

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE
of
MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY

BALAM AND HIS PROPHECIES.

by

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CONCORDIA SEMINARY JUNE 1924.

Introduction.

The subject of this paper is "Balaam and His Prophecies". We intend to divide the discussion of this subject under two main heads as already indicated in the title, "Balaam and His Prophecies". The first of the two will be a study of the character of Balaam, while the second will be a comprehensive exegesis of his prophecies. But before doing that we will devote a portion of the paper to the study of the historical and geographical questions in connection with the Balaam narrative. And then at the close, in a final portion, we will briefly set forth some arguments against the higher critics, to establish the authenticity of the narrative. Thus the whole subject is divided into the following four parts, to be treated in the order mentioned:

- I. The Historical and Geographical Situation.
- II. The Characterization of Balaam.
- III. The Prophecies of Balaam.
- IV. The Authenticity of the Narrative.

Under these points we hope to touch upon the main facts of this much talked of and criticized portion of Scriptures. Our position with respect to the various important theological, exegetical and critical questions, we will not present here, but let them come up and justify themselves in the course of the study.

I. The Historical and Geographical Situation.

The scene of the narrative lies, to the greatest extent, in the land of Moab, that is, the country just East of the Dead Sea. Due South of this region, in Mount Seir, lived the Edomites,¹⁾ who are later mentioned in the prophecies. Southwest of the Edomites, in the Peninsula of Sinai, dwelt the Amalekites,²⁾ who are also mentioned later. Our main interest, however, lies in the land of Moab and its inhabitants.

The descendants of Moab, a son of Lot, that is the Moabites, had settled in the region east of the Dead Sea where they had driven out the original Emim (Deut.2,9.10.11). In the course of time their territory extended from the wady Keraki at the southern end of the Dead Sea, the boundary of the Edomites, north along the Dead Sea and the River Jordan, as far as the Jabbok. This northern section along the Jordan, but quite a ways inland, that is the northeastern section, the Moabites, however, shared with their kinsmen, the Ammonites, the descendants of Ben-Ammi, the second son of Lot. From this section the Ammonites had originally driven the Zamzumim (Deut.2,19ff).

All about the above described territory, to the east and southeast, dwelt the Midianites, descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen.25,1-6). Because of their occupation as merchants, it seems, they became a scattered nation, one tribe living here and another there. The home of the main tribe seemed to have been a region to the southeast of the Edomites, in a section where³⁾ boundaries were never demarked. At the time of the beginning of the Exodus, and before, we find that Moses came into contact with a branch of the Midianites that dwelt in the region of Horeb, in the Peninsula of Sinai (Ex.3,1). Another tribe of the Midianites we find spreading eastward and northward from the immed-

1--For a good description of the Edomites, see Kurtz "Geschichte des Alten Bundes" Band II S.423ff.

2--For a good description of the Amalekites see Kurtz "Geschichte des Alten Bundes," Band II S.236f.

3--In this region the name is still preserved in the ruins called Madyan. Cf. Davis, Dict. of the Bible, s.v. Midian.

iate vicinity of the Meabite territory where, according to Gen.36,35, they must have lived for some time.

To the west of the Jordan in Palestine lived the strong nation of the Amorites. They were mighty people, dwelling there in the hill country (Num. 13,29; Deut.1,7). Just a few years before the event of the crossing of the Jordan from the east by the Israelites, the Amorites had crossed it from the west and conquered all the land from the Arnon to Mount Hermon, and from the wilderness to the Jordan (Deut.4,48; Judg.11,22). The northern division of this conquest was taken care of by the Amorite leader, Og, who subdued all the wide plains of Bashan from Mount Hermon to the Jabbok. He established his capital, right in the middle of this region, about 20 miles east of the Sea of Galilee, in the city of Ashtareth. (Deut.1,4).

The southern portion of this invasion was taken care of by the Amorite leader, Sihon, who established his capital at Heshbarn, almost due opposite, and about 20 miles east of Jericho. This invasion caused a considerable change in the political conditions of the Midianites, Ammonites, and Meabites. The Midianites, living farther east than the Ammonites and Meabites, appear not to have been forced to change their dwelling places to any great extent, though they were made to pay taxes to Sihon (Joshua 13,21). The Ammonites, however, were forced to vacate their territory and move farther east, closer to the desert, with the upper Jabbok as their western border (Num.21,24). This is also clear from Judg.11,13, where the king of the Ammonites calls the land, which the children of Israel took from the Amorites, his land.

The invasion of Sihon had caused the Meabites to abandon their territory north of the Arnon and along the banks of the Jordan, (Num.21,16). Balak and his people were now confined to that portion of his territory which was located between the River Arnon at the north and the wady Keraki at the south. Before this the capital must have been Ar of Meab (Num.21,28), possibly identified with the town of Areer on the right bank of the Arnon (Deut.2,36). At this

time, however, it must have been Rabboth Meab, which later by mistake received the name Arepolis.⁴⁾ Such is the general situation just before the arrival of the children of Israel.

In the fifth month of the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of Egypt, Aaron died on Mount Hor, and the children of Israel, going about the land of Edom to the right, traveled north to enter the land of Canaan from the east (Num.33,38.41). Before this journey is described it must, however, be noted that many of the sites recorded in Numbers as camping grounds of the Israelites are not now discernible, despite the great work of Conder and the Palestine Exploration Fund Society.⁵⁾ Beginning with Ijeabarim there are two different lists of stations found in Numbers, one in Chap.21, the other in Chap.33. Those recorded in Chap.21 are Ijeabarim, the valley of Zered, or Brook Zered, Arnon, Beer, Mattanah, Nahaliel, Bamoth, the top of Pisgah. Those recorded in Chp.33 are Ijeabarim, Dibongat, Almendiblathaim, the mountains of Abarim before Nebo. But this reading should be no cause for alarm, since that country in those days was thickly populated and well cultivated, where a large camp like that of the Israelites may well have bordered on several localities.⁶⁾

Since the Moabites and Ammonites were relatives of the Israelites, the Israelites were to treat them kindly, as they did the Edomites (Deut.2,4 and 2,9). Therefore the Israelites do not distress Moab but travel somewhat east. Where Ijeabarim was we do not know. Neither is it certain where the Brook Zered is.⁷⁾

4--Smith, "Historical Geography" p.559.

5--Smith, "Historical Geography" p.557.

6--Kurtz "Gesch.d.A.B." B.II S.452f explains this point in detail. He says in part: "Im allgemeinen muss die Bemerkung vorausgeschickt werden, dass wir uns hier bereits in cultivirtem Lande befinden, wo die speciell benannten Orte ungleich mehr gehaeuft und einander genaeuert sind, so dass also ein Lagerungsplatz fuer 2 Millionen Menschen wohl auch zwei und mehrerer derselben fuellen oder beruehren koennte; ein Umstand, aus welchem verschiedene Benennungen ein und derselben Stationen sich leicht erklæren."

7--Smith "Hist.Geo." p.557. "The Zered cannot be the great wady rising east from the south end of the Dead Sea....as marked on the P.E.F.red.map,1890; but must have lain nearer Arnon....a branch of the Arnon (see Dillmann). But all sites in this region are problematical."

The River Arnon, however, is the present wady Mejib, an enormous trench across the plateau of Moab. "It is about 1700 feet deep, and about two miles broad from edge to edge of the cliffs which bound it, but the floor of the valley over which the stream winds is only forty yards wide." ⁸⁾ Because of the rough and wild regions one sees at once how well the Arnon served as a political boundary line, also later, for the Israelites. Thus, also, we find another reason for stating that the Israelites crossed farther east, where undoubtedly the region was not so difficult to travel, having thus passed Moab to their left.

After crossing the Arnon, the Israelites found themselves immediately in the wilderness of Kedemoth (Num.21,13; Deut.2,26) southeast of Aroer. From here Moses sent messengers unto Sihon, at Heshbon, asking for permission to pass unmolested through his newly acquired territory (Deut.2,26-29). ⁹⁾ But Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border. The result was a battle between the forces of Sihon and the forces of Israel, which took place at Jahaz ¹⁰⁾ somewhere north of the wilderness of Kedemoth. And Israel smote Sihon with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon (Num.21,23-25). Then followed the song of victory found in Num.21,27-30.

The stations Dibongad and Almondiblathaim, mentioned in Num.23,45.46, must have been in the neighborhood of the wilderness of Kedemoth. Dibongad has been identified with the present Dhiban about 5 miles northwest of Aroer. In this same neighborhood must also have been Beer, where the Israelites were

8--Smith, Hist.Geo.p.558, quoting Burchardt, Syria,372.

9--Num.21,21 where it seems that Moses did not send the messengers until the Israelites had passed through the country and reached the top of Pisgah, v.20, is easily explained by calling attention to the literary style found often in the Pentateuch, where first the main events are recorded in brief, (vs.18-20), and then the events are gone over again in detail (v.21ff).

10--Smith identifies it with the present Uum el Walid about 15 miles north of the wilderness of Kedemoth.

forced to dig wells for water (Num.21,16) and where they sang the song of the well (Num.21,17.18). The exact location of Beer is not fully established.¹¹⁾ Mattanah, mentioned next (Num.21,19) has also not been identified.¹²⁾ Nahaliel,¹³⁾ or the Valley of God, may be the wady Zerka Main with its healing springs. Bamoth, or High Places may be any section of the high plateau land all through this region of Moab and particularly near a certain valley (Num.21,20), possibly Nahaliel. It is questionable whether this Bamoth mentioned here is identical with the Bamoth-Baal mentioned later. We do not consider the two identical.

Approaching the next station, the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon, Israel was to have its first full view of the promised land. "During their journey over the Table-land, Israel had no outlook westward across the Dead Sea. For westward the Plateau rises a little and shuts out all view, but on the other side of the rise it breaks up into promontories slightly lower than itself, which run out over the Arabah and Dead Sea Valley, and afford a view of all Western Palestine. Seen from below, or from across Jordan, these headlands, rising three or four thousand feet by slope and precipice from the valley, stand out like separate mountains. But eastward they do not rise from the Moab Plateau - they are simply projections or capes of the latter, and you ride from it on to them without experiencing any difference of level, except, it may be, a decline of a few feet."¹⁴⁾ One of these projections is the top of Pisgah (Num.¹⁵⁾ 21,20). This headland is "almost certainly that which breaks from the Plateau half way between Heshbon and Medeba, and runs out under the name of Neba, nearly¹⁶⁾ opposite the north end of the Dead Sea.

11--Smith, Hist. Geo. p. 561 "Beer cannot be Daibon, Conder, P.E.F. 2.1882, p.86; for Israel would not need to dig water there and seem to have passed to the eastward."

12--Hengstenberg, Bileam S.240, quoting Burchharts, 635, thinks it to be at the upper end of the wady Ledschum. Smith, Hist. Geo. p.561, says "The only names today even remotely echoing this name are Umm. Denieh and Butmah, the name of the upper course of the wady Waleh."

13--Smith, quoting Conder; but Hengstenberg thinks it to be the wady Ledschum. (Bileam S.240)

14--Smith, Hist. Geo. p.562.

15--According to Deut.34,1 the mountain of Nebo and the top of Pisgah are identical. The explanation lies in the fact that Mt. Nebo is the highest point on the western end of Pisgah.

16--Smith, Hist. Geo. p.562.

From here the Israelites descended into the valley of Jordan, where they pitched their tents all the way from Bethjesinath even unto Abelshittin (Num.33,49). It is while the Israelites were encamped at this place that Moses delivered his addresses recorded in Deuteronomy. More than likely, though possibly earlier, from here the children of Israel sent out their army, or a part of it, to go up over the fields of Bashan on the other side of the Jabbok and defeat Og, the northern Amorite king east of the Jordan. The battle took place quite a ways north, at Edrei (Num.21,33) where Og and his people were utterly defeated (Num.21,35).

The time spent by the Israelites in their journeys from Mount Hor to the plains of Moab was not very long. In the beginning of the fifth month they were in Hor (Num.33,38), and in the beginning of the eleventh month, in the same year, Moses delivered, or began, his exhortations (Deut.1,3). During those six months the conquests of Sihon and Og took place, as noted before. During this time also all the events concerning Balaam, which are described in the Bible, took place.¹⁷⁾

After having thus described the historical and geographical conditions relating to the Balaam narrative from without, we will proceed to describe the historical and geographical conditions relating to the Balaam narrative from within.

From his territory below the Arnon, Balak, the king of Moab, sent messengers unto Balaam to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people. Balak's home has been mentioned as south of the Arnon, more than likely Rabbath-Moab. But as to the home of Balaam there are many and various opinions. However, the Bible calls Pethor his home (Num.22,5; Deut.23,4).

According to Deut.23,4 Pethor was in Mesopotamia, that is the region about the Euphrates in its upper course, by and below Carchemish some 400 to 450 miles N.N.E. of Palestine. The place referred to is, no doubt, the Pitru, mentioned
17--Sayre, Early Hist.of Heb.p.228, however, says, "A year or two would have sufficed to allow the Israelites bands to overrun the districts to the northeast of the Arnon."

by Shalmaneser III, 845 B.C., in the Monolith Inscription Column II, lines 85 and 86: "I received (tribute) in Asshurutirashbat, - on the far side of the Euphrates, - on the river Sagur; this city the Hittites call Pitru."¹⁸⁾

It is also supposed to have been named by Thothmes III of Egypt, Circa 1500 B.C. as Pedru which he took in his Asiatic conquests. The Sagur is the modern Sajur, which flows into the Euphrates from the N.W. at a point just a few miles south of Carchemish. Pethor, if on both the Euphrates and the Sagur, must thus have been on the west bank of the former at its junction with the Sajur, and, strictly speaking, therefore, just beyond the western border of Mesopotamia. It was, of course, much more nearly north of Moab than east (cf.

Num23,7) "But it must be remembered that the term 'east' is used broadly (see Gen.29,1 of Haran, in the same neighborhood)."²⁰⁾ The mountains of the east to which Balaam refers are the hills of that region which the maps indicate. T.K. Cheyne, however, takes exception to this view when he says, "The earliest form of the story of Balaam cannot have traced its origin to a place called Pethor. For no such place as Pethor existed in the Euphrates region. Pethor would be in Assyrian Pitaru, while Pitru would be in Hebrew Pether (Pathar). Nor is it even certain that the true text of Deut.23,5 placed Pethor in the far north;

□ : 7 573 in the phrase □ : 7 573 □ 7 X may perhaps be a corruption of 7 X 573 7 3,

a frequent gloss on □ 7 X. If so, 'Pethor of Jerahmeel' refers to some place on the N.Arabian border." We are not in a situation to pass judgment on his philological argument, but the way in which he changes the text speaks for itself in condemning his argument.

Messengers were sent back and forth from Moab to Pethor twice before

18--Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels of O.T.p.295.
 19--Driver in Hastings Dict.of Bible s.v. Pethor, quoting W.M.Mueller, "Asien und Europa" p.291. But it is not referred to in Breasted's History of Egypt.
 20--Driver in Hastings Dict.of Bible s.v. Pethor.
 21--Encyclopedia Biblica s.v. Pethor.

Balaam went with them and before Balak set out to meet him at the border of his kingdom (Num. 22,36). The city of Moab (אֲרָיִם מֹאָב), mentioned here, is on the border of Arnon. The same is true of Ar (אֲרָ) which lieth on the border of Moab since the border of Moab is the Arnon (Num. 21,15). We therefore believe it highly probable that אֲרָיִם מֹאָב and אֲרָ are identical, and that the city may have been the former capital of Moab. This city of Ar was north of the Arnon, as appears from Num. 21,28, and beyond the present boundaries of Moab. But this offers no explanation, however, that אֲרָיִם מֹאָב must be sought south of the Arnon, as some would have it, because they could not see why Balak would tread upon the enemy's territory to meet a highly honored guest. ²²⁾ The explanation for this meeting north of the Arnon, as well as Balak's peaceful travels farther north, can be found in the fact that the Israelites, though they had conquered that region, were still living in their concentrated camp and were not yet intent upon occupation. The next plausible step concerning the location of the city of Moab is to identify it with Aroer, since Aroer is repeatedly described in a similar manner as the city of Moab (Deut.2,36; Josh.12,2;13,9.16). It was situated on the border of the Arnon, which river formed the extreme boundary of the land. So Balak most probably met Balaam where on the G. A. Smith maps we find the city of Aroer, the present el-Arair.

Here Balaam and Balak, however, did not stay but left Aroer to spend the evening and the night at Kirjathhuzoth (Streetsfort or Strassburg). The reason most probably was that Balak immediately wished to go to the scene of action, and this, as he thought, was close enough to the high places of Baal where they could stay before the morrow's work. This city was probably not very far from Aroer, but as yet there is no certainty as to its exact location. It is plausible, however, with most commentators, to conjecture its identity with the ²³⁾ present Kureiyat, past Dibon, N.W. of Aroer about eight miles.

22--So Kalisch "Bible Studies" I p.156

23--"אֲרָיִם מֹאָב" is rendered by Onk. 'the town of his market places', in the

The next morning finds Balak and Balaam on the high places of Baal, or Bamoth Baal, the scene of the first prophecy. The exact location has not as yet been identified though many theories have been advanced. Hengstenberg, because the name is found in close connection with Dibon (Josh.13,17; Is.15,2), would locate Bamoth Baal as far from Shittim as south of the wady Waleh a few miles north of Dibon where a fine plateau is to be found. Kalisch would find Bamoth Baal somewhere on Jebel Attarus just south of the wady Zerka Main, thus identifying this place with that of the former camp of the whole nation of Israelites. So also many others. Conder and Smith, however, would find Bamoth Baal still farther north, immediately north of el Mashubiyeh, on the promontory just below that of Pisgah. We are inclined to believe that Bamoth Baal was as far north as Conder puts it. The argument of Hengstenberg in quoting Josh.13,17 and Is.15,2 does not conflict with this view since the order of the names mentioned as camps and stopping places of the Israelites does not prove much, as we have seen before. In this connection it may be noted that Balaam saw but a part of the people from Bamoth Baal (Num.22,41) in contra distinction to the whole people.

Still this utmost part of Israel here must have been quite a section, for we find that the next place is one where Balak emphatically says that Balaam shall see but the utmost part of them and shall not see them all. Balak is

Samar. Text and Version by 'the city of his visions', or 'of his mysteries', but in the Sept. by πόλις ἐπαύλεων, as if based on the reading 𐤓𐤓𐤕𐤓𐤓 instead of 𐤓𐤓𐤕𐤓 (comp. Sept. Gen.25,16; Josh.13,23) and in the Vulgate by 'urbs quae in extremis regni eius finibus erat', as if deriving 𐤓𐤓𐤕𐤓 from 𐤓𐤓𐤕𐤓 to divide." Kalisch, p.157.

24--Bileam und Seine Weissagungen, S.238ff. quoting from Burckhardt.

25--Bible Studies I p.161.

26--Encyclopaedia Biblica s.v. Bamoth Baal.

27--Conder is the most recent explorer in this section under P.E.F.S. in 1880ff. We tried to secure a copy of his "Heth and Moab" to get a clearer idea of his arguments, but nowhere could the book be found in the various libraries. Nor is the book on the market.

28--So the LXX μέρος τι τοῦ λαοῦ; Vulg. extremam partem; but incorrectly Luther, Kurtz and others, 'Bis zum Ende des Volkes' or 'das Volk von einem Ende bis zum andern, das ganze Volk'.

making certain that Balaam will not have the slightest chance to see all the in camp, so he takes him on the Field of Seers (Zophim, Num.23,14) a plain on one of the summits of Pisgah. It is only from the last station that Balaam could see the whole camp. Conder reports that the black tents of Israel, in the white gorge of Abel Shittim would be better seen from Bamoth Baal than from Pisgah, but would only be fully seen from Peor.²⁹⁾

The Pisgah range or promontory has been described before, under the list of stations of the Israelites. At the base, or S.E. end, we find Neba or the ancient Mt. Nebo, and it is in this neighborhood where the Field of Seers is to be found. From Bamoth Baal, a conspicuous point on the promontory just south of Pisgah, where Balaam had seen a considerable portion of the end of the camp, Balak takes him on the next promontory north³⁰⁾, but does not go to the most conspicuous portion. He takes him back where he will be sure to see but the end of the camp. Conder would thus identify the field of Zophim with a place leading up to the top of Neba, that is a little table at the base of Mt. Nebo on the Pisgah range. He calls attention to the name Talat es-Sufa here, which seems to correspond with the field of Zophim. On the whole, therefore, the locality of the second speech was doubtless at a similar distance from the camp as that of the first; but in each case Balaam surveyed a different part of the camp.

At the third station Balaam is to see all the camp of the Israelites, and so Balak takes him to the top of Peor. This summit belongs to the same ridge of Pisgah as the field of Zophim; for elsewhere the whole of Pisgah is described with the exact terms here applied to the summit of Peor, namely, that it looks out over the plain of the wilderness (Num.23,28 and 21,20). Mt. Peor must thus have been the N.W. end of the Pisgah ridge where it rises somewhat higher than the ridge in general just before it breaks suddenly into the deep valley of

29--Cox, "Balaam, An Exposition and a Study" p.95, Quoting Conder p.136,143.
30--International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia s.v. Zophim and Pisgah.

Shittim below at the N.E. end of the Dead Sea. This summit may have rivaled in eminence the peak of Nebo from which the eye surveyed all the land, and therefore it was certainly possible to see all the camp in the valley below. We, therefore, would place the top of Peor at the present Ras Siaghah where on the G. A. Smith maps Mt. Pisgah is placed. From here, then Balak and Balaam parted after the prophecies.

These little journeys of Balak and Balaam north of the Arnon have never been definitely located. The above explanation, however, seems to be the most plausible from the material which we could gather on the subject. 31)

A note is in place here concerning the time of these journeys. The reader may have the impression that the whole of the proceedings, beginning with Balak's and Balaam's departure from Kirjathhuzoth (Num.22,41) and ending with Balaam's last prophecy and departure (Num.24,25), followed each other in rapid succession and in the course of the same day. This, however, can be accounted for by the fact that the whole section lays little emphasis on the historical part, but, in poetical form, presents the prophecies in detail, with everything that is mentioned centering on them. It surely is doubtful whether those journeys from Kirjathhuzoth to Bamoth Baal, thence to the field of Zophim, thence to Peor, the threefold erection of altars and the threefold sacrifices, Balaam's meditations and his prophecies could all be compressed into the same day.

31--A lengthy discussion as to the places is found in Hengstenberg, Bileam, p.234-252.

II. THE CHARACTER OF BALAAM.

1. Who and What He Was.

After having thus presented a few historical and geographical remarks we will now take up the study of the man around whom the whole narrative is entwined. The study of Balaam's character has aroused interest at all times, and has caused many books to be written. There is no more perplexing character in the whole Old Testament than Balaam. In just a very few chapters of the Bible - outside of Num. 22-24 he is mentioned but ten times - we read so very little of the man, yet learn so very much. And thus Balaam becomes emphatically a study. Our aim shall be to present Balaam as he appears to us on the bases of Scriptures. It is not by making him out all bad, or all good, that we shall solve the problem, though that is how too many have tried to reach a solution. It is the mixture of good and bad in the man which constitutes the problem, which makes him so interesting and so perplexing. And, again and again, in reading commentaries on this matter, one has to remind one's self that to cut a knot is not to untie it, and that to strike out all the difficult terms of a problem is not to solve it. Before, however, beginning our own study we will present some of the views concerning Balaam, which have prevailed in the past.

One view concerning this man is that he never stood in any relation to the true religion and that he was a wicked sorcerer through and through. This is the opinion of the Jewish traditions and Targumim as well as of many of the old church fathers as Ambrose, Augustine, Gregor of Nyssa and Origen. So also many theologians of the Lutheran, Roman and Reformed churches. Then, concerning the prophecies, it is claimed that they came forth from his lips, without his mind being affected, even against his will. Ambrose, for example, has him say, "quasi cymbalum tinniens sonum reddo". And Origen has the

32--Hengstenberg, Bileam, p.5.

33--Hengstenberg, Bileam, p.6.

following to say, "Venit ergo Deus ad Balaam, non quod dignus esset, ad quem veniret, sed ut fugarentur illi qui ei ad maledicendum et malefaciendum adesse consueverant".³⁴⁾

Another view is that Balaam was truly a prophet of the Lord, but afterwards became an apostate because of the temptations into which he permitted himself to fall. This view is held by men like Tertullian, Jerome, Buddeus, Buzel, Calov and Luther, as well as by many exegetes of today. In his lectures on Genesis, Luther (I, 160ff)³⁵⁾ describes Balaam as a great prophet who had fallen away in a shameful manner.

