

Lesson 13: Balaam's Oracles

Objectives: Students will...

- 1) Study Numbers 23-25 – Continue studying Balaam and Balak
- 2) See that God protects His people and will protect us too!
- 3) Recognize that God blesses those who follow and obey Him and punishes those who don't.

Supplies:

Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Multiplication Riddle Sheet – one per older child *make sure you allow them a calculator or multiplication table so that this activity remains fun and not frustrating for those who have trouble with math.
- Multiplication Table – one per student if no access to calculators. There are 4 tables on a page – cut out before class. – one per older child
- Color Page – one per younger child

Optional:

- Calculators to share – for those doing multiplication sheet if you did not print multiplication table
- Storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

Snack:

- Pretzel Sticks handful for each child
- Napkins for snack one per child
- Water and cup one per child

Lesson:

1) Introduction to Lesson

5-10 minutes

As students enter, welcome them and help find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming.

Take attendance (using attendance chart supplied).

Say to students: **Can anyone remember what we studied last week?** Balaam was called by Balak the king to send curses down on Israel so that Balak would not lose his land to the Israelites. Balaam tried to convince God and this angered God and caused him to send an angel to destroy Balaam. Balaam's donkey spoke to Balaam to stop him from being killed! Balaam then apologized to God for his sin.

This week we will continue to study Balaam and Balak.

Let's read from the New Testament to see what they say about Balaam.

Let's read 2 Peter 2:15-16 and Jude 11:

2 Peter 2:15-16

¹⁵ They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness. ¹⁶ But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

Jude 1:11

¹¹ Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

What are they saying about Balaam? Rushed into profit, made an error, loved the wages of wickedness, his madness was restrained by a donkey speaking to him...

We had read last week that Balaam apologized for his sin and said he would only speak the Lord's Words. Then how can he be still considered such a wicked man? Let's finish the story of Balaam this week and see what happens.

If you have your Bibles let's find Numbers and turn there now.

Today we are studying Numbers Chapter 23-25. Let's start by looking at Numbers 22:39-23:3

2) Numbers 22-24 – Balaam's Oracles

20 minutes

Optional: Storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

Say, **Can I get a volunteer to read Numbers 22:39-23:3? Read Numbers 22:39-23:3.**

Who is Balak? The king of the Moabites.

What does Balaam tell him to do? Build 7 altars and prepare 7 bulls and a ram on each and wait and see what God says.

Let's read Numbers 23:4-16

Was Balaam able to curse the Israelites? No!

What did Balak want Balaam to do after he blessed the Israelites? He wanted him to go to another location with a better view of the Israelites so he might curse them there.

Balaam and Balak thought they could get God to change His mind and let him pronounce the curses if they would offer sacrifices, or move around to different spots, or use sorcery (Read Numbers 24:1). None of the schemes worked. In Chapters 23-24 Balaam speaks 7 Oracles in total all of them show God's protection of the Israelites and punishment for those who would try and hurt them.

Balaam ends up speaking 6 prophecies during these 7 oracles, which God placed in his mouth – let's look at each:

(Ask a child to read each of the verses below and then mention what the verses mean)

Numbers 23:7-10 – I cannot curse the people that God has blessed

Numbers 23:18-20 – God will not change His mind

Numbers 24:5-9 – Israel is good

Numbers 24:21-22 – God will protect them

Numbers 24:17-25 – Israel's enemies will perish

Numbers 24:17 – the time of King David defeating the Moabites (King Balak's people) is foretold

Let's read Numbers 24:17 again. Balaam is speaking about a time 400 years later in the time of King David (1010-970 B.C.). King David defeats the Moabites – the people of Balak. This prophecy may also have two meanings and be referring to the time of Jesus when the wise men saw the star in the East and Jesus would be the scepter that would rise from Israel. (See Matthew 2:1-2)

What can we learn about God from these oracles? God will protect His people. You are safe in the hands of God if you follow Him. That does not mean that things won't happen during your life, but with God – He will make sure you get through all things with His help and guidance! We can also learn evil people can't succeed – they will be punished for their sins and wrong doings.

How can we apply this story for us today? We need to have faith that God will bless us and watch over us. We can rest knowing that people who try to harm us will be stopped by God and will be punished. We need to stand up for God and stay close to Him for protection – when people do come against us we shouldn't be tempted by money, power, or be wishy-washy like Balaam was.

3) Multiplication Riddle Sheet and/or Color Page

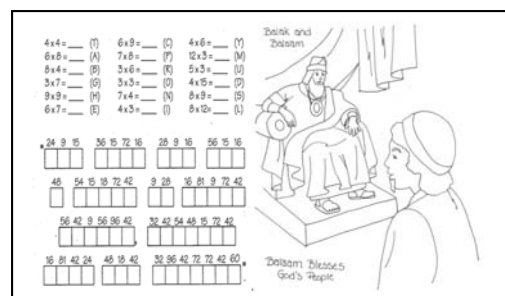
10-15 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each student along with pencils, calculator or multiplication chart. Read the instructions aloud and help students with numbers if needed.

