

1 – LESSON #52: Balaam and the Talking Donkey – Numbers 22 to 24

Balaam was a prophet who lived during the time of Moses.

QUESTION: What is a prophet?

ANSWER: A spokesperson for God

Balaam wasn't the good kind of prophet. He was the bad kind of prophet because he was greedy and sometimes used magic to go against God's will.

King Balak was terrified when he realized that thousands upon thousands of Moses' Israelite army was heading toward his country of Moab.

Why was King Balak so scared? He heard that the God of Israel helped the Israelites win the fight with the Amorites by sending down gigantic icy hailstones to crush the heads of a bunch of them. God also allowed the sun to shine extra long so the Israelites could see to kill many more of those Amorites.

That frightened king decided, "**I'd better send for Balaam, that prophet-for-hire. I will pay him lots of money to curse the Israelite army for me. That way, I have a better chance of beating the Israelites in a fight.**"

Greedy Balaam tried to say no, but King Balak refused to take no for an answer. Finally, Balaam said:

BALAAM: Okay, I will saddle up my donkey and set out on my way.

There was a huge problem. God was angry with Balaam for agreeing to go. He sent an angel, holding a sharp sword, to block Balaam's path.

Balaam could not see the angel, but his female donkey could.

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To avoid the angel killing Balaam, the donkey ran from the road into the field. Balaam beat her.

When she saw the angel blocking the way between two stone walls, she tried to squeeze by and accidentally crushed Balaam's foot. Balaam beat her again.

When she saw the angel blocking a narrow path, she lay down and refused to get up, even though Balaam beat her a third time.

Suddenly, God allowed that female donkey to speak out loud. She said:



DONKEY: Balaam, Hee-haw, what have I done to you that deserves you beating me 3 times?

BALAAM: You have made me look like a fool! If I had a sword, I would kill you!"

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DONKEY: But I am the same donkey you have ridden all your life. Have I ever done anything like this before?

BALAAM: No, you have not.

At that moment, God opened up Balaam's eyes. When he saw that angel holding a very sharp sword, he fell to the ground in fear.



ANGEL OF THE LORD: Balaam, why did you beat your donkey 3 times? Look! I have come to block your way. If your donkey hadn't protected you, you would be dead right now.

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BALAAM: Oh, Angel of the Lord, I have sinned. I didn't realize you were there, blocking my path. I will return home if you are against me going.



ANGEL OF THE LORD: Go with these men. But you are ONLY to say what I tell you to say.

When Balaam reached the country of Moab, King Balak impatiently said, "**Balaam! I need you to curse the Israelite army for me so I have a better chance to beat them in a fight and drive them away from my land.**" Balaam said:

BALAAM: King Balak, even if you offer me a palace full of silver and gold, I can only speak the message that God puts in my mouth.

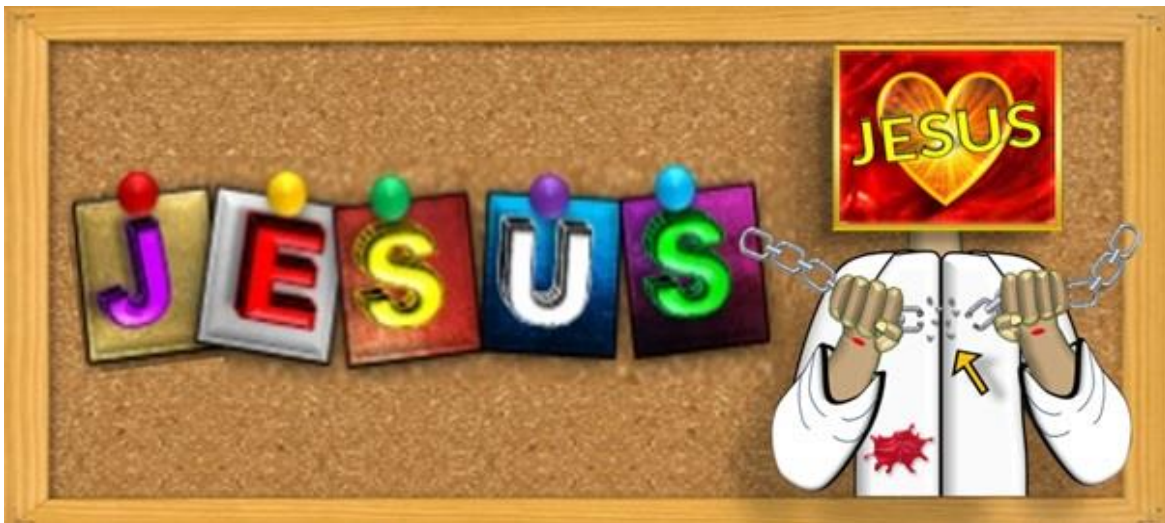


Three times, Balaam told King Balak to build 7 altars. While he sacrificed a young bull and ram on each altar, Balaam would go to a lone hill to speak to God.

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Each time, Balaam felt forced to bless the Israelite army rather than curse them. King Balak yelled:

BALAK: Balaam, I called you to curse my enemies! Instead, you have blessed them three times. Now get out of here! Go back home! I promised to reward you richly, but the Lord has kept you from your reward.



Before returning home, Balaam prophesied that the future Messiah would be born to the Israelite people.

QUESTION: Who was the Messiah?

ANSWER: Jesus

QUESTION: There is only one other Bible story with a talking animal. What was that animal?

ANSWER: Snake aka Serpent

QUESTION: Who did that animal talk to?

ANSWER: Eve and Adam

QUESTION: What was the name of the garden where Eve and Adam originally lived?

ANSWER: Garden of Eden