

Joshua 24:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you:

Analysis

Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab...sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you—this incident (Numbers 22-24) reveals spiritual warfare beyond military conflict. Balak (בָּלָק) hired the prophet-diviner Balaam (בָּלָם) to curse Israel, attempting to defeat them through supernatural means. The verb qara (קָרָא, to call/summon) indicates Balak's desperation—unable to defeat Israel militarily, he sought occult assistance.

Balaam's attempted curse represents satanic opposition to God's elect people. Though Balaam desired reward (2 Peter 2:15, Jude 11), God prevented him from cursing Israel. Instead, he prophesied blessing, including the Messianic oracle: 'There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel' (Numbers 24:17). This demonstrates that no weapon formed against God's people can prosper (Isaiah 54:17)—even enemy curses become blessings.

Historical Context

The Balaam incident occurred around 1406 BC as Israel camped on the plains of Moab, preparing to enter Canaan (Numbers 22:1). Balak, king of Moab, feared Israel after their defeat of the Amorites. Balaam, from Pethor near the Euphrates River (Numbers 22:5), was a renowned diviner. An archaeological inscription from Deir Alla (Jordan, 8th century BC) mentions 'Balaam son of Beor, the seer of the gods,' confirming his historical existence. Though initially prevented from cursing

Israel, Balaam later advised Moab to seduce Israel into idolatry (Numbers 25:1-3, 31:16), leading to his death (Numbers 31:8).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Balak's hiring of Balaam reveal spiritual warfare beyond physical military threats?
2. What does God's transformation of Balaam's intended curse into blessing teach about divine sovereignty over enemy schemes?
3. How do the New Testament warnings about 'the way of Balaam' (2 Peter 2:15, Jude 11) apply to Christians today?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא כִּי יְהִי קָרֵם
arose Then Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab and warred
H6965 H1111 H1121 H6834 H4428 H4124 H3898

לְקָרֵל לְבָעֵר וּלְבָלַע מִזְבֵּחַ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל
against Israel and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse
H3478 H7971 H7121 H1109 H1121 H1160 H7043

אֶת־קָרֵם:

H853

Additional Cross-References

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

Judges 11:25 (Kingdom): And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them,

Micah 6:5 (Kingdom): O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.

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