*For children too young to do activity, hand out one color sheet instead and let them color with crayons as the older students work on this.

Answer to riddle:

You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.



4) Numbers 25 – Balaam Causes Trouble

10 minutes

Remember we looked at two verses in the New Testament about Balaam and that the inspired writers Peter and Jude called Balaam wicked? Let's see why they did that and read Numbers 24:25-25:3. Read Numbers 24:25-25:3.

What did the Israelite men do with Moabite woman? They were immoral and participated in the sacrifices of false gods and worshipped them.

What was God's response? He was angry with the Israelite men who did this.

How does this relate to Balaam? Let's turn to Numbers 31:15-16 to see how Balaam was involved with the sins of the Israelite men.

Read Numbers 31:7-8 and 15-16.

Say: **Moses sends the Israelites to kill all the people involved in the sin of false worship, including Balaam and the Moabite women.**

Did the men kill the woman as commanded? No.

Why does this anger Moses in verse 16? They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice to turn the Israelites away from the Lord.

What? Remember Balaam spoke only what the Lord said and then left, right? Obviously not. Here we read that Balaam before leaving Balak said something like: I can't curse the Israelites but there is a way you can cause them trouble. Send your women to cause the men to want to

commit sin by inviting them to a Baal festival and be with the woman and worship false gods. By doing so Israel will not be blessed by God any longer because He will become angry with them!

Balaam was a trickster and a deceiver and like we read from Peter and Jude – we now know why he was called wicked and why he was killed by the Israelites through God’s command – He didn’t obey God – he spoke more than the Words God told him to. He added this advice to cause the men of Israel to sin and compromise their faith. God punished Balaam for that.

Finally, let’s turn to Revelation 2:14 and read what Jesus says about Balaam:

Revelation 2:14

¹⁴Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.

What is Jesus saying? Can people who are supposed to be God’s people as Balaam was, entice us to sin? Yes.

What can we learn from this? Be careful – only follow the Bible and if others ask you to do things not in the Bible – do not listen to their advice! Run! Even if it is a friend in the church – if it is wrong, don’t do it. Obey God rather than men.

Let’s remember to not be a Balaam and be enticed to sin and die over money and power. Let’s be like Joshua, Moses and Caleb who stand up for God and serve Him! Let’s choose to be part of those who are blessed and protected by God because we do His will and are not tricked to sin and cause God to be angry with us.

5) Optional – Snack: Pretzel Sticks

Hand out snack to each child along with a glass of water or juice. Explain that: **As we studied last week, Balaam’s donkey was beaten by Balaam because Balaam didn’t trust the donkey and take caution when she tried to prevent him from being killed. This week we learned that Balaam still didn’t learn and because of it, he was killed for his sin. We are going to eat pretzel sticks to remind us not to hit or hurt those who are trying to help us but instead run from those who try to give us bad advice as Balaam gave. We need to remember to listen to good Godly advice and be respectful and careful to avoid bad advice. Don’t use a stick, but instead use your ears to listen and your legs to run if you need to get away from those who entice you to sin!** Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss any questions while snacking.

6) Optional – Songs

5 minutes

Have children sing songs with you. An example:

My God is So Big

My God is so big! So strong and so mighty.
There's nothing my God cannot do.

My God is so big! So strong and so mighty.
There's nothing my God cannot do.

The mountains are his and the valleys are his
and the trees are his handiwork too.

My God is so big! So strong and so mighty.
There's nothing my God cannot do for you.

Read Your Bible and Pray Everyday

(Sung to tune: Love is something if you give it
away)

Read your Bible.

Pray every day (repeat 3 times).

Read your Bible.

Pray every day.

And you'll grow, grow, grow (repeat 3 times).

Read your Bible.

Pray every day.

And you'll grow, grow, grow.

Don't read your Bible.

Forget to pray (repeat 3 times).

Don't read your Bible.

Forget to pray.

And you'll shrink, shrink, shrink (repeat 3
times).

Don't read your Bible.

Forget to pray.

And you'll shrink, shrink, shrink.

Repeat 1st verse.

7) Close in prayer

*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.

Dear God, thank you for the events in the Bible that help us learn how we should be. Thank you for giving us the Old Testament so we can learn from the Israelites and see what You do and do not want us to do. Help us to trust You, obey You and speak only the Words You want us to. Help us to believe in Jesus Christ, knowing it is through Him that we can be saved through baptism. We pray that we will listen to the advice of Godly people who are trying to help us and be open to their wisdom.

We pray that we will remember to do what is right and to remember to thank you for all the blessings you give us. We ask for forgiveness Father for our sins and we pray that you will help us to forgive those who sin against us. We thank You for Jesus, who came and died for our sins and who teaches us how to live in accordance with Your good will. Help us this week as we go to school and home. Help us to remember to pray and to study Your Word daily. Help us to remember to pray for those in need. We pray for the leaders of our church and our country. We pray for those who are sick or traveling that they will return to us soon. Comfort and guide those in need. Thank you for helping us this to study Your perfect Word and learn that You and Jesus want us to follow You and that by doing so we will be blessed and protected when we do. And it is in Jesus' name we pray, Amen!