

Numbers 22:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

When Balak heard that Balaam was come—After Balaam's difficult journey (the donkey incident just occurred), King Balak personally travels to the border city of Arnon to meet him. The location **in the utmost coast** (בִּקְצֵה גְבוּלוֹ, *biqtseh g'vulo*, "at the extremity of his border") emphasizes urgency and honor. Moabite kings didn't typically travel to border towns; Balak's desperation over Israel's proximity drove him to this unusual courtesy.

The meeting place at Arnon carries geographical and theological significance—this river marked the border between Moab and Amorite territory that Israel had just conquered (21:13-15). Balak met Balaam at the very boundary that proved Israel's unstoppable advance. The irony: Balak seeks a curse at the site of Israel's recent victory, where God has already demonstrated His power.

Historical Context

Arnon (modern Wadi Mujib in Jordan) was the northern boundary of Moab, flowing west into the Dead Sea. Balak had recently lost territory north of Arnon to Israel, who defeated the Amorite kings Sihon and Og. This meeting occurred circa 1406 BC, just before Israel entered Canaan.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does Balak's personal journey to meet Balaam reveal about the intensity of fear that Israel's God can inspire?
2. How does meeting at the site of Israel's recent victory ironically undermine Balak's entire plan?
3. When have you sought human solutions at the very place where God has already proven His sovereignty?

Interlinear Text

וּשְׁמָ ע	בַּל ק	כִּי	בָּא	בַּלְעָם	וַיֵּצֵא		
heard	And when Balak	H3588	was come	that Balaam	he went out		
H8085	H1111		H935	H1109	H3318		
לִקְרֹאת וְ	אֵל	עַיִר	מוֹאָב	אֲשֶׁר	עַל	הַגִּבּוֹל:	אֶרֶץ אֲרָן
to meet	H413	him unto a city	of Moab	H834	H5921	coast	of Arnon
H7125		H5892	H4124			H1366	H769
אֲשֶׁר	בְּקֵצַהּ	הַגִּבּוֹל:					
H834	which is in the utmost	coast					
	H7097	H1366					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 16:2 (Parallel theme): For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

Acts 28:15 (Parallel theme): And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

Jeremiah 48:20 (Parallel theme): Moab is confounded; for it is broken down: howl and cry; tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled,

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