

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 53: BALAAM
NUMBERS 22-24

Israel moved to the hills of Moab, where they camped across the Jordan River from the town of Jericho. When King Balak of Moab and his people heard how many Israelites there were and what they had done to the Amorites, he and the Moabites were terrified and panicked. They said to the Midianite leaders, "That bunch of Israelites will wipe out everything in sight, like a bull eating grass in a field." So King Balak sent a message to Balaam son of Beor who lived among his relatives in the town of Pethor near the Euphrates River. It said: I need your help. A huge group of people has come here from Egypt and settled near my territory. They are too powerful for us to defeat, so would you come and place a curse on them? Maybe then we can run them off. I know that anyone you bless will be successful, but anyone you curse will fail. The leaders of Moab and Midian left and took along money to pay Balaam for his work. When they got to his house, they gave him Balak's message. "Spend the night here," Balaam replied, "and tomorrow I will tell you the LORD's answer." So the officials stayed at his house. During the night, God asked Balaam, "Who are these people at your house?" "They are messengers from King Balak of Moab," Balaam answered. "He sent them to ask me to go to Moab and place a curse on the people who have come there from Egypt. They have settled everywhere around him, and he wants to run them off." But God replied, "Don't go with Balak's messengers. I have blessed those people who have come from Egypt, so don't curse them." The next morning, Balaam said to Balak's officials, "Go on back home. The LORD says I cannot go with you." The officials left and told Balak that Balaam refused to come. Then Balak sent a larger group of officials, who were even more important than the first ones. They went to Balaam and told him that Balak had said, "Balaam, if you come to Moab, I'll pay you very well and do whatever you ask. Just come and place a curse on these people." Balaam answered, "Even if Balak offered me a palace full of silver or gold, I wouldn't do anything to disobey the LORD my God. You are welcome to spend the night here, just as the others did. I will find out if the LORD has something else to say about this." That night, God said, "Balaam, I'll let you go to Moab with Balak's messengers, but do only what I say." So Balaam got up the next morning and saddled his donkey, then left with the Moabite officials. Balaam was riding his donkey to Moab, and two of his

servants were with him. But God was angry that Balaam had gone, so one of the LORD's angels stood in the road to stop him. When Balaam's donkey saw the angel standing there with a sword, the donkey walked off the road and into an open field. Balaam had to beat the donkey to get it back on the road. Then the angel stood between two vineyards, in a narrow path with a stone wall on each side. When the donkey saw the angel, it walked so close to one of the walls that Balaam's foot scraped against the wall. Balaam beat the donkey again. The angel moved once more and stood in a spot so narrow that there was no room for the donkey to go around. So it just lay down. Balaam lost his temper, then picked up a stick and smacked the donkey. When that happened, the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and it asked Balaam, "What have I done to you that made you beat me three times?" "You made me look stupid!" Balaam answered. "If I had a sword, I'd kill you here and now!" "But you're my owner," replied the donkey, "and you've ridden me many times. Have I ever done anything like this before?" "No," Balaam admitted. Just then, the LORD let Balaam see the angel standing in the road, holding a sword, and Balaam bowed down. The angel said, "You had no right to treat your donkey like that! I was the one who blocked your way, because I don't think you should go to Moab. If your donkey had not seen me and stopped those three times, I would have killed you and let the donkey live." Balaam replied, "I was wrong. I didn't know you were trying to stop me. If you don't think I should go, I'll return home right now." "It's all right for you to go," the LORD's angel answered. "But you must say only what I tell you." So Balaam went on with Balak's officials. When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went to meet him at the town of Ir, which is on the northern border of Moab. Balak asked, "Why didn't you come when I invited you the first time? Did you think I wasn't going to pay you?" "I'm here now," Balaam answered. "But I will say only what God tells me to say." They left and went to the town of Kiriath-Huzoth, where Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep and gave some of the meat to Balaam and the officials who were with him. The next morning, Balak took Balaam to the town of Bamoth-Baal. From there, Balaam could see some of the Israelites. Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars here, then bring seven bulls and seven rams." After Balak had done this, they sacrificed a bull and a ram on each altar. Then Balaam said, "Wait here beside your offerings, and I'll go somewhere to be alone. Maybe the LORD will appear to me. If he does, I will tell you everything he says." And he left. When God appeared to him, Balaam

