

# God's Strange Preachers

(Junior)

## Lesson #4 The Donkey

**Scripture Reference** Numbers 22-26, 31:8,16; II Pet. 2:15-16; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14

**Memory Verse** “. . . Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” Luke 11:28b

**Theme** Disobedience

**Character Trait** Obedience

**Aim of Lesson** To teach God's children that to seek our own will and go astray brings disaster, but to seek and do God's will brings joy and happiness

**Time** Prior to crossing the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land

**Place** Plains of Moab this side of Jordan River from Promised Land

**Main Characters** Balaam, Balak

**Method** Storytelling

**Materials Needed** Flannelboard, Water & sky scene with desert overlay  
Betty Luken flannelgraph

9B 51 87 106 154 197A

22 84 94 110 185 209

40 85 102 119 195 271

**Attendance Chart**

**Snack** Teacher's choice

**Songs** “God's Strange Preachers,”  
“Trust and Obey”

### I. Balak's Fear of Israel's God

- A. Reason for fear
- B. Solution for fear

### II. Balaam's Response

- A. Balak's first request
- B. Balak's second request

### III. God's Intervention

- A. Trouble for Balaam
- B. Rebuke of Balaam
- C. Direction to Balaam

### IV. Balaam's Blessings on Israel

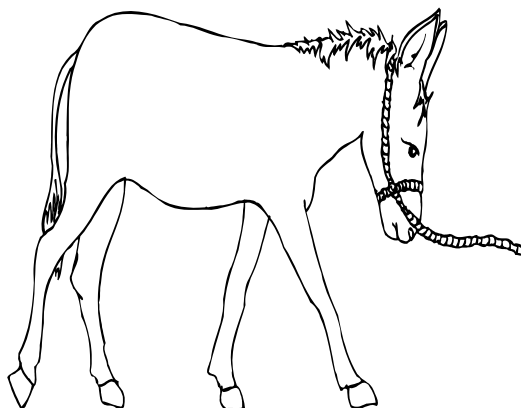
- A. Preparing the curse
- B. Prophesying about Christ

### V. Balaam's Counsel to Balak

- A. Intermarriage
- B. Judgment

### VI. God's Rebuke Today

- A. By His Spirit
- B. By His Word
- C. By godly friends
- D. By illness



OUTLINE

LESSON

# God's Strange Preachers

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## **Introduction:**

Many strange and impossible things can be seen on television today. Some of them are about animals that seem to talk. Have any of you seen these? Of course, this is only play-acting or pretending. Today's "strange preacher" is an animal considered dumb but God spoke through him. This was a miracle! (Sing "God's Strange Preachers")

The children of Israel were going back to the Land of Canaan to the land God had given them through their father Abraham. They had been in Egypt for about 400 years. While they were gone, other people were living in the land, so it was necessary for the Israelites to conquer these people in order to possess the land. Under God's leadership, they had conquered two of the kings and they were now at the border. They could look across the river and see the rich and beautiful country that God had promised them.

## **I. Balak's Fear of Israel's God**

There was a king in the country who watched as the Israelites set up their tents in the plains of Moab. He was wondering what to do to protect himself and his people, the Moabites from the Israelites. King Balak had seen what they had done to the Amorites and he was terrified. No doubt he had heard how God had brought plagues upon Egypt, opened the Red Sea, and led the people out. King Balak knew that the God of the Israelites was powerful and that He would help His people conquer the king and his army the same as He had the others.

So Balak decided that he would have to find another way to get rid of the multitude of Israelites other than trying to go to war against them. He decided to

send for a man by the name of Balaam who lived far away. Balaam was a foreteller of events. So Balak figured that if Balaam would come and curse the Israelites, they would then be powerless and he could drive them out. But Balak did not know the great power of our God over all things, nor did he know God's will for His people as we will see.

## **II. Balaam's Response**

Balak sent messengers with rich presents as a reward for foretelling if Balaam would come and curse the Israelites. The men arrived after the long journey and delivered this message to Balaam. ". . .Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." (Num. 22:5b-6) Balaam invited the messengers into his house and asked them to spend the night. Balaam knew about the true and living God, but he did not love God and was not a true prophet. During the night, God told Balaam not to go with the messengers or curse the people, for they were blessed. So, Balaam knew God and what His will was. The next morning Balaam rose up and told the princes of Balak to go on back home because the Lord refused to let him go. He didn't tell them everything the Lord had told him.

