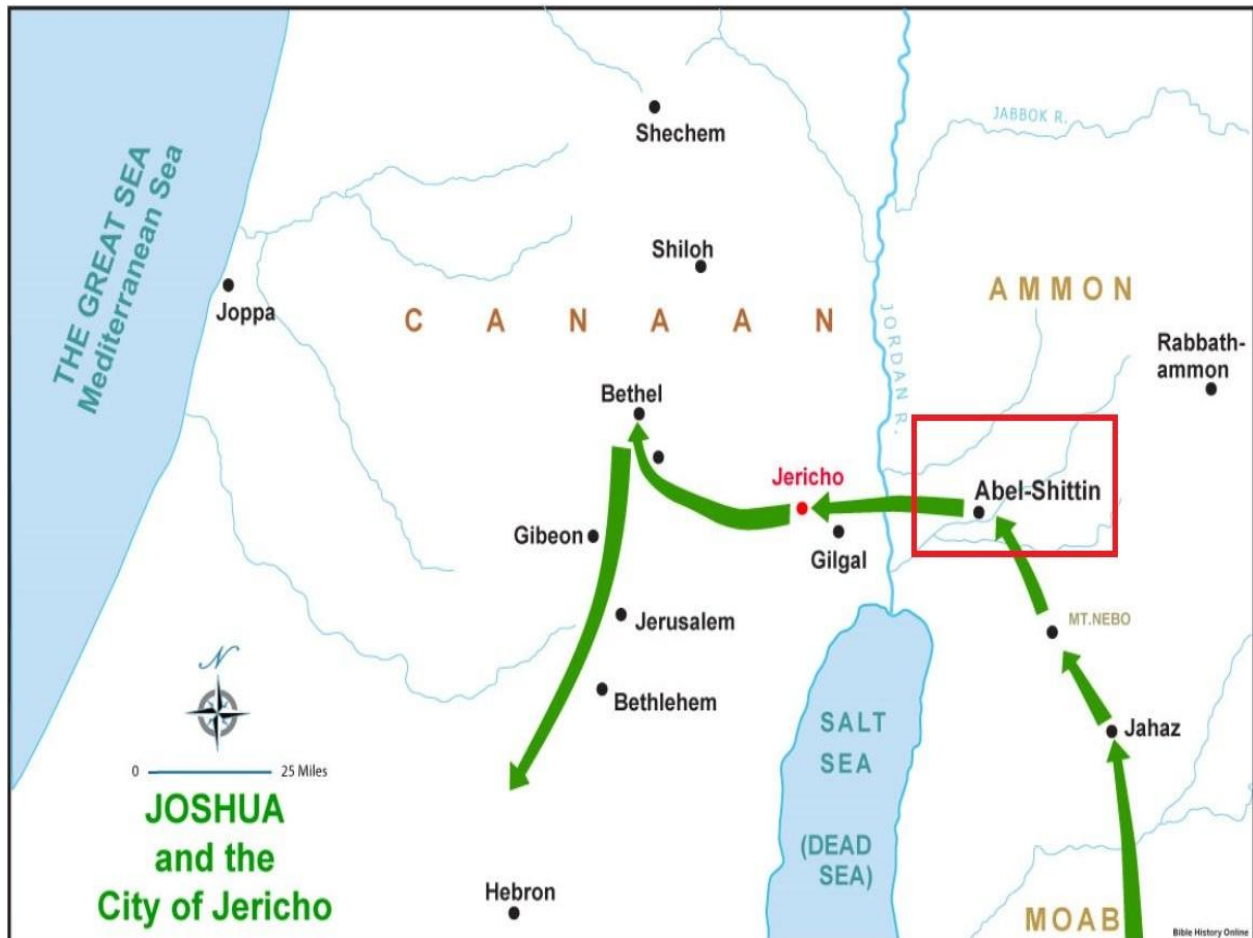


## Numbers 22

Verse 1

Then the sons of Israel journeyed on, and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho.

See Map 2205



Israel was poised to cross the Jordan and begin the assault on Canaan at Jericho but before this took place Israel was caught up in a shameful act of rebellion.

This generation will enter Canaan but they displayed many of the same traits that the previous generation showed.

