



MAYFAIRKIDS

Jesus Is the Star From Jacob and the Scepter from Israel



“WHO IS JESUS?” FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE - Week 15, November 25



JESUS IS THE STAR FROM JACOB AND THE SCEPTER FROM ISRAEL

“A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.”

NUMBERS 24:17

The Israelites’ forty years of wandering were nearly over, and the promised land was so close! Do you remember the promises God made to Abraham? God said, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you. I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:2-3).

God had kept these promises, and he was still keeping them and fulfilling them. And now God was about to add another promise: a victorious leader to rule his people.

Nearby, a king named Balak was watching the Israelites closely. They were numerous and scary to him. How could he stop them from attacking?

So Balak came up with a plan. He hired Balaam, a pagan sorcerer, to curse the Israelites. But God told Balaam, “No.”

So Balak offered Balaam more riches, and Balaam asked God again if he could go. God said he could, but he was only allowed to do what God said.

Yes, God allowed Balaam to go, but that doesn’t mean he

was happy with him. The angel of the Lord came down and stood in the road with his sword drawn, blocking the path in front of Balaam. His donkey saw the angel and ran off the road. Balaam, completely oblivious, beat the donkey and then continued on. Again the angel stood in front of them, and this time the donkey pressed close to a wall, crushing Balaam's foot. Balaam beat the donkey again. A third time the angel opposed them, and this time the donkey simply lay down, refusing to go any farther. Balaam beat the donkey again, not realizing the donkey was saving his life!

The donkey had had enough. "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?" it said (Numbers 22:28).

Wait a second, a talking donkey? God sure gets creative when he wants someone's attention! Balaam was probably a little shocked, but even more so, he was angry! "You've made a fool of me! If I had a sword I'd kill you right now!" he yelled. Actually, there was a sword nearby, but it was pointed at Balaam!

The donkey replied, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" (22:30).

Then Balaam's eyes were opened and he saw the angel.

At this point you might expect Balaam to go home,

realizing the seriousness of the situation. But God allowed him to go on, because God had a plan.

Soon Balaam and Balak were making pagan sacrifices in preparation for the cursing. But when the time came, God put his words in Balaam's mouth. Instead of cursing them, Balaam blessed them!

Balak wasn't happy, and he ordered Balaam to try again, but it didn't work! Balaam said, "I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it" (23:20).

The Israelites were God's treasured possession, the people he had promised to bless. And you can be sure that God keeps his promises!

By now Balak was extremely frustrated. "Change locations!" he said. "Try again!"

But Balaam continued to bless the Israelites and this time also cursed their enemies. Balak burned with anger and ordered Balaam to leave.

Balaam continued prophesying the words of God. He couldn't help it! Do you remember how God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him? Balaam, the pagan, selfish sorcerer, told just how this was going to happen.

He said, "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" (24:17).

Israel was going to get a king—a glorious one! But who, and when? The king is Jesus, born many years later, descended from Jacob, full of glory like a star and authority like a scepter.

God protected his people the Israelites from a curse in this story, and he protects us today from the curse of sin. How? Through Jesus, the Star and Scepter. Paul tells us in the book of Galatians: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13a). Jesus became the curse, defeated death, and then took his place on the throne, where he reigns today. There is no greater blessing than this.



REFLECT

1. What two images are used in this story to point to Jesus? How do these images fit Jesus?
2. God uses a disobedient, heathen sorcerer to proclaim the coming of his Son. Does that surprise you? What might this teach us?
3. If you are a child of Abraham, and a child of God, God wants to bless YOU. And when God makes up his mind, he cannot be stopped. What comfort does this give you?
4. Read Galatians 3:13. How does this verse apply both to this story and the previous story?
5. Balak wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites, but instead he blessed them. See if you can match these verses from Balaam's oracles to the promises God made to Abraham: Numbers 23:10; Numbers 23:21; Numbers 24:5-6; Numbers 24:7; Numbers 24:9.