

Overview NKJ Num 22 and the 4 prophecies:

A heathen sorcerer and a true prophet, a perverter of Israel, but had learned elements of pure, true religion in his home in Mesopotamia.

22.8 – the prophet expects to receive some divine communication in a dream or vision of the night – a man living outside the assembly of Israel.

22:6 Hired to curse Israel – motivated by money.

22:12 rejects the commandment of יהוה.

Read Matt 2, Micah 5, Hosea 11, Jeremiah 31.15

Matt 2 Wise men. **2:7** *Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.* (the flight to Egypt, the killing of Rachael's children) **2:19** *But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,* (the connection to Joseph the dreamer and Jacob's children going down and coming out of Egypt - the star and scepter prophecy of Balaam)

Mic 5:2 *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

Hos 11: 1 *When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.*

Hos 11:2 *As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.*

Jer 31:15 *Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, becau*

Balaam's prophecy marks both the beginning and the end of the series of quotations in chapter 2, and Matthew would have been sure that Numbers 24.17 was fresh in the hearers' mind during the synagogue reading cycle. This chapter would have definitely been read as an exposition of our Torah text today.

The first half of Matthew 2 was deliberately written in such a way as to parallel our Torah parsha Balaam.

The Balaam prophecies of Matt 2:

Texts: Micah 5.2, 4 at v. 6; Hosea 11.1 at v. 15; Jeremiah 31.15 at v. 18; and an allusion from “the prophets” that “he will be called a Nazarene” at v. 23.

According to Aramaic tradition (the Targums) and early Jewish writings Laban’s grand plan is to kill the child-ancestor of the Messiah, comes in the dream where יהוה tells Jacob to flee to Egypt in order to escape Laban.

The common thread which runs through the Balaam-Laban saga – which was the pursuit, not of Jacob, but of his children, and one messianic child in particular – as suggested by the use of “seed” in 46.7.15

Balaam-Laban in Matthew 2

The first readers of Matthew’s Gospel would have been very familiar with the saga of Balaam-Laban and his pursuit of the child ancestor of the Messiah. The Aramaic targumic version was recited in the synagogue after the Torah reading to help the community understand the weeks parsha reading.

TgPsJon.Gen.46.6-7 has "all his sons; he brought his seed and his grandsons", where the MT and other targums have "sons" instead of "seed". The targumist is highlighting the messianic "seed" which Jacob also brought with him.

Mary, just like Rachel, was to give birth in Bethlehem of Ephrath (Mt.2.5-6), and her child would be king of the Jews (Mt.2.2) as Micah prophesied (Mic.5.2) and he would be the Messiah (Mt.2.4) Gen.35.21).

The origin of the ruler and shepherd:

Mic.4.7-8: ... and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now and for ever. (8) And you, Tower of the Flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you he will come...

Mic.5.2-4: And you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are least among the thousands of Judah, out of you will come to me one to become a ruler in Israel, and his coming is of old, from the days of eternity. (3) Therefore he will give them over till the time the one giving birth has given birth and the rest of his brothers shall return to the sons of Israel. (4) And he shall pasture in the strength of the LORD... [MT Mic.5.1-3]

Rachel was buried in Bethlehem yet Jacob pitched his tent nearby at the Tower of the Flock, this is where Micah sees the Moshiach coming from.

Micah: A special child was being born who would return together with his brothers.

Matthew records that Joseph, like Judah, had a dream in which יהוה told him to flee to Egypt (Mt.2.13 - Gen.46.2-4),

I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. (- a messianic revelation of insight is being shown here.)

Matthew highlights the inspiration behind this scripture which links the mysterious wording of Hosea 11.1: ***“When Israel was a child, I loved him and I called my son out of Egypt”***.

There’s a definite distinction between the child Israel, whom יהוה loves, and the son whom he calls out of Egypt, because if they were the same Hosea would say: “I loved him and I called him out of Egypt”.

The saga of Balaam-Laban continued while Jacob’s family hid in Egypt because back in our Torah parsha, according to numerous 1st Century writings, Balaam was Pharaohs pharmacist and the sons of Balaam were the magicians who worked in his pharmacy at the court of Pharaoh called Jannes and Jambres they were the forefathers of the Magi.

Num.22.22: ***And he [Balaam] was riding on his ass and his two lads, Jannes and Jam(b)res. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan:***

**The Chronicles of Moses - late 11th C,
And after they [Moses and Aaron] left, Pharaoh sent and called to Balaam the
magician and Jannes and Jambaris [sic] his sons the sorcerers.**

Jasher 79:27Pharaoh sent for Balaam the magician and to Jannes and Jambres his sons, and to all the magicians and conjurers and counsellors which belonged to the king, and they all came and sat before the king.

