

## BALAK'S SIN OF PRESUMPTION

Have you ever been at a place in your life where you felt like someone was intentionally trying to hurt you, to curse you? Have you ever felt like they were going out of their way to cause you misery? What do we do when we are at a place so low that we just don't know what to do or how to move on? We've all been there at one time or another and this week's Torah Portion gives us tremendous insight into how the spiritual world operates, giving us tremendous hope for our futures in Him.



The story starts out with Israel continuing their journey into the Wilderness as they inch closer to the Promised Land. They had already defeated the Amorites and were headed toward the Moabites. King Balak of the Moabites was blown away by the sheer number of Israelites and knew that his armies were no match for them. He anticipated that Israel was going to do to his land what they had done to the Amorites. In an effort to prevent an all-out war, he contacted the most popular pagan prophet in the land: Balaam.

Balaam was a strong pagan prophet who used animal sacrifices and soothsaying divination practices in order to consult with the spirit world. In doing so, he created a belief among the people in his area that he could traffic with the gods and manipulate them to do things in favor of man, all for a nominal fee, of course. The Balaams of today would be palm readers, fortune tellers, and tarot card readers, and echoes of his practices can be found in horoscopes, Ouija boards, and anything else that consults anything other than the one true God Yahweh for what to do with your life.

Before we go any further, I would like to point out something often overlooked in this story. Let's take a closer look at Balak and see if we can learn anything from his mistakes. What do you think his first mistake was? What was ultimately driving him to contact Balaam for help? There are two different answers but they're very much related to one another.

Balak's first mistake was that he assumed that Israel was going to go to war with him as they did with the Amorites. But look at the actual dialogue with the king of the Amorites back in Numbers 21:21:

*"Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, "let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards. We will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory."*

Israel had no intention of going to war with the Amorites. They were just wandering through the desert waiting out their forty-year punishment so that the Joshua generation could go into the land of their forefathers. But the Amorites did not allow them to pass and that is what caused the war.

What's the spiritual principle we can pull from this text? What is Yahweh trying to tell us today through Balak's first mistake?

The assumption always leads to death and destruction for the one assuming. Whenever we assume, we create a false reality in our minds of what we think is happening and then start acting out in the real world what our false reality is presenting for us. It's quite incredible how powerful this false reality can be, isn't it? You will find yourself talking to yourself, letting your mind wonder, and planning attacks and strategies for how to react to something you have no idea is true! Many relationships have been destroyed because of the sin of presumption. Let's take a look at the word "presumption" in the original Hebrew.

In Hebrew, the main word for **"presume"** is **"zood."** It is Strong's 2102 and is spelled zion, yod, dalet. In the original pictograph Hebrew, where every letter was originally a separate picture, the meaning of this word is incredible. Zion was a "dagger, to cut, the blade of a plow." Even today it still looks like a dagger with its handle at the top. Yod means "hand" or "right hand of God" and signifies strength and divine help. Dalet is an "open door." When you put the three letters together, this is what presumption really does: it cuts the hand that opens the door. The fuller meaning would be: the presumption is the knife that cuts off the right hand of Yahweh that was sent to bring divine assistance and open doors for your future. Wow! Powerful, isn't it? When we look at a potentially negative situation, assume we know all the facts, and move forward based

on those presumptions, we are literally cutting off the hand of God in our lives! The very help we are praying for is being cut off by the sin of presumption! The king of Moab had no idea that if he would have blessed Israel in their journey, it would have created an "open door" of opportunity for them to be blessed. Instead, take a look at what happened as a result of his single sin of presumption:

**Deuteronomy 23:3-4** *"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD, even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the lord forever, because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia to curse you."*

This act of presumption not only affected his generation but all the generations of his people forever. This is how serious this sin really is. It causes war, bloodshed, and utter destruction of friendships, alliances, and families. There is no doubt that king Balak's scouts were the ones who came back and told him what they saw. From Balak's point of view, how all this developed was the EXACT same pattern we see in the sending out of the spies into the land of Canaan. Can you see the parallels? Balak's scouts went out just like the Israelites' scouts did. And like theirs, Balak's spies came back with a report. But their report was truth mixed with presumption. It was true that the Israelites covered the earth and it was true that they had just destroyed the Amorites. But Balak's spies took it one step farther and **assumed** that there was evil intent in their hearts against them. When they acted on that presumption it left them cursed. Balak believed the report and acted presumptuously.

***What could Balak have done differently that would have prevented him from making all the mistakes he made?***

Balak should have gone directly to the leaders of the Israelite tribes and asked them what their intentions were and what his people could do to help them in their journey. According to Yahweh, they should have come to the Israelites with bread and water. They should have welcomed them and assisted them in their journey. Love and kindness should have been their first step. They should have done everything in their power to let the Israelites know that they were a peaceful people and were there to serve them in whatever way possible. In Proverbs, the bible says that ***"a soft answer turns away wrath."***

Do you remember the story of Jacob and Esau when Jacob saw his brother for the first time since he'd stolen his birthright? What did Jacob do before he actually saw Esau face to face? He sent him gifts, supplies, and kindness in hopes of avoiding war. What did the Queen of Sheba do when she came from her country to visit Solomon in 1 Kings 10? She brought more spices, gold, silver, and gifts than almost any other guest. And those gifts created an alliance and an "open door" of connection. Those gifts gave her access to Solomon himself and before she left Solomon "gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity." Because of her assumption of peace, she received an open door that brought blessings to her and her house. But because Balak presumed ill intent and war, he ended up with a closed door and a lifetime of curses on himself and his

family. Let's take a look at what the apostle Peter has to say about this topic and the damage it causes:

**2 Peter 2:9-11** *"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, and self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of those in authority, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord."*

**Wow.** Through Peter, The Spirit says that the root of presumption comes from being "self-willed," from walking "according to the flesh," from the "lust" of wanting to do things our way, and ultimately from a lack of respect for authority. That's quite a mouthful. How does each of those relate to presumption? If you are in a group setting, take some time and discuss each one and make the connection that Peter is trying to make. If not, just take a moment and think about it.

