

# Numbers 22 Commentary

PREVIOUS Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	<a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere ( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> )			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

**Numbers 22:1 Then the sons of Israel journeyed, and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho.**

BGT Numbers 22:1 κα π ραντες ο υ ο Ισραηλ παρεν βαλον π δυσμ ν Μωαβ παρ τ ν Ιορδ νην κατ Ιεριχω

NET Numbers 22:1 The Israelites traveled on and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan River across from Jericho.

NLT Numbers 22:1 Then the people of Israel traveled to the plains of Moab and camped east of the Jordan River, across from Jericho.

ESV Numbers 22:1 Then the people of Israel set out and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho.

NIV Numbers 22:1 Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across from Jericho.

KJV Numbers 22:1 And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho.

YLT Numbers 22:1 And the sons of Israel journey and encamp in the plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan, by Jericho.

LXE Numbers 22:1 And the children of Israel departed, and encamped on the west of Moab by Jordan toward Jericho.

ASV Numbers 22:1 And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in the plains of Moab beyond the

Jordan at Jericho.

CSB Numbers 22:1 The Israelites traveled on and camped in the plains of Moab near the Jordan across from Jericho.

NKJ Numbers 22:1 Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

NRS Numbers 22:1 The Israelites set out, and camped in the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho.

NAB Numbers 22:1 Then the Israelites moved on and encamped in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jericho stretch of the Jordan.

NJB Numbers 22:1 The Israelites then set out and pitched their camp in the Plains of Moab, beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho.

GWN Numbers 22:1 Then the Israelites moved and set up camp across from Jericho, on the plains of Moab east of the Jordan River.

- **the sons of Israel:** Nu 21:20 33:48-50 36:13 De 34:1,8
- **beyond the Jordan:** Nu 32:19 34:15 De 1:5 3:8 Jos 3:16
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Plains of Moab Opposite Jericho

## ARRIVAL AT THE GATE TO THE PROMISED LAND

This verse actually is a summation of the last verse Nu 21:35 "So they killed him and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left him; and they possessed his land."

**Eugene Merrill** has an interesting historical note - An inscription written on a plastered wall at Deir 'Alla in modern Jordan speaks of "Balaam son of Beor," who was esteemed as a seer who specialized in curses (Hackett 1986b; Kaiser 1996; Lamaire 1985; Thompson 1986; Zeron 1991). It has been dated anywhere from the ninth century BC to the Persian period (Ashley 1993:438). That doesn't prove that Balaam was a known historical character, but it does show that he was at least a known literary character in the Transjordan, within a few miles of where the biblical account is set. The accounts in Deir 'Alla and the book of Numbers show striking correspondences (Ashley 1993:439-440): (1) both depict Balaam as a diviner or seer and an exorcist or baru prophet rather than a Hebrew prophet; (2) both use the divine names in pretty much the same way, including even Shaddai; and (3) in both, Balaam receives his revelation by night (cf. Nu 22:20).(CBC-Nu)

**Irving Jensen** divides this next section he calls "Problems" in (1) Opposition from Without (Nu 22:2-24:25) and (2) Opposition from Within (Nu 25:1-18). ...THE ISRAELITES HAD NOW ARRIVED at the gate to the promised land. Geographically that gate is located in 22:1 as by "the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho." For the Israelites God would keep the gate closed until E day (entrance day) arrived. The delay was for the accomplishment of God's sovereign business at this crucial junction in the history of the Israelites. In the midst of new problems, the people would experience God's hand of vindication and judgment (22:2-25:18). For preparation for life in the new land, a new census must be taken, a new leader succeeding Moses identified, and the law of God finalized (chaps. 26-30; actually Deuteronomy contains the bulk of legislation given to the people at this time). Good strategy called for completing the disposition of the Transjordan (land on the east side of the Jordan where the Israelites were now settled) before crossing into Canaan proper (chaps. 31, 32). Finally, specifications were given as to the geographical distribution of the lands of Canaan, with an identification of cities of refuge, and a recognition of the stability of inheritances within the respective tribes (chaps. 34-36).(EvBC-Nu)

**Brian Bell** on **Balaam** - Let's meet a double-minded man who tries to serve 2 masters; who knows God's directive will, but chooses His permissive will instead; & who is best known for being brought up on charges of Donkey Abuse, & for talking to a donkey because it talked to him. As bizarre as the talking donkey part is, Peter, Jude, & John treat Balaam as a historical character in their writings, a few 1000 years later.

**NET NOTE** - The fifth section of the book (Nu 22:1-33:56) traces the Israelite activities in Transjordan. It is hard to determine how long they were in Transjordan, but a good amount of time must have elapsed for the number of moves they made and the wars they fought...This first part introduces the characters and sets the stage for the oracles. It can be divided into four sections: the invitation declined (Nu 22:1-14), the second invitation extended (NU 22:15-21), God opposes Balaam (vv. 22-35), and Balaam meets Balak (Nu 22:36-41).

**Then the sons of Israel journeyed** ([nasa](#) - pulled up tent pegs) - **Journeyed** is [nasa](#) means "to pull up," "to pluck out," such as pulling up the pegs of a tent when the camp moves on (Isa. 33:20) thus it lends itself naturally to the general term of "traveling" or "journeying." So here it pictures Israel as pulling up their tent stakes and moving on. **Nasa** later became a technical term meaning to break camp and move out. Considering that Numbers is a book of wandering or journeying, it is not surprising that over 100 uses of [nasa](#) are found in this book picture Israel as desert travellers, each pulling up their tent-pegs, folding their tents, and setting out with flocks and herds on the next stage of their journey.

**Wenham** notes that "The war against Og of Bashan had taken them into northern Transjordan. Now they returned and encamped in the Jordan valley, a little north of the Dead Sea, across the river from Jericho." (Israel is on the EAST side of the river [in the map above](#) - the **red marker** is Jericho). Israel had skirted the kingdoms of Edom and Moab (**ED**: See **yellow line** in map below) on their way north from the wilderness (Nu 20:21; Nu 21:13) ([TOTC-Nu](#))

Israel goes East of Edom & Moab - Yellow line- click to enlarge  
(Source: NIVSB)

**Guzik** points out that Israel had arrived here with "the blessing of victory, God preparing them to fight the mighty Canaanites by a series of battles against lesser peoples: the southern Canaanites (Numbers 21:1–3), the Amorites (Numbers 21:23–24), and the Bashanites (Numbers 21:33–35)."

**And camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho**- Beyond the Jordan River is obviously to the east of the Jordan. Picture the scene of from 1-2 million people spread **over the plains of Moab**. This would have been an intimidating sight to any non-Israelite.

#### Related Resources:

- American Tract Society [Jericho](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Jericho](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Jericho](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Jericho](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Jericho](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Jericho](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Jericho](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Jericho](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Jericho \(2\)](#) [Jericho](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Jericho](#)

#### Numbers 22:2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

BGT Numbers 22:2 καὶ ὁ υἱὸς Βαλακ υἱὸς Σεπφωρ πύνασα ποῖ ἤσεν Ἰσραὴλ τῶν Ἀμορραίων

NET Numbers 22:2 Balak son of Zippor saw all that the Israelites had done to the Amorites.

NLT Numbers 22:2 Balak son of Zippor, the Moabite king, had seen everything the Israelites did to the Amorites.

ESV Numbers 22:2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

NIV Numbers 22:2 Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites,

KJV Numbers 22:2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

YLT Numbers 22:2 And Balak son of Zippor seeth all that Israel hath done to the Amorite,

LXE Numbers 22:2 And when Balac son of Sepphor saw all that Israel did to the Amorite,

ASV Numbers 22:2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

CSB Numbers 22:2 Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

NKJ Numbers 22:2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

NRS Numbers 22:2 Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

NAB Numbers 22:2 Now Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel did to the Amorites.

NJB Numbers 22:2 Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites,

GWN Numbers 22:2 Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

- Nu 21:3,20-35 Jdg 11:25
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAK RECOGNIZES ISRAEL'S POWER

To help see this chapter in relation to the entire book of Numbers take a moment and observe the chart at the top of the page. Locate the number 22:2" in the chart directly above the designation "AT MOAB." Note the time is "A few Months" and the major mountain will prove to be "Mt Nebo" (others are mentioned even in the story of Balak and Balaam).

**Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites - Balak** (means "devastator" or "waster" or "swallower of the people") witnessed the destruction of the powerful **Amorites** and knew he had to do something or he too would be defeated.

**Fausset Bible Dictionary Balak**- Not hereditary king, but imposed on Moab by Sihon. (See BALAAM; HUR (2).) His employment of Balaam to curse Israel was near the close of Israel's journeying. His knowing as to the seer in Mesopotamia would imply a circulation of intelligence, great considering the times. Moab's descent from Lot, originally of Mesopotamia; also the merchant caravans passing across the deserts; also the advanced civilization of Moab in letters, proved by the Moabite stone some centuries later: all make it intelligible. Finding Israel "too mighty" for him (Numbers 22:6), and his hope of prevailing by Balaam's enchantments being disappointed, he let them alone thenceforth. His "warring against Israel" (Joshua 24:9-10) consisted not in "fighting," which is denied in Judges 11:25, but in hiring Balak against them.

**Balak** - 43x in 40v - Nu 22:2,4; Nu 22:7; Nu 22:10; Nu 22:13; Nu 22:14; Nu 22:15; Nu 22:16; Nu 22:18; Nu 22:35; Nu 22:36; Nu 22:37; Nu 22:38; Nu 22:39; Nu 22:40; Nu 22:41; Nu 23:1; Nu 23:2; Nu 23:3; Nu 23:5; Nu 23:7; Nu 23:11; Nu 23:13; Nu 23:15; Nu 23:16; Nu 23:17; Nu 23:18; Nu 23:25; Nu 23:26; Nu 23:27; Nu 23:28; Nu 23:29; Nu 23:30; Nu 24:10; Nu 24:12; Nu 24:13; Nu 24:25; Jos 24:9; Jdg 11:25; Mic 6:5

### Related Resources:

- American Tract Society [Balak](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Balak](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Balak](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Balak](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Balak](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Balak](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Balak](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Balak](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Balak](#)

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### Question: [Who was Balak in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** Balak was a king of [Moab](#) who appears in the Old Testament in Numbers 22-24. His story is in the context of the time of the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land. Moab, the land that Balak ruled, lay on the east side of the Dead Sea.

As the Israelites traveled to Canaan, their reputation preceded them, and the Moabites were well aware of the miracles that had accompanied Israel's exodus from Egypt. The inhabitants of the cities in Israel's path knew God was on the Israelites' side.

King Balak had witnessed the Israelites' destruction of the Amorites, and the entire region of Moab grew afraid as the Israelites approached (Numbers 22:2-3). When the Israelites encamped in territory that had once been Moab's, the king decided it was time to act. Balak and the elders of Moab colluded with the neighboring Midianites to summon a prophet named [Balaam](#) to put a curse on God's people (verse 6). Ironically, Balaam went to God and asked Him for guidance before he would agree to Balak's plan.

God's answer to Balaam was, of course, a resounding "no" (Nu 22:12). Following God's command, Balaam refused Balak's offer. But Balak would not be put off—he sent even more powerful men and sweetened the deal to tempt Balaam into agreeing to the plan (verse 15).

Balaam eventually set out to meet Balak, and during his journey the famous incident of the [talking donkey](#) occurred—God’s message to Balaam that he should not curse the Israelites (Numbers 22:21–35).

When Balaam stood before Balak, the king likely believed he had won and that the Israelites would soon be cursed. But instead of cursing the Israelites, Balaam blessed them three times. Balak’s “anger burned against Balaam” (Numbers 24:10), and he sent Balaam away without a reward.

Balak’s plot to curse Israel through a hired prophet failed, but that was not the end of Moabite opposition. Later, the men of Israel were judged by God for idolatry and committing fornication with Moabite women (Numbers 25:1–9). As it turned out, this was the result of a plot from Balaam and Balak to corrupt Israel from within (see Revelation 2:14).

What can we learn from Balak’s story? First of all, it is important to recognize Israel’s place as [God’s chosen people](#). He has promised to bless those who bless them and curse those who curse them (Genesis 12:3). King Balak of Moab chose to curse Israel, but the curses were thwarted and turned into a blessing in Balaam’s mouth. God’s ultimate plan is to bring the remnant of Israel to Himself during the future seven-year tribulation (see Romans 11:26; Jeremiah 33:8).

Second, Balak’s story is a wonderful proof of God’s sovereignty over all. No plans made by men—even the most powerful and influential men—will prosper without the Lord’s permission. “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails” (Proverbs 19:21). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Wenham** ([TOTC-Nu](#)) has an excellent summary of the time sequence and Balaam’s encounters with God

Nu 22:2-14		<b>DAYS 1-2</b>
	Nu 22:2-6	Introduction
	Nu 22:7-14	Balaam's First Encounter with God
Nu 22:15-35		<b>DAYS 3-4</b>
	Nu 22:15-20	Balaam's Second Encounter
	Nu 22:21-35	Balaam's Third Encounter
		Nu 21:22-23 Donkey sees Angel - 1
		Nu 21:24-25 Donkey sees Angel - 2
		Nu 21:26-35 Donkey sees Angel - 3
Nu 22:36-24:25		<b>DAYS 5-6</b>
	Nu 22:36-40	Introduction
	Nu 22:41-23:12	First Blessing of Israel
	Nu 23:13-26	Second Blessing of Israel
	Nu 23:27-24:25	Third Blessing
		Nu 24:3-9 Blessing #3
		Nu 24:15-19 Blessing #4
		Nu 24:20-24 Three

**Numbers 22:3 So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel.**

BGT Numbers 22:3 κα φοβθη Μωαβ τιν λα ν σφ δρα τι πολλο σαν κα προσ χθισεν Μωαβ πι προσ που υ ν Ισραηλ

NET Numbers 22:3 And the Moabites were greatly afraid of the people, because they were so numerous. The Moabites were sick with fear because of the Israelites.

NLT Numbers 22:3 And when the people of Moab saw how many Israelites there were, they were terrified.

ESV Numbers 22:3 And Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were many. Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel.

NIV Numbers 22:3 and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites.

KJV Numbers 22:3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.

YLT Numbers 22:3 and Moab is exceedingly afraid of the presence of the people, for it is numerous; and Moab is vexed by the presence of the sons of Israel,

LXE Numbers 22:3 then Moab feared the people exceedingly because they were many; and Moab was grieved before the face of the children of Israel.

ASV Numbers 22:3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.

CSB Numbers 22:3 Moab was terrified of the people because they were numerous, and Moab dreaded the Israelites.

NKJ Numbers 22:3 And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel.

NRS Numbers 22:3 Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were so numerous; Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel.

NAB Numbers 22:3 Indeed, Moab feared the Israelites greatly because of their numbers, and detested them.

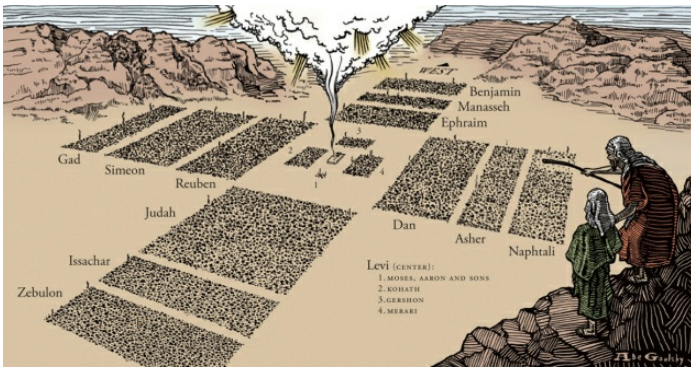
NJB Numbers 22:3 and Moab was terrified of the people, because there were so many of them. Moab was afraid of the Israelites;

GWN Numbers 22:3 The Moabites were very afraid because there were so many Israelites. Besides, the Moabites couldn't stand these people.

- Ex 15:15 De 2:25 Jos 2:10,11,24 9:24 Ps 53:5 Isa 23:5
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Resources:**

Deuteronomy 2:24-25 'Arise, set out, and pass through the valley of Arnon. Look! I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand; begin to take possession and contend with him in battle.'This day **I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens**, who, when they hear the report of you, will tremble and be in anguish because of you.'



THE SONS OF ISRAEL WERE NUMEROUS

## MOAB FEARS ISRAEL

**So** - Term of conclusion - Based on what they saw Israel do to their adversaries, they naturally became fearful.

**Moab was in great fear because of the people, for** (term of explanation) **they were numerous** - Moab was in fear because of the great number of Israelites. There were 1-2 million Israelites spread out on the plain of Moab.

**And Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel**- YLT - "vexed by the presence of the sons of Israel." The Hebrew word for **dread** ([qut](#)) is translated in the Lxx with [prosochthizo](#) which means to be very upset over something someone has done, to be angry, offended or provoked and is this same verb describing Yahweh's reaction to Israel in Hebrews 3:10+ and Hebrews 3:17+!

**Dread** (loathe)([06973](#))([qut](#)) means to be or make disgusted, to loathe, to be sick of. It denotes deep emotional reaction of issuing in a desired repulsion (or destruction) of the object abhorred. Quts refers to God's revulsion toward pagan practices (Lev. 20:23); by Israel toward manna (ungratefully and wrongly) after eating it for years (Nu 21:5; cf. Ps. 78:22-25); by Rebekah toward her Hittite daughters-in-law (Gen. 27:46); and by Solomon's son toward the Lord's rebuke (Pr. 3:11). It also signified the loathing felt by enemies toward Israel's prosperity (Ex. 1:12; Num. 22:3). In Isaiah 7:6, the causative sense means to vex. By taking over, the enemies planned to cause Judah to abhor them.

**Numbers 22:4 Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.**

BGT Numbers 22:4 κα ε πεν Μωαβ τ γερουσ Μαδιαμ ν ν κλε ξει συναγωγ α τη π τ ν ας το ς κ κ λ μ ν ς κλε ξαι μ σχο ς τ χλω ρ κ το πεδ ου κα Βαλακ υ ς Σεπφω ρ βασιλε ς Μωαβ ν κατ τ ν και ρ ν κε νον

NET Numbers 22:4 So the Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "Now this mass of people will lick up everything around us, as the bull devours the grass of the field. Now Balak son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at this time.

NLT Numbers 22:4 The king of Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This mob will devour everything in sight, like an ox devours grass in the field!" So Balak, king of Moab,

ESV Numbers 22:4 And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." So Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time,

NIV Numbers 22:4 The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." So Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time,

KJV Numbers 22:4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time.

YLT Numbers 22:4 and Moab saith unto the elders of Midian, 'Now doth the assembly lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the green thing of the field.' And Balak son of Zippor is king of Moab at that time,

LXE Numbers 22:4 And Moab said to the elders of Madiam, Now shall this assembly lick up all that are round about us, as a calf would lick up the green herbs of the field:-- and Balac son of Sepphor was king of Moab at that time.

ASV Numbers 22:4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now will this multitude lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.

CSB Numbers 22:4 So the Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will devour everything around us like an ox eats up the green plants in the field." Since Balak son of Zippor was Moab's king at that time,

NKJ Numbers 22:4 So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything 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.

NRS Numbers 22:4 And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." Now Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.

NAB Numbers 22:4 So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Soon this horde will devour all the country around us as an ox devours the grass of the field." And Balak, Zippor's son, who was king of Moab at that time,

NJB Numbers 22:4 he said to the elders of Midian, 'This horde will soon have cropped everything round us as closely as an ox crops grass in the countryside.' Now Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at the time.

GWN Numbers 22:4 So the Moabites said to the leaders of Midian, "All those people will eventually eat up everything around us the same way an ox eats up the grass in a field." At that time Balak, son of Zippor, was king of Moab.

- **elders:** Nu 22:7 25:15-18 31:8 Jos 13:21,22
- **this horde will lick up** Nu 24:17 Jer 48:38
- **And Balak:** Nu 22:2 Jdg 11:25
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **MOAB FEARS COMPLETE DESTRUCTION BY ISRAEL**

**Moab said to the elders of Midian** - Moab could be the Moabites (as in Nu 22:5NIV) or could be the King of Moab (as in Nu 22:5NLT). **Elders of Midian** were those who lived both in Sinai ([see map](#)) and in the deserts East of the Jordan (Ex 2:1-22; Jdg 6:1-40).

