

12.35b Balak and Balaam (Numbers 24:25; 25:1–18; Deuteronomy 23:3–5; Joshua 24:9, 10; Micah 6:5; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14)

(The teacher might combine this story with “12.35a Balak and Balaam.”)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional needed materials.
- A stumbling block
- Nancy Ganz’s treatment of this story is excellent in *Numbers: A Commentary for Children*, published by Shepherd Press, 2006. Ideas or quotes from this source will be noted by (Ganz).

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Tips and terms are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *stumbling block*: an obstacle; a means to cause someone to fall in a moral sense
- *Baal of Peor*: “Baal being a general name for an idol; and, to distinguish this from other Baals or idols, it was called Peor, either from its opening its mouth in prophecy . . . or rather from the mountain Peor, where it was worshipped.” (More information is at <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-3.html>).
- *to yoke*: to join in a strong union
- *plague*: a sickness or pestilence affecting the population of a wide area
- *atonement*: satisfaction made for the cleansing of the sins of people

Scripture: (ESV)

Numbers 24:25 Then Balaam rose and went back to his place. And Balak also went his way.

25:1 While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. 2 These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. 4 And the Lord said to Moses, “Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before the Lord, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.” 5 And Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor.”

6 And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting. 7 When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand 8 and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped. 9 Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

10 And the Lord said to Moses, 11 “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy. 12 Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace, 13 and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel.’”

14 The name of the slain man of Israel, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, chief of a father’s house belonging to the Simeonites. 15 And the name of the Midianite woman who was

killed was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, who was the tribal head of a father's house in Midian.

16 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 17 "Harass the Midianites and strike them down, 18 for they have harassed you with their wives, with which they beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the chief of Midian, their sister, who was killed on the day of the plague on account of Peor."

Deuteronomy 23:3 "No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the Lord forever, 4 because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loved you. 6 You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever.

Joshua 24:9 Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel. And he sent and invited Balaam the son of Beor to curse you, 10 but I would not listen to Balaam. Indeed, he blessed you. So I delivered you out of his hand.

Micah 6:5 O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord."

2 Peter 2:15 Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing,

Jude 11 Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error.

Revelation 2:14 You have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

Introduction/Review:

Our last story from about King Balak and Balaam ended with Balaam's wonderful prophecies about Israel and even about Jesus Christ.

Story:

Balaam's counsel

The book of Numbers drops Balaam's story with the prophecies. We have to find other Scripture references to this story in order to find out that, despite God's causing blessings to come out of Balaam's mouth, Balaam found a way to curse Israel. He advised King Balak how to make God curse His own people by putting a stumbling block before them. The results of Balaam's counsel are seen in Numbers 25, but we learn from other places that he is the one who instigated the terrible conditions that caused God's wrath to fall on His people.

This was Balaam's wicked counsel: "Put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality. This is how you will do it: You Moabites and Midianites need to get friendly with Israel. Invite the people to your feasts when you sacrifice to your gods. Show them how you worship Baal. Pretty soon, they will enjoy doing this, and their God will be angry and punish them for worshipping other gods besides Him."

Why would Balaam advise such a thing against God and His people? The New Testament tells us his motivation: "Balaam . . . loved gain from wrongdoing" (2 Peter 2:15). In other words, Balaam didn't care about doing wrong if he could get all that money offered by Balak out of the deal.

Moab and Midian's action

So Moab and Midian got chummy with some Israelites. Young women invited young men to their vile heathen feasts. God's people ate with the Moabites and Midianites in their meals of worship to their false gods, and eventually they got interested enough in those false gods to bow down and worship them. They even intermarried with these ungodly people. In this way Israel "yoked himself to Baal of Peor."

What commandments were they disobeying? Commandments 1 and 2: "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water below. You shall not bow to them or worship them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."¹

God's punishment

Knowing these commandments, you also know God must punish for this terrible disobedience. He said to ✓have the chiefs judge and then execute the idolaters by hanging them in broad daylight so that all could see (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-4.html>). So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you slay those of your tribe who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor."

A man's open sin

Sometimes people who purposefully disobey God become arrogant and "in-your-face" with their sin. That's what happened in Israel. While the Israelites were weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting, perhaps because of grief over the terrible sin of idolatry that was going on around them or perhaps because of the death of the idolaters, one man insolently paraded a Midianite woman to his family's tent in front of Moses and the whole congregation.

Phinehas's zeal

Aaron's grandson, Phinehas, "was filled and fired with zeal for the glory of God, and with an holy indignation against the sin and sinner, and with a just concern for the honour of the righteous law of God; and [a desire] to prevent others from falling into the same sin" (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-7.html>). Being thus zealous and jealous for the Lord, Phinehas took a spear, went into that tent, and stabbed both the man and the woman so that they died. God had already started a plague that had killed twenty-four thousand people,² but when Phinehas slew these two arrogant sinners, God stopped the plague.