A third view is one that aims at a compromise. Thus Hengstenberg claims³⁶⁾ that the truth lies between the two above extreme opinions, that Balaam was a sort of half convert who, however, never got beyond the beginnings. And, because of the mere hazy glimpse at the truth which Balaam had received at the time of the prophecies, he is not to be placed among the prophets. Thus the constant use by Balaam of the name Ely ³⁷⁾ is then used as a conclusive proof of his sanctimony and arrogance, of his frauds and selfish wiles.

In this connection, the opinions of several other writers may be noted. Keil says, "The double-sidedness and ambiguity of the religious and prophetic character of Balaam may be explained on the supposition that, being endowed with a predisposition to divination and prophecy, he practised soothsaying and divination as a trade".³⁸⁾ Wobersin speaks of Balaam as having very little knowledge of God and as having a faith that should rather be called superstition.³⁹⁾ Jeremias says, "Balaam is held to be a mystic, in the Oriental meaning, for whom not only is Yahveh the God of Israel, but who is an initiate

34--Kalisch, Bible Studies I p.116.

35--Hengstenberg, Bileam, p.5.

36--Hengstenberg, Bileam, p.11.

37--Hengstenberg, Authentie des Pentateuchs, I p.407ff.

38--Keil on Numbers, p.161, Clark's Foreign Theological Library Edition.

39--"Die Echtheit der Bileamsprueche" p.9.

into the secrets of divinity; Num.23,3ff;23,30".

The Higher Critics in general wish to put the very best construction on the character of Balaam, which is an easy thing to do when the text is changed to fit a preconceived notion. Thus Kalisch completely ignores what the Scriptures say of Balaam outside of Num.22-24. He assumes that these Scriptures follow a different and wholly untrustworthy tradition and therefore he drops them quietly out of account. Within the narrative itself he changes the text to suit his own ideas. Because the whole episode of the speaking ass is to him evidently inconsistent with the general tenour of the narrative he simply cuts it out as a later and misleading interpolation. Because in Num.24,1 there is one word which he seems to be unable to explain to his satisfaction he substitutes another for it. Having thus cut and carved the narrative to his mind he has no hesitation in concluding that Balaam was a prophet of the purest and noblest type without a stain on his character or a questionable incident in his career. "Firm and inexorable like eternal Fate, he regards himself solely as an instrument of that Omnipotence which guides the destinies of nations by its unerring wisdom. Free from all human passion, and almost from all human emotion he is like a mysterious spirit from a higher and nobler world, which looks upon the fortunes of the children of men with an immovable and sublime repose." 41)

That is one method employed in trying to establish the character of Balaam. Another method is, in a sarcastic manner, to present the other person's view as ridiculous as possible. Thus it is Kalisch again who says, "There is hardly a vice which they did not think themselves justified in attributing to him. They uniformly discovered that our author represented the foreign seer, above

40--"The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East", Vol. II, p.147 - Ewald (Jahrbuecher, 8, 39, quoted by Kalisch, Bible Studies I, p.39) says, "Such wavering and contradiction are quite possible in a heathen, that is a lower prophet, who momentarily may be filled with a purer spirit, and may, at such a time, speak and prophecy beyond the capacity of his nature, but who, being in his own mind very far behind the Divine spirit, may easily, when those transitory moments have passed, yield to very different impulses".

41--Bible Studies I, p.11.

42--Bible Studies I, p.6f.

all, as swayed by the two master passions of ambition and avarice to a degree almost amounting to actual madness, freely applying to him the line of Sophocles: *Τὸ μαντικὸν γὰρ πᾶν φιλόργυρον γένος* (Ant.1055). But in delineating his other blemishes, they differed very considerably. The following florilegium - which is only a specimen - has not been compiled at random. They variously described him as proud, insolent, and inflated, and yet cunning and hypocritical; as false and ungrateful; mendacious and treacherous; wavering, yet obstinate; diabolically wicked and mischievous; the primary type of all artful seducers of God's people; cruel and passionate; a sordid trader in prophecy and a mercenary imposter - the Simaon Magus of the Old Testament; a sacrilegious trickster and blasphemous dissembler; and unhallowed idolator and a lying sorcerer; a profane reviler and sanctimonious scoffer. Indeed not a few writers have produced veritable masterpieces of exegetical ingenuity. Thus Calvin, Michaelis, Hengstenberg, Baumgarten, Kurtz, Keil, Reinke, Lange, Koehler, and others who have influenced the interpretations of these chapters".⁴³⁾

Such are some of the views concerning Balaam, and several of the methods employed in the study of the man's character. What our view and method is will show itself in the course of the study. In this study there are certain definite problems as for example, who Balaam was, what he was, and why he acted as he did. And the necessity of a detailed study of Balaam's character is evident when we note that to many commentators this character is a riddle, a curious mixture in which many excellent qualities were allied with the utmost baseness and iniquity. Thus in the much quoted sermon on this subject by Bishop Butler we find these words uttered, seemingly in despair of a

43--It may be of interest here to note that the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases Num.22,5, "And Balak sent messengers to Laban the Aramaean, that is Balaam, the son of Beor, who was eager to destroy the people, the house of Israel; for he was insane from the vastness of his knowledge, and had no compassion with Israel ----- and the place of his abode was in Padan, that is Pethor, meaning interpreter of dreams, and it was built in Aram, on the river Euphrates, where the people of the country worshiped him". From Kalisch, Bible Studies I p.95.

solution, "Great God, what inconsistency, what perplexity is here". And Samuel Cox says, "That a man so great in virtues and gifts should fall into vices so vulgar and glaring must always, I hope, remain in some measure a mystery to us".⁴⁴⁾

Who, then was Balaam? Nearly all authorities in ancient and modern times have interpreted the name $\square\psi\zeta\gamma$ as 'devourer', or 'destroyer'. Much has been written concerning the derivation of this word.⁴⁵⁾ Hengstenberg thinks it comes from the two words $\psi\zeta\gamma$ and $\square\psi$ 'devourer of the People' with the elision of ψ because of the combination of the two words, as also in $\square\zeta\psi\eta\gamma$ for $\psi\eta\gamma$ and $\square\zeta\psi$, and in the English 'transcribe' for 'trans' and 'scribe'. The parallel thus becomes very evident between Balaam and the Nicolaitanes as presented in Rev. 2v.14.15, the Greek *Νικόλαος* being parallel in meaning to the Hebrew $\square\psi\zeta\gamma$. This, then, is to us the most plausible derivation and the one which we accept. It is a name which a father might fitly have given to his son whom he hoped and wished to be able, by his execrations, to terrify and to destroy his enemies and the foes of his friends and employers.

The following are some of the less plausible derivations and constructions of the word Balaam as found in the various commentaries. Balaam should mean merely 'destroyer' derived from $\psi\zeta\gamma$ and the affirmative $\square\gamma$. Then again Balaam should be pointed $\square\psi\zeta\gamma$ (so LXX *Βαλαάμ*; Josephus, *Βάλαμος*) and to be a contraction for $\square\psi$ and $\zeta\psi\gamma$ 'lord of the people' (the ψ being elided as in $\zeta\gamma$ for $\zeta\psi\gamma$). Another idea is to derive the name from $\square\psi$ and $\zeta\gamma$ 'non populus, peregrinus', or from $\square\psi$ and $\gamma\zeta\gamma$ denoting one 'who confounded Israel by his advice'. However, it is evident that none of these interpretations are as well fitted as that of Hengstenberg which we accept.

According to his name Balaam's father certainly was an enchanter or a man of mean disposition who wished to have his son carry a name similar to his own,

44--"Balaam, An Exposition and a Study", p.190.

45--"Bileam", pp.20-25.

for 77⁷7 means 'destroyer' from 777 'to destroy'. And thus we present the plausible conjecture that Balaam belonged to a family of well known enchanters and himself, according to the wish of his father, had taken up the trade. Furthermore, in Joshua 13,14 Balaam is distinctly called a soothsayer, which may well refer to his character also at a time before he was summoned by Balak.

That is Balaam and his father. But where was his home and what was his nationality? It has been previously remarked that his home was Pitru on the upper Euphrates. Many, however, take exception to this statement. In Gen, 36,32 we read of Bela the son of Beor who was the first king of the Edomites. Since this is the same name with apparently only the ending □ missing on Bela, many have conjectured that these two, Bela and Balaam, are one and the same person, and thus Balaam was an Edomite. ⁴⁷⁾ But this view is plainly against Deut.23,4. Against this passage is also the erroneous view of Heremias, who with Marquart, takes the river of Balaam's home to be the nahal Muzri, the southern boundary of Judea, which by a misunderstanding, as he says, had ⁴⁸⁾ become to be called the river of Egypt.

46--"In 2Pet.2,15 777 is rendered Βοσδρ; this is perhaps merely a copyist's error, instead of Βεωρ or Βόωρ; or it may have arisen out of the difficulty of accurately representing the Hebrew letter 7, for which there is no proper equivalent in Greek, and which therefore, as the strongest aspirate, was, in that instance, represented by the sibilant ς (compare ε'πτα and septem, λς and sal etc); or it may be a result of the Galatian dialect of Peter Mt.26,73; Mk.14,70. Vitranga says, Obs. Sacr, IV IX, 31, p.937, 'The Apostle designedly used the form Βοσρ, in order to recall the sound of 777 'flesh', thus elegantly intimating that Balaam, the false prophet, by inciting men to carnal pleasures, was justly called the son of flesh'. Grotius et al. believe Βοσδρ is intended for 777, so that Βαλααμ ε Βοσδρ would mean 'Balaam, a native of Pethor'." Kalisch, Bible Studies I p.92. - The correct explanation is the linguistic one concerning the sibilant.

47--cf. Hommel, "Alt Israelitische Ueberlieferungen" p.222.

48--cf. Jeremias, "The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East", a translation from the German, Vol. II p.146.

Some commentators unwarrantedly change the word $\dot{\imath}\dot{\nu}\dot{\nu}$ to $\dot{\imath}\dot{\nu}\dot{\nu}$ and say that Balaam was summoned from the neighboring country of the Ammonites. Others again leave the word stand as it is but do not translate it 'his people'. They render it as a proper noun 'Beni Ammo' designating a tribe dwelling on the upper Euphrate⁴⁹, the name probably being found in that of the country of Ammiya or Ammi mentioned in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. Thus Sayce says, "It may not be an accident that one who thus belonged to the Beni Ammo or Ammonites of the north, should have been called to the country which bordered on that of the Beni Ammi or Ammonites of the south". But such a conjecture has very little support in the mere probability of an identity with the Ammiya of the Amarna tablets. It is true, the phrase $\dot{\imath}\dot{\nu}\dot{\nu}$ $\dot{\imath}\dot{\nu}\dot{\nu}$ $\dot{\imath}\dot{\nu}\dot{\nu}$ may be unusual instead of the simple $\dot{\imath}\dot{\nu}\dot{\nu}$, but it is intelligible and idiomatic⁵⁰ as is seen from Gen.23,11; Lev.20,17 (Hebrew) and Judges 14,16. This expression is used, undoubtedly, to indicate that Balaam was not a Hebrew but came from a foreign people.

Some believe that Balaam was a Midianite. Ewald, for example, claims that Num.31,8 indicates that Balaam belonged to the Midianites, "als prophetischer Volkshuehrer und ein eben so grosses Ansehen genoss als ihr fuerfuerntlich angefuehrten Fuersten".⁵⁰⁾ But Num.31,8 merely says that the five kings of the Midianites were killed and Balaam is singled out of all the rest of the people as a person of special interest. Though a portion of the Midianites undoubtedly did spread eastward as far as the Euphrates, they can, on no account, it seems, be called the main inhabitants along the Euphrates, a region which is described as the land of the children of Balaam's people (Num.22,5).

49--"The Early History of the Hebrews" p.40

50--cf. Young's Concordance; a citation in Wobersin, "Die Echtheit der Biliamsprueche" p.59; and especially Ewald, Geschichte des Volkes $\dot{\imath}\dot{\nu}\dot{\nu}$ Israel". Vol.II p.220.

All we know of Balaam's nationality is that he came from Pethor in Padan Aram. The numerous connections of the two names Balaam and Beor seem to indicate that they came from a family of well known enchanters. Pethor, their home, may thus well have been one of the cities or districts which, according to an old Babylonian custom similar to the appointment of priestly and levitical towns in Canaan, were set apart for the various classes of philosophers, astronomers, and soothsayers.⁵¹⁾

Thus we have identified Balaam and seen what he was in his earlier days.⁵²⁾ The question now arises, what was Balaam for some time immediately before the narrative of Num. 22-24?

In trying to answer this question we do not wish to judge Balaam too harshly but always give him all the credit possible, not because we want to shield the man, but because we wish to get at the truth. The easiest way would be to consider Balaam a shrewd soothsayer all through his life, who reached the acme of shrewdness in his actions described in Num. 22-24. But would that be doing justice to him and to what Peter says of him in 2 Pet. 2, 15, 16? Another easy and lazy way to judge Balaam's character is to consider him a half convert to the true religion, as Hengstenberg and many after him think.⁵³⁾ Still another explanation offered for Balaam's actions is that he was a sorcerer and a prophet at the same time.⁵⁴⁾ A good summary of the view taken by most people concerning Balaam, immediately before our narrative, is found

51--cf. Kalisch, "Bible Studies" I p. 96.

52--Because of the foolishness of the ideas, the legends concerning Balaam's identity have been left out of the discussion. According to one, Balaam was one of the Egyptian sorcerers who was intent upon Moses' destruction. (cf. Jeremias Vol. II p. 146f). According to another he is identified with a certain Arabic fabulist called Lokman (cf. Kalisch p. 53).

53--Hengstenberg, "Bileam" p. 11, says that "in Bileam die Anfaenge der Erkentniss und Furcht des Herrn vorhanden wared".

54--Volk, in Hauck "Realencyklopaedie", says, "Er ist beides zugleich; ein heidnischer Magier und ein Prophet Jahves, ein Magier naemlich, welcher die Erkenntnis Jahves fuer die Zwecke der Magie verwandte, ohne sich durch diese Erkenntniss heiligen zu lassen. Aber der Gott, in dessen Namen

in the following. "In order to attain greater proficiency in soothsaying, which he practised as a trade or profession for the gratification of his chief passions of ambition and avarice, he carefully enquired into the traditions and the history of other nations besides his own. In this manner he heard some faint echoes of the convictions left from 'the primitive age of monotheism'; he also heard some distinct whispers of the patriarchal revelations that lingered in Mesopotamia through Abraham and through Jacob's long sojourn with Laban; and, what was of greatest moment to him, he listened to the reports of the recent miracles of Egypt and the manifestations on Sinai, since the lands of the Euphrates and the Nile were, from early times, closely joined by commercial intercourse. Thus, for his own interest and advantage, and 'in the hope that he might by these means be able to participate in the new powers granted to the human race; he was induced to devote himself to the service of Jahveh, 'to call Him his god and to prophecy in His name; without, however, comprehending or honestly following Him - similar to the Jewish exorcists, who, in later times, drove out demons in Christ's name without believing in him, Mk. 9,38.39; Act. 19,13, and similar especially to Simon the sorcerer, 'Balaam's N.T. anti-type' who, dissatisfied with the previous emoluments of his art, and attracted by the signs and miracles of his time, from which he hoped to derive greater profit, believed and was baptised, though his heart had no share in his faith. Act.8,9ff".

Such are some of the attempts at a solution of merely an apparent difficulty. But they are unsatisfactory for they either judge the man too harshly and say things of him that cannot be reasonably applied to him, from

Bileam seine Wahrsagekuenste uebt, ist ein lebendiger Gott, welcher in das Thun des Propheten einzugreifen und es zu beherrschen vermag. Wo dies geschieht, wird Bileam's Wahrsagen zu einem wirklichen Weissagen, welches Gott der Lebendige wirkt. Und solch ein Eingreifen in das Wahrsagegeschaefft Bileam's fand hier statt, als er von Balak berufen wurde, Num.22,6."

55--An idea from Hengstenberg.

56--Kalisch, Bible Studies I p.103f.

what we know of the man, or they make of him both a believer and an unbeliever at one and the same time, and that is impossible. It is also wrong to say that Balaam was in the beginning stage of becoming a convert. We know from our ~~sc~~ Scriptures that a man either believes or he does not believe; even if his faith is but very weak, he nevertheless believes. We dare not rationalize too much in this question. If the Scriptures told us that Balaam was never anything but a sorcerer we would accept that statement and say that God very easily could accept and use an open unbeliever and an enemy of His as an instrument to preach His Word in the Old Testament just as we know He actually did in the New Testament in the case of Caiaphas (John 11,51). But, as we shall see, Scriptures do not only indicate that Balaam was a sorcerer, but they also indicate that he was a prophet of the Lord.

We have seen how Scriptures seem to indicate that Balaam was a highly gifted and renowned sorcerer in his younger days. How he changed, his behavior during the change, and the cause of his relapse into the former state will now be discussed and explained.

The following points, all put together, certainly show that Balaam was a prophet of the Lord and believed in Him, regardless of how weak his faith showed itself when a strong temptation came along.
57)

1. It was not impossible for a heathen, in the time of the Old Testament, to be converted and to become a great prophet of the Lord. Abraham, according to Joshua 24,2.3, was undoubtedly called from idolatry, which he had himself practised. And the case of St. Paul applies, who was an unbeliever, but was converted to become a great prophet. So God could in the same manner have called a heathen sorcerer, to become a prophet of the Lord.

2. Balaam could well have heard of the true God in Mesopotamia since

57--Many of these points were first found in J. Hoeness' article on Balaam in the Theological Quarterly Vol. XII A.D.1908.

Abraham, after his conversion, and Jacob during his stay in that country surely preached the Word of which then the wise Balaam may have heard by tradition or by contemporaneous preaching from some leader of possible adherents to the true God in far away Mesopotamia.

3. Or Balaam may have come to the knowledge of the true God by the rumor which spread concerning that great nation which had recently left Egypt and was getting ready to enter the land of Canaan. Travel between Mesopotamia and Egypt was very frequent in those days, as the Amarna letters clearly show. If Balaam had remained a wise sorcerer till the beginning of the Exodus it would be strange, indeed, if he had not heard of the Israelites and their God at least then.

4. God dealt with Balaam directly just as He dealt with the patriarchs and the prophets of old. Num.22,8 Balaam showed he knew that the Lord would speak to him, realizing that he must first ask the Lord for permission to go. Then also God appeared to Balaam in night visions (Num.22,12.19) just as He appeared to Abraham (Gen.17,1), to Jacob (Gen.46,2), to Job (Job 4,13), to Samuel (1 Sam.3) and to many other prophets. God, furthermore, met Balaam (Num.22,4.16) and put the words into his mouth (Num.23,5.16) just as it is said of Isaiah (Is.51,16) and Jeremiah (Jer.1,9). We also read (Num.24,2), "And the Spirit of God came upon him", that is the Spirit of prophecy, just as with Eldad and Medad (Num.11,26 and especially v.29). Thus, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet.1,21). This indicates that such men were believers, and unless we must, either by direct statement, or by strong indication from the context, consider them unbelievers we should always abide by the general rule and put the best construction on everything.

5. One of the decisive points to prove our case that Balaam was a true prophet is the passage in 2 Pet.2,16 where the apostle calls Balaam not a magician, not a soothsayer, not a deceiver, but a prophet. And the context

indicates the manner in which the word *προφήτης* is to be understood. The apostle speaks of men who had apparently escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Savior, but who have forsaken the right way (*καταλείποντες εὐθεταρόν*). In doing this they followed the example of Balaam. So Balaam also, for a time, had escaped the pollutions of the world and become a true believer, but afterwards left the right way. To bring that parallel out, Peter calls Balaam a prophet, the word being thus used in its full and good meaning.

6/ Another strong point is the fact that Balaam's prophecies were true prophecies which were fulfilled. True it is that the prophecies recorded in Num.23 and 24 might have been forced, so to speak, by God upon an unbeliever, but there are indications that Balaam prophesied numerous other times such prophecies which were true. Balak, who thus thought such prophecies had been nothing but incantations of a sorcerer said Num.22,6,"I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed".

7. Remarks which Balaam make indicate that he had a true knowledge of God and was a believer. An idea that is diametrically opposed to an heathen sorcerer's idea of God is expressed by Balaam when he says, Num.23,19,"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?" It is worth noticing that Balaam makes strong allusions to the sayings of the patriarchs and the promises they had received (e.g. Num. 23,10;24,9.17b). Furthermore, all the statements which Balaam makes concerning God are correct according to what Scriptures say about Him.

8. Balaam calls Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, his God, (*יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי* Num.22,18). He speaks with God as with his God, besides whom there is none other. With reference to this same God he says that He is the God of Israel (*יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* Num.23,21). And we do not consider the term 'Jehovah my God' as a

hypocritical remark, nor is it merely the Hebrew designation of Balaam's monotheism, but a demonstration of the absolute identity of Balaam's monotheism with that of Israel. It is, therefore, not sufficient to say, that "Balaam's religion was probably such as would be the natural result of a general acquaintance with God not confirmed by any covenant"⁵⁸⁾. It is quite evident that Balaam, while in Mesopotamia, knew of the children of Israel, and thus we have another hint to the fact that Balaam's religion was that of Israel. In repeating to God the commission he had received, he said, "Behold the people ($\square\sqrt{s}\bar{\tau}$) that is come out of Egypt". (Num.22,11). To Balak the Israelites were merely a hostile people seemingly threatenig his country (Num.22,5); but to Balaam they were the one renowned people of Jehovah his $\check{\text{G}}\text{o}d$, Who protects them (Num.23,22;24,8).

9. A final point in our favor is the way Balaam acted when Balak summoned him. We can hardly say that Balaam hesitated the way he did because, as a wise sorcerer, he wished to play for effect. The whole narrative does not read that way. If Balaam, on the other hand, would have been a sorcerer, not inclined to such tricks, but eager to get his money, he would have gone along immediately. And if Balaam would have been a man 'half converted' or with only a superficial knowledge of God, his scruples and remorse would have been easily overcome by the flattery of Balak's messengers. But Balaam is a man with a sound knowledge of the true God and of what is right. However, he is not strong enough to send the temptation away and therefore he struggles within himself, undecided whether to do what is right or what is wrong.

Such are the points which indicate that Balaam was a true prophet of the Lord at the opening of our narrative. Point No.5 concerning 2 Pet.2,15,16 establishes the fact beyond a doubt, while all the rest viewed in the light of

58--See Kalisch "Bible Studies" I p.13.

2 Pet. 2 establish the fact still more. Of course, Balaam may have been a hypocrite most of the time and may not have believed what he said concerning his God, but it is for us to judge the man in the best light possible according to that which the Scriptures say of him.

Knowing then that Balaam had undoubtedly been a keen and highly gifted sorcerer but was now converted and a highly gifted and blessed prophet of the Lord, being not of the chosen people and living in a far away country, we will now proceed to follow him in his actions throughout the narrative and see if he made good use of his gifts. We will take up the narrative with a view of studying Balaam's actions, never dealing too harshly with him where it is not warranted, but on the other hand, never flinching from taking him to task for not doing something which he should have done, or for ~~not~~ doing something which he should not have done. We will also attempt to look into the motives involved in Balaam's conduct.

2. How Balaam Acted Before the Prophecies.

Balak, the king of Moab, feared the Israelites and therefore sent Balaam to pronounce a spell upon the children of Israel and thus make them unable to harm him. Before the Israelites made that long journey around the land of Edom they had asked permission of the Edomites and the Moabites to pass through their territory. But the Edomites and Moabites refused them passage and at that time also refused to sell them provisions (Judges 11,17; Deut.23,4a). So the Israelites compassed the land of Edom and passed along its desert eastern border. Thus they also passed close to the land of Moab on its eastern side. When the Edomites and Moabites saw that the children of Israel were coming right along despite their previous protest they sold them provisions to win back their friendship, for they must have feared the

Israelites (Deut.2,28.29). Balak and the Moabites may have also thought that the mighty Sihon who had subjugated the Moabites would also bring the Israelites under control. As soon as the Israelites, however, had defeated Sihon and before they were advanced to the Jordan, Balak began his negotiations with Balaam, whom he considered a powerful sorcerer and able to curse the Israelites. This was an unwarranted action on the part of Balak for he should have known that the Israelites had no more hostile intentions against the Land of Moab and Ammon, than they had shown against the Edomites, for all those districts were inhabited by tribes closely related to Israel. At least the Israelites surely showed no signs of wishing to harm the Moabites.