**Gotquestions** (excerpt) on **Midianites** - Abraham had more sons than just Isaac (by Sarah) and Ishmael (by Hagar). He also had six sons by Keturah, his wife after the death of Sarah: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah (Genesis 25:2). The Midianites were the descendants of Midian and therefore children of Abraham. They settled in "the land of the east" (Genesis 25:6). Most scholars believe the land of Midian was officially on both sides of the Gulf of Aqaba, although the Midianites showed nomadic tendencies later in their history (see Habakkuk 3:7, ESV). When Moses fled the wrath of Pharaoh, he traveled to Midian (Exodus 2:15). There, Moses met and married his wife, Zipporah, and served his father-in-law, Jethro, as a shepherd for forty years. The fact that Jethro was "a priest of Midian" (Exodus 2:16) indicates that the Midianites, at least during Moses' time, still retained the knowledge of the God of their father Abraham (cf. Jethro's words and actions in Exodus 18). At the end of Moses' time in Midian, God appeared to Moses—still in Midian—and commissioned him to lead the Israelites out of slavery (Ex 3:1-4:31). As the children of Israel traveled through the wilderness, they employed the services of a guide familiar with the desert—Moses' Midianite brother-in-law, Hobab (Numbers 10:29). However, the relations between the Israelites and the Midianites began to sour when the Midianites joined forces with the Moabites in order to hire Balaam to curse Israel (Numbers 22). Later, when Israel fell into idolatry and sexual sin with the Moabite women (Numbers 25:1-18), we find that a prominent Midianite woman was also involved (Numbers 25:6). The Lord then told Moses to wage war against the Midianites: "Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them. They treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the Peor incident involving their sister Kozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader" (Numbers 25:17–19). The Israelites did eventually attack the Midianites, meting out divine retribution against their enemies (Numbers 31). Five kings of the Midianites were killed, as was Balaam (Numbers 31:8). This battle was one of the last things Moses accomplished as leader of the Israelites. (For full article see [Who were the Midianites? | GotQuestions.org](#))

**Eugene Merrill** - The fears of Balak were actually in vain, for the Moabites, as kinsmen of Israel (cf. Ge 19:26–37) like the Ammonites, were exempted from the attacks of Israel. In fact the Lord had explicitly revealed through Moses that Israel must assiduously avoid any harmful contact with the Edomites (Dt. 2:5–6), Moabites (Dt. 2:9), and Ammonites (Dt. 2:19). Even the Midianites were distantly related to Israel (Ge 25:1–4), and so presumably they had nothing to fear. (BKC)



**Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field.**"- NLT = "Now this mass of people will lick up everything around us, as the bull devours the grass of the field."

**Guzik** - In one sense, Balak's fear was completely logical. On the other hand, if he had only known and believed God's word, he would have had nothing to fear. God commanded Israel to not harass Moab, because He did not intend to give Israel the land of the Moabites (Deuteronomy 2:9 = "Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession.'").

**And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time**- This is almost identical to Nu 22:4b and serves to reiterate that Balak was the king of Moab and may be given to explain to whom the subject "Moab" at the beginning of the passage was referring.

**Numbers 22:5 So 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, "Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me.**

BGT Numbers 22:5 κα π στειλεν πρ σβεις πρ ς Βαλααμ υ ν Βεωρ Φαθουρα στιν π το ποταμο γ ς υ ν λαο α το καλ σαι α τ ν λ γων δο λα ς ξελ λυθεν ξ Α γ ππου κα δο κατεκ λυψεν τ ν ψιν τ ς γ ς κα ο τος γκ θηται χ μεν ς μου

NET Numbers 22:5 And he sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the Euphrates River in the land of Amaw, to summon him, saying, "Look, a nation has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are settling next to me.

NLT Numbers 22:5 sent messengers to call Balaam son of Beor, who was living in his native land of Pethor near the Euphrates River. His message said: "Look, a vast horde of people has arrived from Egypt. They cover the face of the earth and are threatening me.

ESV Numbers 22:5 sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the people of Amaw, to call him, saying, "Behold, a people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me.

NIV Numbers 22:5 sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, who was at Pethor, near the River, in his native land. Balak said: "A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me.

KJV Numbers 22:5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me:

YLT Numbers 22:5 and he sendeth messengers unto Balaam son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the River of the land of the sons of his people, to call for him, saying, 'Lo, a people hath come out of Egypt; lo, it hath covered the eye of the land, and it is abiding over-against me;

LXE Numbers 22:5 And he sent ambassadors to Balaam the son of Beor, to Phathura, which is on a river of the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, a people is come out of Egypt, and behold it has covered the face of the earth, and it has encamped close to me.

ASV Numbers 22:5 And he sent messengers unto Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the River, to the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me.

CSB Numbers 22:5 he sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the Euphrates in the land of his people. Balak said to him: "Look, a people has come out of Egypt; they cover the surface of the land and are living right across from me.

NKJ Numbers 22:5 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!

NRS Numbers 22:5 He sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is on the Euphrates, in the land of Amaw, to summon him, saying, "A people has come out of Egypt; they have spread over the face of

the earth, and they have settled next to me.

NAB Numbers 22:5 sent messengers to Balaam, son of Beor, at Pethor on the Euphrates, in the land of the Amawites, summoning him with these words, "A people has come here from Egypt who now cover the face of the earth and are settling down opposite us!"

- **sent:** De 23:4 Jos 13:22 24:9 Ne 13:1,2 Mic 6:5 2Pe 2:15,16, son of Bosor, Jude 1:11 Rev 2:14
- **Pethor:** Nu 23:7 De 23:4
- **they cover:** Ge 13:16 Ex 1:7-10 Ps 105:24
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Pethor on the Euphrates

## BALAK SENDS FOR BALAAM'S ASSISTANCE

**So** - Term of conclusion. Based on the fears of sure and total defeat by Israel.

**He sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River**(The Euphrates of Ge 31:21, Ex 23:31, Josh 24:2), **in the land of the sons of his people, to call him-** [Holman Bible Dictionary](#) (and Smith's Dictionary) says **Pethor** means "**soothsayer**" ([Easton](#) says "interpretation of dreams"; early midrash says "dream interpreter") which is located in "upper Mesopotamia ([map](#)) identified with tell Ahmar, twelve miles south of Carchemish ([map](#)) near the confluence of the Sajur and [Euphrates rivers.](#)" Apparently **Balaam the son of Beor, the diviner** (Joshua 13:33; sought **omens** in Nu 24:1) was well known for his skills of divination for Balak knew of him even though Balaam lived some 400 miles from Moab! That's quite a reputation in a day when there was no electronic communication!

**Baker** has an informative note on **diviner** (for more see word study of [qasam](#)) - God had earlier established that He would guide His people through true prophets, not through diviners (Deut. 18:10, 14). Thus, the falsity of divination is repeatedly pointed out by the prophets (Jer. 29:8; Ezek. 13:9; 22:28; Zech. 10:2). Nevertheless, divination was a problem for Israel as well as for other nations (1 Sam. 6:2; 28:8; 2 Kgs. 17:17). This Hebrew term is broad enough to encompass [necromancy](#), augury, and visions (1 Sa 28:8; Ezek. 21:21–29; Mic. 3:6, 7). Divination was quite profitable for some even in New Testament times (cf. Acts 16:16–18)." (WSOT - Dictionary)

**Eugene Merrill** has an interesting note - Possibly **Pethor** was not far from the great city of **Mari** (see [map](#)) discovered in 1933 in the Euphrates Valley. The discovery of a vast number of [cuneiform tablets](#) at Mari, beginning in 1933, revealed among other things the existence of a complex cult of prophets and seers whose activities precisely resemble those of Balaam. The fact that he undoubtedly represented the prophetic customs and practices of Mari and vicinity makes possible a better understanding of Balaam's narrative in Numbers. (BKC)

**Brian Bell** on **Balaam** - What an enigma! 1. He's from a heathen nation, yet he knew the true God. 2. He was a soothsayer, yet he was able to predict the future of Israel. 3. He listened to the Word of God, yet turned right around and led Israel into sin and judgement.

**Balaam** is mentioned 63x in 59v in Old and New Testaments - Nu 22:5; Nu 22:7; Nu 22:8; Nu 22:9; Nu 22:10; Nu 22:12; Nu 22:13; Nu 22:14; Nu 22:16; Nu 22:18; Nu 22:20; Nu 22:21; Nu 22:23; Nu 22:25; Nu 22:27; Nu 22:28; Nu 22:29; Nu 22:30; Nu 22:31; Nu 22:34; Nu 22:35; Nu 22:36; Nu 22:37; Nu 22:38; Nu 22:39; Nu 22:40; Nu 22:41; Nu 23:1; Nu 23:2; Nu 23:3; Nu 23:4; Nu 23:5; Nu 23:11; Nu 23:16; Nu 23:25; Nu 23:26; Nu 23:27; Nu 23:28; Nu 23:29; Nu 23:30; Nu 24:1; Nu 24:2; Nu 24:3; Nu 24:10; Nu 24:12; Nu 24:15; Nu 24:25; Nu 31:8; Nu 31:16; Deut. 23:4; Deut. 23:5; Jos. 13:22; Jos. 24:9; Jos. 24:10; Neh. 13:2; Mic. 6:5; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14

**Saying, Behold ([hinneh](#)) a people came out of Egypt** - He does not mention their name, perhaps ignorance, perhaps arrogance.

**Behold , they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me** - He is saying Israel is like a "swarm of locusts" that cover the surface of the land they are occupying. Of course his major fear is that they are currently camped next to Moab.

**Milgrom** -Literally, "it hides the eye of the earth"; by extension, "eye" can mean "appearance, view," as in Nu 11:7 and Lev 13:55. Israel is clearly compared with a locust plague, a common simile for an invading army (cf. Jdg. 6:5; 7:12).

**NET NOTE** - Balaam appears to be a pagan diviner who was of some reputation; he was called to curse the Israelites, but God

intervened and gave him blessings only. The passage forms a nice complement to texts that deal with blessings and curses. It shows that no one can curse someone whom God has blessed.

#### Related Resources:

- Meindert Dijkstra [Is Balaam Also among the Prophets?](#) Journal of Biblical Literature Vol. 114, No. 1 (Spring, 1995)
- J. A. Wharton, "[The Command to Bless: An Exposition of Numbers 22:41–23:25](#)," Int 13 (1959): 37–48
- P. C. Craigie, "[The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry,](#)" Tyndale Bulletin 20 (1969): 76–94

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#### Question: [Who was Balaam in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** Balaam was a wicked prophet in the Bible and is noteworthy because, although he was a wicked prophet, he was not a false prophet. That is, Balaam did hear from God, and God did give him some true prophecies to speak. However, Balaam's heart was not right with God, and eventually he showed his true colors by betraying Israel and leading them astray.

In Numbers 22–24, we find the story about Balaam and the king of Moab, a man called Balak. King Balak wanted to weaken the children of Israel, who on their way to Canaan had moved in on his territory. Balak sent to Balaam, who lived in Mesopotamia along the Euphrates River (Numbers 22:5), and asked him to curse Israel in exchange for a reward. Balaam was apparently willing to do this but said he needed God's permission (verse 8). Balaam, of course, had no power, in himself, to curse Israel, but, if God were willing to curse Israel, Balaam would be rewarded through Balak. God told Balaam, "You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed" (verse 12). King Balak then sent "other officials, more numerous and more distinguished than the first" (verse 16), promising a handsome reward. This time God said, "Go with them, but do only what I tell you" (verse 20).

The next morning, Balaam saddled his donkey and left for Moab (Numbers 22:21). God sent an angel to oppose Balaam on the way. The donkey Balaam was riding could see the angel, but Balaam could not, and when the donkey three times moved to avoid the angel, Balaam was angry and beat the animal. "Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth" (verse 28), and it rebuked the prophet for the beatings. "Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn" (verse 31). The angel told Balaam that he certainly would have killed Balaam had not the donkey spared his life. Ironically, a dumb beast had more wisdom than God's prophet. The angel then repeated to Balaam the instruction that he was only to speak what God told him to speak concerning the Hebrews (verses 33–35).

In Moab, King Balak took the prophet Balaam up to a high place called Bamoth Baal and told him to curse the Israelites (Numbers 22:41). Balaam first offered fourteen sacrifices on seven altars and met with the Lord (Numbers 23:1–5). He then declared the message God gave him: a blessing on Israel: "How can I curse / those whom God has not cursed? / How can I denounce / those whom the Lord has not denounced?" (Nu 23:8).

King Balak was upset that Balaam had pronounced a blessing on Israel rather than a curse, but he had him try again, this time from the top of Pisgah (Numbers 23:14). Balaam sacrificed another fourteen animals and met with the Lord. When he faced Israel, Balaam again spoke a blessing: "I have received a command to bless; / he has blessed, and I cannot change it" (Nu 23:20).

King Balak told Balaam that, if he was going to keep blessing Israel, it was better for him to just shut up (Numbers 23:25). But the king decided to try one more time, taking Balaam to the top of Peor, overlooking the wasteland (verse 28). Again, Balaam offered fourteen animals on seven newly built altars (verse 29). Then "the Spirit of God came on him and he spoke his message" (Numbers 24:2–3). The third message was not what the Moabite king wanted to hear: "How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, / your dwelling places, Israel!" (verse 5).

Balaam's three prophecies of blessing on Israel infuriated the king of Moab, who told the prophet to go back home with no reward: "Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the Lord has kept you from being rewarded" (Numbers 24:11). Before he left, Balaam reminded the king that he had said from the very beginning he could only say what God told him to say. Then he gave the king four more prophecies, gratis. In the fourth prophecy, Balaam foretold of the Messiah: "A star will come out of Jacob; / a scepter will rise out of Israel. / He will crush the foreheads of Moab, / the skulls of all the people of Sheth" (verse 17). Balaam's seven prophecies were seven blessings on God's people; it was God's enemies who were cursed.

However, later on Balaam figured out a way to get his reward from Balak. Balaam advised the Moabites on how to entice the people of Israel with prostitutes and idolatry. He could not curse Israel directly, so he came up with a plan for Israel to bring a curse upon themselves. Balak followed Balaam's advice, and Israel fell into sin, worshiping Baal of Peor and committing fornication with Midianite women. For this God plagued them, and 24,000 men died (Numbers 25:1–9; Deuteronomy 23:3–6).

Balaam's name and story became infamous, and he is referred to several times in the New Testament. Peter compares false teachers to Balaam, "who loved the wages of wickedness" (2 Peter 2:15). Jude echoes this sentiment, associating Balaam with the

selling of one's soul for financial gain (Jude 1:11). Finally, Jesus speaks of Balaam when He warns [the church in Pergamum](#) of their sin: "There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality" (Revelation 2:14). Satan's tactics haven't changed all that much. If he cannot curse God's people directly, he will try the back-door approach, and [idolatry](#) and [sexual immorality](#) are his go-to temptations. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Numbers 22:6 "Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may 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."**

BGT Numbers 22:6 κα ν ν δε πο ρασα μοι τ ν λα ν το τον τι σχ ει ο το ς με ς ν δυ ν μεθα πατ ξαι ξ α τ ν κα κβαλ α το ς κ τ ς γ ς πι ο δα ο ς ν ε λο γ σ ς σ ε λ γ η ν τ αι κα ο ς ν κα τ αρ σ σ κεκατ ρ αν τ αι

NET Numbers 22:6 So now, please come and curse this nation for me, for they are too powerful for me. Perhaps I will prevail so that we may conquer them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed."

NLT Numbers 22:6 Please come and curse these people for me because they are too powerful for me. Then perhaps I will be able to conquer them and drive them from the land. I know that blessings fall on any people you bless, and curses fall on people you curse."

ESV Numbers 22:6 Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

NIV Numbers 22:6 Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For I know that those you bless are blessed, and those you curse are cursed."

KJV Numbers 22:6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

YLT Numbers 22:6 and now, come, I pray thee, curse for me this people, for it is mightier than I; it may be I prevail -- we smite it -- and I cast it out from the land; for I have known -- that which thou blessest is blessed, and that which thou cursest is cursed.'

LXE Numbers 22:6 And now come, curse me this people, for it is stronger than we; if we may be able to smite some of them, and I will cast them out of the land: for I know that whomsoever thou dost bless, they are blessed, and whomsoever thou dost curse, they are cursed.

ASV Numbers 22:6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

CSB Numbers 22:6 Please come and put a curse on these people for me because they are more powerful than I am. I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that those you bless are blessed and those you curse are cursed."

NKJ Numbers 22:6 "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."

NRS Numbers 22:6 Come now, curse this people for me, since they are stronger than I; perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land; for I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed."

NAB Numbers 22:6 Please come and curse this people for us; they are stronger than we are. We may then be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed and whoever you curse is cursed."

- I know 1Ki 22:6,8,13 Ps 109:28 Pr 26:2 Isa 47:12,13 Eze 13:6 Ac 8:9,10 16:16
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAK'S DEFENSE: COME AND CURSE!

**Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me-** Apparently diviners were known to have the power to curse people. Merrill however points out that there "curses would of course be couched in such qualified language that they were bound to come to pass one way or the other." (BKC) Balak knew he could not defeat Israel with an army so he seeks a spiritual solution from Balaam.

**Perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land-** If the curse weakened Israel, Balak saw a possibility of victory over them.

**For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed-** Somehow Balaam had this reputation for blessing and cursing others. This is a fascinating declaration for Balak in essence attributes to Balaam powers that in truth only God has. And specifically regarding Israel, in Genesis 12:3+ Yahweh promised Abram "I will bless those who bless you, And **the one who curses you I will curse.**" So Yahweh had already decreed He would bless the seed of Abram and that lineage at this time was the nation of Israel. God is not a man that He should lie (Nu 23:19) and so no "curse" could subvert His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Numbers 22:7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him.**

BGT Numbers 22:7 κα πορευθη γερουσ α Μωαβ κα γερουσ α Μαδιαμ κα τ μαντε α ν τα ς χερσ ν α τ ν κα λθον πρ ς Βαλααμ κα ε παν α τ τ ματα Βαλακ

NET Numbers 22:7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fee for divination in their hand. They came to Balaam and reported to him the words of Balak.

NLT Numbers 22:7 Balak's messengers, who were elders of Moab and Midian, set out with money to pay Balaam to place a curse upon Israel. They went to Balaam and delivered Balak's message to him.

ESV Numbers 22:7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand. And they came to Balaam and gave him Balak's message.

NIV Numbers 22:7 The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said.

KJV Numbers 22:7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.

YLT Numbers 22:7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian go, and divinations in their hand, and they come in unto Balaam, and speak unto him the words of Balak,

LXE Numbers 22:7 And the elders of Moab went, and the elders of Madiam, and their divining instruments were in their hands; and they came to Balaam, and spoke to him the words of Balac.

ASV Numbers 22:7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.

CSB Numbers 22:7 The elders of Moab and Midian departed with fees for divination in hand. They came to Balaam and reported Balak's words to him.

NKJ Numbers 22:7 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.

NRS Numbers 22:7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam, and gave him Balak's message.

NAB Numbers 22:7 Then the elders of Moab and of Midian left with the divination fee in hand and went to Balaam. When they had given him Balak's message,

NJB Numbers 22:7 The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian set out, taking the fee for the divination with them. They found Balaam and gave him Balak's message.

GWN Numbers 22:7 The leaders of Moab and Midian left, taking money with them to pay for Balaam's services. They came to Balaam and told him what Balak had said.

- **fees for divination:** 1Sa 9:7,8 Isa 56:11 Eze 13:19 Mic 3:11 Ro 16:18 1Ti 6:9,10 Tit 1:11 2Pe 2:15 Jude 1:11
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FEES FOR DIVINATION

**So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him** - The journey to the Pethor is in the range of 400 miles (Milgrom) which in ancient times would taken at least 20 days (Milgrom) one way. They went with money and a message. The **fees for divination in their hand** would amount to payment/inducement to make a curse against Israel. The mention of **the elders of Midian** is not absolutely clear but suggests that the two nations indeed forged an alliance against Israel, whom they viewed as a common threat.

**Milgrom** - If the identification (of location of Pethor) is correct, then the journey from Pethor to Moab, a distance of about 640 kilometers (400 mi.) would have taken at least twenty days. And since the text records four such journeys, three months would have been occupied in traveling.

**UBS Handbook** - Rashi and Rashbam proposed that the Hebrew term here refers to divination tools, that is, representative models of omens, such as ceramic sheep livers found by archaeologists. If so, Balak would have been dissatisfied with the readings of his own diviners and would have sent the model of the divination results to Balaam for a second opinion, more favorable to what he wanted to hear

**Brian Bell on diviner's fee** - The Diviners fee - everybody has a price...what would you sell your soul for?

**J Vernon McGee** - Balak sent messengers down to Balaam to make this overture to him. The man has quite a reputation, you see. The messengers bring their rewards, or the pay, for the diviner. Balaam is a fortune teller. Balak offers a very handsome price to this man through his messengers.

**Divination** ([07081](#))(**qesem**) described the cultic practice of foreign nations that was prohibited in Israel (Deut. 18:10); and considered a great sin (1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Kgs. 17:17). False prophets used divination to prophesy in God's name, but God identified them as false (Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:6); and pledged to remove such practices from Israel (Ezek. 13:23). Several verses give some insight into what this actual practice looked like: it was compared to a kingly sentence (Prov. 16:10); and was used to discern between two choices (Ezek. 21:21[26], 22[27] **Divination**, which was outlawed by God in Israel, involved using illegitimate means to attempt to gain knowledge of such things as the future. Ezekiel 21:21 includes using arrows, consulting teraphim and examining livers as methods of divination

**Qesem** - Num. 22:7; Num. 23:23; Deut. 18:10; 1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Ki. 17:17; Prov. 16:10; Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:6; Ezek. 13:23; Ezek. 21:21; Ezek. 21:22

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**Thomas Constable** notes that "Several types of divination were common in the ancient Near East."