Verses 2 - 6

<sup>2</sup> Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. <sup>3</sup> So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel. <sup>4</sup> Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this horde will eat up all that is around us, as the ox eats up the grass of the field!” And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. <sup>5</sup> So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the *Euphrates* River, *in* the land of the sons of his people, to call for him, saying, “Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they have covered the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me. <sup>6</sup> Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

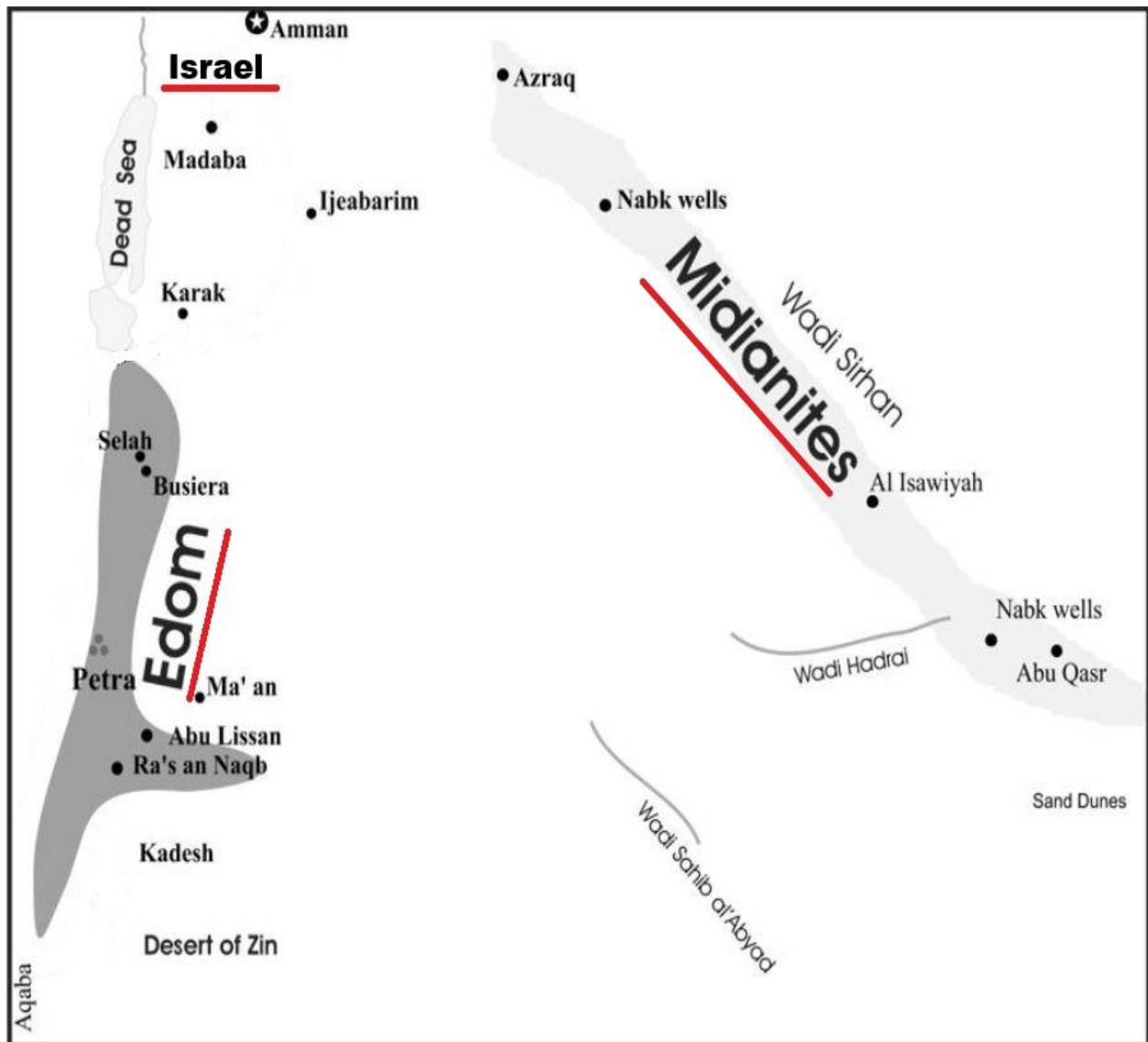
<sup>4</sup> Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this horde will eat up all that is around us, as the ox eats up the grass of the field!” And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.

