyprus, and not necessarily the Mediterranean coasts and islands

1 Josephus, Antiquities, 1, 6. (Whiston Translation)

Newton, op. cit., p. 70, says that Cittiium was "famous for being the birthplace of Zeno, the founder of the sect of the Stoics, who was therefore called the Cittiian."

2 Newton, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

3 Ibid., p. 77.

4 Ibid., loc. cit.

in general, as Newton suggests.¹

Newton states that critics and commentators are divided between Macedonia and Italy, and he himself straddles the issue, accepting both. The ancient name of Macedonia, he reveals, was Ma Cettia, and the Latins were formerly called Cetii.² Balaam, he suggests, might here be referring to either Greece or Italy or both, "the particular names of those countries being at that time perhaps unknown in the East."³ He prefers the reference to both, stating that "Greece and Italy were alike the scourges of Asia."⁴

In Daniel 11, 30, where the "ships of Chittim" are mentioned, Chittim is apparently Italy, and, as the Bible Commentary states, "the Targums render it so several times."⁵ This passage, however, appears to be a reference to Numbers 24, 24, where the ships are said to be "from the side of Chittim," or from that direction, and ships from Italy would pass Cyprus. They need not be from Cyprus itself,⁶ but from the direction of Cyprus. They might be from either Greece or Italy,⁷ as the Greeks appeared first and were later themselves conquered by the Romans.

Balaam himself fails to name the power that was to come from the direction of Cyprus, as this is out of his field of vision.⁸

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 78.

2 Ibid., p. 76.

3 Ibid., p. 78.

4 Ibid., loc. cit.

5 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.

6 Orelli, op. cit., p. 143.

Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 201.

7 Onkelos: כִּרְוִימָא (in חומשׁ, Heb. Publ. Co., New York)
Vulgate takes them as ships from Italy.

8 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 342.

Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

The statement in 1 Maccabees 1, 1, applying this to Macedonia and the Macedonian invasion¹ Hengstenberg brands as an attempt to show that the fulfilment of Balaam's prophecy was by Alexander.² This, apparently, was the fulfilment of the prophecy.³

The better view here seems to be that these are the ships of Greece. Balaam states that "they will afflict Assyria, and they will afflict Heber," וְלִנְיָ אֲשׁוּר וְלִנְיָ אֶבְרָא .⁴

The oppressors of God's people were to be themselves oppressed. A power coming from the West was to conquer the eastern and western Semites.⁵

The name אֲשׁוּר signifies the descendants of Asshur, the Assyrians, but there is a wide divergence of opinion as to the people meant here by Heber. The LXX and Vulgate translate with "Hebrews." Onkelus, according to Hengstenberg, has 'Transeu-phratians.'⁶

Eber might signify "the posterity of a man so called,"⁷ and would thus be the descendants of the grandson of Shem and ancestor of Abraham mentioned in Genesis 10, 24. Hengstenberg opposes this view, basing his objection on the minor importance of Eber.⁸

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.

2 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 202.

The word χεττιείμ is used, according to Hengstenberg.
3 Orelli, op. cit., p. 144, agrees that it took place under Alexander the Great.

4 LXX: καὶ κακώσουσιν Ἀσσοὺρ καὶ κακώσουσιν Ἑβραῖους
Vulgate: Superabunt Assyrios vastabuntque Hebraeos.
Luther: werden verderben den Assur und Eber.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "They shall harass Ashur, they shall harass Eber."
R.V.: "And they shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber."

5 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343.

Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

6 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 206.

7 Newton, op. cit., p. 78.

8 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 206.

The Bible Commentary suggests that Eber here signifies "generally the descendants of Shem," including also Asshur, Genesis 10, 21-22, who is mentioned by name in this verse,¹ but the very fact that both Eber and Assur are mentioned would seem to indicate that they are either mutually exclusive, or coextensive, rather than that one is included as a part of the other.

The suggestion has been made that Eber here means the descendants of Abraham, Israel being included, but that Balaam was reluctant to mention Israel, as he was combining them with Asshur, and for this reason he said Eber.² As Hengstenberg states, a reference to the Hebrews is unlikely, as Balaam speaks of them as Israel or Jacob.³ That Eber here means Israel is not in keeping with the announcement of Balaam in verse 14. An additional argument brought against this is the woe expressed by Balaam,⁴ but, since Balaam was speaking by inspiration, and, since he had previously spoken against his own personal desires, this woe is not necessarily his own sentiment.

