

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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Balak

UVALAK BEN TZIPOR MELECH MOAV BA'EIT HAHI, "And Balak, son of Tzipor was king of Moav at that time" (Bamidbar 22:4). King Balak is an important character in our Parsha and one of our archenemies. However, one question that stands out is with our original acquaintance with Balak. The first pasuk in the Parsha introduces Balak not as royalty but rather as a concerned citizen.

VAYAAR BALAK BEN TZIPOR EIT KOL ASHER ASA YISRAEL LA'EMORI - Balak saw all that Israel did."

Why do we first hear about Balak before his rise to fame? Why do we not meet King Balak immediately? There seems to be importance that the Torah relates how "Citizen Balak" sees the multitude of the Israelites and becomes terrified.

Moav took counsel with the elders of Midyan about this oncoming threat of Israel. Only now, we are told that Balak becomes king. Why delay this fact until after the threat being discussed, as if it was, happen-chance.

The Midrash quotes a tradition that Balak was none other than a layman of no significance. However, once

Balak was associated as the one who took note of the Jewish threat and told of the impending economic and social upheaval that Moav faced, he immediately was chosen as their new leader. The Midrash quotes a sad proof from the Book of Eicha we will be reading in a little more than three weeks from now. The text is HAYU TZOREI'A L'ROSH - "Her enemies came to head." Anyone labeling as their enemy the people of Israel will be coroneted as leaders of their peoples. We are witness to a Balak that sees only what Israel did to the Amorites, but ignored what the Amorites did to Israel by initiating war, nor to the atrocities committed on Israel by Amalek or Egypt. We are introduced to real and simple anti-Semitism, hatred of the Jew no matter what. It was through Bilaam's own experience in challenging Israel that we gain a glimpse of the future nature of Jewish history. It was his efforts in cursing us, which would lead him to bless us. For a star shall come forth from Yaakov and sovereignty arise in Yisrael. Its enemies that surround will be cut down, while Israel does valiantly.

It is the words of the prophet Micha, that we read in the Haftara, which seems to adopt the messianic vision stated by Bilaam. V'HAYA SH'EIRIT YAAKOV B'KEREV GOYIM RABIM. And the last remnant of Yaakov amid the other nations of the world, will be

like the dew from Heaven, reviving moisture on the land in a way that no one could have hoped for, nor any human being anticipated.

This is our answer to Anti-semitism. Those who try to attack us will be the one proclaiming the uniqueness and special character that the Jewish people add to this world. 🏰