See Map 2210



The map above is a map of Midian where Moses fled to get away from the King of Egypt. But this is not the group of Midianites that is talked about in this event. There is another group of Midianites that are living in an area that is east of Edom.

See map 2211



<sup>5</sup> So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the Euphrates River, in the land of the sons of his people, to call for him, saying, “Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they have covered the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me.

See pic 2215



The king of Moab, most likely had to call on Balaam because the King of Midian didn't want to join Moab in a physical battle against Israel but he was willing to help by suggesting a plan that would weaken Israel. So Midian informed the king of Moab about Balaam. It was a very devious but effective way of weakening Israel.

**<sup>6</sup> Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."**

Balaam had quite the reputation. He lived about 350 miles north of Moab but the King of Midian knew about his bona fides and told the King of Moab how he could help.

Israel did not go to war with Edom when they were refused passage, so why did Balak, the King of Moab, assume Israel would go to war against him now? He should have asked Balaam if Israel was a danger to Moab before devising this evil plan to hurt Israel.

Verses 7 - 14

<sup>7</sup> So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian left with the *fees for* divination in their hands; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him. <sup>8</sup> And he said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you just as the Lord may speak to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam. <sup>9</sup> Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" <sup>10</sup> Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent *word* to me: <sup>11</sup> 'Behold, there is a people who came out of Egypt, and they cover the surface of the land; now come, curse them for me; perhaps I will be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" <sup>12</sup> But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." <sup>13</sup> So Balaam got up in the morning and said to Balak's representatives, "Go *back* to your land, for the Lord has refused to let me go with you." <sup>14</sup> And the representatives from Moab got up and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

<sup>7</sup> So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian left with the *fees for* divination in their hands; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him.

The fact that the elders of Midian and Moab made this long journey together indicates that these two countries had a close relationship with each other.

<sup>8</sup> And he said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you just as the Lord may speak to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam.

This sounds noble on the part of Balaam but his true motives will soon be revealed.

<sup>12</sup> But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

Was this message to Balaam unclear in any way?

<sup>13</sup> So Balaam got up in the morning and said to Balak's representatives, "Go *back* to your land, for the Lord has refused to let me go with you."

So far so good, but temptation seldom comes with one attempt.

Verses 15 - 20

<sup>15</sup> Then Balak sent representatives once again, more numerous and more distinguished than the previous. <sup>16</sup> They came to Balaam and said to him, “This is what Balak the son of Zippor says: ‘I beg you, let nothing keep you from coming to me; <sup>17</sup> for I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you tell me. Please come then, curse this people for me.’” <sup>18</sup> But Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, “*Even if Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the Lord my God.* <sup>19</sup> Now please, you also stay here tonight, and I will find out what else the Lord will say to me.” <sup>20</sup> And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If the men have come to call you, rise *and* go with them; but you shall do only the thing that I tell you.”

<sup>15</sup> Then Balak sent representatives once again, more numerous and more distinguished than the previous.

If the king was trying to show true respect to Balaam, he should have accepted Balaam's refusal to curse Israel? But Balak knew how to stroke a diviner's ego so he sent a more impressive delegation.

<sup>16</sup> They came to Balaam and said to him, “This is what Balak the son of Zippor says: ‘I beg you, let nothing keep you from coming to me; <sup>17</sup> for I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you tell me. Please come then, curse this people for me.’”

Balak assumed Balaam wanted a larger reward so he offered him great riches if he would just do what he wanted.

<sup>18</sup> But Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, “*Even if Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the Lord my God.*

Again, this sure sounds noble.

<sup>19</sup> Now please, you also stay here tonight, and I will find out what else the Lord will say to me.”

God had already told Balaam “**Do not go with them**”.

**<sup>20</sup> And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If the men have come to call you, rise and go with them; but you shall do only the thing that I tell you.”**

God allowed Balaam to go but it was not His will. There is a good example of this in the Book of Samuel. When Israel requested a king, God granted their desire but it was still contrary to the will of God.

