

## Numbers 22:1–12

<sup>1</sup> Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

<sup>2</sup> Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. <sup>3</sup> And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. <sup>4</sup> So Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.” And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. <sup>5</sup> Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: “Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! <sup>6</sup> Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

<sup>7</sup> So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner’s fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. <sup>8</sup> And he said to them, “Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the Lord speaks to me.” So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

<sup>9</sup> Then God came to Balaam and said, “Who are these men with you?”

<sup>10</sup> So Balaam said to God, “Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, <sup>11</sup> ‘Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come now, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out.’ ”

<sup>12</sup> And God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.

### *Gracious Sovereignty, Sovereign Grace*

**Main idea:** the Lord will surely carry out His saving plan

**Introduction:** land promise, number promise, covenant promise.

**1. Where sin abounded, grace super-abounded**

1. v3 like Ex 1:9–10.
2. Neither Egyptian tyranny nor Israelite sin could undo God’s purpose/plan/promise

**2. He works all things according to the counsel of His will**

1. How there came to be a true prophet in Midian
2. What a true prophet is: one who speaks from Him Who rules and overrules all things

**3. There is only one God**

1. Balak knew that he needed divine intervention
2. There is only one God from Whom divine intervention can come

3. Don't fear Satan (or any other creature)
4. Don't hope in "hope"
4. **He Who began the good work will be faithful to complete it**
  1. If the people are blessed in God's purpose/plan, they cannot be cursed
  2. Sometimes, God has to emphasize this even to His own prophet (n.b. the interaction in v9–11).

**Conclusion:** look to God for grace to forgive and overrule your sin. Fear not what man or devil can do to you. Remember that He is accomplishing His saving purpose by carrying out His saving plan; so, simply do what He says, rather than attempting to manipulate outcome (whether by forcing to secure it or to avoid it)

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Numbers. 22 verses 1 through 12. These are God's words. Then the children of Israel, moved and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

Now, Black the son of the poor saw all that Israel had done to the amorites. And Moab was exceedingly, afraid of the people because they were many. And Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. So Moab said to the Elders of Midian. Now, this company will lick up everything around us as an ox licks up the grass of the field.

And black, the son of zappor was King the moabites at that time. Then he sent Messengers to belay on the son of bayor at pathor, which is near the river. In the land of the sons of his people to call him saying, look A people has come from Egypt.

See, they cover the face of the Earth and are settling next to me. Therefore please come at once curse this people for me for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land for. I know that he whom you bless is blessed.

And he whom you curse is cursed. So the Elders of Moab and the Elders of Midian departed with the diviners fee in their hand and they came to belem and spoke to him the words of black And he said to them, Lodge here tonight and I will bring back word to you as Yahweh speaks to me.

So, the princes of Moab stayed with belayam, Then God came to blame and said who are these men with you? So Blaine said to God, Black, the son of the poor king of Moab has sent to me saying look a people has come out of Egypt and they cover the face of the Earth.

Come now curse them for me, perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out. And God said to William, you shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people. For they are blessed. Hey man. As far Reading of Gods inspired and And Aaron twerked.

Well, we're really coming close now to Entering the promised land crossing over. The Jordan and taking the land it feels a little bit far away to us because we are familiar with this through

our English Bibles and there's the entire book of Deuteronomy Moses's final, sermon a concluding sermon in his ministry.

Which is a long and sometimes. For us difficult book, not just difficult to understand, although The law as it is applied in the life of the nation of Israel can have difficulties for us because of cultural differences, but difficult for us because of our remaining sin and its resistance to God's law and the strangeness.

With which Sinners. Such as we are. Uh, consider and relate to. The law of God. And so, there's a big long book in between here and there. But you notice in verse 1, Uh, that the children are camping on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho. And that should.

Of course. Uh, raise some Flags, some bells, go off. And you say, ah, I remember Jericho that is the city. In the wall of which Rahab lived and you remember the account of Rahab and the spies. And you remember how the people of Israel were instructed to take the city of Jericho that Wasn't so much.

The number of the people of Israel, which 600 some odd thousand men of arms. And probably. Several million total altogether. But, The number that made the teference was the number one. There's one true God. And he had them, take the city in a way that showed that he alone is God.

Well, he's showing that in our passage too and he's showing He's declaring to us some things about himself. In these passages last week's passage. Of course, we saw that he has begun to keep the land promise begun to fulfill the land promise that where, at one point in time, there were in time, there was seahon and amorites, there are now Israelites dwelling in their land, the land of the amorites, that was promised to them.

