



# MOSAIC Gospel Project

## Volume 3, Unit 7, Lesson 3: Balaam and Balak

**Bible Passage:** Numbers 22-24

### Personal Preparation

God's people, the Israelites, were in the wilderness. They had arrived at the promised land decades earlier, but the people had rebelled—refusing to trust God to give them the land. They believed it would be better to die in the wilderness than to follow God (Num. 14:2), so God sent them into the wilderness for 40 years (vv. 28-29). In time, all of the adults died except for Joshua, Caleb, and Moses. The children grew up, and more children were born. The Israelites disobeyed God time and again, but God still provided for them. He planned to keep his promise to give Israel the promised land.

As the Israelites traveled, God gave them victory over attacking armies like the Canaanites and Amorites. Not surprisingly, when Israel set up camp in the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River, Balak—the king of Moab—was terrified. The king knew he could not defeat the Israelites on his own, so he called on Balaam, a pagan prophet, to put a curse on them.

Though Balaam did not follow God, he knew of God and God spoke to him. God told Balaam, “You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed.” God’s plan all along was to bless humanity (Gen. 1:28), specifically through the nation of Israel (Gen. 12:3). So each time Balaam spoke over Israel, God did not allow him to curse the Israelites. Instead Balaam spoke in four clear messages, insisting that God would bless the Israelites.

One of the ways God would bless the Israelites is found in Numbers 24:17: “A star will come

from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel.” Balaam told of a powerful future king who would be victorious over his enemies. This prophecy referred to and was ultimately fulfilled by Jesus.

Teach the individuals in your group that God protects his people. His promises are sure. In Jesus, God fulfilled his promise of bringing blessing to the whole world. Praise God for his faithfulness and protection. Reflect on the ways he has protected you, and thank him for his faithful protection. Pray that the individuals you teach would know that God cares for and protects his people.

### Memory Verse

Start the lesson by reviewing the memory verse with the group.

#### Proverbs 3:5-6

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”*

### Points of Emphasis

1. God commanded Balaam to bless the Israelites.
2. To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and his commands.

### Activity #1

Lead the group to begin filling out the activity sheet. Feel free to let them continue as you teach the lesson.

## Video

The stories I've shared with you so far have been about things that happened to God's people after they left Egypt and headed toward the promised land. Joshua and Caleb were two of the spies who scouted out the promised land. Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give his people the promised land, but the Israelites did not trust him. So God said those people had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until a new generation grew up.

God provided for his people in the wilderness, but they kept complaining. Because of their sin, God sent snakes that bit the people. When they asked God for help, God told his people to look at the bronze snake to be healed. The bronze snake reminds us of Jesus, who was lifted up on a cross. We look to him to be saved from our sins. In today's Bible story, the Israelites' time in the wilderness was almost over. We'll hear about two people—Balaam (BAY luhm) and Balak (BAY lak)—who encountered God's people. Listen closely to find out what they did.

Play the video lesson titled “Balaam and Balak.”

## Bible Lesson

How would you react if your pet started talking to you? Isn't it strange that Balaam didn't say “Whoa, you can talk!” or anything like that? He was so focused on how angry he felt, he did not even stop to wonder how the donkey spoke. God was using the donkey to get Balaam's attention and change Balaam's plans. Balaam was traveling to see Balak, an enemy of God's people. Balak hired Balaam to curse God's people, but God had a very different plan.

You see, even though Balak sinned by going against God and his people, God commanded Balaam to bless his people. That's exactly what Balaam did. Balaam proclaimed a blessing over God's people, and God revealed some things about the coming

Rescuer. Balaam's message meant that the Rescuer was coming from Jacob's family and that he would be a king. We know that Jesus is the Rescuer from Jacob's family, and he is the King of kings.

Even in the middle of our sinful choices, God is still in control. Balaam encountered God, and it drastically changed his plans. When we encounter Jesus, it changes our whole lives.

## Activity #2

Guide the group to finish working on the activity sheet. Review the memory verse with the individuals. Help them practice it and learn it. Encourage them to write the verse using the Velcro pictures.

## Christ Connection

Balaam could not curse God's people. God had blessed the Israelites, so Balaam blessed them too. Fourteen hundred years after Balaam announced God's promise, Jesus was born. God sent Jesus to bless the whole world by rescuing people from sin.

## Review Questions

*(Optional: Watch the Questions from Kids (QFK) video to continue the discussion on Balaam and Balak. Today's episode asks if angels really exist.)*

Group A

Early Learner

Encourage the individuals to point to the pictures provided or to draw in order to answer these questions.

1. **Point to who was afraid of the Israelites and wanted to curse them.** Balak (king)
2. **Point to who Balak sent to curse the Israelites.** Balaam (with donkey)
3. **Point to who stopped Balaam and told him to bless the Israelites.** Angel
4. **Point to who got angry at his donkey for stopping.** Balaam
5. **Point to who blessed the Israelites.** Balaam

## Group B

1. **Why did Balak want Balaam to curse the Israelites?** Balak was afraid the Israelites would move into the land and take over.
2. **Who came to stop Balaam?** An angel of the Lord came.
3. **Why did Balaam hit his donkey?** Balaam could not see why the donkey kept stopping, and he was angry.
4. **How did God use Balak's sin to bless his people?** Balak sinned by planning to have Balaam curse the Israelites, but God turned the situation around so that Balaam would bless them instead. God shows his great power when he changes difficult situations into blessings.
5. **When might we miss what God is doing around us, like Balaam did?** We often desire sinful things. We often think that our plans will be better than God's plans for us. When we chase after sinful things, we can miss out on being a part of God's good plans.
6. **How does God show grace to sinners?** God's sending the angel to stop Balaam was gracious. Instead of letting Balak continue with his sinful plan, God changed those plans to fit his own good plans. God shows us grace through Jesus, who died to save us from sin so that we can be part of God's plan to rescue sinners all over the world.

## Group C

1. **Why do you think King Balak wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites?** The Israelites were a possible threat to King Balak and the people of Moab. The king saw that they were victorious against their enemies. The Israelites were numerous, and the Moabites were afraid.
2. **How did God protect his people? What protection does God give us?** Balaam could only say what God told him to. He could not curse the Israelites because God had blessed them. God's people face suffering today, but God protects us in the greatest way by rescuing us from sin and death through his Son, Jesus.

3. **How can we use our words for God's glory?** We can tell the truth, talk to others about Jesus, and encourage one another. We can all choose to honor God and bless others with our mouth, or we can dishonor him and hurt others. God wants us to use our mouths to honor him.

## Group D

## Advanced Learner

1. **What does this story teach us about God?** God has a plan to bless his people. In our Bible story, King Balak was afraid of the Israelites, and he wanted to defeat them so they would leave his kingdom. But that was not God's plan. King Balak repeatedly asked Balaam to curse the people, and what happened each time? God commanded Balaam to bless his people, and Balaam spoke blessings on the Israelites.
2. **What special message did Balaam share about the future?** Balaam shared how God was going to bless Israel. Balaam prophesied about Jesus. God's prophecies always come true, sometimes thousands of years later. In fact, we are still waiting for some of God's prophecies to happen. Balaam prophesied that a powerful king—Jesus!—would come from Jacob's family. The star and the scepter meant Jesus would be a king. Jesus will come back one day, and he will reign as King over all.
3. **Do you think angels are real?**
4. **How can we serve God each day?**

## Prayer

**Lord God, you are good. You protected your people and blessed them. You have also blessed us by sending Jesus to die for our sins. Help us show your love to others. Give us hearts to serve others humbly and with joy—for your glory. We love you. Amen.**

