

### LESSON 2

## BALAAM'S DONKEY

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God's Good Plans Cannot Be Stopped

**SCRIPTURE:** Numbers 22–23

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** An enemy king wants a prophet named Balaam to curse God's people, Israel. But God gets Balaam's attention through a talking donkey and reminds him through an angel not to curse Israel, for God's good plans cannot be stopped.

**Activity: What talks?**

**Worship**

**God's Big Story**

**Prayer and Blessing**

**Activity: Stop and Go**

**INVITATION**

*We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...*

One of the best sermons I've ever encountered came in the form of a broken seashell.

I had gone to see the sunrise, but it was cloudy so there wasn't one to see. I was disappointed and decided instead to hunt for seashells. The shoreline was full of shells, but most of them were broken.

Soon a mother with her girls joined me and, oh my, the shrieks of delight! "So many shells, Mommy! They are so beautiful!" These girls didn't care the shells were broken. They saw the beauty in their brokenness.

I felt God say to me, "I love broken shells too." That brief encounter spoke volumes to me about the love of God. It changed me.

I wonder if that's how Balaam in our story felt. Here he was, casting curses for money, when God interrupts his life through a talking donkey and a sword-wielding angel. Could he ever go back to the way things were again?

Read [Numbers 22:24–38](#). The final statement, "I can only speak the words God puts in my mouth" is pretty telling ([Numbers 22:38](#)). I tend to believe Balaam's words indicate more of a life change than a momentary utterance.

In what unexpected way has God spoken to you? What broken thing, familiar item, or everyday moment became life-altering and transformational? How has God used something ordinary—something unexpected—to further His plans in your life? God's good plans cannot be stopped.

**DID YOU KNOW?****FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS****WHO?**

Balak, the king of Moab; Balaam, well-known Aramean diviner and prophet; the people of Israel who have entered Canaan and set up camp near Moab; Balaam's donkey; the angel of the Lord.

**WHAT?**

Israel has gained a reputation for conquering lands in Canaan, and the Moabite king Balak is scared of them. He employs the diviner Balaam to curse the Israelites, but the Lord intervenes, and Balaam is only able to bless them.

**WHERE?**

Israel is camped in the plain of Moab, east of the Jordan River, after their entrance into Canaan. The kingdom of Moab was located east of the Dead Sea in what is now Jordan.

**WHEN?**

This narrative takes place close to the end of the Israelites 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, shortly before the death of Moses and before God's people cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

God protected His people from being cursed by Balaam while they wandered in the wilderness. God had promised land to His people, and in 2 Corinthians, Paul reminds us that God's promises are "all 'Yes' because of what Christ has done" (1:20). Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's good plans!

## Activity: What Talks?

**SUPPLIES:** Toy animals

Before kids arrive, gather a handful of toy animals.

**We use our mouths to talk!** Point to your mouth. **Can you use your mouth to say, “Hi”?** Encourage kids to say, “Hi!” Hold up a toy animal. **Can a [animal] talk and say, “Hi”?** **No! What does a [animal] say?** Encourage kids to say the animal noise. Hold up another animal. **Can a [animal] talk and say, “Hi”?** **No! What does a [animal] say?** Encourage kids to say that animal noise. Continue with a couple animals. Finally, point to another leader. **Can a grown-up say, “Hi”?** **Yes! People can say “Hi.”**

**Only people can talk. But in our story today, we’re going to hear about a special time when God used a donkey to talk and give a message to someone!**

**Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD’S GOOD PLANS CANNOT BE STOPPED**. This is true even if it means God makes a donkey talk!**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

**GOD’S**—*Point up.*

**GOOD PLANS**—*Thumbs up.*

**CANNOT BE STOPPED**—*Shake head back and forth in a “no” motion and cross arms in front of you.*

## Clean Up

Play the Clean Up video and encourage kids to help clean up toys to prepare for snack and story.

## Snack

**SUPPLIES:** Small paper cups, cheerios, and pitcher of water

Gather kids at chairs around snack tables and serve cheerios and water. While kids are busy eating, begin the Bible story.

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

**Our God's big story today is a great story from the Bible about a person named Balaam.** Encourage the kids to say, "Balaam." **Let's find out from the Bible what happened to Balaam!**

**In today's story, we are going to hear about a donkey. You can help with the story by pretending to be the donkey! What does a donkey say?** Encourage the kids to say, "Hee-haw!" **Every time you hear the word donkey, you can say, "Hee-haw!"**

**There was a king named Balak that was worried because God's people were camping nearby, and he knew that God took care of His people.**

**The king sent some people to ask a man named Balaam to say something bad about God's people. Balaam decided to go see the king. Balaam was riding his donkey. Can you say, "Hee-haw" like a donkey?** Allow the kids to say, "Hee-haw." **God sent an angel to block Balaam's path.**

**Balaam couldn't see the angel, but his donkey could! Let's say, "Hee-haw" again!** (Pause for kids to say, "Hee-haw.") **Balaam's donkey** (pause for kids to say, "Hee-haw") **stopped and refused to move. Balaam was upset. Suddenly, the donkey—let's say, "Hee-haw" again** (pause for kids to say, "Hee-haw")—**opened its mouth and started talking!**

**This time, the donkey didn't say, "Hee-haw!" The donkey talked just like people talk! The donkey said, "What have I done to you? Why are you upset with me?"**

**Then God let Balaam see the angel. The angel reminded Balaam to only to say the words God would give him. Do you think that's an unexpected way for God to make His plans happen?**

**Even when we can't see God or understand His plans, He always keeps His promises. God's good plans cannot be stopped.**

## Prayer and Blessing

**Let's talk to God. God, thank You for keeping Your promises. Thank You for always having a good plan for us. Help us remember that Your good plans cannot be stopped. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** **May you always remember that God's good plans cannot be stopped. God wants the best for you and will always love you and take care of you. May you remember that even when you don't understand why something is happening, God is there with you.**

## Worship

**SUPPLIES:** Worship music videos

**Today, we're learning that God's good plans cannot be stopped—even if that means He makes a donkey talk! Let's sing and thank God!**

Play songs and encourage the kids to sing and dance with you.

## Activity: Stop and Go

**We're going pretend that we're donkeys! Let me hear you make a donkey sound. Say, "Hee-haw!" In God's big story, the donkey had to go and stop, and go and stop. Let's play a game where you have to go and stop too. If I say, "Go," you walk around the room and say, "Hee-haw," but when I say, "Stop," you freeze and be quiet.**

Say, "Go" and encourage kids to walk around the room pretending to be donkeys. Every so often, say, "Stop" and encourage the kids to freeze and be quiet.