

introducing Jacob's blessing on his sons, most which deals with predictions of the history of the tribes after the conquest of Canaan, and thus long before any period which could reasonably be designated as 'messianic times.'

h. The fourth utterance (xxiv.15-24)

The prediction of coming Israelite victories now becomes specific. The certainty of what follows is stressed by a strong declaration of Balaam's claim to be the recipient of divine revelation (15-16; cf. xxiv.3-4). Balaam sees one coming, but not immediately, who is to be a king (represented by Star and Sceptre), who will smite Balak's nation of Moab (17). Edom also is to be conquered (18). Verse 19 repeats the assertion that a king is to arise out of Jacob, who will destroy what remains of Balak's city. These three verses (17-19) form a unit. It is not difficult to determine what it predicts. A few centuries after the time of Balaam a king arose in Israel who was a great conqueror. His name was David, and he conquered both Moab and Edom (2 S-a.viii.2 and 14). He exactly and completely fulfilled what Balaam predicted in these verses. Sometimes verse 17 is quoted as a prediction of Christ. It is true that He is a Star and a Sceptre, and that He arose out of Israel, but it is extremely unlikely that this verse has any direct reference to Him, save in the general sense that He alone fulfils the true ideal of kingship. As He is the climax of the line of kings of God's people, everything good ever said about any Israelite king has in a sense a certain reference to Him.

Verse 20 points out that the first of the nations to war against Israel was Amalek (Ex.xvii.8), and declares that the later fate of Amalek is to be complete destruction. The Amalekites were almost annihilated in the time of Saul (1 Sa.xv.1-9). Those who remained were so smitten by David that the nation seems never to have recovered (1 Sa.xxx). A small number escaped and fled to Mount Seir in the land