

Og led his army against the Israelites, but was utterly defeated. This left most of Palestine east of the Jordan and north of the river Arnon in the hands of Israel.

j. Arrival in the plains of Moab (xxii.1)

The wilderness journey was now completed. Camp was established on the plains across from Jericho. It remained to prepare to cross the river and conquer Canaan itself. First, however, we must learn of an attempt on the part of the Moabites to destroy Israel by a new method.

THE BALAAM INCIDENT. xxii.2-xxv.18

XIV. THE SUMMONING OF BALAAM. xxii.2-40

In Previous chapters the foe has directly attacked Israel and has been repulsed. Now a new method is attempted and it is one which every Christian individual and every Christian movement is bound to meet at some time or other. The adversary attempts to find someone who really belongs to the people of God and to use him against them. Those who have at one time seemed to be followers of the Lord, and sometimes even very effective witnesses for Him, are most sought after by Satan for this purpose. What a responsibility rests upon everyone who has been known as one of the Lord's people, not to allow his influence ever to be used against an uncompromising witness to the truth.

In this instance the attempt failed, but only on account of the supernatural intervention of God. Balaam proved rather weak and ready to succumb, but God stood by him and prevented it, thus making sure in a most marvellous way that nothing should prevent the children of Israel from entering the Promised Land.

a. Balak sends messengers to Balaam (xxii.2-7)

Seeing what the Israelites had done to those who had attacked them directly, the king of Moab sought a more indirect method of destroying them. He began by calling the elders of Midian (4). Evidently Moab and Midian were co-operating at this time. Moab was a settled nation, east of the Dead Sea, just south of where the Israelites were encamped. Midian was a roving people in the Arabian Desert.