

# Balaam and the Talking Donkey

Numbers 22-24; Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 438-452

**H**ave you ever seen a dog do tricks? Some dogs can roll over and sit up. In our story, a man heard a donkey talk, really talk! Let's find out what it said.

**T**he Israelites were nearing the Promised Land. But the surrounding nations had tried to stand in their way, forcing the Israelites to go to war with them. But God was on their side, and each victory sent a message.

Balak, the king of Moab, knew he didn't have a hope against that kind of strength. But then he remembered what he had heard about Balaam. Some said that whatever Balaam blessed, was truly blessed. And whatever he cursed, was cursed. If Balak could get Balaam to curse the Israelites, his army might have a chance. So he sent some messengers to bring Balaam to him. They took along a lot of gold, the money of their day.

Balaam believed in God. He had once been a prophet. But he had become greedy and no longer served God. Yet, when the messengers came, Balaam asked God for instructions. The answer came back, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because I have blessed them."\*

So Balaam sent the messengers home. But Balak sent more messengers, with even more gold.

Balaam knew that God did not want him to go. So he said, "King Balak could give me his palace full of silver and gold. But I cannot disobey the Lord." But instead of sending them away, he invited the messengers to spend the night.

That night God said to Balaam, "These men have come to ask you to go with them. Go. But only do what I tell you." So Balaam saddled his donkey and went with the messengers.

Balaam didn't see the angel standing in the road to block his way. But his donkey did, and she turned off into a field. Balaam beat the donkey to get her back onto the road.

The angel appeared a second time. And the donkey turned into a wall, smashing Balaam's foot. Balaam beat her a second time. The third time the angel appeared, there was no place for the donkey to go. So she lay down in the road.

It was after this third beating that the Lord made the donkey speak. "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?" she asked Balaam. (See Numbers 22:28-30.)

Balaam was so angry that he answered without thinking. "You've made a fool out of me," he said.

"You have ridden me for years," the donkey responded. "Have I ever done this to you before?" And that's when Balaam saw the angel. "If



# The Message

We worship God when we follow His instructions.

## Memory Verse

“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching”

(John 14:23, NIV).

your donkey hadn't turned away from me, I would have killed you by now," the angel said. Balaam's life had been saved by his donkey!

"I have sinned," responded Balaam to the angel. "If I am wrong, I will go back."

"No," replied the angel. "Go, but you will only be able to say what the Lord wants you to say."

When Balaam finally met Balak, he warned Balak. "I can only say what the Lord wants me to say."

In three different places that day, Balak asked Balaam to curse the Israelites. But every time Balaam opened his mouth, blessings for the Israelites came out.

After the third time, Balak was angry. "Go home!" he ordered. "I called you here to curse my enemies. But you have blessed them three times!"

"Didn't I tell you I couldn't do anything against the command of the Lord?" Balaam answered. "Before I leave, I will tell you what these people will do to your people." Then Balaam

prophesied truly. "A ruler will rise from Israel. He will crush the heads of the Moabites. . . .

The Israelites will destroy those left in the city."

God taught Balaam that worship involves everything you do. It is living a life that is pleasing to God. Worship is listening to God's voice and following His commands. It is using our voices, our speech, and our actions to honor God.

\*Much of the dialogue in this story is from Numbers 22-24, ICB.





## S A B B A T H

**READ** With your family, find a quiet place and read your lesson together. Why did Balaam want to go with the messengers? Do you really think the donkey talked? How do you know?

**DO** Teach your memory verse to your family. Ask them what it means to them.

**SING** Sing some praise songs before prayer.

## S U N D A Y

**MAKE** Sometime today, ask permission to make a cake without following the instructions. Let each family member add something that they think should go into the batter. Bake the cake, then taste it. What difference do instructions make? Where can we find God's instructions for us?

**SING** Sing a song about the Bible, God's instruction book. Then thank Him for it.

## M O N D A Y

**READ** Read and discuss Numbers 22:1-20 for worship. Notice verse 18. If Balaam said that, why did he go with King Balak's messengers?

