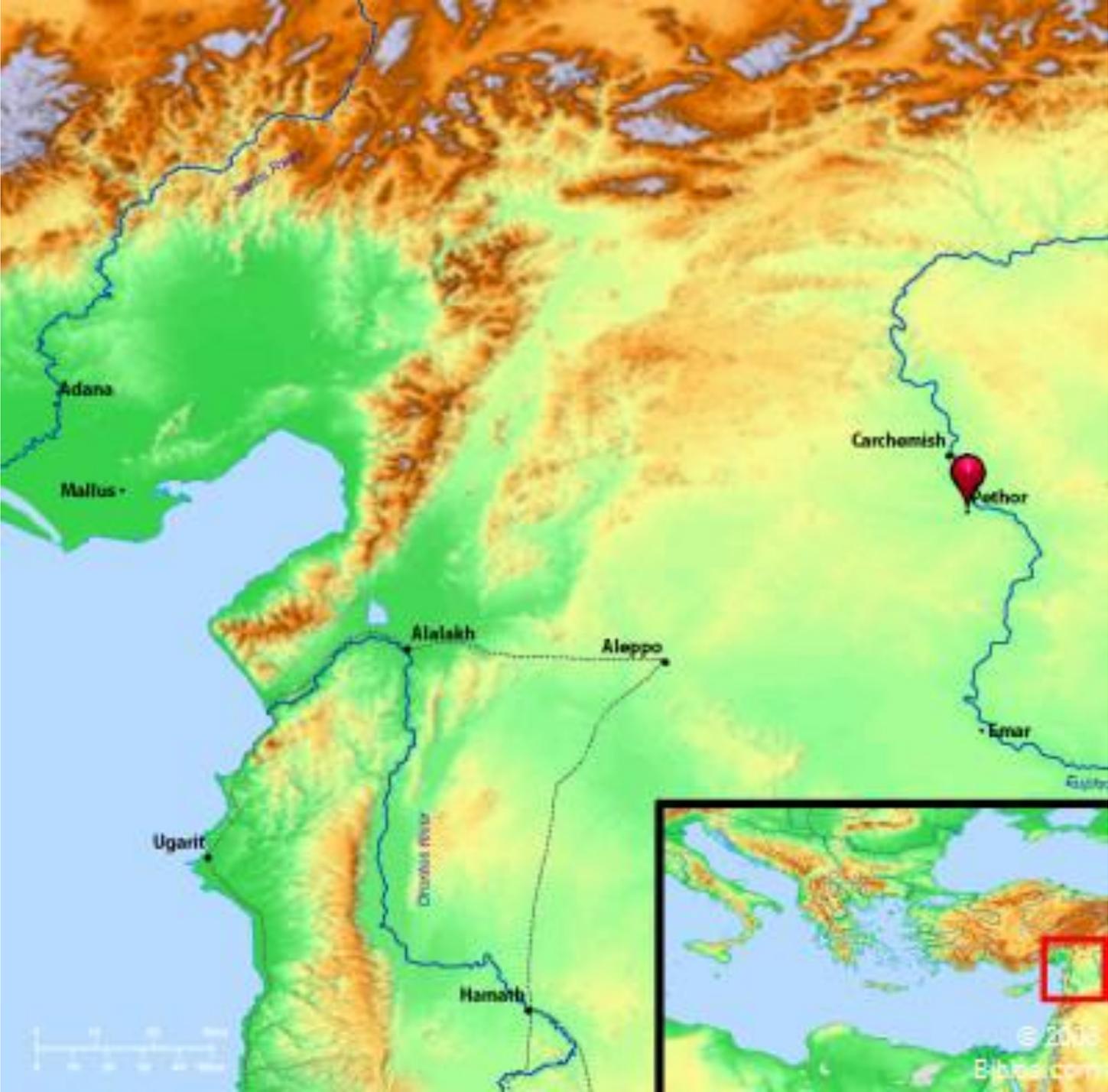


Lesson 16: A Prophet for Profit

Numbers 22-24

Numbers 22-24

22:1-40	Balak Summons Balaam
22:41-23:12	Balaam's First Oracle
23:13-26	Balaam's Second Oracle
23:27-24:25	Balaam's Third Oracle



Balaam Inscription Discovered in Deir Alla, Jordan in 1967

Combination 1

Title

The misfortunes of the Book of Balaam, son of Beor. A divine seer was he.

