

Chapter 22

Balac King of Moab fearing the Ifraelites, fendeth for Balaam a fouthfayer to curfe them. 8. VVho confulting his falfe god, is forbid by God almightie to goe, and fo excufeth him felf. 15. Balac fendeth againe offering greater reward, 19. he againe confulteth, and God biddeh him goe. 22. But fendeth an Angel to meete him in the way, whom his alfe feing, shunneth three times, and fo often he beateth her, 28. then she fpeaketh, expoftulating his hard vface: 31. he alfo feeth the Angel, 35. and is charged to fpeake nothing but that the Angel fhall fuggeft.

And marching forward they camped in the champion cuntrye of Moab, where Iericho is fituated beyond Iordan. ² And Balac the fonne of Sephor feeing al thinges that Ifrael had done to the Amorrhite, ³ and that the Moabites were in greate feare of him, and could not fusteyne his affault, ⁴ he faid to the elders of Madian: So wil this people deftroie al that dwel in our coaftes, as the oxe is wont to eate the graffe vnto the verie rootes. And he was at the fame time King in Moab. ⁵ He fent therefore meffengers to Balaam the fonne of Behor a Southfayer, who dwelt vpon the riuer of the land of the children of Ammon, to cal him, and to fay: Behold a people is come out of Ægypt, that hath couered the face of the earth, fitting againft me. ⁶ Come therefore, and curfe this people, becaufe it is mightier then I: if by any meanes I may ftrike them and caft them out of my land. For I know that he is bleffed whom thou fhalt bleffe, and curfed vpon whom thou fhalt heape curfes. ⁷ And the ancientes of Moab went, and the elders of Madian, hauing the price of diuination in their handes. And when they were come to Balaam, and had told him al the wordes of Balac: ⁸ he answered:

Tarie here this night, and I wil anfwer whatfoeuer ^{a)}the Lord shal fay to me. And whiles they ftayed with Balaam, ^{b)}God came, and faid to him: ⁹ What would these men that are with thee? ¹⁰ He answered: Balac the sonne of Sephor king of the Moabites hath sent to me, ¹¹ saying: Behold a people that is come out of Ægypt, hath couered the face of the land: come, and curse them, if by any meanes fighting I may driue them away. ¹² And God faid to Balaam: Goe not with them, neither doe thou curse the people: because it is bleffed. ¹³ Who in the morning arising faid to the princes: Goe into your countrie, because the Lord hath forbid me to come with you. ¹⁴ The princes returning, faid to Balac: Balaam would not come with vs. ¹⁵ Againe he sent many more and more noble, then he had sent before. ¹⁶ Who when they were come to Balaam, faid: Thus sayeth Balac the sonne of Sephor: Slacke not to come to me: ¹⁷ for I am readie to honour thee, and whatfoeuer thou wilt I wil geue thee: Come, and curse this people. ¹⁸ Balaam answered: If Balac would geue me his house full of siluer and gold, I can not change the word of the Lord my God, to speake either more, or lesse. ¹⁹ I beseech you that you wil also tarie here this night, and I may know what the Lord wil answere me ^{c)}once more. ²⁰ God therefore came to Balaam in the night, and faid to him: If these men be come to call thee, arise and goe with them: yet so, that thou doe that which I shal command thee. ²¹ Balaam arose in the morning, and saddling his asse went with them. ²² And God was angrie. And an Angel of our Lord stood in the way against Balaam, who fate vpon the asse, and

^a He consulted his false god, whom he serued, & called him the Lord, not knowing our Lord God almighty. *Theodoret. q. 40. Procopius. in Num.*

^b God our Lord answered him, not suffering the diuel to speake in this case.

^c Being sufficiently informed before, for worldlie lucre he demandeth againe, & God for his punishment letteth him goe: but suffereth him not to curse, nor speake euil of the Israelites, but contrarywise to prophesie much good, which should come vnto them.

had two feruantes with him. ²³ The affe feeing the Angel fstanding in the way, with a drawen fword, turned her felf out of the way, and went by the field. Whom when Balaam had beate, and had brought her againe to the beaten way, ²⁴ the Angel ftoode in the ftreictes of two walles, wherwith vineyardes were inclofed. ²⁵ Whom the affe feeing, ioyned her felfe clofe to the wal, and brufed the foote of him that ridde. But he beate her againe: ²⁶ and neuertheleffe the Angel paffing to a narrow place, where there could be no going a fide neither to the right hand nor to the left, ftoode to meete him. ²⁷ And when the affe had feene the Angel fstanding, she fel vnder the feete of the rider. Who being angrie, beate her fides with a ftaffe more vehemently. ²⁸ And our Lord opened the mouth of the affe, and she fpake: What haue I done to thee? why fstrikeft thou me? loe now the third time? ²⁹ Balaam ^{a)}anfwered: Because thou haft deferued, and haft abufed me: I would I had a fword, that I might kil thee. ³⁰ The affe faid: Am not I thy beaft, on which thou haft beene alwayes accuftomed to ride vntil this prefent day? tel me what like thing did I euer to thee. But he faid: Neuer. ³¹ Forthwith our Lord opened the eies of Balaam, and he ^{b)}faw the Angel fstanding in the way with a drawen fword, and he ^{c)}adored him flatte to the ground. ³² To whom the Angel faid: Why beateft thou thy affe the third time? I am come to withftand thee, because thy way is peruerfe, and contrarie to me: ³³ and vnleffe the affe had turned out of the way, geuing place to me refifting thee, I had flaine thee, and she should haue liued. ³⁴ Balaam faid: I haue finned, not

^a Nothing is here to be more merueled (*fayeth S. Auguftin*) then that he was not afraide whē he heard his affe fpeake vnto him. But being accuftomed to fuch monftrous things he replied familiarly, nothing therewith afoonifhed.

^b Yet feing an Angel, he fel downe terrified, and adored him. *q. 48. in Num.*

^c Balaam knowing him to be an Angel that appeared, neither adored him with diuine honour as God, nor with ciuil, as a mortal man, but with religious honour, leffe then diuine, & more then ciuil. See *Exod. 20.*

knowing that thou didst stand against me: and now if it displeaseth thee that I goe, I will returne. ³⁵ The Angel said: ^a)Goe with these men, and see thou speake no other thing then I shall command thee. He went therefore with the princes. ³⁶ Which when Balac heard, he came forth to meete him in a towne of the Moabites, that is situated in the uttermost borders of Arnon. ³⁷ And he said to Balaam: I sent messengers to call thee, why didst thou not come immediately unto me? was it because I can not reward thy coming? ³⁸ To whom he answered: Lo here I am: Shall I be able to speake any other thing, but that which God shall put in my mouth? ³⁹ They therefore went on together, and came into a citie, that was in the uttermost borders of his kingdom. ⁴⁰ And when Balac had killed oxen, & sheepe, he sent thereof to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him, presents. ⁴¹ And when morning was come, he brought him to the excelses of Baal, and he beheld the uttermost part of the people.

^a God sometimes maketh false prophetes to utter a truth, because preiudicate mindes do rather geue eare to such, than to true prophetes. *Theod. q. 45. in Num.*