1. **Extispicy (Haruspex)** was the examination of the entrails of a sacrificed sheep by a trained specialist to determine messages from the gods. The intricate arrangements of the internal organs are what believers in this form of divination regarded as indicative of divine revelation.
2. **Astrology** studied the arrangements of the moon, sun, meteors, planets, and fixed stars to discover the future. Eclipses were particularly significant.
3. **Augury** was the study of the appearance, movements, and behavior of birds. The seers supposed the direction and manner of flight of birds was revelatory.
4. **Kleromancy (Cleromancy)** was divination by means of lots. The various configurations of symbolic objects, actors, and areas yielded a binary ("yes" or "no") answer to a given question.
5. **Oneiromancy** was revelation by dreams that sometimes contained verbal communication from a god or non-verbal communication. In the latter type certain colors, animals, or activities corresponded to types of misfortune, happiness, or success.

In all the types of divination, [fortunetellers](#) used tricks to deceive and impress their clients. They often clothed their predictions in mysterious ambiguous language to cover possible error. Devout Israelites were to reject divination as a way of discovering the likely outcome of events and to rely on God to make known what He wanted them to know.

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#### Related Resource:

- Harry A. Hoffner Jr., "[Ancient Views of Prophecy and Fulfillment: Mesopotamia and Asia Minor](#)," JETS 30:3 (September 1987):257-65.
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**G Michael Hagan - DIVINATION** - Communication with a deity for the purpose of determining the deity's knowledge, resulting in clarification of a decision or discernment of the future. Two forms of divination developed in the ancient Near East, one using inductive manipulation of natural or human phenomena and the other taking intuitive forms of inner revelation.

**The History of Divination** . In Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Egypt, and Canaan, people communicated with their deities by means of divination, both on a personal and public level. From the Old Babylonian period (ca. 2000 b.c.) on in Mesopotamia, the reading of livers helped determine the actions of commoners and kings. A sheep was slaughtered, its liver removed, and the markings of the organ "read" for an answer. Other inductive types of divination included the analysis of stars, moon, entrails, lungs, weather, birds, and fetuses. Human-produced phenomena studied included casting lots, shooting arrows, dropping oil in water, drinking wine, calling the dead, and sprinkling water on an ox. Intuitive types of divination in the ancient Near East involved oracles, prophecies, and dreams.

In Israel, an official position on divination limited its uses to forms that did not reflect the practices of surrounding cultures. Most inductive forms were forbidden (Leviticus 19:26 ; Deuteronomy 18:11 ), although the use of Urim and Thummim and lots supposes some inductive approaches. Most ancient practices, however, were used by both the populace and the officials. The Bible alludes to the use of omens (Isaiah 44:25 ), arrows (Hosea 4:12 ), animal actions (1 Samuel 6:7-12 ), the reading of livers (Ezekiel 21:21-22 ), budding plants (Numbers 17:1-11 ), necromancy (1 Samuel 28 ), and prophetic utterances, called false (Micah 3:7,11 ) or "lying divinations" (Isaiah 44:25 ; Jeremiah 14:14 ; 27:9-10 ; Ezekiel 12:24 ; Zechariah 10:2 ). References to the "soothsayers' tree" (Judges 9:37 ), the "sons of a sorcerer" (Isaiah 57:3 ), and the girl with a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16-19 ) are evidence of widespread practice.

**Theology of Divination** . Divination presupposes that the divine communicates with the human. This communication takes both human and divine initiative. Inductive techniques depend on human initiation. The Bible supposes that a priority rests on revelatory forms (dream, vision, oracle) rather than on inductive ones (Urim/ Thummim, ephod). Although natural phenomena may communicate God's will, their interpretation must be scrutinized and may be helped by the verbal. It seems clear that God is not limited to the use of any one means of revelation.

Why would the Bible record such strong negative injunctions against inductive divination? Deuteronomic law especially attacks everything connected with pagan religions. Foreign deities may have attached themselves to these methods. Even then, most of Israel's approved methods display parallels with the surrounding cultures. The question of veracity may be involved because they prove difficult to interpret. For this reason, verbal forms take precedence over inductive methods. Yet even prophecies need to stand the test of whether they come true (Deuteronomy 18:21-22 ).

Human need requires discernment of divine desires. God chooses to communicate in a variety of ways, including divination techniques, but always in the clearest, most unambiguous way possible. (Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Divination](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about divination? | GotQuestions.org](#)
  - Torrey Topical Textbook [Divination](#)
  - Easton's Bible Dictionary [Divination](#)
  - Fausset Bible Dictionary [Divination](#)
  - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Divination Magic, Divination, and Sorcery](#)
  - Holman Bible Dictionary [Divination and Magic](#)
  - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Divine; Diviner](#)
  - McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Divination](#).
  - Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Divination Arrows divination by](#)
  - The Jewish Encyclopedia [Divination](#)
-

**Numbers 22:8 He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam.**

BGT Numbers 22:8 κα ε πεν πρ ς α το ς καταλ σατε α το τ ν ν κτα κα ποκριθ σομαι μ ν πρ γματα ν λαλ σ κ ριος πρ ς με κα κατ μειναν ο ρχοντες Μωαβ παρ Βαλααμ

NET Numbers 22:8 He replied to them, "Stay here tonight, and I will bring back to you whatever word the LORD may speak to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

NLT Numbers 22:8 "Stay here overnight," Balaam said. "In the morning I will tell you whatever the LORD directs me to say." So the officials from Moab stayed there with Balaam.

ESV Numbers 22:8 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.

NIV Numbers 22:8 "Spend the night here," Balaam said to them, "and I will bring you back the answer the LORD gives me." So the Moabite princes stayed with him.

KJV Numbers 22:8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

YLT Numbers 22:8 and he saith unto them, 'Lodge here to-night, and I have brought you back word, as Jehovah speaketh unto me;' and the princes of Moab abide with Balaam.

LXE Numbers 22:8 And he said to them, Tarry here the night, and I will answer you the things which the Lord shall say to me; and the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

ASV Numbers 22:8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as Jehovah shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

CSB Numbers 22:8 He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will give you the answer the LORD tells me." So the officials of Moab stayed with Balaam.

NKJ Numbers 22:8 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.

NRS Numbers 22:8 He said to them, "Stay here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, just as the LORD speaks to me"; so the officials of Moab stayed with Balaam.

NAB Numbers 22:8 he said to them in reply, "Stay here overnight, and I will give you whatever answer the LORD gives me." So the princes of Moab lodged with Balaam.

NJB Numbers 22:8 He said to them, 'Stay the night here, and I will answer as Yahweh directs me.' So the chiefs of Moab stayed with Balaam.

GWN Numbers 22:8 "Spend the night here," Balaam said to them, "and I'll report to you what the LORD tells me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

- Nu 22:19,20 12:6 23:12 Jer 12:2 Eze 33:31
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BALAAM SEEKS A WORD FROM YAHWEH**

**He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me."**- It is interesting that at this great distance from Jerusalem this man knew the Name Jehovah Whom he states he will consult. At first glance this sounds like an honest response, but it is not because they brought **fees for divination**. Balaam's immediate response should have been a clear negative, but it was not. Why is Balaam going to consult Yahweh? Apparently he hoped to coerce God to curse His covenant people (see Merrill's note below).

**Milgrom** suggests that "So that Balaam might receive a divine message in a dream (see Nu 22:20), as dreams are a legitimate means in Israel for divine communication (Nu 12:6). The prophets, however, regarded them as an inferior medium, as noted in Numbers 12:6 and Jeremiah 23:28. Dreams should not be confused with incubation, the ancient custom of sleeping in the temple of a god or goddess in order to obtain a message from him or her. (Numbers - JPS)



**Merrill** - When Balaam received the delegation sent to him he said they must spend the night there while he sought to determine the will of the LORD. Such an inquiry coming from a pagan prophet might seem surprising. But in keeping with the pagans' general spirit of broad-mindedness and their recognition that a people's own gods had the greatest power over them for bad or good, Balaam attempted to establish contact with Israel's God. (BKC)

**NIVSB note** - The language here and in Nu 22:18 ("the Lord my God") has led some to believe that Balaam was a believer in Yahweh ("the Lord"), the God of Israel. Based on the subsequent narrative, however, it seems best to take Balaam's words as claiming to be the spokesman for any god. Balaam is universally condemned in Scripture for moral, ethical and religious faults (31:7-8, 15-16; Dt 23:3-6; Jos 13:22; 24:9-10; Ne 13:1-3; Mic 6:5; 2 Pe 2:15-16; Jude 11; Rev 2:14).

**NET NOTE** - The verb לָיַן (lin) means "to lodge, spend the night." The related noun is "a lodge"—a hotel of sorts. Balaam needed to consider the offer. And after darkness was considered the best time for diviners to consult with their deities. Balaam apparently knows of the LORD; he testifies to this effect in 22:18.

**MacArthur** - Throughout these chapters Balaam himself used the name "Lord," i.e., Israel's God (Nu 22:13, 18-19; 23:3, 12; 24:13). In Nu 22:18 he even called the Lord, "the LORD my God." In this verse it must be assumed that Balaam expected the God of Israel to speak to him. As a pagan prophet he would anticipate making contact with the gods of any people. (MSB)

**HCSB Note** - Balaam, a renowned pagan divination expert (Joshua 13:22), and his oracles of blessing upon Israel. As the very antithesis of the great prophet Moses, this prophet sought Israel's demise at the bidding of the Moabite king Balak. Instead Balaam was used by God in a manner like Moses to pronounce future divine blessing for Israel. Moses is curiously absent from the story, probably because of his sin of rebellion and irreverence at Meribah (Nu 20:2-13). In this section God demonstrated that He can use even a pagan wizard to bring blessing to His people.

**And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam**- He must have had a large residence that would allow him to accommodate this evil entourage.

#### Numbers 22:9 Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"

BGT Numbers 22:9 κα λθεν θε ς πρ ς Βαλααμ κα ε πεν α τ τ ο νθρωποι ο τοι παρ σο

NET Numbers 22:9 And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"

NLT Numbers 22:9 That night God came to Balaam and asked him, "Who are these men visiting you?"

ESV Numbers 22:9 And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"

NIV Numbers 22:9 God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?"

KJV Numbers 22:9 And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?

YLT Numbers 22:9 And God cometh in unto Balaam, and saith, 'Who are these men with thee?'

LXE Numbers 22:9 And God came to Balaam, and said to him, Who are these men with thee?

ASV Numbers 22:9 And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?

CSB Numbers 22:9 Then God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?"

NKJ Numbers 22:9 Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"

NRS Numbers 22:9 God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?"

NAB Numbers 22:9 Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men visiting you?"

NJB Numbers 22:9 God came to Balaam and said, 'Who are these men staying with you?'

GWN Numbers 22:9 God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?"

- God: Nu 22:20 Ge 20:3 31:24 41:25 Da 2:45 4:31,32 Mt 7:22 24:24 Joh 11:51
- What men: Ge 3:9-11 4:9 16:8 Ex 4:2 2Ki 20:14,15
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**AN AMAZING  
DIVINE ADDRESS!**

**Then God came to Balaam** - This is amazing condescension that [Elohim](#) would appear to a pagan diviner. This could indicate that this was a dream or vision. Where is not stated. Obviously it was not at his residence. Recall that God appeared to Abimelech of Gerar in Ge 20:6-7, to Pharaoh in dreams (Ge 41:25) and even to King Nebuchadnezzar in a dream (Da 2:1-45) and visions (Da 4:1-18).

**Merrill** points out that "As the sovereign God He rules and overrules in prophetic revelation as well as in all other areas of life. He therefore accommodated Himself to the crass manipulations of an Amorite diviner, though in the end God showed Himself to be the divine "Manipulator."" (BKC)

**and said, "Who are these men with you?"** - Clearly this is rhetorical for the omniscient God knew the visitors and their purpose. This question was a way to open the conversation as God did with Adam and Eve in Ge 3:9+ and with Cain in Ge 4:9.

**Numbers 22:10 Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent word to me,**

BGT Numbers 22:10 κα ε πεν Βαλααμ πρ ς τ ν θε ν Βαλακ υ ς Σεπφωρ βασιλε ς Μωαβ π στειλεν α το ς πρ ς με λ γων

NET Numbers 22:10 Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent a message to me, saying,

NLT Numbers 22:10 Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent me this message:

ESV Numbers 22:10 And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying,

NIV Numbers 22:10 Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message:

KJV Numbers 22:10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying,

YLT Numbers 22:10 And Balaam saith unto God, 'Balak, son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me:

LXE Numbers 22:10 And Balaam said to God, Balac son of Sepphor, king of Moab, sent them to me, saying,

ASV Numbers 22:10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying,

CSB Numbers 22:10 Balaam replied to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent this message to me:

NKJ Numbers 22:10 So Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying,

NRS Numbers 22:10 Balaam said to God, "King Balak son of Zippor of Moab, has sent me this message:

NAB Numbers 22:10 Balaam answered God, "Balak, son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me the message:

NJB Numbers 22:10 Balaam said to God, 'Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent me this message,

GWN Numbers 22:10 Balaam answered, "Balak, son of King Zippor of Moab, sent them with this message:

- Nu 22:4-6
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BALAAM RESPONDS TO YAHWEH'S QUESTION**

**Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent word to me-** Balaam is straightforward in his answer to God.

**Numbers 22:11 'Behold, there is a people who came out of Egypt and they cover the surface of the land; now come, curse them for me; perhaps I may be able to fight against them and drive them out.'**

BGT Numbers 22:11 δο λα ς ξελ λυθεν ξ Α γ ππου κα δο κεκ λυφεν τ ν ψιν τ ς γ ς κα ο το ς γκ θηται

χ μεν ς μου κα ν ν δε πο ρασα μοι α τ ν ε ρα δυν σομαι πατ ξαι α τ ν κα κβαλ α τ ν π τ ς γ ς

NET Numbers 22:11 "Look, a nation has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Come now and put a curse on them for me; perhaps I will be able to defeat them and drive them out."

NLT Numbers 22:11 'Look, a vast horde of people has arrived from Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come and curse these people for me. Then perhaps I will be able to stand up to them and drive them from the land.'

ESV Numbers 22:11 'Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Now come, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.'

NIV Numbers 22:11 'A people that has come out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them and drive them away.'

KJV Numbers 22:11 Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.

YLT Numbers 22:11 Lo, the people that is coming out from Egypt and covereth the eye of the land, -- now come, pierce it for me; it may be I am able to fight against it, and have cast it out;'

LXE Numbers 22:11 Behold, a people has come forth out of Egypt, and has covered the face of the land, and it has encamped near to me; and now come, curse it for me, if indeed I shall be able to smite it, and cast it out of the land.

ASV Numbers 22:11 Behold, the people that is come out of Egypt, it covereth the face of the earth: now, come curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to fight against them, and shall drive them out.

CSB Numbers 22:11 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the surface of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. I may be able to fight against them and drive them away.'

NKJ Numbers 22:11 '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.'

NRS Numbers 22:11 'A people has come out of Egypt and has spread over the face of the earth; now come, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.'

NAB Numbers 22:11 'This people that came here from Egypt now cover the face of the earth. Please come and lay a curse on them for us; we may then be able to give them battle and drive them out.'

NJB Numbers 22:11 "Look, a people coming from Egypt has overrun the whole countryside. Come now and curse them for me; I may then be able to defeat them and drive them out." '

GWN Numbers 22:11 'Some people have just come from Egypt and are spreading out all over the countryside. Now come and curse them for me. Maybe I'll be able to fight them and force them out.'

- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAAM ESSENTIALLY QUOTES BALAKS WORDS TO GOD

**Behold, there is a people who came out of Egypt and they cover the surface of the land-** Balaam quotes almost verbatim the message he received from the messengers, recalling Balak's declaration in Nu 22:5 "Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me."

**now come, curse them for me; perhaps I may be able to fight against them and drive them out-** Balaam continues his quote from Balak passed on by the messengers and recorded in Nu 22:6 = "Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land."

**Numbers 22:12 God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."**

BGT Numbers 22:12 κα ε πεν θε ς π ρ ς Βαλααμ ο πορε σ μετ α τ ν ο δ καταρ σ τ ν λαν σ τιν γ ρ ε λογημ νος

NET Numbers 22:12 But God said to Balaam, "You must not go with them; you must not curse the people, for they are blessed."

NLT Numbers 22:12 But God told Balaam, "Do not go with them. You are not to curse these people, for they have been blessed!"

ESV Numbers 22:12 God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

NIV Numbers 22:12 But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed."

KJV Numbers 22:12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.

YLT Numbers 22:12 and God saith unto Balaam, 'Thou dost not go with them; thou dost not curse the people; for it is blessed.'

LXE Numbers 22:12 And God said to Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them, neither shalt thou curse the people; for they are blessed.

ASV Numbers 22:12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed.

CSB Numbers 22:12 Then God said to Balaam, "You are not to go with them. You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed."

NKJ Numbers 22:12 And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

NRS Numbers 22:12 God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

NAB Numbers 22:12 But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them and do not curse this people, for they are blessed."

NJB Numbers 22:12 God said to Balaam, 'You are not to go with them. You are not to curse the people, for they are blessed.'

GWN Numbers 22:12 But God said to Balaam, "Don't go with them! Don't curse these people, because they are blessed."

- Thou shalt: Nu 22:20 Job 33:15-17 Mt 27:19
- thou shalt not curse: Nu 22:19 23:3,13-15,19,23 Mic 6:5
- for they: Nu 23:20 Ge 12:2 22:16-18 De 23:5 33:29 Ps 144:15 146:5 Ro 4:6,7 11:29 Eph 1:3
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S CLEAR RESPONSE

**God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."**- Note God gives in essence a three part answer to Balaam (1) do not go, (2) do not curse, (3) they are blessed. God's response is crystal clear and concise. Years before the patriarch Isaac discovered that the blessing could not be reversed once it was pronounced "Then (WHEN ESAU ANSWERED - Ge 27:32) Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and **blessed** him? **Yes, and he shall be blessed.**" (Ge 27:33)

In Genesis 12:2+ God promised Abram "I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing."

**NET Note** - The two verbs are negated imperfects; they have the nuance of prohibition: You must not go and you must not curse.

**Milgrom** - Three times in the Bible God appears to non-Israelites in order to warn them not to carry out their intentions; the other occasions are Genesis 31:24 (Laban) and Genesis 20:3 (Abimelech). (Ibid)

**Numbers 22:13 So Balaam arose in the morning and said to Balak's leaders, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."**

BGT Numbers 22:13 καὶ ἤστῃς Βαλαάμ τῆ πρωῒ ἐπεὶ τὸς ῥηουσὶν Βαλαάκ ποτὴρ χετέ πρὸς τὸν κριὸν μὴ ὀκφῆσιν μεθεὶς πορεῖσθαι μεθ' ἐμὴν

NET Numbers 22:13 So Balaam got up in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your land, for the LORD has refused to permit me to go with you."

NLT Numbers 22:13 The next morning Balaam got up and told Balak's officials, "Go on home! The LORD will not let me go with you."

ESV Numbers 22:13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

NIV Numbers 22:13 The next morning Balaam got up and said to Balak's princes, "Go back to your own country, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

KJV Numbers 22:13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you.

YLT Numbers 22:13 And Balaam riseth in the morning, and saith unto the princes of Balak, 'Go unto your land, for Jehovah is refusing to suffer me to go with you;'

LXE Numbers 22:13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said to the princes of Balac, Depart quickly to your lord; God does not permit me to go with you.

ASV Numbers 22:13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for Jehovah refuseth to give me leave to go with you.

CSB Numbers 22:13 So Balaam got up the next morning and said to Balak's officials, "Go back to your land, because the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

NKJ Numbers 22:13 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."

NRS Numbers 22:13 So Balaam rose in the morning, and said to the officials of Balak, "Go to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

NAB Numbers 22:13 The next morning Balaam arose and told the princes of Balak, "Go back to your own country, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

NJB Numbers 22:13 In the morning Balaam got up and said to the chiefs sent by Balak, 'Go back to your country, for Yahweh will not let me go with you.'

GWN Numbers 22:13 When Balaam got up in the morning, he said to Balak's princes, "Go back to your own country, because the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

- for the Lord: Nu 22:14 De 23:5
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**GO HOME WITHOUT ME!  
GOD REFUSED!**

**So Balaam arose in the morning** - This supports the premise that God appeared to him in the night, probably in a dream or vision.

**And said to Balak's leaders, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."** - Balaam complies with Yahweh's directions. So far we might be able to conclude that here's a man in touch with God, talking to God and hearing from God. Here's a man who knows that God has spoken to him, and he cannot curse what God has blessed. Or at least that's what it looks like at this juncture. As **Bell** says "He first appears as a man of integrity, who attempts a literal obedience to the will of God."

Notice that Balaam does not fully explain why he cannot go with them for he knew cursing Israel was doomed to fail!**Milgrom** has an interesting comment that "Balaam omits the full reason—that cursing Israel is an exercise in futility—not because he hoped later to change God's mind but because it would have brought the story to an end had the emissaries reported this reason to Balak." (Ibid)

**McGee** - Balaam seems to be a sincere and honest man of God. If this were the end of the story, then I would have to assume that about him, but Balak was a persistent fellow.

