

# Scripture\_background

## Background Notes on Numbers 23

### Historical Context:

- Numbers is the fourth book of the Bible's Old Testament and is part of the Pentateuch, which includes the first five books of the Bible.
- This book covers the journey of the Israelites in the desert, following their exodus from Egypt and prior to their arrival in the Promised Land.
- The events in Numbers 23 occur during the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness, as they camped on the plains of Moab, near the Jordan River.

### Cultural Insights:

- The Moabites: The Moabites were descendants of Lot and lived east of the Jordan River. At this time, they were worried about the large number of Israelites camped nearby.
- Prophets and Oracles: In ancient cultures, like the Moabites, a prophet was someone believed to have the power to communicate with gods and often gave messages or predictions, sometimes called oracles.

### Theological Insights:

- Balaam: Balaam was not an Israelite but was known as a prophet. He was asked by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the Israelites so they would be easier to defeat. Instead, Balaam could only speak the words that God gave him.
- God's Protection: A key lesson is God's protection over His people. Despite being hired to curse Israel, Balaam ends up blessing them, demonstrating that God is in control and cares for His people.
- God's Faithfulness: The passage highlights that God is faithful to His promises. He had promised to bless the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

### Key Takeaways for Students:

- Trust in God's Care: Just as God protected the Israelites, we can trust that God looks after us.
- Listening to God: Balaam listened to God, and instead of doing what the king wanted, he did what God wanted, showing the importance of listening to God.
- Being Blessed: The Israelites learned that God had many blessings for them, encouraging us to think about the blessings we have in our lives.

When teaching, emphasize these themes in relatable ways, using examples that resonate with elements in students' everyday lives.