

The background features a dark blue gradient with faint, overlapping circular patterns and numerical scales. Some of the visible numbers include 40, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, and 260. The text is centered and rendered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

On the Trail of the Beast: Balaam, the Prophet Who Became a Witch

Part VII – Part I

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The Background

The Israelites Become a Force to be Reckoned With...

Israel Becomes a Land Holding Nation

- And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel.
- And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong.
- And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof. (Numbers 21:23-25)



Israel Becomes a Land Holding Nation

- Sihon was an Amorite king that conquered the northern lands of Moab and established a kingdom there.
- When Israel came through, they just wanted to pass through the land and prepare to invade Jericho.
- Since Jericho and other cities were controlled by the Amorites, they directed Sihon to resist the Israelites.
- The Israelites wiped out the Amorites and for the first time, they inhabited their land.

Israel Adds to Their Land Holdings

- Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.
- And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.
- And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei. (Numbers 21:31-33)



Israel Adds to Their Land Holdings

- And YHWH said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.
- So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land. (Numbers 21:34-35)



Moses' Post-Battle Assessment

- **Moses would explain later:**

- Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.
- And YHWH said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.
- So YHWH our Elohim delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining.
(Deuteronomy 3:1-3)

Moses' Post-Battle Assessment

- **Moses would explain later:**
 - And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.
 - All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many.
 - And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city. (Deuteronomy 3:4-6)

Moses' Post-Battle Assessment

- **Moses would explain later:**
 - But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves.
 - And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon;
 - (Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;) (Deuteronomy 3:7-9)

Moses' Post-Battle Assessment

- **Moses would explain later:**

- All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.
- For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.
- And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.
- And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.
(Deuteronomy 3:10-13)

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Moab's Israelite Problem

The Assessment

The Moabites Intelligence Assessment of Israel!

- And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho.
- And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.
- And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.
- And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. (Numbers 22:1-4)



The Moabites Intelligence Assessment of Israel!

- It was clear, the Moabites thought they were next on the Israelite invasion list.
- They watched in horror as their former Amorite enemies to the north were not only defeated, but they were also wiped out!
- While they were glad to see their Amorite enemies destroyed, they feared that their Israelite neighbors would be worse.
- They did NOT have the military capability to survive an Israelite onslaught. They had to come up with another way to stop Israel.

The Moabite Solution???

The Moabites Call Upon Balaam

The Moabites Call for a Special Kind of Help!

- 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:
- Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. (Numbers 22:5-6)

The Moabites Bribe Balaam!

- And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.
- And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as YHWH shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam. (Numbers 22:7-8)
 - They knew that Balaam had an inside track to YHWH. Some authorities argue that he was the leading gentile prophet in the region. (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. III, ¶728)
 - They needed him to curse Israel so that they could preserve their own nation.
 - Like with most witchcraft, people wanting someone cursed usually must pay quite a sum of money to accomplish their desire.

The Moabites Visit Balaam

- And *Elohim* came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?
- And Balaam said unto *Elohim*, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying,
- Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.
- And *Elohim* said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed. (Numbers 22:9-12)

Balaam Refuses the Moabite Offer

- And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for YHWH refuseth to give me leave to go with you.
- And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.
- And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. (Numbers 22:13-15)

Balaam Again Turns Down the Moabites

- And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:
- For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.
- And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of YHWH my Elohim, to do less or more. (Numbers 22:16-18)

Balaam Decides to Ask YHWH Again

- Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what YHWH will say unto me more.
- And Elohim came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.
- And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. (Numbers 22:19-21)

Balaam's Livestock Problem

- And Elohim's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of YHWH stood in the way for an adversary against him.
- Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of YHWH standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.
- But the angel of YHWH stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.
- And when the ass saw the angel of YHWH, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. (Numbers 22:22-25)

Balaam's Livestock Problem

- And the angel of YHWH went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.
- And when the ass saw the angel of YHWH, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.
- And YHWH opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? (Numbers 22:26-28)

Balaam's Livestock Problem

- And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.
- And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.
- Then YHWH opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of YHWH standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. (Numbers 22:29-31)

Balaam's Livestock Problem

- And the angel of YHWH said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:
- And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.
- And Balaam said unto the angel of YHWH, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.
- And the angel of YHWH said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. (Numbers 22:32-35)

Balaam's Livestock Problem

- And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.
- And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?
- And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that Elohim putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.
(Numbers 22:36-38)

Balaam Greeted by Balak, King of Moab

- And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.
- And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?
- And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that Elohim putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.
(Numbers 22:36-38)

Balaam Greeted by Balak, King of Moab

- And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth.
- And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him.
- And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.
(Numbers 22:39-41)

Balaam's First Oracle

- And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.
- And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram.
- And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure YHWH will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.
- And Elohim met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. (Numbers 23:1-4)

Balaam's First Oracle

- And YHWH put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.
- And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.
- 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. (Numbers 23:5-7)

Balaam's First Oracle

- How shall I curse, whom El hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom YHWH hath not defied?
- For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.
- Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! (Numbers 23:8-10)

Balak's Anger Towards Balaam

- And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.
- And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which YHWH hath put in my mouth? (Numbers 23:11-12)
 - Balak did not understand what Balaam was trying to tell him.
 - Balak was looking for a “magic word” from Balaam.
 - Rabbi Ginzberg said that Balak was a powerful magician in his own right. He used that magic to gain control of the Kingdom of Moab. (*Legends of the Jews*, Vol. III, ¶720)
 - Balak sent his people to garner Balaam's services because he could not accomplish what he wanted on his own.

Balak's Anger Towards Balaam

- And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence.
- And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.
- And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet YHWH yonder. And YHWH met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus. (Numbers 23:13-16)

Balaam Prepares a Second Altar

- And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet YHWH yonder.
- And YHWH met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.
- And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath YHWH spoken? (Numbers 23:15-17)

Balaam's Second Oracle

- And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:
- El is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?
- Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. (Numbers 23:18-20)

Balaam's Second Oracle

- He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: YHWH his Elohim is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.
- El brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.
- Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath El wrought!
- Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. (Numbers 23:21-24)

Balaam's Second Oracle

- And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.
- But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that YHWH speaketh, that I must do?
- And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please Elohim that thou mayest curse me them from thence.
(Numbers 23:25-27)

Balaam Has Balak Build Another Altar

- And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon.
- And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams.
- And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.
(Numbers 23:28-30)

Balaam's Third Oracle

- And when Balaam saw that it pleased YHWH to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.
- And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of Elohim came upon him.
- And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: (Numbers 24:1-3)

Balaam's Third Oracle

- He hath said, which heard the words of El, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:
- How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which YHWH hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.
- He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. (Numbers 24:4-7)

Balaam's Third Oracle

- El brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.
- He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee. (Numbers 24:8-9)

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