**Milgrom** adds that "The fact that a heathen invokes the name of Israel's God is not unprecedented (Abimelech the Philistine [ED: ALONG WITH his adviser Ahuzzath and Phicol the commander of his army - ALL THREE ACKNOWLEDGE THE NAME YAHWEH Ge 26:26] does this in Gen. 26:28 = "**They** (ALL THREE) said, "**We** see plainly that the **LORD** has been with you; so we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you,')."."

### Numbers 22:14 The leaders of Moab arose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

BGT Numbers 22:14 καὶ νᾶστ ντες ο ρχοντες Μωαβ ἄθον πρ ς Βαλακ κα ε παν ο θ λει Βαλααμ πορευθ ναι μεθ μ ν

NET Numbers 22:14 So the princes of Moab departed and went back to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

NLT Numbers 22:14 So the Moabite officials returned to King Balak and reported, "Balaam refused to come with us."

ESV Numbers 22:14 So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

NIV Numbers 22:14 So the Moabite princes returned to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

KJV Numbers 22:14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

YLT Numbers 22:14 and the princes of Moab rise, and come in unto Balak, and say, 'Balaam is refusing to come with us.'

LXE Numbers 22:14 And the princes of Moab rose, and came to Balac, and said, Balaam will not come with us.

ASV Numbers 22:14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

CSB Numbers 22:14 The officials of Moab arose, returned to Balak, and reported, "Balaam refused to come with us."

NKJ Numbers 22:14 And the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

NRS Numbers 22:14 So the officials of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

NAB Numbers 22:14 So the princes of Moab went back to Balak with the report, "Balaam refused to come with us."

NJB Numbers 22:14 So the chiefs of Moab got up, went back to Balak and said, 'Balaam refuses to come with us.'

GWN Numbers 22:14 So the Moabite princes went back to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

- Balaam refuseth: Nu 22:13,37
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## LEADERS REPORT TO BALAK

**The leaders of Moab arose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us-** They give King Balak the bad news - no prophet. Note that they omit one small detail that YAHWEH had refused to let Balaam go! The leaders remind me of our modern newscasts which are really not genuine truth and true news but are essentially the reports that they want us to hear.

## Numbers 22:15 Then Balak again sent leaders, more numerous and more distinguished than the former.

BGT Numbers 22:15 κα προσθετο Βαλακ τι ποστε λαι ρχοντας πλε ους κα ντιμοτρους το των

NET Numbers 22:15 Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more distinguished than the first.

NLT Numbers 22:15 Then Balak tried again. This time he sent a larger number of even more distinguished officials than those he had sent the first time.

ESV Numbers 22:15 Once again Balak sent princes, more in number and more honorable than these.

NIV Numbers 22:15 Then Balak sent other princes, more numerous and more distinguished than the first.

KJV Numbers 22:15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they.

YLT Numbers 22:15 And Balak addeth yet to send princes, more numerous and honoured than these,

LXE Numbers 22:15 And Balac yet again sent more princes and more honourable than they.

ASV Numbers 22:15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honorable than they.

CSB Numbers 22:15 Balak sent officials again who were more numerous and higher in rank than the others.

NKJ Numbers 22:15 Then Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more honorable than they.

NRS Numbers 22:15 Once again Balak sent officials, more numerous and more distinguished than these.

NAB Numbers 22:15 Balak again sent princes, who were more numerous and more distinguished than the others.

NJB Numbers 22:15 And again Balak sent chiefs, more numerous and more renowned than the first.

GWN Numbers 22:15 Balak sent a larger group of more highly respected princes.

- **leaders:** Nu 22:7,8 Ac 10:7,8
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### IF YOU DON'T SUCCEED TRY AGAIN

**Then Balak again sent leaders, more numerous and more distinguished ([kabad](#) - "heavy") than the former -** Undaunted, **Balak "ups the ante"** sending bigger, more illustrious entourage. In short, he calls in the "heavyweights," the "big dogs!" Surely this would entice Balaam to reconsider his offer.

**THOUGHT** - Can we not see an application unfolding here? How often we have been strongly tempted to disobey God and we strongly refused the initial bombardment. But temptation does give up but often comes back even stronger and more attractive.

**Brian Bell** adds - Wow, I'm really important. They really need my gift. Isn't this exactly what Satan does once we have made a definite decision to obey God's Word? Our battle today is not against flesh & blood but against spiritual wickedness, & we will win the victory only if we use spiritual weapons!

## Numbers 22:16 They came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor, 'Let nothing, I beg you, hinder you from coming to me;

BGT Numbers 22:16 κα λθον πρ ς Βαλααμ κα λ γουσιν ατ τ δε λ γει Βαλακ το Σεπφωρ ξι σε μ κν σ ς λθε ν πρ ς με

NET Numbers 22:16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak son of Zippor: 'Please do not let anything hinder you from coming to me.

NLT Numbers 22:16 They went to Balaam and delivered this message to him: "This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Please don't let anything stop you from coming to help me.

ESV Numbers 22:16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Let

nothing hinder you from coming to me,

NIV Numbers 22:16 They came to Balaam and said: "This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Do not let anything keep you from coming to me,

KJV Numbers 22:16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:

YLT Numbers 22:16 and they come in unto Balaam, and say to him, 'Thus said Balak son of Zippor, Be not, I pray thee, withheld from coming unto me,

LXE Numbers 22:16 And they came to Balaam, and they say to him, Thus says Balac the son of Sepphor: I beseech thee, delay not to come to me.

ASV Numbers 22:16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:

CSB Numbers 22:16 They came to Balaam and said to him, "This is what Balak son of Zippor says: 'Let nothing keep you from coming to me,

NKJ Numbers 22:16 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;

NRS Numbers 22:16 They came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak son of Zippor: 'Do not let anything hinder you from coming to me;

NAB Numbers 22:16 On coming to Balaam they told him, "This is what Balak, son of Zippor, has to say: Please do not refuse to come to me.

NJB Numbers 22:16 They came to Balaam and said, 'A message from Balak son of Zippor, "Now do not refuse to come to me.

GWN Numbers 22:16 When they came to Balaam, they said to him, "This is what Balak, son of Zippor, says: Don't let anything keep you from coming to me.

- **Let nothing, I beg you.** Nu 22:16
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BALAK COUNTERMANDS GOD'S COMMANDS**

[Countermand](#) means to cancel or reverse a previously issued command.

**They came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I beg you, hinder you from coming to me - NLT = "says: Please don't let anything stop you from coming." In other words, do not let the clear directions/commands of Yahweh prevent you from coming! This is direct defiance of divine directives! Yahweh had clearly directed Balaam not to go. Balak says come and (in essence) don't let the words of your God prevent you.**

**Numbers 22:17 for I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Please come then, curse this people for me."**

BGT Numbers 22:17 ντ μως γ ρ τιμ σω σε κα σα ν ε π ς ποι σω σοι κα δε ρο πικατ ρασα μοι τ ν λα ν το του

NET Numbers 22:17 For I will honor you greatly, and whatever you tell me I will do. So come, put a curse on this nation for me."

NLT Numbers 22:17 I will pay you very well and do whatever you tell me. Just come and curse these people for me!"

ESV Numbers 22:17 for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do. Come, curse this people for me."

NIV Numbers 22:17 because I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say. Come and put a curse



on these people for me."

KJV Numbers 22:17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.

YLT Numbers 22:17 for very greatly I honour thee, and all that thou sayest unto me I do; and come, I pray thee, pierce for me this people.'

LXE Numbers 22:17 For I will greatly honour thee, and will do for thee whatsoever thou shalt say; come then, curse me this people.

ASV Numbers 22:17 for I will promote thee unto very great honor, and whatsoever thou sayest unto me I will do: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.

CSB Numbers 22:17 for I will greatly honor you and do whatever you ask me. So please come and put a curse on these people for me! ""

NKJ Numbers 22:17 `for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore please come, curse this people for me."

NRS Numbers 22:17 for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do; come, curse this people for me."

NAB Numbers 22:17 I will reward you very handsomely and will do anything you ask of me. Please come and lay a curse on this people for me."

NJB Numbers 22:17 I will load you with honours and do whatever you say. I beg you come and curse this people for me." '

GWN Numbers 22:17 I will make sure you are richly rewarded, and I will do whatever you ask. Please, come and curse these people for me."

- I will promote: Nu 24:11 De 16:9 Es 5:11 7:9 Mt 4:8,9 16:26
- and I will do: Nu 23:2,3,29,30 Mt 14:7
- come: Nu 22:6
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BALAK ATTEMPTS TO ENTICE BALAAM**

**for** - Term of explanation. Balak explains why Balaam should let nothing (and no One) stand in his way!

**I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you say to me**- "Literally, "I will honor you greatly," a euphemism for monetary rewards, as the next verse makes explicit." (Milgrom) Balak promises a lucrative honorarium. This is a very enticing offer, riches received and wishes granted. Balaam's resolve begins to weaken. Peter uses Balaam as an example of false teachers writing

(FALSE TEACHERS) "having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, **having a heart trained in greed**, accursed children; 15 forsaking the right way (GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION - Jn 14:6 "THE WAY"), they have gone astray, having followed **the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness (SIN)** (ESV = "He loved the gain of wrong doing") (2Pe 2:14-15+)

**Comment** - Notice the critical statement regarding Balaam **'who loved the wages of unrighteousness (sin)'** which recalls Jesus' poignant warning "(ABSOLUTELY) No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other (BALAAM LOVED MONEY), or he will be devoted to one (BALAAM WAS DEVOTED TO MONEY) and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Mt 6:24+) Balaam loved wealth not God. John writes "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 Jn 2:15+) Balaam loved what the world had to offer, not what God had to offer.

**Please come then, curse this people for me** - After "[sweetening the deal](#)," Balak repeats his request for Balaam to curse Israel (Nu 22:6).

**Treasury of Scripture Knowledge** note on "curse for me" - An erroneous opinion prevailed, both in those days and in after ages, that some men had the power, by the help of their gods, to devote, not only particular persons, but cities and whole armies, to destruction. This they are said to have done sometimes by words of imprecation; of which there was a set form among some

people, which [Aschines](#) calls [diorizomenen [aran](#)] "the determinate curse." Macrobius has a whole chapter on this subject. He gives us two of the ancient forms used in reference to the destruction of Carthage; the first, which was only pronounced by the dictator, or general, was to call over the protecting deities to their side, and the other to devote the city to destruction, which they were supposed to have abandoned. The Romans held, that no city would be taken till its tutelary god had forsaken it; or if it could be taken, it would be unlawful, as it would be sacrilege to lead the gods into captivity. Virgil intimates, that Troy was destroyed because {Excessere omnes adytis, arisque relictis dii, quibus imperium hoc steterat,} "All the gods, by whose assistance the empire had hitherto been preserved, forsook their altars and temples." See more on this subject in Dr. Adam Clarke, Bishop. Patrick, and Burder's Oriental Customs, No. 734.

**Numbers 22:18 Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God.**

BGT Numbers 22:18 καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἐπελάλησεν τοῖς ἄγγελοις Βαλαὰμ ὅτι ἂν ἔδοξεν ἡ Βαλαὰμ πληροῦν τὸ οἶκόν μου ἀργύρου καὶ χρυσοῦ ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἔβουλεν παραβῆναι τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ θεοῦ ποιῆσαι ἅτις μικρὰ ἢ μεγάλα ἔστιν ἡ ἐπιτομή μου

NET Numbers 22:18 Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, "Even if Balak would give me his palace full of silver and gold, I could not transgress the commandment of the LORD my God to do less or more.

NLT Numbers 22:18 But Balaam responded to Balak's messengers, "Even if Balak were to give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I would be powerless to do anything against the will of the LORD my God.

ESV Numbers 22:18 But 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 command of the LORD my God to do less or more.

NIV Numbers 22:18 But Balaam answered them, "Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the LORD my God.

KJV Numbers 22:18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.

YLT Numbers 22:18 And Balaam answereth and saith unto the servants of Balak, 'If Balak doth give to me the fulness of his house of silver and gold, I am not able to pass over the command of Jehovah my God, to do a little or a great thing;

LXE Numbers 22:18 And Balaam answered and said to the princes of Balac, If Balac would give me his house full of silver and gold, I shall not be able to go beyond the word of the Lord God, to make it little or great in my mind.

ASV Numbers 22:18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God, to do less or more.

CSB Numbers 22:18 But Balaam responded to the servants of Balak, "If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the command of the LORD my God to do anything small or great.

NKJ Numbers 22:18 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.

NRS Numbers 22:18 But Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, "Although Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the LORD my God, to do less or more.

NAB Numbers 22:18 But Balaam replied to Balak's officials, "Even if Balak gave me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD, my God.

NJB Numbers 22:18 In reply, Balaam said to Balak's envoys, 'Even if Balak gave me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the order of Yahweh my God in anything, great or small.

GWN Numbers 22:18 But Balaam answered Balak's servants, "Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I couldn't disobey the command of the LORD my God no matter whether the request was important or not.

- **Balak:** Nu 24:13 Tit 1:16
- **I could not:** Nu 23:26 Nu 24:13 1Ki 22:14 2Ch 18:13 Da 5:17 Ac 8:20
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

Numbers 23:26 ) But Balaam replied to Balak, "Did I not tell you, 'Whatever the LORD speaks, that I must do'?"

Numbers 24:13 'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the LORD speaks, that I will speak'?

## BALAAM RESPONDS THAT HE MUST OBEY GOD

**Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold-** Ostensibly (but not in reality as subsequent passages show) Balaam's declaration was that he would not and could not be bribed or bought off. This is a striking declaration and it suggests although tempted, he was holding fast to his original refusal. Alternatively he simply may have cloaked his heart's greed for gain with pious platitudes, and as the story plays out it would support this interpretation. **Bell** says "Deep in his heart Balaam wanted to go with the messengers because he was greedy of gain. Using religion as a means of getting wealth! Wow, no one's thought of doing that!"

At this point **Balaam** sounds a somewhat like the true prophet **Micaiah** (who) said, "As the LORD lives, **what the LORD says to me, that I shall speak.**" (1Ki 22:14, cf 2Chr 18:13) But Balaam's subsequent works or actions would prove his words here were disingenuous and that he was a "for profit prophet."

**I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God-** literally "I could not pass by the mouth of the LORD my God." This is "a moral impossibility (cf. Nu 22:38; 23:12, 26; 24:13)." (Milgrom) NLT paraphrases it "against the will of the LORD my God." The implication here is that Balaam was dedicated to being obedient to Yahweh Who he calls "my God. The phrase **contrary to the command** means to disobey. **Either small or great** is another way of saying anything (cf 1 Sa. 20:2). The word **contrary** is [abar](#) which literally means he could not transgress, pass over or step across the boundary established by Yahweh's command. For example, we see [abar](#) used in Joshua 7:11 "Israel has sinned, and they have also **transgressed** ([abar](#)) My covenant which I commanded them."

**McGee** - Well, they had upped the price but that does not seem to affect this man Balaam. He turns it down. He sounds very pious here. I feel like saying **Amen**. Then I have a second thought. He's too good to be true. Just why did he speak of **a house filled with silver and gold**? He said it because that is what he is thinking about. He is covetous, and his mind is turned in that direction.

It is notable that the phrase **the LORD my God** is found here for the first time in the Bible. There are 20 uses total (see below) and the list of names associated with the use of this phrase is sparkling (with exception of Solomon who sinned against God in his advanced age - 1 King 11:1-13 - WATCH OUT OLDER MEN! YOU ARE STILL VERY VULNERABLE TO THE ATTACKS OF THE FALLEN FLESH!). Note especially that this is the same phrase used by Yahweh's servant **Moses** (Dt 4:5, Josh 14:9) and by Yahweh's servant **Caleb** (Nu 14:24+) who declared "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed **the LORD my God** fully." (Joshua 14:8) In short, at this juncture, **Balaam** seemed to have a healthy reverential fear of the LORD and appears averse to compromising his calling.

**Milgrom** suggests "This affirmation perhaps underscores the reason Moab sought Balaam even though he lived so far away (see the Comment to v. 5). Since he professed allegiance to and intimacy with Israel's God he would have had a better chance of convincing Him to curse His people Israel." (Numbers - JPS)

**THE LORD MY GOD** - 20x in 20v - Nu 22:18; Dt. 4:5; Dt. 18:16; Dt. 26:3; Dt. 26:14; Jos. 14:8; Jos. 14:9; 2 Sam. 24:24 = DAVID; 1 Ki. 5:4, 5 = SOLOMON; 1 Chr. 22:7 = DAVID; 2 Chr. 2:4 = SOLOMON; Ezra. 7:28 = EZRA; Ezr. 9:5 = EZRA; Ps. 18:28 = DAVID; Jer. 31:18 = JEREMIAH; Dan. 9:4, 20 = DANIEL; Zech. 11:4 = ZECHARIAH; Zech. 14:5+ = REFERENCE TO HIS SECOND COMING

**Numbers 22:19 "Now please, you also stay here tonight, and I will find out what else the LORD will speak to me."**

BGT Numbers 22:19 κα ν ν πομε νατε α το κα με ς τ ν ν κτα τα την κα γν σομαι τ προσθ σει κ ριος λαλσαι πρ ς με

NET Numbers 22:19 Now therefore, please stay the night here also, that I may know what more the LORD might say to me."

NLT Numbers 22:19 But stay here one more night, and I will see if the LORD has anything else to say to me."

ESV Numbers 22:19 So you, too, please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me."

NIV Numbers 22:19 Now stay here tonight as the others did, and I will find out what else the LORD will tell me."

KJV Numbers 22:19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more.

YLT Numbers 22:19 and, now, abide, I pray you, in this place, you also, to-night; and I know what Jehovah is adding to speak with me.'

LXE Numbers 22:19 And now do ye also tarry here this night, and I shall know what the Lord will yet say to me.

ASV Numbers 22:19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what Jehovah will speak unto me more.

CSB Numbers 22:19 Please stay here overnight as the others did, so that I may find out what else the LORD has to tell me."

NKJ Numbers 22:19 "Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me."

NRS Numbers 22:19 You remain here, as the others did, so that I may learn what more the LORD may say to me."

NAB Numbers 22:19 But, you too shall stay here overnight, till I learn what else the LORD may tell me."

NJB Numbers 22:19 Now please stay the night here yourselves, and I will learn what else Yahweh has to tell me.'

GWN Numbers 22:19 Now, why don't you stay here tonight, as the others did, and I'll find out what else the LORD may have to tell me."

- Nu 22:7,8 1Ti 6:9,10 2Pe 2:3,15 Jude 1:11
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BALAAM BEGINS TO SLIP LOOKING FOR LOOPHOLES**

**Now please, you also stay here tonight** - This was a mistake, an egregious, arrogant blunder for he already knew God's will! Have you ever done this when you knew God's clear will for your life, but chaffed at it? Balaam should have told them to leave immediately. But he was clearly looking for a "divine loophole!" There are no loopholes in God's commands. He means what He says! He reminds me of the famous comedian W C Field who was visited by a friend shortly before his death and, to his shock, found his ailing crony sitting in the garden reading the Bible. When he queried Fields, the soon to pass on comedian quipped **"I'm looking for loopholes!"** He soon found out there were no loopholes, and that Jesus' words described only two possible paths -- **"Enter** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) through the narrow gate; for **the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction**, and there are many who enter through it. 14 (term of explanation) "For the gate is small and the way is narrow (Jn 14:6, Ps 1:6+) that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Mt 7:13-14+)

**THOUGHT** - I am also reminded of the enticing temptations of immorality and Paul's crystal clear instruction to **"Flee** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.." (1 Cor 6:18-20+) (cf **"Flee** [also [present imperative](#)] from youthful lusts" - 2 Ti 2:22+).

Balaam would have been wise to follow Daniel's pattern when offered gifts

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him (Da 5:17+)

**And I will find out what else the LORD will speak to me-** Now we begin to see Balaam "slipping," looking for a divine **'loophole'** that might allow him to go with the emissaries. He did not need to find out because God had already clearly spoken and He did not stutter!

**THOUGHT** - When you are studying the Bible, if you see a passage and know God is speaking to you personally (e.g., some circumstance in your life, some temptation that is luring you away from the way of righteousness, etc), your **immediate** (EMPHASIZE "IMMEDIATE") response should be to obey without hesitating or questioning! When we begin to go to God and say "**But God...**" and look for **'loopholes'** giving Him some lame excuse when His initial instructions or commands were crystal clear, **THEN** we have just entered the slippery slope, one which God may just let us slide down in order to discipline us so that we learn to trust and obey (Heb 12:11+, Heb 12:5-10+)!

