

read in verse 21: He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. God is clearly speaking of Israel, not with reference to its actual state, but with reference to its standing before Him. How wonderful that everyone who belongs to the people of God, and trusts in the sacrifice of Christ, can answer Satan's onslaughts by appropriating this statement to himself! Our state is one of sin, and our sanctification is long process, not completed until we actually see Christ as He is (1 Jn.iii.2); but God sees us as justified in Christ, and as already perfect in Him.

e. Introduction to the third utterance (xxiii.25-xxiv.2)

The differences from the earlier introductions have already been noted.

f. The third utterance (xxiv.3-9)

Still greater emphasis is placed upon the goodness of Jacob (5) and his future victories (8). Agag (7) was probably a hereditary name for the kings of the Amalekites, like Pharaoh for the Egyptians.

g. Introduction to the fourth utterance (xxiv.10-14)

Balak's patience is now exhausted. He declares that the Lord has kept Balaam back from receiving the honours he had planned to give him and tells Balaam to flee to his place (11). Balaam states that he will return to his people, but first will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days (14). The word translated advertise, Heb. ya'as, means 'to counsel,' and is usually so rendered in the AV. The phrase latter days has often been taken to prove that the events of the very end of the age, or at least of 'messianic times,' are in view. But the phrase has no such connotation. It is used by Moses to describe events fairly soon after his death (Dt.xxxi.29). It simply means 'later on' or 'after a time.' We cannot tell from it whether the contents of Balaam's fourth utterance will describe events fairly soon or a long distance off. The same phrase is used (but translated 'last days' instead of 'latter days') in Gn.xlix.1,