

# BALAAM'S DONKEY

*The story of Balaam and his talking donkey on the journey to Moab as found in Numbers 22:21-35.*

## TOPICS:

Animals, Balaam, choices, Guidance, Obedience

## MATERIALS:

Picture of a donkey (*Optional*)

## DURATION:

Approximately 15 minutes



## Introduction:

A long time ago, even before baby Jesus came to live with us on earth, there was a man named Balaam. Can you say Balaam? (*Have the children practice saying the name, pronounced BAY-lm, several times.*) Balaam once was a good prophet of God, but now he was not following God's Will. Instead, he did whatever he wanted, even when God said, "NO Balaam!"

The king of Moab wanted Balaam to come and send a curse on their enemies. But the enemies of Moab happened to be God's chosen people, the Israelites. So of course God said, "NO Balaam, don't go!" But Balaam didn't listen. Eventually, he decided to go to Moab and do what the king wanted.

### Numbers 22: 23-35 (*Paraphrased*)

**B**alaam got up from bed very early in the morning for his long journey. He would be traveling with the prince from Moab. "Wow what an honor!" he thought to himself, not even thinking that God may be very angry because of his disobedience. Balaam leaped up on his trusted donkey, and along with his two servants followed right behind the prince.

Everything was great. Balaam had a big smile on his face. Then suddenly, his donkey saw an angel of the Lord with a sharp sword right there in the middle of the path, blocking the way. So instead of going straight ahead, she ran into a nearby field to avoid being hurt by the sword. But Balaam didn't see anything. He was so upset that his donkey would do such a thing. "*How embarrassing!*" he thought.

"You bad donkey," Balaam yelled as he beat her with a stick. Finally, he was able to get the sore donkey back onto the path.

After going a little farther, they came to a narrow passage with steep walls of rock on both sides. The donkey once again saw the angel of the Lord blocking the way, so she moved as close to the wall as possible to avoid being hurt by the sword. But as she did, Balaam's foot was crushed against the rocks, and he became very angry again.

"You dumb donkey!" Balaam yelled, as he beat her several more times with a stick.

A little farther along the way, the angel of the Lord appeared yet again. Balaam still couldn't see the angel, but the donkey could. There was no way to turn this time. The donkey thought to herself, "*What can I do now? I can't go left, I can't go right, and I can't even back up.*" She did the only thing possible, and sat down right there on the path.

"What a stupid donkey!" Balaam cried out as he beat her even harder than before.

Suddenly, the donkey turned to Balaam, and opened her mouth and said, "Hey! What did I do to you that you should beat me three times with a stick?"

For some reason, Balaam wasn't impressed when he heard his donkey speak. He only answered, "You made me look like a fool, not following the path, and crushing me against the wall, then sitting down like a stubborn old mule. If I only had a sword, I'd stick it in you right now."

"Why are you saying this?" the donkey replied. "Haven't I been faithful to you all these years? Have I ever tried to harm you or make you look foolish?"

Just then, Balaam saw the angel of the Lord standing there in the road. He fell to his knees and put his face very low to the ground to show his respect.

Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Balaam, "Why are you beating your donkey? She saw me in the path, and didn't come near because she knew I would strike you with my sword. You asked me before if you could go to Moab, and I said, 'NO Balaam!' But you went anyway. You asked for my guidance, and I tried to guide you to do the right thing, but you did not listen."

Then Balaam realized he had sinned against the Lord. He would continue on his journey with the prince after all, but God would not let him curse His people. The Word of the Lord was final, "NO Balaam!"

**THE END**