And whereas at one time just recently, there was OG Org, the last to the great Giants. There are now Israelites who Not just defeated him but now taken possession of his land. And this was one of the great promises that God had made to Abraham and to his offspring.

That all of the land that Abraham could see north, south east west. He was giving God was giving to Abraham. He remember when he brought him into the land, but then there was another promise that God had made to Abraham later When the Lord told Abraham that he was his shieldness exceeding, great reward.

And Abraham said, Uh well that's all good and well, but what point does it have? Uh what point is there in my inheriting since I don't have an offspring to give it to Uh, and the Eleazar of Damascus, the eldest servant in his house at that time would have been Abraham's Heir and you remember God promised him, of course, greatly most of all.

Uh the seed, The Offspring in whom all of the Earth would be blessed. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. And we thought about that this morning, even when we were thinking about God, When we were thinking about God, giving rest to us and our justification and making us children of Abraham to taking our, our hearts of stone from us and giving us hearts of Flesh, children of Abraham in the way that we have just finished singing about But in addition to, that singular seed, in whom all the Uh, the Earth would be blessed.

There was the promise that his offspring would be like the sand on the seashore and especially the stars in the sky. You remember. He had taken? Abraham outside and it's kind of like, hope. Well, when we turn off all the exterior lights and and see, see the night sky, although It's not at all to be compared for instance, to turkana country and Kenya on the board border between

Kenya and South Sudan, where there really is no light for miles and miles not to the Horizon anywhere.

And the picture that Abraham Abram saw in the sky and the number of those stars. And the Lord had given the number promise. And then the the big promise The land promise was fine and The number promise was was fine and We know that ultimately Abram and, and his descendants by faith, had taken the land promise.

Not just that tract of Of land in the ancient near East, but of that Heavenly country that he would not inherit without us as Hebrews 11 describes. This was their faith, the faith of those, and the lord gave Out the scripture, it isn't new with the administration of Christ.

And so also the multiplication of The Offspring. This is something we have seen Many times in the book of Isaiah with God gathering into his people. He's this multitude from the Nations and and Israel saying where did all these children come from? That the Lord has blessed her with as every genuinely believing Israelite.

From Abraham. Um, well, I guess a little anachronistic to give him or Isaac the title Israelite from from Jacob, from Israel down to the time of Christ. And even now those who belong to the Natural Olive Tree, when they come to genuine faith in Christ, when they come to realize what God is doing gathering in the Nations to from, where have come all these.

And the third big promise, the biggest of them all, I will be your God and you will be my people. The Covenant promised God binding himself in a special redeeming covenantal. Way to a particular people, which, of course, like the other two is, That, you know, there's a particular Nation that that is in geopolitical contest with other nations.

And this one has Yahweh as its God and none of those do. Uh, but that there is an everlasting Covenant in which God binds himself. To us as Christ Christ, not only then As the last Adam, but Christ as a king of a Nation King of the people, King of the Kingdom, that is in Covenant with God.

Well, the number promised is primarily in Focus. We come from the land promise. They're dwelling across from Jericho and the land promises is Giving black king of Moab hives. Uh because these people are settling next to him but what is really bothering? Him isn't just the geography of Israel at this point.

It is It is the census, the number, the population of Ezreal, they cover the face of the Earth. He says, in verse 5, Or if you, Uh, back up to verse three Moab was exceedingly, afraid of the people because they were And Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel, this all sounds to us like Exodus 1 verses 9 and 10.

Black and the moabites aren't the first people to look around and suddenly see way too many Israelites for their comfort. Do you remember you remember, I hope at the beginning of the book of Exodus that that was that was what was really bothering the Egyptians and Pharaoh king of Egypt specifically Now between then and now we have, we have had Egypt doing its level best to To reduce the population of Of the Israelites.

And, God not permitting Egyptian tyranny to diminish them and then seemingly Israel doing its level best to provoke, God to anger and get itself wiped out. So that an entire generation the generation that had frightened Pharaoh is now gone. Because they have fallen in the wilderness. And yet, as we are about to see this section on the doings between the moabites and the Israelites, their last ditch.

Ditch effort. Uh, from chapters 22 through 25. When this section is over, we're going to go back to a census. And now the census at the end of the Wilderness, wandering is going to be almost identical in number 600. Some odd thousand. Men of War. Uh, with their, with their families and such and so not even Israel's apparent, determination?