Balak called on his friends, the Midianites, for advice. Because of their extensive travels they knew of a renowned man in Pethor, far away, of whom it was reported that he had great and peculiar gifts as a sorcerer and would certainly be able to overpower the Israelites with his spells. They of course considered Balaam's actions as those of a sorcerer, and a successful sorcerer, since his actions and predictions as a true prophet of the Lord had proven themselves genuine. It may also have been that the renown of Balaam the prophet had spread even to Balak more directly. And they preferred calling an enchanter to fighting Israel in open battle. Such superstitious actions and beliefs were very common among the heathen.

The messengers came to Balaam with the reward of divination in their hands. This was not a salary, paid in advance, for the service Balaam was to render, but merely a small present indicating that he would more than likely

59) 59--Some say that Balak hired Balaam because he knew he was a worshiper of the same God whom the Israelites worshiped, and therefore, since all gods were subject to the wills of enchanters, Balaam would be the best man to change the will of that god, and cause Israel to act in accordance with the changed will of their god. See Hoeness in Theol. Quart. Vol. XII p.220. But we prefer our view as the more probable and correct one.
60) 60--Hengstenberg, "Balaam", p.36ff.

receive more later. In the East, to enter the presence of any distinguished person without a 'nuzzur', or present, is simply to insult him, and furthermore, Oriental custom and courtesy has it that no one should consult a seer without carrying him an appropriate offering, however small that offering may be (1 Sam.9,7.8; 1 Kings 14,3; 2 Kings 8,8.9). We cannot say, therefore, that this was an exceptional case showing that Balaam was a sorcerer. Most certainly Balaam did think that he was paying a diviner and therefore we read that he gave the reward of divination into their hands. But that does not say that Balaam was a diviner.

We have seen that Balaam is called a soothsayer, $\square \text{ז} \text{ו} \text{פ}$ (Jos.13,22) but the identity of that word and the word $\square \text{ז} \text{פ}$ here (Num.22,8) does not prove that Balaam was a sorcerer at this time. It cannot be denied, however, that $\square \text{ז} \text{פ}$ means divination, a heathen abomination (1 Sam.15,13) indulged in by the heathen priests (1 Sam.6,2) and a sin for which Israel was punished (2 Kings 17,17). It is only in Prov.16,10 where $\square \text{ז} \text{פ}$ has any good meaning, 'There we read that $\square \text{ז} \text{פ}$ shall be on the lips of the king, and his mouth shall not do wrong judgement. Here in our passage the word undoubtedly means 'rewards' or 'wages of divination' after the analogy of $\text{ז} \text{ו} \text{ו}$ and $\text{ז} \text{ו} \text{ו}$, signifying work and also wages of the work (Job 7,2; Lev.19,13). It is the $\mu\iota\theta\acute{o}\varsigma \delta\omicron\kappa\lambda\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ of 2 Pet.2,15. Vulgate, divinationis pretium. LXX, τὰ μάρτυρα. Luther, Lohn des Wahrsagens. The etymological meaning of the word is uncertain. Some think it is kindred to $\square \text{ז} \text{ל}$ meaning to cut or decide, so that $\square \text{ז} \text{פ}$ would probably be discriminating counsel or conjecture. A slight explanation is only given in 1 Sam.28,8 where Saul requests the witch, 'divine ($\text{ז} \text{ו} \text{ו}$) me by the familiar spirit ($\text{ז} \text{ו} \text{ו}$)'. This philological study shows that $\square \text{ז} \text{פ}$

61--Kalisch cites other passages (p.169) where $\square \text{ז} \text{פ}$ is used in a good sense, but they do not hold. They are Is.3,2; Micha 3,6.7.11; Jer.29,8; Ezek.12,24 et al. But see Hengstenberg 'Bileam' p.8ff.
 62--Kalisch "Bible Studies" I p.110.

truly means soothsayer and that Balak treated Balaam as such by giving him the wages of divination, but it does not prove that Balaam was a soothsayer at that time.

Not only did the messengers of Balaam come with the reward of divination in their hands, but they also came with very flattering words (Num.22,6). These two things put together were a great temptation to Balaam, the prophet of the Lord, who as a human being was subject to temptations as much as any person.

When learning of the purpose of the embassy Balaam should have sent them back immediately, because he knew that it was wrong to curse God's people. But, instead, he asks them to stay over the night that he might ask God for information. This action of Balaam's is not to be interpreted as a show of sanctity or a mere cunning device to enhance his importance in the eyes of the strangers, nor does it indicate 'a most perfect self-denial' on the part of Balaam. Balaam simply yielded a little to the temptation which was before him. He did not care to send the men away, but at the same time he did not wish to do anything that would be directly opposed to God's will. So he asked God, thinking there might be a possibility of God having a peculiar or special reason for sending him to curse the chosen people.

How the Lord appeared to Balaam we do not know. All we know is that He spoke to Balaam and that this conversation was expected as a common occurrence in the life of Balaam. However, this time the conversation with God was not a delightful one. The Lord's first words were a strong rebuke just like the words to Adam (Gen.3,9). He was dissatisfied with Balaam's wavering conduct and said, "What men are these with thee?". But Balaam did not see the warning contained in these words; without any hesitation, since he was anxious to go along and receive the promised reward, he bluntly asked God for permission

63--Thus Hengstenberg, "Bileam" p.40

64--Thus Kalisch "Bible Studies" I p.111.

to go. But the Lord refused to let him go and gave him three short sentences for an answer, "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed". Not only was Balaam prohibited from cursing the Israelites by going to their territory, but he was not even to curse them from his home in Pethor. And the reason, which Balaam well knew, was also given him, since the Lord wished to remind him erring serant of his sinful ways, and to call him back from his sin. The prohibition was simply not to curse the people either from Pethor or from Moab.⁶⁵⁾

The Lord had reminded Balaam of the truth concerning Israel, which he knew very well, namely the promise given to Abraham (Gen.12,3), "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee". But Balaam did not fully heed the words of the Lord. He knew what it meant to act contrary to the will of God, so he did not openly wish to defy that will. He should have told the messengers that it was wrong for him to curse Israel, but he only told them that the Lord had refused to let him go. Balaam was afraid to come right out, boldly, with a firm refusal to curse Israel. We have in Balaam's answer "a touch of the schoolboy denied a holiday on which he had set his heart", and a picture of a "grave ambitions man who sees himself debarred from entering on a great and much desired career".⁶⁶⁾ Balaam did not bear a willing obedience to the Lord, for he was dissatisfied with the Lord's will. And thus, instead of doing away with the temptation he simply paved the way for a still greater one, for the messengers returned to Balak with the idea that Balaam simply refused to come because the reward was not great enough. Balaam should have simply told them he was not permitted to curse the

65--Kalisch and others do not find a warning in these words but consider the Lord's introductory question "in admirable harmony with a narrative so calm and so gradually advancing." Compare Gen.3,9;4,9;5,8; Ex.4,2; Job 1,7; 2,2". Bible Studies I p.111.

66--Cox, "Balaam an Exposition and a Study", p.45.

Israelites, instead of answering in a half truth (Num.22,14).⁶⁷⁾

We know nothing of Balaam's actions during the two embassies. But we may well assume on the basis of God's remarks to him, that this was a time of grace for Balaam and that the Holy Ghost was striving within him and saying, "O Balaam, how happy wast thou when thy heart was not yet distracted by greed and the love of money, when it was sincere with respect to thy God, and thy greatest delight was in the Word and will of God. Repent now, cast off the burden which thy waywardness has laid upon thee, break the yoke which greed and ambition have imposed upon thee, by the grace and power of God, and remember that the grace of God and life eternal are a thousand times better than all the gold and all the honors of the world".⁶⁸⁾

But, we will see from the following whether or not Balaam heeded this warning. Balak wanted to make sure that Balaam would come this second time, so he sent his messengers with more flattering words and greater gifts. Nothing should prevent Balaam from cursing Israel for Balak was willing to promote him to any great honor he would wish (Num.22,16.17). Thus Balaam was led into a greater temptation for which he seemed to have been very little prepared.

However, in the beginning Balaam seemed to act quite well, for he said,

67--Two false conceptions of Balaam in this connection are: 1. Rosenmueller (Scholia ad vs.8,23;23,7 in Kalisch p.111), "Balaam had no doubt heard that the Israelites would surely defeat the Moabites. But the cunning man felt that if he cursed the Hebrews and they were, nevertheless, victorious, he and his magical arts would fall into desrepute. On the other hand, he would not flatly decline the messengers' request, as he was unwilling to lose the large gifts which the king had promised. In this dilemma, he determined, indeed, not to curse the Israelites, but to act so, that the Moabites and their allies might consider him as a favoured friend of God. With this view he feigned to hold consultations with God and to receive His replies, invented the whole story about the ass and the angel, and compiled out of his fancy prophecies so vague and obscure, that any imposter might safely have hazarded them". 2. Lange (Bibelwerk 2,311) sees in vs.9-14 a delineation of 'Bileam's formheiligen aber herzlosen Widerstand'. - It was simply a cowardly Widerstand with no intentional Formheiligkeit over toward the messengers. Under the great temptation Balaam was simply not awake and on his guard.

68--Hoeness in Theological Quarterly Vol.XII p.228.

~~Imagined by~~ "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". The expression "less or more" means 'a small or a great thing', the same as 'a good or a bad thing' (Num. 24,13), merely an emphatic periphrasis for 'anything'. This was undoubtedly an earnest remark on the part of Balaam. But in this verse 18 of Numbers 22 we find the first of several remarks which though sounding very noble, breed a certain suspicion in us. He who here said, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do less or more" afterwards said to Balak, "The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (Num.22,38); and again, "Whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee" (Num.23,3); and again, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?" (Num.23,12); and again, "Told I not thee, saying, all that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?" (Num. 23,26); and again, "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?" (Num.24,13). After reading these asseverations we would like to say, "Methinks the prophet doth protest too much!" Despite the emphasis which Balaam laid on implicit obedience we feel that there was a strong temptation to disobedience working within him, which he was not sufficiently combating.

And truly, Balaam immediately began to yield to the temptation for he told the embassy to wait over night again to see what the Lord would say. This

69--We cannot, however, with Calvin and Hengstenberg ("Balaam" p.42) call this remark of Balaam's a 'plus quam sacrilega impietas'. - Ewald (Jahrbuecher VIII quoted by Kalisch, Bible Studies I p.120) finds in v.18 a proof that Balaam was a wicked pagan prophet saying, "If Balaam had not at heart remained, as he had been before, a pagan prophet inclined to untruth and worldly baseness, he would, after God's first and distinct prohibition, at once have rejected the king's second invitation; but human honor and greed of money, which he loved so much from the beginning, still lingered in the profoundest depths of his heart". This last remark is undoubtedly true, but that was because as a converted prophet of the Lord he still had his evil nature to combat.

70)

was not a pious move, but simply showed that Balaam was falling more and more. But the Lord, his God (Num.22,18b), kind and longsuffering did not deal harshly with Balaam. He was still trying to win back his erring sheep; so he told Balaam that if he is urged to go and curse Israel, he may truly go, but not \cancel{c} curse. God did not change His will not to have Israel cursed. Because Balaam persisted God yielded him a minor point, and if Balaam would not turn from his evil ways God would sometime sooner or later yield him all his wished, but then also totally reject him from his fold. Ps.18,26, "With the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward".

Balaam well knew that he was not to curse the Israelites. Yet, early the next morning he went with the princes of Moab thinking more than likely that there would be some way in which he might satisfy his desires and at the same time obey the will of God. Possibly he thought the words "the words which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do" implied a possible change in the mind of God concerning the cursing. But Balaam was simply going to his destruction. "He ran greedily after the error for reward" (Jude 11).

The Lord, however, was angry because Balaam went. Balaam did not leave with the distinct purpose of blessing Israel, but wished to serve Balak for the reward, and that is why the Lord was angry with him. God was displeased

70--Kalisch (p.9) says that Balaam protested with greater decision than before, and only after having received God's distinct permission, does he consent to accompany the princes of Moab.

71--Knobel (quoted by Kalisch p,122) erroneously remarks, "Had Balaam received the least intimation that he was to bless the Israelites in Moab, (but we say that he surely knew he was not to curse cf. Num.22,12.20) he would surely have refused to go, wherefore he was left in uncertainty on that point; and guided by the secret wish of his heart, he assumed that God, in retracting the prohibition of the journey, retracted also the prohibition of the curse". In this same connection Knobel also says "As God did not require the foreign prophet's blessing for Israel's welfare, He, first, forbade the journey, but then allowed it, 'because, after all, the benedictions of the famous seer might be useful to Him as a means of encouraging Israel and disheartening their enemies, although He did not exactly want them". Such foolishness!

to see His prophet so boldly attempting to disobey His command, even though the going with the princes was in itself a compliance with the Lord's permission.

Balaam rode along on his ass and his two servants were with him. He had been thinking these things over. He was worried and planned continually how he might serve two masters as a faithful servant of both. Whenever he saw before him the riches and honor promised him by Balak his conscience would be bothering him and he would be reminded of the words of his God. But whenever he was beginning to attempt to obey his conscience the riches and honors, spread before him, pulled him away again. And so Balaam found himself ever farther away from the truth and from his God. But God did not as yet fully reject His prophet. He made another attempt at restoring the erring one. The angel of the Lord stood in the way to prevent Balaam's further going with the purpose of cursing. This episode with the angel must have happened soon after Balaam left his home, just outside the city walls of Pethor. ^{72a)} God wished to prevent Balaam from going that long journey planning how he might curse the Israelites. So at the very outset while Balaam's mind was thus occupied and becoming ever more spiritually blinded, the Lord's angel appeared to him to further instruct and warn the erring man, to prevent him in his errors (יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁכַּח לְךָ נְשִׂיךְ. Num.22,22).

The angel which appeared on the way was the angel of the Lord (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) none other than the Son of God, God Himself. This is evident from Num.22,35

72a-Most commentators think with Hengstenberg (Bileam p.45.46) that this happened toward the end of the journey because it is more psychologically probable that the passions of evil corrupted Balaam's heart by degrees and the nearer he approached his destination, the more keenly he felt the attractive power of the honors and treasures which awaited him. This interpretation seems to us less warranted than ours. It does not take long for a man to become wrapped up in his thoughts and cares. And furthermore Num.22,35 tells us that, after the event, Balaam received orders to go with the men as if there was a long way yet to go and so far only a short distance had been covered.

where the angel prohibits Balaam from saying anything contrary to his wish. That the angel of the Lord is the preincarnate Messiah is evident from Old Testament theology. For a short and conclusive proof compare Ex.23,23 with 1 Cor.10,4, where the angel of the Lord leading the Israelites into Canaan is called Christ. God Himself now took special care and made special efforts to warn Balaam some more. He had been speaking with Balaam in His usual manner, but now He was going to deal with him in an exceptional manner. He was going to appear to Balaam in a visible form, so that Balaam should come to his senses and realize his folly.^{72b)}

Balaam was riding along on his ass apparently becoming more and more spiritually blinded and eager to curse Israel, when the angel⁷³⁾ of the Lord, with a sword in His hand, stood in the way. This was a visible appearance but Balaam, engrossed in his thoughts, did not see the angel. His ass, however, saw the angel and turned to the side into the field, whereupon Balaam was angry and smote his animal which had been in the habit of meekly obeying him at all times, and was unused to such rough treatment from its master. But this time Balaam was uneasy because of his troubled conscience and every little thing irritated him. So he smote his ass.

Another time the angel stepped into the way, this time between two walls of a terraced vineyard. Again Balaam did not see him because of his deep thoughts and contemplations, feeling that he was acting contrary to the Lord's will, yet trying in some way to harmonize matters and to justify his actions. Again the ass turned to the side, this time crushing Balaam's foot against the wall. Again Balaam was angry and smote the ass, possibly with greater

72b--Thus also Peter, when he was to be especially instructed and thoroughly impressed, had a most peculiar conversation with God on the housetop (Act.10,9ff), though this is by no means an exact parallel.

73--Contrary to Hengstenberg's idea (Balaam p.48ff). We take the words as they read. For a further discussion of the critical questions involved in this angelophany and the speaking ass see Section IV of this paper.

wrath than before.

A third time the angel of the Lord stepped into the way where there was no possibility of the ass turning to the side. Therefore the ass, upon seeing the angel for the third time, fell down under Balaam. And for the third time Balaam's anger displayed itself and he smote the ass. Balaam had now become a most disagreeable man with his conscience tormenting him continually, but not willing to break down and repent.

However, the Lord was still working on Balaam and making efforts to set him aright. Therefore the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, that the dumb ass might rebuke the prophet's madness and awaken his troubled conscience to true repentance. But Balaam was so set in his thoughts, and so angry, that he apparently was not astonished at the speaking of the ass. He answered her in an angry voice, "Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee." The kind question "What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?" did not bring the prophet to his senses but apparently caused him to grow worse in his anger. But again the ass pleaded with him, "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?" The speaking ass was to rebuke the madness of the prophet (2Pet.2,16) and this second remark seems to have taken hold. The ass had made Balaam think over the reason for his peculiar action in smiting such a faithful animal. Balaam thought the matter over and began to realize that his exceptional anger was due

74--Some of the erroneous views on this point we note from Kalisch (p.149), "St. Augustine and many others, both in earlier and recent times, blame Balaam severely for not having felt surprise and terror at the ass's speech (*iste tanta cupiditate ferebatur, ut nec tanti monstri miraculo tereretur et responderet quasi ad hominem loquens, etc*); others consider these circumstances most cogently to prove that the whole transactions occurred in a dream or vision, as any person to whom such a thing really happened 'would be half dead of fright and would fall from the animal' (Michaelis on v.28ff) while one commentator excusses Balaam by supposing that he was probably a believer in the doctrine of transmigration of souls, and hence regarded the speaking of animals quite natural (Clericus on v.28 and 29)."

to his general frame of mind because of his evil conscience and his determination to obtain the wages of unrighteousness. Therefore he meekly and humbly answered his ass and said "Nay".

Thus Balaam's madness had been rebuked and he had somewhat come to realize his folly. His inner eye, so to speak, had been awakened to the greatness of his error. When thus, by the rebuking of his ass, his mind had become clearer and he realized the greatness of his sin in attempting to curse Israel contrary to God's express command, his physical eyes also noticed the angel of the Lord standing before him with his sword drawn. In that way the words, "The Lord opened the eyes of Balaam" are to be understood. It was the Lord's wish that Balaam should see the angel of the Lord, but not until the Lord, through the speaking of the ass, had shaken Balaam out of his brooding trance. When he saw the angel Balaam bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face in meek submission to his Lord and God.

But Balaam had only been brought to a realization of his folly; his madness had been rebuked, but he as yet showed no repentance. Therefore the angel of the Lord took him to task some more, and told him outright that he has come to withstand Balaam because his way was perverse. He also reminded Balaam of his raving folly of being so lost in his thoughts that he, in unwarranted anger, smites his ass three times.

Furthermore the angel said, "The ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive". The translations here is difficult and in most cases faulty. ⁷⁵⁾ never means 'unless' but 'perhaps' and there is no use changing the word to ⁷⁶⁾. So it is wrong to translate, with many commentaries, 'If

75--He who has experienced how blinded we are to things around us when any great desire, care or trouble has cast a spell upon us, will easily understand Balaam's situation. Through the speaking ass God suddenly threw Balaam out of his sinful thoughts.

76--Thus the International Critical Commentary.

she had turned from me (so as to pass me on the road), I should have killed thee', or 'If she had turned from me (a fourth time, instead of falling on her knees), I should have killed thee'. We translate, "The ass saw me, and turned from me these three times. Perhaps she turned from me - surely I should now have slain thee and saved her alive". The angel was rebuking Balaam for being so deeply set in his meditations that he did not see the angel whereas the ass saw him three times. Balaam was disobedient to God in trying to figure out a way whereby his crime might not be directly opposed to God's command, but the ass, on the contrary, was very faithful and obedient to its human master so that it turned out of the way for the love it had in its masters welfare. It wished to save its master. Balaam should notice the contrast between his disobedience to God and the love and obedience of the dumb ass to him..That is all expressed in the short aposiopetic part of the sentence 'perhaps she turned from me'. The angel did not finish the sentence but left it to Balaam to gather from the hint, that the faithful animal had turned away out of love for its master, seeing the danger he was in. Instead, the angel went on to rebuke Balaam some more and told him that he deserved to be killed and the considerate, well-meaning dumb animal, in contrast, should surely be kept alive.

God thus acted sternly, but kind and longsuffering with Balaam. Never had Balaam been brought to task so severely. All this not only brought Balaam to a realization of his folly but the stern words of the angel, being a loud call to repentance, had a greater effect on him. It, however, is wrong to say that Balaam, the disobedient prophet of the Lord, now made a clean confession, and showed signs of true repentence. True, he said, "I have sinned; ⁷⁷⁾ for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again". But that was not true repentence.

Balaam did not blame his stubbornness and greed for his sin, but pleaded

ignorance, that he might in a way excuse himself. In fact, he never admitted his real sin outrightly, but referred to the striking of the ass, as being the real crime, and said, "I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me". Thus in two ways he evaded a true repentance. He refused to recognize the intentions of cursing as the real crime and he pleaded ignorance in the matter which he did term as his sin. His heart had not yet turned in true repentance for he said, "Now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again", and thus showed that he still wished to go and receive the coveted honors. On top of a half-baked confession and repentance Balaam added a remark of pure hypocrisy. Balaam, the gifted prophet of the Lord, with Whom he had many communications, Whose will he knew well, certainly knew, and did not immediately forget that it displeased the Lord the way he was going with the princes of Moab. Balaam should have said outright, "I have sinned in desiring to earn that money and honor in a manner in which it does not please Thee. Forgive me. I will have nothing to do with those honors and the work of cursing involved therein. I am going back and will not go with the princes of Moab". Thus Balaam should have spoken, for God had not as yet revealed His ultimate plan of actually blessing the Israelites.

Because of God's plans to bless the Israelites through Balaam, the disobedient and unrepentent prophet of the Lord was now ordered, willingly or unwillingly, to go with the men. But for the last time, as a warning and ~~another~~ another call to repentance, God told him that he was only to speak that which the Lord would speak, which would certainly not be anything pleasing to Balak or conducive to the desired honors. Balaam could thus begin to figure out that it was God's intentions to have him do just the opposite of what Balak wished him to do.

"So Balaam went with the princes of Balak with a renewed call to repentance given him in the last final warning from the patient and long suffering

Lord. He still had, however, within his heart those "two tyrants, Avarice and Ambition". Thus Balaam rode on tempting the Lord's patience by not giving up his covetous ideas. The Lord had now as much as told him outright that He had turned his intended curse into a blessing and that it was useless for him to desire the contrary for the sake of the reward.

In the mean time Balak had learned that Balaam was nearing his country. Either he had figured out that Balaam was about due, or messengers had gone before and announced the matter to him. Two reasons prompted Balak to travel north and meet Balaam at the border of his kingdom. He wished to show Balaam ~~atxixhxhxrdaxxf~~ the highest possible honors that he might be the more certain of the expected curse. But then he also seemed to be quite impatient and wished to lose no time in having Balaam curse the people. According to his heathen notions a most effectual curse would be given in view of the people to be cursed, and the Israelites could not be seen in the least from Moab below the Arnon. So Balak met Balaam at the Arnon.

Balak wished to treat Balaam royally, but his impatience over Balaam's hesitation showed itself, nevertheless, in the friendly rebuke, "Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?" Had the king in the least suspected the real cause for Balaam's first refusal, he would not have spoken in that manner but in his heathen superstition would even have been afraid to have anything to do with Balaam. But Balaam answered him displaying a great vexation of spirit. "Lo I am come unto thee", he says. Balaam now showed no enthusiasm since he realized that he would more than likely not receive the coveted honors from Balak. In order that Balak may not be utterly disappointed or even punish him, Balaam began, immediately, to tell Balak that he cannot express his own wishes but must say just what the Lord puts into his mouth. It is wrong to say in this connection that Balaam had by this time fully

repented or that he indicated his perfect willing obedience to God, unhampered
78)
by any false ambition. These words indicate that Balaam was not yet truly
repentent.

