

Numbers (Quality: Very good)

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Date: 26 June 2011

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[0 : 00] For the help of God, we would direct your attention to the reading of the book of Numbers chapter 23 and some words in verse 23.

The 23rd chapter of the book of Numbers in the 23rd verse. According to this time, it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, what hath God wrote.

According to this time, it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, what hath God wrote. And to the natural mind, it's a very strange part of Holy Scripture.

Israel had been in the way from Bolshan to Canaan about 30 odd years.

And it seems to be that this wicked king of Moab thought that he should find some idolatrous prophet to pronounce a curse on God's people, God's nation.

[1 : 40] Then it would be to his advantage and to the destruction of that nation of Israel.

Well, there's all sorts of foolish thoughts. No doubt have gone through the mind of Balak.

But then this remarkable part of this word is what the false prophet Balaam said.

In the 22nd chapter, towards the end, towards the end, verse 37, we read, And Balak said unto Balak, Do I earnestly send unto thee to call thee?

Wherefore, all came is not unto me? Am I not able to promote thee to honour? And Balaam said unto thee to call thee to call thee to call thee to call thee to call thee to call thee to call thee?

[2 : 55] And Balaam said unto Balaam, Do I am come unto thee? Am I now any power at all to say anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

So, of course, in our reading we have proved his words. Godless, an idolatrous prophet, who ultimately died, fighting Israel, was to speak such words of truth.

And they are nothing but words of truth, words that God gave him to speak. And he obeyed in that respect, that the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

And another thing, if you were not of any understanding of the word of God, you would be indeed brought to wonder whether this was a godly man that spoke.

Let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end be like his. Is that not the desire of those who have grace?

[4 : 15] You see, the Lord wonderfully, remarkably accomplished his will. But he can and does use all sorts of means that it shall be so.

There is here a very wonderful and yet a remarkable account of the Israel of God and their safety.

There is also a vain attempt of man to overthrow God's national people.

But turning away from the account in these three chapters, I want to try, with the Lord's help, to speak on those four words.

What hath God wrought? What I do hope is that there shall be in your soul and mine this night an echo of these words.

- [5 : 30] It's very wonderful, you know, when you have a witness, you are the witness of God's work, what hath God wrought.
- It's equally, if not more, wonderful, when you are the subject of God's work. Now, God's work was not the redemption of Balaam, rather than, but the truth must be declared.
- I thought often, you've heard it often, nothing new. 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? Oh, how we bless God for the confirmation of his word, that it shall prosper, and nothing shall overthrow it.
- But is there not a time? Do you not, if you fear God, do you not sometimes have moments where you are brought to consider what God has done?
- [6 : 48] Quite remarkable times they are. I thought of a dear soul I knew, I know, who spoke to me of a call by grace.
- And I was going away from Zor on that Sunday following, and I said to him, listen to what the Lord's servant will preach from.
- Whether he will confirm your exercise. Well, that servant of God came, and if I may just pull for a moment and think what his text was.
- The Master is come, and calleth for thee. Did he need any other confirmation? Not in a moment.
- That was sufficient. The Master is come, and calleth for thee. When he was baptised, we had the hymn, You Just Son. You had it, he had it, that was his choice, because the words that you sang, Jesus sought me, when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God, he to save my soul from danger, interposed his precious blood.
- [8 : 19] A testimony before the people of God is the evidence of what God has wrote. But what I do hope, that there is a purpose in this, that it may bring you and I into that place of consideration and thoughtfulness, meditation, that you might look back upon your journey of life, and that here and there may be those things which will come to your thoughts and exercises, and you'll be able to say what hath God wrote.
- Wonderful, you know, when you've got a testimony. Wonderful if you are led by the Spirit of God into the ways of God.
- Wonderful mercy. Multitudes of the human race. And let us escape to the religious human race that are in essence still dead in trespasses and sins as this prophet of old was.
- Who could mutually agree, I suppose, that there is a God and that they would probably say that they worship him every Sunday.
- Oh, but the testimony of a possessor of grace is one that has the experience of the work of grace in the soul.
- [10 : 09] The God of all grace will leave his mark upon his own dear people. And he'll do it in such a way that will be not only beneficial and profitable to the soul that is blessed, but he'll do it in such a way as will be seen that it is God's work.
- You might say that you take a look at the account in the Knights of the Acts of Saul of Tarsus. Some remarkable words, you know, in that account.
- One or two things came to my thoughts then, which are evidences of the Lord's work. work. Now, prior to that, or around that time, we find that in chapter eight, we find these words concerning Saul.
- For Saul, he made havoc in the church, entering into every house and hailing men and women and committed them to prison. Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.

