

THE '7'
PARABLES
OF
BALAAM

Numbers
(Chapters 23-24)

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INTRODUCTION:

The parables of Balaam compose the first great prophetic utterance of the Bible. They are remarkable in every way. The language is sublime. The unwilling prophet is forced to say what Jehovah puts into his mouth.

Balaam and his evil doings are brought before us in **eight** books of Holy Scripture — **five** in the Old Testament and **three** in the New. This fact is sufficient to prove the seriousness of his activities. The last mention of Balaam (and Balak) is in the epistle to the Assembly in Pergamos (**Rev. 2: 14**).

We learn from this that the wickedness of Balaam and Balak has been reproduced in the Christian circle. It is very significant that Balaam is also mentioned in that important prophetic **Epistle of Jude**, where he stands as a type of the **great apostasy** at the end of this age. Balak the representative of the anti-Semitic world-powers and Balaam the half-hearted prophet are a type of apostate Christendom, forming an alliance against Israel through the agency of the Beast and False Prophet. It is important therefore that every believer in the Lord Jesus should seek to understand what is involved therein.

The healing of Israel by the believing look on **the brazen serpent** stands at the end of their murmurings in the wilderness. Israel was victorious once more, and songs of praise and victory are heard in the camp. And now, after the sad history of their disobedience is almost ended, a prophet pronounces remarkable blessings over the wonderful nation, the nation so miraculously saved from Egypt, guided and kept and healed. This voice of prophecy comes from the lips of a Gentile Soothsayer-prophet, and a Gentile king hears the message first, in which, besides Israel, the king of Moab and all his Gentile successors are so eminently concerned.

Balak (waster) saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. He knew that the people had come out of Egypt and he was sore afraid as he looked at the fate of the Egyptians and Amorites. His heart is filled with fear and hatred and he desired to oppose and curse Israel and to protect his people. He allied himself with the elders of Midian and hired the soothsayer Balaam to curse Israel.

This is nothing less than the history of anti-Semitism in a nutshell. Gentile nations, Christian in name, still hate and fear the people whom no Pharaoh and no soothsayer could overcome. They are a people disobedient, judged and

suffering but still always conquering. Like Balak, opposing future Gentile nations and kingdoms will rise in fear and hatred against Israel and before Israel's coming King (the Lord Jesus Christ) who will sweep them aside. What Balak heard from the prophet's lips in his day—the complete destruction of the world-powers by the appearing of the glorious king of Jeshurum—will be the fate of these nations.

Balaam's name means a terrible one, "*the devourer of people*"; his father, **Beor**, "*the consumer*"; his native place, **Pethor**, meaning "*interpretation*."

He must have known Jehovah to some extent, for he asked of Him and God answered his request. At the same time he was a soothsayer and known for his skill in cursing nations and for his readiness to accept gold and silver to destroy them by his powerful spells. The Mesopotamian prophet was reputed to have influence with the invisible world. *"I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed... Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people"* (Num. 22: 6).

This complex character had some knowledge of God — alas, no heart knowledge! He brought the name of the one true God into his nefarious practises in order to give them an air of respectability. Also, many persons would be more easily duped by his use of the name of God. Balaam was what is now called a "Spiritualist." A very misleading name really; "Spiritist" or "Demonist" would be more correct. Modern Spiritualists seem to be divided into two classes; there are those who leave God quite out of their pretensions (which is at least honest); and there are also those who call themselves "Christian Spiritualists." The latter class are particularly dangerous; for these are not Bible-reading days, and many souls are easily led astray by the use of the word "Christian." In quite a number of cases the clergy tamper with this great evil and even recommend it as a useful adjunct to "preaching." The truth is, there is no possible connection between Christianity and Spiritualism. God in His word notably in **Deut. 18: 9-14** unsparingly condemns this iniquity in all its forms. It is apostasy a turning away from God and His revealed truth. It is intercourse with demons, ruinous to all who practise it. The land of Canaan was full of this when the hosts of Israel marched in, and they were divinely charged to utterly exterminate it. Indeed, the prevalence of this particular evil was one of the principal reasons why the holy and righteous God could tolerate the seven Canaanitish nations no longer.

The Invisible Powers of Evil

There is no doubt whatever that we are surrounded by a vast world of spirits, some good, and some evil. The good are those who continue in their proper allegiance to the Creator; the evil are those who are in revolt against Him, following the leadership of Satan. But both good and evil are deeply interested in the affairs of men; the one delighting in their blessing, and the other seeking to compass their ruin.

There are **three notices** of the spirit world in the epistle to the Ephesians. In **Eph. 1:20-21** we have Christ's position—seated at God's "*right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion.*" However mighty the spirit forces in the universe may be, Christ is superior to them all, and all must yet acknowledge His Lordship. In **Eph. 3:10** we are told "*that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies is made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God.*" These are holy spirits, who observe with unselfish interest what God is doing for His redeemed, and they admire the wisdom of His ways therein. Peter says they desire to "*look into*" these things (**1 Pet. 1:12**). Then in **Eph. 6:12** we learn that the Christian's present conflict is "*against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places*" (see margin).

These spirit-forces are highly organized (we read of "*chief princes*" amongst them (**Dan. 10:13**): and their power is enormous. They act upon individuals to their ruin and they influence also the course of public affairs; they are largely responsible for the disasters which come upon men from time to time. Kings and statesmen, however talented and well intentioned they may be, are helpless pawns in the hands of diabolical spirits, if they have not learned the need of absolute dependence upon God.

Let no-one misunderstand the foregoing. We are not referring to the spirits of departed men and women. These are quite unable to influence earthly affairs, even if they know anything at all about them, which is very doubtful. Our reference is to angelic beings, some good, and some evil, as before stated. Men have always had a desire to pierce the veil which separates the visible from the invisible. Such inquisitiveness is dangerous in the extreme, and those who indulge in it expose themselves to the tyranny of beings greatly their superiors in power and subtlety, who delight to allure souls down to eternal ruin.

It has pleased God, in His gracious instruction of His own saints to give us glimpses of what is going on in the invisible world. He wishes His own, who are set in testimony for Him here, to have some understanding of the terrible influences which are persistently working for the destruction of the human race. We are thus ourselves preserved from satanic deception, and are able to warn others also. **Daniel 10:1-21; Daniel 12:4; 1 Kings 22:14-23; and Rev. 16:12-16** are scriptures which every Christian should carefully examine in this connection. In **Dan. 10** we find the prophet in prayer for three weeks concerning the future of the people of Israel. At the end of that period an angel came to him saying that he was sent off at once with the answer, "*but,*" said he, "*the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days*" (**ver. 13**). Of whom is the angel speaking? Not of a man, certainly; for how could the Persian Sovereign hinder an angel coming from heaven with an answer to the prophet's prayer? And would he be likely to know that the prophet had prayed at all? It is a mighty spirit of whom the angel speaks, a spirit that interested itself for good or for evil in the politics of the Persian State. Then in **ver. 20**, we read: "*now will I return to fight the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.*" It is impossible to introduce men into such a passage. The angel is speaking of movements and counter movements in the spirit world, resulting in conflicts here upon earth. If the angel's message be read through to the end (**Dan. 12:4**), we shall learn of many mischievous doings on the part of Kings and others, energized by Satan; we shall also learn that Israel forms the centre of God's earthly ways, and that the archangel Michael has special charge of Israel's interests and that in due time he will act in power on their behalf. (**Dan. 12:1**)

In **1 Kings 22:14-23** we find Ahab, Israel's wicked and wilful king was disposed to go to war with Syria for the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead. His misguided ally, Jehoshaphat King of Judah (pious, but weak) wished to know what Jehovah might have to say about the undertaking. In due course faithful Micaiah was brought out of prison, and in few words he described a scene in the heavenlies. Jehovah was seated on His throne surrounded by the host of heaven. His patience with Ahab being now exhausted, He called for a volunteer who would dispose the doomed man to go to war to his undoing. After much discussion, a spirit proposed to go down and put a lie in the mouths of all the King's prophets. "*Go forth, and do so,*" said the great God. No words can adequately set forth the solemnity of this. Israel's war with Syria was thus arranged in the spirit world, as many a war since. Blinded by Satan, Ahab paid no heed to what

he heard. God's faithful witness was sent back to prison, and the king rode forth to his death.

