

## Numbers 22:1-41 **Balak Sends For Balaam + The Talking Donkey**

### Traveled from Pisgah to the plains of Moab across from Jericho

<sup>1</sup> Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

### Fear of Moab prompts Balak to send for Balaam to curse Israel

<sup>2</sup> Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. <sup>3</sup> And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. <sup>4</sup> So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up all that is around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. <sup>5</sup> Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! <sup>6</sup> Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

### Elders of Moab and Elders of Midian bring Diviners Fee to hire Balaam

<sup>7</sup> So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. <sup>8</sup> And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

### Elohiym said to Balaam, "Do not go, Do not curse the people, for they are blessed"

<sup>9</sup> Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" <sup>10</sup> So Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, <sup>11</sup> 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come now, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out.' " <sup>12</sup> And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." <sup>13</sup> So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you." <sup>14</sup> And the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

### Balak's second offer to Balaam

<sup>15</sup> Then Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more honorable than they. <sup>16</sup> And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; <sup>17</sup> for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore please come, curse this people for me.' " <sup>18</sup> Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. <sup>19</sup> Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me." <sup>20</sup> And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you--that you shall do." <sup>21</sup> So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

### Angel of Yehowah with Drawn Sword + The Talking Donkey

22 Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. 24 Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. 26 Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff. 28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!" 30 So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?" And he said, "No."

### Balaam talks with Angel of Yehowah

31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. 32 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me. 33 The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live." 34 And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back." 35 Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

### Balak greets Balaam

36 Now when Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the border at the Arnon, the boundary of the territory. 37 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not earnestly send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?" 38 And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." 39 So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kirjath Huzoth. 40 Then Balak offered oxen and sheep, and he sent some to Balaam and to the princes who were with him.

### Viewing the Camp of the Children of Israel

41 So it was the next day, that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal, that from there he might observe the extent of the people. NKJV

#### Facts Revealed:

- ✧ From the top of Pisgah which overlooks the Wasteland [Numbers 21:20], Israel has moved to the plains of Moab east of the Jordan River and across from Jericho. [Numbers 22:1]
- ✧ The people of the lands involved are well aware of what has transpired for Israel:
  - ◇ From the time they were in Egypt,
  - ◇ The things God did to bring Israel out of Egyptian bondage,
  - ◇ The crossing of the Red Sea,

- ✧ Their encampment in the land of Midian at Mount Horeb (Sinai),
- ✧ Their Laws given by God from the Mountain,
- ✧ The provision of Manna, quail, and water that God has given them to sustain them in the wilderness,
- ✧ Their defeat at the hands of the Amalekites when they attempted to go it without God.
- ✧ Their 40 years in the wilderness for their rebellion at the command of God.
- ✧ Their victory over the Canaanites when attacked at Mount Hor.
- ✧ Their travels around the land of Edom.
- ✧ And recently their defeat of Sihon and Og the kings of the Amorites, especially since Sihon had previously taken the land of the Arnon from the people of Moab. [Numbers 21:28-29]
- ✧ Now Israel is encamped in the plains of Moab near the Jordan River.
- ✧ The people of Moab are terrified at the presence of Israel in their land and afraid to attack them in war knowing that they are too mighty for them.
- ✧ They also know that the Israelites are headed into the land of Canaan, because they say, “They are settling next to me.”
- ✧ Balak the king of Moab consults with the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian regarding a plan to have Balaam curse the people of Israel because he has known that whoever Balaam curses is cursed, and whoever Balaam blesses is blessed.
  - ✧ God does at times allow a false prophet to receive messages that come true to test his people, [Deuteronomy 13:1-3] and we see in Balaam that though he is a sorcerer, God has allowed him to gain a favorable reputation for this particular time.
  - ✧ Moab is descended from Lot the nephew of Abraham. [Genesis 11:27-30, 12:4-5, 19:30-38]
  - ✧ Midian is descended from Abraham through Keturah whom he married after the death of Sarah. [Genesis 25:1-6]
  - ✧ Moses had stayed with the priest of Midian and had married his daughter when he had fled from Pharaoh 40 years before God sent him to bring Israel out of bondage. [Exodus 2:11-22]
  - ✧ Moab is son of Lot and brother of Ben-Ammi who is father of the people of Ammon. [Genesis 19:30-38]
  - ✧ The people of Moab worship Chemosh. [Numbers 21:29, 1 Kings 11:33]
- ✧ Balaam is known to be a sorcerer, so Balak sends the delegation of elders from Moab and Midian to Balaam with the **diviner’s fee** and a request that he come and curse the people of Israel, in the hope that he might then have the ability to defeat them and drive them out of the land. [Numbers 22:7, 24:1]
  - ✧ It would appear that Balaam is of the land of Midian though it is called Mesopotamia since he is killed when Israel kills the 5 kings of Midian. [Numbers 31:8-9, Deuteronomy 23:4]
  - ✧ It also demonstrates that the desire to see the destruction of the State of Israel is not a new idea today, because it was the desire of their eastern neighbors at the time they were first given the land.
  - ✧ God does not accept sorcery because in the Law He said, “You shall not permit a sorceress to live.” [Exodus 22:18] And those who practice such are an abomination to God and because of these things the Lord is driving out the nations before Israel.” [Deuteronomy 18:10-12] This is also one of the sins held against Manasseh the wicked king of Judah before the fall of that kingdom. [2 Chronicles 33:1-6]
- ✧ Balaam deeply desired to receive the Diviner’s fee from Balak so he invited the messengers to “lodge here tonight and I will bring back word to you as Yehowah speaks to me.”
  - ✧ At first glance, Balaam appears to be a real man of God as he says he will only speak what Yehowah speaks to him.