1. **Self-willed.** Presumption does not take the will of the other person, or the will of Yahweh, into account. It only takes into account its own will. Presumption does not seek out the original intent of the other party, doing its due diligence to discover the motives of the one in question. Instead, it takes what appears to be the truth, adds assumption to it, and creates a path that forwards its own self-willed agenda, which leads to destruction.
2. **Walking according to the flesh.** To walk according to the flesh is to walk according to carnal, fleshly instincts, that animalistic nature that fights for self-preservation and always puts "I" before "you." Its motto is "guilty as charged" and only considers innocence if it fits its agenda. It pronounces judgment before finding all the facts and without a trial. It makes a mistake of Balak in not approaching Israel to discover the truth, original intent, or real motive. It believes evil reports without checking them out first because it walks in fear and in the flesh. To walk in the Spirit is to walk in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. To walk in the Spirit is to present this fruit to those in question. To walk in flesh is to present assumption, presumption, false judgment, and war.
3. **Lust comes in all shapes and sizes,** but when it all boils down, its root is found in a void within the soul. As a matter of fact, one of the main words in Hebrew that is used for "lust" is "nephesh," which is also the word for "soul," a person's mind, will, and emotions. A man's soul is constantly trying to forward its own mind, its own will, and its own emotions. When a person has a deep void or hurts inside of them, they try to fill that void, and the yearning to fill it is called "lust." You've probably heard the phrase "lust for power," but what's its root? Insecurity. When someone goes out of their way to gain authority that does not belong to them, they are simply following their "nephesh," their soul's desire to "be somebody." They are trying to fill the void of insecurity in their life. When someone is fully rooted and secure in their relationship with Yeshua, they will never try to become more than they are because they have no void to fill. You can use this same template for lust in every category. Find the void and you've found the root of the action. Fill and heal the void and you've killed the lust that grows from it.

4. **Lack of respect for authority.** Ultimately, presumption comes from the lack of respect for authority and, specifically, spiritual authority, starting with Yahweh and working its way down to the head of a household. Why is the ultimate root a lack of respect for authority?

When Balak decided to believe the false report of the Israelites and add evil intent to the truth that they were coming, all of his next moves were rooted in his lack of respect for authority. How? Because he did not have enough respect for the leaders of Israel to go to them and talk to them face to face to try to discover the real truth, what their agendas were, or how he could have helped them. His presumption caused him to immediately disrespect not only their authority but Yahweh's authority that stood behind them.

When we don't respect one another enough to go to each other to truly find out the truth, we are not only disrespecting each other, we're disrespecting God Himself, and He has commanded us to **MAKE SURE** that we follow the proper steps of discovery before we jump to conclusions based on half-baked facts.

We see this same sin in the story we just covered a couple of weeks ago about Korah. Yahweh had chosen Moses to be the leader of the Israelites, not because he was qualified but because he had a heart for His people and was obedient to His instructions. But somewhere down the line, Korah felt like it was just too difficult to be under Moses. Things were not going according to his plan and he thought Moses should be leading differently. He specifically thought that Moses was "taking on too much," and that he should hand over more authority to him and the other leaders so they could "help Moses out." The truth was that Korah wanted to be in charge. He was not satisfied with just being a Levite and already being elevated in front of the people. He wanted the priesthood, as well. He couldn't see how they were going to get past the giants and the massive obstacles in their way and he believed if he was fully in charge, things would be different. And he would stop at nothing to get it. Whenever things look bad, watch out. That's when a coup always happens. It is at that time that Korah presumed that Moses had too much authority and should hand some of it over. When Moses refused because he knew Korah was not qualified or called, Korah got the rest of the leaders together, trumped up charges against Moses, and stormed the proverbial castle. The sin of presumption ended with Korah's death and that of everyone around him.

Yahweh always backs the one He's called to lead with little or no effort on their part and the Spirit always returns anything that gets stolen. We see this very thing happen when Balak tries to hire Balaam to curse the Israelites and instead ends up blessing them! Yahweh always turns curses into blessings for those who trust Him, stay in love, and trust His guiding hand in their lives.

Have you ever made a false presumption about someone or has someone made a false presumption about you? How did it turn out? Did you get anxious and try to do something about it? Or did you go to your heavenly Father and truly trust Him to take care of it?

The bottom line of this part of the story is that whenever we jump to conclusions about other people before fully vetting out the situation, we will end up in serious sin. It causes our minds to

race, creates anxiety, steals our shalom, and causes us to create a false reality which we then act on, and it leads only to death. It kills our connection to the Spirit, can destroy relationships, and separates close friends.

I encourage you to ask the Father to reveal if this sin of Balak is hidden anywhere in your heart and to ask Him to help you in the future to not make premature judgments before you know all the facts. After all, I'm sure when Korah came to the 250 leaders of Israel that they all believed that he **DID** have all the facts and had done his homework, just like Balak believed the report of his leaders. Korah was a major leader in Israel and a Levite! Surely he would know what was going on in Moses' inner circle. But at the end of the day, both sets of leadership found themselves on the wrong side of the fence, utterly destroyed by the sin of presumption.

May we all walk tenderly and carefully through our spiritual wilderness experience and always assume the best possible motive in people, waiting for the hand of the Lord to make all things clear. When it is in your power to do it, be at peace with all men and err on the side of love.

Shalom,  
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