

Numbers 22:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

Balak sending messengers to Balaam 'the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people' shows the great distance Balak went to secure spiritual power against Israel. Pethor was approximately 400 miles from Moab, near the Euphrates. This desperate journey reveals Balak's conviction that spiritual weapons were necessary where military might failed. It also shows the pagan world's recognition that invisible spiritual realities determine visible outcomes. Paul affirms this principle: 'we wrestle not against flesh and blood' (Ephesians 6:12).

Historical Context

Balaam was evidently a famous diviner in the ancient Near East. His reputation extended across hundreds of miles. Archaeological discoveries at Deir Alla in Jordan reference a 'Balaam son of Beor' who was a 'seer of the gods,' confirming his historical existence and regional fame. His technique of blessing and cursing for hire typified pagan religious practitioners.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Balak's desperate search for spiritual power reveal the reality of spiritual warfare?
2. What does it mean that spiritual realities determine physical outcomes?
3. How do we recognize when visible problems have invisible spiritual causes?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁלַח ח מַלְאָכָיִם אֶל בָּלָעַם בְּנֵי אוֹר
He sent **messengers** ^{H413} **therefore unto Balaam** **of the children** **of Beor**
^{H7971} ^{H4397} ^{H1109} ^{H1121} ^{H1160}

עַל אֲשֶׁר רַ פְּתוֹרָה הַנָּהָר הָאָרֶץ בְּנֵי
to Pethor ^{H834} ^{H5921} **which is by the river** **of the earth** **of the children**
^{H6604} ^{H5104} ^{H776} ^{H1121}

עַם לֵאמֹר לֵוִי לִקְרֹא הִנֵּה
Behold there is a people **to call** ^{H0} **him saying** ^{H2009}
^{H5971} ^{H7121} ^{H559}

עַם יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם הִנֵּה כָסָה אֶת
Behold there is a people **come out** **from Egypt** ^{H2009} **behold they cover** ^{H853}
^{H5971} ^{H3318} ^{H4714} ^{H3680}

עַיִן הָאָרֶץ וְהֵיא וְיָשְׁבוּ מִמֶּלִי:
the face **of the earth** ^{H1931} **and they abide** **over against**
^{H5869} ^{H776} ^{H3427} ^{H4136}

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 23:4 (References Egypt): Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.

Joshua 24:9 (Parallel theme): 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:

Micah 6:5 (Parallel theme): 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.

Jude 1:11 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Revelation 2:14 (Parallel theme): But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Joshua 13:22 (Parallel theme): Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them.

Numbers 23:7 (Parallel theme): And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.