said, "I have built seven altars and have sacrificed a bull and a ram on each one." The LORD gave Balaam a message, then sent him back to tell Balak. When Balaam returned, he found Balak and his officials standing beside the offerings. Balaam said: "King Balak of Moab brought me from the hills of Syria to curse Israel and announce its doom. But I can't go against God! He did not curse or condemn Israel. "From the mountain peaks, I look down and see Israel, the obedient people of God. They are living alone in peace. And though they are many, they don't bother the other nations. "I hope to obey God for as long as I live and to die in such peace." Balak said, "What are you doing? I asked you to come and place a curse on my enemies. But you have blessed them instead!" Balaam answered, "I can say only what the LORD tells me." Balak said to Balaam, "Let's go somewhere else. Maybe if you see a smaller part of the Israelites, you will be able to curse them for me." So he took Balaam to a field on top of Mount Pisgah where lookouts were stationed. Then he built seven altars there and sacrificed a bull and a ram on each one. "Wait here beside your offerings," Balaam said. "The LORD will appear to me over there." The LORD appeared to Balaam and gave him another message, then he told him to go and tell Balak. Balaam went back and saw him and his officials standing beside the offerings. Balak asked, "What did the LORD say?" Balaam answered: "Pay close attention to my words-- God is no mere human! He doesn't tell lies or change his mind. God always keeps his promises. "My command from God was to bless these people, and there's nothing I can do to change what he has done. Israel's king is the LORD God. He lives there with them and intends them no harm. With the strength of a wild ox, God led Israel out of Egypt. No magic charms can work against them-- just look what God has done for his people. They are like angry lions ready to attack; and they won't rest until their victim is gobbled down." Balak shouted, "If you're not going to curse Israel, then at least don't bless them." "I've already told you," Balaam answered. "I will say only what the LORD tells me." Balak said to Balaam, "Come on, let's try another place. Maybe God will let you curse Israel from there." So he took Balaam to Mount Peor overlooking the desert north of the Dead Sea. Balaam said, "Build seven altars here, then bring me seven bulls and seven rams." After Balak had done what Balaam asked, he sacrificed a bull and a ram on each altar.

Balaam was sure that the LORD would tell him to bless Israel again. So he did not use any magic to find out what the LORD wanted him to do, as he had the

first two times. Instead, he looked out toward the desert and saw the tribes of Israel camped below. Just then, God's Spirit took control of him, and Balaam said: "I am the son of Beor, and my words are true, so listen to my message! It comes from the LORD, the God All-Powerful. I bowed down to him and saw a vision of Israel. "People of Israel, your camp is lovely. It's like a grove of palm trees or a garden beside a river. You are like tall aloë trees that the LORD has planted, or like cedars growing near water. You and your descendants will prosper like an orchard beside a stream. Your king will rule with power and be a greater king than Agag the Amalekite. With the strength of a wild ox, God led you out of Egypt. You will defeat your enemies, shooting them with arrows and crushing their bones. Like a lion you lie down, resting after an attack. Who would dare disturb you? "Anyone who blesses you will be blessed; anyone who curses you will be cursed." When Balak heard this, he was so furious that he pounded his fist against his hand and said, "I called you here to place a curse on my enemies, and you've blessed them three times. Leave now and go home! I told you I would pay you well, but since the LORD didn't let you do what I asked, you won't be paid." Balaam answered, "I told your messengers that even if you offered me a palace full of silver or gold, I would still obey the LORD. And I explained that I would say only what he told me. So I'm going back home, but I'm leaving you with a warning about what the Israelites will someday do to your nation." Balaam said: "I am the son of Beor, and my words are true, so listen to my message! My knowledge comes from God Most High, the LORD All-Powerful. I bowed down to him and saw a vision of Israel. "What I saw in my vision hasn't happened yet. But someday, a king of Israel will appear like a star. He will wipe out you Moabites and destroy those tribes who live in the desert. Israel will conquer Edom and capture the land of that enemy nation. The king of Israel will rule and destroy the survivors of every town there. "And I saw this vision about the Amalekites: Their nation is now great, but it will someday disappear forever. "And this is what I saw about the Kenites: They think they're safe, living among the rocks, but they will be wiped out when Assyria conquers them. "No one can survive if God plans destruction. Ships will come from Cyprus, bringing people who will invade the lands of Assyria and Eber. But finally, Cyprus itself will be ruined." After Balaam finished, he started home, and Balak the king also left.