I don't feel that Saul would have taken the honor or the glory of such continuation of the gospel preaching. Persecution drove them here and there, but they didn't leave their religion behind, nor their preachers.

[11 : 56] Wherever they went, they preached the word. But then, you see, he came to the time, as the ninth chapter will tell you, of a remarkable conversion.

What hath God wrote of work of grace? You might say, well, it is remarkable all of God's work of grace is remarkable.

For those who are the subject of it are sinners. And whether they be religious sinners or profane sinners, that work of grace is a wonderful work.

Do we not read is this a brand truck from the fire? And if you've got grace, and I've got grace, then that could be truly humbly, I hope, said of us.

Because it's what God has wrought. Oh, there's an abundance of religion, there's an abundance, too, of what I might call fleshly religion.

[13 : 10] they make their place and appointments in religious buildings, and so they have this persuasion that they are going to heaven when they die.

Oh, but has God ruled anything there? The hymn says, doesn't it, to change the heart, renew the will, and turn the feet to Zion's hill, that's God's work.

What hath God ruled? It's not for you and me to look at this one and that one, and say, well, what hath God ruled?

It wouldn't be wrong, but would it not be better, and may it be to the glory and praise of a gracious God, that he may reveal this to us, concerning our soul, and our standing, for time and for eternity.

Because sure of this, you know, if he hasn't ruled it, then it is of no value, no value whatsoever. Convince us of our sin and lead to Jesus' blood, is what you and I sing sometimes, and that is what God hath wrote.

[14 : 40] It is a people that has been appointed unto salvation before they were ever born. There's a verse, you know, in the prophecy of Isaiah, isn't it, 54, poor, and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.

That was a word in season to a person who wasn't even married. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and I believe he lives to see that day.

What hath God wrote? It's not what inclinations or leanings or leadings that the natural religious mind comes to.

It's that work which is only God's work, the work of grace, that quick and inter-divine life.

Perhaps you have been to chapel all your days, well I'm sure you have, in the most part. Perhaps too, but you wouldn't do otherwise.

[15 : 57] If there was responsibilities or obedience, so you were found where the means of grace was. Dear friends, to bring you into the way of glory and praise and honour, a work must be found in you.

That's God's work. We consoled and make them cry, give me Christ or else I die. And it is too profitable to consider what he's wrought.

God's thought recently and said so, how in a providential way, the Lord so opened my eyes many years back now, how it come to be that I was where I am in Norfolk.

God's work. And so it went on in my mind. I traced every step. You know, the appearance of how it was and what was brought about and the way it was remarkably and wonderfully.

Because I did desire to do the will of God and so was enabled to do so. But then you know I believe I can say this before God, he changed the view and I had a view of the way of Christ.

[17 : 36] And the way of Christ, it brought tears to my eyes as I was meditating then about the way of Christ. You see, the Lord has, if I might put it simply, two works.

to do one in the heart of his dear people and that's a call by grace. But in the means of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ has made a way of salvation.

salvation. If you and I are thought of God, he's convinced us of our sin and brought us in need of mercy.

When you cry for mercy out of a distressed condition of soul, that's the Lord's work. work. If you should be taken by precious faith to a place called Calvary, you will see the purpose of it.

The Lord's work in a sinner is to convince him of his sin and to lead him to Jesus' blood. And the Holy Spirit, I've said this today already, the Holy Spirit is to teach them all things, and also to take of the things of Jesus and reveal them unto you.

[19 : 15] And you know, this is, these four words is not a question, what has God wrote, but a statement of truth.

And when you come and when I come to those places, when you can see the work and you can see the hand of God in bringing it about, then all the praise and all the glory and all the honour belongs to him.

When you can see the way of pardon and forgiveness, when you can feel the power and the cleansing influence of his precious blood upon your conscience, when he makes you to groan under sin on the one hand and rejoice in peace and in the mercy of God on the other, then it is the Lord's work, and it's wondrous in our eyes, isn't it?

what hath God wrought? That is the truth, that is the four words that matter tonight, what hath God wrought?

