

EPISODE NO. 93

Num. 22:1-3,5-7,21-35

Balaam, a False Prophet

1 Then the people of Israel went to the plains of Moab. They camped near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

2 Balak, the son of Zippor, was the king of Moab at that time. Balak saw everything that the Israelites had done to the Amorites. 3 The people of Israel were so numerous that Moab was terrified of them. In fact, Moab was in a state of panic because of them.

5 Balak sent messengers to Balaam (a false prophet) to summon him. 6 Balak said, "The Israelites are too powerful for me. So, come now and put a curse on them for me!"

7 The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian traveled to Balaam with money in their hands. It was the fee for him to practice occult divination on Israel. They found Balaam. Then they told him what Balak had said.

21 Balaam got up the next morning. He put a saddle on his donkey. Then he went with the Moabite chieftains. 22 God became angry because Balaam went. The Angel of Yahweh stood in the road to kill him. So, Balaam was riding along on his donkey, and he had two servants with him. 23 The donkey saw the Angel of Yahweh standing in the road. The Angel had a drawn sword in his hand. So, the donkey swerved off the road and went into a field. Therefore, Balaam started hitting the donkey to make it go back to the road.

24 Later, the Angel of Yahweh stood in a narrow path between two vineyards. There were walls on both sides. 25 Again, the donkey saw the Angel of Yahweh. So, the donkey thrust herself up against one wall. This scraped Balaam's foot against the wall. That is why Balaam smacked her again.

26 The Angel of Yahweh did it again later on — the Angel stood in a very narrow place; it was too narrow to turn either left or right. 27 The donkey saw the Angel of Yahweh. So she lay down underneath Balaam. Balaam was very angry and he started whacking the donkey with his stick. 28 Then Yahweh caused the donkey to speak. She said to Balaam, "What have I done to make you beat me three times!?"

29 Balaam answered the donkey, "Because you have frustrated me! I only wish I had a sword in my hand right now. I would kill you on the spot!"

30 But the donkey said to Balaam, “I am your donkey, aren’t I? You have ridden me all your life until this very day. Have you ever known me to act like this before!?”

“No.” Balaam said.

31 Then Yahweh let Balaam see the Angel. The Angel of Yahweh was standing in the road with his sword in his hand pulled out. Then Balaam bowed himself face-down on the ground.

32 The Angel of Yahweh asked Balaam, “Why have you beaten your donkey three times? Listen, I have come out to kill you, because your way is not My way! 33 The donkey saw Me; she turned away from Me three times. If she had not turned away from Me, then I would have certainly killed you by now! However, I would have let the donkey live.”

34 Then Balaam said to the Angel of Yahweh, “I have sinned! I did not realize that you were standing in the road to stop me. Now, since you see that this trip is a bad idea, I’m just going to turn myself around and go back!”

35 The Angel of Yahweh said to Balaam, “No, go on with these men. However, say ONLY the message that I speak to you; that is all you can say.” So, Balaam went with the chieftains of Balak.