### Numbers

## Chapter 23

1Then BalaAm said to Balak:  
  
 ‘Build 7 altars for me here, and prepare 7 calves and 7 rams for me.’  
  
2So Balak did just as BalaAm told him… He offered up a calf and a ram on each altar.  
  
3Then he said to Balak:  
  
 ‘Stand here by your sacrifices, and I’ll go to see if God will appear and meet with me... Then I’ll tell you whatever He says.’  
  
So, Balak stood by his sacrifices 4while BalaAm went to enquire of God… He went straight ahead, and God appeared to him.  
  
Then BalaAm said:  
  
 ‘I have prepared 7 altars, and I’ve offered a calf and a ram on each of the altars.’  
  
5And God said:  
  
 ‘Return to Balak and tell him this...’  
  
...then He put the words into BalaAm’s mouth.  
  
  
6So BalaAm returned to [Balak], who was standing next to his whole-burnt offerings with all the leaders of MoAb. Then the Breath of God came over BalaAm 7and he spoke this prophecy:  
  
 ‘I was summoned by MoAb’s King Balak…  
 To MesoPotamia and the mountains in the east.  
 He said: ‘Come and curse Jacob for me…  
 ‘For me, call a curse on IsraEl.’  
  
 8‘But, how can I curse what the Lord won’t curse,  
 Or dedicate those whom God won’t destroy?  
 9For I see them on the tops of the Mountains…  
 In the hills, I see and observe them.  
  
 {‘Look!} But, these people must live all alone…  
 They must not be counted as one of the nations.  
 10For, who can count Jacob’s offspring…  
 Who can count all the families of IsraEl?  
  
 ‘May my soul die among the souls of the righteous,  
 And may my offspring become as their offspring.’  
  
11Then Balak said to BalaAm:  
  
 ‘What have you done to me!?  
  
 ‘I called you to curse my enemies! But look… You’ve greatly blessed them!’  
  
12And BalaAm replied to Balak:  
  
 ‘Shouldn’t I say whatever the Lord puts into my mouth?’  
  
13And Balak said:  
  
 ‘Then, come with me to another place where you won’t see these people… You’ll only see part of them. Curse them for me there!’  
  
14So he took him to a high place in a field, to the top of some quarried blocks, where he built 7 altars and offered a calf and a ram on each of the altars.  
  
15Then BalaAm said to Balak:  
  
 ‘Now, stand next to your sacrifices, while I’ll go [and speak to] God.’  
  
16Well, God met with BalaAm and He said:  
  
 ‘Return to Balak and tell him this...’  
  
...then He put the words into his mouth.  
  
  
17So BalaAm returned to Balak, who was standing next to his whole-burnt offerings along with all the leaders of MoAb.  
  
And Balak asked:  
  
 ‘What did the Lord say?’  
  
18Then [BalaAm] spoke this prophecy:  
  
 ‘Arise and listen, O Balak,  
 Listen to the proofs, O son of SepPhor.  
  
 19‘God doesn’t waver like men,  
 Nor may He be threatened like their sons.  
 Will He talk and not make it happen;  
 Must He speak and not keep His Word?  
  
 20‘{Look!} I’ve been instructed to bless them,  
 So I’ll bless and I’ll not turn back.  
 21For, there must be no trouble in Jacob,  
 Nor may sorrow be seen among IsraEl.  
  
 ‘For their God Jehovah is with them,  
 And the glory of kings is among them.  
 22It was God who brought them from Egypt,  
 And like the rhinoceros is His glory.  
  
 23‘There are no sooth-sayers in Jacob,  
 And in IsraEl, there are no enchanters.  
 So, Jacob and IsraEl will soon be told  
 All the things God will do.  
  
 24‘{Look!} These people will become like the cubs of a lion,  
 And they’ll then grow into lions.  
 They won’t lie down ‘til they’ve eaten their prey,  
 And drunk the blood of those they’ve destroyed.’  
  
25Then Balak said to BalaAm:  
  
 ‘If you can’t curse the people for me, don’t bless them!’  
  
26And BalaAm replied:  
  
 ‘Didn’t I tell you that I must say whatever God tells me?’  
  
27And Balak said:  
  
 ‘Then, come and I’ll take you to another place that’s more pleasing to God, and you can curse them for me there.’  
  
  
28So Balak took BalaAm to the top of Mount PhoGor (the part that runs into the desert).  
  
29And BalaAm said to Balak:  
  
 ‘Build 7 altars for me here, and prepare 7 calves and 7 rams for me.’  
  
30And Balak did just as BalaAm told him, offering a calf and a ram on each altar.