What a blessing it is when you can trace the way in which the Lord has gone with you and gone before you.

[20 : 44] May the crooked straight, the rough places plain, and may darkness light. We think of those two, that walked to Anias, whose eyes were holden, and so their state and condition was one of wonder and one of reason, and you'll never reason God's ways.

But you see, the Lord Jesus Christ, we read, don't we, then Jesus himself drew near and went with them, and the purpose of that was that he was to reveal to them what God hath wrought.

He revealed to them the way and the purpose of it, ought not Christ who has suffered and entered into his glory. Beginning at Moses and the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself, and that had a most blessed effect upon them.

they said afterwards, did not our heart burn within us as he spoke with us by the way? But you see, the blessing came as we said in prayer, when their eyes were opened and they knew him.

They had walked with Jesus, and he had revealed the purposes of his suffering and his death, and of his resurrection. What hath God wrote.

[22 : 13] That's the only way of salvation, is what God has wrote. And if he has wrote it for you, he will indeed show it to you, and bring you into the enjoyment of it.

Then you will trace his footsteps, and you will rejoice and give thanks, and you will sing that glorious hymn that we have just sung. Teach me some melodious sonnets, sung by flaming tongues above.

Praise the mount, oh fix me on it, mount of God's unchanging love. It is good, you know, personally I'm speaking now, it's good when you can see no other hand but the hand of God.

Oh, it's not if I did this and if I did that, as I came to be this place, and as I was brought to that place, oh abandon all this eye in it, abandon it all.

The Lord give you eyes to see, and hearts to understand the work of God. you see, it's not just to explain it, it's not just to say, well, I can see this and I can see that.

[23 : 45] The hand of God is in the way of salvation, in the provision of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. But the hand of God is also to be seen in the influence and blessing of the Holy Ghost.

you have he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. It's a good chapter to read, Ephesians 2, because the apostle describes his pathway in an unregenerate state.

But you know then he said this, but God, that's the best, that's where it begins, but God, who is rich in mercy, according to his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, as quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man shall boast.

I do believe, you know, in that remarkable blessing of revelation, when the Lord reveals God's verse, and then by revealing confirms, it's very remarkable, what hath God wrote, we would not forget either, pathways of the people of God, all are appointed, what hath God wrote, sometimes it's clouded over, sometimes you can't see too much in front of us all, sometimes you have to walk by faith and not by sight, surely you have got some instances, surely you have got some places or spots where you have to, you come to this conclusion, that being led by the

Spirit of God into the truth, as it is in Jesus, and the way which he has brought you along, is only according to his purposes and his will.

[26 : 04] there are one or two remarkable incidents, you know, in the Word of God, which we I feel would not be wrong in revealing or interpret them.

We read in the book of Genesis a word in the 45th chapter chapter.

It is the day when, or the time, when the, when Joseph was to reveal himself to his brethren.

in, chapter 45, it is, and he explains it like this, for God did send me before you to preserve life.

God sent me before you to reserve a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God.

[27 : 16] he went back over something like 15, 16 years. When he was 17 years of age, he had these two dreams, didn't he?

And those dreams pointed out that one day his brethren and his father will fall down before him. Of course, the interpretation was, of course, brought jealousy from the brethren.

You know, we sing this hymn, don't we? His purposes are ripening fast, unfolding every hour. The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet shall be the flower.

I think I learned that when I was a child. God moves in mysterious ways, wonders to perform. I didn't understand it, of course, but it's a blessing when you can be brought to see what hath God wrote.

Well, he was sold as a slave into Egypt, and he worked in Potiphar's house until the wickedness of Potiphar's wife put him into prison.

[28 : 36] God traced the footsteps sometimes in your own life. Do you trace the footsteps? Because there is a guide, and there is a purpose in his guiding hand.

Well, in that prison he came into company with two men who were employed by Pharaoh. Those two men had a dream each, and Joseph was given the grace to interpret it.

It all came to pass, and then Joseph put his hand to it. We read, he said to the butler, and it is well with they think on me.

And the next chapter I can hear it being read on one occasion after two full years. See, the time had not come.

And then, of course, as you know, Pharaoh had a dream, a remarkable dream, he didn't understand it, and so the butler suddenly remembered there was a man in prison called Joseph who could, as he would say, interpret dreams.

