

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 Timeline. Even after seeing God's power and faithfulness as he rescued the Israelites and led them through the wilderness, the people were afraid and 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.

Slide #3

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

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

These three gathered others and went up against Moses and 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 even after all this, 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 on a pole 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 was often ridden back in Bible times. And one of them talked to its owner! Any guesses? Allow guesses. Donkey.

Have the Donkey Poster and other items ready for the donkey game. It was a donkey! God miraculously made a donkey talk! Attach the Donkey Poster to the board. While blindfolded, who can pin a tail where it should go? Choose volunteers or let all students have a turn. Blindfold them, spin them around, and then have them stick a tail on the poster using tape or

poster putty. Award a prize to the student whose tail is closest to the right spot.

Slide #4

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Today, we'll jump 40 years to the end of the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness. The younger people had grown up, and it was finally time for them to enter the promised land of Canaan. There were many dangers they would have to face. But God promised to intervene. That means he would come between the Israelites and their enemies and clear the way for them to take this land for their own. God was with them and promised to bless them in this new land. Let's see how it turned out.

Victories over Sihon and Og

Slide #5

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. Show the path of the Israelites on the map.

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

The Edomites were the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau, and they didn't want the Israelites to pass through their land. 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.

Slide #6

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 Moab or Ammon because they were descendants of Lot.

Does anyone remember who Lot was? He was related to Abraham. He was Abraham's nephew.

Point out Gilead on the Journey to Canaan Map. Next, the Israelites came to the land of Gilead, which was controlled by an Amorite king named Sihon who said, "You can't come through my land!" He gathered his army to fight the Israelites! But God helped the Israelites win the battle. They destroyed Sihon's army and took over all the cities in his land, including the capital city.

Slide #7

Point out Bashan on the Journey to Canaan Map. Then Moses sent spies into the beautiful land of Bashan, which was controlled by a giant king named Og.

The Bible tells us that Og slept in a bed that was about 13 1/2 feet long and 6 feet wide. So 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 ceilings in our homes are about 8 feet high, so Og would have to duck

down to walk around inside your house so his head wouldn't crash through the ceiling! That's pretty tall!

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

Uh oh! Will the Israelites trust in God and go to battle against Og? Or will they be too afraid, like before? Let's find out!

Deuteronomy 3:1–5

Slide #8

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. Follow along as I read verses 1–5. Read the passage.

Point out Edrei on the Journey to Canaan Map. Og and all his people came to fight at a place called Edrei.

What did the Lord say to Moses in verse 2? Do not fear him, for I have given him and all 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.

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 #12

Show the Twelve Tribes Map. 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 help fight with the other tribes to conquer the promised land.

Pass out the Class Notes to the students.

Let's start the Class Notes. Each statement is either true or false. Circle the checkmark if it's true or circle the X if it's false. When the answer is false, ask who knows the correct answer.

Slide #13

Slide #14Slide #15

Who will read #1 and tell us if it's true or false? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #1.

And #2? True or false? Choose a reader. False. Have students complete #2.

Who will read #3? What did King Sihon do? Choose a reader. False. Have students complete #3.

And who remembers the name of the giant king? Someone read #4. Choose a reader. False. Have students complete #4.

How did the Israelites win battles against these powerful kings? Who will read #5? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #5.

Blessings from Balaam

Now Balak, the king of Moab, heard about the Israelites' victories over the Amorite kings Sihon and Og—and he was scared!

Were the Israelites going to attack Moab? No.

Balak didn't know that God had told the Israelites not to fight him and his people. He thought for sure they would attack him and his land, too. So he came up with a plan to stop them, and he got his neighbors, the Midianites, to help him. King Balak knew of a false prophet named Balaam. The king decided, "I'll send princes to Balaam to hire him to come and curse the Israelites. For it is said that whenever Balaam speaks a curse against someone, that terrible thing will surely happen!"

When the princes came to Balaam and asked if he would come with them, Balaam asked God if he should go, but God told him not to. Balaam obeyed God and didn't go with the princes—this time.

But King Balak didn't give up. He sent even more important princes to Balaam. They offered 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.

As Balaam's donkey was trotting along, suddenly the angel of the Lord stood in the road. He was right in front of them with his sword drawn, blocking the path. Now, Balaam couldn't see the angel, but his donkey could. She didn't want to face an angel with a drawn sword! So she turned off the road and went into a field.