The messengers went back to Balak and told him Balaam refused to come. Balak was desperate. He thought maybe if he sent bigger rewards to Balaam then

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he would come. So he chose even more important men in the kingdom to go with more rewards and promises of honor. They reached Balaam's house and promised him great honor if he would go back with them. Balaam said even if they gave him a house full of silver and gold, he could not go beyond what God had said to do. Oh how Balaam wanted those rewards and honor! If only he could figure out some way to get them! So, he asked the men to stay all night again and said he would see if the Lord said anything else to him about it! He already knew God's will! God told him if the men called him, he was to rise up and go with them, but only to say what God had told him to say. Balaam didn't even wait for the men to call him, but rose up early, saddled his donkey, and took two of his servants and left.

God knows our heart the same that He knew Balaam's. When we want our own way more than God's way, He sometimes lets us have it, even though it hurts us.

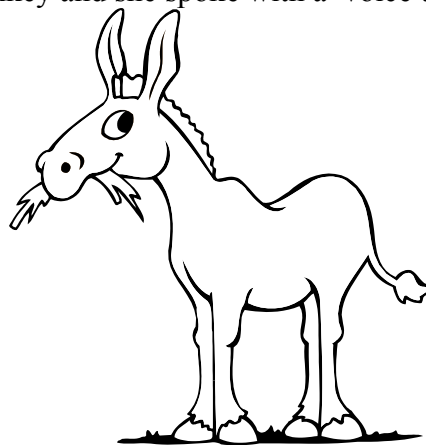
*(Set up flannelboard as shown in left picture, p. 74 Betty Luken manual)*

### **III. God's Intervention**

God was angry with Balaam because he went. He gave Balaam a chance to choose between God's will and his own will and Balaam wanted money so much that he went astray. God even sent his angel to trouble Balaam on the way. God is good to us, even when we choose wrongly. He sends things to try to make us realize it. As Balaam was riding along with his two servants, the angel stood in the road with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam did not see the angel, but the donkey did, so it turned out of the road into the field. Balaam hit the donkey to turn her back into the road.

The angel went a little further and stood where there was a wall on each side of the road as it went through the vineyards. The donkey again saw the angel, was frightened, and crowded against the wall, crushing Balaam's foot. Well, you can imagine how angry Balaam was becoming so he hit the animal another hard blow. The angel stood in the way a third time in a narrow place, and the donkey fell down under Balaam. By this time, Balaam was really angry and he struck his faithful animal with his staff.

At this time, God performed a miracle and opened the mouth of the donkey and she spoke with a voice to



Balaam saying, "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" (Num. 22:28b) Balaam was so angry that he didn't even think about how strange this was that his donkey was talking to him, so he just answered her, "Because thou has mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee." The donkey was not mocking Balaam; she was "rebuking" him. (Num. 22:30) She said, "Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?" (Num. 22:29-30) She reminded Balaam that she had always

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been faithful to her master and had always done his will. That was more than Balaam was doing toward God. The donkey was rebuking Balaam for his unfaithfulness and disobedience toward God. (II Pet. 2:15-16)

The Lord then opened Balaam's eyes and he, too, saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand. Balaam was frightened, too, and bowed his head and fell flat on his face. The angel said, "Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive." (Num. 22:32b-33)

The donkey had saved his life! Balaam knew he was doing wrong and admitted his sin. He said he would go back home, but the angel told him to go on, but only to speak what he was told to speak.

*(Set flannelboard as shown in right picture, p. 74)*

## **IV. Balaam's Blessings on Israel**

Balaam continued his journey, still hoping to receive great honor and riches. He was met by King Balak and great preparations were made for the ceremony of the cursing of Israel. But to Balaam's surprise and Balak's horror, when Balaam opened his mouth to curse Israel, only words of blessing came out!! Remember God had warned Balaam that he could only speak the words that God told him to speak. God even gave some wonderful prophecies concerning Israel and Jesus during these times. Balak was angry and Balaam was terribly disappointed because he lost out on all those rewards!

