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BALAAM.

NUMB. 22—24.

The history of Balaam, as recorded by Moses, Numb. 22—24, is beyond doubt one of the most interesting and instructive parts of the Old Testament. There are many things which commend it to the special study and meditation of the thoughtful and diligent Bible student. It is a singular and unique personage and character which in these chapters is portrayed to the reader of the good Book,—Balaam, the Seer,—and yet we see in this strange man the picture and type of many that have received from God great spiritual gifts and have occupied a high place in the Church of God, but, being blinded by the things of this world, have forgotten again their high calling and have rushed anew into the snares and clutches of Satan, into temporal and eternal ruin. But if the character and personage of Balaam are such as to arouse our special interest, his extraction, the remote time in which he lived, his sudden appearance in the history of Israel, and the part which he plays in it, also certainly engage our attention in no small degree. Balaam is a native of a heathen country, a contemporary of Moses and Joshua, and without having any previous intercourse with God's chosen people, he is suddenly confronted with the same, at a time when Israel had pitched its tents on the eastern boundaries of the promised land, ready to fight in the name of their God, their hearts swelled with the certain hope of victory and conquest. Called by a heathen king to

curse this nation, he cannot but bless and proclaim the bright and happy future of Israel, while, at the same time, his spiritual eye sees only ruin and destruction for its enemies and the enemies of the Blessed Seed which was to spring from Israel. And oh! what a lofty flight do his words and thoughts take, when he speaks of these things; how poetic and sublime is the very language he uses! When we see and hear him, standing on the summits of the mountains of Moab, when his eloquent tongue bids us behold the radiant light of the Star out of Jacob, we might believe that we were standing at the deathbed of one of the patriarchs of old or listening to the words of some great prophet, like David or Isaiah. If, therefore, I busy my pen with the history of this man, I trust that I will have the goodwill of the kind readers, my greatest regret only being that none of the brethren that are more equal to the task have not long ago undertaken to delineate this man and the history circling round about him in our THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

I.

If we read or hear of a person that played an important part in the history of the world or the Church, we would also like to know the particulars of his parentage, how he was raised and educated, what position he occupied in his country, what influence he exerted, the good and bad traits of his character from his early youth, and the like. In some instances Holy Writ gives us a detailed account of these things, as in the narration of the lives of Moses, Samuel, and Daniel. But in regard to Balaam's earlier life the Holy Spirit saw fit not to acquaint us with the particulars, and many things which we would like to know are shrouded in the deepest mystery, or perhaps only hinted at. Still, what He had Moses relate about the birthplace and descent of Balaam is worthy of our notice and helps us to understand the better his subsequent history.

Balaam was a native of Mesopotamia, the cradle of the human race, a resident of the country whence Abraham came

and where Laban had lived. He himself states this Numb. 23, 7, saying: "Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east." The town, or city, in which he lived was Pethor, concerning which Moses makes the remark: "Which is by the river of the land of the children of his people," Numb. 22, 5. The river which he means evidently is the Euphrates. His father's name was Beor, Numb. 22, 5, or in the New Testament Bosor, 2 Pet. 2, 15. It is remarkable that his father's name, as well as his own, have nearly the same meaning. For Beor, or in the Hebrew tongue, בְּעוֹר , according to Hengstenberg and others, means "destruction," this name being derived from the verb בָּעַר , absunsit, deponit. Balaam, בַּלְעָם , denotes, "The swallower of the people." The Greek rendition of this name, according to Hengstenberg, is, *Nicholaos*, the conqueror of the people, as may be seen from Rev. 2, 15, where the followers of the doctrine and practice of Balaam after his apostasy are called Nicolaitans. These names of father and son have given room to the conjecture that Balaam was the scion of a family in which soothsaying or divination was practiced as a craft, and that even his father's name was dreaded by the people for the power and efficacy of his execrations. Balaam might, then, have received this name immediately after his birth, and his father may have given him this name in the hope and expectation of his becoming what the name expressed, a swallower and destroyer of the people. If this was the case, the impious hope of the father was surely fulfilled. But according to Oriental custom, Balaam may have received his name after his oracles had given him an almost international reputation, Numb. 22, 15, or even after he had given the advice to the Midianites to seduce the children of Israel to idolatry and fornication, Numb. 31, 16. For through this wicked counsel Balaam became the cause of destruction for many thousands.