Newton states, that, if the posterity of Eber is meant, "then Balaam, who was commissioned to bless Israel at first, prophesied evil concerning them at last, though under another name: but men and manners usually degenerate in a long course of time; and as the virtues of the progenitors might entitle them to a blessing, so the vices of the descendants might render them obnoxious to a curse."⁵

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.

2 Lange Schaff Commentary, Vol. III, p. 141.

3 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 209.

4 Ibid., loc. cit.

The curse here was for the oppressors of God's people, rather than for God's people themselves, although history reveals that also Judah suffered oppression at the hands of the Western conquerors. While not afflicted greatly by Alexander himself, they were afflicted more by the Seleucidae and Antiochus Epiphanes.¹ They suffered even more under the Romans, who made their land an imperial province and finally destroyed and dispersed them.²

While the descendants of Abraham might mean only the Israelites, as his spiritual descendants, the same cannot be said of Eber, as Scripture states nothing about his faith, and any relation to his descendants is, therefore, purely physical.³

Thus Keil takes Eber as signifying not only the Israelites as "Hebrews," nor only the "Transeuphratians," but "all the children of Eber." Asshur thus would represent the Semites dwelling in the far East, also the descendants of Elam, while Eber would represent the Western Semites, those descended from Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.⁴ This view, which bases the distinction on both locality and genealogy and makes Eber and Assur mutually exclusive, is acceptable, even though the chief basis of distinction is territorial.⁵

That Eber means the Semites living on the other side of the

1 Newton, op. cit., p. 79.

1 Maccabees 1.

2 Newton, loc. cit.

3 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 207.

4 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343.

Keil, English Translation, p. 198.

5 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284: "Both the Semitic nations of the East, which included the inhabitants of Assyria, and those of the West, which occupied the country between Assyria and Palestine, Gen. 10, 21, ... "

Euphrates¹ is the view adopted by many commentators.²

Newton prefers the view that Eber stands for the people who live on the other side of the Euphrates,³ a view supported by Onkelos⁴ and others.⁵ In Isaiah 7, 20 עֲבָרֵי נָהָר appears as "those beyond the river," and Newton states that a similar meaning would be expected here, "... shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict them beyond the river."⁶ This view is acceptable, if Eber is on the other side of the Euphrates from Assyria. If the genealogical significance of the name is dropped, this could be understood of those Semites living opposite Assyria, to the southwest of the Euphrates. Since Assur is an ancestral name, Eber also would appear to be such a name, although this is not required. That Eber means simply those across the river from Assyria can easily be accepted. Thus the distinction in geographical.

Hengstenberg claims that the existence of a person named Eber is purely a matter of chance. He denies that there is any reason to derive the name עֲבָרִים from a person named Eber. There is nothing to forbid the meaning "Transeuphratians."⁷ Even the Israelites regarded the Euphrates as the river.⁸

1 Calov, op. cit., p. 545.

2 Newton, op. cit., p. 79.

3 Newton, loc. cit., admits that "beyond the river" sometimes occurs in Scripture, but asks when "beyond" alone ever has this meaning.

4 Newton, op. cit., p. 78, quotes Onkelos: "And they shall subdue beyond the river Euphrates." (footnote)

5 Calov, loc. cit.

6 Newton, op. cit., p. 79.

7 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 207.

8 Ibid., p. 208.

Hengstenberg here takes Eber, the "Transeuphratians," to signify the same people as Assur. He claims that Genesis 10, 21 permits the sons of Eber to include also Assur.¹ This designation of Shem as "the father of all the children of Eber" merely indicates that the descendants of Eber were Semites, not that all the Semites were descended from Eber. In Isaiah 7, 20, which Hengstenberg also cites, טַבְרֵי וְנָהָר does apply to the Assyrians, but here the Assyrians are definitely mentioned as "those beyond the river."

Hengstenberg here attempts to exclude the Israelites from this judgment by restricting it to the area northeast of the Euphrates, but history shows that the judgment was not so restricted. The Assyrians were not the only ones afflicted by the Greeks and Romans.² In this way history supports the view of Keil, who applies Assur to the Eastern Semites and Eber to the Western Semites.³

This differs from the former prophecies of destruction in that the retribution was to come at the hands of a foreign people.⁴ The fulfilment came first with the domination of the Greeks, who under Alexander subdued all these countries.⁵ The Romans later extended their empire into the same territory, Assyria being conquered by Trajan.⁶ With the conquests of the Romans the subjection of East to West was even more lasting.⁷

1 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 210.

2 Newton, op. cit., p. 79.

3 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343.

4 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 199.