[29 : 51] That's how it came to be. But you see, the purposes of God from his age of seventeen till he was in his thirties, brought about this remarkable vision.

And he could give the glory and the praise, as we read to you, he could give the glory and the praise and honour to his God. It was not you that brought me hither, but God. What hath God wrote?

Well, he'd made a provision for Jacob, and for his family, and their families, kept alive a nation by the provision of Joseph.

But can't you also look beyond providential supplies? I do hope, too, it's not wrong to trace the Lord's way in dealing with you in life's journey.

How things hinge, as it were, and turn according to the will of God. It's not wrong to trace the pathways of providence and the way that the God of all grace has brought you along and brought you into places where he'll have you to be, made you needy and poor, and yet hath wrought on your behalf his will and purposes.

[31 : 24] There's something very sure you know about these chapters here. And what is sure is this, God has not changed and cannot change towards his own dear people.

You must look at it as a spiritual way, of course. The Lord does not change, but he'll bring his purposes to pass. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way.

Now this is the Lord's hand, this is the Lord's doing, and wondrous in our eyes. But then you see a greater than Joseph there.

Oh, you know, there are in Holy Scripture, there are types of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Joseph was one, Moses was one, a type of Christ.

Christ. What I mean by that, of course, is that they were ones that were appointed of God to not only do his will, but also to be part of and experience the leading and guidance and direction that is needed.

[32 : 47] So the wonderful way in which the blessed Lord Jesus was raised up. Much less condescension you sung in the first hymn, and it is that he sent his son not as a prince, as a king, not to dwell in a palace, but to come as a little child, born of a woman, born under the law, to save his people.

They shall call his name Jesus, we said this day, didn't we? And he shall save his people from their sin. to you that know your state by nature, and that I mean in a solemn way.

You don't fall out with the terminology that you're a sinner, because by the grace of God you are made to know it, and you're brought by the grace of God to confess it.

It may be true, you know, and this is where God's children sometimes come, they learn in themselves of the helpless condition that they're in.

To be a sinner in their eyes, as the Holy Spirit will reveal it, it will bring them from time to time into a state of helplessness.

- [34 : 28] such will be the pathway of tribulation also. Remember the word of the Syrophoenician woman, Oh, he answered her, not a word, we read.
- Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. That's the pathway that those who know the work of grace will often come to.
- Because whether it's providence or grace or a mixture of the two, you will find, dear friends, that as one that fears God, you will be indeed wholly dependent on him.
- And there will be times in the matters of your soul's peace, where it will be, in the sense of your own soul, you will feel the helplessness of it.
- There's a great mercy to be helpless in the way of salvation. And in the purposes of God, you know, real children of God often come to helpless places, helpless situations.
- [35 : 47] Jonah was in the whale's belly, a hopeless situation. salvation. I am cast out of thy sight, yet will I look again towards thy holy temple.
- You know, the next but last word, I think it is in that chapter, is this, salvation is of the Lord. What a impossible place he was, what a impossible circumstance he was, was in.
- Many will say, well, he was disobedient. So he was. But you know, if you and I were dealt with because we're disobedient, would we see the mercy in it?
- Would we be brought to realise the purposes of God in so teaching us? What hath God wrought? to do this, it made Jonah willing to go to Nineveh.
- The Lord brought him out of the whale's belly and so we read in the next chapter in that book that he should preach the preaching that I bid.
- [37 : 09] Well, dear friends, there's this too about it. when the Lord's purposes are to be done, and I'm not going to try to describe or invent what these purposes are, but if the will of God in you is, and the purposes of God in you is to bring you to where he'll have you to be, you won't prevent it, you won't bring it to nothing.
- Jonah didn't say, well Lord, I don't want to go, so send someone else. Jonah was appointed to go to Nineveh, and to Nineveh he was come, and though he eventually arrived at Nineveh, not by the way that he would have gone, but according to the will of God, his purposes were there.
- You know, when you think about, go back to the person of Jesus Christ, he shall save his people from their sins.
- How many would have understood in that hour and that day that it must be by dying, dying for them. Human reason would say, well, if the people of God are sinners, what will happen to this sin, God is not a man that he shall lie.
- You see, the burden of the people of God under grace is sin. God must deal with sin, will deal with sin.
- [38 : 59] God I remember him once saying this to me on a journey home from work once. He dropped this word, if thou, O Lord, should mark in equity, O Lord, who will stand?
- sin. And my spirit dropped before that word, because I knew that if he should mark iniquity in me, then I would never stand.
- But he showed me that he has marked iniquity of the church of Christ on his son. Sin must be dealt with.
- sin. He doesn't overlook the sins of the church of Christ. You may think he does, you may think that you could go on, nothing's happened, nothing's changed.
- The Lord will work in his people what he will, and he will bring them under a sense of his anger against sin.