And self-destruction. Uh, could keep the number promise from coming true because where sin has abounded Grace has super abounded God had made promises, and he is faithful to keep them over against what any of his or our enemies do. And for those who are his Over against anything that we ourselves do.

In fact, this is what the cross. Is all about, isn't it? That God having foreknown people and predestined them to be conformed to the image of his son? Not even our sin. Against the Holiness against the glory. Against God in his being every sin. Being a rejection of him, not even that.

Could stop the purpose and plan and promise of God. To redeem his elect and he would overcome it even at the cost of the Incarnation of his son and his suffering, God's Wrath for us upon the cross and dying under the curse. In our place. And so we're sin.

Abounded Grace has super abounded here. Israel are at the end of the 40 years. And they are just as many. As they were back when they had frightened Egypt and now they're a frightening. Moab. And that's going to be one of the things that Rahab tells the spies all the people's hearts have melted.

Uh that's some of the inside info. She's going to give the two spies. About the, the city of Jericho, of course, this is probably the point in time. The goings-on between black and belem. This is probably the point in time she really starts to hear. About Yahweh being the one true God and throwing in her lot with the Lord's people.

Uh, Things are coming to a hit. Well, how does the Lord do that? Well, he doesn't just put Faith in the heart of a prostitute in the wall of the greatest city. Of the moabites. He's also raised up an actual true Prophet in their land outside of Israel. And we see this from time to time in the Old Testament.

We've seen it a few times. Uh it's possible that this is the case with Melchizedek who is not just a king but also a priest it's quite possible and and As I currently read it. Uh, I think that Melchizedek is probably a christophany. Appearance of God, a pre-incarnation Appearance of God, not only Was with a special reference to the person of the son, but making display of the offices that his son will have as mediator.

When he does take on flesh and come. Well, even if that's not true of Melchizedek, if you remember Jethro, Uh, Moses's Uncle. Matt was his uncle. That would be bad Moses's. Father-in-law Was midianite and was was a priest of God, and now we have this guy who comes out of nowhere.

Belayum and yet he is a prophet of Yahweh. This gives some of the commentators hives. They try to figure out any way that uh belayam would not actually be a prophet of Yahweh. And they try to say, well, he's just referring the To Yahweh because Yahweh is the god of the Israelites or It's the commentator or it's the the Bible writer is using the word Yahweh in the place of God but that uh, claim is actually refuted even by our text where when you have the narrator in verse 9, he refers to him as God Elohim, then God came to beam.

When it's belayam, speaking in verse 8, he says, as Yahweh speaks to me. I will speak to you and when we come. Uh, when we come into next week's passage, we'll even see belem

saying in verse 18, Yahweh, my God. And so here's, here's this guy. Maybe a midianite, maybe a moabite.

We don't even You don't even get his nationality. We just kind of get his City and The commentators are here or there on it. But the Lord has given him a knowledge of himself and has raised him up as a true Prophet. That's why black sends for him. He needs divine intervention, he has to, to his credit recognized.

Uh, he has recognized that he is unable to deal with the people verse six. For they are, they are too mighty for me. And he needs divine intervention and when it comes when it comes down to it, God gives him a level of Sanity that many ancient near easterners and ancient near Eastern Kings did not have, you know, they thought there was one God who was really strong in The Valleys and one God who was really strong in the mountains.

And, you know, this God is really strong in that in that country by that River. And this God is really strong over here by This coast and a bunch of other nonsense and rubbish. Black, and the moabites. Need of the God who when blessing is pronounced in his name, the people end up blasting.

When curse is pronounced in his name, the people ended up cursed. And so, Blaine had a reputation for what he said came true. Because he A true prophet of Yahweh. Well, what do we make of this? What we make of it is. That God is not restricted to work within his church.

God is not restricted to work among the Israelites in the Old Testament or even within his church now. Now he has ordained primarily to do so. And especially now that his church is under his son and that all things are for the glory of his son, we should not expect or depend upon God, working outside of the ordinary means of Grace and his church as it has been gathered under Christ.

Following what the Lord says in his word and yet If God works in people's lives in such a way as to bring them to the gospel to hear it. We should not be surprised because he Who worked until Christ came. Even in the Nations outside of Israel, for the preserving of the nation of Israel for the bringing into the world of his son, from the seed, and stock of Israel and would raise up a Jethro.