Damascus Document 5:17-19 (“In days gone by, Moses and Aaron arose by the hand of the Prince of Lights [that is, the Good Spirit], but Belial [Satan] in his cunning raised up Yohana [Jannes] and his brother when Israel was saved for the first time.”),

(2 Tim.3.8.)

There's also the apocryphal book "Jannes and Jambres" - 1st C CE.

Pliny: *Hist.Nat.30.11: "there is also another group of Magi who derive from Moses and Jannes and Jambres and the Jews".*

Philo calls Balaam a *magos* at *Life Moses* I 276, which is also his term for the magicians of Pharaoh (*Life Moses* I 92).

Jannes and Jambres persuaded Pharaoh to kill the children of the Israelites, they continued the attempt by Laban to kill the special "son" of Jacob.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan tells us the reason for why Pharaoh only targeted the male babies: ***Exod.1.15: And Pharaoh said (that while) he slept, he saw in his dream that all the land of Egypt was placed on one balance of a weighing-scales, and a lamb, the young (of a ewe), on the other balance of the weighing-scales; and***

the balance of the weighing-scales on which the lamb (was placed) weighed

down. Immediately he sent and summoned all the magicians of Egypt and told them his dream. Immediately Jannes and Jambres, the chief magicians,

opened their mouths and said to Pharaoh: "A son is to be born in the assembly of Israel, through whom all the land of Egypt is destined to be destroyed." Therefore Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, took counsel and said to the Jewish midwives ..." (TgPsJn)

Josephus: *One of those sacred scribes, who are very sagacious in foretelling future events truly, told the king, that about this time there would a child be born to the Israelites, who, if he were reared, would bring the Egyptian domination low, and would raise the Israelites; that he would excel all men in virtue, and obtain a glory that would be remembered through all ages. Which thing was so feared by the king, that, according to this man's opinion, he commanded that they should cast every male child, which was born to the Israelites, into the river, and destroy it.* (Jos. Ant. II 9.2, 205)

The prophecy that through this child ***"all the land of Egypt is destined to be destroyed"*** (Tg.PsJn - or, as in Josephus, that Egyptian domination would be brought

low) goes far beyond what Moshe actually accomplished.

The destruction prophecy of Isaiah 11, that the moshiach would “**utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea**” at the Greater Exodus, just as at the first (Is.11.15-16), this chapter is linked with the prophecy of Balaam because when Israel did leave Egypt and cross the Wilderness, they found Balaam waiting for them, ready to try again to destroy them.

One of Balaam’s prophecies included the doom and destruction of the people who hired him... **Num.24.17: ... A star shall come out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall dash the corners of Moab and destroy all the sons of Seth.**

Where did they get their interpretation for this prophecy – **Isaiah 11: A shoot will proceed from the stump of Jesse and a branch from his roots will bear fruit (2) And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding... (4) He will judge the poor in righteousness... He will strike the earth with the rod of his breath**”. This text is linked to our Torah parsha Balaam.

The Magi: Balaam and his two sons, Jannes and Jambres, were called ‘magi’ by Philo (*Life Moses*), prophesied about the star which pointed to the Messiah, and the child from whom he would rise.

Because of this Pharaoh ordered the death of all baby boys. Our Torah parsha ends when Balaam “**went off to his home**” (Num.24.25), just as the Magi “**went away to their own country**” (Mt.2.12).

Matthew’s writings about Herod parallel Josephus’ version of the story of Pharaoh – he consulted his magicians, expressed fear for his throne, and ordered the death of the baby boys.

But in Matthew 2 the shadow of the Torah comes to life and the child who comes out of Egypt isn’t a precursor of the Moshiach like Moses (Deut.18.15) or an ancestor of the Moshiach, but the Moshiach himself.

Matthew keeps us thinking about Balaam but shifts to the context of Jeremiah 31 – our return from all corners of the earth (v.8) not just from Egypt as in the past (v.32), and to a new covenant rather than the old broken one (v.31-34).

Balaam-Laban and Herod, both killed the children of Israel in an attempt to kill the child-messiah, the link, again, is found in the traditional Jewish Passover Haggadah when it cites **Deuteronomy 6.5: “An Aramean sought to destroy my father”**

The parallels of the stories of Balaam-Laban are so close, especially the wording of the LXX because in the LXX the words are infact the Magi's word's ***"We saw the star when it rose"***. Balaam's prophecy of the ***"star which will rise out of Jacob"*** a deliverer would dash their enemies with His Malki-Tzedik Sceptre. (Num.24.17).