

NUMBERS 22-27

WEEK IN REVIEW + FAMILY GUIDE



WEEK IN REVIEW

God's people continue to move through the wilderness and head towards the Promised Land. As we saw in Numbers 1, the Israelites were a large group of people. The natives of the land they were passing through were very intimidated by them. The Israelites have come across the Moabites, who were filled with great fear because of their size. The Moabites are led by a man named Balak, and he realizes that the Israelites are too big to conquer, so instead he seeks to curse them. In order to do that, Balak hires a guy named Balaam who is a **diviner**. During this time, it was a pagan (non-Israelite) practice to find a diviner to curse the people before going into battle, just to make sure that the "gods" were in favor of them. It was similar to fortune-telling, and God prohibited the practice of it.

As Balaam was riding his donkey, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and spoke to him through the donkey. Yes, we see a talking donkey in the Bible! Balaam faithfully speaks the message that God gives him and instead of cursing, he blesses Israel in the form of an **oracle**. An oracle is a special message from God. Balaam speaks four oracles over Israel and in his fourth oracle he says, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17). This is a prophecy of a future coming of a great King: Jesus Christ. Jesus was referred to as the bright morning star in Revelation 22:16, and the one with a scepter in Genesis 49:10 symbolizing absolute authority over the nations. Ultimately, what we see is God using a pagan diviner to bless His people and remind them of the hope that is to come through Jesus.

The plan to curse and conquer Israel didn't work, so Balaam led them to compromise. Balaam led the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols, openly worshiping other "gods", and committing other forms of **immorality**. Immorality means acting in a way that is evil. There were some serious consequences for this, and thousands of people died. We then see a second census in the book of Numbers (with a total number of 601,730) and more instructions on how to divide the land. Joshua is then chosen to take over after Moses, and he will be the one to lead the new generation (the conquest generation) into the Promised Land.

FAMILY GUIDE

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| BIG IDEA: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God can and will use anyone to accomplish His purposes |
| KEY STORIES: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balaam's talking donkey ● Israel worships false gods and gets plagued ● New generation census ● Joshua commissioned to lead |
| KEY VERSES: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Numbers 23:19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" ● Number 24:17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. ● Numbers 27:22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly." |
| PEOPLE/ WORDS TO KNOW: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Divination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The practice of fortune-telling ● Oracle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A special message from God ● Immorality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acting in a way that is evil |

Reflection Questions

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| 1. | Why were the Moabites intimidated by the Israelites? What did the King of Moab (Balak) do as a result of this? |
| 2. | Who was Balaam and what was the special message he spoke that provided hope for the future? Who was this message about? (Num. 24:17) |
| 3. | The plan to curse and conquer Israel didn't work, so Balaam led them to compromise and sin. What sin did the Israelites commit? |
| 4. | Who took over for Moses as the people headed to the Promised Land? |