

King Balak of Moab Asks Balaam to Curse Israel (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 22:2–40

King Balak of Moab and the Elders of Midian Conspire to Destroy Israel

2 Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel did to the Amorites,

3 and Moab was very terrified in the presence of the people because they *were* numerous; and Moab dreaded the presence of the Israelites.

4a And Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now the crowd will lick up all around us, like a bull devours the grass of the field.”

Balak Asks Balaam to Curse Israel

4b And Balak son of Zippor *was* king of Moab at that time.

5 He sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor *at* Pethor, which *is* by the river, in the land of the children of his people, to summon him, saying, “Look! A people went out from Egypt. Look! They cover the surface of the land; they *are about* to dwell opposite me.

6 Now, please go, curse this people for me because they *are* stronger than me; perhaps I will be able to strike them and drive them out from the land because I know whoever you bless *is* blessed, and whoever you cursed is cursed.”

7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian went *with* a fee for divination in their hand; they came to Balaam and spoke the words of Balak to him.

8 He said to them, “Spend the night here, and I will return, and I will return word to you, just as Yahweh speaks to me.” So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

9 And God came to Balaam and said, “Who *are* these men with you?”

10 And Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent *word* to me,

11 ‘Look! A people went out from Egypt. Look! They cover the surface of the land. Now, go, curse them for me. Perhaps I will be able to attack them and drive them out.’”

12 God said to Balaam, “You will not go with them; you will not curse the people, because they *are* blessed.”

13 Balaam got up in the morning, and he said to the princes of Balak, “Go to your land, because Yahweh refused to allow me to go with you.”

14 The princes of Moab got up and went to Balak, and they said, “Balaam refused to come with us.”

Balak Asks a Second Time

15 Balak again sent many princes, *who were more* honored than the former.

16 They came to Balaam and said to him, “Thus says Balak son of Zippor, ‘Please, let nothing keep you from coming to me

17 because I will surely honor you greatly, and all that you say to me I will do. Please, come; curse this people for me.’”

18 Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, “Even though Balak gives to me his house full of silver and gold, I am not able to go beyond the command of Yahweh my God to do a little or a lot.

19 And now please, you also stay here the night, and let me find out again what Yahweh will say with me.”

20 And God came to Balaam *at* night, and he said to him, “If the men have come to call you, get up *and* go with them; but only the word that I will speak to you, you will do.”

21 So Balaam got up in the morning and saddled his donkey, and he went with the princes of Moab.

Balaam’s Talking Donkey

22 But God became angry because he was going, and the angel of Yahweh stood in the road as an adversary to him; he *was* riding on his donkey, and two servants were with him.

23 The donkey saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the road with his sword drawn in his hand, and the donkey turned aside from the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back *to* the road.

24 The angel of Yahweh stood in the narrow path of the vineyards, *with* a wall on either side.

25 When the donkey saw the angel of Yahweh, she pressed herself into the wall, and she pressed the foot of Balaam into the wall, so he struck her again.

26 Then the angel of Yahweh went further ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was not a way to turn aside *to the* right or left.

27 When the donkey saw the angel of Yahweh, she lay down under Balaam, so Balaam became angry, and he struck the donkey with *his* staff.

28 Yahweh opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What did I do to you that you struck me these three times?”

29 Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you made a mockery of me! If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now!”

30 The donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life until this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?” He said, “No.”

31 Then Yahweh exposed the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the road with his sword drawn in his hand, and he bowed down and worshiped to his face.

32 The angel of Yahweh said to him, “Why have you struck this donkey three times? Look, I have come out as an adversary because your conduct is perverse before me.

33 The donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from my face, then I would have killed you and kept her alive.”

34 Balaam said to the angel of Yahweh, “I have sinned because I did not know that you *were* standing to meet me in the road. Now, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back.”

35 The angel of Yahweh said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but speak only the word that I will speak to you.” So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

Balak Meets Balaam

36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him by the city of Moab, which *was* on the boundary of Aaron at the end of the territory.

37 And Balak said to Balaam, “Did I not urgently send to meet with you? Why did you not come to me? Am I really not able to honor you?”

38 Balaam said to Balak, “Look, I came to you now. Am I really able to speak anything at all? I speak the word that God puts in my mouth.”

39 Balaam went with Balak, and they came *to* Kiriath-Huzoth.

40 And Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and he sent *them* to Balaam and to the princes who *were* with him.

Balaam’s Seven Oracles (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 22:41–24:24

Balaam’s First Oracle

22:41 And it happened, in the morning Balak took Balaam and took him up to Bamoth-Baal, and he saw from there the end of the nation.

