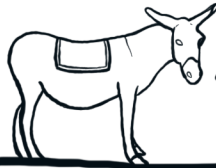


NUMBERS

CHAPTER

23



CHARACTERS

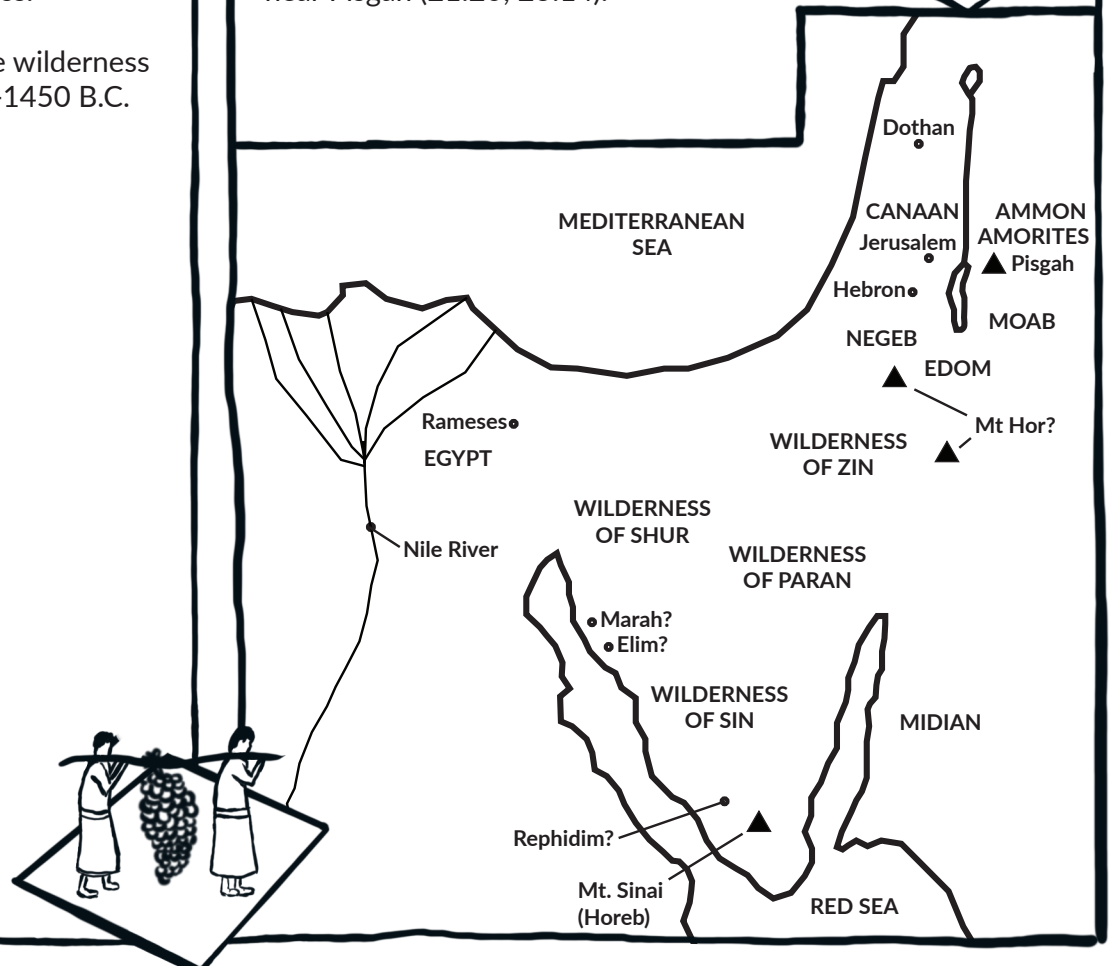
- Balak – Son of Zippor, he was the king of Moab.
- Balaam – Son of Beor, he was from Pethor of Mesopotamia (Deu 23:4) and a practitioner of divination (Jos 13:22):

WHEN

- These events occurred towards the end of the Israelites' 40 years wandering in the wilderness.
- The Israelites were in the wilderness from approximately 1490-1450 B.C.

WHERE

- The Israelites were camped on the border of the Amorites and Moabites near Pisgah (21:20; 23:14).





OUTLINE

- BALAAM'S FIRST DISCOURSE (23:1-12):

- + Balaam told Balak to build 7 altars and sacrifice 7 bulls and 7 rams.
- + Balaam left the king at the altars and went to meet with the Lord.
- + God "put a word in Balaam's mouth" and sent him back to the Balak.
- + In verses 7-10, rather than cursing Israel, as Balak had asked him to do, he blessed the Israelites.
- + Balak was angry, but Balaam told him he was not at liberty to curse a people who God intended to bless.
- + He asked Balak, "Must I not take care to speak what the Lord puts in my mouth?"

- BALAAM'S SECOND DISCOURSE (23:13-26):

- + Balak invited Balaam to travel with him to another location overlooking the Israelite camp and to curse the people from there.
- + They went to the field of Zophim, built 7 altars, and sacrificed a bull and a ram on each.
- + When this was complete, Balaam went to meet with the Lord and God put another "word in his mouth."
- + Balaam's second "discourse" announced that God was not like fickle men who change their minds. God was intent on blessing Israel and Balaam could not revoke the blessing.
- + He described Israel as a lioness that would not rest until it had devoured its prey.
- + Balak told Balaam to stop speaking if he could not curse his enemies.
- + Balaam told him he didn't have a choice, he had to speak the words of God.

- BALAAM'S THIRD DISCOURSE (23:27-30):

- + Balak invited Balaam to yet another location to try to curse Israel a third time.
- + He took Balaam to the top of Peor, overlooking the desert.
- + They built 7 altars and sacrificed a bull and a ram on each altar.

APPLICATION

- It would have been easy for Balaam to fabricate some kind of curse on Israel to make the king happy, but Balaam inquired of the Lord each time he was to speak.
- We need to go to God and His word first before we condemn or endorse anything.
- As disciples, our job isn't to appease people by telling them what they want to hear, it's to faithfully communicate God's words to them.