Or a balam as a prophet, for the purpose of preserving his people and bringing Christ into the world. Is certainly. Is certainly free. And now stories abound and Be careful with how you let your heart or mind get enraptured with. Missionary histories. And Biographies. I have worked with a lot of missionaries.

In my lifetime and my Ministry. And They're not all that honest, many of them know how to get people. Excited. But some of them Are very faithful and can give you accounts of things that God has done. Like, Bruce Wilkinson, who Ends up through many twists of Providence. At.

Uh, at a tribe and when he pulls out a book and the people had never seen a book before, Just one of them had had a dream and there was a tradition in the the tribe. That someone would come with golden leaves. And in the golden leaves, there would be salvation.

And they were prepared to hear the word of God read in Christ's proclaimed. By the Providence of God who works, not just beyond his means. But sometimes, even apart from them, this is something that we confess in the Westminster standards. And here God is using. This maybe midi night.

A moabite, maybe we should just call him pathorite. Since he was. Uh, at pathor. And he, Works to bless his people by his prophesying over them. He works all things. According to the Council of as well and that's all things in all places at all times. He works all things according to the council as well and there is then this only only this one.

God we've already opened that a little bit but one point of applications uh to make here. We as Believers who have the scriptures, We should be careful not to make too much of the devil. The devil could not have helped. Black of Moab. Because Yahweh was against him. The only hope that he could have is if Yahweh helped him I think too often Christians speak of the devil, as if he's There, as if there's some kind of contest, some kind of tension.

As if he's got enough weight or enough Force to pull on the other end, uh, in in the contest with God, he is not a many God. He has a maxi Angel. And that is, Infinitely short. Of the Living God. There is only one living in true God and he is the one who has come in the person of his son, who added to himself Humanity.

That we have been hearing Proclaim himself from Matthew 11, these last few weeks. So, do not fear the devil, do not fear anything. If you hope in God, what can man do to you? And what can Satan do to you? As much greater as Satan is than any man.

He cannot do any more against you. To your ultimate harm. Then a man can. A creature. The only hope that there is is in the Living God, and This brings us to another, Application. Don't hope and hope. Don't hope in faith. Believingness, or religiosity? Uh, or Uh, or the exercise of the desire, or the hoping of the heart.

Your hope can't save your your faith can't save you. Your intensity of trying to believe. It's only the Living God, who can save. And so, there's only Uh, the one living and true God. Which, A Doctrine. Strongly emphasize to us in the passage before us this afternoon. And finally, We see that he who began the good work will be faithful to complete it.

Uh, blam loved money. Uh he becomes in the New Testament, a warning for us about loving the things of this world. He figures out how to earn the money by the way, even though the Lord never lets him pronounce a curse upon Israel, we find out from the New Testament that it was his idea.

For the daughters of Moab. Tempt, the sons of Israel, and And that spiritual catastrophe in chapter 25. And if there wasn't a priest who as a type of Christ intervenes and intercedes, Israel would have been wiped out by their own sin. In provoking God. But God, of course, was determined not to do that, but Liam loved the money.

When it says that he came with the that they came, with the divining fee in their hand, The word for fee actually isn't there is divination. The implication was they came with whatever was necessary to get the Divination or the curse that that they wanted to get from him.

And, When William says, no, because God, Tells him. Black is actually going to up the ante. In next week's. Next week's portion. And so he wanted to go. He wanted to go, but God was determined. To bless the people of Israel and he is Sovereign and he rules over everything, and he overrules everything he works.

All things according to the Council of his will. He doesn't just take what? What creatures do and turn it for good. He has ordained to do his good. Even by that which wicked creatures, wickedly intend and wickedly do. And so if the people are blessed in God's purpose and plan, they can't be cursed.

And so the Lord is going to tell Balaam in verse 12, not just you can't curse them for they are blessed, but don't even go with them. Why would you go with people who are trying to get you to speak the opposite of what God intends to do? And he has emphasized this to the prophet by speaking to him in kind of an odd way.

Verse 9 then God came to Balaam and said, who are these men with you? Now, that would be a very strange question. In the knowledge of the Living God. Children was it because God didn't know who the men were. That we're with Balaam. Of course, he knew he didn't just know that they were the elders, the princes of Moab and of Midian and that they were there because they were afraid of how many the nation of Israel was and that they were trying to get blame to curse Israel.