See 1 Samuel 8:7

**<sup>7</sup> And the Lord said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people regarding all that they say to you, because they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.”**

The same thing may have happened here. God gave him permission to go because that is what Balaam desired in his heart but it was still contrary to the will of God.

Balaam was told, “You shall do only the thing that I tell you.” Let’s wait and see if Balaam will do what the Lord has told him to do and then we can decide if Balaam’s word is as noble as it sounds.

There is a good video concerning Balaam which proves that the events of the O.T. are not just folklore but real history.

See video 2220

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.26.html>

Verses 21 - 27

**<sup>21</sup> So Balaam arose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the leaders of Moab. <sup>22</sup> But God was angry that he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. <sup>23</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn in his hand, the donkey turned off from the road and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey to guide her back onto the road. <sup>24</sup> Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, *with* a stone wall on this side and on that side.**

**<sup>25</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed herself against the wall and pressed Balaam’s foot against the wall, so he struck her again. <sup>26</sup> Then the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right or to the left. <sup>27</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his staff.**



**<sup>21</sup> So Balaam arose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the leaders of Moab. <sup>22</sup> But God was angry that he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.**

It is obvious that God allowed Balaam to go but He was not happy about it because Balaam had chosen wealth over doing His will.

**<sup>23</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn in his hand, the donkey turned off from the road and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey to guide her back onto the road.**

Balaam will strike his donkey 3 times in verses 23 thru 27 not realizing that his donkey was trying to save his master from a sudden death.

Verses 28 - 30

**<sup>28</sup> Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” <sup>29</sup> And Balaam said to the donkey, “*It is* because you have made a mockery of me! If only there had been a sword in my hand! For I would have killed you by now!” <sup>30</sup> But the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been in the habit of doing such a thing to you?” And he said, “No.”**

**<sup>28</sup> Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?”**

This should have shocked Balaam enough to bring him back to reality but he responds to the donkey like this was a normal event. And then he actually complains to his donkey that he has been treated unfairly.

**<sup>29</sup> And Balaam said to the donkey, “*It is* because you have made a mockery of me! If only there had been a sword in my hand! For I would have killed you by now!”**

It seems that Balaam is being the real jackass in this episode.



<sup>30</sup> But the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been in the habit of doing such a thing to you?” And he said, “No.”

When a donkey uses better logic than his master something has gone awry.

Verses 31 – 35

<sup>31</sup> Then the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground. <sup>32</sup> Then the angel of the Lord said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was reckless *and* contrary to me. <sup>33</sup> But the donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away from me, I certainly would have killed you just now, and let her live.” <sup>34</sup> So Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, “I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back.” <sup>35</sup> But the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word that I tell you.” So Balaam went along with the representatives of Balak.

Then the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground.

Balaam misunderstand what was going on because his spiritual eyes were blinded by his desire for a big payday.

<sup>32</sup> Then the angel of the Lord said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was reckless *and* contrary to me.

This is an accurate definition of sin, that which is reckless and contrary to God.

<sup>34</sup> So Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, “I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back.”

Does Balaam’s reply to the Lord make sense? Consider the following:

1. He says he has sinned because he didn't know the Lord was standing in the way. That was not His sin! His sin was that he did not listen to the Lord's command when He said "Do not go with them".

2. Then Balaam says, "If it is displeasing to you I will turn back". This is like the person that says "IF I have sinned then I am sorry". Balaam has convinced himself that God has changed His mind, but that is not the case. God allowed him to go but it was not His will.

This is not like the situation that many of us face. We may wonder what God's will is concerning some matter we are considering and after prayer we make a decision that proves to be a mistake in time. That kind of decision is not a defiant rejection of the Lord's will unless you happen to be one of those people who believe that the Lord talks to you in a way that is unmistakable. Balaam was given a firm NO from the Lord and then came back to see if His answer might change.