Having made this etymological digression, we shall turn our attention to the main question in this part of our treatise. This question is: Was Balaam, previous to the time at which

Moses introduces him into the history of Israel, a truly pious man, a man that was in a state of grace and a true prophet? There are, in the main, two opinions which are diametrically opposed to each other. Philo, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and many theologians of the Lutheran, Roman, and Reformed churches answer this question in the negative. They try to maintain that Balaam never stood in any relation to the true religion. According to their judgment he never was a worshiper of the true God, but always given to idolatry and at all times an enchanter, whose mind had no relation whatever to the prophecies which he uttered, whose prophecies, in fact, came forth from his lips without his mind being affected, even against his will. Ambrose, for instance, puts these words into his mouth: "Quasi cymbalum tinniens sonum reddo." (Conf. Hengstenberg, *The History of Balaam and His Prophecies*, pp. 5. 7. Germ. ed. Berlin, 1842.) Many others, again, as, for instance, Tertullian, Jerome, Luther, Buddeus, Deyling, Buzel, Calov, and in our times Stoeckhardt, are fully convinced that Balaam was first a truly pious man and a true prophet, but afterwards became an apostate, blinded by the gold and the honors of Balak. Hengstenberg claims that the truth lies in the midst of "these two extreme opinions," and maintains that there were in Balaam the beginnings of the knowledge and fear of God, but that he had never gone beyond these beginnings and had never experienced a thorough conversion. Concerning his prophecies, he says that God had granted him, as it were, some clear glances, but that his prophetic gift proved to be by no means comprehensive and reliable, so that he cannot be counted among the prophets. (l. c., p. 11.) The merits or demerits of this conciliatory effort will show themselves when we deal with the above-mentioned discrepant views, and especially when we shall undertake to expound Balaam's prophecies.

We do not hesitate to maintain that Balaam, at the time to which we referred above, was in a state of grace, and that he was also a true prophet. By making this assertion, however,

we do not mean to decide the question whether before that time, in his younger days, he had been initiated into the magical arts and practiced them, or not. If, according to the testimony of Joshua, the Lord had called Abraham from idolatry to make him a great patriarch, the bearer of the divine promises, the forefather of the Blessed Seed, and the father of all true believers; if, furthermore, St. Paul, first a persecutor of the Church of God, became a great apostle and the teacher of the heathen world, why should and could God not also have called Balaam out of heathenish darkness and away from sinister practices not only to kindle faith in him, but also to make him His prophet? St. Paul says Rom. 9, 16: "So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

But how did Balaam obtain the true knowledge of God? In what manner did God call him and qualify him for his office? We have reasons to believe that at the time of Balaam there were still alive in Mesopotamia some traditions concerning Abraham and Jacob. Abraham, after his conversion, and Jacob, during his stay in that country, surely sought to disseminate the knowledge of the true God and to communicate to others their hopes and expectations concerning the promised Redeemer of the human race. But a studious and inquisitive mind, like that of Balaam, must have eagerly imbibed such information and pondered these things, and God might have used such traditions to plant the true faith into his heart. It is noteworthy, at any rate, that Balaam's oracles and prophecies contain strong allusions to the sayings of the patriarchs and the promises they had received; cf. Numb. 23, 10; 24, 9. 17b, etc. We are, of course, fully aware of the fact that God put these prophecies in the mouth of Balaam, but we also know that the Holy Spirit did also take into His service the knowledge and the phraseology of the individuals whom He employed as His amanuenses and mouthpieces. Thus He availed Himself of St. Paul's knowledge of Greek poets and philosophers, Acts 17, 28; Tit. 1, 12. The above-mentioned passages (Numb.

23, 10, etc.) therefore are no slight intimation that the progenitors of the Israelites were not altogether forgotten in Mesopotamia, and that Balaam also had become acquainted with their history in some way.

