

Lesson 63

God Prepares the Way

God helped the Israelites defeat Amorite kings and receive blessings from Balaam.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi . Let's review what's happened to the Israelites since the beginning of Exodus. What special child was born who would lead the Israelites out of Egypt? Moses.

And what was that event called when God sent plagues against Egypt and brought his people out of slavery? The Exodus.

God guided the people in a pillar of cloud and fire and rescued them by parting the Red Sea so they could escape from Pharaoh and his army. He provided for them and brought them to the promised land, the land of Canaan.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 61 Theme Poster. When they got there, Moses sent 12 spies into Canaan. The spies reported that the land was very good! But only two spies trusted God and urged the people to enter the promised land.

Who were those two spies? Joshua and Caleb.

The other 10 spies were afraid, and their report scared the Israelites, who rebelled against God's command to enter the promised land. Because of this, only Joshua, Caleb, and the young people under age 20 would get to enter the land.

Refer to Lesson 62 Theme Poster. The Israelites lived in the wilderness for 40 years. But some people became impatient and unhappy following God and Moses.

Who remembers the names of the three men who rebelled? Korah, Dathan, Abiram.

These men gathered other leaders and challenged Moses and Aaron. Some wanted to be priests, like Aaron.

How did God judge Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? What happened to them? An earthquake split the ground, and they and their families and belongings fell into the earth.

Right. Then God sent fire to destroy the 250 men who were trying to make themselves priests. But the Israelites continued to complain against God and Moses. One time when they grumbled about food and water, God sent poisonous snakes into the camp.

What did the people have to do to be saved from the snakebites? Look to the bronze serpent so they would not die.

The bronze serpent was a picture of Jesus, who would come to die on the cross and take the punishment for sin so we can have eternal life.

We saw how God used poisonous snakes to teach the Israelites not to complain. In today's lesson, God will use another animal to get someone's attention.

This animal talked to its owner! Anyone know what it is? Allow guesses. This animal was ridden back in Bible times. Any guesses? Allow guesses. Donkey.

Gather supplies for pin the tail on the donkey: Donkey Poster, tails, blindfold, tape, and optional prize.

Put the Donkey Poster for pin the tail on the donkey on the board. That's right! A donkey! God supernaturally enabled a donkey to talk! Let's see who can pin a tail where it should go while blindfolded! Choose volunteers or let all students have a turn. Blindfold them, spin them around, and then have them pin a tail on the Donkey Poster using tape or poster putty. Award prize to the student whose tail is the closest to the right spot.

Slide #5

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Today, we'll jump to the end of the 40 years of the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness. We'll read how they faced some battles preparing the way into the promised land. We'll also read about a talking donkey God used to warn a false prophet named Balaam.

Victories over Sihon and Og

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

Slide #6

Refer to the Journey to Canaan Map and point out the land of Edom. The Israelites left the wilderness and traveled to the land of Edom.

Who knows who the Edomites were descended from? He had a twin brother, Jacob! Esau.

The Edomites, the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, lived in a mountainous region called Seir. The Israelites asked for permission to pass through the Edomites' land, but the Edomites said no. God would not let the Israelites fight against them because he promised that land to Esau. So, the Israelites had to take the long way around. This map shows a route they may have taken around Edom. Show the path from the wilderness to Elath on the map.

Slide #7

Refer to the Journey to Canaan Map and point out the lands of Moab and Ammon. God also told his people not to fight against the people of Moab or Ammon because they were descendants of Lot.

How was Lot related to Abraham? Does anyone know? He was Abraham's nephew.

God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites. But God also promised to give land to Lot and his descendants, so he

didn't want the Israelites to fight against them and take it away.

Refer to the Journey to Canaan Map and the path north to Gilead. Next, the Israelites came to the land of Gilead, which was controlled by an Amorite king named Sihon. Moses asked for permission to travel through Sihon's land. Moses said they wouldn't take anything; they would pay for any food or water they needed. But King Sihon said, "No, you can't come through my land." Then he gathered his army and came to fight the Israelites. He was a proud king and thought he could easily beat them. But God helped the Israelites win the battle, and they defeated King Sihon. They destroyed his army and then took over all the cities in his land, including King Sihon's capital city, Heshbon. Point out Heshbon on the Journey to Canaan Map.

Slide #8

Point out Bashan on the Journey to Canaan Map. Then Moses sent spies into the land of Bashan, which was a rich land, full of grass for livestock and tall cedar trees for building. But the land of Bashan had many walled cities and was controlled by a giant king named Og.

Og slept in a bed that was about 13.5 feet long and 6 feet wide. That means he was probably 9–12 feet tall! That's at least 2 feet taller than the tallest basketball players in the NBA. Think about this: most home ceilings are about 8 feet high, so Og would have to duck down to walk around inside your house; otherwise his head would crash through the ceiling!

Remember what the Israelites were afraid of when the 12 spies returned from the land 40 years before? Giants and fortified cities.

Uh oh! Will the Israelites trust God and go to battle against Og? Let's find out!

Deuteronomy 3:1–5

Slide #9

Slide #10

Slide #11

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Bible, and find chapter 3. Who will read verses 1–5? Assign readers or you read the passage.