**<sup>35</sup> But the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word that I tell you." So Balaam went along with the representatives of Balak.**

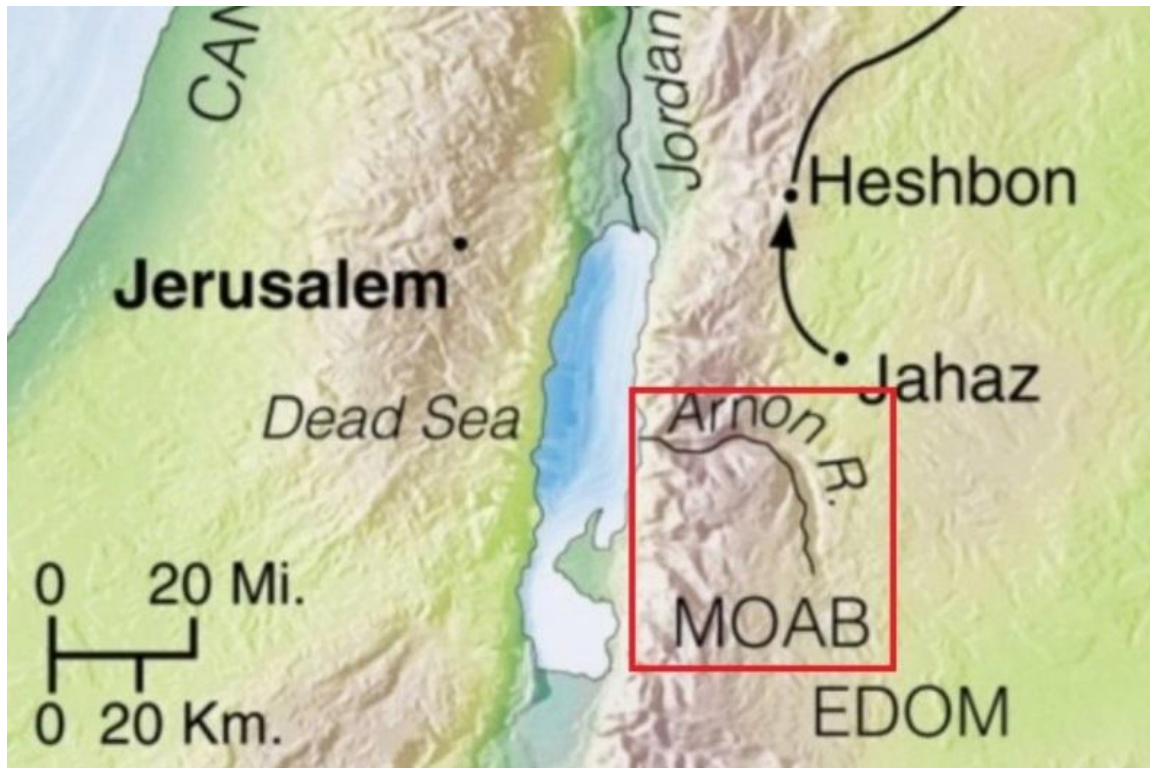
Balaam had made the wrong choice but God was giving him an opportunity to do the right thing. God is always looking for an opportunity to give mankind a second chance when he has done wrong.

Verses 36 – 38

**<sup>36</sup> When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the Arnon border, at the extreme end of the border. <sup>37</sup> Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not urgently send *word* to you to call for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I really unable to honor you?" <sup>38</sup> So Balaam said to Balak, "Behold, I have come to you now! Am I really able to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that *only* shall I speak."**

**<sup>36</sup> When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the Arnon border, at the extreme end of the border.**

See Map 2225



<sup>37</sup> Then Balak said to Balaam, “Did I not urgently send *word* to you to call for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I really unable to honor you?”

Balak honored Balaam by going to meet him but rebuked him for his delay.

<sup>38</sup> So Balaam said to Balak, “Behold, I have come to you now! Am I really able to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that *only* shall I speak.”

Balaam warns the King of Moab that he may not like the message.

Verses 39 - 41

<sup>39</sup> And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. <sup>40</sup> Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent *some* to Balaam and the leaders who were with him. <sup>41</sup> Then it came about in the morning that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal, and he saw from there a portion of the people.

**<sup>40</sup> Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent *some* to Balaam and the leaders who were with him.**

This was more than a free lunch or dinner as we know it in our time. The food shared by Balak was a fellowship meal that had been offered to a false god.

**<sup>41</sup> Then it came about in the morning that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal, and he saw from there a portion of the people.**

Chemosh was the primary god of the Moabites but it was common for the people of that time to worship a number of gods.