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THE LIFE OF MOSES – LESSON 38

BALAAM'S MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Yesterday I mistakenly cited Exodus 20 for the lesson. It was taken from Numbers 20 and 21. Today we continue from Numbers 22 and forward.

Israel now moved north into Moab and the Amorites' area. They were positioning for the invasion of Canaan near the north tip of the Dead Sea. They settled in the plain of Moab east of the Jordan River. Midian was next to Moab on its east border.

The Moabites and Midianites knew of Israel's exploits and feared them and their vast numbers of over 600,000 fighting men. They felt that they needed divine help to avoid being consumed by Israel.

They came up with a plan. They knew of a proven and renown diviner named Balaam in the city of Pethor, in Babylon on the Euphrates River. The elders of Moab and Midian were sent out by King Balak of Moab to go to Babylon with the rewards of divination (vs. 7) which was customary for diviners. They told their dilemma to Balaam and asked him to come with them to put a curse on Israel. They believed this would help them defeat Israel and drive them out of their land.

Balaam told them to lodge overnight, and he would bring them the word that Jehovah (22:18) would speak to him. God spoke to Balaam and told him not to go with them (vs. 12) because Israel was a blessed people and are not to be cursed.

The elders returned to Balak, King of Moab, and reported Balaam's refusal. Balak sent them a second time with great promises for Balaam. Again, Balaam refused, telling them in vs. 18 (Young's Literal version) even ***"If Balak doth give to me the fulness (all) of his house of silver and gold, I am not able to pass over the command of JEHOVAH my (Elohiym) to do a little or a great thing."***

It is interesting to note that Babylon was the home of the Chaldeans who had a reputation for spiritual discernment. We do not know if Balaam was one of them, but clearly his fame was known throughout many countries, and he did know Jehovah. Now God came again to Balaam and told him to go with the men but say only what word that God would give. It was permission to go, but God was angry over it as it was not really His will.

To make a long story short, Balaam blessed Israel which made King Balak very angry. Balak told Balaam now to flee back to his home. Before Balaam left, however, he prophesied great things for Israel and also prophesied in 24:19 of the Messiah to come out of Israel. He then returned home.

This blessing came as Israel was camped in the position from which Joshua would later lead them into Canaan. Sometimes the word from God may come from the least expected sources. Always keep your ear tuned to Holy Spirit and your eye on the written word to discern the good word (truth) given from the bad word (lies) given. God can even use an unbeliever to speak a true word prophetically. This I know also from personal experience.