

Lesson 11

## Blessing, Instead of Cursing, Israel



**Theme:** Faith—Obeying from the heart

### Sunday Morning Lesson

**Pre-Class Activity:** For younger students: *Balaam Blessed Israel, Be Holy! Book 1*, page 27  
For older students: *What Does the Bible Say About Obeying? Be Holy! Book 2*, page 26

**Bible Facts:** Take Time for Bible Facts

**Memory Verse:** Reproduce a worksheet with blanks in the Memory Verse to be filled in by the students. A sample worksheet is found on page 65 of this Guide. After all students have completed the worksheet, read it aloud together.

**Prayer**

**Lesson of the Day**

**Ideas for Telling the Story**

1. For non-reading students, read Numbers 22:21-35. In the classroom Bibles, have reading students find and mark Numbers 22:21.
2. Ask the students to take the Bibles and move to the Bible story area.
3. Have one child show where Moab is on a map. Moab is where the evil king from today's lesson is from. Balaam will travel from Mesopotamia to Moab to curse Israel.
4. To reinforce the setting, have one student point out on the time line when today's lesson took place. They should remember from weeks past that the lessons are from the Old Testament and took place before the judges and kings but after Noah and Adam.
5. Tell the story of Balaam and Balak. Talk about Balaam's donkey and how he helped Balaam by keeping him from doing something he shouldn't have been doing in the first place. Discuss with students the importance of obeying the first time you are asked to do something. Balaam did not do this; it took some convincing before he understood what God wanted him to do. His problem was that he knew what he wanted to do and did not listen to God.

6. As you “surprise” the students by taking each item, one at a time, out of the It’s Bible Time Bag — money, coins in a drawstring bag, plastic donkey, stick, and graphics, let them help you tell story of Balaam and the talking donkey.
7. Ask students to move back to the desks and read aloud together Numbers 22:21-35. For reading students, each child will have a part: narrator(s), Balaam, angel of the Lord, or donkey. For non-reading students, as you read the narrative let the students create hand motions for what you are describing. For example when Balaam’s donkey saw the angel, put your circle-shaped hands at your eyes like you are looking through glasses. When the donkey goes off the path, make legs with your fingers to walk on the table “off the path.” When Balaam hits the donkey, slap your hands together. Let the students make a noise like a donkey.
8. See page 64 for reinforcement questions.

**Things to Get or Do  
for Sunday Morning**

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## Lesson 11

**Blessing, Instead of Cursing, Israel**

**Theme:** Faith—Obeying from the heart

**Wednesday Night Lesson**

**Pre-Class Activity:** For younger students: *Balaam and the Talking Donkey, Be Holy! Book 1*, page 26  
For older students: *Balaam Blessed Israel, Be Holy! Book 2*, page 27

**Bible Facts:** Take Time for Bible Facts

**Memory Verse:** Print the Memory Verse on paper using a relatively large font. Print a Memory Verse for each student. Cut up the words or phrases of the Memory Verse, and put the pieces in an envelope—one for each student. Have the students put the pieces together to form the Memory Verse. Another option is to provide construction paper and glue sticks and allow the students to glue the Memory Verse pieces on the construction paper in the correct order.

**Prayer****Starter**

Imagine yourself playing with a dog and all of a sudden the dog said, “Get me that bone over there.” Or imagine you were walking by a cat and the cat said, “Good morning!” You’d be surprised and then you’d think someone was playing a trick on you. You would be right, of course, because animals cannot talk like humans.

Maybe you’ve seen an old black and white TV show about Mr. Ed who was a talking horse. Other movies also have talking animals. The movie *Homeward Bound* was about two talking dogs, Shadow and Chance, and a talking cat Sassy. But we know these animals were made to talk only on TV or in a movie; they could not really talk.

None of us has heard an animal talk, but a man named Balaam really heard a donkey speak to him. God caused this to happen to teach a lesson to Balaam. In the ancient world of Moses’ day, Balaam was a seer from Mesopotamia. A seer would trick people to think he could predict the future or even change what would happen in the future. Balak, king of Moab, wanted Balaam to use his supposed powers against Israel.

**Briefly Review the Lesson**

## Ideas for Illustrating and Reinforcing the Story

1. *Objective: Illustrate responsibility to God rather than people*

Tell the students you are tired of making them study so hard and you just want to come to class to play from now on. Make it sound convincing! Ask students if this will be okay with them. Let them give you reasons to play and reasons to study. Relate this to Balaam and his decision. The objective of this activity is to help students understand that Balaam's responsibility was to do what God wanted him to do rather than what someone else wanted him to do that appeared to have a better payoff.

2. *Objective: Illustrate that God is in control even if we do not know what His plan is*

Role play the story having as characters Balak, Balaam, a donkey, and an angel. All other students may be the Israelites.

Discuss with the students that the Israelites probably never knew anything about what happened with Balaam until years later. We do not always know what God is doing for us "behind the scenes." He is in control of many things we don't even know about. We must trust God to take care of us. According to the students' age level, have some scenarios in which the students can decide how something good could come out of what appears to be a bad situation. A few examples follow:

*Scene: A broken vase is on the floor. Your parents think you did it, but you saw the cat knock it over.*

*Possible Answer: Because you never have lied to your parents, they believe your answer and you are not in trouble.*

*Scene: You are wrongly accused by another student that you cheated on a test.*

*Possible Answer: The principal and teacher have already seen that you are always honest. When you are questioned about cheating and you have a believable answer, they believe you over the student making the accusation.*

*Scene: Your aunt has never been a strong Christian, and she gets sick and knows she will die soon.*

*Possible Answer: Your aunt makes her life right with God and begins talking to everyone who visits her about being ready to go to heaven. Many people are brought to the Lord and many are strengthened because of her great faith at the end of her life.*

3. *Objective: Reinforce the story of Balaam for younger students*

Have students tell the story about Balaam using the puppet made in the pre-class activity.

4. See page 64 for reinforcement questions.

### Things to Get or Do for Wednesday Night

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