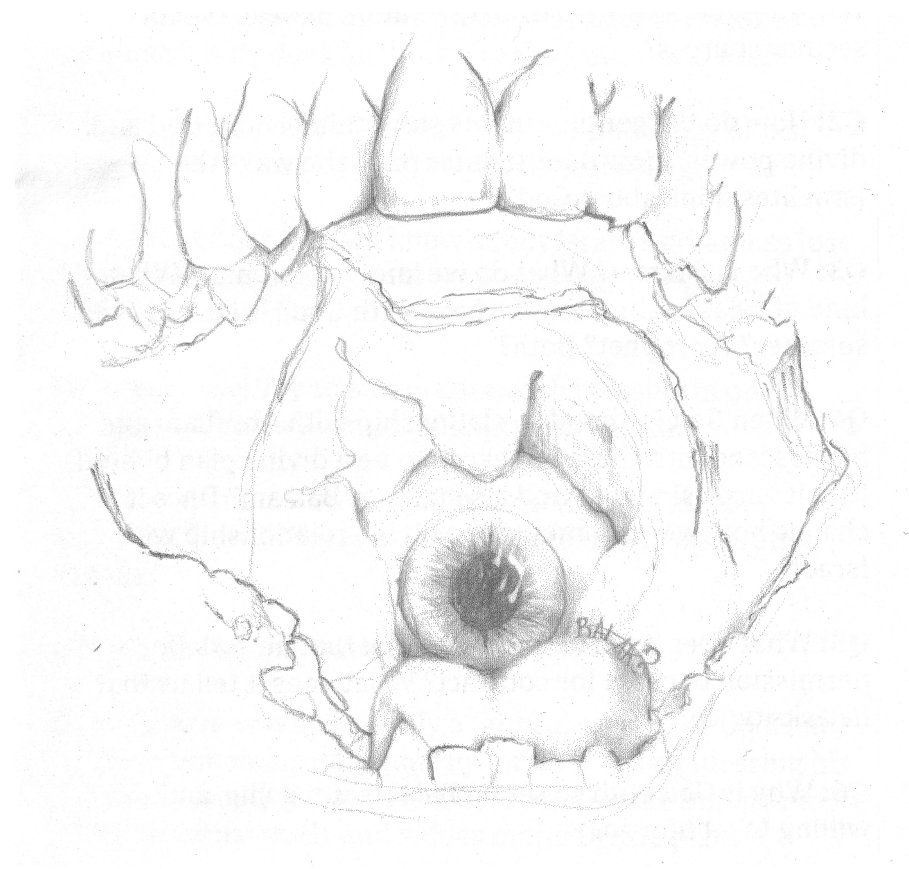


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Q1: Why is Balak afraid of Israel? Are his fears justified? Why does he seek help from divination instead of more secular sources?

Q2: How do the gentiles in this story think about God and divine power? How does it differ from the ways the Israelites think about God?

Q3: Who is Balaam? What do we know about him? What kind of relationship does he have with God? Is he a sorcerer? A prophet? Both?

Q4: When God initiated a relationship with Abraham and his descendants, there appeared to be a divine plan behind it. Is it surprising that God also talks to Balaam? Does it change how we understand the divine relationship with Israel?

Q5: What does it tell us about Balaam that he asks God for permission to curse for contract? What does it tell us that he asks twice?

Q6: Why is God both so set on Balaam not going, and so willing to let him go?

Q7: What is more unusual--that Balaam can't see the angel or that the donkey can?

Q8: What does Balak think Balaam is saying when he says he isn't free to speak on his own? Why doesn't he take him seriously? Why does he think a new location will help?

Q9: What is Balaam's "theme"? Are the phrasings of his blessings authored by God, or just their message?

Q10: What does Balaam know about Israel's greatness just from looking at them? How is his message affected by where he is looking?

Q11: Exercise: Try to summarize each blessing in one sentence. What is the main idea of each blessing?

Q12: Compare the different circumstances of his four speeches. How does his relationship to divine inspiration change?

Q13: Does Balaam learn his lesson?

Q14: Balaam was apparently a faithful servant of God, and yet he is remembered primarily for unwillingly blessing his enemies (Israel). What does this say about the importance of our personal goals and values in the Divine plan?

Q15: Does Israel's conduct with the Moabite women contradict or underscore Balaam's blessings?

Q16: What is the relationship between sex and idolatry?