5 Hengstenberg, op. cit., p. 203.

Newton, op. cit., p. 78.

6 Newton, loc. cit.

7 Orelli, op. cit., p. 144.

The final words of the prophecy, "and also he is for destruction," : ד אבד אבד אבד ,¹ are taken by many to refer to the conqueror from the West, while others apply it to Assur and Eber.

Hengstenberg applies this to Assur and Eber, as the completion of the "who will live?" in the preceding verse.² The Bible Commentary points out that the reference cannot be to Assur, since the last phrase is syntactically disconnected from it.³ That the last phrase cannot refer to Assur and Eber is shown by the fact that their fate has already been announced.⁴

Newton argues that אבד , the singular, cannot well refer to both Assur and Eber, but that it "must naturally signify Chittim, the principal agent." He states that Chittim, "the main subject of this part of the prophecy, and whose ships were to afflict Asshur and to afflict Eber" was to perish forever.⁵ Chittim, however, is not, as he says, "the principal agent," but merely an indication of direction. The agent mentioned in the former phrase is אבד , "ships," a plural, and the verb אבד is likewise plural. Thus the אבד is no more inapplicable to Assur and Eber than to the

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- 1 LXX: καὶ αὐτοὶ ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἀπολοῦνται
Vulgate: et ad extremum etiam ipsi peribunt.
Luther: er aber wird auch unkommen.
S.G. Am. Tr.: "So that he in turn shall perish forever."
R.V.: "And he also shall come to destruction."
2 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 210.
3 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.
4 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 343.
Keil, English Translation, p. 199.
5 Newton, op. cit., p. 79.

agents of the affliction. ¹

Although Newton regards Chittim itself as the conqueror, he is correct in referring אֲרָם to the conqueror that was to come in ships from the West. If Balaam "meant the Grecians, the Grecian empire was entirely subverted by the Roman." If the Romans were meant, "the Roman empire was in its turn broken into pieces by the incursion of the northern nations." ²

Hengstenberg argues that the Western conquerors cannot be here destined for destruction, as nothing is stated of their enmity to Israel, and it was just such enmity that brought about the downfall of the others. ³ Such a statement of enmity is not necessary. Balaam here predicts their destruction, but nothing is said of the cause, the manner, or the agents of their downfall.

The Greek and Roman domination of the East can be taken together, as one was merely a continuation of the other. Some take the Papacy as the last of these world powers, as the Papacy is definitely a world power, and it is often regarded as the continuation of the Roman Empire. The Papacy, the last world-power, the Antichrist itself, is to fall at the "end of days," when "God will destroy all the enemies that oppose His will, and give victory to His people."⁴

The destruction of the enemies of God's people began at the time

1 The אֲרָם is even more applicable to אֲשׁוּר and עֲבָר than to צִיִּים, as אֲשׁוּר and עֲבָר are mentioned separately. This is true especially if Hengstenberg's interpretation, which identifies Eber and Assur, is accepted. Hengstenberg himself applies the אֲרָם to Assur and Eber.

2 Newton, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

3 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 210.

4 Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 284.

of David, and it is not yet complete. Its fulfilment, announced for the "end of days," is not to be restricted to any one event or period, but continues throughout Messianic times, culminating in the return of Christ, the King symbolized by Star and Sceptre, who is to shatter all enemies and establish His eternal kingdom, to which all worldly powers must yield. ¹

Balaam's prophecy offers a noticeable contrast to that of Jacob. In Jacob's prophecy, where the sceptre is a symbol of pre-eminence, the stress is laid on the Shiloh, the Peacebringer, Who is to have the willing obedience of the people. Balaam views God's people as opposed by the nations of the world, who strive to annihilate the people of God. In their attempts they are to be vanquished by the King out of Israel, the same person referred to by Jacob as Shiloh. ²

The Moabites, the representatives of the powers arrayed against God's people, were to realize that by their enmity toward Israel they were opposing the Almighty, and that there could be only one result, their destruction, as God's blessing was on His people. While Balaam's announcement was made actually to the Moabites and their allied neighbors as a warning, the warning is meant for all the enemies of God and His people. At the same time the announcement was intended for the congregation of Israel and the believers of all time as an assurance of divine blessing and preservation. ³

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- 1 Keil, German edition of 1870, pp. 343-344.
Keil, English Translation, p. 200.
Psalm 2; 72; 110.
 - 2 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 345.
Keil, English Translation, p. 201.
 - 3 Keil, German edition of 1870, pp. 345-346.
Keil, English Translation, p. 202.