- ✧ We know that his approach to God was through sorcery by what is recorded. [\[Numbers 24:1\]](#)
- ✧ God did come to Balaam and asked who the men are, indicating that when the inquiry concerns God's people, God may still respond to even a sorcerer on their behalf.
- ✧ Balaam answered God correctly and even gave their motive which was, that they might be able to overpower the Israelites and drive them out.
  - ✧ Balaam and Balak certainly knew who the people were and that they had come out of Egypt even though it had been 40 years earlier.
- ✧ God clearly gave Balaam His instruction concerning the people. [\[Numbers 22:12\]](#)
  - ✧ **You shall not go with them.**
  - ✧ **You shall not curse the people, because they are blessed.**
- ✧ Balaam gave the messengers the right answer and sent them back to their own land, saying, "Yehowah has refused to give me permission to go with you." [\[Numbers 22:13\]](#)
  - ✧ At that point Balaam may be considered somewhat a man of God because of his obedience even though he did approach God through sorcery which God hates.
- ✧ Balak like most ungodly people and like many supposedly Christian believers, demonstrated the tendency of human thinking, that man may persuade God to change His mind if we offer a large enough bribe to the preacher or spokesman, or make a big enough promise to God.
  - ✧ So Balak increased the offer greatly to entice the hypocritical prophet.
- ✧ Balaam's hypocritical response was a beautiful demonstration of pretentious piety.
  - ✧ "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of Yehowah Elohey, to do less or more."
  - ✧ God had already given Balaam a clear answer by commanding him not to curse Israel because they are blessed. [\[Numbers 22:12\]](#)
  - ✧ Instead of sending the delegation on their way, Balaam invites them to stay the night that he might know what more Yehowah will say. In other words, Balaam is hoping that God will change His mind so Balaam might receive the greater reward.
  - ✧ We make the same mistake in the Church today when we refuse to accept the teachings of God that clearly express his thoughts on a subject, and we pray for God to honor our desire when it is clearly in conflict with His written Word.
  - ✧ This is done when it pertains to things we desire for ourselves as well as in consideration of other doctrinal teachings from cultic groups that conflict with the written Scriptures.
  - ✧ So often we feel that if we persist in our demand, God will accept it and change His mind.
  - ✧ If we were wise, we would accept and faithfully follow the clear teachings of Scriptures.
- ✧ God then appears to accept the second greedy plea by the erring prophet as He came to Balaam again at night and told him to go with the men, but to be careful to say only the word God gives him to speak.
  - ✧ Had God not given Balaam the command to go with the men, who knows how long the dickering would have continued, especially when we consider the events that occurred after Balaam did go. [\[Numbers chapter 23\]](#)
- ✧ When Balaam went with the delegation, we discover that God really did not want him to go, just as God had said at the first, but God wanted to get Balaam's attention and warn Balaam that he would not be allowed to go beyond what God will say.
  - ✧ God does not change His mind, but He does work even with our rebellious nature to accomplish His Will.
  - ✧ The episode of the **Angel with the drawn sword** and the **talking donkey** finally got Balaam's attention so God could confirm the importance of Balaam giving accurate report of God's Words to Balak.

- ✧ When Balak met Balaam, Balak assured Balaam that he was certainly able to reward him generously.
- ✧ Balaam again feigned piety and said, “Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The Word that Elohiym puts in my mouth, that I must speak.”
- ✧ They went together to Kirjath Huzoth, where Balak offered oxen and sheep, sending some of the food to Balaam and the princes who were with him.
- ✧ The next day they went to the high places of Baal so Balaam might observe the extent of the people of Israel, of whom Balak was afraid but wanted to destroy.