Not only that, God blessed Phinehas for his righteous deed with a long-lasting blessing. God told Moses, "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them so that I did not consume the people of Israel. Therefore tell him, 'I give to him and to his descendants my covenant of peace and the promise of a perpetual priesthood because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel.'"

Midianites' punishment

Regarding the Midianites. God said, "Harass the Midianites and strike them down, for they have harassed you with their tricks to make you worship Baal of Peor."

A little later, just before Israel entered Canaan, Moses instructed the people further about Moab and Ammon, saying, "No Ammonite or Moabite may become a part of Israel, even to the tenth generation because they did not meet you with bread and water on the way when you came out of Egypt and because they hired against you Balaam to curse you. But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; instead your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord loved you. You shall not seek peace or prosperity for Moab and Ammon forever."

Moab's punishment

In this we see that although God did not let Israel actively fight against Moab or Ammon, He also prevented

those nations from ever becoming a part of Israel. That is a long-lasting consequence for doing evil. Yet God is gracious, as we have learned and will see again.

¹“[N]o sin is more provoking to God than idolatry, that being so directly opposite to his nature, honour, and glory, as well as to his will and worship” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-3.html>).

²“The apostle says 23,000 (1 Corinthians 10:8). Moses includes those that were hanged against the sun, in the time of the plague, as well as those that were taken off by it, even all that died on this account; the apostle only those that ‘fell’, which cannot with propriety be said of those that were hanged, who might be 1000 and so their numbers agree; but of this and other ways of removing this difficulty (See Gill on 1 Corinthians 10:8)” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-9.html>).

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

Phinehas “was a type of Christ, whose zeal for the house of God . . . for the salvation of his people, and the glory of God thereby, ate him up, (Psalms 69:9) as well as in his turning away wrath from Israel; sin is the cause of wrath, and for it is revealed from heaven; the people of God are deserving of it as others; but Christ has bore it for them, and so has delivered them from it”

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-11.html>).

“[I]n this also Phinehas was a type of Christ, the covenant made with him not only being from everlasting and to everlasting . . . but the priesthood founded on it is so too, being established by the oath of God, who swore to him, ‘thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek’ . . . (Hebrews 7:21, 24, 25, 27)” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-13.html>).

“[T]here is an agreement between Phinehas and Christ in his very name; Phinehas signifies either ‘the face of him that spares’, that is, of God, that spares; Christ is the face of God, the express image of his person, even of him, who, though he spared not Christ himself, yet he spares his people for Christ’s sake” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-25-13.html>).

- Do right, and do not abandon doing right in order to get riches.
- Consequences for doing evil are often long-lasting.
- “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Activities:

- Play dough: sword; tent; yoke; oxen
- Snack: Something bitter or sour like dill pickles to remind of the bitterness of sin and its consequences
- Sing the Hornet Song found below. The sheet music for this song seems to be unavailable online, but the tune is “That Is What Heaven’s to Me.” (See Lesson 12.35a for a video site that records the song.)
- Sword drill about this story from the Scriptures found above: Deuteronomy 23:3–5; Joshua 24:9, 10; Micah 6:5; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14
- Review questions: (Game: See Lesson 12.35a Balak and Balaam for altars and fire game.)
 1. What terrible advice did Balaam give to Moab and Midian so that God would punish them? [To get Israel to come to their feasts to false gods so that they would eventually worship those gods.]

2. What did God tell the judges to do to those who had been involved in this idolatry? [To hang them.]
3. Whom did one Israelite bring to his family's tent? [A Midianite woman.]
4. Who was zealous for the sake of the Lord when the man brought the woman into the camp? [Aaron's grandson, Phinehas.]
5. What did Phinehas do to the man and woman? [Slew them by stabbing them with a sword.]
6. By slaying the man and woman, what did Phinehas stop? [A plague.]
7. How many people were killed in the plague? [24,000.]
8. Moab and Ammon could never be a part of what nation? [Israel.]
9. Why could Moab and Ammon never be a part of Israel? [Because they did not meet Israel with food and water when they journeyed through their nations and because they hired Balaam to curse them.]
10. Fill in the blank. God said, "Harass the _____ and strike them down." [Midianites.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Exodus 20:1–17. An enlarged copy of the words, the "Exodus 20:1–17" song sheet, and motions are in Lesson 12.15 or on the "Lessons" and "Songs" pages at teachingthebibletochildren.org. "Stop! It's the Law," a song that teaches only the basic Ten Commandments, is found on the same "Songs" page.

Handwork:

- Print enough copies of the cross clipart found below so that each student gets a copy. Students should draw a person in the cloud. They may also color inside the letters.

