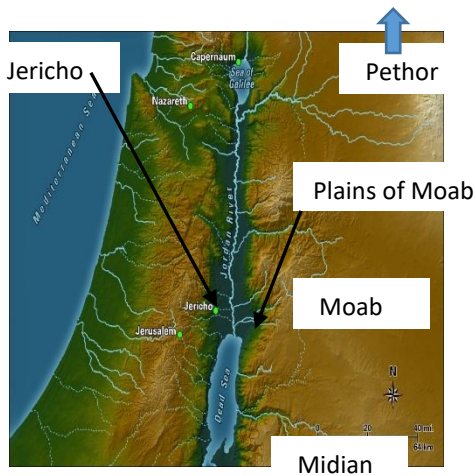


Sermon Notes

“Playing God for Profit”

Sermon series: Lessons learnt from Balaam and his donkey”

A few things I need to remember from hearing today’s Bible Reading and Teaching.



The Bible Reading

Numbers 22 verses 1 to 14

¹ Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across from Jericho.

² Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites,

³ and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites.

⁴ The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, “This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.”

So Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, ⁵ sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, who was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River, in his native land. Balak said: “A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me.

⁶ Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed.”

⁷ The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said.

⁸ “Spend the night here,” Balaam said to them, “and I will report back to you with the answer the Lord gives me.” So the Moabite officials stayed with him.

⁹ God came to Balaam and asked, “Who are these men with you?”

¹⁰ Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message: ¹¹ ‘A people that has come

out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them and drive them away.’”

¹² But God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.”

¹³ The next morning Balaam got up and said to Balak’s officials, “Go back to your own country, for the Lord has refused to let me go with you.”

¹⁴ So the Moabite officials returned to Balak and said, “Balaam refused to come with us.” (NIV)

A prayer

Almighty God and loving heavenly Father, guide me and teach me of yourself from your Word. Help me and others to see the wisdom and value of living life according to your word the Bible; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

The Bible Study

Before reading the passage.....

- You must read Genesis 12 verses 1 to 7 first and keep thinking back to it in subsequent Bible Studies. Because what is promised by God to Abraham forms the background to understanding the story of Balaam

and why it’s in our Bibles. What’s promised?

- Have a look at the map (See over) and familiarise yourself with the places where Balaam’s story takes place.
- Note: God’s people the Israelites, have become a great nation. It’s forty years after leaving Egypt. Now they are on the verge of entering Canaan the promised Land.
- Balaam was not an Israelite but a renowned prophet from Babylon region (vs 5).

Now read the Bible Reading from Numbers 22 verses 1 to 14.

Question:

1. Why did Balak call on Balaam? What does this tell you about Balak and the nations and their beliefs?
2. What did God say to Balaam? (See verse 12). Is this what Balaam reported back to Balak’s officials? (See verse 13)
3. What do you find interesting, or unusual about the encounter between Balaam and God?
4. What are your initial thoughts about why God has included Balaam’s story in the Bible?

There is more to come in the coming weeks of Balaam’s story!