23:1 Balaam said to Balak, “Build for me this: seven altars. And prepare for me this: seven bulls and seven rams.”

2 And Balak did just as Balaam spoke, and Balak offered Balaam a bull and a ram on the altar.

3 And Balaam said to Balak, “Station yourself at your burnt offering, and I will go; perhaps Yahweh will come to meet me, and whatever he shows me I will tell to you.” So he went *to* a barren height.

4 And God met with Balaam, and he said to him, “I have arranged seven altars, and I have offered a bull and a ram on the altar.”

5 Yahweh put a word in the mouth of Balaam and said, “Return to Balak, and you must speak thus.”

6 So he returned to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, he and all the leaders of Moab.

7 And he lifted up his oracle and said,

“From Aram Balak lead me,
from the mountains of the east the king of Moab,
‘Go for me, curse Jacob,
and go, denounce Israel.’

8 How can I curse *whom* God has not cursed,
and how can I denounce *whom* Yahweh has not denounced?

9 Because from the top of *the* rocks I see him,
from hilltops I watch him.
Behold, a people *who* dwell alone,
they do not consider themselves among the nations.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob,
or *as* a number the fourth part of Israel?
Let my life die the death of an upright person,
and let my end be like his!”

11 And Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and look, you have surely blessed them!”

12 He answered and said, “Should I not speak what Yahweh puts in my mouth?”

Balaam’s Second Oracle

13 Then Balak said, “Please walk with me to another place where you will see them, *but* you will only see part of them and will not see all of them; and curse them for me from there.”

14 So he took him to the field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah, and he built seven altars, and he offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar.

15 Balaam said to Balak, “Station yourself here at the burnt offering while I myself meet with *Yahweh* there.”

16 Then Yahweh met with Balaam, and he put a word in his mouth, and he said, “Return to Balak, and you must speak thus.”

17 He came to him, and behold, he *was* standing at his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said to him, “What has Yahweh spoken?”

18 Then he uttered his oracle, and said,

“Stand up, Balak, and hear;
listen to me, son of Zippor!

19 God *is* not a man, that he should lie,
nor a son of humankind,
that he should change his mind.

Has he said, and will he not do *it*?
And has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

20 Behold, I have received *a command* to bless;
when he has blessed, I cannot cause it to return.

21 He has no regard *for* evil in Jacob,
and he does not see trouble in Israel;
Yahweh his God *is* with him,
and a shout of a king *is* among them.

22 God, who brings them out from Egypt,
is like the strength of a wild ox for them.

23 Because *there is* no sorcery against Jacob,
and *there is* no divination against Israel.
Now it will be said to Jacob and Israel,
what God has done!

24 Look! *the* people will rise like the lion;
he raises himself and will not lie down
until he eats *the* prey
and drinks the blood of the slain.”

25 Then Balak said to Balaam, “Do not curse them at all, nor bless them at all!”

26 But Balaam answered and said to Balak, “Did I not speak to you, saying, ‘Whatever Yahweh speaks I will do’?”

Balaam’s Third Oracle

27 Then Balak said to Balaam, “Please, come, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will be acceptable to God, and you will curse for me from there.”

28 So Balak took Balaam *to* the top of Peor, which looks down on the face of the Jeshimon.

29 And Balaam said to Balak, “Build for me these seven altars, and prepare for me these seven bulls and seven rams.”

30 Balak did just as Balaam said, and he offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar.

24:1 And Balaam saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel, and he did not go as other times to seek out sorcery; instead, he set his face toward the desert.

2 Balaam lift up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling according to its tribes, and the spirit of God was upon it.

3 He uttered his oracle and said,

“The declaration of Balaam son Beor,
the declaration of the man *whose* eyes are closed,
4 the declaration of the hearer of God’s words,
who sees the revelation of Shaddai,
falling down but *whose* eyes are uncovered.

5 How good are your tents, O Jacob,
your dwellings, O Israel!

6 They are spread out like valleys,
like gardens on a river,
like aloes planted by Yahweh,
like cedars at *the* waters.

7 He will pour water from his buckets,
and his offspring *will be* like many waters;
his king will be higher than Agag,
and his kingdom will be exalted.

8 God, who brings him out from Egypt,
is like the strength of a wild ox for him.
He will devour *the* nations *who are* his enemies;

he will break their bones;
 he will pierce *them with* his arrows.

- 9 He crouches, he lies down like a lion,
 and like a lioness, who will rouse him?
They who bless you will be blessed,
 and *they who* curse you will be cursed.”