**Brian Bell** on directive versus permissive will - The problem here is, of course, that Balaam's 2nd appeal was in essence a request for God to change His mind! Balaam knew God's directive will. He simply did not want to obey it. You and I are often in Balaam's situation. We know what God wants. But we want something else so badly that we keep going back to the Lord, asking Him to change His mind. Later, when things go wrong, we're likely to say as Balaam did after being warned by the donkey, "I did not know"(34). But this is the worst kind of lie - a lie we tell ourselves. Down deep we knew all along what God really wanted us to do!. Let's learn from Balaam not to deceive ourselves, and to choose God's directive will, rather than settle merely for permission.

**McGee** - Oh, oh, what is happening here, friends? Well, it's quite obvious. He already has an answer from God. He has no need to wait another night for a further answer from God. God had already told him not to go, but you see, this man is hoping that the Lord will open a little crack in the door so he can put his foot into it; and if he can get his foot into it, then he is going to go. This is all very interesting. Do we sometimes do this same thing? We who are preachers make a great deal about a call from God. I heard the story of a preacher who came home and told his wife one day, "Honey, I just had a call to the church over in the next town. Now you know it's a bigger town, richer town, bigger church, more members, and fine folk over there. I've been called to go over there as pastor and I'm going upstairs to pray about it and find out what the Lord's will is for us." She answered, "I'll go upstairs to pray with you." "Oh no," he said, "you stay down here and pack!" He had made up his mind, as you can see. Old Balaam had made up his mind also. Now notice what happens. God does not do this for Balaam only; He does it for you and for me. It is not good, friends, but God permits us to do what we want to do.(Thru the Bible)

It is not good, friends, but God permits us to do what we want to do.

-- McGee

**Milgrom** comments on **what else** - Perhaps the Lord will change His mind. Such indeed is the unspoken premise behind all forms of divination. The same ritual procedures are repeated until a favorable omen is received. Repeated omen taking is best attested among the ancient Greeks. Xenophon, for example, sacrifices three times on each of two or three consecutive days, based on this hope: "It may be that the victims will turn out favorable to us." Also the Hittite "Ritual against Impotence" is performed for three consecutive days, three times daily,48 probably for the same reason (see Excursus 59). There exists a pre-Islamic Arabian tale of a female soothsayer who enabled her client to avoid fulfilling his vow to sacrifice his son by continuing to throw the arrow-oracle before the god until the god pointed (via the arrows) at a surrogate (ten camels) instead of at the son. So Balaam will have the king repeat the same sacrificial ritual, albeit in different places, in order to effect the desired result. Even in dream interpretation, a single dream is not decisive, as in the case of Pharaoh in Genesis 41:5. Similarly, in Mesopotamia, Gilgamesh and Gudea must dream the same dream twice. Thus Balaam can sincerely hope that in his second dream he will learn that the Lord has changed His mind. This basically pagan view is reflected in the midrash that Balaam was privy to the split second when God waxes angry against Israel each day. The difference between Balaam and Israel's prophets contrasts sharply on this matter. Both hope that God will change His mind. But the prophets assume His constancy even while attempting to change His mind, whereas Balaam assumes that God is fickle, and he attempts to exploit that by divination. This premise will be categorically denied in this story. The universe is neither mechanical nor predictable; God's will is neither capricious nor determinable. (Ibid)

**Numbers 22:20 God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you shall you do."**

BGT Numbers 22:20 κα λθεν θε ς πρ ς Βαλααμ νυκτ ς κα ε πεν α τ ε καλ σαι σε π ρεισιν ο νθρωποι ο τοι ναστ ς κολο θησον α το ς λ λ τ μα ν λαλ σω πρ ς σ το το ποι σεις

NET Numbers 22:20 God came to Balaam that night, and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, get up and go with them; but the word that I will say to you, that you must do."

NLT Numbers 22:20 That night God came to Balaam and told him, "Since these men have come for you, get up and go with them. But do only what I tell you to do."

ESV Numbers 22:20 And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you."

NIV Numbers 22:20 That night God came to Balaam and said, "Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."

KJV Numbers 22:20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.

YLT Numbers 22:20 And God cometh in unto Balaam, by night, and saith to him, 'If to call for thee the men have come, rise, go with them, and only the thing which I speak unto thee -- it thou dost do.'

LXE Numbers 22:20 And God came to Balaam by night, and said to him, If these men are come to call thee, rise and follow them; nevertheless the word which I shall speak to thee, it shalt thou do.

ASV Numbers 22:20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men are come to call thee, rise up, go with them; but only the word which I speak unto thee, that shalt thou do.

CSB Numbers 22:20 God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "Since these men have come to summon you, get up and go with them, but you must only do what I tell you."

NKJ Numbers 22:20 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."

NRS Numbers 22:20 That night God came to Balaam and said to him, "If the men have come to summon you, get up and go with them; but do only what I tell you to do."

NAB Numbers 22:20 That night God came to Balaam and said to him, "If these men have come to summon you, you may go with them; yet only on the condition that you do exactly as I tell you."

NJB Numbers 22:20 God came to Balaam during the night and said to him, 'Have not these men come to summon you? Get up, go with them, but do only what I tell you to do.'

GWN Numbers 22:20 That night God came to Balaam and said, "If these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."

- **God:** Nu 22:9
- **If the men:** 1Sa 8:5-9 12:12-19 Ps 81:12 Eze 14:2-5 2Th 2:9-12
- **but:** Nu 22:35 23:12,26 24:13 Ps 33:10,11 78:30,31 Isa 37:29 Ho 13:11
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GOD CONDESCENDS TO DESCEND!**

**God came to Balaam at night** - The phrase **at night** raises the possibility or probability that God came this time in a dream or vision.

**Milgrom** comments on **at night** - That is, in a dream (see the Comment to v. 8). The same language is used for divine manifestations to non-Israelites, as in the case of Abimelech in Genesis 20:3 and of Laban in Genesis 31:24. It is never used with Israel's prophets, an indication that Balaam is the recipient of an inferior theophany. Strikingly, the identical language is used of Balaam's vision in the Deir 'Alla inscription: "the gods came to him at night"

**UBS Handbook** - at night was the normal time for dreams and visions in the Old Testament.

**And said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up and go with them** - As explained below, this is a manifestation of God's permissive will, not His perfect will (which He had already clearly stated). For example, God's permissive will allowed Satan limited authority over Job (Job 1:12; 2:6). NLT = "Since these men have come for you, get up and go with them" This seems to suggest God is giving in to Balaam's persistence in prayer, for in Nu 22:12 God clearly said "Do not go with them."

**Merrill** - This time the LORD granted Balaam permission, not to curse His people but to go to Moab so that He might reveal Himself gloriously through Balaam.

**Brian Bell** - God allowed Balaam to go, but He did not carry divine approval with him. Sometimes God punishes us by allowing us to have our own way! So, permission granted, but a limit was set on his speech. An abiding principle - Man is compelled to work out what is deepest w/in him, while all the way God works toward changing that internal condition. (grace)

**J Vernon McGee** - In other words, God is saying, "All right, you want to go and before it is through you will go, but if you go, you are to say what I want you to say. Be careful of that." We have here what is known as the **permissive will of God**. He permits us many times to do something that we insist on doing when it is not in His direct will. You remember how we learned from the children of Israel that God granted their request but sent leanness to their souls. Sometimes He also grants our requests and sends leanness to our souls. Balaam had God's direct answer, but he didn't like that. God permits him to go. Now God sends His angel, but this prophet doesn't have the mind of God at all. We can see that he has no spiritual discernment, not even the discernment of this dumb animal. (Thru the Bible)

**Gotquestions** on **permissive will** - The sovereign or **decretive** will of God (**ED: MOST CALL IT DIRECTIVE**) can be divided into His **efficacious will** and His **permissive will**. We must do this because God does not directly "cause" everything to happen. Some of His decrees are efficacious (that is, they directly contribute to the fulfillment of God's desire); others of His decrees are permissive (that is, they allow for an indirect fulfillment of God's desire). Because God is sovereign, He must at least "permit" all events and happenings. Within God's sovereign will, He chooses to permit many things to happen that He takes no pleasure in. Again citing the example of Joseph and his brothers, God chose, by an act of decretive will, to allow the kidnapping and enslavement of Joseph. **God's permissive will** allowed the sins of Joseph's brothers in order to bring about a greater good (see Genesis 50:20). At every mistreatment of Joseph, God had the power to intervene, but He "permitted" the evil and, in that limited sense, He sovereignly "willed" it to happen.

**Holman Bible Dictionary** - Sovereignty and Freedom Divine sovereignty does not mean that everything which occurs in the world is God's will. God has created a world in which freedom is a real possibility. **His permissive will** provides for human freedom and the laws of nature.

**Jack Arnold - The Permissive Will of God** - The permissive will of God is a theological way of explaining how nothing can happen outside of God's secret will, and yet God is not responsible for sin. **Human sin falls under the permissive will of God**. It is related to those responsible actions of men which God passively allows, and yet He still has control over them. The permissive will of God deals with the negative aspects of God's secret will. (See Jack Arnold's excellent summary - [Acts 21:1-14 The Will of God](#))

Here is an example of God's **permissive will** - Psalm 106:13-15KJV± - "They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And **he gave them their request** (PERMISSIVE WILL); but sent leanness into their soul."

**Spurgeon comments on Ps 106:14** - Though **they would not wait God's will, they are hot to have their own**. (SOUNDS LIKE BALAAM - HIS "WILL" WAS FOR "WEALTH") When the most suitable and pleasant food was found them in abundance, it did not please them long, but they grew dainty and sniffed at angel's food, and must needs have flesh to eat, which was unhealthy diet for that warm climate, and for their easy life. This desire of theirs they dwelt upon till it became a mania with them, and, like a wild horse, carried away its rider. For a meal of meat they were ready to curse their God and renounce the land which floweth with milk and honey. What a wonder that the Lord did not take them at their word! It is plain that they vexed him greatly (**AS DID BALAAM AS SEEN IN Nu 22:22**),

**Milgrom** asks "Why indeed did God change His mind and allow Balaam to go? A realistic answer might be that without the change we would have neither the tale nor the oracle." The rabbis, however, see in this tale the source of the doctrine of human responsibility and free will: "From this you learn that a man is led in the way he desires to go"; "If one comes to defile himself, he is given an opening," that is, he is given the opportunity.<sup>53</sup> (Ibid)

**But only the word which I speak to you shall you do**- God had also said "you shall not curse them." Note **word** and **do** indicating that both the words and deeds are to be under YAHWEH'S complete control

**Numbers 22:21 So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey and went with the leaders of Moab.**

NET Numbers 22:21 So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

NLT Numbers 22:21 So the next morning Balaam got up, saddled his donkey, and started off with the Moabite officials.

ESV Numbers 22:21 So Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab.

NIV Numbers 22:21 Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab.

KJV Numbers 22:21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

YLT Numbers 22:21 And Balaam riseth in the morning, and saddleth his ass, and goeth with the princes of Moab,

LXE Numbers 22:21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

ASV Numbers 22:21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

CSB Numbers 22:21 When he got up in the morning, Balaam saddled his donkey and went with the officials of Moab.

NKJ Numbers 22:21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

NRS Numbers 22:21 So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the officials of Moab.

NAB Numbers 22:21 So the next morning when Balaam arose, he saddled his ass, and went off with the princes of Moab.

NJB Numbers 22:21 Balaam got up and saddled his donkey and set out with the chiefs of Moab.

GWN Numbers 22:21 When Balaam got up in the morning, he saddled his donkey and left with the Moabite princes.

- Pr 1:15,16
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Nu 22:12 God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

### OFF HE GOES TO DISASTER

**So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey and went with the leaders of Moab-** If he had listened to God's initial words, he would have been safe, but clearly he was being attracted by Balak's offer.

**UBS Handbook** - A saddle donkey is usually a large strong female donkey since the males are too difficult to control when they are near a female in heat

**William MacDonald** - Balaam's reason for going is clearly pointed out in 2 Peter 2:15, 16+. He was motivated by his love of "the wages of unrighteousness." He is typical of the "hireling prophet" who prostitutes his God-given ability for money. (BBC)

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#### God, Donkeys, And Us

If God is for us, who can be against us? — Romans 8:31

Today's Scripture: Numbers 22:21-35

Pastor Gumercindo rides a donkey as he travels from village to village in Brazil and preaches the gospel. According to author Don Hare, the traveling evangelist fell asleep in the saddle on his return home after a tiring day. A couple of hours later he was rudely



awakened by the roughness of the ride. His donkey had left the trail and was walking through a rocky field. At first the pastor was angry, but he calmed down when he saw that they were almost back to his village.

When he arrived at his church, he learned that friends had gathered to pray for his safety. A rancher who hated the gospel had sent some men to attack him at a bend in the trail. They thanked God for causing the donkey to take a shortcut home.

Centuries ago, God used another donkey. This one miraculously spoke and saved the life of Balaam, a disobedient, money-hungry prophet (Num. 22:21-35). God got his attention, and Balaam took the Lord's message to Moab.

God cares for us and He will carry out His good plans for us, even if He has to use animals and rebellious people to do so. How has God spoken to you or cared for you through unusual circumstances? What reasons do you have to praise Him for His protection and leading? By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My times are in my Father's hand;  
How could I wish or ask for more?  
For He who has my pathway planned  
Will guide me till my journey's o'er. |  
—Fraser

Because God is with us, we need not fear what is ahead of us.

**Numbers 22:22 But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.**

BGT Numbers 22:22 κα ργ σθη θυμ θε ς τι πορε θη α τ ς κα ν στη γγελο ς το θεο νδιαβ λλειν α τ ν  
κα α τ ς πιβεβ κει π τ ς νου α το κα δ ο πα δε ς α το μετ α το

NET Numbers 22:22 Then God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.

NLT Numbers 22:22 But God was angry that Balaam was going, so he sent the angel of the LORD to stand in the road to block his way. As Balaam and two servants were riding along,

ESV Numbers 22:22 But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him.

NIV Numbers 22:22 But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

KJV Numbers 22:22 And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.

YLT Numbers 22:22 and the anger of God burneth because he is going, and a messenger of Jehovah stationeth himself in the way for an adversary to him, and he is riding on his ass, and two of his servants are with him,

LXE Numbers 22:22 And God was very angry because he went; and the angel of the Lord rose up to withstand him. Now he had mounted his ass, and his two servants were with him.

ASV Numbers 22:22 And God's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of Jehovah placed himself in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.

CSB Numbers 22:22 But God was incensed that Balaam was going, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand on the path to oppose him. Balaam was riding his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

NKJ Numbers 22:22 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.

NRS Numbers 22:22 God's anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the road as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him.

NAB Numbers 22:22 But now the anger of God flared up at him for going, and the angel of the LORD

stationed himself on the road to hinder him as he was riding along on his ass, accompanied by two of his servants.

NJB Numbers 22:22 His going kindled Yahweh's anger, and the angel of Yahweh took his stand on the road to bar his way. Balaam was riding his donkey and his two servants were with him.

GWN Numbers 22:22 God became angry that he was going. So the Messenger of the LORD stood in the road to stop him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, accompanied by his two servants.

- **God:** 2Ki 10:20 Ho 1:4
- [Angel of the LORD](#) Nu 22:35 Ge 48:15,16 Ex 3:2-6 Ho 12:4,5
- **stand:** Nu 22:32 Ex 4:24 La 2:4
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 3:2-6 The [Angel of the LORD](#) appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. 3 So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." 4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Angel of Yahweh in the Way!

## THE IRONICAL SATIRICAL STORY OF THE BLIND SEER!

**But God** - The term of contrast **BUT** usually figuratively depicts a change of direction but here it depicts a literal change of direction for Balaam!

**But God** - 41x in 41v - Gen. 8:1; Gen. 17:19; Gen. 20:3; Gen. 21:12; Gen. 45:8; Gen. 48:21; Gen. 50:20; Gen. 50:24; Exod. 21:13; Num. 22:22; Jdg. 15:19; 1 Sam. 23:14; 1 Chr. 28:3; Job 34:5; Ps. 49:15; Ps. 52:5; Ps. 64:7; Ps. 73:26; Ps. 75:7; Jon. 4:7; Mk. 2:7; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 12:20; Lk. 16:15; Acts 2:24; Acts 7:6; Acts 7:42; Acts 13:30; Rom. 5:8; 1 Co. 1:27; 1 Co. 3:6; 1 Co. 3:7; 1 Co. 6:13; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 12:24; 1 Co. 15:38; 2 Co. 7:6; Gal. 3:18; Eph. 2:4; Phil. 2:27; 1 Thess. 2:4

**Was angry because he was going** - The anger of Jehovah was stirred up because of the disobedience of Balaam. Hebrew [aph](#) and Lxx [orgizo](#) which means to become (very) angry.

**THOUGHT** - I know speaking for myself, I tend to forget that sin invokes God's wrath and makes Him angry. This is a truth if we kept at the front of our mind's eye, we would likely be less likely to miss God's mark (aka "sin"). This truth couple with continued dependence on God's Spirit can fortify us to fight when the temptations come and to **"abstain** (present tense - only possible as Spirit enables! Note [middle voice](#) indicating we initiate [as Spirit gives us desire - Php 2:13NLT+] and participate in this act! E.g. we might also **"Flee"** as in 1 Cor 6:18+) from fleshly lusts ([epithumia](#) - strong desires to rebel against the word and will of God) which wage war ([strateuomai](#) in present tense = continually carry on a "military campaign" - not just one battle but continual battles!) against our soul (not just our mind but the very essence of our being!)." (1 Peter 2:11+).

**Anger** (nose, nostril, wrath) ([0639](#)) [aph](#) from **anaph** = to breathe hard, to be angry) is a masculine noun meaning nose, nostril, snout (pigs - Pr 11:22), face (2Sa 25:23) and anger. Both senses are found in Proverbs 30:22 - "For the churning of milk produces butter, and pressing the **nose** (aph) brings forth blood; so the churning of **anger** (aph) produces strife." Uses in Numbers Num. 11:1; Num. 11:10; Num. 11:20; Num. 11:33; Num. 12:9; Num. 14:18; Num. 22:22; Num. 22:27; Num. 22:31; Num. 24:10; Num. 25:3; Num. 25:4; Num. 32:10; Num. 32:13; Num. 32:14

**Pfeiffer** - The use of a participle in the Hebrew suggests the translation, "God's anger was kindled as he was going." Though God had granted Balaam's wish that he might go, His anger arose because the prophet's heart was swayed by his love of "the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet 2:15). (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

**Merrill** - The Lord had already given Balaam permission to go (Nu 22:20) so this resistance was not against his going but against his unspoken motive or intention (he "loved the wages of wickedness," 2 Peter 2:15), which was obviously contrary to God's will (cf. Num. 22:32b, 34–35). (BKC)

**And the [Angel of the LORD](#) took his stand in the way as an adversary against him** - This is not a created angel (who would have been powerful enough to do this if God so choose), but is the [Angel of the LORD](#), a pre-incarnate Christophany. This is the Lord Jesus Christ (before His incarnation) impeding Balaam's progress forward. Not only was He **in the way**, but was specifically called **an adversary against him**. God stood as an "adversary" because no curse could undo the covenants and agreements already made with Israel. The Septuagint uses the verb *endiaballo* which means to stand in the way as an adversary, to divert from a purpose.

**Milgrom** - Later the term **satan** is personified as Satan (see 1 Chron. 21:1). Here it is used attributively, as in 1 Samuel 29:4.

**Adversary** (07854)(**satan**) means adversary, opponent, accuser. Most uses refer to Satan the adversary of God and thus related to relate to "the cosmic struggle in the unseen world between God and the opposing forces of darkness." In 1 Chronicles 21:1 "Then **Satan (satan)** stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel."

**Gibran** on **satan** - In the narrative portions of the OT, *sātān* generally refers to a person's adversary in military and political realms (1 Sam. 29:4; 1 Ki. 5:4; 11:14, 23, 25). For example, 1 Ki. 11:14 says, "The Lord stirred an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom." In Psalms, *sātān* takes on the legal sense of verbal accusation by adversaries (Ps. 109:6). Even the angel of the Lord was described as a *sātān* when he opposed Balaam (Num. 22:22, 32).

Throughout history, Satan has been mankind's most noted opponent, called "that old serpent" (Rev. 12:9; cf. Gen. 3:1), in reference to Eve's deception in the Garden. Some of the evil one's other biblical identifications include "son of the morning" (Isa. 14:12), "covering cherub" (Ezek. 28:16), "Satan" (Zech. 3:1; Rom. 16:20), "prince of this world" (John 12:31), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2).

The Bible records the progressive failure and ultimate doom of Satan and his demonic plans. God created the one now known as Satan to be a heavenly angel and adorned him with beauty. However, the wicked pride found in Satan caused him to instigate a rivalry of power and majesty with God (cf. the king of Babylon, Isa. 14:12-15; the king of Tyre, Ezek. 28:12-19; 1 Tim. 3:16). Subsequently, God cast him from heaven to earth in disgrace, thus fueling Satan's hatred against God and his beloved creation. Satan's first recorded interaction with mankind came in the Garden of Eden. Although the OT does not directly identify the serpent who deceived Adam and Eve as Satan, Paul makes the connection in the NT (Rom. 16:20). Satan incited David to take a census of Israel despite God's command not to do so (1 Chr. 21:1). The account of Satan's wager with God concerning the righteousness of Job reveals several things about the activities of Satan. First, Satan roams "to and fro in the earth" and travels "up and down in it" (Job 1:7; 2:2). Second, he often dwells in the company of angels (1:6; 2:1). And third, every remnant of power Satan possesses comes from God, Who literally must give his permission before Satan can act (1:12; 2:6). This certainly does not imply that God condones or authors evil, but that He merely allows Satan to function on earth for a time. In Zechariah's vision, the supernatural commander of evil, Satan himself, stands on the right hand of Joshua in order to accuse him of sin (Zech. 3:1), but the Accuser is rebuked by God, Who informs him that Joshua's sin has been taken away. In the NT, Jesus prophesied that after his crucifixion and ascension, Satan's defeat would be complete and he would no longer be able to accuse the brethren (John 12:31; Rev. 12:10). And following the Millennium, Satan will be bound and thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, along with the beast and false prophet. Together, they "will be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (20:10). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Satan - 27x in 23v- accuser(1), adversary(8), Satan(18). Num. 22:22; Num. 22:32; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Ki. 5:4; 1 Ki. 11:14; 1 Ki. 11:23; 1 Ki. 11:25; 1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1:6; Job 1:7; Job 1:8; Job 1:9; Job 1:12; Job 2:1; Job 2:2; Job 2:3; Job 2:4; Job 2:6; Job 2:7; Ps. 109:6; Zech. 3:1; Zech. 3:2

**Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him** - This gives us the background context for the [Angel of the LORD](#) taking His stand in the way. "Balaam was determined to go, you see. He was a covetous man." (McGee)

**Milgrom** - Balak's officials (v. 21) have disappeared.

**Numbers 22:23 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way.**

BGT Numbers 22:23 κα ὄσα νος τιν γγελον το θεο νθεστηκ τα ντ ὄ κα τν ομφαν σπασμ νην ν τ χειρ ατο κα ξ κλινεν νος κ τς ὄο κα πορε ετο ες τ πεδον κα παξεν τν νον τ βδ το εθ ναι α τν ντ ὄ

NET Numbers 22:23 And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn in his hand, so the donkey turned aside from the road and went into the field. But Balaam beat the donkey, to make her turn back to the road.

NLT Numbers 22:23 Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand. The donkey bolted off the road into a field, but Balaam beat it and turned it back onto the road.

ESV Numbers 22:23 And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand. And the donkey turned aside out of the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the road.

NIV Numbers 22:23 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road.

KJV Numbers 22:23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

YLT Numbers 22:23 and the ass seeth the messenger of Jehovah standing in the way, and his drawn sword in his hand, and the ass turneth aside out of the way, and goeth into a field, and Balaam smiteth the ass to turn it aside into the way.

LXE Numbers 22:23 And when the ass saw the angel of God standing opposite in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, then the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field; and Balaam smote the ass with his staff to direct her in the way.

ASV Numbers 22:23 And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

CSB Numbers 22:23 When the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing on the path with a drawn sword in His hand, she turned off the path and went into the field. So Balaam hit her to return her to the path.

NKJ Numbers 22:23 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.

NRS Numbers 22:23 The donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; so the donkey turned off the road, and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey, to turn it back onto the road.

NAB Numbers 22:23 When the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing on the road with sword drawn, she turned off the road and went into the field, and Balaam had to beat her to bring her back on the road.

NJB Numbers 22:23 Now the donkey saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, and she turned off the road into the open country. Balaam then struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road.

GWN Numbers 22:23 When the donkey saw the Messenger of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn, the donkey turned off the road into a field. Balaam hit the donkey to get it back on the road.

- the ass saw: 2Ki 6:17 1Ch 21:16 Da 10:7 Ac 22:9 1Co 1:27-29 2Pe 2:16 Jude 1:11
- the ass turned: Jer 8:7
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPIRITUAL VISION

When the donkey saw the [Angel of the LORD](#) standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand - Clearly God was angry with Balaam going to Balak. This same motif is seen in other OT scenes

Genesis 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and **the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life**

Joshua 5:13-15 Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him **with his sword drawn in his hand**, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" 14 He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" **The captain of the LORD'S host** (aka [Angel of the LORD](#)) said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

1 Chronicles 21:16 Then David lifted up his eyes and saw the [Angel of the LORD](#) standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, covered with sackcloth, fell on their faces.

**The donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way** Balaam's word (surely he was shouting at the donkey) were as ineffectual on the donkey as they would be on Israel. Envision this incredible scene. Milgrom writes "as a Mesopotamian diviner, Balaam should have recognized that his animal's bizarre actions may have held a divine portent." His donkey had never done that before! God was trying to get Balaam's attention with the donkey going into the field. Who do you think made the donkey go into the field? It was Yahweh behind the scenes, in full control of the scenes He is behind! And yet Balaam did not have spiritual eyes to see it, because his eyes had been blinded by the "bucks." Any spiritual vision he had possessed was replaced with visions of "dollar signs" so to speak. If you are chasing money, God may let you succeed, but you will lose your soul. Jesus warned

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny** himself, and **take up** his cross and **follow** Me. 35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mk 8:34-38+)

**Balaam** needed to hear the words of Jesus to Saul that "it is hard to kick against the **goads**." (Acts 26:14+) The **goads** in Balaam's case were the repeated attempts of a "dumb" donkey to lead him in the way of righteousness!

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### The Unseen World

The Angel of the Lord [was] standing in the way. — Numbers 22:23

Today's Scripture: Numbers 22:21-31

Did you know that the microbes on just one of your hands outnumber all of the people on the earth? Or that millions of microbes could fit into the eye of a needle? These one-celled, living organisms are too small for us to see without a microscope, yet they live in the air, soil, water, and even in our bodies. We constantly interact with them, even though their world is completely beyond our senses.

The realities of the spiritual world are also often not visible to us humans, as the prophet Balaam discovered. He was trudging along the road with his two servants when his donkey "saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand" (Num. 22:23). To avoid the angel, the animal walked into a field, crushed Balaam's foot against a wall, and lay down with Balaam still on her back. Balaam was angry and struck the donkey. He didn't realize something supernatural was going on—until God opened his eyes (v.31).

The Bible tells us that a spiritual world does exist, and we may sometimes encounter realities from that realm—both good and bad (Heb. 13:2; Eph. 6:12). Because of this, we are encouraged to be watchful, prayerful, and prepared. Just as God rules the world we see, He also rules the unseen world. Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Heavenly Father, help us to be strong in You  
and in the power of Your might. Open our

eyes so that we may see the spiritual realities You have for us.

All that is seen and unseen is under God's sovereign power.

**Numbers 22:24 Then the [Angel of the LORD](#) stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side.**

BGT Numbers 22:24 κα στη γγελος το θεο ν τα ς α λαξιν τ ν μπ λων φραγμα ς ντε θεν κα φραγμα ς ντε θεν

NET Numbers 22:24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a path among the vineyards, where there was a wall on either side.

NLT Numbers 22:24 Then the angel of the LORD stood at a place where the road narrowed between two vineyard walls.

ESV Numbers 22:24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side.

NIV Numbers 22:24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides.

KJV Numbers 22:24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.

YLT Numbers 22:24 And the messenger of Jehovah standeth in a narrow path of the vineyards -- a wall on this side and a wall on that --

LXE Numbers 22:24 And the angel of the Lord stood in the avenues of the vines, a fence being on this side and a fence on that.

ASV Numbers 22:24 Then the angel of Jehovah stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.

CSB Numbers 22:24 Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow passage between the vineyards, with a stone wall on either side.

NKJ Numbers 22:24 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.

NRS Numbers 22:24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side.

NAB Numbers 22:24 Then the angel of the LORD took his stand in a narrow lane between vineyards with a stone wall on each side.

NJB Numbers 22:24 The angel of Yahweh then went and stood on a narrow path among the vineyards, with a wall to the right and a wall to the left.

GWN Numbers 22:24 Where the road went through the vineyards, it was narrow, with stone walls on both sides. Now the Messenger of the LORD stood there.

- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE ANGEL TIGHTENS THE PATHWAY

Then the [Angel of the LORD](#) stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side- This is a **narrow** path that Jesus did not want him on in contrast to the **narrow** way He desires all men to travel in Mt 7:14+.

**Numbers 22:25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot**

BGT Numbers 22:25 κα ὄσα ἴσως τὸν ἄγγελον τοῦ θεοῦ προσέθιψεν αὐτὴν πρὸς τὴν τοῖχον καὶ ἐπιθίψεν τὴν πῶδα Βαλαάμ καὶ προσέθετο τὴν μαστῆξαι αὐτὴν

NET Numbers 22:25 And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself into the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. So he beat her again.

NLT Numbers 22:25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it tried to squeeze by and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. So Balaam beat the donkey again.

ESV Numbers 22:25 And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pushed against the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall. So he struck her again.

NIV Numbers 22:25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again.

KJV Numbers 22:25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

YLT Numbers 22:25 and the ass seeth the messenger of Jehovah, and is pressed unto the wall, and presseth Balaam's foot unto the wall, and he addeth to smite her;

LXE Numbers 22:25 And when the ass saw the angel of God, she thrust herself against the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall, and he smote her again.

ASV Numbers 22:25 And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, and she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

CSB Numbers 22:25 The donkey saw the Angel of the LORD and pressed herself against the wall, squeezing Balaam's foot against it. So he hit her once again.

NKJ Numbers 22:25 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.

NRS Numbers 22:25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it scraped against the wall, and scraped Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck it again.

NAB Numbers 22:25 When the ass saw the angel of the LORD there, she shrank against the wall; and since she squeezed Balaam's leg against it, he beat her again.

NJB Numbers 22:25 The donkey saw the angel of Yahweh and scraped against the wall, scraping Balaam's foot against it, so he struck her again.

GWN Numbers 22:25 When the donkey saw the Messenger of the LORD, it moved over and pinned Balaam's foot against the wall. So Balaam hit the donkey again.

- crushed Balaam's: Job 5:13-15 Isa 47:12
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DONKEY'S REPEAT VISION AND SECOND BEATING

**When the donkey saw the [Angel of the LORD](#)** - Once again the donkey sees what Balaam cannot see.

**she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall-** The donkey was seeking to save Balaam.

**THOUGHT** - Sometimes God allows painful circumstances in our lives to keep us from traversing a road He knows will lead to destruction and heartache.

**so he struck her again** - "The first time was for a purpose—to get the donkey back on the road. The lack of purpose here serves to indicate that Balaam struck his donkey in sheer anger." (Milgrom)

BGT Numbers 22:26 κα προσθετο γγελος το θεο κα πελθ ν π στη ν τ π στεν ες ν ο κ ν κκλ ναι δεξι ν ο δ ριστερ ν

NET Numbers 22:26 Then the angel of the LORD went farther, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left.

NLT Numbers 22:26 Then the angel of the LORD moved farther down the road and stood in a place too narrow for the donkey to get by at all.

ESV Numbers 22:26 Then the angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left.

NIV Numbers 22:26 Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left.

KJV Numbers 22:26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

YLT Numbers 22:26 and the messenger of Jehovah addeth to pass over, and standeth in a strait place where there is no way to turn aside -- right or left --

LXE Numbers 22:26 And the angel of the Lord went farther, and came and stood in a narrow place where it was impossible to turn to the right or the left.

ASV Numbers 22:26 And the angel of Jehovah went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

CSB Numbers 22:26 The Angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn to the right or the left.

NKJ Numbers 22:26 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.

NRS Numbers 22:26 Then the angel of the LORD went ahead, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left.

NAB Numbers 22:26 The angel of the LORD then went ahead, and stopped next in a passage so narrow that there was no room to move either to the right or to the left.

NJB Numbers 22:26 The angel of Yahweh then moved and stood in a place so narrow that there was no room to pass either to right or left.

GWN Numbers 22:26 Then the Messenger of the LORD moved ahead and stood in a narrower place where there was no room to turn to the right or the left.

- **where was no way:** Isa 26:11 Ho 2:6
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD NARROWS THE PATHWAY

The [Angel of the LORD](#) went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left - Now Balaam's way is completely blocked.

**Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick.**

BGT Numbers 22:27 κα δο σα νος τ ν γγελον το θεο συνεκ θισεν ποκ τω Βαλααμ κα θυμ θη Βαλααμ κα τυππεν τ ν νον τ βδ

NET Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she crouched down under Balaam. Then



Balaam was angry, and he beat his donkey with a staff.

NLT Numbers 22:27 This time when the donkey saw the angel, it lay down under Balaam. In a fit of rage Balaam beat the animal again with his staff.

ESV Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

NIV Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff.

KJV Numbers 22:27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

YLT Numbers 22:27 and the ass seeth the messenger of Jehovah, and croucheth under Balaam, and the anger of Balaam burneth, and he smiteth the ass with a staff.

LXE Numbers 22:27 And when the ass saw the angel of God, she lay down under Balaam; and Balaam was angry, and struck the ass with his staff.

ASV Numbers 22:27 And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, and she lay down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with his staff.

CSB Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she crouched down under Balaam. So he became furious and beat the donkey with his stick.

NKJ Numbers 22:27 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.

NRS Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it lay down under Balaam; and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

NAB Numbers 22:27 When the ass saw the angel of the LORD there, she cowered under Balaam. So, in anger, he again beat the ass with his stick.

NJB Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the angel of Yahweh, she lay down under Balaam. Balaam flew into a rage and struck the donkey with his stick.

GWN Numbers 22:27 When the donkey saw the Messenger of the LORD, it lay down under Balaam. Balaam became so angry he hit the donkey with his stick.

- and Balaam's anger: Pr 14:16 27:3,4
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DONKEY'S THIRD SIGHTING AND BEATING**

**When the donkey saw the [Angel of the LORD](#), she lay down under Balaam** - Again the donkey proves herself smarter than her rider and more in tune with the will of God! Balaam's spiritual blindness persists.

**So Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick** - Balaam's third striking of the poor donkey.

Balaam is more of a brute than his beast!

-- Milgrom

**Numbers 22:28 And 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?"**

BGT Numbers 22:28 καὶ ὠξεν ἡ εἰς τὸ στήμα τῆς σου καὶ λέγει τῷ Βαλααμ τὸ πρῶτον σοὶ τί πᾶσαι εἰς με τοῦτο τῶν τριῶν

NET Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?"

NLT Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD gave the donkey the ability to speak. "What have I done to you that deserves your beating me three times?" it asked Balaam.

ESV Numbers 22:28 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?"

NIV Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

KJV Numbers 22:28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

YLT Numbers 22:28 And Jehovah openeth the mouth of the ass, and she saith to Balaam, 'What have I done to thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?'

LXE Numbers 22:28 And God opened the mouth of the ass, and she says to Balaam, What have I done to thee, that thou hast smitten me this third time?

ASV Numbers 22:28 And Jehovah opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

CSB Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she asked Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?"

NKJ Numbers 22:28 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?"

NRS Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

NAB Numbers 22:28 But now the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she asked Balaam, "What have I done to you that you should beat me these three times?"

NJB Numbers 22:28 Yahweh then gave the donkey the power to talk, and she said to Balaam, 'What harm have I done you, for you to strike me three times like this?'

GWN Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD made the donkey speak, and it asked Balaam, "What have I done to make you hit me three times?"

- the Lord opened: And where is the wonder of all this? If the ass had opened her own mouth, and reproved the rash prophet, we might well be astonished; but when God opens the mouth, an ass can speak as well as a man. It is to no purpose to speak of the construction of the ass's mouth, of the formation of the tongue and jaws being unfit for speaking; for an adequate cause is assigned for this wonderful effect, "The Lord opened the mouth of the ass"; and no one who believes in a God, can doubt of his power to do this and much more. Ex 4:11 Lu 1:37 1Co 1:19 2Pe 2:16
- What have I: Ro 8:22
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE DONKEY PROVES SMARTER THAN BALAAM

**And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey**- Just as He did with His prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 3:27; Ezek 33:22). Is anything too difficult for the LORD? (Jer 32:17, 27+) Of course not and here we have a talking donkey. Three times the LORD had tried to get the message through to Balaam that going with Balak's messengers was a bad idea, so now He invokes a miracle to convey the message, but still chooses to use the medium of a "dumb" donkey. Clearly, the one who was "dumb" was not the donkey but the rider!

**Wenham** makes a great point - This parallelism between Balaam and his (donkey) suggests that the ability to declare God's word is not necessarily a sign of Balaam's holiness, only that God can use anyone to be his spokesman. Throughout the Bible, prophecy and other ecstatic spiritual gifts are regarded as signs of inspiration, but not necessarily of holiness or of a right standing with God. False prophets may accurately foretell the future (Deut. 13:1-5). Though condemned to lose his throne, Saul still prophesied (1 Sa 19:23-24). Caiaphas prophesied the death of Christ (John 11:51-52). Jewish exorcists cast out demons in Jesus' name without believing in him (Mark 9:38-39; Acts 9:13-16). The Corinthian church was long on ecstatic spiritual experience but short on love, holiness and sound doctrine (1 Cor. 1-15). Our Lord warned that on the last day neither prophecy, exorcism nor miracles would guarantee entry to the kingdom of heaven, only 'he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven' (Matt. 7:21-23).([TOTC-Nu](#))

Recall that Adam and Eve were confronted and confounded by the talking **serpent** who was the incarnation of Satan (Ge 3:1).

Peter gives us a commentary on this strange event likening the false teachers of 2 Peter 2:1-3ff to Balaam declaring of the false teachers that they were...

forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed **the way of Balaam**, the son of Beor, who loved the **wages of unrighteousness**; 16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. (2 Peter 2:15-16+)

**Comment** - So here the Donkey is seen as God's agent of rebuke restraining the madness of the prophet (note Balaam the diviner is called a **prophet**, but see Dt 13:1-5). What was the "madness" in context? His love for **wages of unrighteousness**. This is why the Angel of the LORD was angry. And in fact Balaam proved to be a teacher as Jesus declared in Revelation 2:14 (see comments on this passage)

**Milgrom** - He gave the ass the power of speech (see Ezekiel 3:27 and 33:22). These words are a satiric play on Balaam's reputed prophetic gifts, for the Lord also uses Balaam's mouth as the vehicle for His message (Nu 22:38 = "The **word** that God puts in my **mouth**, that I shall speak."; Nu 23:5 = "Then the LORD put a **word** in Balaam's **mouth**", Nu 23:12, 16).(Ibid)

**And she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"** - Imagine Balaam's mouth open at the LORD opening the mouth of the donkey! I wonder if Balaam's talking donkey was the inspiration for the popular show [Francis the Talking Mule](#)?

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**Question:** [Did Balaam's donkey really talk to him?](#)

**Answer:** The story of [Balaam](#) and his talking donkey is found in Numbers 22. Balaam was a pagan prophet who practiced divination and other magic arts, led Israel into apostasy, and was identified as a greedy, unscrupulous man by Peter and Jude (2 Peter 2:15 – 16; Jude 1:11). Fearing the encroaching Israelites, [King Balak](#) of Moab sent for Balaam and enlisted his aid in repelling the Israelites by cursing them. The Lord spoke to Balaam and told him to refuse to go to Balak, although the Lord relented under the condition that Balaam would speak only His words. So Balaam saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab back to Balak.

But knowing Balaam's heart, the Lord's anger burned against Balaam for what He knew was Balaam's rebelliousness, and He sent an angel with a drawn sword to bar his way. Although Balaam couldn't see the angel, his donkey could, and she tried to discontinue the journey by going off the path, crushing Balaam's foot against the wall and lying down on the path. Angered by her behavior, Balaam used his staff to beat the donkey three times. Then in [Numbers 22:28](#), we learn that "the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?'" Then Balaam and the donkey proceeded to have a conversation about the situation, with Balaam angrily berating the donkey, after which the Lord opened Balaam's eyes to see the angel and understand why his journey was stopped.

There is no doubt that Balaam's donkey spoke to him. The question that arises is whether the donkey was suddenly given the power of speech, which would also mean she was given the power to reason because she answered Balaam's questions, asked some of her own, and carried on a rational conversation. While it is certainly possible that God granted human powers to the donkey, it's more likely that He opened her mouth and spoke through her. The angel that barred his way is identified as the angel of the Lord, likely a manifestation of the presence of God Himself (Genesis 16:9-16; Exodus 3:1-6). After the donkey "spoke" to Balaam, and Balaam's eyes were opened, the angel proceeded to ask the identical questions that came from the mouth of the donkey, further evidence that God, not the donkey, was actually speaking both times. This is reiterated by Peter, who identifies the donkey as "a beast without speech" and who "spoke with a man's voice" (2 Peter 2:16). Whatever the method, the donkey was able to speak by a miraculous working of God's power.

Why was Balaam not shocked into silence by the donkey speaking to him? Surely, it must have come as a surprise to him, and under normal circumstances, the obvious reaction would be for him to at least ask how she came to be speaking. The Bible doesn't tell us why he didn't find it odd to be addressed by a donkey, but we do know something about his state of mind. First, he was in rebellion against the Lord, going to Balak for his own purposes and not those of the Lord. Second, the donkey's refusal to continue down the path enraged him so that he beat her out of anger because she had mocked him and made a fool of him. Anger has a way of curtailing rational thought, and perhaps he was so intent on exerting his dominance over the animal that he lost the ability to think clearly. It wasn't until the angel opened Balaam's eyes to see reality that he relented in his anger against the donkey, listened to the angel, and repented. Verse 38 tells us that Balaam went to Balak and told the king, "I must speak only what God puts in my mouth," which just goes to show that God can use anyone, even a donkey and a rebellious prophet, to do His will and speak His truth.[GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Numbers 22:29 Then Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now."**

BGT Numbers 22:29 κα ε πεν Βαλααμ τ ν τι μπ παιχ ς μοι κα ε ε χον μ χαιρα ν τ χειρ μου δη ν ξεκ ντησ σε

NET Numbers 22:29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "You have made me look stupid; I wish there were a sword in my hand, for I would kill you right now."

NLT Numbers 22:29 "You have made me look like a fool!" Balaam shouted. "If I had a sword with me, I would kill you!"

ESV Numbers 22:29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you."

NIV Numbers 22:29 Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

KJV Numbers 22:29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

YLT Numbers 22:29 and Balaam saith to the ass, 'Because thou hast rolled thyself against me; oh that there were a sword in my hand, for now I had slain thee;'

LXE Numbers 22:29 And Balaam said to the ass, Because thou hast mocked me; and if I had had a sword in my hand, I would now have killed thee.

ASV Numbers 22:29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me, I would there were a sword in my hand, for now I had killed thee.

CSB Numbers 22:29 Balaam answered the donkey, "You made me look like a fool. If I had a sword in my hand, I'd kill you now!"

NKJ Numbers 22:29 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!"

NRS Numbers 22:29 Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!"

NAB Numbers 22:29 "You have acted so willfully against me," said Balaam to the ass, "that if I but had a sword at hand, I would kill you here and now."

NJB Numbers 22:29 Balaam answered the donkey, 'Because you have been making a fool of me! If I had been carrying a sword, I should have killed you by now.'

GWN Numbers 22:29 Balaam answered, "You've made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I'd kill you right now."

- for now would: Pr 12:10,16 Ec 9:3
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and CommentariesB

## **BALAAM'S RIDICULOUS RESPONSE TO A TALKING DONKEY**

**Then** - One would have expected Balaam to say "How can you speak?" But Balaam was so blinded by his lust for wealth that he wasn't even able to see that this was clearly a supernatural act of YAWHEH! When you are deceived, by definition you don't even know it!

**Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now** - Aren't we all grateful to God that Balaam did not have a sword!

**Bell** - Balaam is calling for a sword, w/o knowing that he was about to see one pointed at him.

**Milgrom** quips that "The irony rests in the fact that the sword Balaam seeks is close at hand with the angel, whom he, the seer, cannot see." (Ibid)

**Numbers 22:30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No."**

BGT Numbers 22:30 κα λ γει νος τ Βαλααμ ο κ γ νος σου φ ρς π βαινες π νε τητς σου ως τς σ μερον μ ρας μ περορ σει περιδο σα πο ησ σοι ο τως δ ε πεν ο χ

NET Numbers 22:30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am not I your donkey that you have ridden ever since I was yours until this day? Have I ever attempted to treat you this way?" And he said, "No."

NLT Numbers 22:30 "But I am the same donkey you have ridden all your life," the donkey answered. "Have I ever done anything like this before?" "No," Balaam admitted.

ESV Numbers 22:30 And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?" And he said, "No."

NIV Numbers 22:30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" "No," he said.

KJV Numbers 22:30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

YLT Numbers 22:30 and the ass saith unto Balaam, 'Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden since I was thine unto this day? have I at all been accustomed to do to thee thus?' and he saith, 'No.'

LXE Numbers 22:30 And the ass says to Balaam, Am not I thine ass on which thou hast ridden since thy youth till this day? did I ever do thus to thee, utterly disregarding thee? and he said, No.

ASV Numbers 22:30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden all thy life long unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? and he said, Nay.

CSB Numbers 22:30 But the donkey said, "Am I not the donkey you've ridden all your life until today? Have I ever treated you this way before?" "No," he replied.

NKJ Numbers 22:30 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."

NRS Numbers 22:30 But the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way?" And he said, "No."

NAB Numbers 22:30 But the ass said to Balaam, "Am I not your own beast, and have you not always ridden upon me until now? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way before?" "No," replied Balaam.

NJB Numbers 22:30 The donkey said to Balaam, 'Am I not your donkey, and have I not been your mount all your life? Have I ever behaved like this with you before?' 'No,' he replied.

GWN Numbers 22:30 The donkey said to Balaam, "I'm your own donkey. You've always ridden me. Have I ever done this to you before?" "No," he answered.

- the ass said: 2Pe 2:16
- upon which thou hast ridden: Heb. who hast ridden upon me, ever since I was thine. or, ever since thou wast, unto, etc. 1Co 1:27,28
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **THE DONKEY REASONS WITH BALAAM**

**The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No."** - Balaam's acknowledgement that his own lifetime donkey had never acted this way should have been a clue that he was traveling in the wrong direction, away from the will of God which is good, acceptable and perfect (Ro 12:2b+).

**Milgrom** - The burlesque continues. Balaam's impetuous rage is answered by the measured and justifiable argument of the ass: "Here was this ass, the most stupid of all beasts, and there was the wisest of all wise men, yet as soon as she opened her mouth he could not stand his ground against her."

**Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground.**

BGT Numbers 22:31 πεκλυψεν δ θες το ς φθαλμο ς Βαλααμ κα ρ τ ν γγελον κυρ ου νθεστηκ τα ν τ δ κα τ ν μ χαιραν σπασμ νη ν τ χειρ α το κα κ ψα ς προσεκ νησεν τ προσ π α το

NET Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; so he bowed his head and threw himself down with his face to the ground.

NLT Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the roadway with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam bowed his head and fell face down on the ground before him.

ESV Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face.

NIV Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

KJV Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

YLT Numbers 22:31 And Jehovah uncovereth the eyes of Balaam, and he seeth the messenger of Jehovah standing in the way, and his drawn sword in his hand, and he boweth and doth obeisance, to his face;

LXE Numbers 22:31 And God opened the eyes of Balaam, and he sees the angel of the Lord withstanding him in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, and he stooped down and worshipped on his face.

ASV Numbers 22:31 Then Jehovah opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed his head, and fell on his face.

CSB Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the path with a drawn sword in His hand. Balaam knelt and bowed with his face to the ground.

NKJ Numbers 22:31 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.

NRS Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down, falling on his face.

NAB Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD removed the veil from Balaam's eyes, so that he too saw the angel of the LORD standing on the road with sword drawn; and he fell on his knees and bowed to the ground.

NJB Numbers 22:31 Yahweh then opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed his head and threw himself on his face.

GWN Numbers 22:31 Then the LORD let Balaam see the Messenger of the LORD who was standing in the road with his sword drawn. So Balaam knelt, bowing with his face touching the ground.

- **opened:** Nu 24:4 Nu 24:16 Ge 21:19 2Ki 6:17-20 1Ch 21:16 Lu 24:16,31 Ac 26:18
- bowed down: Ex 34:8 Ps 9:20 Joh 18:6
- fell flat on his face: or, bowed himself
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **OPENING DONKEY'S MOUTH THEN OPENING EYES OF ONE ACTING LIKE A DONKEY**

**Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the [Angel of the LORD](#) standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand and he bowed all the way to the ground** - Balaam's bowing was appropriate. It is fascinating that God is protecting a diviner, a false prophet, but as we see He has purpose to use him as an instrument to bless His people Israel. God's ways are so much higher than our ways!

**Milgrom** - The wording is deliberate, a [sardonic](#) contradiction of Balaam's claim that his "eyes are opened" to God's revelation (Nu 24:4, 16+ = "having his eyes uncovered").

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## **Unstoppable**

The Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way. —Numbers 22:31

Today's Scripture: Numbers 22:10-34

Under it. Over it. Around it. Through it. Nothing will stop me from doing it." I often hear people express this kind of attitude when they get an idea or see an opportunity that seems good or profitable. They devote all of their resources to getting it done.

As evidence that this way of thinking may be flawed, I call as my witness a donkey—a donkey belonging to a man named Balaam.

Balaam was offered a profitable assignment from a neighboring king, and he inquired of God for permission to accept it (Num. 22). When God said no, the king's representatives made a better offer. Thinking God might change His mind, Balaam asked again. God granted permission for Balaam to go with them but with strict conditions. God knew Balaam's heart and was not pleased with him, so He placed His Angel in the way. Balaam couldn't see the Angel but his donkey could. When the donkey refused to continue, Balaam became angry with the animal for blocking his progress.

Balaam's story teaches us that not every obstacle is meant to be overcome. Some are placed by God to keep us from doing something foolish. When our plans are hindered, we shouldn't assume that it's Satan trying to stop us. It might be God trying to protect us. By: Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Let Your wisdom guide me ever,  
For I dare not trust my own;  
Lead me, Lord, in tender mercy,  
Leave me not to walk alone.  
—Reed

God is always protecting us— even when we don't realize we need it.

**Numbers 22:32 The angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was contrary to me.**

BGT Numbers 22:32 κα ε πεν α τ γγελος το θεο δι τ πι ταξας τ ν νον σου το το τρ τον κα δο γ ξ λθον ε ς διαβολ ν σου πι ο κ στε α δ ς σου ναντ ον μου

NET Numbers 22:32 The angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look, I came out to oppose you because what you are doing is perverse before me.

NLT Numbers 22:32 "Why did you beat your donkey those three times?" the angel of the LORD demanded. "Look, I have come to block your way because you are stubbornly resisting me.

ESV Numbers 22:32 And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me.

NIV Numbers 22:32 The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me.

KJV Numbers 22:32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:

YLT Numbers 22:32 and the messenger of Jehovah saith unto him, 'Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? lo, I -- I have come out for an adversary, for thy way hath been perverse before me,

LXE Numbers 22:32 And the angel of God said to him, Why hast thou smitten thine ass this third time? and, behold, I came out to withstand thee, for thy way was not seemly before me; and when the ass saw me, she turned away from me this third time.

ASV Numbers 22:32 And the angel of Jehovah said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these

three times? behold, I am come forth for an adversary, because thy way is perverse before me:

CSB Numbers 22:32 The Angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look, I came out to oppose you, because what you are doing is evil in My sight.

NKJ Numbers 22:32 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.

NRS Numbers 22:32 The angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary, because your way is perverse before me.

NAB Numbers 22:32 But the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you beaten your ass these three times? It is I who have come armed to hinder you because this rash journey of yours is directly opposed to me.

NJB Numbers 22:32 And the angel of Yahweh said to him, 'Why did you strike your donkey three times like that? I myself had come to bar your way; while I am here your road is blocked.

GWN Numbers 22:32 The Messenger of the LORD asked him, "Why have you hit your donkey three times like this? I've come here to stop you because the trip you're taking is evil.

- Wherefore: Nu 22:28 De 25:4 Ps 36:6 145:9 147:9 Jon 4:11
- withstand thee: Heb. be an adversary unto thee, Nu 22:22
- thy way: De 23:4 Pr 28:6 Mic 6:5 Ac 13:10 2Pe 2:14,15
- before me: Nu 22:20,22,35 Ex 3:2-6 Pr 14:2 28:18
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BALAAM'S DIVINE ADVERSARY

The **Angel of the LORD** said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? **Behold, I have come out as an adversary** (Heb - [satan](#)), **because your way was contrary to me.** - NLT = the angel of the LORD demanded. "Look, I have come to block your way because you are **stubbornly resisting me.**" Note the words **stubbornly resisting me.** Who is Balaam resisting? Clearly Yahweh. This would support that the Angel is Yahweh, not just a created angel. **Contrary** (yarat - only here and Job 16:11) means perverse, reckless, impetuous all of which sum up Balaam's character.

**Numbers 22:33 "But the donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live."**

BGT Numbers 22:33 κα̅ δο̅ σ̅ με̅ νο̅ς̅ ξ̅ κ̅ λ̅ ι̅ ν̅ ε̅ ν̅ π̅ μ̅ ο̅ τ̅ ρ̅ ο̅ ν̅ τ̅ ο̅ τ̅ ο̅ κ̅ α̅ ε̅ μ̅ ξ̅ κ̅ λ̅ ι̅ ν̅ ε̅ ν̅ υ̅ υ̅ ο̅ υ̅ σ̅ μ̅ υ̅ π̅ κ̅ τ̅ ε̅ ι̅ ν̅ α̅ κ̅ ε̅ υ̅ η̅ ν̅ ὃ̅ π̅ ε̅ ρ̅ ι̅ ε̅ π̅ ο̅ ι̅ η̅ σ̅ μ̅ η̅ ν̅

NET Numbers 22:33 The donkey saw me and turned from me these three times. If she had not turned from me, I would have killed you but saved her alive."

NLT Numbers 22:33 Three times the donkey saw me and shied away; otherwise, I would certainly have killed you by now and spared the donkey."

ESV Numbers 22:33 The donkey saw me and turned aside before me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let her live."

NIV Numbers 22:33 The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her."

KJV Numbers 22:33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.

YLT Numbers 22:33 and the ass seeth me, and turneth aside at my presence these three times; unless she had turned aside from my presence, surely now also, thee I had slain, and her kept alive.'

LXE Numbers 22:33 And if she had not turned out of the way, surely now, I should have slain thee, and should have saved her alive.

ASV Numbers 22:33 and the ass saw me, and turned aside before me these three times: unless she had



turned aside from me, surely now I had even slain thee, and saved her alive.

CSB Numbers 22:33 The donkey saw Me and turned away from Me these three times. If she had not turned away from Me, I would have killed you by now and let her live."

NKJ Numbers 22:33 "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."

NRS Numbers 22:33 The donkey saw me, and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let it live."

NAB Numbers 22:33 When the ass saw me, she turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away from me, I would have killed you; her I would have spared."

NJB Numbers 22:33 The donkey saw me and turned aside because of me three times. You are lucky she did turn aside, or I should have killed you by now, though I would have spared her.'

GWN Numbers 22:33 The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, I would certainly have killed you by now but spared the donkey."

- surely: Nu 14:37 16:33-35 1Ki 13:24-28
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## WHEN A DONKEY SAVES A MAN

**But the donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live** - We usually hear the saying that dogs are man's best friend, but in Balaam's case a donkey was his best friend! God was angry enough to kill Balaam, reminding us once again of Paul's words that the wages of sin are death (Ro 6:23+). Writing to Timothy, Paul instructed him that "those who want to get rich (LIKE BALAAM) fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction (THIS COULD EASILY BE BALAAM'S "LIFE VERSE!"). For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." (1 Ti 6:9-10+).

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### Norman Geisler - NUMBERS 22:33—Why did the angel of the Lord try to kill Balaam, since God had given him permission to go to the plains of Moab?

PROBLEM: In Numbers 22:20 God had told Balaam to go with the men to the plains of Moab. However, verse 22 says, "Then God's anger aroused because he went, and the Angel of the Lord took His stand in the way as an adversary against him." Also, in verse 33 the angel of the Lord says, "If she [the donkey] had not turned aside from Me, I would also have killed you by now, and let her live." Why did the angel of the Lord try to kill Balaam when God had already given him permission to go with the men from Moab?

SOLUTION: The account of Balaam's activities demonstrates that Balaam was torn between obeying the command of God, and the greed in his heart for the riches that Balak had promised. Although God had flatly told Balaam not to go with the men to Balak (Num. 22:12), Balak's offer of riches (v. 17) tempted Balaam, and he went to God a second time to seek permission to go to Balak. It was because of Balaam's evil heart of greed that the Lord sent His angel to stand in the way as Balaam's adversary. The intent was not to kill Balaam, evidenced by the fact that the angel of the Lord allowed Balaam's donkey to see him and, by turning aside, to prevent Balaam's death. Rather, the angel's purpose was to present a forceful reminder that Balaam was to speak only what the Lord would tell him. Balaam's greed is clearly demonstrated in the fact that, although he would not curse Israel because the Lord would only allow him to bless His people, Balaam counseled Balak to corrupt Israel by allowing his women to marry the men of Israel and to lead them into idolatry (2 Peter 2:15; Rev. 2:14). Balaam's greed had devised a way to help Israel's enemies while not directly disobeying the Lord's command to speak only the words that He would give to him (Num. 31:16). (When Critics Ask)

**Numbers 22:34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back."**

BGT Numbers 22:34 κα ε πεν Βαλααμ τ γγ λ κυρ ου μ ρηκα ο γ ρ πιστ μην τι σ μοι νθ στηκας ν τ δ ε ς συν νησιν κα ν ν ε μ σοι ρ σκει ποστραφ σομαι

NET Numbers 22:34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood

against me in the road. So now, if it is evil in your sight, I will go back home."

NLT Numbers 22:34 Then Balaam confessed to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I didn't realize you were standing in the road to block my way. I will return home if you are against my going."

ESV Numbers 22:34 Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the road against me. Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back."

NIV Numbers 22:34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back."

KJV Numbers 22:34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

YLT Numbers 22:34 And Balaam saith unto the messenger of Jehovah, 'I have sinned, for I did not know that thou art standing to meet me in the way; and now, if evil in thine eyes -- I turn back by myself.'

LXE Numbers 22:34 And Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, I have sinned, for I did not know that thou wert standing opposite in the way to meet me; and now if it shall not be pleasing to thee for me to go on, I will return.

ASV Numbers 22:34 And Balaam said unto the angel of Jehovah, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

CSB Numbers 22:34 Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that You were standing in the path to confront me. And now, if it is evil in Your sight, I will go back."

NKJ Numbers 22:34 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."

NRS Numbers 22:34 Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now therefore, if it is displeasing to you, I will return home."

NAB Numbers 22:34 Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. Yet I did not know that you stood against me to oppose my journey. Since it has displeased you, I will go back home."

NJB Numbers 22:34 Balaam said to the angel of Yahweh, 'I have sinned. I did not know you were standing in the road to stop me. But if what I am doing displeases you, I will go home again.'

GWN Numbers 22:34 Balaam said to the Messenger of the LORD, "I've sinned. I didn't know you were standing there in the road to stop me. If you still think this trip is evil, I'll go back."

- I Have sinned: Ex 9:27 10:16,17 1Sa 15:24,30 24:17 26:21 2Sa 12:13 Job 34:31,32 Ps 78:34 Mt 27:4,5
- if it displease thee: Heb. be evil in thine eyes, Nu 22:12 11:1 1Ch 21:7 Pr 24:18 \*margins
- I will get: Job 34:31,32
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Balaam said to the [Angel of the LORD](#), "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back."** - He confesses sin and is even willing to turn back. "Balaam therefore acknowledged his sin in opposing the LORD and not seeing divine direction in the donkey's behavior." (Merrill)

**THOUGHT** - There is a principle here. Do the will of God and you will know the God of the will. Balaam was deficient on both counts. Since he was clearly doing God's will (in his heart he was going with greed not with a desire to bless Israel) his eyes were blinded to God's hand at work. As Merrill says he was not able to see the "divine direction in the donkey's behavior." Jesus declared "If anyone is **willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching**, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself." (Jn 7:17). Are you willing to do His will? Then you will be able to discern His will in other situations.

**Numbers 22:35 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I tell you." So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak.**

BGT Numbers 22:35 κα ε πεν γγελος το θεο πρ ς Βαλααμ συμπορε θητι μετ τ ν νθρ πων πλ ν τ μα ν ε πω πρ ς σ το το φυλ ξ λαλ σαι κα πορε θη Βαλααμ μετ τ ν ρχ ντων Βαλακ

NET Numbers 22:35 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you may only speak the word that I will speak to you." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

NLT Numbers 22:35 But the angel of the LORD told Balaam, "Go with these men, but say only what I tell you to say." So Balaam went on with Balak's officials.

ESV Numbers 22:35 And the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only the word that I tell you." So Balaam went on with the princes of Balak.

NIV Numbers 22:35 The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

KJV Numbers 22:35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

YLT Numbers 22:35 And the messenger of Jehovah saith unto Balaam, 'Go with the men; and only the word which I speak unto thee -- it thou dost speak;' and Balaam goeth with the princes of Balak.

LXE Numbers 22:35 And the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, Go with the men: nevertheless the word which I shall speak to thee, that thou shalt take heed to speak. And Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

ASV Numbers 22:35 And the angel of Jehovah said unto Balaam, Go with the men; but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

CSB Numbers 22:35 Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you are to say only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's officials.

NKJ Numbers 22:35 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.

NRS Numbers 22:35 The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men; but speak only what I tell you to speak." So Balaam went on with the officials of Balak.

NAB Numbers 22:35 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men; but you may say only what I tell you." So Balaam went on with the princes of Balak.

NJB Numbers 22:35 The angel of Yahweh said to Balaam, 'Go with these men, but say only what I tell you to say.' So Balaam went on with the chiefs sent by Balak.

GWN Numbers 22:35 The Messenger of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but say only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's princes.