After these words between Balak and Balaam, they both together peacefully
came to Kirjathhuzoth. Balaam had not nerve enough to tell Balak the
full truth which would have undoubtedly caused considerable animosity. At
Kirjathuzoth Balak offered oxen and sheep and sent to Balaam and to the princes
that were with him, that is, Balaam took part in the offering. This was not
a feast in honor of Balaam's arrival, sending to Balaam's table the best
79)
portion of the oxen and sheep. True it is that $\pi\lambda\beta$ is used not only with
respect to sacrifices, but also to killing for food (1 Sam. 28, 24; 1 Kings 19, 21).
But that does not determine the meaning here. Neither can we hypothetically
say "if the author had meant to describe a sacrifice essential to Balak's
main purpose, he would not have so generally spoken of 'oxen and sheep' but
would have more accurately specified the kinds and numbers of victims, as he
80)
is careful to do at the fitting occasion, 23, 1.4, 14.29". If that were merely
a feast in honor of Balaam's arrival it would have undoubtedly taken place
immediately, but Balaam and Balak went off towards the scene of the intended
cursing and on the way Balak wished to hold a sacrifice before attempting
the curse.

This sacrifice was undoubtedly given by the heathen in a blind super-
stitious manner to the honor of the Lord with whom Balaam was in communication,
whose prophet Balaam was, though Balak considered him a mere sorcerer serving
that Lord. Because this sacrifice was thus given in honor of his God, Balaam
may well have made that an excuse for participating in such a heathenish

78--Kalisch (p.155) says in this connection, "Not ambition, wealth, and power
are his care, but the will of his God, in which he merges his own, and that
absolute obedience which curbs all pride and conceit".

79--Thus Cox in "Balaam, An Exposition and a Study" p.86.

80--Kalisch Bible Studies I p.158.

ceremony to the true God. But we will be safe in saying that Balaam must have done this rather reluctantly and thoughtfully since the time was close at hand for him to speak the word of God which he knew from bitter experience could not be changed to suit human fancies. He knew that it was useless for Balak to try to cause God to curse Israel, Balak, who believed heathen sorcerers could influence the will of their gods.

3. How Balaam Acted During the Prophecies.

God alone knows whether or not a person is a believer, and God in His Word has not told us whether or not Balaam had fully repented of his error and was a true and faithful prophet again at the time when he uttered the four prophecies. It was not necessary, as we have stated before, that a prophet be a believer. God could make the stones cry out for Him if He so wished, and He did make the unbelieving Caiphas prophecy. In the following pages we will present our impressions of Balaam's character during the prophecies as described in Num. 23 and 24.

On the high places of Baal, the scene of the first sacrifice, Balaam ordered seven altars built and seven oxen and seven rams prepared. Interpreters trying to make of Balaam as evil a man as possible instead of treating him in the best possible light, have considered him a wicked sorcerer here, since his directions with reference to the mystical number seven savors strongly of the tricks of magic and incantation. Lange calls the sacrifice 'a sordid union between paganism and monotheism, between yes and no', while Hengstenberg thinks the sacrifice an excuse to Balak that all possible steps were taken to effect a curse, when later he would learn that nothing but blessings had been
81) uttered. But we shall see that there is nothing in the actions of Balaam or

in his prophecies, which prevents us from stating that most probably the severe schooling had finally brought him to a full repentance and back to his former state of a true and faithful prophet of the Lord. Having been placed in a position where he could realize the utter folly of Balak's sacrifice at Kirjathuzoth he may have well determined, during that night, rightly to repent of his own folly. What then Balaam may have told Balak in the course of the sacrifices and prophecies we cannot tell, besides the few statements recorded in Num. 23 and 24. Three times did the prophet of the Lord offer sacrifices to his God, in connection with the prophecies.

Altars to the true God could of course be erected anywhere, even, under certain circumstances, during the days of the central sanctuary, cf. 1 Kings 18,23.24.30-33. These sacrifices here were like the sacrifices of the patriarchs. Balaam would not use the altars of Baal, more than likely found at these high places, but authoritatively commanded, "Build for me". No more did he join in any Moabitic rite. Num.23,4 clearly shows that these sacrifices were offered to the Lord. Analogies to such sacrifices, ~~more~~ particularly as to the number seven, can easily be found. 1 Chron.15,26 David offered seven bullocks and seven rams, seven lambs, and seven goats. Job's friends (Job 42,8) were commanded to bring for a sin offering seven bullocks and seven rams. The number seven is found very much among the worshipers of the true God in the Old Testament. Like a golden thread it runs through all the sacred writings. We find it in sacrifices, we notice it in institutions from the weekly Sabbath to the Year of Jubilee. So Balaam seemed to be consciously complying with a custom connected with the worship of the true God, when he ordered Balak to build the seven altars. In connection with a devotional and obedient sacrifice Balaam hoped to show the Lord that he had repented; in connection with such a sacrifice he also hoped the Lord would communicate to him just what to say. It was in connection with a devotional sacrifice that the Lord, for example,

appeared to Solomon (1 Kings 3,4.5).

Twice during the course of the prophecies Balaam went out on a high place to receive the words from the Lord (Num.23,3.15). During that solitude Balaam received inspirations from the Lord. What Balaam did during these short periods the Bible does not tell us, and therefore most interpreters have found this a place to attribute to Balaam the worst practices of heathen sorcery, and many cannot find words strong enough to describe his actions as the basest juggleries of darkest paganism. Thus Kurtz considers him a sorcerer⁸²⁾ who thinks he can handle Jehovah as he handles heathen gods. Hengstenberg here makes use of his theory concerning Balaam as a half convert who has just a few, but false notions concerning the Lord, and therefore thinks he must go to the trouble of auguries and "Naturerscheinungen" to receive the message⁸³⁾ from the Lord. Then again the phrase 'the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth', which of course, refers to the ordinary inspiration of prophets, has been explained to mean that the words were put into Balaam's mouth, not into his⁸⁴⁾ heart, so that he neither understood them nor sympathised with their spirit. And all these interpreters refer to Num.24,1 where the word $\square^{\prime}\psi\eta\eta$ is used and is supposed to mean enchantments in the usual evil sense. Such are some of the interpretations of Balaam's actions here, and if the argument concerning $\square^{\prime}\psi\eta\eta$ is correct then our whole view of Balaam's character is wrong. But what does the word mean in this connection?

There remain but two expedients, - either to take the word as a corruption

82--Kurtz "Geschichte des Alten Bundes" B. LI S. 482, in part says, "als aber zweimal seine Hoffnung ihn getauscht, unterlaesst er zum dritten - und viertenmale das Augurienwesen gaenzlich und ueberlaesst sich allein der unmittelbaren Eingestung Jehovah's".

83--Hengstenberg "Bileam" p.74, "Bileams Verhaeltnis zu dem Gotte Israels ist nach seinem eignen Bewusstsein nicht nahe genug, dass er auf eine Manifestation seines Willens blos in seinem Inneren mit Zuversicht rechnen koennte; nur das meint er hoffen zu duerfen, dass Jehovah ihm in bedeutsamen Zeichen erscheinen und ihm die Faehigkeit der Deutung gewaehren werde". But we read of no "bedeutsame Zeichen" which Balaam received.

84--See Kalisch, "Bible Studies" I, p.171.

instead of $\square \cdot \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\zeta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}}$, or $\dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}}$, as Kalisch does; or to attribute to that expression a less offensive signification. The first method is out of the question since we cannot recognize a corruption in the Massoretic text unless we are driven to it after all possible study of the question has been exhausted. We believe we can attribute a less offensive meaning to the word here.

The phrase $\square \cdot \dot{\bar{\psi}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}}$ is of course commonly translated in its literal and usual sense. But there are a few traces left - slight we admit, but still not indistinct - of the Hebrew verb $\dot{\bar{\psi}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}}$ used in a more general and less offensive meaning. In 1 Kings 20,33 the word seems to be used in the sense of accepting a word as a good sign or omen. But right in the Pentateuch the verb $\dot{\bar{\psi}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}}$ is used by Moses (Gen.30,27) where it most certainly cannot have the evil sense usually attributed to it of ascertaining something by means of enchantments. "There Laban says, 'I have learned by experience ($\dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\psi}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}}$) that the Lord hath blessed me', etc. But Laban had neither used enchantments nor miraculous signs or auguries from heaven; he had simply seen, by studious observation, that the Lord had increased his wealth through the hand of Jacob". Here in Num.23,23 the singular is used indicating a difference.

It is very evident that the reference in Num.24,1 is to Num.23,3.5 where Balaam went out to meet the Lord. Nothing is said in these places concerning any enchantment. Balaam's intention was merely to find out the will of the Lord, to learn the exact words which he was to utter. The verb $\dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\eta}} \dot{\bar{\rho}}$ in the Niphal (Num.23,3.4.15.16) means to meet, as in Ex.3,18; where the same verb is used with reference to God 'meeting' Moses and Aaron. So the meaning does not seem to refer to any meeting through enchantments, nor does it indicate that God's revelation came to Balaam merely by accident because he was no

85--LXX, εἰς συνάντησιν τοῖς οἰωνοῖς; Vulg., ut augurium quaereret; Luther, ging nach den Zaubern; Hengstenberg, Zeichen; A.V., seek for enchantments; R.V., meet with enchantments.

86--Hoeness in Theol. Quart. Vol. XII p.141.

true prophet. The place where Balaam went to meet the Lord was a high place. This does not mean that Balaam sought out an appropriate place for his incantations, as many would have it. The word יִצְוֶה signifies, etymologically, a bare or waste spot, from יָצַו , kindred to יָרַו , 'to be equal or even'. Is.13,2 יָצַו הַר is a bare mountain, covered with no trees or shrubs. Thus Balaam went out to meet the Lord at a lonesome bare place. Privately he wished to communicate with the Lord and ask Him what he was to say, after he had offered the humble sacrifices. There seems to be nothing in the way to say that Balaam, while he was alone, humbly confessed his former sin and asked the Lord to tell him what to say. Being in a contrite repentent spirit he could do that more effectively alone, he thought, so he went aside a ways to a lonely spot. This he did twice.

To harmonize Num.24,1 with the above given interpretation of Num.23,3.5 and 23,15.16 we give the plural $\text{יָצַוּ$ a less offensive meaning on the basis of the possibilities shown above. We translate "to the meeting of inquiries" or in plainer words "to seek for information". Thus also there is no contradiction with this passage and the statement in Num.23,23. When Balaam had thus after two special meditations received the word from the Lord and had seen how it pleased the Lord to bless Israel the Lord's word came upon him the third and fourth time without such meditations preceding. We do not read that Balaam no more went out, because he now saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, as if he had not realized that before. In Num.24,1 there are two parallel consecutive ways in the Hebrew, indicating that Balaam

87--Thus, as some must have done, there is "no reason for assuming that Balaam, as heathen augurs did, went out to watch for 'remarkable phenomena of nature or important signs' as thunder, lightning, or the rainbow; for applying to him the whole vocabulary of Greek and Roman divination, of τέρατα and σήματα , οὐρανόπολος and μάντις , of auguria and auspicia, lituus and auguraculum; and for insisting that veiling his head and turning to the east, he practised all the arts and tricks usually performed on elevations". From Kalisch, Bible Studies, I,p.169.

was so well pleased and filled with the idea that it pleased God to bless Israel, that he no more went out in meditation for information. In the previous meditations he had fully repented of his error and learned anew that the Lord was to bless Israel. Now, in a real confident manner, knowing that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, and knowing that the main blessing had not yet been uttered, he set out directly to prophecy facing the wilderness which lay beyond the children of Israel immediately on the banks of the Jordan. He knew the Lord still had something more for him to say. Thus, while he was standing there
88)
the Spirit of God came upon Balaam.

The remarks of Balaam to Balak between the various prophecies are to be understood as firm rebukes at Balak's ignorance. Balaam went with Balak from place to place, not in obedience to Balak, but because he now wanted to obey his Lord, who had picked him out to bless Israel. When therefore Balak grew impatient Balaam repeated to him the fact that he must speak the words of the Lord and not his own. The context and spirit of these statements seem to indicate that there is no cheap excuse involved, but a clear cut rebuke at Balak, and a statement of Balaam's faith in the Lord. This is very evident from his last remark where he tells Balak he is going to return to his people without making any attempt at securing Balak's gold, but on the contrary first giving Balak to hear the greatest blessing of all.

Much has been written concerning the different manner in which Balaam received the third and fourth prophecies, for in connection with them Balaam did not go away, alone and by himself. In connection with the first and second prophecies we read that the Lord met Balaam and put the words into his

88--This expression 'the spirit of God came upon him' indicates that heavenly inspiration by which Balaam, like other true prophets, was enabled to pronounce, of do, that which the Lord wished (cf. Judg. 3, 10; 6, 34; Is. 61, 1; Ezek. 11, 5). This is not intended as a pointed contrast to Balaam's own spirit as if he had still wished and intended to pronounce a curse upon Israel instead of a blessing as Hengstenberg would have it, "Authentic des Pentateuchs" B.I.S. 409.

mouth, and in connection with the third and fourth prophecy we read that the spirit of God came upon him. No argument can be based on the difference between these statements for they both mean the same, namely that the Lord told Balaam what to say, just as he would tell any prophet. We have also seen that no argument can be built on the perfectly natural fact that Balaam after twice meditating in solitude and repentance, now, in connection with the third and fourth prophecy, no more went aside since he was overwhelmingly joyful and confident in the cause of the Lord whom he was serving.

But this does not explain Balaam's introductory remarks to the third and fourth prophecies found in Num. 24, 3.4 and 15.16. Much has been written concerning these remarks in an attempt to describe Balaam's character at this point. So Hengstenberg, and his followers. For example Keil, in loco, says that "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." Others would have these words to refer simply to the state of ecstasy in which Balaam was put during those prophecies, as many prophets were in such a state while prophecying. But it

89--Keil on Numbers p.187. Clark's Foreign Library Edition.

90--Prof. Fuerbringer in his lectures on Num. 24, 15-24 said, "Er ist in der Ekstase. Das innere Auge ist offen damit er auf Gottes Offenbarungen acht habe; aber das aeußere Auge ist geschlossen". - Volk in Hauck "Realencyklopaedie" says, "Wenn Bileam in der Einleitung des dritten und vierten Spruches von sich sagt; 'Der Mann mit verschlossenem Auge, der Hoerer goettlicher Rede, der das Gesicht des Allmaechtigen schaut, niederfallend und geoeffneter Augen', so bezieht sich $\text{לְעֵינָיו שְׁלֹסֶט}$ auf das aeußere Auge, die aeußere Sinneswahrnehmung, die bei der eintretenden prophetischen Ekstase samt dem ganzen daerlichen Geistesleben cessiert; $\text{וְעֵינָיו שְׁלֹסֶט}$ hin- gegen auf das innere prophetische Auge, das im Zustand der Ekstase geoeffnet ist, so dass der Seher die Gesichte Gottes zu schauen vermag; und wie $\text{לְעֵינָיו שְׁלֹסֶט}$ so weist $\text{לְעֵינָיו שְׁלֹסֶט}$ auf die gewaltsame Form hin, in welcher der Geist der Weissagung den Seher ueberkommt (1 Sam. 19, 24). Indem aber in der Einleitung zum vierten Spruch zu den beiden anderen Stuecken steigend hinzutritt: $\text{וְעֵינָיו שְׁלֹסֶט}$, so sehen wir Bileam die Ausdruecke des Schauens, des Hoerens, des Wissens gebrauchen, um den empfangenen Besitz der Offenbarung und Erleuchtung von sich auszusagen".

is such interpretations which pave the way for a possible misconception of Balaam's character, namely, that he was a disinterested heathen sorcerer who, contrary to his wish, received the prophecies in "gewaltsamer Form". We will, therefore, take up Num.24,3.4.15.16 in detail to present and defend our interpretation.

The first phrase to consider is $\text{זָּרַחַת} \text{אֶת־עֵינָיו}$. We note that the singular זָּרַחַת is used here, and that in the other phrase $\text{אֶת־עֵינָיו} \text{זָּרַחַת}$, the dual is used. The verb אֶת־עֵינָיו has been much discussed and because, in that form, it is only found in this connection, by far the most interpreters have translated it with 'opened' on the basis of a supposed analogy with $\text{אֶת־עֵינָיו} \text{זָּרַחַת}$. Thus the LXX has $\varphi\eta\sigma\iota\tau\ \delta\ \delta\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \delta\rho\acute{\omega}\nu$, and on the basis of this translation Gesenius Handwoerterbuch gives אֶת־עֵינָיו the meaning 'geoeffnet'. But if $\text{זָּרַחַת} \text{אֶת־עֵינָיו}$ is made parallel with $\text{אֶת־עֵינָיו} \text{זָּרַחַת}$ we would have a meaningless tautology. Furthermore the parallel cannot be brought up as an argument for there is no parallel; in one we have זָּרַחַת and in the other we have אֶת־עֵינָיו .⁹¹⁾ Therefore we must find a different meaning for אֶת־עֵינָיו . Hengstenberg has shown conclusively that אֶת־עֵינָיו with the weak עֵינָיו was an original form for the later אֶת־עֵינָיו changing to that form through the medium sibilant אֶת־עֵינָיו . אֶת־עֵינָיו is found Lam.3,8 and אֶת־עֵינָיו in Kings and Chronicles. We therefore translate in contrast to the other phrase, 'with closed eye' all the more since the singular זָּרַחַת is set in contrast to the dual אֶת־עֵינָיו . So the Vulgate, cuius obturatus est oculus. Act.9,8 is only a parallel if we consider these words of Balaam an indication of the manner in which he received the prophecies as most interpreters take the words to mean. But is that possible?

The word זָּרַחַת 'falling down', because of its use in 1 Sam.19,24, could be meant to refer to the violent trances which overcame inspired persons, but that meaning does not seem to fit here where we read that Balaam calmly

set his face toward the wilderness and there saw Israel while the spirit of God came upon him. Furthermore, if we were to refer these words to the manner in which Balaam received the word of the Lord while the physical eye was closed and the mental eye was opened, as Hengstenberg, Keil, Fuerbringer and others would have it, we would expect the dual $\square^{\prime}\text{J}^{\prime}\text{y}$ with the first phrase concerning the physical, closed eyes, and the singular $\text{J}^{\prime}\text{y}$ in the second phrase concerning the opened, mental eye. But as it is we find that just the opposite is the case, the singular is used for the closed eye and the dual is used for the opened eyes. We therefore translate Num.24,3.4.15.16, "And he took up his parable, and said, So speaketh Balaam, the son of Beor, And so speaketh the man whose eye was closed; So speaketh he who heard the words of God, (And knew the knowledge of the most High); Who saw the vision of the Almighty, Falling and with opened eyes". There is no mention of a trance in the Hebrew. For the tense of the participles see Ges. Gram. # 116,0.

Balaam, in a happy, faithful mood, after the two meditations, introduced the third and fourth prophecies by boldly telling Balak how the Lord had treated him on the way and how he had gone through a severe lesson. On the way, as we have seen, Balaam's mind and desires had been blinded by avarice which he was feeding with his sinful thoughts as he was riding along. His thought and mind, the inner eye, (singular) was blind to the truth of realizing the enormity of his crime even though his conscience was bothering him. That is what Balaam referred to when he said, 'so speaketh the man whose eye was closed'. Boldly he admitted his error, but then he also told Balak some more. He admitted that he was a true prophet of the Lord who heard the words of God. The second time he also adds 'and knew the knowledge of the most High'. All

92--No read commentaries make even a slight mention of this view except Newton, "Dissertations of the Prophecies" p.67, who, without giving any reason or explanation, says, "It plainly alludes to Balaam's not seeing the angel of the Lord, at the time that the ass saw him". Kalisch, with the rest refers these words to the manner in which he received the prophecy.

that Balaam knew, yet, rifting along, he was blinded in his thoughts of avarice. So great was the internal blindness of his that at first he did not see the angel with his physical eyes (dual). But his physical eyes (dual) were opened so that he saw the vision of the Almighty. He saw the angel and fell down before him, Num.22,31. All this Balaam now told Balak outright, in open rebuke. This interpretation of ours is also strengthened by the fact that the Hebrew סָרַף from סָרַף 'to see' with physical eyes may well refer to the seeing of God with physical eyes as in Ex.24,11 where the verb סָרַף is used of the nobles of Israel seeing God. (See also Job 19,26.27.) The fact that in Num.22,31 we do not find סָרַף used, can be no argument against our interpretation since in Num.24 we have but a brief account of the event described in detail and with more words in Num.23. Thus Balaam, unconscious words of his own, though inspired by God, introduced the third and fourth prophecies with bold remarks concerning his error and rebuke received from God, indicating thereby that now, for a time at least, he had fully taken that rebuke to heart and repented. This bold statement of Balaam's to Balak was also strengthened by his rebuke to Balaam between the last two prophecies, where without any excuse or hypocrisy he says, "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 I will speak. And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days"(Num.24,13.14).

In presenting this our view of Num.24,3.4.15.16 we do not deny that Balaam received the inspiration for these prophecies in the manner in which

93--Hereby, of course, all the various translations and paraphrases are rejected, as, for example, the fact that Balaam 'in a moment of supreme frenzy feels himself grasped by the mighty hand of Jahveh and hurled to the ground' (Ewlad in Kalisch); or that סָרַף indicated that Balaam's prophesying assumed a vehement form because it found him in an unripe state (Kengstenberg, p.141). Neither is סָרַף then brought in connection with סָרַף וַיִּפֹּל in a relation of cause and effect as 'when he falls down his eyes are opened' (Syriac in Kalisch).

prophets usually were inspired for special occasions. We merely wish to state that Num.24,3.4.15.16 does not refer to that manner in which Balaam was supposed to have been inspired. In fact the narrative says nothing concerning the manner in which he received these particular prophetic words which he was to utter, beyond the mere statements that ~~the~~ God met Balaam (23,4), that He put a word in his mouth (23,16), and that the spirit of God came upon him (24,2). These remarks, however, are enough to indicate that Balaam was subjected to the usual 'seeing' of the prophets for special revelations. Since, however, the object of Balaam's prophetic seeing was not some peculiarly strange or symbolical object (Is.6,5; Jer.24,1ff; Ezek.1,4ff; 11,1.13) which usually frightened the prophet and put him in an ecstatic state, but since, moreover, Balaam's seeing here was merely an emphatic, vivid representation of the truth concerning Israel and the Messiah which he, as a believer, knew beforehand, - the prophecies containing nothing new concerning the Messiah - we are of the opinion that Balaam was not in an ecstatic state during the prophecies, but, as the narrative indicates, stood there and in a conscious manner spoke to Balak, while in his prophetic sight he saw what he was saying.

In connection with the seeing of Balaam and Num.24,3.4 and 15.16 a few words concerning סֵרֵר would be in place. If Balaam with these words referred to the ecstatic state in which he received his prophecies he must have been a false prophet since the prophetic seeing of the false prophets in the Old Testament is usually designated by סֵרֵר (Ezek.13,6.7.8.23; 21,29; Zech.10.2⁹⁴). But God would not have Balaam, in a prophecy that is true, say that he saw a vision like the false prophets saw them. Therefore Num.24,3.4.15.16 cannot refer to the prophetic seeing of Balaam. If, moreover, Num.24,3.4.;5.;6 referred to a true prophetic seeing - regardless of whether Balaam believed what he was seeing or not - we would expect to find the word סֵרֵר used since

רָאָה is usually used to designate the seeing of the true prophets (Amos 7,1-9; Is.6,1; Jer.1,11-13)⁹⁵). Therefore the only correct explanation lies in the fact that Num.24,3.4.15.16 does not at all refer to any prophetic vision, true or false, but to the physical seeing of the angel of the Lord on the way.

Having thus sketched the character of Balaam as a true repentent prophet of the Lord we need not say much in regard to the expressions of Balaam's ~~ex~~ character as found in the prophecies themselves. The contents of these prophecies will be discussed in the next division of this paper. Balaam believed every word that God gave him to say, and would therefore at the time have acted in accordance with everything which he said. He was very faithful to the Lord as his expression concerning the blessings of the righteous shows. He now truly delighted in the blessed state of God's children, being one himself. He was glad and bold while preaching the Gospel of the Messiah to the heathen Balak. It is interesting to note a gradation in Balaam's conduct over toward God during the prophecies. At first he did not know for certain whether the time set aside by God for the blessings was at hand, so he said, "peradventure the Lord will come to meet me" (Num.23,3). But after the first blessing Balaam knew God was now communicating with him, but still going out for meditation, he said, "I meet the Lord yonder". After the second time he no more went out for meditation, but full of great joy and bold confidence, stood before Balak, while the spirit of God came upon him, and spoke words still more unwelcome to Balak's ears than the preceding.

