

The Story of Balaam, His Donkey, His Two Encounters with God and Their Effect Upon Him

Numbers 22: 15–41

1. The 2nd encounter of Balaam with God: A man who would do anything for money (Jude 11)

a. The king tried a more urgent request: He sent other more distinguished officials

- 1) He would reward him well
- 2) He would do anything
- 3) He was desperate:

b. The response of Balaam:
A spirit enslaved by greed

- 1) He declared: He could not go against God's will
- 2) He sought God (just in case God would let him go)

c. The 2nd encounter with God:
Gave Balaam over to his greed

- 1) Gave permission to go
- 2) But warned him: Had better do only what God told him

d. Balaam's response:
He went with the officials

2. The 3rd encounter of Balaam with God: The anger of God over greed and the signs of His anger

a. The angel of the LORD stood in the road to block Balaam's way

- 1) The donkey saw the angel with a drawn sword:
Turned off the road into a field
- 2) Balaam beat her to get her back on the road

15 Then Balak sent other officials, more numerous and more distinguished than the first.

16 They came to Balaam and said:
"This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Do not let anything keep you from coming to me,

17 because I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say. Come and put a curse on these people for me."

18 But Balaam answered them, "Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the LORD my God.

19 Now spend the night here so that I can find out what else the LORD will tell me."

20 That night God came to Balaam and said, "Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."

21 Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the Moabite officials.

22 But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

23 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, it turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat it to get it back on the road.

b. The angel of the LORD blocked the path again

- 1) The donkey again saw the angel of the LORD: Tried to squeeze by and crushed Balaam's foot
- 2) Balaam again beat the animal

c. The angel of the LORD then moved ahead to a very narrow place blocking the donkey

- 1) The donkey saw the angel of the LORD and just lay down

2) Balaam, in anger, beat her

d. The donkey miraculously, spoke to Balaam

- 1) The donkey complained of Balaam's cruelty
- 2) Balaam wished he had a sword to kill the animal
- 3) The donkey reasoned with Balaam
 - That she was Balaam's property
 - That she had always served Balaam well
 - That she had never behaved like this before
- 4) Balaam agreed

e. The LORD opened Balaam's eyes

- 1) Balaam saw the angel standing with his drawn sword: He fell face down on the ground
- 2) The angel of the LORD confronted Balaam
 - Rebuked him for mistreatment of an animal
 - Condemned him for his reckless resistance to God

24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path through the vineyards, with walls on both sides.

25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat the donkey again.

26 Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left.

27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat it with his staff.

28 Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

29 Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

30 The donkey said to Balaam, "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?" "No," he said.

31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell face-down.

32 The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me.

- Warned him that God would have taken his life by now because of his resistance if the donkey had not stopped

3) Balaam confessed his sin and offered to return (but did not repent)

4) The response of the angel:
Gave Balaam over to his greed — he could go, but he must speak only what God said

3. *The effect of the encounters and warnings upon Balaam*

a. The excitement of king Balak at Balaam's coming

1) He travelled all the way to the border to meet Balaam

2) He expressed disappointment at Balaam's first refusal

b. The effect of the encounters with the LORD: Balaam replied he could speak only the message God gave him

c. The king celebrated Balaam's coming

1) He offered pagan sacrifices: Balaam participated with Balak

2) He took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, some high place where Baal was worshipped:
To scan the camp of Israel

33 The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared it."

34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing on the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back."

35 The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's officials.

36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite town on the Arnon border, at the edge of his territory.

37 Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?"

38 "Well, I have come to you now," Balaam replied. "But I can't say whatever I please. I must speak only what God puts in my mouth."

39 Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth.

40 Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and gave some to Balaam and the officials who were with him.

41 The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, and from there he could see the outskirts of the Israelite camp.