Rev. 16: 12-16 deals briefly with the last gathering of the nations for battle. The dread word "Armageddon" is found here. Spirit forces are involved in the world's final conflict. *"I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are the spirits of demons, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the whole earth. to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."* The language is doubtless symbolic, but its meaning is too plain to be misunderstood. As the scriptures become more and more neglected and discredited; men will listen with increasing willingness to *"seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy"*, **1 Tim. 4:1, 2** – a terrible result of the poison of unbelief injected by the serpent into the minds of Eve and Adam at the beginning **Gen. 3: 1!**

When various disasters came upon **Job**, he had no idea that he had been the subject of conversation in the heavens. Jehovah had observed his ways with much pleasure; Satan also had observed him, but with malignant eyes. When Jehovah raised the question of Job with Satan, he was answered with the insinuation that Job only served Him for his own advantage. God therefore allowed the enemy to strip him bare of all that He had given him; yet Job did not renounce his God. At a second conversation in the heavens, Satan urged that the trouble had not gone far enough, and if God would touch the patriarch's person He would see what manner of man he really was. We will not pursue the familiar subject further; but when Job's friends, having heard of his troubles, came to visit him, and found him covered with boils, sitting in anguish upon an ash-heap, their words and also Job's show that none of them really understood the matter. But Job clave to his God, spite of His strange dealings with him, and in the end he was more richly blessed than ever as he learned *"the end of the Lord; and that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy"* **James 5:11.**

The Scriptures that we have examined tell us a little of the hostility of Satan and his hosts to God and to men individually and Israel and the Church collectively. A great day is coming, and it may be very near, when a mighty clash of spirit-forces will take place on high, resulting in the expulsion of Satan and his angels from the heavens, never to have a footing in those regions again. Then will be heard the shout of triumph from the glorified saints: *"Now is come*

the salvation, and the strength. and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12: 7-12).

Returning to Balaam it is clear that the thoughts and revelations of Jehovah were put into Balaam's lips by the Spirit of God, so that he had to utter them. We may ask how did Moses find out what was said by Balaam? Balak or Balaam would surely not report the sayings to Moses. What transpired at the different stations where Balak and Balaam were found was not known to Israel. The Holy Spirit alone gave the correct report of all that took place and all what was said to Moses. How little did the malicious conspirators think that God was taking note of everything, and that the story of their doings would be recorded by divine authority to be read by men in all succeeding ages! As little did the Roman officer Claudius Lysias imagine that his lying letter to the governor Felix concerning Paul was noted and preserved by God for insertion in His sacred Word! (**Acts 23: 25-30**).

Direct divine revelation is the only explanation of other chapters than **Num. 22: 24**. Take, for example, the first two chapters of the book of Genesis. There we are told of what God said and did day after day during His great work of preparing the earth for the habitation of man, and when the moment came for the man to be created God said: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion, etc.*"

There was most certainly no scribe standing by to record all that the Creator did and said during those wonderful days; and we must have remained in eternal ignorance of it all had not God been pleased to make the whole matter a subject of divine revelation to the historian. Thus we learn to trace everything to its true source — God. He who questions either the possibility or the reality of divine revelation has no claim whatever to be regarded as a Christian.

When Moses later told the people of the danger which had threatened them, Moses said. "*They hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless Jehovah thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but Jehovah thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because Jehovah thy God loved thee" (Deut. 23: 4-5)*. Precious words, "*because Jehovah thy God loved thee!*" But how poor the response from our faithless human hearts!

Let us also never forget that all that we say and do concerning persons we dislike, and of which we hope they will never hear, are all observed and

recorded by the all-seeing God. Every malicious word and deed will have to be accounted for *"in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ"* (**Rom. 2: 16**). Listen to the words of Him who will sit upon the judgment seat: *"I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."* (**Matt. 12: 36**).

When Moses and the children of Israel sang their song of triumph on the shores of the Red Sea, they said; *"the peoples shall hear and be afraid... the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them... fear and dread shall fall upon them"* (**Ex. 15: 14-16**). Many centuries after Moses' day Jehovah said, *"O My people, remember now what Balak King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of Jehovah"* (**Micah 6:5**).

This is a truly remarkable passage when we consider the places which are named therein. "Shittim" was on the wilderness side of the Jordan, but "Gilgal" was inside the Promised Land. Thus Jehovah's answer to the enemy was in deeds as well as in words. His words were uttered in Shittim (and very full and wonderful they were); His deeds were witnessed in Gilgal, where the people of Israel were after their miraculous crossing of the Jordan, pitched their camp, and from which they went forth conquering and to conquer. Most blessedly therefore did Jehovah display His righteousness in the fulfilment of His gracious word to His people. But how quickly they forgot His works, and ceased to sound forth His praise!

Having some knowledge of these terrible forces of evil, Balaam was willing to be their tool for the destruction of God's people Israel, but Jehovah, who loved the people, frustrated him at every point, and from his lips there flowed not curses but blessings!

We study this grave chapter in Israel's history with deep interest because it concerns us vitally. What have we been towards our God during the days of our pilgrimage? We must all bow our heads with sadness and shame as we put this question to our hearts. But can our shortcomings affect God's counsels of grace concerning us? Will He cease to love us, erase our names from the book of life, and fling us back to where He found us? Blessed be His holy name, NO! He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; He has taken us into favour in the Beloved; He has washed, sanctified, and justified us; and has sealed and

anointed us with the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 1:21-22**). All this must stand for ever, for God is faithful, whatever His people may be. In His righteous government He may chasten us even as He chastened Israel of old, but He will never abandon His counsels of grace. *"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance"* (**Rom. 11:29**). Listen to Moses in **Deut. 23:5**: *"Jehovah thy God would not hearken unto Balaam, but Jehovah thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because Jehovah thy God loved thee"* similarly, all our blessings are secured in the risen Christ, and the Father loves us as He loves Him. This was fulfilled to the letter when the King of Moab and his people beheld Jehovah's pilgrim host encamped upon their frontiers forty years later. There were in the camp of Israel 601,730 men able to carry arms; with women and children there were probably at least three million souls; admittedly a vast company. Balak was alarmed; the more so because Israel had recently destroyed three nations which had ventured to oppose their march. The **King of Arad**; likewise **Sihon, King of Heshbon**, and **Og, King of Bashan** (**Num. 21**). Sihon had some time previously waged a successful war with Moab, and had annexed some of her territory; how then could Balak hope to stand up against a nation which had destroyed his powerful neighbour?

When men are in trouble, the proper thing is to turn to God in prayer. He is as truly interested in the affairs of nations as in the difficulties and sorrows of individual men and women; but Balak knew nothing of God. If the rulers of our own time would humbly spread out their troubles before God, much grief and destruction would be spared. Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah are two fine examples of kings turning humbly to God in moments of national peril, **2 Chron. 20; 2 Kings 19**.

In reality Balak had nothing to fear. Jehovah had already said to Moses: *"Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee of their land in possession"* (**Deut. 2: 9**). Jehovah had in view a better portion for Israel than the land of Moab. Moab typifies the comfortable, self-satisfied man of the world — *"at ease from his youth, settled on his lees"* (**Jer. 48:11**); proud and arrogant in consequence (**Isa. 16: 6**).

God's saints today need not envy such, for they have a better and more enduring portion. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"* (**Eph. 1: 3**).

Asaph, when he got out of communion with God, did envy the prosperity of the wicked; when he went into the sanctuary, and contemplated things there with God, he recovered his spiritual equilibrium (**Ps. 73**).

The **seven parables** which Balaam is obliged to give by the power of God, are divided into **four parts**. Taken together they give the whole story of God's grace with His people Israel. His wonderful ways, traced from His sovereign choice of them until their ultimate triumph under Christ in the Millennial Kingdom. Each parable has its own theme. He utters them from **three** points, all mountain tops. The first was from the high places of **Baal**, the second was from the summit of **Pisgah**, and the last was from **Peor**.

From these mountain tops Balak and Balaam had a good view of the camp of Israel. Each one of the three points is progressively nearer to the camp and gives a more complete view. It seems Balak tried to diminish the number of Israel and their strength in the eyes of Balaam, for he took him first to a place from which he saw only a part; the utmost part, the fourth part of the people. Seeing that his scheme failed, Balak took Balaam to Pisgah; from there the view was more complete, and then at last to Peor, from which point he saw the twelve tribes of Israel with their flags in camp.

Upon each mountain Balaam had **seven altars** erected, and **two sacrifices**, a bullock and a ram, are placed upon each altar. The whole proceedings were evidently calculated to make all as impressive and solemn as possible.