95--For more passages and extended discussion on the difference between רָאָה and רָאָה see Koenig, "Theologie des Alten Testaments", p.69f.

4. How Balaam Acted After the Prophecies.

After the prophecies we read "And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way" (Num.24,25). Nothing more is said in the narrative itself concerning the relation between Balak and Balaam after the prophecies. We can assume one of two things concerning Balak at this point. The usual conception is that Balak displayed such great anger that he chased Balaam away. But we believe that Balak, though by no means pleased at Balaam's words, nevertheless did not give up trying to get Balaam to curse Israel. His heathen faith must have told him that Balaam, as a sorcerer, could still plead to have that god change his mind concerning the welfare of Israel. Therefore we believe that Balak offered still greater honors to Balaam if he would yet curse Israel. Our reason for this is Rev. 2,14 where we read that Balaam later on communicated with Balak on friendly terms, and that could not easily have happened if the two had parted while Balak was displaying great wrath.

But be that as it may, Balaam was not free from temptation. After he left Balak the still small voice began to speak to him concerning the chance for money and honors now cast to the winds. Whether that chance had just been renewed or not, makes no difference. As a human being Balaam was never free from temptation, and the following events show plainly that he again fell into temptation and, sad to say, this time had resisted the grace of God steadfastly till he was killed, thus committing the sin against the Holy Ghost.

We consider the wicked advice of Balaam merely a direct result of his besetting sin of greed. He wanted that money and honor. He was not watchful enough concerning his weakness, and greed took hold of him again, while he was

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riding away from Balak. Ashamed to return directly to Balak he betook himself to the Midianites whom he knew, of course, to be friends and allies of Balak

97)

and the Moabites. God had now given up calling back his erring sheep. Now Balaam had again fallen away, immediately after being so faithful, though that faithfulness was but short lived. Now Balaam had tempted the Lord once too often. He, who was greatly blessed and a highly gifted prophet of the Lord, who knew right from wrong, did not diligently and prayerfully watch over his weak faith that had just been strengthened again. This time the temptation was so strong that he followed after it with greater eagerness than before. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Matt. 12, 43-45). These words of Christ apply very accurately to Balaam's character at this point. Now Balaam was also rejected of God just as God rejected the gifted and once faithful Saul because of his increasing persistence in sin.

As a prophet of the Lord, knowing right from wrong, he knew better than the Midianites and Moabites, with whom such idolatry was a common matter, that, to seduce the men of Israel into the licentious idolatry of Baal-peor,

96--Num. 24, 25 does not say that Balaam actually reached his home. Hengstenberg's explanation (Bileam p. 212f) of לָשׁוּבָה taken in the inchoative sense of 'went in the direction of his home' is the best. They do not mean that Balaam went where he was before the prophecies, or 'he went away whither he would', or 'he resumed his sorceries', or that he intended to return but was detained by the Midianites.

97--Hengstenberg (Bileam p. 212f) is wrong in supposing that Balaam, disappointed in losing his honor with Balak, went to Moses to receive honors from him for blessing Israel, but Moses, seeing through Balaam's motives, rejected him, whereupon he betook himself to the Midianites to give them the revengeful advise. That is making Balaam a worse character than is necessary.

would be very displeasing to the Lord and would materially weaken the fighting power of the people. So Balaam, residing with the Midianites, most likely in a very short time after the prophecies, gave the wicked advise both to Balak and the Moabites (Num.25,1; Rev.2,4) and to the Midianites (Num.25,6;31,16). We do not believe that Balaam received the great reward from Balak which was promised him, though he must have been honored to some extent by both the Moabites and Midianites. The fact that Balaam is mentioned among the five Midianitish chiefs (Num.31,8) does not prove that he had been exalted to the same position. The special mentioning of Balaam at the end in a special sentence shows that it was added as a matter of special interest to the reader, saying nothing concerning his rank among the Midianites. We also believe that Balaam, while with the Midianites, now fell so far away from his God that he again took up the profession of his youth and became a sorcerer, for he did not return to his home in Pethor where he would have been ashamed to show himself as a degraded prophet, fallen back into his former profession of sorcery. Furthermore in Joshua 13,22 Balaam is called a soothsayer, undoubtedly referring to the way he appeared to the Israelites at the end of his life.

The wicked advise of Balaam had its desired result in as far as God punished Israel for its sins and killed 24,000 with the plague. But the Midianites were to be avenged (Num.31) and in that war Balaam was also taken and killed with the sword, so that he lived but a very short time to satisfy his greed.

Balaam must have died a judicial death after the battle, as the special mentioning of his death with the sword seems to indicate. The Israelites must have heard by mixing with the nations, as they did, that Balaam had caused the great seduction. They may also have heard some few remarks concerning the prophecies which he had uttered referring to Israel's blessings. To

hear more and to get the story straight they undoubtedly gave Balaam a hearing. Here then Balaam must have given a detailed account of the matter concerning the prophecies in the best light possible, with a hope of vindicating himself. But Moses saw through it all, perceived Balaam's wickedness and had him killed with the sword. We believe that Balaam died a sinner and an unbeliever, fallen away from grace, having sinned against the Holy Ghost. We do not read that God attempted to call Balaam back from his errors after the prophecies but rejected him and permitted him to give the wicked advise to harm Israel. Furthermore, if Balaam had in the very last end repented, the Bible would undoubtedly have made some mention of the fact instead of saying that he was killed as he was. Finally, in all subsequent Scriptures Balaam is set forth as a warning example and ~~is~~ ^{is} in a parallel with Cain and Core (Jude 11).

A few words should be said concerning Balaam as represented in the rest of Scriptures. As just mentioned, he is depicted as a warning example throughout. Deut.23,4,5 shows us that Balaam set out with the expressed purpose of cursing Israel, as we have pictured him leaving Pethor. Joshua 13,22 calls the man whom the children of Israel slew, a soothsayer, as we have pictured him to be at the time of his death.

Joshua 24,9,10 tells how Balaam was hired by Balak, and how God would not let Balaam have his way, so that instead of cursing he blessed the Israelites. Neh.13,2 also tells how God turned the intended curse into a blessing. Here as in Deut.23,4 it seems as though the Ammonites also hired Balaam (English translation). The fact that the Ammonites were close relatives of the Moabites was sufficient reason for keeping them out of the congregation of the Lord (Deut.23,3). They do not seem to have had a hand in the whole affair. Deut.23,4 and Neh.13,2 merely state that the last named, the Moabites, hired Balaam. The Hebrew word for hire (אָשַׁר) is found in the singular in both

places.

Micah 6,5ff had been construed to picture Balak and Balaam in a religious conversation at their first meeting, Balak asking how he should serve the true God and Balaam giving him the answer. This is done, however, in a desperate attempt to find, outside of Num.22-24, a passage speaking well of Balaam. But to construe Micah 6 in that manner is to say something of Balaam, which we do not know from Numbers. This could indeed be done by inspiration from the Holy Spirit if it were not contradicting what Num.22-24 tell us of the blind heathenism of Balak and of Balaam's actions at their meeting. Furthermore, the whole context in Micah 6 shows that the conversation indicated in that chapter is one between the Lord and his people, through the prophet. God reminds His people of His previous kindness to them in what He did while they were leaving Egypt (v.4) and while they were going from Shittim to Gilgal (v.5). In that connection come the stories of Moses, Aaron and Miriam as well as that of Balak and Balaam.

The New Testament references we have already referred to. 2 Pet.2,15.16 pictures Balaam as the prophet of the Lord greedily following the wages of unrighteousness but being rebuked by the speaking ass. Jude 11 shows us Balaam as ^agreedy errorist who received his due reward as Cain and Core. Rev.2,14 tells how Balaam gave that wicked advise to seduce the children of Israel, and made him a type of seducing errorists.

Thus we have pictured the character of Balaam as revealed in Scriptures. Writers on this subject have all tried to find parallels to his character, as they have seen him. Thus he is to be another Simon Magus, Caiaphas, Melchisedek, Abimelech and a Jethro. But the best comparison, as we see Balaam, between him and any other Biblical character, is between him and Saul, king of Israel. Like Saul he was highly blessed intellectually and spiritually. Like Saul,

99--Cox, "Balaam" p.155, devotes ten pages to a defense of this view.

when erring, he was called back by the Lord and warned, till like Saul he persisted in his error so that he was finally left to his sin and totally rejected of the Lord.

Many writers, especially Reformed theologians, are perplexed because of the dual nature of Balaam. But to anyone, who knows the power of Satan and the evil nature, even in a believer, can readily understand Balaam's actions. His character was put under temptation at a very weak point and his faith was not diligent enough to counteract that temptation till finally his faith was drownd and the temptation and sin took complete control. Even gifted prophets, professors and pastors may have a faith like the seed that fell among the thorns (Matt.13). The thorns kept pace with the seed till finally they have grown so thick that the seed is choked. Often lust and secular desires take hold of a spiritual leader to such an extent that finally, much to the surprise of the people, he falls away from faith and is rejected of God as a warning example to future generations. The sin against the Holy Ghost which Balaam committed is still found today. But we pray, "Lord, lead us not into temptation!".

III. THE PROPHECIES OF BALAAM.

1. Introductory Remarks.

The prophecies of Balaam are interesting from various angles of observation. They are interesting because of their exceptional literary value, and they also contain much historical information. Above all, however, these prophecies are most interesting because they contain such clear and definite statements to show what the Old Testament theology was, back as far as the days of Moses. Balaam preached his sermons, so to speak, in a wonderful manner with regard to the style, as if the same spirit that inspired his thoughts, had also raised his language. But Balaam could speak in that exceptional manner since he was not addressing a large gathering, but was speaking to one individual. It was to the heathen king Balak to whom Balaam addressed these words, with the special aim of blessing Israel and depicting the fate of its enemies.

Because of their peculiar literary style these prophecies have been variously translated, even to the point of attempting to retain the supposedly intended original Hebrew metrical system to each verse and stanza. Hebrew poetry is only accidentally metrical, but on the other hand it excels all other poetry in parallelisms, in repetitions and contrasts. From a comparison of various translations we present the following as an attempt to reproduce

- 1--Paton, a Presbyterian pastor, in "The Presbyterian and Reformed Review" Vol. II, p. 615ff attempted such a translation which, however, sounds wooden. A Latin metrical translation is found in Newton, "Dissertations on the Prophecies", p. 63.
- 2--"The utterances of Balaam are remarkable for an exemplary parallelism. This consists all but uniformly of two members mostly synonymous, more rarely antithetical (24, 9b. 20) and occasionally synthetic, whether in two parts (23, 20. 22. 23b; 24, 82. 17c. 19. 23), or three, or even four (24, 4. 24); while in one instance it is thrice synonymous (24, 8b)". Kalisch, "Bible Studies" Part I, p. 178.

in English the majestic rythm and power of Balaam's four prophecies while adhering to the Hebrew as closely as possible.

First Prophecy.

Num.23,7-10: And he took up his parable and said,

7. From Aram hath Balak brought me,
The king of Moab from the mountains of the east;
Come, curse me Jacob,
And come, execrate Israel!
8. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?
And how shall I execrate, whom the Lord hath not execrated?
9. For from the summit of the rocks I see him,
And from the hills I behold him;
Lo, a people that dwelleth apart,
And is not reckoned among the nations.
10. Who counteth the dust of Jacob,
And by number the fourth part of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
And be my end like his!

Second Prophecy.

Num.23,18-24: And he took up his parable and said,

18. Arise, Balak, and hear,
Hearken unto me, son of Zippor!
19. God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
Hath He said, and shall He not do it,
And spoken and shall He not fulfil it?
20. Behold, I have received command to bless,
And He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

21. He beholdeth no iniquity in Jacob,
And seeth not distress in Israel;
The Lord his God is with him,
And the trumpet-call of a King is with him.
22. God brought them out of Egypt;
They have the fleetness of the buffalo.
23. For there is no enchantment in Jacob,
Nor divination in Israel;
In due time it is told to Jacob,
And to Israel, what God doeth.
24. Behold, they are a people that rise as a lioness.
And lift themselves up like a lion;
He does not lie down till he eats the prey,
And drinks the blood of the slain.

Third Prophecy.

Num. 24, 3-9; And he took up his parable and said,

3. So speaketh Balaam, the son of Beor,
And so speaketh the man whose eye was closed;
4. So speaketh he who heard the words of God,
He who saw the vision of the Almighty,
Falling and with opened eyes:
5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,
Thy dwellings, O Israel!
6. As valleys that are spread out,
As gardens by the river's side,
As aloe trees which the Lord hath planted,
As cedars beside the waters.
7. Water floweth from his buckets,
And his seed is by many waters;

- And his King is higher than Agag,
And his kingdom is exalted.
8. God brought him forth out of Egypt:
He hath the fleetness of the buffalo.
He devoureth nations, his enemies,
And crusheth their bones,
And pierceth with his arrows.
9. He coucheth, he lieth down like a lion,
And like a lioness, who shall rouse him up?
Blessed are they that bless thee,
And cursed they that curse thee.

Fourth Prophecy.

Num. 24, 15-24: And he took up his parable, and said:

15. So speaketh Balaam, the son of Beor,
And so speaketh the man whose eye was closed;
16. So speaketh he who heard the words of God,
And knew the knowledge of the Most High;
Who saw the vision of the Almighty,
Falling and with opened eyes:
17. I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not nigh:
There cometh a star out of Jacob,
And a sceptre riseth out of Israel,
And smiteth both sides of Moab,
And shattereth all the children of tumult.
18. And Edom is his possession,
And his possession is Seir, his enemies,
And Israel acquireth might.

19. And he that cometh out of Jacob ruġath,
And destroyeth the remnant from the cities.

And he saw Amalek, and he took up his parable and said,

20. Amalek/ is the first of the nations,
But his end is for destruction.

And he saw the Kenites, and he took up his parable and said,

21. Strong is thy dwelling place,
And built in a rock thy nest;

22. For surely Kain shall not be destroyed
Even when Asshur carrieth thee away captive?

And he took up his parable, and said,

23. Woe, who shall live, when God doeth this!

24. And ships from the side of Chittim,
They humble Asshur and humble Eber,
But he also is for destruction.

We call these words of Balaam "prophecies" in the sense of religious blessings, both with respect to the present and with respect to the future. The word "prophecy" seems to fit the best, though there is apparently no real satisfactory equivalent in English for the term זִשְׁר . Various writers have used different terms as 'discourse', 'parable', 'utterance', 'oracle', 'Spruch' and 'Gleichniss'.³⁾

The word זִשְׁר originally meant a comparison. Therefore any suggestive saying that implied more than it actually said might apparently be called a זִשְׁר . Thus we find the word often used in the Old Testament (Ps. 49, 4; 78, 2; Isa. 14, 4; Ezek. 17, 2; Mic. 2, 4; Job. 27, 1; Prov. 1, 1). These quotations just mentioned are, however, from certain songs and similes inserted in the general prophecies,

3--Hengstenberg "Balaam", p. 78. - Haupt has argued that the original meaning was simply a verse of poetry or a verse as something that consisted of two halves; cp. Assyrian mislu e.g. half. See International Critical Commentary on Numbers, p. 345.

and it seems as though, outside of Num.23,24, the word $\sum \psi \rho$ is never used of such direct revelations from God to a true prophet. This peculiarity is not to be explained in the fact that these prophecies received a peculiar name⁴⁾ because Balaam was not a true prophet. They are called $\sum \psi \rho$, apart from their contents, because they are an extraordinary combination of elegant poetry and true prophecy. They do not rush along in torrentlike eloquence, but more with a quiet dignity, displaying an inherent, profound meaning.

The two last prophecies are also called $\square \chi \gamma$ (Num.24,3.15), the ordinary term introducing a Divine speech.⁵⁾ Though this word is not applied to the first two prophecies we can safely say that they, simply because of their great similarity to the last two, are also to be considered as Neums. However, the special mention of $\square \chi \gamma$ with the last two undoubtedly indicated the comparatively greater importance of the last two over the first two prophecies.

Such are the terms used in describing the prophecies uttered by Balaam the servant of the Lord, to Balak the heathen king.

These prophecies have been variously explained according to the various schools represented by the various exegetes.⁶⁾ Gray and all higher critics of course see no prophecy in these words of Balaam at all, but merely a vaticinium post eventum. Thus one says, "To maintain the literal truth and divine inspiration of this monstrous story of this unprincipled soothsayer is a flagrant breach of all just rules of interpretation, an insult to common sense, and⁷⁾ furnishes most luscious pabulum for the whole tribe of Ingersolls".

Men of the stamp of Kalisch, who do not wish to be too radical, explain

4--Thus Hengstenberg and Keil.

5--The word $\square \chi \gamma$ is usually accompanied with the word $\int \gamma \int$ even before this in Gen.22,16 and Num.14,28. When, however, here and in 2 Sam.23,1 as well as in Prov.30,1 it is used with a human being as author it simply means God through that person. The peculiar meaning of $\square \chi \gamma$ in Ps.36,2 is explained in the fact that the wicked person listens to the voice of sin as a believer would listen to the $\int \gamma \int$ $\square \chi \gamma$.

6--International Critical Commentary.

7--R.P. Stebbins, "The Old Testament Student" Vol.IV, p.395, May 1885.

the prophecies as ~~same~~ predictions of a wise man written at a time when such predictions could reasonably be made. Thus Kalisch uses the word "prophecy", meaning no spiritual and certainly not Messianic foretelling, but merely a shrewd indication of the possible future as seen by a keen observer on the eve of the events. Thus he also must place the date of composition to suit his theory, and must also cut portions off and place them later.

But among those who recognise the Mosaic authorship of these prophecies, as uttered by Balaam, there are various classes of interpretation.

A good representation of the old and regular Presbyterian and Reformed interpretation is given by Pastor Paton.⁸⁾ To them the whole Old Testament has more or less of a hidden, symbolical meaning. Paton gives the prophecies of Balaam the following interpretation as applied to the spiritual Israel of Balaam's time. The first prophecy tells of Israel's election, the second of Israel's prophetic office, the third, Israel's priestly office, and the fourth, Israel's kingly office. This all applies to Old Testament times, symbolizing and culminating in Christ's election, and His threefold office. But from Christ again in the New Testament these truths spread out and apply to the election of the church of God and, as he says, to the prophetic, priestly and kingly office of each Christian.

The representative German evangelical theologians also have a certain erroneous double interpretation but more definite than the view just presented. They call the prophecies of Balaam Messianic, each, however, giving his own meaning to the word. With all of them, however, the main content of the prophecy is none Messianic and referring to the physical Israel. Thus Volk, having said nothing in this respect of the previous prophecies of Balaam, calls Num. 24, 17ff, in what we consider a very erroneous expression, "eine indirekt

8--"Presbyterian and Reformed Review" Vol. II, p. 640ff.

9)
messianische Weissagung".

Keil very clearly puts a double meaning into the prophecies when, for example, he says to Num.24,7, "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 that was established by David, and was exalted in the Messiah into an everlasting kingdom, the enemies of which would be made its footstool (Ps.2 and 110)¹⁰⁾". In connection with Num.24,17 he says, "In ^{the} person of David and his rule the kingly government of Israel was only realized in its first and imperfect beginnings. Its completion was not attained till the coming of the second David, the Messiah Himself, who breaks in pieces all the enemies of Israel"¹¹⁾. Thus he clearly intermingles the spiritual and physical Israel.

In their views, both Keil and Volk, as well as many others, have followed Hengstenberg, who in his "Bileam" devoted much thought and argumentation in defending the peculiar double interpretation concerning the physical and spiritual Israel, with the "star" being "eine ideale Person, das personifizierte Israelitische Koenigthum"¹²⁾. Thus Balaam had neither Israel's physical kings nor its spiritual King in mind, but an ideal person whom Hengstenberg then refers to David and his successors with their wars, and to Christ with His wars. In this particular instance, then, Hengstenberg has an abstract single meaning but a double concrete application. In other sections of the

9---Volk in Hauck's Realencyklopaedie, "Wir habes es hier nicht mit einer direkt sondern mit einer indirekt messianischen Weissagung zu thun, nicht zwar so, dass es die koenigliche Person Davids ist, welche dem Auge des Sehers sich darstellt; aber auch nicht so dass es die Person Christi ist; sondern ein koeniglicher Herrscher ist es, aus Israel emporkommend, in dessen idealer Person der Seher auf einmal sich verwirklichen sieht, was dann als historischer Prozess sich auseinanderlegt".

10--Keil on Numbers, Clark's Foreign Library Edition, p.190.

11--Keil on Numbers, Clark's Foreign Library Edition, p.200.

12--"Bileam" p.172ff. - In the first edition of his Christology Hengstenberg recognized in Num 24,17 an exclusive reference to David and thus gave up any Messianic interpretation. Later, however, he again came back and established the peculiar view adopted by many of his followers.

prophecies, when the reference is to Israel, he always applies it first to the physical Israel and then in its fullest extent to the spiritual Israel, realizing in the prophecies a double signification both physical and spiritual.

All these interpretations either unwarrantedly put a vague symbolical meaning into the words, or give them a double meaning, contrary to the hermeneutical principle 'sensus literalis unus est'. Promises of temporal blessings are found in the Old Testament, e.g. when God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham. And it is true that just some of these promises were by the individual taken also typically with a deeper spiritual meaning. This we see e.g. from Heb. 11, 9-16. From such cases as Heb. 11 and also John 3, 14, 15 we may safely infer that there were many more types and symbolical acts and also prophecies than we know of from the New Testament. But we go safe if we apply a typical or symbolical meaning to the Old Testament Scriptures only where we are expressly told that the words are to be understood in that manner. This information we may find either in the New or Old Testament. However, even at that, the originally intended meaning of a portion of Scriptures was but one single meaning. Thus it is for us to find out what Balaam meant when he uttered the four prophecies.

It is very difficult to distinguish, in the Scriptures, between the physical Israel, that is the Jewish nation, and the spiritual Israel, that is the God fearing believers. References to the physical Israel we meet with all over. But there are also very old references to a spiritual Israel with the term "children of Israel" expressing the idea. Thus e.g. Ex. 19, 5, 6. Paul's use of the word τὸ δωδεκάφυλον in Acts 26, 7 indicates a frequent use of an expression with the same meaning as our "spiritual Israel". In the prophets we often find the word "Israel" used in the sense of "believers". Thus the restoration of the physical Israel becomes the nucleus with them around which the spiritual Israel will grow. Is. 10, 22, 23; Jer. 50, 19, 20; Hag. 2, 7-10; Zech. 2, 10-12.

Naturally this spiritual Israel also included the heathen believers as Balaam, Ruth, Job and others (Rom.4,9-11).

Balaam, the prophet of the Lord, was called to curse the Hebrew nation as it was encamped at Shittim. But instead of cursing he blessed the people in very plain words so that Balak knew his request was not being fulfilled. Balaam also spoke of the fate of Israel's enemies so that Balak knew what to expect. This and otherwise there are very clear references in the prophecies to the physical Israel as it was encamped over against Pisgah. Balaam, however, was a prophet of the Lord, a believer, belonging to the same spiritual Israel to which the believers in the Hebrew nation belonged. But in the Hebrew nation was found the nucleus of the spiritual Israel during the Old Testament. This Balaam knew. He also knew that it was because of the spiritual Israel, found in the physical Israel, that the physical Israel was blessed as it was. Therefore, as a prophet of the Lord who knew the Word of God, Balaam would not be speaking in the first place of the physical Israel, but of the spiritual Israel, praise and bless it and speak of its glorious future. This however could only be done in terms of the physical Israel.

We therefore set up the following formula to aid in a clear understanding of the prophecies of Balaam. Balaam spoke of the spiritual Israel and told of its internal and external blessings. To illustrate this, Balaam had to speak of the physical Israel and ~~concrete~~ concrete facts in connection with it. Thus we will avoid indefinite symbolical interpretations and will give the words, as they stand, but one meaning. Balak, of course understood merely the concrete facts concerning the physical Israel, but Balaam, and any other believer, then or later, knew of what those remarks were an illustration, namely of the spiritual Israel with its manifold blessings. The prophecies of Balaam are not to be considered parallels to such prophecies as that of Is.7,13ff where in the midst of non-spiritual predictions we suddenly have a

spiritual and that a Messianic prediction. From beginning to end these prophecies are spiritual or Messianic. We use the word Messianic referring to the believers in the midst of whom the Messiah reigns with His blessings. Thus all references to the spiritual Israel are Messianic, since without the Messiah the spiritual Israel is not. But to the spiritual Israel may be attributed both internal and external blessings, that is blessings concerning its relation to the rest of the world, and blessings concerning itself in its spiritual leadership which it enjoys. In that sense we will find the prophecies of Balaam attributing internal and external blessings to the spiritual Israel. But all this will be expressed in terms of the physical Israel and its blessings. The prophecies are Messianic but always given in language of non-Messianic prophecies. Similar prophecies are Amos 9,13.14; Joel 3,18 and Micha 4,1-5.