"What are you doing!" Balaam cried angrily. He struck the donkey with his stick to get her back onto the road.

On they went until they came to a narrow path between some grape vineyards. Suddenly, the donkey saw the angel of the Lord again! This time the angel blocked the road where there was a wall on either side. There was no way around the angel, so the donkey pushed against the wall, squishing Balaam's foot.

"Ouch!" Balaam struck his poor donkey again! He still didn't see the angel and didn't know what was wrong with his donkey; she never acted like this before.

On they traveled. Balaam rode along on the donkey until once again, the angel of the Lord appeared on the road. Balaam still couldn't see the angel, but his donkey sure could. This time she had nowhere to turn. So she just lay down right there in the middle of the road! Balaam was so angry, he struck his donkey again with his stick.

Numbers 22:28

Slide #16

Slide #17

Let's find out what amazing thing the Lord did next! Who will read Numbers 22:28 for us? Assign a reader.

What did God do for the donkey? He opened the mouth of the donkey so she could speak to Balaam.

What did she ask Balaam? What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Can you imagine having a donkey speak to you? But guess what—Balaam answered his donkey! He told her she was making a fool of him and he wished he had a sword to kill her! He must have been very angry with her.

How many of you would have talked back to a donkey if it spoke to you in your language? Or would you be too surprised to say anything? Allow discussion.

Numbers 22:31–33

Slide #18

Slide #19

Who will read Numbers 22:31–33 now? Assign readers.

God finally opened Balaam's eyes, and what did Balaam 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; he knew what was in Balaam's heart. Balaam confessed his sin and offered to return home instead of going to King Balak. The angel of the Lord told Balaam to go, but he was to speak only what God told him to. Isn't that

interesting how God used a talking donkey to prepare Balaam to be obedient? Let's keep going and find out if he did obey.

When Balaam arrived, King Balak was really glad to see him. He wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites because he knew he couldn't defeat them in battle. King Balak took Balaam to a place where they could see some of the Israelites' camp. They offered sacrifices and then God gave Balaam the words to say—and Balaam blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them.

Numbers 23:11–12

Slide #20

Do you think this made King Balak happy? Turn to Numbers 23 now. Someone read verses 11–12. Assign readers.

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 put in his mouth.

Well, King Balak wouldn't give up. He took Balaam to two different places, hoping 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 to kill Balaam and told him to flee for his life. Balaam didn't get what he was hoping for. But God used Balaam to bless the Israelites.

It didn't end there, though. Before he returned home, Balaam did think of something evil and sneaky to help the king defeat the Israelites. He told King Balak that even though God wouldn't allow him to curse the Israelites, Balak could still get them to disobey God so they would have to be punished.

King Balak liked this idea. So his people, the Moabites, and their neighbors, the Midianites, came to the Israelites, acting friendly. They invited them to sacrifice to their false god, Baal. Then the Israelites went with their new neighbors to their feasts and bowed down to Baal. Soon the Israelites married Midianite women, who led them to worship their false gods. This was Balaam's idea, and it worked!

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 the one true God.

God also punished the Moabites and the Midianites for tricking his people. He told Moses to attack them. In the end, the Israelites destroyed five

kings of Midian, and Balaam was also killed.

Slide #21

Slide #22

Let's complete the Class Notes. Who will read #6? What was the name of the king of Moab? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #6.

Who will read #7? Choose a reader. False. Have students complete #7.

And #8, is it true or false? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #8.

And #9, what is the answer there? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #9.

And #10, when the Israelites were invited to worship false gods, what did they do? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #23

Refer to the Journey to Canaan Map. Moses and the Israelites had to travel around the land of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Then God gave them victory over two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, and the Israelites took over their lands.

The king of Moab became afraid when he saw the Israelites' victories. He hired Balaam, a false prophet, to curse the Israelites for him.

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 #24

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Balaam couldn't see the angel blocking his path, so he got mad every time his donkey tried to get 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, like a donkey, speak if he wanted to? Yes!

God can do whatever he wants because he is sovereign and omnipotent. 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 rescue 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 intervened by using a talking donkey to get the attention of Balaam so he would speak only what God told him to say. And that's what Balaam did!

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! 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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