

God’s people, the Israelites, were in the wilderness. They had arrived at the promised land decades earlier, but the people had rebelled—refusing to trust God to give them the land. They believed it would be better to die in the wilderness than follow God (Num. 14:2), so God sent them into the wilderness for 40 years (vv. 28-29). In time, all of the adults died except for Joshua, Caleb, and Moses. The children grew up and more children were born. The Israelites disobeyed God time and again, but God still provided for them. He planned to keep His promise to give Israel the promised land.

As the Israelites traveled, God gave them victory over attacking armies like the Canaanites and Amorites. Not surprisingly, when Israel set up camp in the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River, Balak—the king of Moab—was terrified. The king knew he could not defeat the Israelites on his own, so he called on Balaam, a pagan prophet, to put a curse on them.

Though Balaam did not follow God, he knew of God and God spoke to him. God told Balaam, “You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed.” God’s plan all along was to bless humanity (Gen. 1:28), specifically through the nation of Israel (Gen. 12:3). So each time Balaam spoke over Israel, God did not allow him to curse the Israelites. Instead, Balaam spoke in four clear messages, insisting that God would bless the Israelites.

One of the ways God would bless the Israelites is found in Numbers 24:17: “A star will come from Jacob, and a scepter will arise from Israel.” Balaam told of a powerful future king who would be victorious over his enemies. This prophecy referred to and was ultimately fulfilled by Jesus.

Teach your kids that God protects His people. His promises are sure. **Balaam could not curse God’s people. God had blessed the Israelites, so Balaam blessed them too. Fourteen hundred years after Balaam announced God’s promise, Jesus was born. God sent Jesus to bless the whole world by rescuing people from sin.**

Check this session’s Activity Page and Big Picture Card as well as the Gospel Project for Kids Family App for ways to interact with the Bible content this week.

FAMILY STARTING POINTS

* + ● **Babies and Toddlers**
  + ○ We can trust God.
  + ○ Balak wanted Balaam to speak against Israel.
  + ○ Balaam could only bless God’s people.
  + ○ Balaam said that God would send His people a king.
  + ● **Preschool**
  + ○ What does it mean to sin? To sin is to go against God and His commands.
  + ○ Balaam blessed God’s people.
  + ● **Kids**
  + ○ What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.
  + ○ God commanded Balaam to bless His people.