On the heights of **Baal**, in the **first** parable, Balaam says to Balak: *"I will go, may be Jehovah will come to meet me, and whatever He may say to me I will declare to thee."* He went to a lower level view and God met him there and put a word in his mouth. Balaam learns that **God had sanctified**—set apart for Himself His people Israel.

Next at **Pisgah** in his **second** parable Balaam tells Balak to stand by the burnt offering, *"while,"* he says, *"I go to meet,"* *"the Lord,"* it says in the Authorized Version but that does not appear in the original. In Hebrew it reads, *"I will go to meet—yonder."* He was really not going to meet the Lord but evil spirits. (See **Num. 24:1 JND**)

Slyly he tried to impress Balak with his mysterious power. Here he learns that **God has justified** His people and he sees no sin upon them.

In proceeding to Mount **Peor** in the **third** parable Balak, utterly disheartened by the continued blessing of Israel from Balaam's lips, demands that he is neither to curse nor to bless. In this parable Balaam learns that **it pleased the Lord to bless Israel** and he no longer goes out to meet with enchantments; he drops the mask, and now the Spirit of God comes upon him. Balak's anger is kindled after this third parable, and while Balak smites his hands together the prophet opens his mouth in his **fourth** parable and utters the sublimest of all his prophecies—an outline of future events that would befall Israel and the nations about them.

Balak's messengers went to Mesopotamia *"with the rewards of divination in their hands"* (**Num. 22:7**). Knowing that the false prophet *"loved the wages of unrighteousness"* (**2 Peter 2:15**). Balak sought to make sure of him by sending "cash in advance!" In **1 Tim. 6:10** the apostle did *not* say, *"the love of money is the root of all evil,"* but rather *"the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."* From that pernicious root envy, lying, and murder (not to mention other sins) can easily spring. But the same hateful things can also come from other roots. Love of money was the ruin of Balaam, as of Judas Iscariot and many others. The Holy Spirit when commenting on Balaam's doings fifteen centuries later said, *"he loved the wages of unrighteousness!"* (**2 Peter 2:15**). But the treacherous deceiver introduced Jehovah's name into the matter, and lodged the messengers for the night under the pretense of seeking the mind of God. The business in hand was of immense importance, for he was required to effect the ruin of a whole nation; did he therefore spend the night in prayer to God? Nothing was further from Balaam's thoughts. He simply went to bed; and God, who was watching all these movements with the deepest interest, came to him with the challenge, *"What men are these with thee?"* *Soon after all this Balaam went to his place to meet with his terrible fate. (See Num. 31:8 JND)*

Let us note the whole position carefully. The people of Jehovah, who had been ungrateful and disobedient throughout their wilderness journey, were now in grave peril. They were not aware of it and therefore did not make supplication to God. But Jehovah Himself took the matter up, and there we are reminded of His changeless favour. He loved the people, spite of all that they were, and He would not allow the enemy to harm them. Oh, the comfort of this thought for ourselves!

PARABLE ONE (from the heights of Baal): (23:1-14)

*"And he took up **his parable**, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, from the mountains of the east: Come, curse me Jacob, and come, denounce Israel! How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I denounce whom Jehovah doth not denounce? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let my soul die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!" (Num. 23:7-10 JND)*

This first inspired utterance of Balaam speaks of **the general character of Israel as the chosen people of God—SANCTIFIED to God.**

When God distributed to the nations their inheritance at the time of the Babel scattering Israel was uppermost in His mind (Deut. 32:7). Israel was to be the centre of His earthly dealings, and the people were meant to be a witness and blessing to all the nations, while divinely separated from them. *"Ye shall be holy unto Me: for I Jehovah am holy, and have severed you from the peoples to be Mine"* (Lev. 20: 26 JND).

Faith in Solomon responded to this in his prayer at the dedication of the Temple. *"They are Thy people, and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron . . . Thou didst separate them from among the peoples of the earth, to be Thine inheritance as Thou spakest by the hand of Moses Thy servant when Thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God"* (1 Kings 8: 51-53). But the people did not value their distinctive place of separation to God, Solomon himself becoming one of the worst transgressors in this respect.

Balaam was speaking *"from the top of the rocks,"* and thus described the people as God **in His grace** regarded them; had he walked through the camp and been permitted to record all that he saw and heard there, he would have told a different story, for the ways of the chosen people were scarcely better than those of the heathen Moabites. Israel's distinctive place in the earth has been forfeited by sin; but it will yet be restored in grace when Christ appears.

Meantime, the Holy Spirit is upon earth forming the Church, the body of the exalted Christ. God is *"visiting the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name"*(Acts 15:14). The Church belongs to heaven all its blessings are there; and it was meant to walk in absolute separation from the world in testimony to Christ. Christians are called **"the sanctified"** in Heb. 2:11; and the Lord Jesus

said of them in **John 17:15, 16** "*I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*" But the Church has been no more faithful in its distinctive place of blessing than Israel in the past. It has been said, and we quote the words with shame: "***I looked for the Church and I found it in the world; I looked for the world, and I found it in the Church.***"

God wants a separated people. Only through such can He be glorified; only through the instrumentality of such can He carry out His purposes of love.

Paul told the Galatians that "*our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of our God and Father*" (**Gal. 1:4**). He told the Hebrews, "*Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.*" He followed this with the earnest appeal: "*Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach*" (**Heb. 13: 12-13**). Shall we not, as individual believers, seek to walk apart from everything that is unsuitable to God and to Christ? Shall we not seek to be sanctified "*wholly,*" that our "*whole spirit and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*"? (**1 Thess. 5:23**).

The people in their tents knew nothing of what was being said about them in the heights. If God's thoughts of grace had really penetrated their hearts, how different their history would have been!

We may divide this **first** parable into four parts.

1. After stating the fact of Balak's call and his wish that he should curse **Jacob** and denounce **Israel**, he states the impossibility to curse and to denounce Israel for God hath not cursed him, He hath not denounced him.

In the original the name **El**, God, stands in connection with **Jacob**, and **Jehovah**, the covenant-keeping God, with **Israel**. Jacob refers to the people of God in relation to their responsibility to God and Israel speaks of the precious link they had with Jehovah, the eternal covenant-keeping God. This double usage is seen throughout the parables.

When Balak's deputation came to Balaam, God had said to him, "*Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.*" And what God told him there, in the secret place, he is to speak in public. This truth is found all through the Word of God; **Israel's blessed calling—the seed of Abraham blest and to be a blessing.**

How many have tried to curse Jacob and to denounce Israel? They have never succeeded, for Isaiah's vision has been fulfilled in all generations, "*No weapon that is found against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.*" (Is. 54:17)

No magic, no voice, no power, no tongue can counteract the decree of God. Jacob and his seed are blest of God. Oh that man would understand it, but alas, they are wise in their own conceits, and boasting against the broken off branches they think of Jacob as accursed and denounce Israel, and thus dishonour God and make Him a liar. (See **Rom. 11:17-21**)

2. With his hands before his eyes, Balak gazes upon the fourth part of the Israelitish camp from the tops of the rocks and from the hill and sees a second general characteristic of the people, namely, that **Israel is to be a separated people**. Israel is the nation chosen of God and as such is different from the Gentile nations and not to be reckoned among them.

Here then we have the destiny of Israel, a destiny the same for all times—a peculiar people, separated from all other nations. As far as Old Testament times are concerned, this decree of God can hardly be denied; but many Christians have stated and believe that in these New Testament times Israel has ceased to be a peculiar people, and that there is no difference between them and the other nations. The Bible and experience, however, teaches differently. Truly the seed of Abraham is today mingling with the nations, scattered in fact among all the nations, and there the sons of Jacob have not lost their peculiar characteristics. Assimilation has been attempted, and quite often by themselves, but rarely if ever has it been successful. God has kept Israel as His own separated people as truly as He has separated and keeps unto Himself by His Holy Spirit a spiritual, heavenly people, the church. All movements endeavouring to rob Israel of its peculiarity and separation have failed, and thus Israel remains a stranger in a strange land. What a tremendous testimony the Zionistic movement is in this direction! It is a movement to establish a Jewish state for the Jewish people in the Jewish land, and in itself a confession that assimilation with other nations is impossible. In speaking the Word of our God to the scattered Jews, God's future purpose in Israel as a nation must not be overlooked.