So that, that would give Moab the upper hand to try to God knew every one of them. He knew their names. Them from when then they were within their mommy's tummies. Before they were born he knew all of their secret thoughts and sins knew everything about them. But the Lord does come sometimes to remind us that he knows and to remind us that he rules.

Do you remember he did this with Adam? In the garden when Adam and his wife, Mrs. Adam, had sinned against God and their eyes were opened and they wanted to hide from each other. Because now, they were sinners. And they knew their own hostility to each other, knew their own hostility to the other and knew the other's hostility to themselves.

And they were naked in front of each other now, and in an uncomfortable way. And they had covered themselves. The fig leaves. And they hear God in the wind of the day in the evening. And the cool of the day. You remember they hide from God?

Which is absolutely ridiculous. And God indulges that or addresses that he shows them, it's ridiculous. How He says, where are you? Was God having a hard time? Finding Adam and Mrs. Adam. Was he not by asking the question? Confronting them with the fact that you can't hide from God?

And then when Adam, when Adam starts with his, ridiculous and wicked explanations and excuses. God asks him. Did you eat of the fruit of the tree? Of which I told you. Was God on a fact-finding mission? Did he not know, was he counting on Adam to tell? No. God knew Adam didn't realize.

But he had done to himself by eating of the fruit of that tree and so he was asking him questions not to get information. But to, to teach him to confront him with the realities that were behind that information. And so God comes. Who are these men with you?

And suddenly Balaam, has to realize Here I am. Trying to serve. Moab. I'm trying to serve Moab and the Moabites by Elders. I'm trying to get their money and I'm trying to do it by cursing, the people of Yahweh. You see what? God? Bringing to Balaam's attention. And so he's reminding him, he's teaching him, the Lord is teaching Balaam that The Lord is Sovereign.

And his determination to bless Israel. His keeping his promises. To bless Israel is not about to be overturned. By anything Moab can devise or purchase and anything Balaam can. He who began the good work. Will be faithful to complete it. If the people are blessed in God's purpose and plan, they cannot be cursed.

And who can better know? Who can more know that you that they are blessed. Than you who have the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have him by faith, it is absolutely impossible. That anything can ever stop you? From receiving not just All good things in a new heavens and a new Earth forever.



But the Living God himself. As your portion and your inheritance. He who did not spare. His own son, but gave him up for us all. How will he not also together with him freely? Give us all things. And so, here is a good work that the Lord Has begun and will be faithful to complete in the life of the nation of Israel precisely because this is how he has determined to bring his son into the world for our Salvation.

And he will be faithful to complete it just as in application to our own lives, his sovereignty and his faithfulness assure us. That he who has begun a good work in. Will be faithful to complete it until the final day. Of Christ, Jesus. And so look to God for Grace.

To forgive and overrule your sin. Sin abounds Grace super abounds. Fear not what man or devil can do to you. God is working all things according to the Council of as well, and there is only one God. Do not fear them as we heard not too long ago in Matthew Who kill the body or who can kill the body?

Fear Him. Who after killing the body, can cast the soul and Destroy the soul in hell. Fear not what man or devil can do to, you remember. That he is, accomplishing his own saving purpose. By carrying out that saving plan. About which he has told us in his word as promises.

And so simply do what he says. Don't try to manipulate the outcome. The outcome actually cannot be changed. Ultimately But he has given you. The means that he uses, he has told you What to do? He has been faithful in teaching us and he was faithful in keeping his word.

So simply do what he says. Don't try to manipulate outcomes Don't try to force an outcome that you want. Thinking that you will be able to secure it in that way and do not try to avoid an outcome that you fear. Thinking that you will be able to escape it in that way.

But trust him, who rules and overrules. All things and do according to his word duty is ours. Events are gone. Amen. Let's pray.

We thank you. Our father. That you keep all of your promises, help us to be sure. Of. Perfectly true word and of your own faithfulness. In which you gave that word in, which you are keeping that word. Thank you that your grace. Overcomes even our sin keep us from.

The utter wickedness and Rebellion. In which we would use such an idea to excuse. But thank you for supporting us. Uh, when our repentance is tempted to come with despair, Thank you for supporting us with the knowledge. That what you have determined to do in Christ? You will accomplish.

Thank you for him. Give us to keep clinging to him. That having him and belonging to him, we may be sure that you are together with him. Giving us all things. And so give us not to fear, man, or devil or any circumstance. But trusting you. That we would fear nothing.

For we ask it all in Jesus name. Amen.