

# Numbers

24 January 2024

Lesson: 15

Numbers 22

For our admonition. I Corinthians 10:11

## **The Failure of Israel en route to Moab**

Once again, the main outline is from the Open Bible, slightly edited.

### **Israel in the Plains of Moab**

#### ***Balak called for Balaam (v.1-7).***

We first note that Israel was camped in the plains of Moab on this side (i.e., on opposite side) Jordan by Jericho.

Balak, king of Moab, was fearful (v.2-3). He sought alliance with the Midianites (v.4).

Balak sent a request to Balaam to come and curse Israel (v.5-6). Who was this man Balaam? Unger in his Bible Dictionary calls him “a heathen diviner who lived at Pethor, which is said, in Deut. 23:4, to have been a city of Mesopotamia. Although doubtless belonging to the Midianites (Num. 31:8), he possessed some knowledge of the true God and acknowledged that his superior powers as poet and prophet were derived from God.” Ryrie adds that Pethor was located on the W bank of the Euphrates in northern Mesopotamia [about 600 km NE of Moab].

Elders of both Moab and Midian went to find Balaam.

#### ***Balaam obeyed God and did not go (v.8-14).***

Balaam asked God and God told him “No” (v.8-12). God said that Israel was blessed. He told the princes God’s answer, and they returned

home.

#### ***Balak called for Balaam again (v.15-17).***

Balak sent more princes of higher rank to entice Balaam. They promised great honour and profitable reward.

#### ***God gave Balaam restricted permission to go (v.18-21).***

Again, Balaam asked God for permission. Oddly, God gave him permission to go but strictly warned him to say only as God would say (v.20). God permitted him to go, but it was not God’s true will. We must beware of begging God for his permissive will rather than his perfect will.

#### ***Balaam’s talking donkey (v.22-35).***

God was angry with Balaam. He knew his heart. Of Balaam, Peter said, he “loved the wages of unrighteousness.” (2Pe 2:15). Jude warned of those, who “run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit”.

God allowed his donkey to see the angel, but not Balaam. Three times the donkey avoided the angel and each time Balaam hit her (v.23, 25, 27). God caused the donkey to speak to Balaam (v.28-30). God then allowed Balaam to see the angel who then rebuked him (v.31-34).

Again, God allowed Balaam to go, but strictly warned him to guard his words (v.35).

#### ***Balak and Balaam talk (v.36-41)***

Balak rebuked Balaam for not coming the first time. However, Balaam told him that he could only say what God allowed (v.38). They prepared for the ceremony.

### **Principles for Us Today**

Today, we have the Bible as our primary guide for knowing God’s will. We cannot disobey the Bible and be in the will of God at the same time. Examine your life. Are there commands you are not obeying? (Love your wife like Christ loves, submit to your husband, obey your parents, flee lust, do not covet, study the Bible, pray without ceasing, prove all things, abstain from all appearance of evil, put off anger, walk in the Spirit, etc.).

God may let you get by for a time, but judgment day will certainly come.