A detailed study of the prophecies will illustrate more clearly what is meant, and also show whether our interpretation is Scriptural, and hermeneutically correct. A climactic development of the theme will also be noticed.

2. The First Prophecy (Num.23,7-10).

Balaam began this first and briefest of the four prophecies with an introduction concerning himself and the reason for his presence. In an open manner he spoke very impressingly to Balak, "From Aram hath Balak brought me, The king of Moab from the mountains of the east: Come, curse me Jacob, And come, excrete Israel". But this trouble to which Balak went was useless, as these words in their forceful presentation already began to indicate. But Balaam did not let Balak in doubt very long as to the utter uselessness of his intended curse. In a bold confession he told the king, "How shall I curse, whom the Lord hath not execrated?" At the very beginning of the prophecies,

Balak learned that his false and erroneous idea concerning Balaam's abilities as a reputed sorcerer was false and ungrounded. Balaam, in words which the Lord gave him to say, told Balak that he was God's servant and had to curse and bless according to the will of the Lord. Furthermore, Balaam immediately implied that in this case especially it was useless for Balak to attempt to have Israel cursed since God had blessed that people. Having told Balak that, Balaam ended the introduction by saying, "For from the summit of the rocks I see him, And from the hills I behold him". There Balaam referred to the position in which he was standing, and indicated that he was deeply impressed with the sight of a portion of the camp of the Israelites as they were spread out below him.

The real body of this the first prophecy is very brief as found in Num. 23, 9b-10. The first thing that Balaam told Balak, after partly seeing the Israelites encamped as they were, was the fact that they were a separated nation not having anything to do with other nations. To Balak this meant that the Hebrew nation as such was peculiar and different from all other nations and separated from them. And that is true. The Jews were a distinctly different nation during their whole history as a nation. This individuality was not even lost in the captivity concerning which we read, Esther 3, 8, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people ---; and their laws are diverse from all people". But that was not the meaning intended by Balaam, though those words, with that meaning, served as an illustration to the true and only meaning which God intended the words to have and which Balaam, his faithful prophet, considered them as having. The sight of the Hebrew nation caused Balaam to think of the reasons for their separation and blessings and he, as a prophet of the Lord and also especially inspired on this occasion, thought of the true Israel, that is the believers. Those are the people whom he meant as dwelling alone and not being reckoned

among the nations. Seclusion and separation, as Balaam meant it, applied to the Hebrew nation, the physical Israel, only in as far as they were included in the true Israel, the spiritual Israel, the believers and the nation that feared the Lord (Ex.19,4.5; Deut.7,6;14,2;26,18; Ps.135,4; Is.41,8;43,1). The real Israeli, the spiritual body of believers, - as Balaam, they did not have to belong to the physical Israel - were God's peculiar people whom He bore on eagles wings, His treasure, His turtle-dove and the flock which He leads, the beloved bride whom He has chosen and betrothed to Himself for ever in mercy and faithfulness (Hos.2,21.22). That is why they are separated from the other nations. That is what Balaam thought of when he saw the physical Israel before him, which, with its blessings, - and it had many - was but a feeble illustration, and afforded only weak descriptions of the true separation of the spiritual Israel.

The next remark of Balaam~~s~~ was concerning the great number of the body of believers which cannot be counted. This, again, was couched in words describing the physical Israel before him. He said, "Who counteth the dust of Jacob, And by number the fourth part of Israel?" This very evidently does not refer to the physical Israel or a fourth part of it which could easily have been counted if need be. Balaam spoke of the spiritual Israel. They cannot be counted for they are as innumerable as the sand or the dust. Not even a small portion of them can be counted, as Balaam said while beholding a small portion of the physical Israel, which, however, could have been counted. These remarks of Balaam show that he was acquainted with the promise of God to Abraham Gen.13,16. From Rom.4,12ff we learn that this promise referred

13--The phrase "who counteth the dust of Jacob?" is a pregnant expression by no means surprising, and means, "Who can count the Israelites, who are like the dust that cannot be counted?"

14--The expression "fourth part" (רִבְעִית) was used because Balaam was reminded of the four divisions of the camp (Num.2) of the Hebrews in the desert, of which he only saw part of one, possibly the tribe of Dan, which was the hindmost (Num.2,31).

to the spiritual Israel including the believers which were not sons of Abraham by the flesh. And from Heb.11,9ff we learn that the promises given to Abraham concerning the land of Canaan and his physical seed served him as a type and illustration of the spiritual Israel and its home. So Balaam here used the physical Israel as a type of the spiritual Israel.

Balaam ended the first prophecy with the words, "Let me die the death of the righteous, And be my end like his!" This remark proves conclusively that Balaam had the spiritual Israel, the body of believers, in mind while speaking and, with his eyes, beholding the physical Israel. The word $\square' \gamma \psi'$ "righteous" has here almost the force and nature of a proper noun, and thus coincides with $\gamma \gamma \gamma \psi'$ (Deut.32,15;33,26) a poetical appellation of Israel who are or should be the $\square' \gamma \psi'$ or $\square' \gamma \psi' \gamma \psi'$ $\kappa \alpha \tau' \epsilon \xi \sigma \chi \eta \nu$ (Ps.14,5;Is.26,2;60,21) as God Himself is $\gamma \psi \gamma \psi' \gamma \psi'$ (Deut.32,4). This expression "righteous" is not to be applied to the physical Israel as most commentators do, thus giving the word the meaning "honorable". It refers to those people within the Hebrew nation who are truly righteous - the spiritual Israel - because of whom the whole nation is then called righteous (Deut.32,15;33,26).

When then the righteous in the Old Testament died they went to heaven through faith in the promised Messiah. This is nowhere expressed in just those words, particularly not in the Pentateuch. But the story of the fall and the first promise tells us just what the Old Testament faithful understood with the death of the righteous. Punishment and unhappiness was inflicted upon the people. Yet relief, in the form of the Messianic prophecies, was promised the righteous. Now the righteous died and were gathered to their fathers. We read of their deaths as joyful and peaceful. They could not have died thus if they had considered the promise of happiness and blessedness referring to their death as an end of the troublesome life here on earth. Death and annihilation would be ^ahorrible kind of blessedness to be expecting

since a person naturally abhors death. The faithful in the Old Testament could only ~~far~~ long for death in view of a true happiness awaiting them beyond the grave. Cf. Gen. 47, 9 and all of Ch. 49. ¹⁵⁾

This expression of Balaam therefore does not refer to the death or end of a self satisfied man who has lived righteously and thanks God for all the blessings he has received, especially ~~an~~ for the great posterity which will arise out of his seed. Balaam, therefore, did not ask God, "that, in the hour of death, he may look back upon an existence blessed by security and rich in pious works and life ennobled by the knowledge of God and His protecting love; and that he may leave behind a numerous and happy posterity." ¹⁶⁾ But he wished, as an inspired believer himself, to die the death of all believers and to receive the eternal reward ~~resulting from it~~ as a faithful believer in the Messiah.

Thus Balaam ended the first prophecy which was but a short beginning of more and extended prophecies. Very clearly ^{ly} was even this first prophecy a Messianic one, referring to the spiritual Israel and its end which it receives only through the Messiah. Balak, of course, did not see Balaam's intended meaning but undoubtedly considered the words of Balaam just as they stood, and not as types or illustrations of the real and fully applicable meaning.

15--Thus Hofmann's remarks are erroneous when he says, "Was unmittelbar nach dem Sterben ihrer ^{wartet} das ist der Zustand des Todes, an welchem nichts Erfreuliches ist. Sie bleiben die Gerechten, welche sie bei Lebzeiten gewesen, aber ~~ein~~ ein Lohn ihrer Gerechtigkeit wird ihnen nicht zu Theil, so lange die Verheissung Gottes unerfuellt bleibt". Schriftbeweis Band I S. 507.

16--Kalisch, Bible Studies L.p. 174. The erroneous view is also adopted by men like Hengstenberg, Kurtz and Keil.

3. The Second Prophecy (Num.23,18-24).

In this prophecy Balaam expanded the theme of the preceding and showed more clearly the absolute certainty of Israel's greatness. Pharaoh, dreaming twice a dream of the same importance, was assured of its realization. See also Acts 11,10. So Balaam unfolded his prophecies over Israel in repeated strains to emphasize what he was saying and to enlarge by perceptible degrees their depth and meaning. Thus the whole tone of the second is more emphatic and bold than that of the first prophecy. Balaam began with harsh and hard words directly to the unwilling listener, "Arise, Balak, and hear, Harken unto me, son of Zippor!."

Thus, before actually taking up the contents of the first prophecy and elaborating on it, Balaam repeated boldly to Balak the fact that he could and would not curse the Hebrews since God had blessed the nation itself because of the righteous within that nation. Balaam referred to God's faithfulness and immutability and said, "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it, And spoken and shall He not fulfil it?" (Num.23,19). This remark, of course, referred primarily to God's immutability with reference to what was said in the previous prophecy. We do not find here a contradiction to such passages as Gen.6,7 and 1 Sam.15,11 as well as of Gen.18,20-32 or Jon.3,10;4,2. It must be remembered that the Bible must always use human and inadequate terms particularly to describe the indescribable God. "Such passages of Scriptures as state that God repents of an action are to be ~~understood~~¹⁷⁾ understood anthropathically".

As God's immutability referred to the preceding prophecy, Balaam also referred it to what he was about to say in the second prophecy. He said,

17--Prof.W.H.T. Dau, "Doctrinal Theology", Vol.I, p.88. Cf. also Hengstenberg, "Beitraege", Vol.III, p.453f.

"Behold, I have received command to bless, And He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it". (v.20). It is not for Balaam to change God's plans if He Himself does not change them. Balak very unwillingly had to listen to these unwelcome words which Balaam willingly took from God. $\text{׀} \text{ׁ} \text{ׂ} \text{׃} \text{ׄ} \text{ׅ} \text{׆} \text{ׇ} \text{׈} \text{׉} \text{׊} \text{׋} \text{׌} \text{׍} \text{׎} \text{׏}$ means "I have taken to bless", i.e. I have received from God the commission to bless. The LXX renders the principal verb incorrectly in the passive '*παρείλημμαι*'; and so the Vulgate, '*adductus sum*'; and also Luther, '*bin ich hergebracht*'.

After such an emphatic introduction Balaam took up the subject of the prophecies again and said, "He beholdeth no iniquity in Jacob, And seeth not distress in Israel"(V.21a). The subject of $\text{׀} \text{ׁ} \text{ׂ} \text{׃} \text{ׄ} \text{ׅ} \text{׆} \text{ׇ} \text{׈} \text{׉} \text{׊} \text{׋} \text{׌} \text{׍} \text{׎} \text{׏}$ and $\text{׀} \text{ׁ} \text{ׂ} \text{׃} \text{ׄ} \text{ׅ} \text{׆} \text{ׇ} \text{׈} \text{׉} \text{׊} \text{׋} \text{׌} \text{׍} \text{׎} \text{׏}$ is evidently God, from whom Balaam had taken to bless. It is both less simple and less suitable to take those verbs impersonally as the LXX, *οὐκ ἔσται ---- οὐδὲ ὀφθαλμοεταί*, from whence the Vulgate and Luther's translation. The nouns $\text{׀} \text{ׁ} \text{ׂ} \text{׃} \text{ׄ} \text{ׅ} \text{׆} \text{ׇ} \text{׈} \text{׉} \text{׊} \text{׋} \text{׌} \text{׍} \text{׎} \text{׏}$ and $\text{׀} \text{ׁ} \text{ׂ} \text{׃} \text{ׄ} \text{ׅ} \text{׆} \text{ׇ} \text{׈} \text{׉} \text{׊} \text{׋} \text{׌} \text{׍} \text{׎} \text{׏}$ are best taken in their common meaning of iniquity and distress or toil signifying sin and its consequences. God finds in Israel no impiety or wickedness, and therefore will not visit them with any sufferings. Not seeing the one he will have no cause to see the other. This whole statement is a fuller explanation of the $\text{׀} \text{ׁ} \text{ׂ} \text{׃} \text{ׄ} \text{ׅ} \text{׆} \text{ׇ} \text{׈} \text{׉} \text{׊} \text{׋} \text{׌} \text{׍} \text{׎} \text{׏}$ mentioned in the first prophecy. Balaam, therefore, did not refer to the physical Israel, since even at that time there was plenty of sin among them and God was visiting them with distress. Balaam spoke of the spiritual Israel, the body of believers, who, being in faith, are not considered sinners in the sight of God and who, because of their faith, are not afflicted with punishments from God.

Thinking of the physical Israel Hengstenberg has construed the sentence to mean, "Unbearable to God is the malice practised against the Israelites by their enemies, and the misery they suffer, so that He forthwith removes both malice and misery". But it is only by a strained construction that it is

18--Thus Keil in loco.
 19--Hengstenberg, Bileam, p.112f.

now Balaam described how their King and God protects them externally from their enemies, and he illustrates that with a mentioning of Egypt as the enemy from which the physical Israel was freed. Thus Egypt is used as a picture of the enemies of God's people. Thus also the prophets, especially Hosea and Amos, used Egypt as an illustration of the enemies of the church of God.

The next sentence is connected with the ~~preceding~~ preceding as effect is to cause. If God leads His people out of the hands of their enemies, they are to be strong and mighty. We translated, "They have the fleetness of the buffalo". The $\square\aleph\eta$ (also $\square\aleph\eta$, $\square\eta$ or $\square\eta$) is not the unicorn (LXX $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega\varsigma$, Luther, Einhorn). It must be the Indian rhinoceros or buffalo (Vulgate) since the Bible repeatedly mentions 'the horns' ($\eta\eta\eta$) of the $\square\aleph\eta$ (Ps.22,21). But more uncertain is the meaning of $\eta\eta\eta$. It seems best to connect the root $\eta\eta$ with $\eta\eta$ 'to fly' and to take the word in the sense of fleetness, which attribute is elsewhere ascribed to the $\square\aleph\eta$ (Ps.29,6). Following uncertain etymologies are LXX ' $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ ', Vulgate, 'fortitudo', Luther, 'Freudigkeit'. Balaam praised the strength of the spiritual Israel and used the vigour of the huge buffalo as a picture of what he wanted to say. Besides the internal blessing which they have, of having God with them, the children of God have the external blessing of being strong and independent to withstand all attacks of the enemies of God's people, just as the $\square\aleph\eta$ is independent and able to withstand all attacks (Job.39,9-12).

But Balaam had not finished pronouncing blessings upon the spiritual Israel. He said, "There is no enchantment in Jacob, Nor divination in Israel" (v.23a), and thereby indicated that God shows His special favour to His chosen people in this point also, that He does not have them commit the sin of seeking information from diviners. But, on the other hand, ~~xx~~ Balaam said, "In due

21--Thus Kalisch, Bible Studies I, p.168, against Hengstenberg's argumentations, Balaam, p.119ff.

time it is told to Jacob, And to Israel, what God doeth". God announces to His children His plans, invariably and in due time, through His messengers and His Word, and thus teaches them how to await and understand future events as in this very case He did through Balaam and not through sorcerers. The fact that this was true to a great extent of the Israelites encamped before him, though they at times fell away and used enchantments, served Balaam as an illustration and a type of what he really did say in a general and all-inclusive way concerning the faithfulness of the spiritual Israel to their Lord. The translation frequently adopted (A.V.), "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel", though perhaps philologically unobjectionable, does not suit the context as well as Luther's translation.

The next words of Balaam about the warlike and victorious lion does not refer to the victories of the Jewish nation over its enemies, but the overwhelming power of the spiritual Israel over its enemies and the peace enjoyed after the enemies are overcome. All that was true to a certain extent of the physical Israel and prophesied particularly of its strong and warlike tribe of Judah, Gen. 49, 9. But here Balaam used that prophecy as an illustration of what he wanted to say concerning God's chosen believers. Balak, the heathen, of course, could not see Balaam's view but considered that a reference simply to the physical prowess of the Hebrew nation, which caused him to tremble.

Thus Balaam ended his second prophecy having blessed the believers who have the King in their midst and therefore are all powerful against their enemies, whom they overcome at all times. This second prophecy is a distinct contrast and elaboration on the first. The first told briefly the blessedness of the righteous, while the second pictured strongly the reasons and results. Therefore the first began calmly, "From Aram hath Balak brought me", while the second had Balak collect and rouse himself to listen to a further and more

illustration in describing the blessedness both of the unstable and permanent homes of the spiritual Israelites, the first concerning the present, the second concerning the future. That the unstable homes of the Israelites in tents and the longing for a permanent home in Canaan was often used to picture the similar condition of the spiritual Israel is evident from Heb.11,9.10.

Balaam further described the peace and internal blessings of the spiritual Israel when he said, v.6, "As valleys that are spread out, As gardens by the river's side, As aloe trees which the Lord hath planted, As cedars beside the waters". These words describe the tents and dwellings of the spiritual Israel. Verse 6, therefore, describes the peaceful life of the children of God. The large extent of their membership is described in 'as valleys that are spread out', their prosperity in 'as gardens by the river's side', their joyful life coming from God in 'as aloe trees which the Lord hath planted', their endurance and strength in 'as cedars beside the waters'. We translated אֲלֹעִים with 'aloe-trees' because of passages as Cant.4,14 and ps.45,8. They "are the aloe trees, which are found in the East Indies, in Siam, in Cochin China, and upon the Moluccas, and from which the aloe wood was obtained, that was so highly valued in the preparation of incense, on account of its fragrance. 22) Some earlier translators do not read אֲלֹעִים but אֹהֳלוֹת 'tents' (LXX, ὡσεὶ σκηναί; Vulgate, tabernacula, Luther, Huetten), which is made more than doubtful by parallelism of אֲרָזִים 'cedars', though the verb יָצַח is used also in connection with tents (Dan.11,45). The aloe trees, which God has planted, are like the cedars, which God has planted (Ps.104,16), pre-eminent in excellence and duration. Thus also are God's people whom he has planted. Speaking of the spiritual Israel God said through Amos(9,15), "I will plant them upon their

22--Keil in loco. Also Davis Bible Dictionary. - Kalisch erroneously considers the reference here to an indigenous succulent plant of the genus asphodalus, apparently because he does not want to give international trade any credit for those days. And furthermore those are no trees to be paralleled with cedars.

land", in referring to the building of the fallen tabernacle of David.

Nothing could describe blessings more than a repeated allusion to water, so Balaam went on to say, "Water floweth from his buckets, And his seed is by many waters" (Deut.8,7;Ps.65,10;Is.44,3.4). Such passages ascribe continual and great blessings allotted to the persons or places described. The picture is here of a man going forth with his two buckets (dual with suffix is $\text{בָּרָבִי}^{\text{ב}}$) so abundantly full of water that it overflows. He also plants his seed corn in and by places well irrigated with water where he will enjoy a good crop. The real significance of the picture is very evident. God's people, the believers are richly blessed even in earthly things. They will have an abundance of everything and enjoy a great posterity also richly blessed. Luther's translation is faulty (sein Same wird ein gross Wasser werden) not observing the ב in $\text{בָּרָבִי}^{\text{ב}}$.

After having thus described the people Balaam turned to a description of their King and said "And his King is higher than Agag, And his kingdom is exalted". The resemblance alone between this and the previous prophecy, at this point, shows that Balaam here thought of the same King of whom he spoke in Num.23,21, and that the King here is the Messiah. Thus also the kingdom here, which is higher than all the rest, is the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah of which Balaam is speaking throughout all the prophecies. All this is described in terms of the temporal kingdom of the physical Israel and its superiority over its enemies. This, however, served but as a meagre illustration since the physical kingdom of Israel never was so idealistically exalted and all powerful over its enemies. Therefore this, and all the prophecies, must refer to the Messiah and His blessed and powerful kingdom, illustrated by the meagre resemblances in the conditions of the physical Israel. Agag here is the

23--Here Hengstenberg's false interpretation shows itself clearly when he contends, Balaam, p.154, that the reference is Messianic only in as far as the Hebrews arrived at their full power by the establishment of the monarchy, and that monarchy realised its full destination by the advent of the Messiah only.

titular name for the Amalekite rulers as Pharaoh of Egypt and Abimelech of Philistia (Gen.20,2.3; Gen.26,1.2; Ps.34,1; 1 Sam.21,10)²⁴⁾. Nothing in the context warrants a reference to the individual king Agag of the Amalekites whom Saul slew (1 Sam.15,8). That defeat of Agag showed Agag very weak, and furthermore it was no great or illustrious act on the part of Saul in overcoming the Amalekites at that time. But Agag as a titular name is taken as a picture of the powerful rulers of the world opposing the King Messiah and His Kingdom. The fact that the Amalekite kings were strong and powerful enemies of the Hebrew nation to whom they, however, repeatedly had to bow, served as the illustration to Balaam's intended meaning of the exalted kingdom of God to whom the most powerful enemies must bow (Ps.2). That the reference here is not to the particular incident in 1 Sam.15 is evident from the fact that the Amalekites just then were not a particularly strong enemy.

The next remark of Balaam was an exact repetition of what he had said in the previous prophecy, Num.23,22, with the very same meaning. The use of the plural pronoun in the object is not a real difference,^{since} in the one we have 'them' and in the other 'him' both denoting the same thing, that is, the spiritual Israel. Here in Num.24,8, however, Balaam added some remarks not mentioned in the previous instance. He said, "He devoureth nations, his enemies, And crusheth their bones, And pierceth with his arrows". The Piel אָרַךְ is a denominative verb of אָרַךְ 'bone' and means 'to crush or break bones'. אָרַךְ means 'to dash to pieces' and so אָרַךְ cannot be the object since arrows are only broken to pieces. אָרַךְ is then taken as simple noun denoting the instrument.²⁵⁾ There is no use changing the meaning of אָרַךְ in an attempt to unify the

24--An extensive proof for this view also philologically is found in Hengstenberg's Beitrage zur Pentateuchkritik B.III, S.306ff.

25--Gesenius Grammar # 52 H.

26--For example, Wobersin, "Echtheit der Bileamsprueche", p.27, translates it 'Zahn' and carries the following picture of the lion into this verse, giving a better unified picture. But nowhere do we find that the meaning of

picture. Balaam is simply using mixed metaphors to describe the power of the church of God warring against its enemies and overcoming them.

The result of such overwhelming and successful attacks of the children of God is that they will be in peaceful repose, not to be molested, as Balaam described it, v.9a, "He coucheth, he lieth down like a lion, And like a lioness, who shall rouse him up?". These words do not mean exactly the same as those in Num.23,24. In the previous prophecy, the lion goes out for his prey, and has not yet lain down; in this prophecy appears the triumphant lion after having couched in such a majestic and powerful looking manner that no one dares to approach.

Balaam now ended this third 'Messianic' prophecy with a truly 'Messianic' statement fitly summarizing everything that had previously been said, "Blessed are they that bless thee, And cursed they that curse thee". Friends of the spiritual Israel, who become identified with it, are blessed, but their enemies are cursed for that kingdom has a most powerful King to exercise punishment upon the strongest enemies. Balaam very evidently repeated here the blessings of Gen.12,3 and 27,29. In these places the words would be meaningless if they would not be construed in the Messianic sense. The physical posterities of Abraham and Jacob are blessed because they are faithful believers in the repeated Messianic promise, and therefore really the spiritual posterities are meant. Thus Balaam meant the spiritual Israel in his prophecies and especially in the summary found here at the end of the third. It seems from Gen.12,3;27,29;Num.24,9b that this expression was a common designation of the people of the true religion, found, in those days, mostly in the Hebrew nation; but the Hebrew nation as such was not designated by that expression.

Thus the third prophecy closed as a seal and combination as well as an expansion of the first two. These three prophecies are truly Messianic though they described the present rather than the future. The con-

ditions of the church of God are the same at all times. Balaam, in these three prophecies described the church of God at his time as led, blessed and protected by their King who was at that time still the pre-incarnate Messiah, their God. Since the contemporaneous descriptions found in the first three prophecies apply also to the future, it is no misnomer to call them prophecies. The fourth prophecy, as a climax, is distinctly different in that it deals expressly and solely with future events.

