

## **GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE!**

**Numbers 22:36 - 24:25**

When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at a city which is on the border of Moab. Balak said to Balaam, "When I urgently sent for you to come, why didn't you come to me? Don't you know that I am able to promote you to a place of great honor?"

Balaam answered Balak, "Here I am now. I have come to you. Do I have the power to say anything? The words that God puts in my mouth are the words that I will speak."

So Balaam went with Balak, the enemy of Israel, to Kirjathhuzoth. There Balak offered oxen and sheep. On the next day Balak took Balaam and brought him to the high places of Baal, so that he could see all the people of Israel. Now Baal, as you know, was one of the false gods that many people in that region worshipped.

Balaam told Balak to build seven altars at that spot, and sacrifice seven oxen and seven rams. Balak did as Balaam told him to do. Balaam said, "Stand by your burnt offering and I will go and maybe the Lord will come to meet me. What ever he shows me I will tell you."

Then Balaam went to a high place, and God met him there. Balaam said, "I have prepared seven altars and offered sacrifice on each one."

The Lord put words in Balaam's mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and this is what you shall say."

Balaam returned to Balak, who was standing beside his burnt offering, along with all the princes of Moab. He began to speak, saying, "Balak the king of Moab has brought me from Aram, saying, Come, curse Jacob for me. How shall I curse those who God has not cursed? Or how shall I defy who the Lord has not defied? Who can count the dust of Jacob, or even count one fourth of them? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

When Balak heard these words that Balaam spoke, he said, "What have you done? I brought you here to curse my enemies and instead you have blessed them."

Balaam replied, "Don't I have to be careful to speak only those things which the Lord tells me?"

Well, Balak was not ready to give up yet. He seemed to think that if he built altars, and made sacrifices, and asked God often enough, that he could get what he wanted. He brought Balaam to another place, so that he could see Israel from that spot. Again Balaam had Balak build seven altars and make sacrifice. Again Balaam went off to hear what the Lord might say. Once again the Lord made Balaam bless Israel rather than curse them. This time God said, "God 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?" Balaam told Balak, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it."

Balak couldn't believe it. He had tried three times to get God to do what he wanted, but the Lord wouldn't allow Balaam to curse the Israelites.

You would think that by now Balak would have figured out that God was not going to allow Israel to be cursed, but he just didn't get it. Balak brought Balaam to another spot overlooking the camp of Israel. Once again he made sacrifice on seven altars. Finally, this time, Balaam realized that the Lord would only bless Israel, and this time he didn't seek to use enchantments as he had the other times to approach God. Now we see that Balaam was certainly not a man who served God, but a man who was involved in witchcraft. Balaam was not only a greedy man, but also a prophet who trusted more in his "magical" powers than in God. He thought he could manipulate God with chants and spells and sacrifice, just as many who claim to be Christian today do. They think that if they say the right words, at the right time, and in a certain way, that then God will have to do what they want. But they are mistaken, for the Lord God Almighty can not be controlled by men. How foolish people become in their desire for their own personal gain. It would be well for all of us to remember God's description of himself in this passage. He does not lie, he keeps his promise. He will do what is right and just. He is unchangeable.

In the end, Israel was thoroughly blessed in spite of all Balaam's efforts to the contrary, and Balak became angry at Balaam.



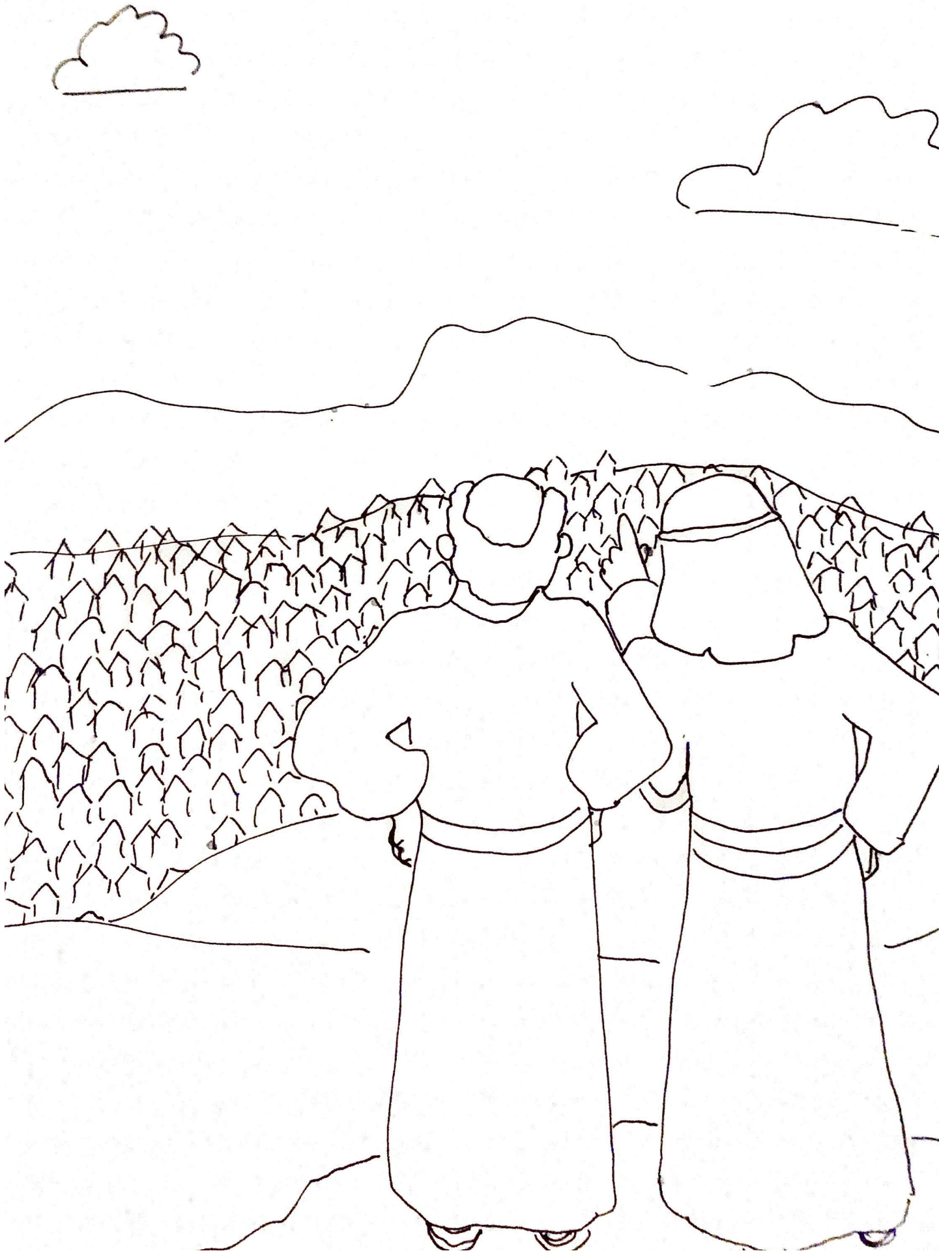
**Balaam knew God's character, but he tried to use God for his own benefit rather than obeying and worshipping him. We will see later how Balaam helped Balak achieve some of his desire, in spite of the fact that the Lord would only bless Israel.**

**What an important lesson we can learn from Balaam. Not every one that knows about God and says that they speak for him is truly his. That is why we all must know the scripture and study it well, so that we will be able to understand who speaks for God and who does not. If we are faithful to the Lord and search his word to know him, he will give us wisdom to know the truth.**

**LEARN: God 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?  
Numbers 23:19**

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