

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of May 6, 2018

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a “worship discussion” guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Numbers 23:27-24:25 *“It Pleased the LORD to Bless Israel”*

- **How do you know God is sovereign? How do you know He is love?**

^{23:27} And Balak said to Balaam, “Come now, I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there.” ²⁸ So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the desert. ²⁹ And Balaam said to Balak, “Build for me here seven altars and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams.” ³⁰ And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

- **Yet again, Balak took Balaam to a different location in an effort to get him to curse Israel (27). What did this location overlook (28)?**
- **Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel. Before giving this oracle, what did Balaam do (29)?**

^{24:1} When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness. ² And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him, ³ and he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
⁴ the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:

⁵ How lovely are your tents, O Jacob,
your encampments, O Israel!

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

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

⁸ God brings him out of Egypt
and is for him like the horns of the wild ox;
he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries,
and shall break their bones in pieces

and pierce them through with his arrows.

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

- **What did Balaam do differently this time (1-2)?**
- **The Spirit of God came upon Balaam (2). However, this coming of the Spirit did not prove Balaam to be one of God’s own people. What is the difference between the Spirit enabling a person to be used by God and the Spirit indwelling a person to abide with them? ([John 7:38-39](#); [14:16-17](#))**
- **Balaam’s oracle begins with testimony that his eyes and ears had been opened to see Israel from God’s perspective. What things does God reveal to Balaam about His people (5-9)?**

¹⁰ And Balak’s anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them these three times.” ¹¹ Therefore now flee to your own place. I said, ‘I will certainly honor you,’ but the LORD has held you back from honor.” ¹² And Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me, ¹³ ‘If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will. What the LORD speaks, that will I speak’? ¹⁴ And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days.”

¹⁵ And he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
¹⁶ the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
and knows the knowledge of the Most High,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:

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

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

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

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

²⁰ Then he looked on Amalek and took up his discourse and
said,

"Amalek was the first among the nations,
but its end is utter destruction."

²¹ And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his discourse and
said,

"Enduring is your dwelling place,
and your nest is set in the rock.

²² Nevertheless, Kain shall be burned
when Asshur takes you away captive."

²³ And he took up his discourse and said,

"Alas, who shall live when God does this?"

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

²⁵ Then Balaam rose and went back to his place. And Balak also
went his way.

- **Balak, king of Moab, become furious with Balaam for continuing to bless the children of Israel. What did Balak blame the Lord for doing to Balaam (11)?**
- **What information does Balaam reveal, despite Balak's anger (14)?**
- **Balaam's next oracle begins with a recognition that true knowledge comes only from God. What do you think Balaam is referring to in this oracle (17)?**
[\(Matthew 2:2; Genesis 49:10\)](#)
- **Balaam prophesied against Moab, Edom, Amalek, and the Kenites. What did Balaam say would happen to these nations (17-22)?**
- **Each week in worship, we participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. How does participation in the Supper remind you that God is sovereign? How does participation in the Supper remind you that God is love?**
- **Take time to pray together as a group. Ask the Lord for faith to believe He is King and He loves His Church. Thank Him in light of His rule and care.**

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Numbers 23:27-24:25](#).

- Balak's frustration continues.
- We have a third and fourth oracle from Balaam.
 - The third oracle gives us a picture of a prosperous, growing and settled Israel.
 - The fourth oracle gives us a picture of the king who will arise out of Israel and extend her borders and crush her enemies.
Note, these people, though many, have no home yet and live in tents.
- God sees beauty in His people, He sees blessings and He sees a future where He will supply them with a great Leader who will finish and achieve ultimate blessing for them.
- All of this has been about words. Just words.
- One thing that is true of us is that we talk.
- But words have the power to bless, to build, or to curse and destroy.
- We think that words are not that important because we think of words as little utilitarian tools for making our life easier and more efficient, when they are actually a powerful gift given by a communicating God for His divine purpose. After all, the first words ever spoken, were spoken by God.
- God speaks most clearly to us through the (W)word(s).
- What we have seen is a life and death conflict but it has been fought, out of Israel's sight and hearing with and through words.
- The most important battles in the Bible are fought with words.
 - Genesis 3 (Did God say?)
 - Matthew 4 (Man does not live by bread alone)
 - Revelation 12 (they overcame him by the word of their testimony)
- What we say, what we bear witness to matters.
- Out of the heart the mouth speaks.