Slide #12

Og and all his people came to fight at a place called Edrei. The Israelite army met them there. Point out Edrei on the Journey to Canaan Map. What did the Lord say to Moses in verse 2? Do not fear, for I have given him, his people, and his land into your hand.

God promised to give the Israelites victory over this giant king! And he did! They struck down Og and left no survivors. Then they took over all his cities.

How many cities did they get? Look in verse 4. 60 cities.

And how are those cities described in verse 5? The cities were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars.

God helped the Israelites defeat Og and his people and take over their cities. These cities were well-protected by walls, gates, and bars, but that didn't stop the Israelites from conquering them!

How do you think these victories made the Israelites feel? Allow discussion.

These victories against a giant king and strong cities gave the Israelites faith and courage. They could trust God to give them victory. They didn't need to fear with God on their side. The way was now clear for them to enter the promised land without worrying about enemies behind them. Plus, they now had land with cities to live in! Several tribes liked this land so much that they asked Moses if they could have it as their possession instead of land on the other side of the Jordan River.

Slide #13

Show the Twelve Tribes Map and point out the lands east of the Jordan River. Moses agreed to give the Reubenites, Gadites, and half of Manasseh's tribe the land of the Amorites as long as the men would still cross over the Jordan River and fight with the other tribes to conquer the promised land. The tribe of Manasseh, descendants of Joseph's oldest son, had so many people that half of the tribe stayed in the land of Bashan while the other half chose to wait and receive land on the other side of the Jordan. Point out East and West Manasseh on the map.

Let's start the Class Notes. Each statement is a clue that you will use to select the answer from the word bank and write in the crossword.

Slide #14

Slide #15

Who will read #1 and give us the answer from the word bank? Choose a reader. Edomites. Have students complete #1.

And #2? Who was the Amorite king who attacked Israel first? Choose a reader. Sihon. Have students complete #2.

Who will read #3 about the giant king? Choose a reader. Og. Have students complete #3.

And who gave the Israelites their victories? Who will read #4? Choose a reader. God. Have students complete #4.

Blessings from Balaam

Now Balak, the king of Moab, heard about the victories of Israelites over the Amorite kings Sihon and Og—and he was scared! He didn't know that God had forbidden the Israelites to attack him and his people. He came up with a plan to stop them, and he got his neighbors, the Midianites, to help him. Balak knew of a false prophet named Balaam. When Balaam spoke a curse against someone, that bad thing happened! King Balak sent princes to Balaam to ask him to come and curse the Israelites for him. Balaam asked God if he should go with the princes of Moab, but God told him not to go. Balaam obeyed God and didn't go with the princes.

King Balak didn't give up though. He sent even more important princes to Balaam, offering him honor, silver, and gold if he would come curse the Israelite

people. Balaam again asked God what he should do. This time God said he could go, but he must only say what God told him to.

So Balaam saddled his donkey and traveled to meet King Balak. But Balaam's heart was not right, and God knew this. Balaam may have been going only because he wanted the reward from the king not because his heart was truly obedient to God.

The angel of the Lord stood in the road with a drawn sword to block Balaam's path. Balaam couldn't see the angel, but his donkey could. She didn't want to face an angel with a drawn sword! She turned off the road and went into a field. Balaam was angry with his donkey because she wasn't obeying him. He struck her with his stick to get her back on the road.

Next, they came to a narrow path between vineyards. This time the angel of the Lord blocked the road where there was a wall on either side. Balaam's donkey tried to avoid the angel and pushed against the wall. Balaam's foot got squished against the wall, so he struck his poor donkey again!

Numbers 22:26-35

Slide #16

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

Slide #20

Let's read what happened the third time the angel of the Lord appeared. Who will read Numbers 22:26-35? Assign readers.

Where did the angel of the Lord stand this third time? Numbers 22:26. In a narrow place, where there was no way to turn to the right or left. What did the donkey do when she saw the angel? She lay down.

Slide #21

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. The donkey couldn't turn off the road to avoid the angel, so she just lay down on the road.

And what did Balaam do to his donkey? Struck the donkey with his staff.

What amazing thing did the Lord do next? He opened the mouth of the donkey so she spoke to Balaam.

Can you imagine having a donkey speak to you? What did the donkey say? She asked why Balaam struck her three times.

Balaam answered that she was making a fool of him and he wished he had a sword to kill her! The donkey then asked if she usually acted this way, going off the road, pushing against the wall, and laying down. Balaam said no.

Then what did God do in verse 31? He opened Balaam's eyes so he could see the angel of the Lord with the sword.

What did Balaam do when he saw the angel? He bowed down and fell on his face.

What did the angel of the Lord tell Balaam he would have done if his donkey hadn't turned aside those three times? Killed Balaam and let the

donkey live.

That's right. The Lord was showing Balaam that he was against him. Balaam acknowledged his sin and offered to return home instead of going with the princes to King Balak. The angel of the Lord said for Balaam to go with them, but to only speak what God told him to. God used a talking donkey to prepare Balaam to be obedient.