CONCLUSION

It is not necessary to assume that Balaam shared in the hope of the kingdom that he predicted. Even the prophets themselves did not always grasp the full import of their prophecies.¹ The final actions of Balaam suggest that, if he did have such an understanding, it had little effect on him. After finishing his last prophecy, he rose up and headed in the direction of his home.² That he actually returned to his home is not even implied in the words of Scripture.³ Subsequent statements in Scripture indicate that, instead of returning to Mesopotamia, he turned to the Midianites and gave Israel's enemies the benefit of his evil advice. The Israelites "began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor."⁴ That the Midianites were the chief offenders here is indicated by the statement of God to Moses: "Vex the Midianites, and smite them: For they vex you with their wiles."⁵ This temptation was offered at the instigation of Balaam, as is shown by the statement of Moses, that they "caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against

1 Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 744.

1 Peter 1, 11.

2 וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּלָעַם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּשָּׁב לְמִדְיָן

3 Keil, German edition of 1870, p. 346.

Keil, English Translation, p. 202.

4 Numbers 25, 1 - 3.

5 Numbers 25, 17-18.

the Lord." ¹ Balaam received just retribution for his attitude and his vicious advice, for, when Israel executed its vengeance on the Midianites, Balaam was killed along with the others. ²

Thus ended the life of one who, having announced divine judgment on the enemies of God's people, himself joined these enemies and by so doing invited his own destruction.

The prophecies of Balaam have been subjected to various attacks, some of which have been mentioned in connection with the prophecies themselves.

Thus the statement is made that we cannot be certain that we have this in the original form. ³ Orelli states that, as Balaam "did not speak in Hebrew, his words in any case have been put here also into a Hebrew dress." He claims that oral traditions perhaps moulded these oracles, "while written redaction settled their formal shape." ⁴ This leads to the question of how Israel arrived at a knowledge of these prophecies, so that Moses could incorporate them into the Pentateuch. Scripture nowhere answers the question, but this lack of information is no testimony against the authenticity of the record.

The very fact that these words are in the Pentateuch testifies to their genuineness. ⁵ That Balaam's words were those of God is attested by such statements as, "the Lord put a word in Balaam's

1 Numbers 31, 16.

2 Numbers 31, 8.

3 Watson, The Book of Numbers (Expositor's Bible), p. 309.

4 Orelli, op. cit., p. 144.

5 Hengstenberg, Die Geschichte Bileams, usw., p. 18.

mouth," and "the Spirit of God came upon him." The fulfilment, especially the overthrow of the eastern powers by one from the West, was so far in the future that mere conjecture could not account for its accuracy. The fulfilment alone, being later than the dates suggested by even the radical critics, supports not only these prophecies, but the entire Pentateuch.¹ The truth of the record and the accuracy of the prophecies themselves are insured by inspiration. ~~As God Himself~~ was the Author of the words which Balaam spoke, ~~so~~ He was ^{also} the Author of the written record of these words.

Balaam could not curse Israel, because Israel was not cursed by God. They were His people, living alone, differing from the heathen neighbors, and this difference they were to maintain. They were to increase as the dust, so that even the fourth part of them would be innumerable. The divine blessing that was promised to them was immutable, and the fulfilment of it was certain, not to be frustrated by any of their enemies. God had blessed, and He was able to carry out His blessing. He was with Israel, as their King, at whose presence and victory the Israelites were to rejoice. The Israelites had no need for divination and sorcery, but God revealed His counsel and will to them, whenever it was necessary. The future of Israel was to be full of blessing, both physical and spiritual, and Israel was to be a source of blessing to others. The divine blessing of Israel was shown by what God had done for the people in the past, and was still doing. He had brought them out of Egypt and was still leading them. Because of His providence and guidance

¹ Cook, Bible Commentary, p. 748.

Israel was going forth with the strength of a wild ox. The future was to bring rest and security. The final fulfilment of these blessings was to come in the distant future, when the King represented by the Star and the Sceptre would appear and vanquish the enemies of the people of God. The Moabites, the Edomites, and the Amalekites, all viewed in their character as enemies of Israel and the Church of God of all ages, were heading for destruction. Another power from the West is foretold, who again was to be destroyed. The final power opposed to the Church of God, although lasting until the end of time, is not to escape the universal and eternal destruction that is in store for the enemies of God. At this time, when the King begins His rule of glory, the people of God, both the pious Israelites and the Christians, who constitute the spiritual Israel of the New Testament, who have been enjoying the blessings of the kingdom of grace, are to enjoy the blessings that are in store for them in the kingdom of glory.

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