

Appendix: The Complete Text of Numbers 23 and 24

23 Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.” ²Balak did as Balaam instructed *him*; then *the two of them* offered a bull and a ram on each of the altars. ³Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here beside your burnt offering, and I will go *to seek Jehovah*. Perhaps Jehovah will come to meet me; and whatever he reveals to me, I will tell you.” So he went to a barren height. ⁴God met *him*, and Balaam said to *God*, “I have prepared the seven altars, and on each altar I have offered a bull and a ram.” ⁵Then Jehovah put a message in Balaam’s mouth and told *him*, “Go back to Balak and give him this message.” ⁶So he returned to him and *found him* standing beside his burnt offering, he and all the princes of Moab. ⁷Then *Balaam* uttered his oracle: Balak brought me from Aram, the king of Moab *has brought me* from the eastern mountains. “Come,” *he says*, “curse Jacob for me. Come and denounce Israel.” ⁸How can I curse *those* whom God has not cursed? And how can I denounce *those* whom Jehovah has not denounced? ⁹From the rocky peaks I see *them*, and from the hills I observe *them*. They are a people who live apart; they shall not be counted among the nations. ¹⁰Who can count the dust *that is* Jacob, or number *even* a fourth of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like his! ¹¹Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? I brought you *here* to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them!” ¹²*Balaam* replied, “Must I not be careful to speak what Jehovah puts into my mouth?” ¹³Then Balak said to him, “Please come with me to another place where you can see them. You shall only see the smallest part of them; you shall not see all of them. Curse them for me from there.” ¹⁴So he took him to the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah, and there he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each of the altars. ¹⁵*Balaam* said to Balak, “Stay here beside your burnt offering, while I meet with *Jehovah* over there.” ¹⁶Jehovah met with Balaam and put a message into his mouth and told *him*, “Go back to Balak and give him this message.” ¹⁷So he went to him and *found him* standing beside his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab were with him. Balak said to him, “What has Jehovah said?” ¹⁸Then *Balaam* uttered his oracle: Arise, Balak, and listen; pay attention to me, son of Zippor. ¹⁹God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son

of man, that he should change his mind. Has he spoken, and will he not act? Has he promised, and will he not fulfill *it*?²⁰ Listen; I have received *a commandment* to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.²¹ He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, he has not observed obstinate behavior in Israel. Jehovah his God is with him; the shout of a king is among them.²² God brought them out of Egypt; he is for them like the strength of the wild ox.²³ There is no sorcery *that can prevail* against Jacob, neither is there any divination *that can succeed* against Israel. It will now be said of Jacob and of Israel, “See what God has done!”²⁴ Look; the people rise like a lioness; *they rouse themselves* like a lion. He shall not rest until he has devoured his prey and drinks the blood of his victims.²⁵ Then Balak said to Balaam, “Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all!”²⁶ But Balaam responded by saying to Balak, “Did I not say to you, ‘I must do whatever Jehovah says’?”²⁷ Then Balak said to Balaam, “Come now, and I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God to let you curse them for me from there.”²⁸ So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, overlooking the wasteland.²⁹ Again Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.”³⁰ Balak did as Balaam instructed *him*, and offered a bull and a ram on each of the altars.

24 When Balaam saw that it pleased Jehovah to bless Israel, he did not resort to sorceries as at the other times; rather, he turned his face toward the wilderness.² When Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes, the Spirit of God came upon him.³ Then he uttered this oracle: The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one whose eyes see clearly,⁴ the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are open.⁵ How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!⁶ They are spread out like valleys, like gardens beside a river, like aloes planted by Jehovah, like cedars beside the waters.⁷ Water shall flow from his buckets; his seed shall have abundant water. His king shall be greater than Agag; his kingdom shall be exalted.⁸ God brought *them* out of Egypt; he is for *them* like the strength of the wild ox.⁹ *They* shall devour hostile nations and break their bones into pieces; with *their* arrows *they* shall pierce them.

¹⁰Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to *him*, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them these three times! ¹¹Now, therefore, leave at once and go home! I intended to bestow great honor upon you, but Jehovah has held you back from honor." ¹²Balaam answered Balak, "Did I not tell the messengers you sent me, ¹³*Even* if Balak were to give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah, to do anything of my own accord, whether good or bad. Whatever Jehovah speaks, I must speak'?"