## **V. Balaam's Counsel to Balak**

Then Balaam did another terrible thing. He counselled with Balak as to how they could get the children of Israel to sin causing God to bring judgment on them. He told Balak to be friendly with the Israelites and to encourage them to get acquainted with the Moabites. Then Balak could invite them to the feasts when they worshipped their idols. So the Moabites began to date the Israelites. Then it wasn't very long until they were even marrying each other. The Israelites who did this also attended the worship of the Moabite's idols, eating the things sacrificed to idols and bowing down before them. What a terrible thing for children of the true and living God to do!



Young people, it is forbidden by God to marry an unsaved person. If you begin dating that person, you are already in trouble. Even though the friend may be a nice person, he is not a born again believer. As you date, your affections grow and it isn't long until you think you can never be happy unless you marry. But God says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14) You may think you will change that person after you are married. Don't fool yourself. The Israelites didn't change the idol worshippers. The unsaved won them over. God knows better than we do and we need to heed His warning and obey His Word to avoid trouble and heartache.

God was angry with those who committed this terrible sin and rightly so, because He knew that these people would lead others to turn from Him also.

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So He sent a plague into their camp and 24,000 of the young people died. Moses took the men who led others to commit this sin and had them killed. God then told Moses to prepare for battle against the Moabites and Midianites which they did. Israel had victory in this battle. Balaam was also killed with a sword.

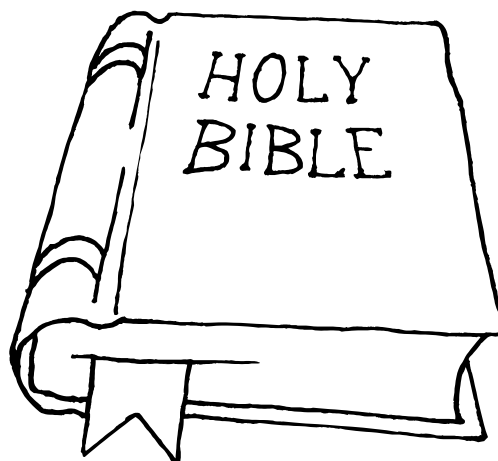
Balaam might have been a good man if he had not loved the riches and honors of the world more than he loved God; if he had not deliberately turned his heart from the will of God and then taught the enemy how to get God's people to sin. We can learn from Balaam's life how we should live for God by refusing to go the way that Balaam did.

## **VI. God's Rebuke to His Child Today**

God made the donkey to speak with a man's voice to rebuke Balaam for his sin. God rebukes us in many ways today.

God, the Holy Spirit dwells within the believer to teach us and to lead us in God's will. He reproveth us and makes us to realize when we are doing wrong. (just like the donkey and angel of the Lord did Balaam. John 14:17; I Cor. 6:19-20)

We also have God's Word, the Bible, today, that reproveth us as we hear it or read it. (John 17:17; II Tim. 3:16) God wants us to act on what we hear! As we hear the Word preached, the Holy Spirit begins to deal with us to tell us areas in our life we need to change. Do we go forward and make that decision? Do we change that area of our life?



Our spiritual Christian friends are also given to us to help us and reprove us. They may counsel us not to go a certain way and we do it anyway. Sound like Balaam?

Then, finally, sometimes God uses physical disabilities to get our attention, to rebuke us. That doesn't mean that every sickness or injury is because of sin. But when that does occur, we need to search our lives and make things right with God if they are not.

There was a man named G. Christian Weiss. While he was a student, one of his teachers said, "I have lived most of my life on God's second best." He proceeded to tell his class the following story. God had called him to be a missionary in his younger days, but he turned aside from this course through marriage. In fact, he practically gave up all Christian work and began a selfish business life as a cashier of a bank, with the purpose of having a nice home and making money. The Spirit of God kept dealing with him, but he refused to give in. After a number of years, one day there came a message to him at the bank. His little child had fallen over in her high chair and died. It took that bitter experience to bring this Christian to the place of surrender. After he spent a

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night alone with God on his knees, in tears and agony, the surrender came. But now it was too late to go to the mission field. He begged God for forgiveness and to take the tangled webs of his life and make of it whatever He could.

How about your life? Have you been more concerned with the things of the world than with God? Do you love the wages of unrighteousness more than you love God? God is deserving of your love and your life. Jesus gave His life for you; won't you give yours for Him?

*(Pray and give invitation)*

*(Sing, "Trust and Obey")*

**Missionary Story** Teacher's choice

**Workbook** See Thursday project sheet

**Craft** Teacher's choice