

The Battle Really Begins!

Purpose: to show that everything that God takes us through is to prepare us to fight and overcome our enemies.

The children of Israel are now closer than ever to entering into the promised land.

- They have finally begun to obey
- They have defeated two great kings (Sihon, king of the Ammorites and Og, king of Bashan)
- In the previous chapter Moab is mentioned 7 times:
 - They camped east of Moab (v. 11)
 - They camped near the border of Moab (v. 13,15)
 - Once again, they camped near Moab (v. 20)
 - Moab had been defeated by the people that Israel have just defeated! (v. 26)
 - Moab was mentioned in a proverb as being taken (v. 28)
 - They, and their false god Chemosh, were threatened in the proverb:

Num 21:29 - Woe to you, Moab! You have perished, O people of Chemosh! He has given his sons as fugitives, And his daughters into captivity, To Sihon king of the Amorites.

Now the children of Israel are headed toward Moab, and this is where the narrative picks up:

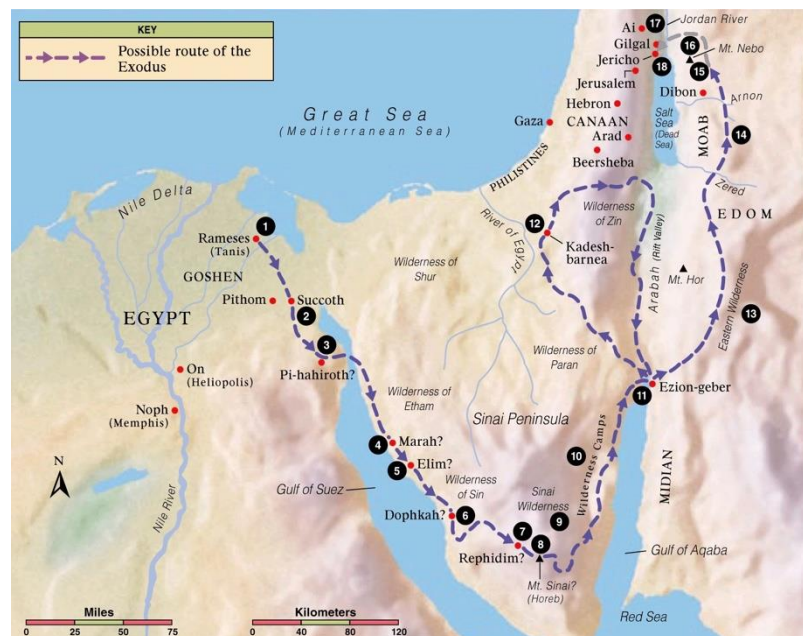
Num 22:1 - Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan *across from* Jericho.

Num 22:2 - Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

Num 22:3 - And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they *were* many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel.

Num 22:4 - So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time.

Num 22:5 - Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which *is* near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying:



"Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me!

Num 22:6 - Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they *are* too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall 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."

There are two people that we are going to follow:

Balak – what do we know about him?

- He is the King of Moab, who were the descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew (Genesis 19:37). Ruth was from Moab.
- His people worshipped a false god (Chemosh).
- He had seen what Israel had done to the two strongest kings of the area, Sihon (Amorites) and Og (Bashan)

This is what the people of Moab felt about Israel

- They were exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many
- They were sick with dread
- They went to their neighbours, the Midianites, and said: "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field."

Who is Balaam?

- He is called a soothsayer (Joshua 13:22) and is mentioned several times in other places in the bible: Joshua 24:9,10; Nehemiah 13:2; Micah 6:5; 2Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11; Revelation 2:14
- Soothsayer is the Hebrew word Qasam, and means to practice divination. It is also associated with diviners and false prophets.
- He loved the wages of unrighteousness (2Peter 2:15)
- The bible refers to the "error of Balaam for profit"
- The bible also speaks of the "doctrine of Balaam", which we will consider at the end of this narrative.

The king of Moab (Balak) sends for Balaam:

- He wants Balaam to curse them
- He believes that Israel is too strong for him
- He believes that if Balaam curses them, they will be cursed and he will be able to defeat them.

Three things that we can already see:

- The enemy worshipped false gods that could not deliver them
- The enemy was afraid of the children of Israel
- The enemy attempted to use spiritual weapons against Israel

Eph 6:10 - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Eph 6:11 - Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Eph 6:12 - For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Three things that must be learned in the wilderness:

- We must have faith
- We must learn obedience
- We must really understand that God is in control – even though we don't always know what is happening

One more thing:

- They had no idea what was going on!
- God doesn't tell us everything!

Summary:

- We have real enemies that will attempt to use spiritual weapons against us.
- Usually, we have no idea what is happening in the heavenly realm.
- This is why we must pass through the wilderness, so that we can learn to overcome!

Deu 23:4,5