Another source from which Balaam drew at least some knowledge of the true God was the rumor which spread before Israel. The deliverance of Israel from the hand of the Egyptians, attended by signs and miracles, and the great miracles which God performed for His people even during its wanderings in the wilderness, did not fail to make a deep impression upon the surrounding nations, Ex. 15, 14; Josh. 5, 1. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and Rahab were thereby led to the knowledge of the true God, Ex. 18; Josh. 2. Mesopotamia, however, was neither so far from the regions where these great events had taken place, nor was the intercourse between the nations of the East so scanty that the inhabitants of Mesopotamia should not have heard of the great deeds which Jehovah had done for His people. It would be strange indeed if a man of the character and caste of Balaam should not have tried to obtain all the information in regard to this people and its God he possibly could. It is true, Numb. 22, 10 seems to refute this assertion at the first glance. Balaam there says to the Lord: "Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying: Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt," etc. But Balaam simply quotes the words of the Moabitish ruler. We also may surmise that in the hour of weakness and temptation the prophet was so foolish as to believe it to be of advantage to him not to betray any acquaintance with that nation in his conversation with God, although all the statements which he makes concerning God are correct and in keeping with what Scripture says about Him and His attributes. Do we not also judge God sometimes by feeble sense, especially if some strong temptation assails us, although we know better and would be far from uttering any heterodox opinion if catechised by anybody? But the Mesopotamian seer knew very well who that nation was and whence it came. We see this from passages like Numb. 23, 7:

“Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel!”—and 22, 23: “Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob,” etc. Should not also the great deeds of God in behalf of His chosen people have deeply affected the heart of this man and fully convinced him that Jehovah is the only true God?

Balaam, however, had still another source from which he derived the knowledge of God and His will. God dealt with him directly, in the same manner in which He conversed with the patriarchs and the prophets of old. Deyling, in his *Observationes Sacrae* (pars tertia, p. 103, 8. 3), says that he sees in Balaam the certain and indubitable characteristics of a true prophet—and if we examine the arguments which he produces we cannot but agree with him. He had intercourse with the true and eternal God, as we see from Numb. 22, 8. There, being asked to curse Israel, he declares that he can do nothing without God’s consent, and that he must ask Him first before he could make any promises. If he would have been a worshiper of a false god, of Baal, or Moloch, or some demons, he would have made preparations to consult them. And God appears to him at night in dreams or visions, 22, 12, 19, and speaks to him. In the same manner God appeared to Abraham, Gen. 17, 1; to Jacob, Gen. 46, 2; to Job, Job 4, 13; to Samuel, 1 Sam. 3, and to many other prophets. We read, furthermore, that God met him, 22, 4, 16. God put the words in Balaam’s mouth, 22, 5, 16. This is also said of prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Is. 51, 16; Jer. 1, 9; 5, 14, etc. To Balaam is also ascribed that mode of prophesying which the Hebrew doctors call רִיבָהּ הַקֹּדֶשׁ. We read 24, 2: “And the Spirit of God came upon him,” that is, the Spirit of prophecy, by the afflation of whom the mind sees and predicts future events and prophecies. The same thing is also said of Eldad and Medad, Numb. 11, 26, and the consequence of it was that they prophesied in the camp. The word which Moses uses there is נָבֵא, and the proper meaning of this verb is always to prophesy or to speak in prophetic enthusiasm (προφητεύειν). This was also the most common way by which God revealed His will to Moses, David, and other

prophets, 2 Pet. 1, 21: "The holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Scripture, however, calls our attention to still another mode by which Balaam received his prophetic knowledge, namely, by ecstasy (*κατ' ἔκστασιν*). In this state the functions of the senses are suspended for awhile, the inner eye is opened, and the prophet, unconscious of what is taking place round about him, sees some extraordinary or supernatural objects which it pleases God to reveal to him. Of this manner of divine revelation Balaam speaks Numb. 24, 4, where he says: "He hath said, . . . which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." Overpowered by the impressions he received, by the visions he saw, the prophet lay prostrate (*שָׁרַף*, war hingesunken). In such a state of ecstasy was Saul when he prophesied, 1 Sam. 19, 24. But Balaam is in still better company than that of Saul. St. Peter fell into a trance when God wanted to teach him not to despise the Gentiles, Acts 10, 10: *ἐγένετο ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔκστασις*. The same St. Paul experienced twice: Acts 22, 17 (*ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γενέσθαι με ἐκστάσει*); 2 Cor. 12, 2. 4 (*ἀρπαγέντα ἕως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ — ὅτι ἀρπάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον*).

