**BALAAM & BLESSED ISRAEL**

Sunday School Lesson 19

*Wandering in the Wilderness*

Numbers 22

5/18/2025

**Lesson Review:** In our previous lesson, we observed God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ being carried out on Israel in the wilderness. They had complained against Moses, and God dealt swiftly and strongly with them by sending \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The serpents were a display of what the Israelites had allowed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to do. Notice that Satan loves to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our view and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ toward God’s plan and provision. Notice that the people were \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by God’s plan, even though God had provided them with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and provision. The serpents were also a demonstration of how Israel’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, venomous \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would keep them from moving forward to the Promised Land. Notice that like a serpent, Israel’s bite pushed them \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the land of Egypt. Notice that like a serpent, the venomous bit of Israel’s words quickly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the whole body of Israel and led to much death and destruction. The serpents were devices used by God to bring out the sting of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Notice that the literal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and punishment from the serpent s prompted a reaction. Notice that the people did not wait long to go, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and repent of their sins against God and Moses. The brazen serpent was a dedication to the One who would \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ above all of the fiery darts of Satan, defeat death and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and offer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to all. Notice that the solution was for them to look at the very things that had caused their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Notice that they only needed to look at the lifted up serpent to be saved. This provides us with a beautiful picture of salvation. We will continue our lesson series today by looking at Balaam and his donkey!

1. **FEARFUL ISRAEL QUICKLY BECAME THE POWERFUL PEOPLE THAT EVERYONE FEARED.**
2. **Notice that after the event with the serpents, Israel began winning battles. They even spied out enemies and then were brave enough to fight against them.** *Numbers 21:17 Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: 23a And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: 24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, 34a And the Lord said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; 35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.* It is important for us to notice the seismic shift that happened for Israel after the encounter with the serpents in the wilderness. It appears that this was THE test for Israel. Those that remained were those who looked to what Moses lifted up. They were believers in the Lord. This is a great picture of what salvation for the believer should look like. Israel had victory after victory. They sang a song of praise to God. They sought peace but weren’t afraid to fight against a nation. They didn’t run away when a strong enemy stood up against them. The murmuring, defiant days were gone for Israel. They were a changed people, and their faith and confidence was growing with every battle God helped them through.
3. **Notice that the Moabites and Midianites were genuinely and rightfully afraid of the children of Israel.** *Numbers 22:3 And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. 4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time.* After Israel’s battle against the Amorites, they came and pitched their tents in the plains of Moab. This immediately caused a stir among the Moabites and the Midianites in that land. As king of Moab, Balak was scrambling to find a way to stop these people from taking the land. Is there anything more fearful for the enemies of God than to see a group of believers who are resting in the mighty power of God? Surely, Satan himself trembles to see believers today who cannot be dissuaded from following the Lord God.
4. **ISRAEL FACED A SECRET ATTACK THAT WAS DESTINED TO FAIL FROM THE START**
5. **Notice that Balak thought that he could get God to turn His Word against His people.** *Numbers 22:6a Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me:* *14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us. 15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. 23:27 And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.* Balak sought out a man named Balaam who he understood to have a relationship with the Lord. He thought that he could get this man to curse the people of Israel for him. When Balaam came to him, he took him up three times to get him to see the people and curse them. He thought that he could overcome the Word of God that had made a covenant with His children. Does this sound familiar? It’s what Satan tried to do with the Lord. Three times he tried to get Jesus to turn His back on His Word, but God is ALWAYS faithful to His Word.
6. **Notice that a greedy and unfaithful man of God could not prevent the faithfulness and grace of God.** *Numbers 22:22 And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. 32 And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: 33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.* Prior to going to see Balak, we see the compromise of Balaam. God did not want him to go to Balak, but Balaam was eager to go and be paid handsomely. Balaam had three opportunities to heed the donkey’s warning, and he failed the warning three times.Even still, while Balaam was unfaithful, God was still faithful. He made sure that Balaam wasn’t going to say anything other than what He wanted said to Balak. He gave him a word of blessing.
7. **Notice that the events of Balaam and Balak remind us of how important it is to have God fighting our battles for us. We have a deceitful and crafty adversary who is constantly plotting our demise.** *Psalm 121:4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* Balaam and Balak's secret meetings happened while Israel camped peacefully in the plains of Moab. They didn’t even know there was a plot against them, but God did! He stepped in and took control of the conversation before a curse could ever leave Balaam’s lips. That is the kind of protection God offers His people today. We don’t always see what Satan is plotting in the background, but we know he is busy scheming ways to discourage and destroy us. Still, God never sleeps, never slips, and never suffers defeat. While the enemy schemes, our Defender and our Rock steps in. I wonder how many battles God has fought for us in our lives without us ever even knowing about them. While the disciples slept in the garden, the Lord had the weight of the entire world upon His shoulders! Give thanks to God for His constant care.
8. **ISRAEL FACED A SINISTER ATTACK FROM THOSE CLOSEST TO THEM.**
9. **Notice that Moab and Midian had a very close connection to the children of Israel.** *Genesis 19:36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. 37 And the first born bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. 25:1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. Exodus 3:1a Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian:* It’s worth noting the connections between Moab, Midian, and Israel. They were all from the same family. The nation of Moab formed out of the family of Lot. The Midianites were descendants of Abraham himself. Additionally, Moses’ wife was a Midianite. Her father was a priest of Midian. One would think that these people would be willing to work with Israel. Perhaps, Israel even felt comfortable because the Moabites and the Midianites were nearby. It may often be those nearby who Satan uses to try to attack us. Judas was counted among the twelve. Joseph was betrayed by his own family. Moses had already been attacked by those who should have been close to him. The point is that evil does not have a distinguished face. May the Lord give us the discernment that we need.
10. **Notice that a true man of God would be someone we expect would desire God’s blessing for us.** *Numbers 22:13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. 19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more.* While Balaam did end up blessing Israel, his intentions were not very good. One would think that a man of God would want for the children of God to be blessed. It seems that blessing Israel was more of a chore for Balaam. Sometimes, we might find that the people who should want the best for us are not particularly interested in finding it for us. While this can be a painful truth, it shouldn’t change our mission or our focus. Thankfully for Israel, they did have a leader who wanted what was best for them. Both the Lord and Moses had proven their love to Israel over and over again.