3. In the third place, we have **their wonderful increase**. *"Who has counted the dust of Jacob?"* The promise to Jacob when he went out from Beer-Sheba was, *"Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth."*

It stands for the earthly promises and earthly blessings which are Jacob's. What a sight it must have been for Balaam and Balak, standing beside their smoking altars, and down, way down in the desert, tent after tent is to be seen; but still it is only the fourth part, and appears like the dust of the earth—a people having passed through so much affliction and punishment, yet in spite of it all, strong and as numerous as ever. While looking over the past, a still grander picture presents itself to us. Israel has wandered through a greater desert and through greater afflictions and punishments than ever before; they have been a people scattered and peeled, yet how wonderfully God has kept them, and more than ever they are like dust, down-trodden yet ever increasing, and multiplying, to the astonishment of their enemies. Who as counted the dust of Jacob? Surely they are increasing rapidly all over the earth, and it is truer than ever before, *"Who counted the dust of Jacob?"*

4. Balaam's exclamation forms a fitting conclusion to his first parable—**Israel's hope and glorious end**, the glorious end of ages when the God of Jeshurum will reveal Himself once more for the salvation of His people and brings vengeance upon their enemies.

*"Let me die the death of Jeshurum and let my end be **like his**."*

We do not think that Balaam had so much the physical death of Israel in view, but rather that their glorious end, that glorious morning after a night of storm and disaster, which he has here the first glimpse. The contents of this first parable are in part a repetition of God's promises to Abraham, but now the promise is not stated to a member of Abraham's family, but put into the mouth of a Gentile soothsayer to transmit it to the unbelieving hateful Gentile king, Balak.

PARABLE TWO (from the heights of Pisgah): **(23:15-24)**

This second inspired utterance of Balaam speaks of Israel as a *JUSTIFIED* people of God and their future assured blessing.

Next they are on top of Mount Pisgah, on the fields of Zophim. Balaam, after having been away from Balak hastens back, and filled with a greater degree of inspiration, it seems, he bursts forth:

“And he took him to the watchmen’s field, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered up a bullock and a ram on each altar. And Balaam said to Balak, Stand here by thy burnt-offering, and I will go to meet yonder. And Jehovah met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Return to Balak, and thus shalt thou speak. And he came to him, and behold, he was standing by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him; and Balak said to him, What has Jehovah spoken?” (Num. 23:14-28 JND)

The opening words of his second discourse are exceedingly precious:

“Then he took up his parable and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear! hearken unto me, son of Zippor! God is not a man, that he should lie; neither a son of man, that he should repent. Shall he say and not do? and shall he speak and not make it good? (23:18-29 JND)

Balaam’s response is revealing both as to his heart and to the end-times:

“Behold, I have received mission to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. [Note he did not say “I will not”] He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen wrong in Israel; Jehovah his God is with him, and the shout of a king is in his midst. God brought him out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a buffalo. For there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Lo, the people will rise up as a lioness, and lift himself up as a lion. He shall not lie down until he have eaten the prey and drunk the blood of the slain. (Num. 23:20-24 JND)

What an awful rebuke this was to unbelieving Balak. He surely had expected a change in the mind of that God whose aid and help Balaam was to invoke. Maybe, he thought that God would once more, after a second request, allow Balaam, as at the time when Balak's princes came to him, to speak a more favourable word; instead of that with an awful commanding voice—for thus it must have been—Balaam shouts to Balak to rise and listen. He hears now that God's promises to Israel are unchangeable, they can never be reversed.

The same truth we have not alone from Balaam's lips, but likewise from the lips of Paul, the servant of the Lord, who after giving his wonderful prophetic testimony concerning his own beloved Jewish nation, cries out in exaltation, "*The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*" God is ever the covenant-keeping God, and every word which has come from His loving heart through the prophets to His people Israel He will yet fulfil. Balak, in his unbelief and his ignorance, as well as his hatred against Israel, is, alas, a sad type of Christendom, apostate, disbelieving the promises of the God of Abraham, ignorant of His purposes concerning Israel, and, therefore, despising and cursing those whom they should honour and love. Again, in this second parable, we notice **four principal thoughts**, which now bring us a step nearer to Israel, **Israel's calling and Israel's future**, just as Balaam and Balak were on Pisgah's mountain top nearer to the camp than on the heights of Baal.

1. He hath not beheld iniquity in **Jacob** nor seen travail (or perverseness) in **Israel**. They were justified before God! It seems to us a very significant fact that in all of Balaam's parables sin and guilt are never mentioned. However, it does not say here that Israel is without iniquity or evil travail, but the statement is that God hath not beheld iniquity and not seen perverseness in Israel. Truly Israel had sinned against God during their travels in the wilderness. Israel was likewise punished for it, but their sinfulness was never hopeless. In all their iniquity and perverseness they are still His beloved children, and the promise is theirs very definitely, that the seed of Israel can only be cast away for all that they have done if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath (**Jeremiah 31:36, 37**). That, of course, means that it will never come to pass. But more than that, to Israel belongs the promise of forgiveness, when, indeed, the eyes of God will not behold iniquity in Jacob nor will He see perverseness in Israel.

And when in old age **David** had to mourn over the unfaithfulness of his own house, he was enabled to say: "*Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire? although He make it not to grow*" (**2 Sam. 23: 5**). This means that God's revealed counsels were sure whatever His apparent delay in the development of them. All that David looked for awaits the coming in power of the Lord Jesus.

In **Micah**, the last chapter and last three verses, is one of these sweet national promises to Israel, "*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever,*

because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again and have compassion upon us; He will tread our iniquities under foot, and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." (Micah 7:18-20)

God looking upon Israel saw no iniquity, God now beholds His people and no perverseness is seen; their sins forgiven and remembered no more – **JUSTIFIED** by **grace** (Rom. 3:24) on the basis of the precious **blood** of Christ (Rom. 5:9) and appropriated through **faith** (Rom. 5:1).

2. Balaam gave utterance to another precious truth concerning the people of God. Not only does He justify them in His grace, but He delights to **dwelt amongst them**. "*Jehovah his God is with him, the shout of a king is among them.*" The cloud upon the Tabernacle was proof of this. We have something better than Israel ever imagined. The Holy Spirit is with us. In **1 Cor. 6:20** we are taught that He dwells in the body of every individual believer, and in **1 Cor. 3:16** that the saints collectively constitute His temple. "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?*" This is the great forgotten truth of the dispensation — one of its greatest marvels, one of its richest blessings, yet practically forgotten! What power was seen in the first Pentecostal Church! What power would yet be experienced if God's saints could be aroused to the immense fact that His Spirit abides with us still! In **1 Cor. 14:22-25** the case is supposed of a stranger coming into the Assembly of God, and becoming, so impressed with the power operating there that the secrets of his heart are laid bare, and falling upon his face he worships God. and reports that God is in His people of a truth! "*The shout of a King is among them,*" added Balaam. This is anticipative even though God already dwelt amongst them in the Tabernacle, but the King is even yet future. Not David is meant, still less Saul, but Christ. He is the King of Jehovah's choice (**1 Sam. 2:10**). He will yet reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." (**Isa. 24:23**).

3. In the next place we notice that Balaam speaks of that deed of salvation, **the redemption of Israel** from the house of Egypt, which stands in the Old Testament as a type not only of our redemption in the blood of the Son of God, but likewise as the type of that future deed of God when He will gather His outcast children from the four corners of the earth. (See **Jeremiah 16:14-15**.)

It is important to note that in the next parable Balaam repeats the same words only in another connection. Here connected with the fact that God brought Israel out of Egypt stands the statement that there is no enchantment against Jacob and no divination against Israel. Egypt could hold Israel for centuries, but Egypt's wickedness ripened, and when the hour had come there was no power in the air or upon the earth which could prevent the carrying out of the judgments of God upon Egypt, and the mercies upon Israel. No enchantment and no divination will ever frustrate God's plan in the future.

4. And then in the fourth place: In its time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, "What hath God wrought?" Just **a glimpse is given here of that time of conquest in Israel** and through Israel, when the people shall rise up as a lioness, when she shall not lie down till she has eaten the prey and drunk the blood of the slain; which not only Balaam in his next parables has to make plainer because the vision now hastens towards the end, but likewise which all the prophets from beginning to end have revealed. We shall see more of this in the third parable of Balaam.

PARABLE THREE (from the heights of Peor): **(24:1-9)**

This third inspired utterance of Balaam speaks of the Beauty and Order of God's People—Israel in God's eyes.

From the top of Peor, Balaam now **beholds Israel abiding in their tents according to their tribes**. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him. It is no longer meeting with the Lord and receiving it from Him, but the Spirit is upon him and through the Spirit he receives a higher revelation. He is now fully persuaded that Israel is to be blessed and he yields himself without resistance to God.