A man to whom God revealed His will in so many ways is surely not to be placed on the same level with Simon Magus, who never received any divine revelation, neither can he be a mere deceiver, or a mere, ordinary soothsayer, but must have been in truth a prophet of God for a time, and if we wish to compare him with any person in Scripture, we are surely more justified to compare him with Judas Iscariot, the chosen apostle of the Lord, who, also blinded and seduced by the cursed hunger for gold, betrayed the Son of God.

Another strong argument for the correctness of our view is the fact that the Scriptures do not point to a single instance where his oracles and his predictions did not come true. False prophets, deceivers, and mere diviners may, by their own sagacity or the sagacity of the devil, sometimes guess at or foresee near future events, but the rule with them certainly is that

they tell lies, especially in regard to God's will and the future of the Church, and their very lies and falsehoods expose them as deceivers and prophets of the Evil One. All the prophecies of Balaam, however, as recorded Numb. 23 and 24, have been fulfilled, although they embrace a period of fifteen centuries. But not only the oracles which he gave forth on the heights of Moab were verified in the course of time, even his previous blessings and curses were confirmed by the outcome. The heathen Balak also bears testimony to this fact. He says through his ambassadors, Numb. 22, 6: "For I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed."

A further corroboration of the assertions we have made is 2 Pet. 2, 16. There the apostle calls Balaam not a magician, or a soothsayer, or a deceiver, but a prophet (*ἐκάλωσε τὴν τοῦ προφήτου παραφροσύαν*). Indeed, the whole passage, 2 Pet. 2, 15, 16, and the subsequent context, shows us likewise that Balaam had been for some time a true believer, a man, therefore, that also possessed the fear of God. The apostle here speaks of men that have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but who would forsake (*καταλείποντες εὐθεῖαν ὁδόν*) the right way and go astray. In doing this, however, they would follow the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, etc. But if these men and false teachers follow the way of Balaam, it is but fair to infer that Balaam had first traveled that road, or in other words, that he also for a time had escaped the pollutions of the world and become a true believer, but afterwards lost the grace of God through the love of the wages of unrighteousness. This inference is furthermore in agreement with his personal relations to God as they are represented in the 22d and 23d chapters. He calls Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, his God (*לַעֲבֹד אֱתֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי*), 22, 18. He converses with God as with his God, besides whom there is no other. There is no trace, no vestige of polytheism in all that we hear about Balaam or that proceeds from his lips. His knowledge of God is pure, and we can subscribe to everything he says about God

and His attributes. Again and again he emphasizes that he can do nothing without God, in spite of all temptations and although this truth is most inconvenient for him. The conviction that God is unchangeable in His thoughts and designs is firmly settled in his mind. We only refer to one word which he holds up to the idolatrous Balak, who thinks he can change God's mind by his hecatombs. He says 23, 19: "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" All these words are diametrically opposed to the notions which the heathen entertained concerning their gods, and they were spoken by him not only as a dogmatical truth, but in the tone of personal conviction, although according to his flesh and blood he wished that he would be in a position to gratify the wishes of Balak. Balaam was, at any rate, no worshiper of idols, but an adorer and worshiper of the true God, and if afterwards he became an open enemy of Him, a veritable apostle of Satan, it was because he ceased to give room to the Holy Spirit in his heart, and yielded to his flesh and blood which warred against the Spirit. If we should deny this, or if there had been in Balaam only a few, scanty beginnings of the fear of God, how could we finally account for or explain the long and fierce struggle in which Balak's temptation involved him? If the prophet had been wholly without the true fear of God, he would not have asked God repeatedly if He would "give him leave" to accompany the messengers of Balak, but would have complied with the request of the Moabitish king without any hesitation; and if his knowledge and fear of God would have been only superficial, we venture to say that his scruples and remorse would have been easily overcome by the flattering and smooth words of Balak and his messengers.