[40 : 05] Now, the way of salvation and through the person of Christ is through his death and by his resurrection. He, the apostle Paul, under divine teaching, wrote to the Hebrew church, you know, and said, without shedding of blood, there's no remission.

Know how that points out the way of salvation. It takes you back, as it were, as an example only, though, as an example only.

of the types and shadows that were to be found in Old Testament times. The sacrifices. Oh, but there's a better sacrifice there.

The same apostle said this, you know, that the blood of beasts and of goats should never take away sin. And he also said this, when writing to the Jews about the Old Testament dispensation, and he spoke, or he wrote, rather, about the high priest going into the holiest of all, once a year, not without blood, for his own sin and the sins of the people.

But this he did continually. That's the weakness. That's the weakness of the old dispensation.

[41 : 38] It never took away sin. It was a shadow of good things to come, but it never took away sin.

but in sending Christ into the world and bringing him to a place called Calvary, there he took the sins of the church upon himself and died in their place, room and stead.

He was the sacrifice, he was the offering, but you see, as in contrary to Old Testament scriptures, he rose again from the dead.

When your eyes and mine are open to see the way of salvation, and I mean this in the enjoyment of it, and in the pace that it brings, you have two things to wonder at.

One is of your own sin and iniquity, and the wonders of God's grace. See, on the one hand, you will feel, be made to feel what it is to be a ruined sinner, helpless in your own salvation, and on the other hand, you will be able to trace the way of salvation by a three-one God, what hath God wrote.

[43 : 15] what comfort these words bring to God's dear children, because you say it rings unto say that nothing can alter it.

This ungodly prophet was brought to admit it. It's one of the words which he was to utter concerning the uselessness of any enchantment or any divination.

What God has wrought can never be overthrown. And he brings his purposes to pass according to his will and according to his time.

the violence sinner out of hell who lives to feel his need is welcome to the throne of grace, the saviour's blood to plead.

You see, human nature would view the way of salvation if it included some uprightness of the creature.

[44 : 30] In the days of the Lord Jesus Christ there was a centurion whose servant was ill and he sent a messenger to Jesus requesting that he should heal him.

You see, some said, you know, well he was worthy because he built us a synagogue. He was evidently a man that feared God the centurion and he did things for the Jews, for the people.

And so by his deeds they would come to this conclusion that he was worthy, that's the words he used, that he was worthy of this blessing. What did he say?

I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. what hath God wrote?

Well, have you such things in your pathway? Have you such things that you have to say this?

[45 : 44] What hath God wrote? The wonder of it is beyond your ability to put it into words? You sat and traced, like I said this morning, this afternoon, this afternoon, you sat and traced, like I said about Manoah and his wife, the angel did wondrously and Manoah and his wife looked on.

Maybe that's how you have come into this place that we have here in this word. You've watched the hand of God and he's made a way where there wasn't one.

Or he's brought you into his sanctuary to show you what the hand of God will do.

Well, we must leave the word. But I do hope there's a purpose in this. It wasn't what I was going to preach. I still haven't preached what I went to bed with last night.

That will have to wait until the Lord's time. But may you and I be in this blessed word this night.

[46 : 59] because it gives praise and honour to him. It brings humility to the sinner. When you can attribute everything to his grace and mercy, he will have the praise, all the praise, all the glory.

Amen. to the verse.

Close by singing hymn number 208, the tune is mimei, 679, hymn number 208, Jesus, lover of thy nation, saviour of thy people free, visit us with thy salvation, let us, Lord, thy glory see, O revive us, that we may rejoice in thee.

Let us find thy love surrounding us, thy fickle children here, and thy mighty grace abounding, leading us in holy fear.

Guide us, Jesus, to our souls be ever near. prayer in number 208, and hope can do In number 208.

[48 : 56] 208. one two twenty to two Are four in part are in Thank you.