*"And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel dwelling in tents according to his tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor saith, and the man of opened eye saith, He saith, who heareth the words of God, who seeth the vision of the Almighty, who falleth down, and who hath his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, Jacob, and thy tabernacles, Israel! Like **valleys** are they spread forth, like **gardens** by the river side, Like **aloe-trees** which Jehovah hath planted, like **cedars beside the waters**. Water shall flow out of **his buckets**, and **his seed** shall be in great waters, And **his king** shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of a buffalo. He shall consume the nations his enemies, and break their bones, and with*

his arrows shall smite them in pieces. He stooped, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness: who will stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee. Balaam, forced to speak, is now made to proclaim the victory of the nation of destiny and what God will do among them." (Num. 24:2-9 JND)

What a view of Israel he saw!

What unity! "The tribes" - v. 2

What dignity! "Cedars" - v. 6

What order! "Abiding ... according to their tribes" - v. 2

What sufficiency! "Beside the waters" - v. 6

What beauty! "Valleys" "Gardens" - v. 4

What overflowing! "Water out of buckets" - v. 7

What fragrance! "Aloes" - v. 6

What power! "Unicorn"- v. 8; "Lion" - v. 9

What Unity! The twelve tribes were here still one whole. The breach which took place after the death of Solomon has not been healed to this day but the tribes will be re-gathered by the sound of the trumpet at the appearing of the Lord Jesus (**Matt. 24:31**). It will then be said, "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity*" (**Ps. 133:1**).

The unity of God's saints in this period is more intimate than that of Israel's tribes. The Spirit of God came from heaven at Pentecost to form it. There is now on earth a wonderful spiritual organism called the body of Christ. All the members are in living union with the glorified Head in heaven, and all are in union with one another. If the truth of this were realized in faith, every true Christian would abandon the ecclesiastical organizations of Christendom, and would never acknowledge any divisive working of any kind again.

What Order! Balaam saw Israel abiding in tents "*according to their tribes.*" Our God is a God of order. When the five thousand were fed they were not allowed to drop down upon the grass as they pleased: the Lord Jesus said "*make them sit down by fifties in a company*" (**Luke 9:14**). Israel's camp in the wilderness was planned by Jehovah Himself. The tribes were arranged around the Tabernacle in four groups of three each, under their respective standards (**Num. 2**).

Even so in the body of Christ every member has been divinely placed and furnished from the infinite resources of the Head in heaven with all that is needful for the blessing and development of the whole, "*God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him*" (**1 Cor. 12:18**). "*The whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part making*

increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16). How sorrowful to compare God's gracious order with the human machinery which has impoverished the Church for so long!

What Beauty! *"As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side!"* Lovely imagery! What is more beautiful than a valley; what more attractive than a garden? The one is suggestive of loveliness, which God always delights to see in His people; and the other of culture and fragrance. In **Cant. 4:12**, the Bridegroom says, *"A garden enclosed is my sister spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed: thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits":* the bride in response says, *"Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits"* he accepts the loving call, *"I am come into my garden, my sister-spouse!"*

Israel was God's cultivated garden in the old dispensation; the Church is His cultivated garden now—hence the words of the apostle in **1 Cor. 3:9**, *"Ye are God's husbandry."* Individual saints are His plants, tenderly cared for in infinite wisdom and love. Of mere religionists the Lord Jesus once said, *"Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."* (**Matt. 15:13**).

Another image of beauty as far as Israel is concerned is found in **Ezek. 16**. Jehovah is there remonstrating with the people for their ingratitude. He likens Israel to an outcast babe which he adopted and nourished with gracious care. *"Thy renown went forth amongst the nations for thy beauty, for it was perfect through My comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord Jehovah"* (**ver. 14**).

Moses in **Ps. 90**, says, *"Let the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us."*

"Thy beautiful flock," said Jehovah reproachfully in **Jer. 13:20** to the rulers who neglected His people.

We who in this age believe in Jesus stand before God in all the perfection and acceptability of the Risen One. In **Col. 3:12** the apostle uses of Christians the same terms as are used elsewhere of Christ, *"The elect of God, holy, and beloved."* Compare **Isa. 42:1**, *"Behold My servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth."*

In **Acts 2:27**: *"Thou wilt not suffer Thine holy One to see corruption."* In **Matt. 3:17**: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* Seeing that God in His grace speaks of us as He speaks of His own Son let us *"walk as He walked"* (**1 John 2:6**).

Those who are beautiful before God should also be beautiful before men. Our practical state should correspond to our standing.

What Fragrance! "As the trees of lign aloes which Jehovah hath planted." Aloes were used for the purposes of fumigation and incense, the wood having a sweet smell. In **Ps. 45**, which describes the great King coming forth in His majesty, we read, "*All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes, and cassia.*"

When Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took down the body of our blessed Lord from the cross they wound it in linen cloths with a hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes (**John 19:39-40**). The aloe tree is "an image of all that is lovely, fragrant, flourishing, and incorruptible." Wonderful that Jehovah should select this particular tree as setting forth the fragrance of His people in His sight!

On the same principle He bade Moses put pure frankincense upon the twelve loaves which stood continually upon the table of shewbread in the sanctuary (**Lev. 24:7**).

The frankincense upon the meal offering typified the fragrance of Christ to God (**Lev. 2:2**); the frankincense upon the twelve loaves teaches us that God's people, viewed as "*in Christ*," are fragrant as He. This thought should have a profound effect upon our lives. In measure as we are occupied with God and with Christ our lives will be fragrant to those who have to do with us. They will be conscious as they behold our words and ways that we are accustomed to intimacy with God. The very face of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai revealed the fact that he had been occupied with God (**Ex. 34:29**).

What Dignity! "As cedar trees beside the waters." In the description of the bridegroom (Christ) in **Cant. 5:15** we read, "*His countenance (or, bearing) is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.*"

There has never been on earth so dignified a nation. They stood in special relationship to God, separated from all others; they possessed His word; and they were constituted the pivot of His ways in government and blessing (**Ps. 147:19-20**). Alas, the people's hearts have never yet entered into the reality of it!

In this era, while Israel is estranged from God, Christians are God's cedars. Every believer in Jesus is a very dignified person indeed in the divine

estimation! He is a child, son, and heir of God. He stands in nearer relation to God than the most exalted of angelic beings, for he is a member of the royal family of the universe. He will be displayed in majesty with the First-born Son when He comes forth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to reign. The world will be amazed at the magnificent display of glory on that day. All this is true of every Christian without distinction; but the world has no understanding of these marvels. *"The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not"* (**1 John 3:1**). The sense of God's wonderful grace gives moral dignity in our bearing towards men. Carnal pride and pretension is hateful to God, but the moral dignity which results from appreciation of His grace is acceptable in His sight.

What Sufficiency! *"Planted... beside the waters."* God plants judiciously; man, not always. God knows that His plants need nourishment, and He places them where they can get it, and moreover provides them with means whereby they can absorb it. There is a suggestion of trees in **Col. 2:7**: *"Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught."* The rooting is the act of God, and once for all He roots His saints in Christ. Then, like trees, we are built up and established as we draw to ourselves the nourishment divinely provided. This is our responsibility, and it is continuous. There is no lack on God's part. *"The river of God is full of water,"* and it greatly enriches all who draw from it (**Ps. 65:10**). In Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and we are complete (filled full) in Him (**Col. 2: 9-10**). One great object for which the epistle to the Colossians was written was to stress the truth that the Christian need not, and should not, go outside of Christ for anything. There was some danger in this respect in Colosse. Other things were being presented to them to be added to their Christianity. **"Christ is everything,"** says the apostle in **Col. 3:11**.

The people of Israel, although planted beside the waters, that is to say, they were in direct relationship with Jehovah, were frequently turning aside from Him, to their own hurt, as well as to His dishonour (**Jer. 2:13**). But there is a day coming when the people will turn back to the One they have so grievously neglected. They will see God in Christ, and then it will be said: *"Jehovah shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought; and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not"* (**Isa. 58:11**). In **Jer. 31:12** it is added: *"They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow, together to the goodness of Jehovah, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all."*

Let us avoid Israel's failure, and *"hold fast the Head, from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God"* (Col. 2:19).