10 Then Balak became angry with Balaam, and he clapped his hands and said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, but look, you have surely blessed *them* these three times.

11 Flee to your place now. I said I would richly honor you, but look, Yahweh has withheld honor from you.”

12 Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying,

13 ‘If Balak gave to me the fullness of his house full of silver and gold, I am not able to go beyond the command of Yahweh to do good or evil, from my heart; what Yahweh speaks, I will speak’?

14 And now, look, I *am about* to go to my people; I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the following days.”

Balaam’s Fourth Oracle

15 And he uttered his oracle and said,

“The declaration of Balaam son of Beor,
 and the declaration of the man whose eye is closed,

- 16 the declaration of the hearer of God’s words,
 and the knower of the knowledge of the Most High,
 who sees the vision of Shaddai,
 who is falling, and *his eyes are* revealed.

- 17 I see him, but not now;
 I behold him, but not near;
 a star will go out from Jacob,
 and a scepter will rise from Israel;
 it will crush the foreheads of Moab
 and destroy all the children of Seth.

- 18 Edom will be a captive;
 Seir, its enemies, will be a captive,
 and Israel *will be* acting courageously.

- 19 Someone from Jacob will rule
 and will destroy a remnant from the city.”

Balaam’s Fifth Oracle—Against the Amalekites

20 And he looked *at* Amalek, uttered his oracle, and said,

“Amalek *is* first of *the* nations,
 but his future *will be* forever ruin.”

Balaam’s Sixth Oracle—Against the Kenites

21 And he looked *at* the Kenites, uttered his oracle, and said,

“Steady *is* your dwelling place;
 in the rock is your nest.

- 22 Nevertheless, *the* Kenite will be burned;
 how long will Asshur keep you captive?”

Balaam’s Seventh Oracle—Against Assyria

23 Again he uttered his oracle and said,

“Woe, who will live when God establishes this?

- 24 The ships *will come* from the hand of the Kittim,
 and they will afflict Asshur and will afflict Eber;
 also he *will be* forever ruin.”

Balaam Teaches Balak How to Corrupt Israel (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 24:25	Numbers 31:16a	Revelation 2:14
<p>25 Then Balaam got up and went and returned to his place, and Balak also went on his way.</p>	<p>16a Behold, these women caused the Israelites, by the word of Balaam, to be in apostasy against Yahweh in the matter of Peor,</p>	<p>14 But I have a few <i>things</i> against you: that you have there those who hold fast to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat food sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.</p>

Israel Worships Baal of Peor (September–December 1407 BC)

Numbers 25

Israel Worships Baal of Peor and a Plague Strikes the People

- 1 When Israel dwelled in Shittim, the people began to prostitute *themselves* with the daughters of Moab.
 2 And they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and worshiped their gods.
 3 So Israel was joined together to Baal Peor, and Yahweh became angry with Israel. [cf. [Num 31:16b](#)]

Yahweh Tells Moses How to Stop the Plague

- 4 Yahweh said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and kill them before the sun, so the fierce anger of Yahweh will turn from Israel.”
 5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each *of you* kill his men who are joined together with Baal Peor.”

Phinehas Obeys Moses’ Command

- 6 And behold, a man from the Israelites came and brought to his brothers *a* Midianite woman before the eyes of Moses and before the eyes of all of the community of the Israelites, and they *were* weeping *at* the doorway of the tent of assembly.
 7 When Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest saw, he got up from the midst of the community and took a spear in his hand.
 8 He went after the man of Israel into the woman’s section of the tent, and he drove the two of them, the man of Israel and the woman, into her belly. And the plague among the Israelites stopped.
 9 The ones who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand. [[1 Cor 10:8](#)]
 10 Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,
 11 “Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, turned away my anger from among the Israelites when he was jealous with my jealousy in their midst, and I did not destroy the Israelites with my jealousy.
 12 Therefore say, ‘Behold, I *am* giving to him my covenant of peace,
 13 and it will be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of an eternal priesthood because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the Israelites.’”
 14 The name of the man of Israel who was struck with the Midianite woman *was* Zimri son of Salu, a leader of the family of the Simeonites.
 15 The name of the Midianite woman who was struck *was* Cozbi daughter of Zur, a leader of *a* tribe of the family in Midian.

Yahweh Initiates a War of Vengeance Against the Midianites

- 16 Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,
 17 “Attack the Midianites and strike them
 18 because they *were* attacking you with their deception, *with* which they have deceived you on the matter of Peor and on the matter of Cozbi the daughter of the leader of Midian, their sister who was struck on the day of the plague because of the matter of Peor.”

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