The Theophany

The gods came to him at night.

And he beheld a vision in accordance with El's utterance.

They said to Balaam, son of Beor:

"So will it be done, with naught surviving.

No one has seen [the likes of] what you have heard!"

Balaam Reports his Vision to His Intimates

Balaam arose on the morrow;

He summoned the heads of the assembly to him,

And for two days he fasted, and wept bitterly.

Then his intimates entered into his presence,

and they said to Balaam, son of Beor,

"Why do you fast, and why do you weep?"

Then he said to them: "Be seated, and I will relate to you what the Shaddai
gods have planned,

And go, see the acts of the god!"

Balaam Describes the Celestial Vision and Its Aftermath in the Land

"The gods have banded together;

The Shaddai gods have established a council,

And they have said to [the goddess] Shagar:

'Sew up, close up the heavens with dense cloud,

That darkness exist there, not brilliance;

Obscurity and not clarity;

So that you instill dread in dense darkness.

And - never utter a sound again!"

It shall be that the swift and crane will shriek insult to the eagle,

And a nest of vultures shall cry out in response.

The stork, the young of the falcon and the owl,

The chicks of the heron, sparrow and cluster of eagles;

Pigeons and birds, [and fowl in the s]ky.

And a rod [shall flay the cat]tle;

Where there are ewes, a staff shall be brought.

Hares - eat together!

Free[ly feed], oh beasts [of the field]!

And [freely] drink, asses and hyenas!"

Balaam Acts to Save the Goddess and the Land

Heed the admonition, adversaries of Sha[gar-and-lštar]!

... skilled diviner.

To skilled diviners shall one take you, and to an oracle;

To a perfumer of myrrh and a priestess.

Who covers his body with oil,

And rubs himself with olive oil.

To one bearing an offering in a horn;

One augurer after another, and yet another.

As one augurer broke away from his colleagues,

The strikers departed ...

The Admonitions are Heeded; The Malevolent Gods are Punished, the Goddess Rescued, and the Land Saved

They heard incantations from afar

...

Then disease was unleashed

And all beheld acts of distress.

Shagar-and-Ištar did not ...

The piglet [drove out] the leopard

And the ... drove out the young of the ...

... double offerings

And he beheld ...

Combination 2

... a girl those who were used² to be saturated with love ...

... a blinded one and the whole moistened² soil² ...

(A) El Builds a Necropolis

El satisfied himself with [love]

And then El fashioned an eternal house;

[A house ...]

A house where no traveler enters

Nor does a bridegroom enter there

(B) A Half-existence in Sheol

Worm rot from a grave.

From the reckless affairs of men.

And from the lustful desires of people.

(C) The Rejection of a Seer

If it is for counsel, one will not counsel with you!

Or for advising him, one will not take advice!

(D-E) More on Conditions in Sheol

From the bed they cover themselves with a wrap.

If you hate him, he will be mortally afflicted.

If you ...

[Worm rot] is under your head.

You shall lie on your eternal bedding,

To pass away to ...

(F-G) Kings and Other Corpses in Sheol

... in their heart.

The corpse moans in his heart,

He moans ...

... a daughter.

There, kings behold ...

There is no mercy when Death seizes a suckling.

And a suckling ...

And a suckling ...

A suckling ...

There ... shall be.

The heart of the corpse is desolate

As he approaches [Sheol].

...

To the edge of She[ol],

And the shadow of the hedge ...

(H-I) An Oracle: The Quests of Kings and Seers Come to Naught

"The quest of a king is moth rot,

And the quest of ...

... seers.

Your quest is distant from you.

To know how to deliver an oracle to his people.

You have been condemned for your speech

And [banned] from pronouncing words of execration.