What Overflowing! Those who are drawing from the infinite resources of God have something to impart to others. They take in more than they can well contain, hence Balaam's words (although the poor man did not know what he was saying), *"he shall pour water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters."* If Balak had understood what he was now hearing he would have had no dread of Israel. The people were intended to be a blessing to all the nations; they were to spread abroad the knowledge of the one true God, and to share with others His wonderful grace. Israel has never yet risen to this. How cruelly the Jewish people persecuted Paul because he carried the Gospel to the Gentiles! *"Away with such a fellow from the earth; it is not fit that he should live"* (Acts 22:22). In the Kingdom-age their whole attitude will be changed. The beautiful **Psalm 67** expresses the joy of the people as they share their blessings with the nations around them. **Micah 5:7** says *"the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as a dew from Jehovah, as the showers upon the grass that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."* **John 2:1-11** gives a beautiful picture of the millennial day when the Lord will fill the water pots to the brim. What a day for Israel on earth and the Church in heaven.

While Israel is dry and barren, unblessed by God, and a curse to the world rather than a blessing (**Jer. 26:6**), believers in Jesus have a fountain of water within themselves springing up into eternal life (**John 4:14**) and from them rivers of living water are flowing forth (**John 7:38**). This is the power of the Holy Spirit making the things of Christ very real to the Christian, and enabling him to communicate them to others out of the fulness of his heart. The word *"buckets"* suggests energy in drawing. Where are we as to this? Are we filling our buckets with the good things of God, and pouring them forth to those around us? Also, are we making such advance in the spiritual life that we need larger buckets than once we did? Are we drawing up larger supplies than ever, and pouring them forth abundantly? "Young men" and "fathers" should be able to handle larger buckets than "babes" (**1 John 2: 12-27**). *"His seed shall be in many waters"* expresses the universality of service and testimony for God. *"The waters... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues"* (**Rev. 17:15**).

What Power! The victorious power of the people of God, when Christ takes His place at their head, is the theme of Balaam's final parable; but he

concluded his third utterance with some reference to it: The King and His Kingdom rise up before the prophet's vision. *"His King shall be higher than Agag, and His Kingdom shall be exalted."* The King here is Christ, higher than earth's highest. Balaam vividly describes the power of God as it acts for, and in His chosen people. *"God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn (or buffalo); he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows" (ver. 8).* For the second time reference is made to the great deliverance from Egypt. The God who broke the power of the enemy at that time will break the power of even mightier foes in the coming day (**Micah 5:8**).

In **Num. 24:9** Balaam was constrained to re-affirm two ancient prophecies concerning Israel. Jacob said of Judah in **Gen. 49:9**: *"Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall rouse him up?"* Balaam said: *"He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion; who shall stir him"*. Jehovah said to Abram in **Gen. 12:7** *"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."* Balaam said: *"Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."* Thus did the God of Israel confirm His word by the lips of an implacable foe!

If God's earthly people were unconquerable, and superior to all the malice of the enemy, this is yet more blessedly true of God's heavenly saints. We are even now established before Him in Christ the victorious One, and the Holy Spirit dwells within us both individually and collectively. Thus the blessing is full and secure, and the power abundant, may our faith rise up to it all!

The Restraining Hand

That Balak should have waited to hear anything more from the lips of Balaam is perhaps surprising, but the hand of God was in it for reasons of His own. Balak was greatly disappointed with the first and second parables; but after he heard the third, wherein the people he hated were described as not only sanctified and justified, but also positively lovely in the eyes of Jehovah, he was furious. *"Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies; and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times" (Num. 24:10).* He now wished to get rid of his visitor. He might indeed have slain him in his fury, but a different end was divinely designed for Balaam; and, moreover, the full message of God had not yet been delivered. Balak bade him flee to his own country, adding, *"I thought to*

promote thee to great honour; but, lo, Jehovah hath kept thee back from honour." To all this Balaam's poor covetous heart would regretfully say "Amen." We recall his words to the messengers who waited upon him in Mesopotamia, "*Get you into your own land for Jehovah refuseth to give me leave to go with you*" (**Num. 22:13**). Thus, if Balak was disappointed with the result of this extraordinary business, Balaam also was disappointed quite as keenly. But the King having fetched up the soothsayer was not allowed to dismiss him at his will. He had already heard much that was distasteful to him, but he must hear yet more for his own Kingdom of Moab had not been mentioned thus far; its turn was now coming.

The seven parables taken together give the whole story of Jehovah's grace to Israel from the deliverance from Egyptian bondage right onward to millennial glory and supremacy. It is delightful to our souls to trace it, for Israel's God is also our God; and He who was so faithful to them in spite of all their disobedience, may be trusted to be faithful to us also. His ways with Israel are leading up to the land of promise for an everlasting possession with Christ as King in their midst; His ways with us are leading up to the Father's house on high.

Balaam reminded Balak that he told him at the beginning that if he would give him his house full of silver and gold he could only say what Jehovah gave him to speak; and he added, "*Now, behold, I go unto my people; come, I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.*"

Balak had no wish to hear more, and Balaam had no wish to say more; but the power of Hell having been invoked against His chosen people Jehovah had taken the matter up and He would see it through to the finish. Moreover, it must finish in His time, and in His way. Restrained by the power of God, Balak was compelled to listen to a remarkable prediction of earth's final military catastrophe.

"The latter days" now come before us.

PARABLE FOUR (from the heights of Peor): **(24:14-19)**

*"And now behold, I go to my people: come, I will admonish thee what this people will do to thy people at the end of days. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor saith, and the man of opened eye saith, He saith, who heareth the words of *God,*

*who knoweth the knowledge of the Most High, Who seeth the vision of the Almighty, who falleth down, and who hath his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: There cometh a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and he shall cut in pieces the corners of **Moab**, and destroy all the sons of tumult. And **Edom** shall be a possession, and **Seir** a possession, —they, his enemies; but Israel will do valiantly. And one out of Jacob shall have dominion, and will destroy out of the city what remaineth.” (Num. 24:14-19 JND)*

All these nations having passed away stand nevertheless in a very pronounced relation to the great day of the wrath of the Lord, when He whose right it is will appear once more. In fact they seem to come again to the front in the latter day. Balaam was led to describe the conquests of God's King when He appears, and he mentioned Moab first. *“He shall smite the corners of Moab.”*

In **Dan. 11:41** where the depredations of the latter day King of the North are foretold (not to be confounded with Gog in **Ezek. 38**), we read, *“he shall enter into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.”* Why are these ancient enemies of Israel specially named as to escape the heavy hand of the terrible invader? It is because Jehovah had already decreed their destruction by the hands of His own people.

Isaiah wrote more than a century before Daniel's day: *“they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab and the children of Ammon shall obey them” (Isa. 11:14)*. Thus Balak was given to understand that it is not Israel that is doomed to destruction, but his own envious and guilty Moab. And not Moab and her confederates only but He *“shall destroy all the children of Sheth (or tumult).”* With these words we may connect **Ps. 68:30** *“scatter Thou the people that delight in war.”*

The God of peace will not forever tolerate the doings of *“the sons of tumult.”* Devastated lands, ruined cities, blasted homes, and broken hearts present a sorry spectacle to Him. Self-seeking leaders who are responsible for these conditions, who seek their own aggrandizement at painful cost to others, are utterly abhorrent to the God of peace. When the seventh trumpet is sounded (**Rev. 11:15-18**) a great shout of triumph will be heard in heaven because the world-kingdom of our Lord and His Christ has at last come. Amongst the many results of the coming of the King it is written: *“Thou shalt destroy them that destroy the earth.”* But ruthless disturbers of the peace will not disappear until that day. One troubler may be cast down, but another will arise, (if not in his place

geographically) elsewhere. This has been the world's sad experience ever since the days of Nimrod and Chedorlaomer, the first recorded tyrants in **Gen. 14:1-16**.

After the last Assyrian (Gog and its confederates) are destroyed and God is seen destroying them and advancing even to Edom and returning with His vesture drenched in blood (**Isaiah 63:1-6**) Israel (the spared remnant of the 12-tribes) is destined to play an important part in the subjugation of the enemies of God and His people. Balaam said: "*Edom shall be a possession, and Seir also shall be a possession, and Israel shall do valiantly.*" (**Num. 23:18**).

The destruction by the Lord of the Western confederacy as described in **Rev. 19: 19-21**, and the overthrow of the Arab confederacy under the King of the North in **Isa. 28:11-22** and lastly the hordes of Russia and her allies as in **Ezek. 38; 39**, mentioned above will be quite apart from human instrumentality; but against Israel's closest neighbours (the Palestinian, Moab, Ammon and Edom) it is the divine intention to make use of delivered Israel. The **Palestinian** and **Edom** will be utterly destroyed (**Jer. 49:1-39; Ez. 25:12-17; 35:1-15; Ob. 1-21**) and **Moab** and **Ammon** will be subjugated to Israel forever (**Jer. 49:1-39; Ez. 25:1-11**).

