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**BALAAAM, A PROPHET GONE BAD**

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In the country of Jordan, at an excavation site known as Deir 'Alla, a fragment of a text from the prophet Balaam was found which dates to at least 800 years before Christ.

The discovery consists of 119 broken plaster fragments inscribed with an ancient text written in the Aramaic language. One of the fragments is inscribed with the words "**Warnings given by Balaam, the son of Beor. A seer of the gods.**"

Also included in the text is the Aramaic word "Shadday," which translated into English is "**the Almighty.**" This is consistent with Balaam's oracles given in the Old Testament.

The Bible in Numbers 24:3-4 says: "The utterance of **Balaam the son of Beor**, The utterance of the man whose eyes are opened, The utterance of him who hears the words of God, Who sees the vision of **the Almighty**, Who falls down with eyes wide open."

The present day country of Jordan where the inscription was found, was known as Moab at the time of Balaam.

This backs up the biblical account found in Numbers 22-24, in which the **King of Moab** sends the elders of Midian before Balaam and offers him money to curse the children of Israel. Instead of cursing the children of Israel, the spirit of God came upon Balaam and he blessed them.

Greed eventually overcame Balaam and the following events then occurred as recorded in Numbers 25: 1-3,9:

"Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab.

They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel . . . And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand."

The Bible states in Numbers 31:16 that Balaam was the one who devised the plan to cause Israel to sin in exchange for money from the Midianites:

"Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of *Balaam*, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."

The reason for God's great anger against Israel is recorded in Psalm 106:28: "They joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead."

Not only were they worshiping another god, but they were committing deeds of sexual immorality. (Numbers 25:1)

Though it is only speculation, their sins may have also involved child sacrifice for both Jeremiah 19:5 and Jeremiah 32:35 mention that this was a

common practice in Baal worship and we know from Deuteronomy 12:30-31 that it was performed by the pagan nations at this time.

God thus commanded Moses to battle the Midianites as vengeance for such abominations caused by the plan of Balaam.

### **JESUS CHRIST WARNS AGAINST BECOMING LIKE BALAAM:**

"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality."

Revelation 2:14

### **THE GREATEST PROPHECY GIVEN BY BALAAM BEFORE HE HANDED HIS SOUL OVER TO GREED:**

"A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult . . . Out of Jacob One shall have dominion."

Numbers 24:17-19

This one, who is a descendant of Jacob, is **JESUS CHRIST THE MESSIAH.**

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