

BALAAM**Numbers 22 - 25**

Lesson Memory Verse: Acts 5:29 - "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.**" (Grades 1 and 2 memorize portion in bold print.)

Lesson Aim: To know that God speaks to us through His Word, the Bible, and that we are to obey it.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY - HE - SEE - WE - BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): How many of you like to eat cake? Would any of you like to help your mother bake a cake? If she let you bake a cake, but did not tell you what to put in it, or how long to bake it in the oven, do you think it would be a good cake? Probably not. You would need her help. This is also true about being a good Christian. You cannot be a good Christian without God's help. You must do what God tells you to do in the Bible. Like baking a cake, you will be good, if you follow the rules—God's rules.

HE (for Authority): The Bible is God's rule book that we are to obey. In our memory verse, it tells us that we are to obey God rather than man. That means you and I are to love God so much that we put His rules first. Do you love God's Word, His rule book, that much? That is how much Peter and the other apostles loved God's Word. They would obey God, even if wicked men beat them for doing so.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

In our story today we will study mostly about a man named Balaam, who did not put God's Word first. God used a donkey to talk to him because he would not obey God's Word. But now we are ahead of our story and we must go back to the beginning and find out why Balaam did not obey God's Word. God was leading Israel to the land of Canaan. Before they could get to Canaan, they would pass by the nation of Moab. Balak, the king of Moab, did not like the Israelites and wanted them destroyed. Let's find out why?

I. Fear (22:1-6)

Balak was afraid of Israel because they were camped near his country and they had a great number of people. He had heard how God gave them a great victory over the Egyptians and recently they had defeated the Amorites and the nation of Bashan. He thought that they were going to fight against his nation next, even though that was not true. So Balak wanted to put a curse on Israel, so he could defeat Israel, but he needed someone to do it. He thought of Balaam and decided to ask him to curse Israel. It was sinful for Balak to want to do such a thing.

WE: We are tempted to sin when we are afraid. Balak should have asked Balaam to find out from God, if Israel was going to attack his nation. If he had done that he would have learned that there was no need to fear Israel. Many of our fears are like Balak's - nothing to them. We need to read the Bible and listen to what God says. When we believe what God tells us in the Bible, our fears will all disappear.

II. Fame (22:7-21)

Balak sent servants to offer fame and money to Balaam, if he would curse Israel. Balaam prayed to God and He told Balaam not to accept Balak's offer. Balaam obeyed God and told Balak he could not do it. Then Balak sent better servants and offered Balaam more fame and money and Balaam hoped God would change His mind and let him curse Israel. When he prayed the second time, God did not change His mind, but He let Balaam go and told him that he had to say only what He told him to say.

WE: We will do foolish things to gain fame and money. If someone offers a prize to do something for him, we must find out what God says about it in the Bible and do what He says. The Bible has thousands of answers for us. Furthermore, Balaam hoped God would change His Word when more fame and money was offered to him, but God's Word never changes. We must watch out for people who try to change God's mind by offering more money. If we think that God will change His mind about something that He told us not to do, we will deceive ourselves and get into serious trouble with God.

III. Fool (22:22-35)

Balaam wanted fame and money more than God's Word. This desire was going to make a fool out of him. God was angry with Balaam for deciding to go to Balak so he could curse Israel. God sent the angel of

the Lord with a sword in his hand to stand in his way. The donkey on which Balaam rode could see the angel, but Balaam could not. First, the donkey ran off the road into the field to escape the angel. Then the donkey crushed Balaam's foot against a wall to escape the angel. Finally, there was no way to escape, so the donkey stopped and would not move. Balaam was so angry with the donkey that he hit it and wanted to kill it. Then the donkey talked to Balaam, but Balaam was so angry that he did not realize that he was talking to his donkey. Then Balaam's eyes were opened and he saw the angel with the sword in his hand and he fell on his face. Balaam was told that God was angry with him and that he had been close to death three times for going to help Balak. Balaam's donkey was smarter than he was. If it had not been for his donkey, he would have been killed. What a fool Balaam was! But worse than that, Balaam was foolish enough to say, after all these warnings from the Lord, "If it displeases thee, I will get me back again." There were no "ifs" about it. God was displeased. If Balaam had been wise, he would have turned his donkey around and headed back home without another word, but fame and money made a fool out of Balaam.

WE: We are foolish to want fame so that bad people will like us. Some boys and girls will disobey God to be liked by their friends. We also are foolish if we want money, playthings or treats so much that we will disobey God to get them. Some boys and girls will steal the things that they want. These sinful desires will make a fool out of us.

IV. Failure (22:36 - 25:18; 31:8, 16)

Balaam tried to curse Israel three times in order to please Balak, but the Lord would not allow him to do it. Instead he had to say what God told him and he blessed Israel. As a result Balak was angry with Balaam and would not honor him (24:10, 11). Balaam failed to get the honor and money he wanted, because God would not let him curse Israel. His failure could have been avoided, if he had obeyed God's Word. However, Balaam disobeyed God in yet another way. He taught the Moabites to mix with the Israelites in order to get the Israelites to sin with the Moabites. It caused much trouble for Israel and many Israelites died. As a result, Balaam also had to be killed by the Israelites. Balaam did not need to be a failure, if only he had obeyed God's Word.

WE: No one wants to fail, but we will fail if we do not obey God's Word. Balaam tried to get God to change His Word, but that failed, too. God does not change His Word. He may let us do what we want to do, but He will not change His Word. If we do things our way, instead of doing them God's way, we will fail. We must obey God's Word to be a success.

BE (for Action): God speaks to us today through the Bible. It is important that we listen carefully to what He says. If you want to go to Heaven, you must do it the way He says in the Bible. It is foolish to try to get to Heaven by some other way. You will be full of fears until you listen to God's Word. If you want to be popular with sinful people, you are foolish and it will cause you to be a failure. If you want the things of this world more than the things of Heaven, you are foolish, because the things of this world will pass away, but the things of Heaven will last forever. Do not be like Balaam. Listen to God's Word now and be a success. (Ask those children, who want help in obeying God's Word, to raise their hands. Invite them to talk to you after class so you can help them.)