

In The Wilderness

Numbers 22:1-41

- Israel has just been in three major battles > King Arad of the Canaanites, Sihon King of the Amorites, and Og the giant King of Bashan who history says stood over **9ft** tall and won them all. This no doubt was done no doubt to encourage Israel that everything that the Lord had promised to do for them He would accomplish it, they need only to follow Him.

V1-41

- **V1-4** now they come to the border of Moab and before they enter in word has spread about what Israel had done to the Amorites, Canaanites and Bashan, and it brought fear to the people of Moab. What's interesting is when the former generation saw the people who were dwelling in the promise land, instead of looking and trusting God they only saw the stature of their enemies and when compared to them they seemed as small as ants, but now when the enemy sees this generation, they are now the giants while the enemy are the ants.
- This is what happens when we let God fight our battles instead of trying to fight and figure out things for ourselves, we need to trust and follow Him, and not our feelings or our wants and desires. Moab was terrified of Israel after hearing what they had done to the Amorites, a people who they themselves couldn't defeat and had previously taken their land from them.
- What they didn't know was God had already spoken to Israel about Moab, who were descendants of Lot the nephew of Abraham, and according to **Deut 2:9** they were not to touch them because God had promised them a section of land. But of course, they didn't know that because they weren't seeking the Lord and His counsel, instead they were relying on their own, and it led to what **Prov 28:1**> the wicked flees when no one is pursuing wow!
- **V5-6** in not knowing that Israel was not to touch them they go out and hire a man named "**Balaam**" who is mentioned in at least eight books of the bible, and none of them paint a flattering picture. In fact **2 Pet 2:12-15**, and **Jude 11** describe false teachers, false prophets, and people who mislead others in order to swindle them out of money as "**following in the way of Balaam**". Moab hires him to put a curse on Israel, believing that Balaam has the power to stop Israel from coming in and taking their land from them.
- **V7-11** as we see although Balaam is a heathen he does have a working knowledge of Who God is, during this time every nation had their own false gods and soothsayers, people who practiced witchcraft and sorcery, these people are fully aware of who God is, they just don't want to follow Him. Now although they know Who He is that doesn't mean they know His character, when we were unsaved we also heard Who God was but we didn't fully know Him

- **V12-13** God speaks to him and tells him not to go or curse Israel as they are blessed by Him, he has his answer from the Lord and that should have been the end of it, but its just getting started. **V14-18** they go back to Balak the King of Moab and tell him Balaam said he cannot grant their request and curse Israel, the King then sends men who are rich princes and carry more political weight than the ones before, and they make him an even better offer, but Balaam says no matter what they offer that he cannot go beyond the Lord's Word.
- Notice he calls the Lord his God, in reading this one would think that maybe Balaam has had a change of heart and surrendered his life to the Lord right! **V19-21** if he truly had, then why would he seek the Lord about something that God has already told him not to do? We should never be seeking the Lord's will about something that is clearly not His will, because as you can see the Lord may give you exactly what your deceitful heart desires, as God tells Balaam to go with them but only speak what He tells him to.
- **V22-25** Balaam is thinking I'm about to get rich, but little did he know that God was upset that he came to Him a second time about this, after He had already spoken to Him the first time. If Balaam truly had been seeking the Lord's will he would have known that Moab wasn't in any danger in the first place, but because he had ulterior motives he couldn't see or hear what the plan of God was, as his heart was bent on getting rich off the Moabites.
- As he's traveling an Angel is waiting with sword drawn, Balaam can't see this but the donkey does and tried to go another way and get off the road, Balaam started beating the donkey trying to get him to get back on the road and moving forward but he wouldn't. Then the Angel blocked the donkeys path forcing it between a vineyard and a wall, Balaam's foot is crushed in the process and he's had enough of not being able to control this seemingly out of control donkey, what he didn't realize was the donkey was seeing something that he was blind to.
- **V26-33** now we see the true nature of Balaam's heart > **1st** we see that the donkey is more spiritually perceptive than Balaam the so called prophet, even though it had no spiritual gifts. This happens because when you acknowledge the creator and His will, you then can recognize when divine judgment is near, Balaam had spiritual gifts but a disobedient heart, leading to spiritual blindness.
- **2nd** Balaam is more concerned about his foot than he is his soul, but the donkey is the opposite, when the physical is more important than the spiritual, that is a sure sign that we are heading in the wrong direction, and caring about the wrong things. **3rd** the donkey cared more about Balaam's life than its own, but Balaam didn't care about anyone but himself. **4th** Balaam is told that his way is perverse, but the donkeys path was righteous.
- **V34-37** initially Balaam responds correctly stating how he had sinned by not listening the first time when God said no, and for being so spiritually blind, unable to see that he was heading toward destruction. Now he's told that he could go but he was only to speak exactly what the Lord said, and he agrees. Balak hears that Balaam is coming and meets him, then asks why hadn't he come sooner, was the gifts that he offered not enough?

- Balaam has a reputation of being a prophet for hire, one that if the price was right would curse or pronounce a blessing to the highest bidder. **V38-41** Balak then offers sacrifices to the false god Baal, and notice Balaam doesn't speak out against it, nor does he refuse to not be around it, if he really had a change of heart this would have been unbearable to him.