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Balaam's Fifth Oracle

24: 20

There came a day of reckoning on the Amalekites that was dreadful.

The remaining three **oracles** seem to spring almost involuntarily from **the fourth oracle (to see link click [Dw - Balaam's Fourth Oracle](#))**. **They** overlap the promise of victory of **Isra'el** over all **her** enemies; hence these are "**curse oracles**." It may be that these were similar to the types of **oracles** that **Balaam** intended to hurl against **Isra'el**. Instead, these harsh words lash out against the foes of **the people of ADONAI**. Here lies the final irony: **Balak** and **Balaam** had plotted to bring **Isra'el** under a **curse**, but **their** conspiracies only assured **their** own doom.⁵⁴² As **Balaam** stood on **the top of the Pisgah Mountain Range**, some 2,600 feet above sea level, **he** had visions concerning other **nations** and predicted **their** destiny. **They** differ from the previous **oracle** against **Mo'ab** and **Edom**, in that **they** do not mention **Isra'el**. Indeed, from **the Moabite plateau** looking southward to the Negev, **he** could see the **Amalekites**, **Kenites**, and the **Asshurites**.



Balaam saw Amalek and made this oracle, "First among nations [was] Amalek" (24:20a). Amalek, the tribal ancestor of **the Amalekites** is here used as a synonym for **the tribe**. **They** were **first among the nations** in two ways. First, **they** were **first among the nations** in the sense that **their** ancestry could be traced all the way back to **Esau**, making

them an ancient people (**Genesis 36:16**). And secondly, **they** were **the first nation** to take up arms against **Isra'el**. **They** attacked **the Israelites** just after **they** left Egypt (see the commentary on **Exodus Cv - The Amalekites Attacked the Israelites at Rephidim**). To remember the attack, Jewish communities around the world observe Shabbat Zachor (Shabbat of Remembrance). It is the Shabbat immediately preceding **Purim** when the attack is remembered. **There is a tradition from the Talmud that Haman, the antagonist of the Purim story, was descended from Amalek**. The portion that is read includes a commandment to remember the attack by **Amalek**, and therefore at the public reading, both men and women make a special effort to hear the reading.

But, there came a day of reckoning on **the Amalekites** that was dreadful. **Balaam** concluded: **their destiny [will be] destruction (24:20b)**. In **the near historical future**, at the request of **God, king Sha'ul** seemed to defeat **the Amalekites**, but disobeyed when **the prophet Samuel** placed **them** under **His** cherem judgment (see the commentary on **the Life of King Sha'ul C1 - The Rejection of King Sha'ul**). Later, **David** defeated **the Amalekites**. **He fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day**. The attack was massive, bloody, and decisive. **None of them got away, except for four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled** (see the commentary on **the Life of David Cb - David Defeats the Amalekites**). Later, **they** were totally **destroyed** by the tribe of Simeon in **Hezekiah's** time (**First Chronicles 4:43**). However, **the Exodus** passage above ends with the statement: **ADONAI will wage war against the Amalekites from generation to generation**, symbolizing all of **God's** enemies (**Exodus 17:16**). Therefore, this **oracle** of doom will also extend into **the far eschatological future** where **the Messiah** will secure the final victory over all **His** enemies (see the commentary on **Revelation F1 - When the Thousand Years Are Over**).

These three **oracles (24:20-25)**, paint a picture of one **nation** raising and supplanting another, only to face **its** own doom (see **Dz - Balaam's Seventh Oracle**). In contrast, there is the implied ongoing **blessing** on **the people of Isra'el** and **their** sure promise of a future **Deliverer** who will have the final victory. It is remarkable that **God** gave these visions to a covetous Gentile **sorcerer** instead of a dedicated Jewish prophet. But **He** is sovereign in all **His** ways, and **His** ways are higher than our ways (see the commentary on **Isaiah Ji - My Word That Goes Out Will Not Return Empty**).⁵⁴³

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for being such a wonderful **Heavenly Father**, completely loving yet also fair and **righteous** in **judgment**. **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne**. **Lovingkindness and truth go before You (Psalms 89:14)**. **Messiah Yeshua** called out to all that **they** should come to him. **Come to Me, all***

who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

The prophet **Isaiah** spoke of the importance of coming to **God**, not just knowing about **Him**, but to answer **the LORD's** invitation and come to **Him** so that their **soul may live**. **Everyone who thirsts, come to the water . . . open your ears and come to Me. Listen, so that your soul may live (Isaiah 55:1 and 3).** **Messiah** calls out for all to come to **His** gracious offer of living water. **On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Yeshua stood up and cried out loudly: If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, 'out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.** Now He said this about the **Ruach**, whom those who trusted in Him were going to receive; for the **Ruach** was not yet given, since Yeshua was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39).

Many do not want to humble their hearts before **You**. They do not want to answer **Your** gracious invitation to come to **You** by making **You** their **Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-11)**. They choose to follow their own selfish hearts desires and ignore **Your** merciful call. **You** will judge each one fairly. **Then Yeshua began to denounce the towns where most of His miracles had happened, because they did not turn from their sins. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have turned long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the Day of Judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum? Will you be lifted up to heaven? No, you will go down to Sheol! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I tell you that it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom on the Day of Judgment than for you (Matthew 11:21-24).**

Praise **Your** great love that calls all to come, and **Your righteousness** and **justice** that will judge with fairness **Your** enemies. Life is so short and eternity is so long. It is foolish to be **Your** enemy. What joy it is to love and follow **You** and be rewarded by **a home in heaven** for all eternity (**John 14:1-3, Revelation 21:1-4**)! Praise **You** always! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen