### Numbers

## Chapter 22

1Thereafter, the children of IsraEl left that place and camped on the west side of MoAb, by the JorDan River near JeriCho.  
  
2And when Balak (son of SepPhor) saw what the IsraElites had done to the Amorites, 3[he] and the people of MoAb became very concerned and upset, because there were so many IsraElites!  
  
4Then the MoAbites said to the elders of MidiAn:  
  
 ‘This gathering is going lick up everything around us like a calf swallows down grass in a field!’  
  
Well, Balak (son of SepPhor) was the king of MoAb at the time. 5And he sent ambassadors to call BalaAm son of BeOr, who was at Phathura (which is beside a river in the land of his people). [And he told them] to say:  
  
 ‘Look! These people who’ve come from Egypt are covering the entire land… And now they’re camping close to me!  
  
 6‘So, come and curse them for me, because they’re stronger than we are. Then we’ll be able to attack them and drive them out of the land! Because, I know that whomever you bless will be blest, and whomever you curse will be cursed.’  
  
7So the elders of MoAb and MidiAn went out carrying their charms in their hands, and they went to see BalaAm. Then they told him everything that Balak had said, 8and he replied to them:  
  
 ‘Spend the night here, and I’ll tell you whatever the Lord says to me.’  
  
So the leaders of MoAb spent the night there with BalaAm. 9And [during the night], God came to BalaAm and asked him:  
  
 ‘Who are these men who are with you?’  
  
10And BalaAm replied:  
  
 ‘Balak son of SepPhor and the king of MoAb sent them to Me. For he said:  
  
 11‘Look! These people have come from Egypt… They [literally] cover the land, and now they’re camping close to me. So, come and curse them for me, then I can cut them down and drive them out of the land!’  
  
12But God told BalaAm:  
  
 ‘You must not go with them, nor should you curse these people; for they are blest.’  
  
13So when BalaAm got up the next morning, he told Balak’s [ambassadors]:  
  
 ‘Hurry and return to your lord, because God won’t allow me to go with you.’  
  
14As a result, the MoAbites got up and returned to Balak and told him that BalaAm had refused to come with them. 15So Balak then sent some [of his] rulers that were even more respected than the first ones.  
  
16They went to BalaAm and said:  
  
 ‘This is what Balak son of SepPhor says:  
  
 ‘I beg you; please hurry and come to me, 17for I’ll honor you with great [gifts] and do anything you ask!  
  
 ‘Come and curse these people for me!’  
  
18However, BalaAm answered Balak’s leaders in these words:  
  
 ‘If Balak were to give me his whole house filled with silver and gold, I wouldn’t be able to violate the words of the God Jehovah and do anything good or bad, for I know [that this is wrong].  
  
 19‘However, spend [another] night here, and I will see what the Lord says.’  
  
20Then God came to BalaAm during the night and said to him:  
  
 ‘When these men who came to call you [awaken], get up and go with them... But just do the things that I tell you to do!’  
  
  
21Well when BalaAm arose the next morning, he saddled his burro and went with the leaders of MoAb. 22But then God became very angry and sent His messenger to stop him.  
  
So, while he was riding along on his burro (accompanied by two of his servants), 23when the burro saw the messenger of God standing in her way with a sword in his hand, she turned aside and ran into a field!  
  
Well, BalaAm started hitting the [animal] with a stick to make her [behave].  
  
24Then [later on,] Jehovah’s messenger went and stood in the Avenue of Vines, which had walls on both sides... 25And when the burro saw God’s messenger, she pushed up against the wall, squeezing BalaAm’s foot, and he started beating her again.  
  
26And after that, Jehovah’s messenger went ahead and stood in a narrow place where it was impossible to turn to either the right or to the left. 27And when the burro saw the messenger of God, she just sat down under BalaAm.  
  
Well, BalaAm was furious! And he again started beating the burro with his stick.  
  
28But God opened the burro’s mouth, and she asked BalaAm:  
  
 ‘Just what have I done to you that you’ve started beating me a third time?’  
  
29And BalaAm told the burro:  
  
 ‘You’re making a fool of me, so if I had a sword in my hand I’d kill you!’  
  
30Then the burro said to BalaAm:  
  
 ‘I’m the burro that you’ve ridden since you were young, and have I ever disobeyed you?’  
  
And [BalaAm] replied:  
  
 ‘No.’  
  
31Then God opened BalaAm’s eyes so he could see the messenger of Jehovah standing in the way with his sword in his hand!  
  
So he fell down and bowed with his face to the ground.  
  
32And God’s messenger asked him:  
  
 ‘Why did you beat your burro this third time?  
  
 ‘Look; I came and stood in front of you three times, because the way that you’re heading is wrong!  
  
 ‘And when this burro saw me, she turned away from me all three times. 33For if she hadn’t turned away, I would have killed you and left her alive!’  
  
34Then BalaAm said to Jehovah’s messenger:  
  
 ‘I have sinned! I didn’t realize that it was you standing in our way!  
  
 ‘So, if it’s displeasing to you for me to go on, I’ll turn back.’  
  
35But Jehovah’s messenger told BalaAm:  
  
 ‘Go on with these men.  
  
 ‘However, make sure that whatever I say to you is what you’ll tell them!’  
  
So, BalaAm traveled on with Balak’s governors.  
  
  
36Well, when Balak heard that BalaAm had arrived [in his land], he traveled to a city at the border of the Arnon (which is on the edge of MoAb) to meet him.  
  
37Then Balak asked BalaAm:  
  
 ‘I sent for you, so why didn’t you come to me?  
  
 ‘May I not be allowed to honor you?’  
  
38And BalaAm replied:  
  
 ‘Look, I’m here now. But let me [warn] you... Whatever God says to me is what I must say.’  
  
  
39So BalaAm traveled with Balak until they reached the City of Streets. 40There, Balak offered sheep and calves [to God], then he called for BalaAm and the governors that came with him.  
  
41And since it was morning, Balak took BalaAm to the sacred column of [their] BaAl and introduced him to some of the people there.