

Stories You Didn't Hear in Sunday School

A Talking Donkey?

Numbers 22:21-35 NRSVUE

So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the officials of Moab. God's anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the road as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. The donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand, so the donkey turned off the road and went into the field, and Balaam struck the donkey, to turn it back onto the road.

- Numbers 22:21-35

24 Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side.

When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it scraped against the wall and scraped Balaam's foot against the wall, so he struck it again. Then the angel of the Lord went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam, and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

- Numbers 22:21-35

28 Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!" But the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way?" And he said, "No."

- Numbers 22:21-35

31 Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand, and he bowed down, falling on his face. The angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let it live."

- Numbers 22:21-35

34 Then Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now therefore, if it is displeasing to you, I will return home." The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you to speak." So Balaam went on with the officials of Balak.

- Numbers 22:21-35

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A Talking Donkey?

God

God

Balaam

God

Balaam

King Balak

God

Balaam

King Balak

the people of Israel

God

Balaam

King Balak

the people of Israel

special guest: Balaam's donkey

Come now, curse this people for me, since they are stronger than I; perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed.”

- Numbers 22:6

He said to them, “Stay here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, just as the Lord speaks to me”; so the officials of Moab stayed with Balaam.

- Numbers 22:8

God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.”

- Numbers 22:12

So the officials of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, “Balaam refuses to come with us.”

- Numbers 22:14

*That night God came to Balaam and said to him,
“If the men have come to summon you, get up and
go with them, but do only what I tell you to do.”*

- Numbers 22:20

*Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey,
and it said to Balaam, “What have I done to you,
that you have struck me these three times?”*

- Numbers 22:28

Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!”

- Numbers 22:29

But the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way?” And he said, “No.”

- Numbers 22:30

The angel of the Lord said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary because your way is perverse before me.

- Numbers 22:32

patience and prayer