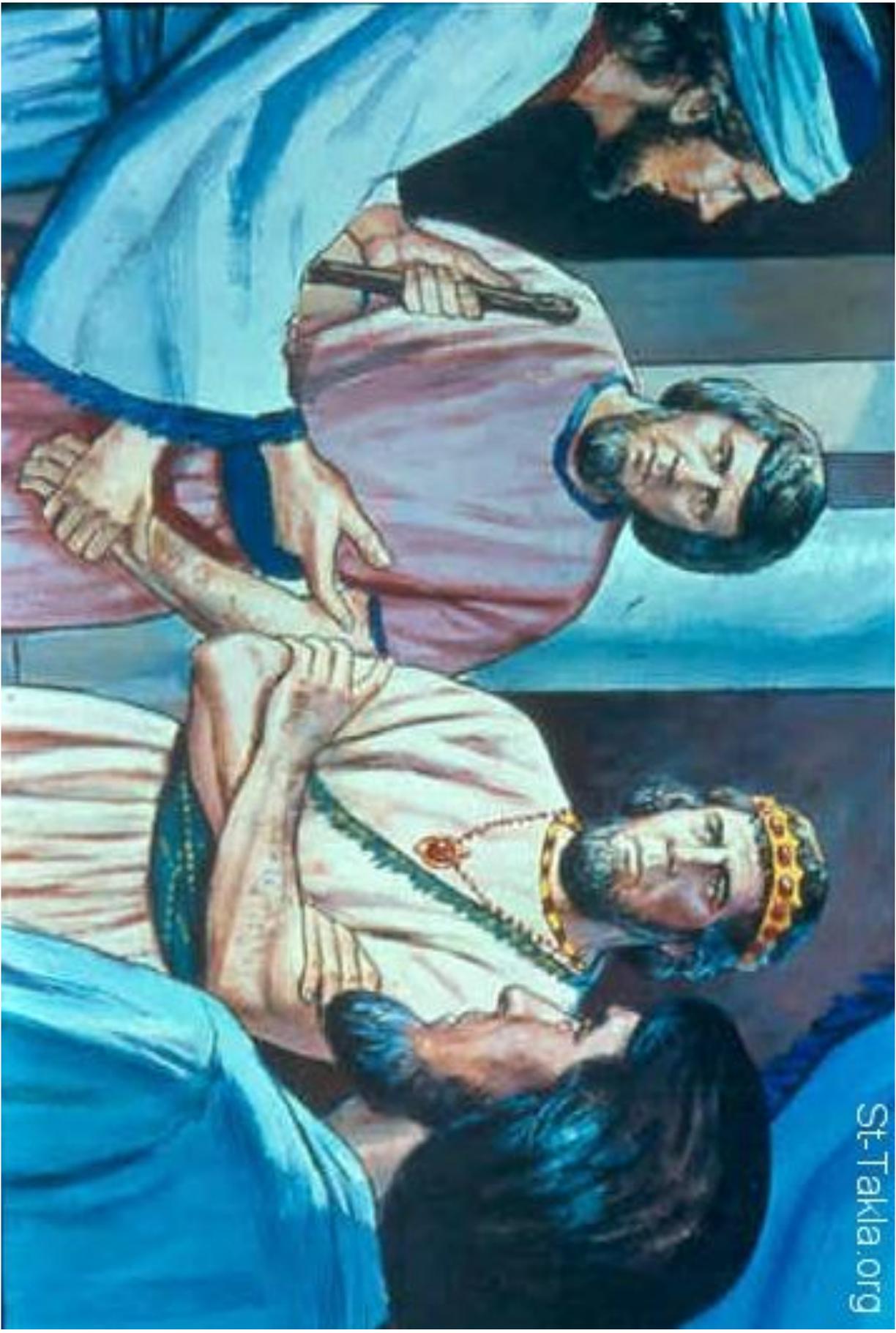
stumbling block

Baal of Peor

to yoke

plague

atonement







The Hornet Song

1. When the Canaanites hardened their heart against God
And grieved Him because of their sin,
God sent along hornets to bring them to time
And to help His own people to win.
The hornets persuaded them that it was best
To go quickly and not to go slow;
God did not compel them to go 'gainst their will,
But He just made them willing to go.

Chorus:

He does not compel us to go (no, no),
He does not compel us to go;
He does not compel us to go 'gainst our will,
But He just makes us willing to go.

2. If a nest of live hornets were brought to this room
And the creatures allowed to go free,
You would not need urging to make yourself scarce;
You'd want to get out, don't you see?
They would not lay hold and by force of their strength
Throw you out of the window, Oh, no!
They would not compel you to go 'gainst your will,
But just make you so willing to go. . . .

4. When Balaam was sent to the Moabite king
And wanted things run his own way,
His mule, ever faithful, spoke at the right time,
Made him willing God's voice to obey.
God can use any man, since He used Balaam's mule,
For He is Almighty, you know;
He does not compel us to go 'gainst our will,
But He just makes us willing to go.

5. There's so much in man that resembles a mule,
He is contrary, you know.
When you say, "Come here," he is sure to go there,
And say, "Whoa," he will then start to go.
My song may seem funny, but I know it's true,
And I don't want a sting from a hornet, do you?
You'd better not fight, for you might not be right,
But just be made willing to go.

(Thora Harris)



**ON THE CROSS,
JESUS MADE
ATONEMENT FOR HIS
PEOPLE.**