**MAKE** Trace your hands and feet on a piece of paper. Around them, draw pictures of ways you can tell your parents you love them. Give it to your parents with a big hug.

**SING** Sing favorite songs about obeying Jesus. If you really want to obey Him, write your name here: \_\_\_\_\_. Ask Him to help you.

## T U E S D A Y

**READ** Read Numbers 22:21-41 during worship. Why did the angel appear to the donkey? To Balaam? Who saved Balaam's life? How do you think Balaam felt when he heard his donkey talking to him? Why did he answer the donkey? What kept Balaam from thinking clearly?

**DO** Find out more about donkeys. (Hint: see an encyclopedia or other book.) Draw a picture of one.

**SING** Sing a song about animals. Then thank God for animal friends.

## W E D N E S D A Y

**READ** For worship today read Numbers 23. Talk about the two messages recorded in this chapter. Why do you think Balaam offered sacrifices to God? (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 444.)

**DO** If you have a pet, spend some special time with it today. Or draw a picture of a pet that you would like to have. Think about how you treat animals.

**PRAY** Pray that God will help you know how to take care of His animals.

## T H U R S D A Y

**READ** Read and discuss Numbers 24 during family worship today. Study Balaam's third blessing (verses 3-9). Why did these blessings make King Balak angry? What did he tell Balaam to do? Now look at the first part of Balaam's final message from God (verses 10-19). What does it say about Israel? Read verse 17 again. Who is the star that will rise from Israel?

**PRAY** Thank God for sending Jesus to be your Saviour.





**F R I D A Y**

Only two animals talk in the Bible: Balaam's donkey and the serpent in Genesis 3.



**DO** Act out the Bible story with your family for worship. Who will be the donkey? The angel? The voice of God? Ask each person to tell what they have learned from the story. Is it better to give blessings or curses? Why?

**DO** Sing songs about the Bible. Then pray that God will use you to bless others. Tell Jesus what you're thankful for this week.

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**PUZZLE**

Directions: In this lesson, the angel was hidden from Balaam. See if you can find the following words hidden in the puzzle: BALAAM, BALAK, MOAB, DONKEY, KING.

M	O	A	B	C	D
E	F	G	A	H	I
J	B	A	L	A	K
L	M	N	A	O	I
S	Q	R	A	S	N
T	U	V	M	W	G
D	O	N	K	E	Y

# Worship



*Directions:* People around the world worship God because of the powerful message in John 3:16. This verse is shown on the next page in some of the languages of the world. Draw a line from the verse to the part of the world that uses that language. Then copy this verse in your language on the scroll.



# AROUND THE WORLD

- English: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
- Italian: "Poiche Iddio ha tanto amato il mondo, che hadato il suo unigenito Figliuolo, affinchechiunque crede in lui nonnon persica, ma addia vita eterna."
- Swahili: "Kwa maana jinsi hii mungu aliupenda ulimwengu, hata, akamtoa Mwanawe pekee, ili kila mtu amwaminiye asipotee; bali awe na uzima wa milele."
- Spanish: "Porque de tal manera amo Dios al mundo, que ha dado a su Hijo unigenito, para que todo aquel que en el cree, no se pierda, mas tenga vida eterna."



# A



## My Memory Verses

1. "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet" (John 13:14, NIV).
2. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, NIV).
3. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).
4. "He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation'" (Mark 16:15, NIV).
5. "Again Jesus said, . . . 'Do you truly love me?' . . . 'Take care of my sheep'" (John 21:16, NIV).
6. "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God" (Psalm 143:10, NIV).
7. "Work together as a team for the faith" (Philippians 1:27, ICB).
8. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9, NIV).
9. "I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant . . . between me and you" (Genesis 9:13, 15, NIV).
10. "If you call the Sabbath a delight . . . you will find your joy in the Lord" (Isaiah 58:13, 14, NIV).
11. " 'Have faith in God' " (Mark 11:22, NIV).
12. "Love the Lord your God and . . . serve him with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 10:13, NIV).
13. " 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching' " (John 14:23, NIV).



# A



SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST  
CHURCH