Finally, is it not remarkable that Balaam says, Numb. 23, 10: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his"? He does not wish to die like a heathen in despair, or relying on false gods; he does not expect his end

to be like the end of a heathen priest or magician, but desires that his end be like that of the true Israelites who trusted in their covenant God, the God of grace, that his death might be like the death of those who had walked in the ways of the Lord. We know very well that here, also, he is the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost. But what the Holy Ghost inspires him to utter he declares to be his own wish, his own personal desire and expectation. This is clearly and most forcibly indicated by the use of the suffix of the first person in the singular: . . . תָּמַתְּ נַפְשִׁי . . . תְּהִי אֶחְרִיתִי. In these words we surely do not have the language of a man who never had possessed true faith in the Lord or who had been altogether without the true fear of God.

But the objection has been raised: Is Balaam not called a soothsayer or, rather, "the soothsayer" (תְּקִינִים), Josh. 13, 22? And if Scripture calls him "the soothsayer," must he not have been a wicked man, a man in reality devoted to the foul practices of divination? Now, we do not doubt that *kosem* is employed here in its proper sense, and that it has an evil meaning in itself. Neither do we attempt to attach to it a signification similar to the meaning which its noun has in Prov. 16, 10: "A divine or wise sentence (קִסָּם) is in the lips of the king." But still we must remember that Balaam lived in a heathen country and in heathen surroundings, where the multitude, or even, to say the least, by far the greater majority of the people could not distinguish between their idols, their priests, and diviners and the true God and His prophets. What could have been more natural, therefore, than that they regarded as a diviner and called a soothsayer every one that was, or pretended to be, in contact and communion with the invisible world? Thus, if Balak sends his messengers to Balaam with the rewards of divination in their hand (קִסָּמִים בְּיָדָם), it does not go to prove that Balaam was at that time given to divination. It only shows that he judged Balaam and his God according to his heathen standard and his pagan notions. Moreover, it is by no means impossible, as we have intimated above, that the son of Beor formerly was a real heathen *kosem*, or soothsayer,

until the Lord called him into His kingdom of grace and made him His prophet. And if he was no soothsayer before his calling and conversion, he undoubtedly became one after his conversion, so that we cannot be surprised that Joshua, who takes notice of his death and doom in a few words, calls him Balaam, the soothsayer, without any circumlocution. Taking all this into consideration, we cannot see how this title or appellation given to Balaam after his death could undermine our position or invalidate the arguments which we have brought forth.

Some learned men furthermore point to Numb. 24, 1b as an evidence that Balaam must have been, even at the time when he followed Balak's invitation, an enchanter and soothsayer. We read there: "He (Balaam) went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments." The phrase, "to seek for enchantments," or, to the meeting of enchantments, is the rendition of: לְקַרְאֵת נְחָשִׁים. The plural נְחָשִׁים, however, which occurs only in this passage, does not denote enchantment or divination here, like its singular in Numb. 23, 23. It is beyond question that Moses by these words refers to ch. 23, 3. 15. But in these two verses not a word is said about divinations and enchantments. Moses only relates both times that Balaam bade the Moabitish king stay by the burnt offering, while he went to a lonely place, nearby, to meet God. His intention was to find out the will of God. And both times Balaam came back from the solitude to proclaim the word which the Lord had put in his mouth. But could any one really believe that God would have answered to heathen charms and spells, to enchantments and magical formulas? This only the devil does, and Balaam surely did not receive his prophecies from the devil, but from the true living God. Therefore we have more than sufficient reasons to reject this translation as an impossibility. Hengstenberg and Gesenius have instinctively felt this and have substituted: *augurium* or *omen*. This signification is strongly suggested by a secondary meaning of the verb נָחַשׁ, namely, to presage, to take for an omen. In this sense נָחַשׁ is evidently used 1 Kings 20,

23: וְהִזְנִיחַ אֲנִי יְהוָה; Vulgate: "Et acceperunt viri pro omine," that is, they received the words of Ahab for a good omen or sign. If נִחַשׁ is to be taken in this sense, then Balaam would have gone to some lonely place to wait there for a sign from the Lord, from which he would learn to know His will. But such a procedure would not necessarily have been heathenish or even superstitious, nor would it have stamped Balaam as a diviner and common soothsayer. Gideon, for instance, asked God repeatedly for signs to become the more assured that the Lord was with him and with Israel, Judges 6, 17. 37. 39. Elijah, one of the greatest prophets, waits for a sign from heaven to convince Israel that Jehovah was the true and only God. Gen. 30, 27, however, the force of נִחַשׁ is still more lessened. There Laban says: "I have learned by experience (נִחַשְׁתִּי) that the Lord hath blessed me," etc. But Laban had neither used enchantments nor miraculous signs or auguries from heaven; he had simply seen, by studious observation, that the Lord had increased his wealth through the hand of Jacob. נִחַשׁ may, therefore, also have the meaning, to find out by observation or inquiry, and there is no reason whatever why we should not translate the above-mentioned phrase with, "to the meeting of inquiries," or in plainer English, to seek for information (from the Lord). What he had known before was confirmed to him repeatedly. God will not turn His blessing into a curse, and for this reason he will ask no more, or try to obtain information in some lonely place.

