

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide  
SB 01.29.2023

**GOD PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE -NUMBERS 22: 1-6,31; 23:19-23**

## Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

In today’s lesson, Pastor David Guzik shares with us the amazing story of Balaam and Balak and how no one can curse God’s people! Only we can cause a curse on ourselves when we depart from the Lord. It’s important to realize while we may not always see or feel it, the truth is that God cares for you. Being in the middle of a bustling crowd doesn’t hide you from His eye. Not being able to hear yourself amid a crowded conversation doesn’t make Him deaf toward your words. Even when you may not realize it, the Lord is working all the time to accomplish His purpose in your life. Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from this week’s sermon?
2. Invite group members to come up with a list of some of the reasons that they know God cares for them. Why do people sometimes doubt whether God cares about them?
3. Looking back across your life, in what ways would you say that God has blessed you with providential guidance and/or protection?

## Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ NUMBERS 22:1-6.**

1. Why did the king of Moab engage the services of Balaam? Why do you think he chose this strategy to defend Moab against the Israelites? What did he ask Balaam to do?

As the Israelites headed toward the promised land and their conquest of Canaan, they had to cross through land occupied by other groups. Some of these people were hostile and refused to allow the Israelites passage. The Israelites fought back, soundly defeating various Amorite and Canaanite kings (Num. 21:1-3,21-35). God put the fear of Israel in all their enemies. With the Israelites headed his way, the king of Moab and his people heard about Israel’s victorious progress and started getting extremely nervous. The king sought help from a prophet-for-hire.

1. Why might some people or groups feel threatened today by Christians?
2. How might people today use their religious practices and superstitions in an effort to oppose Christians and the message of Christ?
3. How should we respond to this opposition? See Genesis 12:3, Luke 12:4-5, and 1 John 4:4.

Following God’s plan did not keep the Israelites from encountering spiritual opposition, but God protected them on the way. The same holds true for us today, no matter what kind of opposition we face.

## *“PROMISES” in 2023*

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ NUMBERS 22:31-35.**

We may wonder why God at first told Balaam not to go with Balak’s officials, then later told him to go with them (vv. 12,20). Then the Angel of the Lord stopped Balaam for doing evil, only to tell him to continue (vv. 32,35). The key is the Lord’s command that Balaam do and say only what God told him (vv. 20,35). Apparently Balaam intended all along to speak a curse against Israel, as he was hired to do.

1. How did God feel about what Balaam was doing (v. 32)? Why did the Angel of the Lord permit Balaam to continue on his errand?
2. Although Balaam said, “I have sinned” (v. 34) his subsequent actions show no evidence of contrition or repentance. He likely meant only that he had erred in not perceiving the Angel of the Lord standing in his path.
3. Was it Balaam or the Lord who was actually in control of what Balaam said and did? Does God’s sovereignty mean we are not accountable for our choices? Explain.

Later, when Balaam opened his mouth to pronounce a curse against the Israelites, the Lord put a message of blessing in his mouth (Num. 23:7,16; 24:2).

4. Is it easier for you to trust God when life is going great or when unexpected trouble arises? Why?
5. What is our proper response to God’s loving protection?

Those who would harm God’s people are limited by what God allows. Ultimately, the Lord is in control. We cannot suffer persecution or other harm unless He permits it, and He will not permit it unless He intends to use it for good.

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ NUMBERS 23:19-23.**

1. In verse 19, Balaam declared that God is not a man. How did he say God is not like a man? How can this verse give us confidence in the Lord and in His promises?
2. If the Lord has chosen to bless us, can anyone impede or negate that blessing by a curse, charm, prayer, or any other method? Why is this significant?
3. What did it mean for Israel that God was with them (v. 21)? What does it mean for us?

Verse 21 says the Israelites rejoice over the King among them. That King is God Himself. This line is poetically parallel to the third phrase in verse 21, “The Lord their God is with them.” It would be many years until Saul was chosen as their first king. Even then it is clear that it was God’s desire that the Lord would be the king over Israel (1 Sam. 12:12).

4. Can we claim verse 23 as a promise for Christians today? Explain. How can believers today be certain that God is acting on their behalf?
5. Why is the gospel the ultimate demonstration of God’s care of and protection over you?

The greatest example of this principle can be seen in the death of our Savior, Jesus Christ. God allowed Jesus to suffer at the hands of evil people to accomplish our salvation. Evil cannot change God’s plans or defeat His purposes. As Christians, we can know that God is sovereignly watching over all the events of our lives. In that confidence we can live boldly for Him.

## ***“PROMISES” in 2023***

### Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

**Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.**

In Numbers 24:17 Balaam prophesied blessings upon Israel and the coming of Jesus our Messiah. The prophecy stated *“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A **star** shall come forth from Jacob, A **scepter** shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.”* Pastor Guzik emphasized that we as believers must keep Jesus as our bright Star, the focus of our life and to let Him rule in our lives because he carries the scepter in righteousness.

1. How do God’s promises to you provide comfort in your times of need? How does the assurance of His presence make a difference when harm threatens?
2. How might you share your confidence in the Lord with a fellow believer who is frightful about the circumstances he or she is facing?
3. When you reflect on your life and God’s care for you and your family, what causes you to say, “What great things God has done!”?

**PRAYER** – Conclude your group meeting in prayer for all the people in your group to see God’s blessings and to express gratitude to Him today.

***“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.” Numbers 24:17***