We have thus seen that it is a mistake to consider the first three prophecies as dealing with temporal blessings of the physical Israel in contrast to the fourth which deals with spiritual blessings. The King referred to in the first prophecies is not a human king over the Hebrew nation but the King Messiah being described more fully in each succeeding prophecy.

5. The Fourth Prophecy.

The circumstances of Balaam by this time must have been very much like those of Amos in Amos 7,10-17. In spite of Balak's unwillingness Balaam was going to advise Balak, now particularly, what was going to happen to his people in the latter days. The verb צָוָה means 'to advise' and here it denotes an announcement which includes an advise. All this is to take place $\text{בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים}$. This expression cannot mean simply the future or following days, but it means the end of the days. The reference is to the end of the period described, and not until then will the prophecy have been fulfilled in its all comprehensive manner. In these prophecies Balaam is describing the Messianic period and particularly the reign of the pre-incarnate Messiah among His people. But he

also referred to the actual physical coming of the Messiah (Num.24,17) and thus included the post-incarnate period of the Messianic reign, or the Messianic period as usually understood with that term. The expression $\text{לְמַדְבָּרַי וְלְמַדְבָּרֵיךְ}$ then refers to the whole reign of the Messiah, before and after His incarnation, but denoting that that which is referred to as going to happen in the near future (during the pre-incarnate Messianic reign, as we shall see) will not have its end till the very last of days (the end of the post-incarnate Messianic reign in this physical world). The use of this expression in Messianic prophecies is very common in the Old Testament found already in Gen.49,1, then also in Deut.4,30 and particularly in the prophets as Hosea 3,5; Is.2,2; Micha 4,1 and Jer.23,19f. This expression does not have both a 'zeitgeschichtliche' and 'heilsgeschichtliche' meaning, but on the basis of Zeitgeschichte as an illustration and type it then refers only and alone to the heilsgeschichte. That is brought out very clearly in this the fourth prophecy of Balaam.

Balaam still spoke of, and prophesied concerning, the same subject matter as in the previous prophecies, namely the internal and external blessings of the spiritual Israel, only here it was in more detail and with reference to the future alone. As to the internal blessings of the spiritual Israel he mentioned the fact that its King, who even then ruled, as we have seen in the previous prophecies, will at some time in the future distinctly appear. As to the external blessings of the spiritual Israel Balaam prophesied that this King would destroy the enemies and protect the friends of His Kingdom in the future. To illustrate Balaam prophesied concerning the fate of particular enemies of the physical Israel. And he mentioned the future blessings of a particular friend of the physical Israel as an illustration of the blessings received by the friends of the spiritual Israel. As Balaam had used the לְמַדְבָּרַי

28--Thus Wobersin "Echtheit der Bileamsprueche" p.73f and Kurtz "Geschichte des Alten Bundes" B.II,487, as well as Hengstenberg, "Bileam", p.160.

physical Israel and its enemies to illustrate particularly the present and past blessings of the spiritual Israel, so he now also prophesied matters concerning the physical Israel to use that as an illustration of the future blessings of the spiritual Israel. The ideal phraseology and the fact that it is the King Messiah who conquers and destroys the enemy, are enough proofs that these references to the future fate of the nations are only used to illustrate the Messiah's power and the fate of His enemies at all times. Therefore the real, intended, single meaning of this prophecy is the fact that, the Messiah, who will at some time in the future appear, does at all times rule over His spiritual Israel, and guards and protects them from their enemies, whom He will, by the end of time, have totally destroyed. As mentioned sometime before, Heb. 11,9.10 indicates the existence of typical prophecies, and the context here shows that Num.24,17-24 is a typical prophecy concerning the blessings of the church of God and the fate of its enemies, though it is^a direct prophecy concerning the Messiah.

The introductory words of this prophecy, Num.24,15.16 are the same as those to the third prophecy and have been treated at length in the study of Balaam's character. The real body of the prophecy begins with v.17 where Balaam started out immediately and described the individual whom he had mentioned in the previous prophecies. Looking out over the camp of the Israelites he did not see the person with his physical eyes. Balaam said, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh". The pronouns here refer to the following subject, a not uncommon construction. The imperfect tense indicates the present, ²⁹⁾ but the adverbial modifiers indicate that the seeing, referred to, is a prophetic seeing. Not now, but in the future, not near, but in the distance that which is described in the following sentence is to happen, namely, "There cometh a star out of Jacob, And a sceptre riseth out of Israel".

The perfect tense used in these verbs then is the prophetic perfect.

A star (כוכב) shall appear. The word star is often used, even today, to denote an important or illustrious person. The poets call their heroes 'stars'. The word is found in such names as Esther, Ishar and Ashtoreth. Corinth was called by Homer 'the star of Greece'. In short, the word 'star' is used to denote a person or thing which for some reason is very noticeable. Thus the word was used by Isaiah to address the great Babylonian king when he said Is.14,12, "O shining star, son of the morning".

The nature of this illustrations person, called a star, is brought out in the parallel where the word sceptre (שֵׁטֶף) is used. The sceptre is the symbol of regal power (Gen.49,10; Is.14,5; Amos 1,5.8; Ps.45,6). By way of metonymy the star and the sceptre is a ruler, a king. The שֵׁטֶף is then not the shepherd's 'staff', the king understood as the shepherd of his people (Lev. 27,32; Ps.23,4), nor directly 'rod' of castigation (Is.10,5; 11,4; Job 9,54), but only indirectly in as far as the king, whom it represents as holding the all powerful ruler's staff, chastise-s his enemies (Ps.2,9). This king described here will be a human being coming out of Israel and Jacob, that is the Jewish nation.

It is hardly necessary to mention at this point again the various schools of Old Testament interpretation ^{all of which} ~~which~~ apply their different theories in identifying the person represented by the star and the sceptre. This king is neither David, not any other Hebrew king, not an ideal representation of the Jewish monarchy; but a direct personal reference to the individual King Messiah mentioned in the previous prophecies. This is evident from the context and the fact that Balaam here used a previous prophecy which also mentioned the Messiah as a ruler (Gen.49,10). No individual human ruler of the Jews

30--Gesenius Grammar # 106 N.

31--For a complete list of interpretations see Kalisch, Bible Studies I p.257f and Reinke, Beitrage, IV, 187.

accomplished what is subsequently ascribed to this King. Neither was that accomplished by the whole line of Jewish kings nor by any ideal representative of theirs. This direct individual referance to the King Messiah has been adopted as the correct interpretation by at least some, ever since the days of the oldest Jewish commentators. Above all, this direct Messianic interpretation is lastingly established by the New Testament where Christ Himself uses the word star and says, "I am the bright and morning star" (Rev. 2, 16). That the star of the Magi is not the star referred to here is very evident, since this is a person and that a thing.

After having thus described the King, Balaam proceeded to tell of some of His actions and said, "And smiteth both sides of Moab, And shattereth all the children of tumult". The words $\text{בְּצַדָּיִם וְבְצַדָּיִם}$ are not to be translated 'temples of Moab' simply because the verb שָׁחַט is not supposed to refer to anything but parts of the human body as objects, though linguistically the rendering 'temples' ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ would be correct (Lev. 19, 27). If translated 'temples' there is less forceful meaning than if translated 'both sides'. Either by metonymy or by taking a different reading the LXX translated $\text{ἀπὸ ἁμῶν καὶ ἀπὸ ἐναντίας αὐτῶν}$. We take it, they must have read $\text{בְּצַדָּיִם וְבְצַדָּיִם}$ from צַדָּיִם 'governor', equivalent to the more frequent term צַדִּיק and preserved in the proper noun $\text{צַדִּיק־בְּנֵי־עֲזָרָה}$ Ezra 2, 6; 8, 4; Neh. 3, 11. Therefore the Vulgate has 'duces' and Luther 'Fuersten'. The best rendering is 'both sides' meaning all of Moab from one side to the other, for then the expression becomes a harmonious parallel to the following.

Much has been written concerning the sentence, "And shattereth all the children of tumult". To take צַדָּיִם as the proper noun Seth, the son of Adam (Gen. 4, 25), and to understand the phrase as "all the children of men" (so LXX

32--In the days of Hadrian a man who posed as the Messiah was therefore called Son of a Star, Bar chosha () but when found out, he was ever after called Son of Falsehood, Bar Cosiva ().
 33--Thus Dillmann in loco.

and Luther) is neither appropriate as regards the words nor the sense. Nowhere in Scriptures do we read so generally of the children of Seth and certainly all men are not descendents of Seth (R.V. margin). Still less defensible are the very numerous other explanations of $\text{נְשִׁי} \text{נְגִי}$ which have been suggested, for instance, 'children of the drunkard' (Lot), or the Ammonites and Moabites, נְשִׁי derived from נְשִׁי ; or 'men of might', נְשִׁי taken as equivalent to נְשִׁי 'foundations'; or 'all the strong walls', נְגִי supposed to be equivalent to נְגִי . Some propose to read נְשִׁי , identical with נְשִׁי in the sense of haughtiness or presumption. But there is no reason for abandoning the Massoretic reading. In Jer. 48, 45 the word נְשִׁי is replaced by נְשִׁי . Therefore נְשִׁי , which occurs also with the scriptio plena נְשִׁי (Lam. 3, 47) is most probably to be referred to the same root נְשִׁי 'to cause a din', from which נְשִׁי is derived and means 'tumult'. The children of tumult are then tumultuous and war-loving people (Amos 2, 2). For נְשִׁי the Inf. Pilp. the meaning 'to destroy' is fully established by the parallel נְשִׁי and by Is. 22, 5. In Jer. 48, 45 we find the word נְשִׁי (the crown of the head). But, though Jer. 48, 45 is evidently based on Num. 24, 17 we are not justified in changing נְשִׁי to נְשִׁי , all the more "since Jeremiah almost invariably uses earlier writings in this free manner, viz. by altering the expressions employed, and substituting in the place of unusual words either more common ones, or such as are similar in sound". "Shattereth all the children of tumult" is simply a poetic parallel to "smiteth both sides of Moab".

The grammatical construction of the sentence as well as the subsequent history of Moab show that this verse cannot be a prophecy, couched in ideal phraseology, as it is, concerning the subjugation of the children of Moab by

34--Altogether wrong is Sayce when he says, "Seth are the Sutu of the Assyrian inscriptions, the Sittu or 'Archers' of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, the Bedawin of modern geography. The Beni-Seth will be the Midianite Bedawin who are associated with the Moabites in the Pentateuch". Early Hist. of Heb. p. 230.
 35--Keil in loco. Also Hengstenberg, Bileam, p. 171.

the children of Israel. The Moabites were never entirely destroyed by the Israelites, and even at times Moab was at peace with Israel and was absolutely independent, especially after the divided kingdom (cf. 2 Kings 1,1; 2 Kings 3; 2 Chron. 20; 2 Kings 13,20 etc). Furthermore the one who smitteth and shattereth is the King Messiah and not the children of Israel, the Hebrew nation. He it is who totally destroyed the Moabites so that there is no trace of such a nation today. This total destruction of Moab on the part of the Messiah, who did at times use the physical Israel to bring this about in part, was due to their enmity against the King Messiah and His people, the spiritual Israel. Thus this prophecy concerning the total destruction of Moab served as a type and an illustration of the fate of all enemies of the church of God.

The same is true in the following verses 18 and 19 concerning the fate of Edom. Balaam said, "And Edom is his possession, And his possession is Seir, his enemies, And Israel acquireth might. And he that cometh out of Jacob ruleth, And destroyeth the remnant from the cities". The construction is rather difficult here. To וְיִשְׂרָאֵל must be supplied 'his' that is the King's possession who is still the subject throughout vs.18 and 19. Thus also the suffix in וְיִשְׂרָאֵל refers to the King, and the noun is in apposition to וְיִשְׂרָאֵל and וְיִשְׂרָאֵל , the sense being that Edom and Seir, the King's enemies, shall become the King's possession (Vulgate distinctly the first part, 'et erit Idumeaea possessio eius'; LXX the second part, *καὶ ἔσται κληρονομία Ἡοῦ ὁ ἔχθρος αὐτοῦ*). The construction is less clear and simple if the suffix in וְיִשְׂרָאֵל is applied to Seir, 'a possession is Seir of his enemies'; Vulgate, 'haereditas Seir cedet inimicis suis'; Luther, 'Seir wird seinen Feinden unterworfen sein'; A.V., 'Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies'. On the basis of Gen. 36,20 some have taken וְיִשְׂרָאֵל and וְיִשְׂרָאֵל to mean Edomites and Horites, the sons of Seir the Horite. But it is only correct to observe the parallelism of the people and the country, meaning one and the same thing, namely the Edomites

living in Mt. Seir. The phrase $\bar{\zeta}^{\eta} \bar{\eta}^{\psi}$ denotes an increase in property and power (Deut. 8, 17, 18; Ruth 4, 11; Prov. 31, 29) yet $\bar{\zeta}^{\eta}$ should not be restricted to wealth alone. The subject of $\bar{\eta}^{\psi}$ (v. 19) is indefinite but the context shows that the King is meant. The verb is a Jussive form of $\bar{\eta}^{\psi}$, 'to be master' or 'to rule', not of $\bar{\eta}^{\psi}$, 'to descend' as LXX $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\epsilon\rho\theta\eta\sigma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$. The words $\bar{\eta}^{\psi}$ and $\bar{\eta}^{\psi}$ are to be understood collectively.

The prophecy on Edom, as that on Moab, signifies utter destruction. Even those who at first escaped would be destroyed. This does not prophecy anything that the Hebrew nation itself did to the Edomites. In the first place, the acting power is again the King Messiah. He alone utterly destroyed the Edomites in the course of time so that there is now no such nation in existence. The Hebrew nation, however, never accomplished the destruction of Edom as the history clearly shows. True, there was more or less continual warfare between Israel and Edom at all times, but sometimes the one and then the other would be victorious. Never was Edom utterly destroyed. The prophets spoke of Edom as a great affliction to Israel and ~~XXXX~~ decried them because they had a perpetual hatred and shed the blood of the children of Israel by the sword in the time of their calamity (Ezek. 35, 5; Jer. 49, 7-22 etc). Later John Hyrcanus (129 B.C.) did subject Edom and forced it to submit to circumcision, but then, a century later, we find the Idumaeen family of Herod ruling powerfully over the Hebrew nation. Furthermore it was prophesied to Edom that they would at times have dominion over their brethren (Gen. 27, 40). Since the acting power here, as before, is the King Messiah, since the possession and destruction is a total and an ideal one, and since the prophecy on Edom is so closely connected with the preceding, the meaning is that the King Messiah will utterly destroy the Edomites for being His enemies, and then also enemies of the spiritual Israel. Thus the Edomites become a type and picture of enemies of the church. When the enemies are thus destroyed then the church grows stronger and mightier,

that is Israel acquireth might. The word Israel thus has the meaning of spiritual Israel, which rendering is also justified from the fact that the King Messiah is here the ruler over Israel.

Balaam now began the first of the three short, so-called appended prophecies. That Balaam saw the Amalekites refers to the prophetic seeing. Balaam could not see the Amalekites from where he was standing even though they seem to have been very ubiquitous. Nowhere do we read that they lived in the lower Jordan valley especially at that time. A few years before this time they were roaming and scattered about the peninsula of Sinai.

Concerning the Amalekites Balaam said, "Amalek is the first of the nations, But his end is for destruction". The Amalekites are called the first (אֲמֵלֶקִים). This does not here refer to their great power, although they were the mightiest of all people. But they are called the first because they were the first to attack the new-born Hebrew nation in the desert at Rephidim (Ex.17). This view is furthermore established by the word אֲמֵלֶקִים which usually does not simply denote 'nations', but hostile and heathen nations. There is no use of taking אֲמֵלֶקִים (36) to mean 'as far as those who perish', אֲמֵלֶקִים being taken collectively (cf. Job 29,13;31,19;Prov.31,6). The simplest way is to take אֲמֵלֶקִים as neuter in the sense of destruction, meaning that his end will reach destruction.

Being found in connection with the preceding the meaning of these words is very evident. The utter destruction of the Amalekites is here prophesied. Since the one who is to destroy them is not mentioned, we must imply from the preceding that it is the King Messiah who will also destroy Moab and Edom. Amalek, in opposing the Hebrews at Rephidim and forever after, showed itself as an enemy of the King Messiah and His spiritual Israel. Therefore He was going to destroy them. Unlike His ways of destroying Moab and Edom where He used the Hebrews only to destroy partially while using other means to bring about the utter destruction, here in connection with Amalek, as history shows, the King

36-- For the peculiar form אֲמֵלֶקִים see Gesenius Grammar #1037 and #124a.

used the physical Israel to destroy Amalek utterly. This utter destruction of the Amalekites was accomplished when in the days of Hezekiah a portion of the Simeonites annihilated their last remnant (1 Chron.4,42.43.). Nowhere later do we find any mention of this once powerful nation which at Balaam's time was taken as a representative powerful enemy of the Kingdom of the Messiah (Num. 24,7). The reference in Esther 3,1 to Haman the Zgagite has no connection whatsoever. Thus also the Amalekites served as a type and an example of all the enemies of the King Messiah and His spiritual Israel. Their end is destruction.

The next prophecy of Balaam referred to the Kenites, with an introduction identical to that concerning the Amalekites. The seeing of the Kenites is ~~is~~ also here the prophetic seeing. We translate, "Strong is thy dwelling place, And built in a rock thy nest; For surely Kain shall not be destroyed Even when Asshur carrieth thee away captive?". The word קניז, the name of the first ancestor is used to denote the Kenites, just as Moab is used to denote the Moabites. On the basis of Gen.15,19 Hengstenberg claims that the Kenites referred to here are some inhabitants of Canaan, which land should also be represented among the enemies of Israel. But those Kenites, according to the table of nations, where they are missing, in Gen.10, must not have been a formidable tribe. They are also never mentioned among the enemies of Israel at the time of Moses. Therefore Kurtz suggests that the Kenites here are a representation or another name for the Midianites, the enemies of Israel, who are otherwise not mentioned in the prophecies. But the Midianite Kenites were always represented as friends of the Hebrews according to Num.10,29ff and similar passages. No enemies of Israel are meant with the Kenites here as the context and translation shows. The idea that the Kenites here are enemies of Israel arises from a mistranslation and a false notion that Balaam was only

37--Bileam p.190ff.

38--Geschichte des Alten Bundes B.II S.495f.

to represent, in his prophecies, the fate of the enemies of Israel.

The Kenites mentioned here are that portion of the wandering Midianites which were friendly to the Hebrews and shared their fortunes (Num.10,29-32; Ex.18,1-26), the descendents of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. Furthermore, the prophecy can only be read to pronounce blessings upon the Kenites, even though the Hebrew is difficult. "Strong is they dwelling place, And built in a rock thy nest". $\square^{\prime}\psi$ is here participle passive, as in 2 Sam.13,32 and Obad. 4, and not the infinitive or imperative as some would have it. The dwelling of the Kenites is strong because their nest is in the rocks. There is a play upon words here with $\zeta^{\prime}\rho$ and $\eta^{\prime}\rho$. The words represent a picture. These Kenites had lived in the safe crags of the Horeb mountains. Now they have a safer dwellingplace since they have nestled themselves together with the spiritual Israel in the hands of the almighty King, the Messiah. Thus the Kenites were pictured by Balaam as a type of all friends of the spirithal Israel, and the blessings resulting from becoming associated with them.

The next verse is very difficult Hebrew and is construed and interpreted in various ways by different writers. We translate, "For surely Kain shall not be destroyed, Even when Asshur carrieth them away captive!". $\square\zeta^{\prime}\rho$ does not mean "nevertheless" so that this verse is to signify just the opposite of the preceding. Neither are the renderings "but" or "except when" acceptable. Nor can the particles be separated since there is but one idea involved. $\square\zeta$ is the interrogative, expecting a negative answer as the Latin 'num', also found in single questions as here. ρ then has its usual meaning 'for'. $\eta^{\prime}\rho$ 'to destroy' is Piel. We translated $\eta^{\prime}\rho\text{-}\tau\psi$ 'even when' which renders good English for the peculiar Hebrew. The exact translation would be 'till when'. But that

39--Gesenius Grammar # 150 F.G.

40--Gesenius Grammar # 29 F. - Hommel, "Alt Israelitische Ueberlieferung", p. 245 changes le-baer to le-Eber and translates 'Kain will blong to Eber'. A flimsy conjecture taken over from Klostermann.

would not be clear. The אֲשׁוּר carries on the preceding question and indicates that what had been said also applies to the condition of Kain as described in the following. The person described in אֲשׁוּר is Kain, ~~אֲשׁוּר~~ The reference to Israel here would be entirely too far fetched. An abrupt change like this⁴¹⁾ from the third to the second person happens at times in Hebrew.

Here Balaam also mentioned Asshur. Hommel identifies Asshur here with⁴²⁾ the land of Shur in southern Palestine. But it is evident that the Kenites were never taken into captivity by any of the inhabitants of Shur. We have here simply a prophecy concerning the Assyrian captivity of the Jews. See for example 2 Kings 15,29 concerning Tiglathpilezer of Assyria. In taking the children of Israel captive he also took along the friendly Kenites who had come to dwell with the Israelites (Judges 4,11). It would not have been impossible for Balaam to prophecy concerning a nation that was as yet not at all in existence. But Balaam knew of Assyria at that time since even then already that very word was used to designate one of the vassal nations of the king of Babylon. Even then already Assyria was beginning to assert itself. In the Tel el-Amarna letters we read of a complaint of the Babylonian king concerning the fact that the 'Assyrians', his vassals, have gone to Canaan to⁴³⁾ enter into relations with the Egyptian court. *

Here in verse 22 Balaam prophesied the future captivity of the Jews under which also the friendly Kenites are included. All this, however, is to be understood typically according to the analogy of the rest of the prophecies of Balaam. The Kenites and the Israelites typify the spiritual Israel, and

41--Gesenius Grammar # 144 P.

42--He says, "In dem Satz, 'Ashur wird dich (den Keniter) gefangen fortfuehren' sind mit Ashur die naechsten Nachbarn der Keniter gemeint, vielleicht auch die spaeteren Herren Ashur's oder Sued-Judah's, die Israeliten der Richter-Zeit und der Zeit David's (vgl. z.B. die Stelle 1 Sam. 27,10). Erst Leser der Koenigszeit verstanden dann Assyrien darunter, da sie sich unter der veralteten Bezeichnung Ashur fuer Shur nichts anderes mehr denken konnten".
Alt Israelitische Ueberlieferung, S. 246.

43--Sayce in "Early History of the Hebrews", p. 230f, quoting from Records of the Past, new ser. III, pp. 61-65.

Asshur typifies the enemies of the church of God, who are permitted by the King Messiah to trouble the elect. But such trouble and captivity will not result in destruction for the Messiah's Kingdom since He will see to it that His enemies are duly punished. That thought was brought out in Balaam's final words.

The third so-called appendix to the prophecies began with the words, "Woe, who shall live, when God doeth this!" The $\gamma\pi$ in $\dot{\gamma}\pi\dot{\psi}\pi$ is temporal (LXX, $\delta\tau\alpha\nu$; Vulgate, quando), while $\dot{\gamma}\pi\dot{\psi}$ is the infinitive construct of $\square\dot{\gamma}\psi$ 'to establish, set'. The suffix is to be taken as neuter and referred to what follows. To refer it to what has been said in the previous verse before the interruption by the sentence "And he took up his parable and said", would be referring the pronoun back too far when an appropriate noun clause is immediately following. Furthermore, this fits into a very logical meaning. $\dot{\gamma}\pi$ is "God" and not an abbreviation of $\dot{\gamma}\pi\dot{\psi}\pi$, which is always written with an article in the Pentateuch. Here in an unusual manner the subject follows the object and infinite verb.⁴⁴⁾

Balaam expressed a particular 'Woe' when he was about to tell how the King would destroy His enemies who lived especially in his native country. Then also the remark indicates the severity of the universal and total punishment which will come upon all the enemies of the church when the King will cause one to be punished by the other till finally they have all been destroyed.⁴⁵⁾ That the King Messiah is the one who inflicts all this punishment upon His enemies is evident from the general context of the whole prophecy.

44--Gesenius Grammar # 115 K.

45--Some of the many erroneous interpretations as found compiled in Kalisch, Bible Studies I p.300 are as follows: Who shall live if Asshur destroys Israel's power?; Who can live in those days, when Nebuchadnezzar makes himself a God?; Wer uebersteht sein Verwuester?; Wenn Gott ihn ungluecklich macht; Wenn Gott es ihm zugedacht; Wehe, wer ueberlebt, was Gott festgesetzt; Who can live when God shall have put the Assyrian into the world. - But such translations are interpolations.