This is made perfectly clear in **Zech. 9:13; 12: 6; Isa. 11:14** and other Scriptures.

The long down-trodden sons of Jacob will then become as a lion amongst the nations treading down, and tearing in pieces, with none to deliver (**Micah 5:8**) "*out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.*" Led on by Christ, who will then indeed be "a man of war" (**Ex. 15:3; Ps. 45:3-5**) Israel's armies will be irresistible. When this work of judgment is completed, Israel will be able to say: "*So let all Thine enemies perish. O Jehovah, but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might*" (**Judges 5:31**).

Balaam's words in **Num. 24:19** would seem to be final. What could be added to the statement that "*out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion.*" and destroy even the remnants of His peoples' enemies?

But the Spirit of God had still more to say in three short appendices.

PARABLE FIVE (from the heights of Peor): **(24:20)**

Amalek

When Balaam looked on Amalek, *"... he saw Amalek, and took up his parable, and said, Amalek is the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be for destruction."*

Ancient prestige, however wonderful it may be in the eyes of men, will count for nothing when God arises in His might. Balaam called them *"the first of the nations,"* but predicted that they should perish forever. (**Num. 24:20**).

There is a difficulty connected with these names, seeing that we read of Amalekites in **Gen. 14:7**, some hundred years before Amalek, the son of Eliphaz and grandson of **Esau**, was born, **Gen. 36:12**. Whether all we read of the tribe after this refers to the descendants of Esau, or whether the more ancient people were amalgamated with them, is not known.

The tribe became numerous and warlike. The **first** we read of them is that they attacked Israel soon after they had passed the Red Sea. They were conquered, and God declared *"I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven;"* not that they were at once destroyed, but the Lord swore He would have *"war with Amalek from generation to generation."* (**Ex. 17: 8-16**). They dwelt in the south of the land, **Num. 13:29**.

When the Israelites, who, alas, disbelievingly agreed with the spies who had brought up the evil report of the land, were told they should all fall in the wilderness, they then said they would go up and possess it; but they were smitten by the Amalekites and the Canaanites. Also several times in the period of the **Judges** war was made against them. **Saul**, as anointed king over the Lord's people, was bidden to destroy them utterly, but failed to answer to the Lord's vindication of His people: it was **Samuel** who cut Agag their king to pieces. (**1 Sam. 14:48; 15:1-33**). In the early days of **David** he attacked the Amalekites, **1 Sam. 27: 8**; and again when they burned Ziklag and carried away the women and children, including David's two wives, he recovered all, and sent of the spoil to the elders of Israel. (**1 Sam. 30: 1-31**). David dedicated their silver and gold unto Jehovah, **2 Sam. 8:12**. In the days of **Hezekiah** the rest of the Amalekites were smitten by the sons of Simeon. (**1 Chr. 4: 41-43**).

In the future they are among the nations of the **first Assyrian**—an Arab confederacy set on Israel's destruction. (**Ps. 83:7**).

We thus find that Amalek was the first to attack Israel, and continued an enemy ever ready to molest them when they were weak even until the days of

Hezekiah, and they are found in the hostile confederacy at the close of their history: an apt type of Satan as the enemy of God's people.

PARABLE SIX (from the heights of Peor): **(24:21-22)**

Kenites

“And he saw the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Firm is thy dwelling-place, and thy nest fixed in the rock; But the Kenite shall be consumed, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.”

Great fortifications, strong natural frontiers, and every possible accumulation of military force will be worthless when the day of the Lord opens, for He is wiser and stronger than men. Everything will collapse before Him.

Such triumphs for God and His people found no response in the heart of poor Balaam. Thus he opened his third appendix with the moan, *“Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!”* He rightly felt that His intervention will sweep the earth clear of all that which fills men with pride and vain glory. Balaam saw them dwelling in the rocks, but who were to be carried away by Asshur. These may have been a remnant of the Kenites mentioned in **Gen. 15:19** but there seem to have been several different peoples called by this name, without any apparent link between them. Thus

1. There were some in the land when it was promised to Abraham. **Gen. 15:19**.
2. **Jethro**, or Raguel, Moses' father-in-law, is called a Kenite, **Judges 1:16**, and is also called a Midianite. (**Num. 10:29**). The Midianites sprung from Midian, the son of Abraham and Keturah, (**Gen. 25:2**); so these Kenites were probably a branch of the Midianites. The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, left Jericho, the city of palm trees, and went into the wilderness of Judah, which was to the south of Arad, and dwelt there. (**Judges 1:16**) Apparently **Heber** the Kenite travelled north, and was neutral between Israel and their enemies; but Jael his wife smote Sisera in her tent. (**Judges 4:11, 17; 5:24**). Others remained in the far south, for when Saul was going to smite the Amalekites he warned the Kenites, for their own safety, to depart from among them, because they had befriended Israel when they came from Egypt. (**1 Sam. 15:6**). They were still in the neighborhood when David feigned to have attacked them. He

regarded them as friends, and sent presents to them. (1 Sam. 27:10; 30:29).

PARABLE SEVEN (from the heights of Peor): **(24:23-25)**

Chittim, Asher and Eber

*"And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! Who shall live when *God doeth this? And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and afflict Asshur, and afflict Eber, and he also shall be for destruction. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way."*

"Ships shall come from the land of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish forever."

Chittim, strictly speaking, means the island of Cyprus, now in possession of Great Britain; but in Scripture it is used as a general term for the West (**Jer. 2:10**), viewed from the Holy land as God's centre. In **Dan. 11:30** Chittim indisputably means the Roman Empire.

Asshur stands for the cruel first Assyrian of Isaiah and Micah and the King of the North of **Isaiah 10:5-7; Dan. 11:40; Micah 4:11-13**. He is at first victorious in the world's last crisis. *"Many countries shall be overthrown"* by him (**Dan. 11:41**), Jehovah using him as one of His *"carpenters"* (**Zech. 1:20-21**).

But both the Roman and the Assyrian are divinely appointed to destruction. The *"he"* of **Num. 24:24** is the last head of the Roman Empire (Comp: **Dan. 7:8**), the core of which will be the nations of Western Europe — Britain, France, Italy, Spain, etc. In this blasphemous tyrant, with his confederate, the false prophet of **Rev. 19:20** (the Antichrist) and the Assyrian leader, **Isaiah 30:33** all evil will reach its consummation, and all three will be despatched from the battlefield to the lake of fire.

Then in few words he spoke of "Armageddon," where the last terrible clash of the nations is destined to take place, **Rev. 16:13-16** with the fall of the Revived Roman Empire under the Beast, **Isaiah 13; 14** and a little later the fall of the first Assyrian and their leader, **Isaiah 28; 30**. That will indeed be the "war to end war!"

APPENDIX

"The **way** of Balaam"—**2 Peter 2: 15**.

"The **error** of Balaam"—**Jude 11**.

"The **doctrine** of Balaam"—**Rev. 2: 14**.

THE WAY OF BALAAM

"... having left the straight way they have gone astray, having followed in the path of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness..."

Peter speaks of "*the way of Balaam*" in **2 Peter 2:15** as he writes severely of **false teachers their evil doctrines**, and their pernicious ways. The Apostle, with eyes anointed by the Holy Spirit, could see men of the Balaam type rising up amongst Christians after his departure. That holy men such as the Apostles should have such "*successors*" is an appalling thought! Bad teaching can only produce bad living. "*The way of Balaam*" was the way of self-will. There was a certain course that Balaam desired to pursue, which would yield him substantial gain if he were successful; but his soul knew nothing of humble subjection to the will of God. Let us beware! Above all things we must be careful concerning the doctrines that we hold and teach for the truth of God must be allowed to humble us, and subdue every atom of self-will. A dumb ass rebuked the madness of Balaam. God forbid that we should lay ourselves open to such rebukes!

THE ERROR OF BALAAM

"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah" (Jude 11).

Peter deals particularly with the **wickedness** of religious leaders (abundantly proved in the pages of "Church" History); **Jude** has in mind their **apostasy**.