- Go: Nu 22:20 Ps 81:12 Isa 37:26-29 2Th 2:9-12
- I shall speak: Nu 22:20,21
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But the [Angel of the LORD](#) said to Balaam, "Go with the men (BALACK'S MEN), but you shall speak only the word which I tell you."** - The phrase **speak only the word which I tell you** indicates this is not just a created angel but the Creator Himself. Compare Nu 22:20 "God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up and go with them; but **only the word which I speak to you shall you do**"

**WENHAM** - The repeated statements that Balaam will declare only the word that God puts in his mouth may be intended to emphasize the inspiration of his oracles rather than the holiness of his character. (**ED**: WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN THE DONKEY AND BALAAM?) ([TOIC-Nu](#))

**So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak** - Where were the leaders while Balaam was being blocked, beating his donkey and then speaking with the [Angel of the LORD](#)? The text does not tell us but presumably since Balaam's eyes had to be spiritually opened to visualize what was really happening, it is likely that the eyes of **the leaders of Balak** were spiritually blinded (assuming they were present)..

**Numbers 22:36** When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the Arnon border, at the extreme end of the border.

UBS When Balak heard that Balaam was on the way to him, he went out to meet him at the border town of Moab on the Arnon River, which was at the farthest [northern] border of his land.

BGT Numbers 22:36 κακοσας Βαλακ πικει Βαλααμ ξληεν ες συν ντησιν ατ ες π λιν Μωαβ σπιν π τ ν ρων Αρνων σπιν κ μ ρους τ ν ρων

NET Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at a city of Moab which was on the border of the Arnon at the boundary of his territory.

NLT Numbers 22:36 When King Balak heard that Balaam was on the way, he went out to meet him at a Moabite town on the Arnon River at the farthest border of his land.

ESV Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, on the border formed by the Arnon, at the extremity of the border.

NIV Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite town on the Arnon border, at the edge of his territory.

KJV Numbers 22:36 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.

YLT Numbers 22:36 And Balak heareth that Balaam hath come, and goeth out to meet him, unto a city of Moab, which is on the border of Arnon, which is in the extremity of the border;

LXE Numbers 22:36 And when Balac heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him, to a city of Moab, which is on the borders of Arnon, which is on the extreme part of the borders.

ASV Numbers 22:36 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto the City of Moab, which is on the border of the Arnon, which is in the utmost part of the border.

CSB Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite city on the Arnon border at the edge of his territory.

NKJ Numbers 22:36 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.

NRS Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at Ir-moab, on the boundary formed by the Arnon, at the farthest point of the boundary.

NAB Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the boundary city Ir-Moab on the Arnon at the end of the Moabite territory.

NJB Numbers 22:36 Balak learned that Balaam was coming and went out to meet him, in the direction of Ar in Moab, at the Arnon frontier on the country's furthest boundary.

GWN Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at Ir Moab, in the region of the Arnon Valley, right on the border of Moab.

- went: Ge 14:17 18:2 46:29 Ex 18:7 1Sa 13:10 Ac 28:15
- the border: Nu 21:13,14 De 2:24 3:8 Jud 11:18 Isa 16:2 Jer 48:20
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BALAK EAGER TO MEET BALAAM**

**When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the Arnon border** (ESV = on the border formed by the Arnon), **at the extreme end of the border** (NET - at the boundary of his territory)- Arnon was Moab's extreme northern border at the time of the Israelite incursion (cf Nu 21:26+) It is clear that Balak was very eager -- he went to Balaam rather than waiting for Balaam to come to him. "Normally, an honorable person would wait for his guest to arrive to receive him, but Balak was so anxious to curse Israel that he could not wait to get started, so he met Balaam at the northern boundary of his country." (UBS Handbook)

**Milgrom** writes that "Balak paid Balaam the maximum respect by meeting him at the point at which Balaam crossed into Moabite territory (see Gen. 29:13; 46:29; Exod. 18:7)."

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## Numbers 22:37 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not urgently send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I really unable to honor you?"

BGT Numbers 22:37 κα ε πεν Βαλακ πρ ς Βαλααμ ο χ π σπειλα πρ ς σ καλ σαι σε δι τ ο κ ρχου πρ ς με ντως ο δυν σομαι τιμ σα σε

NET Numbers 22:37 Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send again and again to you to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?"

NLT Numbers 22:37 "Didn't I send you an urgent invitation? Why didn't you come right away?" Balak asked Balaam. "Didn't you believe me when I said I would reward you richly?"

ESV Numbers 22:37 And Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?"

NIV Numbers 22:37 Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?"

KJV Numbers 22:37 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

YLT Numbers 22:37 and Balak saith unto Balaam, 'Did I not diligently sent unto thee to call for thee? why didst thou not come unto me? am I not truly able to honour thee?'

LXE Numbers 22:37 And Balac said to Balaam, Did I not send to thee to call thee? why hast thou not come to me? shall I not indeed be able to honour thee?

ASV Numbers 22:37 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honor?

CSB Numbers 22:37 Balak asked Balaam, "Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?"

NKJ Numbers 22:37 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?"

NRS Numbers 22:37 Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?"

NAB Numbers 22:37 And he said to Balaam, "I sent an urgent summons to you! Why did you not come to me? Did you think I could not reward you?"

NJB Numbers 22:37 Balak said to Balaam, 'Did I not send messengers to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Did you think, perhaps, I could confer no honours on you?'

GWN Numbers 22:37 Balak said to Balaam, "Why didn't you come when I summoned you? You knew I'd be able to reward you."

- I am not able, Nu 22:16,17 24:11 Ps 75:6 Mt 4:8,9 Lu 4:6 Joh 5:44
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### BALAK UPBRAIDS BALAAM

**Upbraid** means to reprove sharply. He immediately asked three questions. Balak makes no formal greeting but wants to get on with business!

**Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not urgently ([shalakh](#)) send ([shalakh](#)) to you to call you?"** - Rhetorical question. In Hebrew the verb for **send** is repeated for emphasis and so the NET renders it "Did I not send again and again to you to summon you?" "The emphatic construction is made of the infinitive absolute and the perfect tense from the verb שָׁלַח ([shalakh](#), "to send"). The idea must be more intense than something like, "Did I not certainly send." Balak is showing frustration with Balaam for refusing him." (NN)

**Why did you not come to me?** - "Why then did you not come to me?" "Why did you not come before now?" (NBV) This question is asking for an answer from Balaam. Recall that Balaam did not specifically tell the envoy why the LORD refused. In other words he left out the command from God "**You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed**" (Nu 22:12+). If he had said that, Balak

may have looked for another diviner. It is as if Balaam had kept the door open for going to Balak. In the back of his mind were the diviner fees, because he loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pe 2:15+).

**Am I really unable to honor you?"** - An emphatic rhetorical question. NLT = "Didn't you believe me when I said I would reward you richly?" GNT = "Did you really think I wasn't able to reward you enough?" Did Balaam not really believe a king would be able to pay him? "Balak again refers to his ability to "honor" the seer. This certainly meant payment for his service, usually gold ornaments, rings and jewelry, as well as some animals." (NN) "The king seems to think that Balaam is motivated by greed and does not sufficiently respect his capacity as king. " (UBS) Balak's rhetorical question indicates he interprets Balaam's refusal was because of the amount of the reward for divination.

**Numbers 22:38 So Balaam said to Balak, "Behold, I have come now to you! Am I able to speak anything at all? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak."**

BGT Numbers 22:38 κα ε πεν Βαλααμ πρ ς Βαλακ δο κω πρ ς σ ν ν δυνατ ς σομαι λαλ σα πι τ μα ν β λ θε ς ε ς τ στ μα μου το το λαλ σω

NET Numbers 22:38 Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you. Now, am I able to speak just anything? I must speak only the word that God puts in my mouth."

NLT Numbers 22:38 Balaam replied, "Look, now I have come, but I have no power to say whatever I want. I will speak only the message that God puts in my mouth."

ESV Numbers 22:38 Balaam said to Balak, "Behold, I have come to you! Have I now any power of my own to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak."

NIV Numbers 22:38 "Well, I have come to you now," Balaam replied. "But can I say just anything? I must speak only what God puts in my mouth."

KJV Numbers 22:38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

YLT Numbers 22:38 And Balaam saith unto Balak, 'Lo, I have come unto thee; now -- am I at all able to speak anything? the word which God setteth in my mouth -- it I do speak.'

LXE Numbers 22:38 And Balaam said to Balac, Behold, I am now come to thee: shall I be able to say anything? the word which God shall put into my mouth, that I shall speak.

ASV Numbers 22:38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to speak anything? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

CSB Numbers 22:38 Balaam said to him, "Look, I have come to you, but can I say anything I want? I must speak only the message God puts in my mouth."

NKJ Numbers 22:38 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."

NRS Numbers 22:38 Balaam said to Balak, "I have come to you now, but do I have power to say just anything? The word God puts in my mouth, that is what I must say."

NAB Numbers 22:38 Balaam answered him, "Well, I have come to you after all. But what power have I to say anything? I can speak only what God puts in my mouth."

NJB Numbers 22:38 Balaam said to Balak, 'I have come to you after all. I suppose you know I cannot say anything on my own? The words God puts into my mouth are what I shall say.'

GWN Numbers 22:38 Balaam replied, "Well, I've come to you now. But I can't say whatever I want to. I can only say what God tells me to say."

- **have I:** Nu 22:18 Ps 33:10 76:10 Pr 19:21 Isa 44:25 46:10 47:12
- **the word:** Nu 23:16,26 Nu 24:13 1Ki 22:14 2Ch 18:13
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**So Balaam said to Balak, "Behold ([hinneh](#) - to get Balak's attention on following declaration), I have come now to you!** - Balaam

dismisses the rebuke and questioning of Balak.

**Am I able to speak anything at all?**- Literally = "Now to be able am I able to speak anything?" (Hebrew verb for able is [yakol](#) repeated for emphasis) Balaam is saying something like, "Can I really say anything?" (NN) This is rhetorical for Balaam knows he cannot say anything. Notice that he specifically fails to tell Balak Yahweh prohibited him from cursing Israel! "The whole question is rhetorical – he is saying that he will not be able to say anything God does not allow him to say." (NN) The implied answer to this rhetorical question is "Not at all."

**The word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak."**- Note the irony of Balaam's statement that God puts a word in the prophet's mouth! Compare to the word in the donkey's mouth. Note that here Balaam uses **God** or [Elohim](#) which Milgrom says is an "exception to the rule that Balaam refers to God only by the [Tetragrammaton](#) (YHWH)."

**Related Passages: Note the repeated emphasis - this is a key phrase in this story - It would be a good "tagline" for pastors as they ascend to their pulpits each week!**

Numbers 22:20 God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up and go with them; but **only the word which I speak to you shall you do**"

Numbers 22:35 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but **you shall speak only the word which I tell you.**" So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak.

Numbers 23:16; 26 Then the LORD met Balaam and **put a word in his mouth** and said, "Return to Balak, and **thus you shall speak.**" (23:26) But Balaam replied to Balak, "Did I not tell you, **Whatever the LORD speaks, that I must do**?"

Numbers 24:13 'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord. **What the LORD speaks, that I will speak**'?

#### **Numbers 22:39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.**

BGT Numbers 22:39 κα πορευθη Βαλααμ μετ Βαλακ κα λθον ες π λεις πα λεων

NET Numbers 22:39 So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.

NLT Numbers 22:39 Then Balaam accompanied Balak to Kiriath-huzoth,

ESV Numbers 22:39 Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.

NIV Numbers 22:39 Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.

KJV Numbers 22:39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjathhuzoth.

YLT Numbers 22:39 And Balaam goeth with Balak, and they come to Kirjath-Huzoth,

LXE Numbers 22:39 And Balaam went with Balac, and they came to the cities of streets.

ASV Numbers 22:39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kiriath-huzoth.

CSB Numbers 22:39 So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.

NKJ Numbers 22:39 So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kirjath Huzoth.

NRS Numbers 22:39 Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.

NAB Numbers 22:39 Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.

NJB Numbers 22:39 Balaam set out with Balak. They came to Kiriath-Huzoth.

GWN Numbers 22:39 Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.

- Kirjathhuzoth: or, a city of streets, Probably Rabbath-Moab, now called Rabba, the capital of the Moabites; and being the royal city, distinguished by its streets. Nu 22:39
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DIVINATION RITUAL

**And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth**- Unidentified; the site is probably close to Bamoth-baal ("the heights of Baal") (Nu 22:41). **Kiriath-huzoth** (Qiryath Chutsoth) where **huzoth** means streets thus the name "city of streets," but site unknown.

**Numbers 22:40 Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent some to Balaam and the leaders who were with him.**

BGT Numbers 22:40 κα θυσεν Βαλακ πρ βατα κα μ σχους κα π στειλεν τ Βαλααμ κα το ς ρχουσι το ς μετ α το

NET Numbers 22:40 And Balak sacrificed bulls and sheep, and sent some to Balaam, and to the princes who were with him.

NLT Numbers 22:40 where the king sacrificed cattle and sheep. He sent portions of the meat to Balaam and the officials who were with him.

ESV Numbers 22:40 And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent for Balaam and for the princes who were with him.

NIV Numbers 22:40 Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and gave some to Balaam and the princes who were with him.

KJV Numbers 22:40 And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him.

YLT Numbers 22:40 and Balak sacrificeth oxen and sheep, and sendeth to Balaam, and to the princes who are with him;

LXE Numbers 22:40 And Balac offered sheep and calves, and sent to Balaam and to his princes who were with him.

ASV Numbers 22:40 And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him.

CSB Numbers 22:40 Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and sent for Balaam and the officials who were with him.

NKJ Numbers 22:40 Then Balak offered oxen and sheep, and he sent some to Balaam and to the princes who were with him.

NRS Numbers 22:40 Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent them to Balaam and to the officials who were with him.

NAB Numbers 22:40 Here Balak slaughtered oxen and sheep, and sent portions to Balaam and to the princes who were with him.

NJB Numbers 22:40 Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and offered portions to Balaam and the chiefs who were with him.

GWN Numbers 22:40 Balak sacrificed cattle, sheep, and goats, and sent some of the meat to Balaam and the princes who were with him.

- Nu 23:2,14,30 Ge 31:54 Pr 1:16
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

Daniel 1:8 But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.



## DIVINATION COMMENCES

**Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent some to Balaam and the leaders who were with him**- Why these sacrifices? Ancient divination often involved a bizarre examination of animal [entrails](#) to discern signs, a [divination practice](#) known as hepatoscopy or [haruspex](#).

**Believer's Study Bible** suggests that "What Balak "sent" Balaam the diviner was probably the entrails (especially livers) of the animals for him to read." While this is possible, it is not an obvious interpretation.

**Ronald Allen** - "The pieces given to Balaam presumably would have included the livers; for as a baru diviner, Balaam was a specialist in liver divination. Numbers 24:1 reports that Balaam subsequently gave up on his acts of sorcery as the power of the word of the Lord came on him. But at the beginning he starts his procedures as he always has. Yet never did he speak as he was about to speak." (EBC)

**Milgrom** has a different interpretation - Balak sacrificed a zevaḥ shelamim, a well-being offering, the meat of which is eaten by the worshiper and his guests, as is clear from Exodus 18:12 and 1 Samuel 9:23–24.

**Numbers 22:41 Then it came about in the morning that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal, and he saw from there a portion of the people.**

BGT Numbers 22:41 κα γενθη πρω κα παραλαβν Βαλακ τν Βαλααμ νεβ βασεν ατν π τν στλην το Βααλ κα δειξεν ατ κεθεν μ ρος τι το λαο

NET Numbers 22:41 Then on the next morning Balak took Balaam, and brought him up to Bamoth Baal. From there he saw the extent of the nation.

NLT Numbers 22:41 The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth-baal. From there he could see some of the people of Israel spread out below him.

ESV Numbers 22:41 And in the morning Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal, and from there he saw a fraction of the people.

NIV Numbers 22:41 The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, and from there he saw part of the people.

KJV Numbers 22:41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.

YLT Numbers 22:41 and it cometh to pass in the morning, that Balak taketh Balaam, and causeth him to go up the high places of Baal, and he seeth from thence the extremity of the people.

LXE Numbers 22:41 And it was morning; and Balac took Balaam, and brought him up to the pillar of Baal, and shewed him thence a part of the people.

ASV Numbers 22:41 And it came to pass in the morning, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal; and he saw from thence the utmost part of the people.

CSB Numbers 22:41 In the morning, Balak took Balaam and brought him to Bamoth-baal. From there he saw the outskirts of the people's camp.

NKJ Numbers 22:41 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.

NRS Numbers 22:41 On the next day Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal; and from there he could see part of the people of Israel.

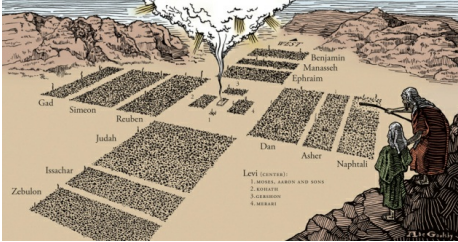
NAB Numbers 22:41 The next morning Balak took Balaam up on Bamoth-baal, and from there he saw some of the clans.

NJB Numbers 22:41 Next morning Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-Baal, from where he could see the edge of the camp.

GWN Numbers 22:41 The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal. From there he could see the

outskirts of the Israelites' camp.

- **high places:** {Bamoth baal,} "the high places of Baal," probably the same as Bamoth mentioned in Nu 21.19, 20; evidently not far from Baal-meon, in the mountains of Abarim: for the Israelites were now encamped in the plains of Moab, which these mountains overlook. Baal, which signifies a lord or governor, was a name common to many idols; and probably here was the same as Chemosh, the god of Moab. Nu 25:2,3 Dt 12:2 2 Chr 11:15 Jer 48:35
- utmost: Nu 23:13
- [Numbers 22 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Looking at the Most High God from a high place!

Clearly this is not a good chapter division as this verse goes with Numbers 24:1ff

**Then it came about in the morning** (only indicator of time for all Balaam's discourses/oracles) **that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal** - The pagans had one thing correct, that there was a divine presence in the heavens, but their "divinity" was of course a counterfeit. Satan always seeks to counterfeit God and His ways. Balak made the same error the builders of the Tower of Babel made (Ge 11:4 They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven..."), thinking that the higher they got, the closer they were to their "god."

This is the first specific allusion to **Baal** worship in the Scripture and sadly this deity would prove enticing and corrupting to the pure worship of Yahweh in Israel.

**NN** on the **high place of Baal** - Bamoth Baal.

**Baal** (proper noun) (01168) **ba'al** refers to the pagan god who was called by the name '**Baal**'. Elijah contended with and exterminated the prophets of **Baal** (1 Ki 18:18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 40). One of the more incredible mentions of Baal is Jehu's eradication of them from the northern kingdom (see 2 Ki 10:18-28). Before God would use Gideon to deliver His people from the Moabites, He first had him tear down his father's backyard altar to **Baal** (Jdg 6:25, 28, 30-31-note). As a result Gideon was named Jerrubball ("Let **Baal** contend against him" - Jdg 6:32-note). Under Gideon Israel was set free from Moabite oppression, but apparently they people were not set free from the "seed" of Baal worship in their hearts for "Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot (SPIRITUAL ADULTERY!) with the **Baals**, and made **Baal-berith** their god" (Jdg 8:33-note)! Wow! Our hearts are more deceitful than all else and are desperately sick (Jer 17:9)! In 1 Sa 7:4 we see that "Israel removed the **Baals** and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone" but they must have backslide because we see their cry in 1 Sam 12:10! Beware of idols.

#### Related Resources:

- [Gotquestions.org - Who is Baal?](#)
- American Tract Society • [Baal](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Baal \(1\)](#) [Baal \(2\)](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary • [Baal](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible • [Baal \(1\)](#) • [Baal](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT • [Baal](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary • [Baal](#)

**UBS Handbook** quips the use of a pagan site "highlights the ironic incongruity of the whole situation, as in the original text. From a pagan worship site, a foreign prophet was being commissioned by a fearful king to curse the people of the LORD."

This is quite a scene - From a pagan worship site, a foreign prophet Balaam was being commissioned by a fearful king to curse the

people of the LORD.

And from there he saw the nearest of the people: The pronoun he refers to Balaam, which GNT makes

**Bush - Brought him up to the high places of Baal.** Heb. **bâmoth Baal**, i.e., the consecrated high places of Baal. Gr. "The pillars (or monuments) of Baal." Chald. "The high places of his Fear," i. e., of the god of his fear. Targ. Jon. "The fear of Peor," i.e., the object of the idolatrous fear. Baal, having the import of Lord, Master, or Patron, was the name given by many nations in that part of Asia to the idols worshipped on high places, hills, or mountains. Wherever employed it signified the sun, and with the Moabites was but another name for Chemosh, their presiding deity. Balak made choice of an elevated position, both because such places were chiefly used for the purpose of sacrificing to the gods, and from such a place Balaam could have a more distinct view of the camp of the Israelites, which was thought to be a matter of peculiar importance, as giving additional efficacy to the curse uttered.

**and he saw from there a portion of the people-** This was thought that the curse would be more effective if you could see the ones being cursed.