

Micah 6:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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 the LORD.

Analysis

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 the LORD. God commands Israel to "remember" (זָכֹר-נָא, zekhor-na)—the imperative with emphatic particle נָא (na, "now, please") urges immediate recollection. What should they remember? Balak's conspiracy and God's sovereign protection.

"What Balak king of Moab consulted" (מָה יַעֲזֹב בָּלָאק, meh ya'ats Balaq) refers to his plot to curse Israel through Balaam (Numbers 22-24). "What Balaam... answered him" recalls how God turned intended curses into blessings: **"How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?"** (Numbers 23:8). Balaam pronounced four oracles blessing Israel, culminating in Messianic prophecy: **"There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel"** (Numbers 24:17).

"From Shittim unto Gilgal" (מִן-הַשִּׁטִּים עַד-הַגִּלְגָּל, min-haShittim ad-haGilgal) bookends Israel's journey from Moab's plains to Canaan's conquest. Shittim was Israel's final camp before crossing Jordan (Joshua 2:1); Gilgal was their first encampment in Canaan where they circumcised the new generation and celebrated Passover (Joshua 4:19-5:12). The span represents God's faithfulness bringing them despite enemies' opposition. "That ye may know the righteousness of the LORD" (צִדְקוֹת יְהוָה, tsidqot YHWH) uses the plural form, indicating God's

repeated righteous acts—His covenant faithfulness, saving deeds, and just governance.

Historical Context

The Balaam narrative (Numbers 22-24) demonstrates God's sovereign protection of Israel. Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, but God forced Balaam to bless them instead. Though Balaam later devised sinful strategy (seducing Israel to idolatry at Peor—Numbers 25:1-3; 31:16; Revelation 2:14), God overruled his initial curses. Israel's survival despite powerful enemies' schemes proves divine preservation.

Micah's audience in 8th century BC Judah faced Assyrian threats. Remembering God's past deliverances (from Egypt, from Balaam's curse) should inspire trust. Yet they turned to other gods and unjust practices. The command to "remember" echoes throughout Scripture (Deuteronomy 8:2; Psalm 77:11; 103:2; Ephesians 2:11-12)—remembrance combats forgetfulness that breeds ingratitude and apostasy. The New Testament similarly commands remembering Christ's sacrifice (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25). Rehearsing God's past faithfulness strengthens faith for present challenges.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does remembering God's past protection from enemies you didn't even know existed strengthen faith when facing current threats?
2. What does Balaam's inability to curse whom God has blessed teach about the security of those under divine covenant?

3. How does regularly rehearsing God's 'righteous acts' in your life guard against ingratitude and apostasy?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| עַמִּי י | זָכַר | נָא | מֵה | יַעֲזָ | בָּלָק | מֶלֶךְ |
| O my people | remember | H4994 | H4100 | consulted | now what Balak | king |
| H5971 | H2142 | | | H3289 | H1111 | H4428 |
| בְּמוֹאָב | וּמָה | עָנָה | אֶת־ו | בָּלָעַם | בֶּן־ | בְּעוֹר |
| of Moab | H4100 | answered | H853 | and what Balaam | the son | of Beor |
| H4124 | | H6030 | | H1109 | H1121 | H1160 |
| הַשִּׁטִּים | עַד | הַגִּלְגָּל | לְמַעַן | יָדַעְתָּ | וְ | צִדְקָתוֹ |
| him from Shittim | H5704 | unto Gilgal | H4616 | that ye may know | | the righteousness |
| H7851 | | H1537 | | H3045 | | H6666 |
| יְהוָה: | | | | | | |
| of the LORD | | | | | | |
| H3068 | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 25:1 (Parallel theme): And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

Judges 5:11 (Righteousness): They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

Joshua 4:19 (Parallel theme): And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

Revelation 2:14 (Parallel theme): But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Jude 1:11 (Parallel theme): 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 Core.

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