

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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BALAK

"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 arch-enemies. 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.

"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 Midian about this oncoming threat of Israel. Only now, are we told that Balak becomes king. Why delay this fact until after the threat is being discussed, as if it was, happenchance.

The Midrash quotes a tradition that Balak was none other than a layman of no significant value. 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. Midrash quotes a sad proof from the Book of Eicha.

The text is HAYU TZOREHA L'ROSH - "Her enemies came to head." Anyone labeling as their enemy the people of Israel will be coronated 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 in Israel by Amalek or Egypt.

We are introduced to real and simple anti-Semitism, hatred of the Jew no matter what.

Balak realizes early on that military attack would not surrender Israel. They would need something supernatural and therefore he ran to Bilaam to curse them.

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.

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. 🗨️