53. BALAAM
(NUMBERS 22-24)



"And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and it asked Balaam,
'What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?' "

NUMBERS 22:28

53. BALAAM

(NUMBERS 22-24)

MEMORY VERSE:

"He was rebuked for his iniquity; a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet."

2 PETER 2:16

TRUE OR FALSE

1. Israel moved to the hills of Moab, where they camped across the Jordan River from the town of Jericho. TRUE or FALSE
2. King Balak of Moab had his men call upon Balaam to bless the Israelites so that they would move on. TRUE or FALSE
3. Balaam refused to go with the Moabites the first time. TRUE or FALSE
4. The second time the Moabites came Balaam went with them. TRUE or FALSE
5. Balaam's donkey saw an angel in the way and went out of the way twice, then finally laid down, and it made Balaam so mad he hit the donkey three times – once for each time he didn't do what Balaam wanted him to do. TRUE or FALSE
6. Balaam cursed the Israelites like Balak wanted him to do. TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. After Balaam hit his donkey the third time, what did the LORD make the donkey do?
2. What did the donkey say to Balaam?
3. Did Balaam curse the Israelites like King Balak wanted him to do?
4. What did Balaam do to the Israelites instead of cursing them?
5. Was king Balak happy that Balaam blessed the Israelites?
6. Why did Balaam bless the Israelites? Did he get paid for blessing them?

53. BALAAM

(NUMBERS 22-24)

