

PARSHA SUMMARY FOR PARSHAS BALAK

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Note: The Shabbos Torah Reading is divided into 7 sections. Each section is called an Aliya [literally: Go up] since for each Aliya, one person "goes up" to make a bracha [blessing] on the Torah Reading.

1st Aliya: Parshas Balak begins with King Balak's offer to Bilam the Prophet to curse the Jewish people and G-d's refusal to allow him to accept.

2nd Aliya: Balak sent a second negotiating team and Bilam was given permission to go. However, G-d stipulated that Bilam could only speak the word of G-d.

3rd Aliya: Along the way the incident with the talking donkey occurred, emphasizing G-d's instructions to that Bilam only deliver the word of G-d.

4th Aliya: Bilam attempted his first curse and was unable to do so. Instead, the words he spoke were a blessing for the Jewish people.

5th Aliya: Bilam made his second attempt at cursing the Jews and was again unable to do so. Instead, he issued his second blessing.

6th & 7th Aliya: Bilam attempted his final curse but again blessed the Jews. As he left in disgrace, Bilam told the assembled coalition of kings of their eventual destruction by the Jews. As a parting shot against the Jews, he advised them to seduce the Jewish men with Midianite women and bring G-d's wrath down upon the nation. The Parsha concludes with the incident of Baal-Peor and Pinchas's heroism.