King Balak was really glad that Balaam came. He wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites because he knew he couldn't defeat them in battle. King Balak took Balaam to an area where they could see some of the Israelites. They offered sacrifices and then God gave Balaam the words to say.

Numbers 23:8–12

Slide #22

Slide #23

Slide #24

Who will read what Balaam said in Numbers 23:8–12? Assign a reader. Did Balaam give a curse or a blessing on the Israelites? Blessing.

Right. In verse 8, he says he can't curse whom God has not cursed.

What did King Balak say after Balaam spoke? Was he happy with what happened? No, he was angry that Balaam blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them.

How did Balaam answer? He said he had to speak what the Lord puts in his mouth.

Well, King Balak didn't learn his lesson. He took Balaam to two more spots where he hoped Balaam would curse the Israelites. But each time Balaam spoke, he gave blessings from God instead of curses. Balak was so angry he refused to pay Balaam for coming. He even threatened Balaam and told him to flee for his life. Balaam had hoped for honor and wealth from King Balak, but he got neither. However, God still used Balaam to bless his chosen people even though Balaam was hoping for personal gain.

But Balaam did something terrible before he returned home. He gave King Balak advice on how to defeat the Israelites. He knew that they couldn't curse the people or defeat them in battle. Instead, he told Balak how to get the Israelites to disobey so God would have to punish them.

The Moabites and Midianites came to the Israelites and acted friendly. They invited them to sacrifice to their false god, Baal. This was Balaam's idea, and it worked! The Israelites went with their new neighbors to their feasts and bowed down to Baal. The Israelites also married Midianite women, who led them to worship their false gods.

Refer to the Ten Commandments Poster. What commandments did the Israelites disobey when they worshipped Baal? The first and second commandments. Have students read those from the poster.

Balaam was right that God would punish the people for their sin. God sent a plague that killed 24,000 Israelites. The people had to learn not to follow the false gods of the people around them. They were to worship only God.

God also punished the Moabites and the Midianites for tricking his people. He told Moses to attack them. The Israelites destroyed five kings of Midian, and the false prophet Balaam was also killed.

Slide #25

Slide #26

Let's complete the Class Notes. Who will read #5 and give us the name of the king of Moab? Choose a reader. Balak. Have students complete #5. And who was the false prophet in #6? Choose a reader. Balaam. Have students complete #6.

Who will read #7? Choose a reader. Donkey. Have students complete #7. And #8, what did Balaam give the Israelites? Choose a reader. Blessing. Have students complete #8.

And #9, what false god did the Israelites worship? Choose a reader. Baal. Have students complete #9.

And #10, who will read about God's punishment? Choose a reader. Plague. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #27

Refer to the Journey to Canaan Map. Moses and the Israelites had to travel around the land of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. But when they came to the land of the Amorites and asked to pass through, King Sihon attacked them. God gave them victory, and Sihon was defeated. Then the giant King Og attacked Israel. God gave them victory over this giant and his fortified cities. The Israelites took over the Amorite lands of Gilead and Bashan and settled in their cities.

When they heard about the victories of the Israelites, the kings of Moab and Midian became afraid. They hired Balaam, a false prophet, to curse the Israelites for them.

Why did God send the angel of the Lord to block Balaam's path? He knew Balaam's heart was not obedient. Balaam just wanted honor and money. Who saved Balaam from the angel of the Lord three times? His donkey.

Slide #28

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Balaam couldn't see the angel in the road, so he got mad every time his donkey went off the road. Finally, his donkey lay down in the road, and God enabled her to speak to Balaam. Then God opened Balaam's eyes to see the angel. Balaam recognized his sin and said he would speak only what God wanted him to.

Some people don't believe that Balaam's donkey spoke. But we read it in God's Word!

Why do you think people don't believe this? Allow discussion. Animals don't talk today.

It would be amazing if animals did talk today. It's not something we've ever seen, so some people doubt that it could have ever happened. However, we need to remember who God is and what he can do. God is the omnipotent Creator!

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What is the definition of omnipotent? Choose a reader. Omnipotent: all-powerful to do whatever he wants. Don't you think that our all-powerful God can make one of his creations, a donkey, speak if he wanted to? Yes!

I do! God can do whatever he pleases because he is sovereign. We should never doubt God's Word just because we have never seen or heard an animal speak today. God did many amazing miracles to deliver the Israelites from Egypt and bring them safely through the wilderness. Those were special signs he did back then. In the account of Balaam, God was faithful to keep his promise to bless the descendants of Abraham and protect them from those who wanted to curse them. God used a talking donkey to get the attention of Balaam so he would speak only what God told him. And that's what Balaam did!

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

Materials

Review Questions
Three chairs set out for bases
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Medium-sized cardboard box
- Scissors or knife
- Four beanbags
- Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

Materials

- Review Questions
- One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)
- Pencils or white board markers
- One die

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board

in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

Materials

Review Questions
Masking tape

Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

Review Questions
Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
Rolled up socks
Masking tape
Ten sheets of paper
Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

Materials

Review Questions
White board or chalkboard
Markers/chalk
Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.),
tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

Materials

Review Questions
Small paper strips
Cup or basket

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions

A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards

One beanbag

Masking tape

Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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