

A Breach in Our Armor (Balak)

“We must watch over our modesty in the presence of those who cannot understand its grounds.” - Jean Rostand

The wicked prophet Bilaam teams up with the powerful King of Moab, Balak, to destroy the people of Israel. Bilaam attempts time and again to unleash curses against the Israelite nation. However, God intervenes, and Bilaam, instead of cursing Israel, is forced by God to bless Israel.

After three failed attempts, Bilaam is cast away by an enraged King Balak. Israel seemed impervious to any attack. According to Ibn Ezra on Numbers 23:21, Balak does not give up. God’s very blessings provide Balak with a clue as to Israel’s fatal weakness.

One of the blessings mentions that God found “no fault” in Israel. Balak then reasoned (correctly) that if God were to find fault in Israel, they would become vulnerable to curses and destruction. The Rabbis comment that the people of Israel conducted themselves with modesty and faithfulness, qualities that found favor in God’s eyes. With this insight, Balak organizes the seduction of the Israelite men and sends a squad of Moabite and Midianite women to the Israelite camp. Balak knew that if the Israelite men would fall to the prohibited charms of these idol-worshipping women, then God’s impenetrable protection of the Jewish people would cease.

In this campaign of seduction, Balak is wildly successful. The Israelite men indeed succumb to the temptation, and then without lifting a finger, Balak witnesses God’s judgment upon the people of Israel through a fatal plague that kills 24,000 Israelites in short order.

Not only does God no longer provide defense, but He Himself punishes us for not living and behaving as we are supposed to.

We have a potent armor in God’s protection. We should be careful not to lose it.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

Dedications!!!!

To the birth of our new grandson, Yagel Ovadya Spitz, son of Zavi and Elchanan!

To the marriage of Mia Raskin and Ilan Shields!!

To the engagement of our niece, Miri Spitz to Hillel Gontownik!!!

To Elchanan getting his Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Bar-Ilan University, Magna Cum Laude!!!!

MAZAL TOV!!!!