In brief, clear statements Balaam described this future, general and total punishment. We translate, "And ships from the side of Chittim, They humble Asshur and humble Eber, But he also is for destruction". $\square^{\prime}\aleph$ like $\square^{\prime};\aleph$, (Dan.11,30) is a plural of the unusual word \aleph signifying 'ship'. $\aleph^{\prime}\aleph$ means 'from the side'; that is 'from along side'. $\aleph^{\prime}\aleph$ refers to the power represented by the ships from the side of Chittim. They also, as the rest, shall be destroyed. $\square^{\prime}\aleph^{\prime}\aleph$ is undoubtedly the island of Cyprus, in which one of the most ancient towns was Citium (*Kίτιον* or *Κίτιον*). From Is.23,1; Dan.11,30 and 1 Macc.1,1 it is evident that to come from the side of Chittim meant to come from the West in general since all the ships from the West had to pass by Chittim. Eber, used here for the people, denotes the inhabitants of the land beyond the Euphrates or of Mesopotamia. The context forbids to take $\aleph^{\prime}\aleph$ in the stricter sense of Hebrews (so LXX, Vulgate) who, throughout the section, are never called by that name. Furthermore we would hardly expect the Hebrew nation represented, together with Assyria, as an enemy of the spiritual Israel. Here Asshur and Eber denote the whole Asiatic civilization which was humbled by the ships from the side of Chittim, Asshur denoting particularly the eastern and lower Euphrates region and Eber the western or upper Euphrates region. ⁴⁶⁾

Much has been written concerning the interpretation of this verse, Num. ⁴⁷⁾ 24,24. It would be beside the point and useless to mention and refute the various interpretations mostly based on the theory of vaticinium post eventum, or on a denial of miracles to the extent that such an insignificant reference should refer to such a great event as the complete subjugation of the East by the West. Thus Kalisch refers this to an insignificant event concerning a ⁴⁸⁾ Cyprian rebellion which was soon quenched.

46--For more about Asshur and Eber cf Wobersin, *Echtheit der Bileamsprueche*, p.46.

47--A very good and detailed account and refutation of the various erroneous views is found in Kurtz, *"Geschichte des Alten Bundes"* B.II s.497-500.

48--He says, *Bible Studies*, I, p.297, "Not from the west, but from the east, ruin and annihilation came upon the Assyrians - from the rugged mountain tracts of Kurdistan, which poured forth the rapacious and pitiless Chaldeans like a scourge over the lands of Asia".

The true meaning of verse 24, however, is very simple and clear. The powerful nations in Asia which were enemies of the King Messiah and His Kingdom were to receive their punishment from the Messiah who rules His church and protects it. To do this, the King, who is called God in v.24, will send other powerful nations from the West. These were, first the Greek and then the Roman empires. Since, however, they were also enemies of the King Messiah and His Kingdom, the spiritual Israel, they were to be utterly destroyed, and thereby also the nations whom they had humbled would likewise be utterly destroyed, and In the destruction of the Western enemies of the church of God lies also prophesied the destruction of the greatest of all enemies of the spiritual Israel, who grew up in the place of the Roman Empire, the Antichrist himself. Thus also this last sentence of Balaam prophesied the destruction of great nations of the world as a type and example of what the King Messiah will always do to the enemies of His spiritual Israel.

6. Concluding Remarks.

Balak heard all these prophecies, but because of his lack of faith and knowledge in spiritual matters ^{he} simply interpreted them as he understood them, namely that the Hebrew nation was powerful and blessed by its God Jehovah and that it would overpower all the neighboring tribes. Thus Balak, who heard the prophecies then is a good example of many interpreters, who read the prophecies today. They explain them only as they can understand them according to their spiritual blindness and unbelief. Therefore they see in the first prophecies merely temporal and contemporaneous blessings pronounced on the Hebrew nation. Therefore the fourth prophecy is cut up into appendices, and the pieces

considered interpolations at a time when such references were vaticinia post eventus. We purposely refrained from mentioning in detail, during the course of the explanation, the various interesting false interpretations. However, they have been sufficiently explained in general. A convincing refutation of those interpretations is found in the establishment of the correctness of our own interpretation.

These statements of Balaam added nothing new in the line of Messianic prophecies where each subsequent prophecy usually included some detail concerning the Messiah which had not been mentioned in the preceding ones. He, Balaam, clearly described the Messiah as He had been described before in Gen. 49,10, as ruler over His people. This Balaam, however, did in an extensive manner, mentioning in detail some of the enemies the Messiah would destroy. The theme of all four prophecies then simply is, "The Blessings of God's People" This is brought out by the fact that He is their King and protects them.

The progress and development of thought was observed in the explanation. The unity of these prophecies, together with the ever increasing power of contents, may be described as a river which at its source is but a small smooth running rivulet, but as it goes along, becomes an ever increasing mighty stream.

Commenting on the statement, Deut. 23, 5, that God changed Balaam's intended curse into a blessing, the Midrash says, "The Lord gave power to Balaam's voice, ⁴⁹⁾ so that it was heard from one end of the world to the other". This is true, of course, in a figurative sense. And in that sense it is very true. Today, all over the world, wherever the Bible is read, the voice of the prophet Balaam, the spokesman of God, is heard, telling the children of God that they are blessed for being members of the all powerful and exalted Kingdom where Christ is the King who defends them and shatters their enemies to the end of days.

IV. AUTHENTICITY.

1. The Miracles.

The Balaam narrative, contains, as we have seen, prophecies, that is, the foretelling of future events. This, of course, is denied by higher critics and rationalists. But we simply make the statement that God can give His servants power to foretell future events. If we dare not attribute such power to our God, what should we expect of Him otherwise?

There is, however, another point in the Balaam narrative which has been the subject of much ridicule and slander. That is the story of the speaking ass. Rationalistic critics deny absolutely that there ever occurred such an incident on the road, but state, on the other hand, that it was a story made up and invented by Balaam, or was an old myth interpolated into the narrative by a later writer. Thus Kalsich disregards the whole incident on the road as something beside the point and evidently not genuine. In the following chapter we will discuss the unity of the whole narrative. But here we will study the miracle of the speaking ass.

The following is one of the very prevalent explanations concerning the speaking ass. Balaam is on the road attacked by a fearful vision, and when the ass, in her anguish, fell down, the vision begins in the prophet's soul; he hears the ass speak, he sees the messenger of Jehovah with the glittering sword - presumably a brilliant flame blazing up before his eyes; he hears at last the Divine messenger's rebuke, that he, more senseless than his ass, had not listened to the earlier and gentler forebodings. Then it is claimed that this incident contains nothing that would not be possible to any one of those Shamans, who are capable of the most violent workings of fancy, "compared to which this vision of Balaam is as child's play", as one writer

50)
has expressed himself. Such interpretations, however, ignore the meaning and power of the individual words in the text itself.

But even the more conservative interpreters do not consider this incident in its true light as found in Num.22,22-35. Though the incident, as a whole, is not denied by these men, they nevertheless try to find various explanations for it. They call in all kinds of ideas as e.g. the operations of the nerves passing beyond the usual limits, magnetic action, clairvoyance, and second sight. Even Hengstenberg is not correct in his views here. Briefly his view is that the whole procedure was an internal action on the part of Balaam, that is e.g. God brought it about that sounds uttered by the creature after its kind, became to the prophet's intelligence as though it addressed him in rational speech.
51a)

The only correct view concerning the story of the speaking ass is that it was an event which happened outside of Balaam's mind, that is, the ass actually spoke articulate words which Balaam understood. Therein lies the real miracle. The appearance of the angel, of course, was also a reality and not merely a vision. God came to Balaam in a visible form to speak to him in a way which he would understand. What the sword of the angel of the Lord was like we do not know. Under the circumstances, as we have seen them in the study of Balaam's character, it was not surprising that the ass saw the angel before Balaam did. How God caused the ass to speak, is asking a question we have no right to answer. This is the view held by men like Kurtz and Keil against Hengstenberg.
51b)

Some of the proofs for this view are: It must be considered a fundament-

50--Herder, "Geist der Ebraeischen Soesie", II, 177-179, taken from Kalisch, "Bible Studies", I, p. 135.

51a--In his "Bileam", p. 48-65 Hengstenberg has brought up six points which in his mind prove conclusively that his view is the only correct view against four points which he permits his opponents to have. His argumentation, however, is not convincing.

51b--Kurtz, "Geschichte des Alten Bundes", II, 467-479 goes into a long exegetical argumentation to refute Hengstenberg and to establish his own interpretation.

ally wrong process on the part of interpreters to confound their own views with those of the Bible, as to assume that since they hold angelophanies of the speaking of animals to be impossible, the Bible assumes the same thing to be true. The words of the Bible must always be taken in their apparent original intended meaning wherever possible. When we read that the ass spoke, we must believe that she spoke. The angel of the Lord appeared in a form visible to the physical eye, and Balaam at first did not see it, somewhat in the same manner in which Hagar did not see the well (Gen.21,19), and the men of Sodom did not see the door of Lot's house (Gen.19,11). The parallels 2 Kings 6,18 and Dan.10,7 often mentioned do not really apply since those were spiritual visions, and not tangible as this one. Furthermore, the miracle of the speaking ass is paralleled by the miracle of the speaking serpent Gen.3. There the Devil spoke through a serpent, here God spoke through an ass. 2 Pet.2,16 we are expressly told that the speaking of the ass forbade the prophet. And we have seen in the study of Balaam how that was really God who in this wise wished to warn Balaam. The fact that the servants or the princes did not see the angel or hear the ass speak, is an argumentum e silentio and carries no weight. The question concerning the presence of the embassy at the time of the miracle will be touched upon in the study on the unity of the narrative. But even if they were present it would be nothing surprising to have read that they did not see or hear what happened. With God nothing is impossible. Furthermore we have close parallels in Luke 24,16; Acts 9,7 and John 12,28ff where the people heard the Father speaking to Jesus but comprehended it not and thought it was thundering.

It is wrong to make a miracle greater than it actually is, but here we must insist, that if the boundaries set by God are broken by Himself, He can go as far as He likes beyond those boundaries, even to the extent of causing an ass to use human speech.

2. The Unity.

Most critics today are agreed that Num.22-24 is a compilation, in general, of the two sources J and E. These two sources then have been sandwiched together with various harmonistic additions by a redactor, who himself was a veritable genius in so successfully compounding the various documents. Dillmann cannot say too much in praise of his literary ability. Yet, in spite of the great learning of the redactor, he has pieced his sources together in the most mechanical way, and has passed unnoticed a number of the plainest contradictions and repetitions. By means of these contradictions and repetitions the critics claim to be able to discover the sources of Num.22-24.

Some of the chief indications of diversity of sources alleged by the various critics are as follows: 1. The doubling of statements at the beginning of ch.22: "And Balak, the son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites". "And Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites at that time". "And Moab was sore afraid of the people because they were many". "And Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel". 2. The alternation in the use of the divine names $\square^{\prime}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\gamma}^{\prime}\bar{\gamma}$ and $\bar{\gamma}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\gamma}^{\prime}$. 3. The incongruity of the story of the speaking ass with the preceding. 4. The contradiction involved in representing God as commanding Balaam to go, and then being angry with him for going to Balak. 5. The statement in Num.22,21 that Balaam went with the princes of Moab, while according to the next verse, there were with him only two servants. 6. The distinction of the third and fourth prophecies from the first and second by the fact that in them Balaam speaks of himself by name. 7. Moreover, the quotations of part of the second in the third would not be likely, it is said, if both prophecies were by the same author.

On the strength of such repetitions and contradictions two utterly divergent sources regarding Balaam are found. According to E, after the defeat of the Amorites, Balak, king of Moab, sends messengers to Balaam,

a holy prophet of Jehovah, at Pethor on the Euphrates. These messengers say nothing about rewards, but simply ask him to come and curse Israel. Balaam refers the matter to God, and, on being forbidden to leave his home, refuses to accompany the messengers. A second embassy is then sent by Balak, and this time Balaam is commanded to go. He accompanies the princes of Moab, meets Balak, and speaks the first and second prophecies. Throughout he appears only as a most pious man.

According to J Balak consulted with the Midianites concerning Israel and learned from them of Balaam the Midianite sorcerer. He sends messengers with the rewards of divination. Balaam at first refuses to come in obedience to a command of God, but after the princes have left, influenced by greed, he sets out to overtake them. The angel of Jehovah withstands him in the narrow way and the ass speaks to him. He offers to go back, but is bidden to proceed. Arriving, he speaks the third and fourth prophecies under a divine impulse that compels him to speak contrary to his wish.

With this general outline the various critics differ widely in respect to the details, as can be learned by consulting the commentaries. Wellhausen himself in his earlier years attributed the first and second prophecies to J and the third and fourth to E but later changed them about.⁵²⁾ And ever since, the critics, as a whole, have followed his idea.⁵³⁾ The further notice in Num. 31 of Balaam's advice to the Midianites and of his own destruction, all the critics seem to ascribe to P and hold that it is a part of a third tradition entirely at variance with both J and E.

We will now briefly examine the repetitions and contradictions, mentioned before, to see if the position of the critics is justified.

52--For a detailed description of this and the various critical views concerning the sources in Num. 22-24 see Wobersin, "Die Echtheit der Balaam-perikope".

53--Besides in Wobersin, the various divergent critical views can be found in the International Critical Commentary on Numbers, p. 310.

1. The objection to the unity because of the doubling of statements hardly deserves serious consideration. A writer may surely repeat for the sake of emphasis, and especially when he does not contradict himself. Here we find no contradictions. Num.22,3 can thus easily be explained especially when one remembers the frequent use in Hebrew of parallels, even in prose. Hengstenberg's explanation to the other objection is⁵⁴⁾ very good. The author had first spoken of Balaam, the son of Zippor (v.1), and then of Moab, without describing the relation in which the one stood to the other; with respect to his contemporaries, whom the author had in his mind when beginning the account, an explicit remark setting forth that relation was unnecessary; but he added it afterwards, because he remembered that he was writing for posterity also.

2. It is claimed the Num.22,24-35 is distinguished from the narrative by the use of the divine name $\overline{\text{יהוה}}$. But the use of divine names can be no argument in Num.22-24 since $\overline{\text{יהוה}}$ occurs repeatedly in sections ascribed to E (Num.22,8.13.18.19 for example). And $\overline{\text{אשר}}$ is found in Num.22,22 which is supposed to belong to J though the critics say that in such cases $\overline{\text{אשר}}$ was substituted for an original $\overline{\text{יהוה}}$. The reason that $\overline{\text{יהוה}}$ occurs so frequently in Num.22,24-35 is simply because the angel of $\overline{\text{יהוה}}$ is spoken of. $\overline{\text{יהוה}}$ is the name of God as He reveals Himself and hence $\overline{\text{יהוה}}$ $\overline{\text{אשר}}$ is the constantly used and natural expression for this particular manifestation.

3. The critics allege that the episode of the speaking ass is an incongruous addition to the whole story. But this objection is purely subjective. The author never regarded it as incongruous, not did the orthodox commentators. It throws light on Balaam's previous actions and furnished an explanation for his future conduct. The alleged incongruity arises solely from the division that the critics make of the previous verses, and from their denial of the supernatural.

4. The charge of contradiction in God's commanding Balaam to go and then being angry with him for going, is based, as Hengstenberg has shown, on a misunderstanding of the text. God had not only forbidden Balaam to go but mainly had forbidden him to curse. When he is finally permitted to go, it is still with the original refusal to curse. But Balaam's going, though permitted, was out of a sinful heart and therefore God meets him, in anger at his sinful purpose, not at the mere fact of his going. Thus there is no contradiction if things are simply allowed to explain themselves. It is only through the evil designs of the critics in splitting the narrative up into sections and then setting them in antagonism to one another that they are able to discover any inconsistency here. Furthermore, if it is to be regarded as a contradiction for God to tell Balaam to go and then to oppose him, why is it not also a contradiction for God to come out ~~of~~ to stop him, as the critics maintain, and then afterwards to tell him to go on? Surely they ought not to ignore such an incongruity; and yet it is found in a section the whole of which they ascribe to J.

5. The contradiction claimed between the passage which states that Balaam went with the princes of Moab and the one that represents him as traveling with the two servants only, rests on the assumption that the princes were not present because they were not mentioned in Num.22,22. This may be a possible conjecture, but hardly strong enough for an argument. Hengstenberg thinks that the princes were present, although only the servants were in immediate attendance. The princes may have ridden forward to inform Balak of the prophet's coming. The most reasonable explanation, however, is the following: Verse 21 gives a summary of Balaam's action after God has permitted him to go, "He rose up in the morning and saddled his ass and went with the

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55--Taken from Paton, "Presbyterian and Reformed Review", Vol.II, p.628. From this article we have taken the general outline concerning the unity of Num.22-24.

princes of Moab". Verses 22ff give a more detailed account of the journey. The large company of Moabites and Midianites, with tents and camels and horses, would most likely be encamped outside of Pethor. To join them Balaam, with his servants, rides out along the way and between the vineyards. Here God meets him, warns him, and finally tells him to go on. Accordingly in v.35 we are told, "So Balaam went with the princes of Moab". Thus Balaam rode that long tedious way in the comfortable caravan of the Midianites. This explanation also does away with the objection that Balaam could not have made that long trip on an ass and that therefore he must have come from near by. Which of these various methods of harmonizing is the true one we cannot say, but as long as there is a reasonable way of harmonizing we have no right to assume a contradiction.

6. The critics claim that the third and fourth prophecies must be by a different author from the first and second because of the variation in their introduction, stating that there is no reason why every prophecy should not have a similar introduction. The difference in the introductions has been explained in our study of Balaam's character. Such criticism is merely subjective as is shown from the following: The same critics who make the similarity of the beginning of the third and fourth prophecies a proof of identity of authorship, allege the similarities in Num.23,21-24 and Num.24,7-9 as indications of diversity of authorship because the same writer would not repeat himself.

Thus the alleged causes, stated before, concerning the source hypothesis have been refuted. These were just some of them. The critics have many more but less forceful and important. The following are some of the less important arguments. The language of the fourth prophecy is much more difficult and obscure. True! But that is no argument in support of a later addition. The nature of the prophecy concerning the distant future as well as the fact that

Balaam is at the end of his prophecies and is speaking in short pointed sentences, is enough proof for the striking difficulty in the language. The fact that the Midianites are not mentioned among the enemies is not surprising since they may well be included in Moab, and furthermore Balaam is speaking very generally of enemies referring to very scattered individual nations. The apparent contradiction between Num.24,25 and the future references to Balaam has been explained in the study of Balaam's character. The fact that Num.25,1-5 presents the Moabites as the seducers of Israel whereas v.6ff present the Midianites as such is explained very easily. The Moabites and Midianites enjoyed such a close alliance in those days, that what one did the other did, especially in their actions toward Israel and their hospitality to Balaam.

So much for a refutation of the critics' objections to the unity of the narrative. But there are also positive indications of the unity in Num.22-24. The critics themselves praise the redactor for his ingenuity in compiling his material so as to show some consistent progress. It cannot be denied that the redactor could have arranged his material so as to give a regular progress in, say, one particular, Balaam's character for instance. But there is something more than this in Num.22-24. There is a development in every particular. "It would be perfectly possible for one to arrange a lot of scattered algebraic quantities according to the ascending powers of a, or b, or x, but it would be impossible to arrange them according to the ascending powers of a, and b, and x. This is simply an application of the law of probability, a law that it seems to me is continually forgotten in the higher criticism. Though a redactor might easily arrange his material so as to have a nonsistent development of one feature, it is exceedingly improbable that he could do so with two features, and practically impossible with three or more". Now in the story of Balaam we have at least three independent lines of development, first the

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56--Paton, "Presbyterian and Reformed Review", Vol.II, p.629.

character of Balaam, secondly God's dealings with Balaam, and thirdly the progress of in the prophecies. All these points and their development have been brought out in the study of Balaam and his prophecies.

Paton says, l.c., "In consideration of these facts we are impelled to the conclusion that such high consistency and unity demand the supposition of a single writer, who recorded a series of actual historical events. The portrait of Balaam given here is not like those ingenious statues composed of many different-colored pieces, which the degenerate taste of the later Romans delighted in; it is rather like the masterpiece of a Phidias or a Praxetles, a perfect form hewn from a single block of marble".

3. The Date and Author.

According to the later critics the date of Num. 22-24 is that of J and E based on critical analysis, and of the ex eventu character of the prophecies. But even this is not late enough for the predictions in Num. 24, 20-24, so they are considered later insertions. Even the redactor, however, cannot be supposed to have lived at the beginning of the invasion of the East by the West, so the prophecy is made to refer to an early insignificant invasion from the West, of which we have no other record.

Individual critics hold different views from this general one. Addis, 57) who to our interest admits the unity of the prophecies, says, "The basis of the story of Balaam is evidently a patriotic legend, which, as we now have it, presupposes a comparatively advanced historical period drawn up by a prophet of Judah under Manasseh. It is much harder to fix the date and origin of the poems. We can scarcely attribute them without reserve to J and E, for the points

of contact between the prophecies (cf. 23,22 and 24,8) suggest that an ancient poem has been expanded and changed in diverse ways. The kernel of the poem may go back to the early days of the kingdom, even, it may be, to those of Solomon".

Kalisch claims Num.22-24 describe the latter period of David's reign, written then, and used later by the compiler of the Pentateuch. "This portion which is sui generis, was by the compiler of the Book found in circulation; he saw that it admirably illustrated his own ideas concerning Israel's election and glorious destiny; and he had no difficulty in assigning to it a place in the great work of Hebrew antiquities".⁵⁸⁾

If, however, our previous conclusions in regard to the unity of Num.22-24 are correct, and if we admit the possibility of prophecies, then all such speculations regarding the age of the narrative are utterly worthless.

There are, however, certain internal evidences which prove the antiquity of the Balaam narrative. Thus in the diction and style we have a few good proofs. The writing of Jericho as יְרִיחוֹ Num.22,1 and not as יְרִיכֹ as found in later Hebrew-already in Joshua - shows that the section was written at a time before the conquest when the name of the city was not pronounced among the Hebrews as later when they adopted the pronunciation used by the inhabitants of Canaan.⁵⁹⁾ Furthermore, the construct יְרִיחוֹ (24,3), יְרִיחוֹ as a prose form (22,17;23,11), כִּי יְרִיחוֹ followed by the name of the prophet, are all peculiar to the early Hebrew. The style of the prophecies is totally different than those later in the Old Testament. The mashal structure, the sustained parallelism and the poetic introductions all serve to distinguish these prophecies from those of a later period. It is inconceivable that their author could have used such a style if he had written at the time to which the critics would assign him.

58--Bible Studies, I, p. 51.

59--Hengstenberg, Bileam, p. 256f.

Diction and style prove the age in general, but it is possible also to show that Num.22-24 dates from the period it describes. The minute undesigned coincidences of details in the narrative with other parts of the Pentateuch prove this. The first to be noticed is the mention of the Plains of Moab. This name does not occur outside of the Pentateuch except in one quotation from it in the Book of Joshua. Conquered by the Amorites this district was later only known as Amorite territory. Accordingly it was only at a time when the memory of its former owners was still fresh that it could thus be called by its ancient name. A second point is the allusion to the Midianites. As merchants (Gen.37,28), they were just the ones who would know of Balaam in Mesopotamia. But of greater importance is the fact that it was only at the period of the Exodus that the Midianites could have played this important part. After the defeat recorded in Judges they disappear from history, and it is highly improbable that a fabricator of a later age would have revived their memory and introduced them here into the story. Other points could be mentioned and explained, as the imagery of the prophecies and the particular enemies referred to.

Taking all these facts into consideration, therefore, we must regard the writing of Num.22-24 the work of ~~one~~ who was a contemporary of Balaam. Such minute consistency of detail is unavoidable in an eye witness, but impossible in a literary forger.

Though, because of the subject-matter, Num.22-24 is somewhat different in style from the general context, and for the same reason a complete narrative in itself, yet the story of Balaam is nevertheless in harmony with the general context of the whole book of Numbers. Thus it is also evident that the author of the Balaam narrative is the same as the author of Numbers and the Pentateuch. How he may have been informed of the whole story is evident from the study of Balaam's character. It is beyond the scope of this paper to prove

the antiquity and unity of the Pentateuch and that it's author, as that of Num. 22-24, was Moses.

FINIS.

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