P S C E H I Q B Q M I F L Q Y
R S F U N V T I Z P W J C R Y
O I K W G V A A U E Z T T Y O
P L B J G B M A A L A B I E F
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E J Y N G Q Q M A G K J T N L
T L N S R Y F X N D Q Z A O S
K L M Z Q E H T M E J Z N D V
T D R O L E H T F O L E G N A
D O H K I K A L A B B K R I M
Y P E S R U C Y G P B C P L T
H E L B P L P L F Z R U I S H
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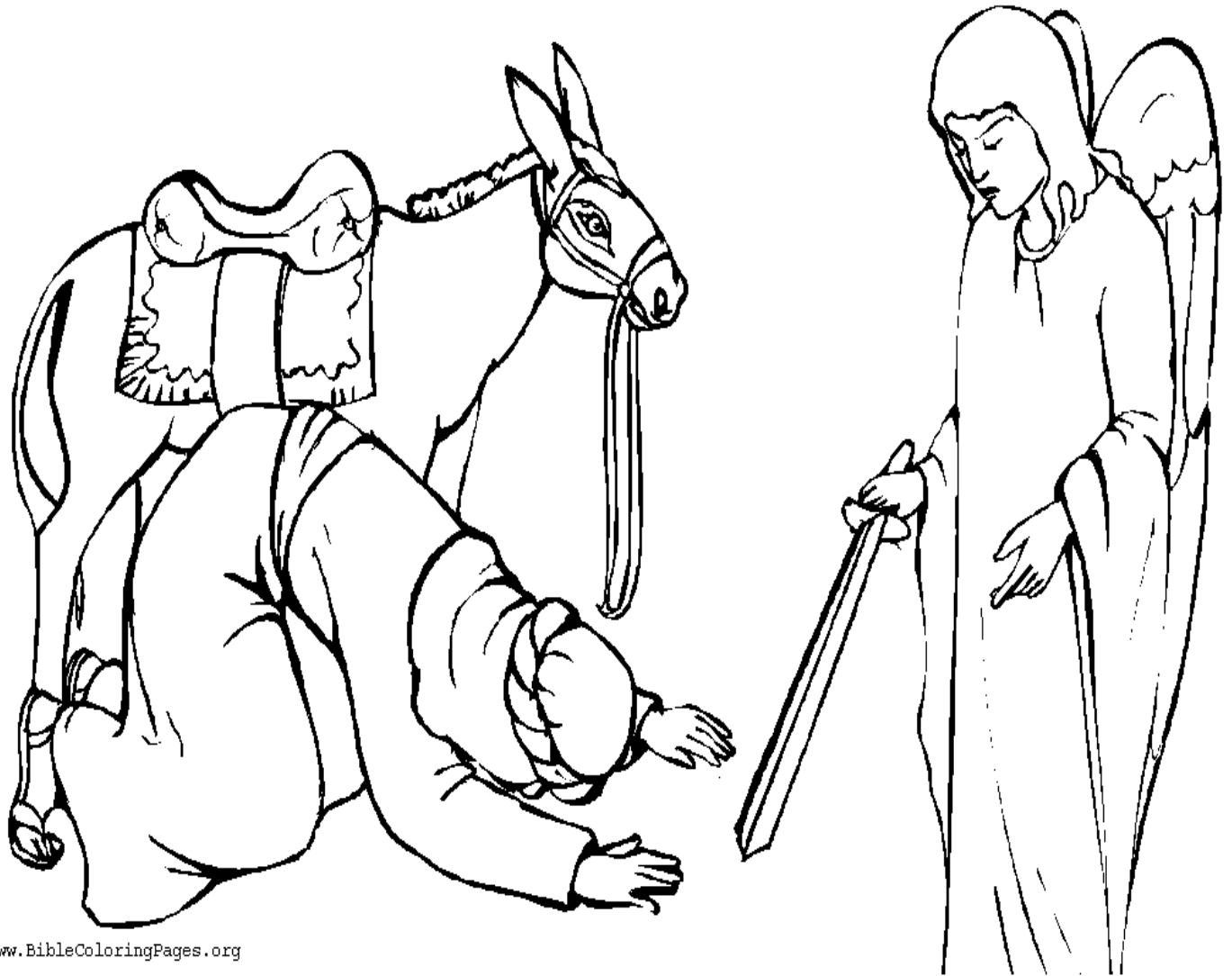
ANGEL OF THE LORD
BALAAM
BALAK
BLESSED

CURSE
DONKEY
JERICO

PROPHET
STRUCK
THREE



53. BALAAM



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Balaam didn't see the angel, but his donkey did.

LESSON 53 CRAFT

“His Truth Shall Be Your Shield and Buckler”

SUPPLIES:

Cardboard (a piece at least 10"x12" for each child)

LARGE ROLL OF ALUMINUM FOIL

TAPE OR STAPLER

STRING/YARN

Based on Psalm 91:4, make a small shield by cutting a shield shape out of cardboard and letting the kids cover with aluminum foil. Gluing string to the cardboard before covering with foil could make further decoration on the inside (the foil will rub over top of the string, so you can see it underneath) – OPTIONAL – you can staple/tape string to the back (two vertical pieces) of the shield so the children can put their arm through – You can also use strips of construction paper on the back to put their arms through.

Remind the children that the Lord will always protect us.

PRAYER Lead the children in a prayer of thankfulness to the Lord for His protection in our lives and commitment to always trust in Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.