Some, finally, have found a proof of Balaam's superstition in the fact that he had seven altars built and seven oxen and rams offered, Numb. 23, 1; 23, 14. But we can adduce several other instances where pious and godfearing men have observed this number in offering sacrifices. 1 Chron. 15, 36 David offers seven bullocks and seven rams. 2 Chron. 19, 21 Hezekiah offers seven bullocks, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven goats. And Job 42, 8 the friends of Job are even commanded to bring for a sin offering seven bullocks and seven rams. It was among the worshipers of the true God that the number seven was re-

garded as holy, while the heathen favored the number three. Thus we find in Virgil (*Ecl.* 2, 4) the following lines, which he puts in the mouth of a prophetess:

Terna tibi haec primum triplicei diversa colore
 Licia circumdo, terque haec altaria circum
 Effigiem duco. Numero deus impare gaudet.
 Necte tribus nodis ternos Amarylli colores.

And again:

Idem ter socios pura circumtulit unda.

Aristotle (in *De Coelo*) likewise says that the ancients employed this number *πρὸς τὰς ἀγίας τελείας τῶν θεῶν* (for the holy dedications made to the gods).

All these passages, therefore, do not refute the arguments we have offered; on the contrary, the two last ones on which we have dwelt serve even to strengthen our position, and for this reason we abide by our former assertions that Balaam was, before he yielded to the temptation and apostatized, a true prophet and a true believer, though, of course, he was not free from infirmities and frailties. Indeed, it is by no means improbable that he was at the head of a church or a congregation in his native country. God, as a rule, did not only call His prophets to reveal the future, but also to call men to repentance and to bring them to true faith. Luther seems to have firmly believed that Balaam was a great prophet and had preached the Word to many in his country. This would also, in a measure, explain why Balaam, after his apostasy, did not go back to Mesopotamia to stay there altogether, but spent the closing part of his life among the idolatrous Midianites. He would then, like Cain, or like Jonah when he went on board ship, have fled from the presence of the Lord and His people, hoping thus to escape their rebukes and to find more rest for his troubled conscience. But since we all like to hear the voice of Luther itself in all things pertaining to theology, I shall conclude the first part of this treatise with a few quotations from his pen.

In his Lectures on Genesis (I, 1601 ff.) he says: "Jerome writes that those well versed in Holy Scripture say that Elihu

(the friend of Job) was Balaam, of whom Moses, Numb. 23, writes that he was an excellent prophet and teacher in Mesopotamia, to whom God's Word had been revealed, as he boasts himself. God had also given him many beautiful and glorious prophecies. For this reason he says, Numb. 23, 7: 'Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram out of the mountains of the east.' . . . Moses writes that Balaam was a son of Beor, whom St. Peter calls Bosor, 2 Pet. 2, 15. He was a great prophet, but apostatized in a shameful manner, as is recorded of him. He had the greatest prophecies, being equal to the prophecies of Daniel concerning the great Alexander and the Roman empire which would devastate the kingdom of Judah and Israel. They say now that this Balaam was born of Bus, the son of Nahor, and lived up to the time of Moses. Those two were the chief prophets at that time. Balaam was called from Mesopotamia against Moses, who had come from Egypt. And Balaam truly had had the Word of God and blessed the people of Israel."—Vol. II, 385, Luther says: "There is no doubt that many of the family of Nahor were saved. They were a light among the other heathen by teaching and spreading the true knowledge of God. Job as well as his friends were excellent men; and Balaam was a very excellent prophet and at first a man of great piety. He possessed peculiar gifts," etc.

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(To be continued.)