"*The error of Balaam*" was the corruption of ministry for the sake of personal aggrandizement. Balaam has had no lack of successors throughout the centuries. Hirelings in abundance have asserted themselves, caring nothing for

the glory of God nor for the blessing of men. Their own advantage has been uppermost in their thoughts.

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

“And to the angel of the assembly in Pergamos write: These things says he that has the sharp two-edged sword: I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in the days in which Antipas my faithful witness was, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against thee: that thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat of idol sacrifices and commit fornication.” (Rev. 2:12-14)

Pergamos was one of the seven Assemblies in Asia that were selected and addressed by the Lord Jesus in the second and third chapters of the Apocalypse. The omniscient eye of the Lord discerned the path that the Church would tread from the days of the Apostles down to His coming. He beheld sunshine and shadow, faithfulness and treachery, and He laid it all out for the guidance of those who have ears to hear, and who desire to do His will.

A fresh phase of the diabolical conspiracy of Balaam and Balak against Israel is here exposed. These men had zealously striven to array the forces of earth and Hell against the people of God, and their efforts had been turned to confusion by Israel's faithful Jehovah.

This doctrine is to tell the saints that there is nothing wrong in unholly association with the world. And it is on every hand today. It is the warp and woof of present-day Christendom. How terribly sad it is when such had counsel comes from the lips of true children of God!

CONCLUSION

The episode concludes in **Num. 24:25** thus: *“Balaam rose up and went and returned to his own place; and Balak also went his way.”*

But before the soothsayer left his disappointed patron, he apparently made a vile suggestion to him. If Jehovah could not be turned away from His people, perhaps the people could be turned away from Jehovah! Balaam knew enough of God to be sure that if the people of Israel could be tempted into sin Jehovah's hand would come down upon them in judgment. Thus we read in

Num. 25:1-2: *"Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods."*

Balak was recommended by Balaam to bring out the women and girls of Moab, and thus cast a snare before the all too frail people of Jehovah! Moses became aware of this later, for he referred to it when reproving the people for sparing all the women after a campaign against Midian.

"Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against Jehovah in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of Jehovah" (Num. 31:15-16).

The record in **Num. 25:1-9** is painfully solemn; a great lesson is here which we must not miss. As surely as Balaam sought to mingle the people of God with the ungodly in a by-gone age, the teachers of the doctrine of Balaam have laboured to mingle Church and world together in our own era and they have been sadly successful. History is continually repeating itself. Satan first endeavours to destroy, then, finding this impossible he seeks to corrupt, for a pure testimony for God in the earth is abhorrent to him.

In the Apocalyptic Assemblies Pergamos follows Smyrna. In Smyrna we have persecution. In the prophetic view, this refers to the second and third centuries of the earthly history of the Church when the Imperial authorities, urged on by Satan, sought to blot out the name of Christ. A change came when the Emperor Constantine made a profession of Christianity in the early years of the fourth century, and then decided to make the proscribed faith the religion of the State. We must think sympathetically of the saints of that period who, with their forefathers for at least two hundred years, had suffered cruelly for the name of Christ. What relief it must have been to them when the ruling power ceased to be hostile, and professed to be friendly! It was no longer discreditable and dangerous to be a Christian; instead, it became positively respectable, and the Bishops and clergy were welcomed at the Imperial Court.

But the guile of Satan was in all this, little as the mass perceived it. There was doubtless a spiritual minority who realized the serious tendencies of the changed conditions, and who humbly sought grace from above to be true to their Lord. But the masses were blinded.

The Church was alas no longer to be distinct from the world. It was to be its agent and ally; indeed one theologian defined the Church as "the nation in its religious aspect!"

No wonder the Lord said to the Assembly in Pergamos: "*I know where thou dwellest, where Satan's throne is*" (**Rev. 2:13**). Satan's throne is in the world of which he has been the acknowledged prince since the true Prince was cast out (**John 16:11**). To be **in** the world is one thing; to *dwell* in it– to **settle down** and be at home in it, is quite another. We are reminded of the stinging words of **James 4:4**: "*Adulteresses! Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*"

Let us remind ourselves that we belong to a heavenly order of things. The Church is an exotic in this evil world. On the evening before His death the Lord Jesus said to the Father in the hearing of His disciples: "*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*" (**John 17:14-16**).

To the disciples themselves He said: "*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*" (**John 15:19**).

In all His teaching our Lord sought to prepare them, not for the world's friendship and patronage, but for its hostility. One great object that He had in mind in giving Himself up to death was that He might have a people altogether for Himself; not by and by when earth of necessity has slipped away from us, but here and now. At great cost He purchased the treasure and the pearl; both are now His and His exclusively. (**Matt. 13: 44-46**).

What could be plainer than the words of the Apostle in **Gal. 1:3**?

"The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

In conformity with this, Paul states his own position definitely in **Gal. 6:14**: "*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" To the Hebrew Christians he wrote that Jesus in order "*that He might sanctify the people with His own blood suffered without the gate.*" (**Heb. 13:12**).

He went "*outside*" in His exceeding grace and He wants His people "*outside*" with Him, confessing in all their words and ways that "here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

The question may arise in some minds: "What does Scripture mean by the world? Does it refer to the frivolities of the flesh, and to those lusts and abominations which many decent people would abhor?" The scripture term means much more than this.

It includes the whole order of things which Cain and his family established in independence of God as described in **Gen. 4**. That order has developed and expanded, with ramifications religious, social, political, commercial, scientific, and otherwise. "*The world*" may have different forms of manifestation in various lands but in principle it is the same throughout, men determined to live and act in independence of God. The whole order of things here below which men love and pursue to their eternal ruin, is drastically described by the Holy Spirit in His warning to saints in **1 John 2:15-17**:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Such language leaves no loophole whatever. Evasion is impossible. The world in all its manifestations is offensive to the Father, and it will come under severe divine judgment ere long.

If the question be asked: "Has not the incoming of Christianity modified conditions amongst men? May we not now speak of a *Christian* world?" The opposite is the truth. The incoming of Christianity has made the whole position more serious than before. Men are not only as determined as ever to order their affairs without reference to God, but they have added to their sin and folly the rejection of His beloved Son sent in grace. The shadow of the cross is over all men's undertakings, and that terrible crime must yet be avenged.

In **Gal. 1:4** Paul speaks of this era as "*the present evil age*" (not "world"); and in **2 Cor. 4:4** he speaks of Satan as "*the god of this age*" who blinds men's eyes to prevent the Gospel of the glory of Christ shining into them. Satan was never

spoken of in this way until he succeeded in banding together men of all classes to cast out of the world God manifested in flesh (**Acts 4:27**).

Having accomplished this he has stepped into the place of the rejected one and is the world's god. Those who profess allegiance to the Lord Jesus, and who confess that they owe everything to His precious blood, should stand sternly apart from the world and its ways, and testify to its evil (**John 7:7**).

What have the world's political parties, military enterprises, co-operative societies, unions, and combines to do with those who even now are in union with the glorified Christ in heaven as His body, who will shortly be presented to Him as His bride, and who are destined to reign with Him over all things above and below?

"The doctrine of Balaam" would drag us down from our high places, and make us grovel in the dust with those whose interests are exclusively in things below. Definite separation becomes us, and the Lord's promise to those who overcome *"the doctrine of Balaam"* is singularly sweet and comprehensive. *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"* (Mark how individual is this appeal!) To him that overcometh will I give of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (**Rev. 2:17**).

The manna — God's gift to Israel in the wilderness, typifies Christ in His humiliation. An omer was to be placed in a golden pot and laid up before Jehovah in the sanctuary (**Ex. 16: 33**). This suggests that only God knows the whole truth concerning the Man Christ Jesus. A little has been told to us in the four Gospels but John, when laying down his pen said that if all the things that Jesus did and said were written the world could not contain the books. (**John 21:25**).

The promise to the overcomer in Pergamos means that He who was perfect in His separation to God will have much to tell us about His wonderful pathway when He gets us home. With what delight shall we listen to His voice!

The white stone, with its new name, private and personal to him who receives it, is the expression of the Lord's approval. Ample recompense for everyone who has sought to follow His steps in separation to God, and in obedience to His will!

The epistles to the Apocalyptic Assemblies reveal to us how very early destructive doctrines became established amongst the people of God. *"The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes"; "the doctrine of Balaam";* and the vile teaching of the prophetess Jezebel!

Of both moral wickedness and doctrinal evil it is written, *"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"* (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9).

Unwatchfulness leaves the door open for these things (Jude 4.). May God in His infinite mercy preserve both writer and reader in moral and doctrinal purity while we wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus!

