

DUMBER THAN A DONKEY

ser5052 Proverbial Wisdom, Pt 2

June 12, 2022 E & L

I. (HOOK) PRIDE MONTH

A. On Sunday evening I was working on the Tuesday Lead Team Agenda.

While doing so, I had the Warriors – Celtics game on TV, muted. I can't work with any kind of noise.

STRANGE HOW THINGS CHANGE! When I was a teenager, I couldn't work unless there was some kind of noise in the room, now that I'm an aging adult, I can't work with noise in the room. LOL!



After the game, Action News came on. The next hour was devoted totally to LGBTQ Pride Month. There were flags, banners, signs, colors, etc., all promoting "Pride Month." (*show photo*) The history of the month is credited to then President Bill Clinton declaring June as Gay & Lesbian Pride Month in 1999. Former President Obama declared June LGBTQ Pride Month, and Mr Joe Biden declared June LGBTQ+ Pride Month.

B. Immediately, the word “pride” became offensive to me.

It was like sin erupted from the pit of Hell. Everything about the word “pride” was repulsive. My mind went back to the first recorded sin, or should I say, the cause of the first recorded sin—pride. The scripture says of Lucifer in *Ezekiel 28*,

14You were anointed as a guardian cherub,
for I had ordained you.

You were on the holy mountain of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.

15From the day you were created
you were blameless in your ways—
until *wickedness* was found in you.

... So I drove you in disgrace
from the mountain of God,
and I banished you, O guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.

17Your heart grew *proud* of your beauty;
you corrupted your wisdom because of
your splendor;

so I cast you to the earth;
I made you a spectacle before kings.

... So I made fire come from within you,
and it consumed you.

I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the eyes of all who saw you.

19All the nations who know you
are appalled over you.

You have come to a horrible end
and will be no more.' ”

*emphasis mine, jbs

Verse 17 explains what the wickedness was in **verse 15** – pride. The words **pride** and **proud**, although we use them, particularly as parents, coaches, or employers, is rooted in sin. Its underlying tone is centered in “me” and not “Thee.”

C. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit brought this truth to my mind.

I posted it on my social media platforms. Here it is.

Have you ever pondered the fact that God never uses the words "pride" or "proud" in a positive sense? In truth, when the



Father refers to His son, both at Jesus’ baptism and His transfiguration, God says in **Matthew 3:17**, “This is My son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased.” Pride was the cause of sin in Heaven and continues to be the driving force behind all sin today.

D. No matter what sin it is, no matter what label we give it, great or small, you’ll find that it always comes back to pride. Pride is the root of all evil

and sin.

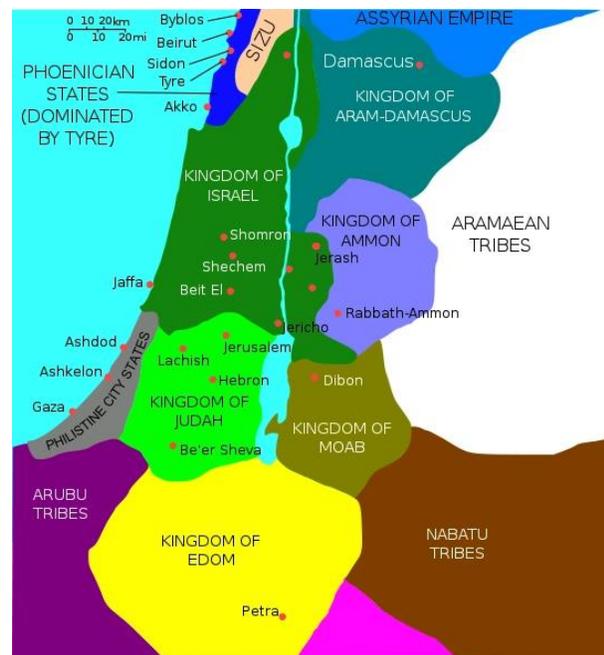
E. Let us pray!

II. (BOOK) MEET BALAAM

A. We're introduced to Balaam when Balak, king of Moab, feared the Israelites. Here's how the story unfolds.

While wandering in the wilderness, Israel set camp in the plains of Moab on the east side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

The King of Moab fears the Israelites because of what they had done to the kings and nations who had opposed them.



King Balak knew he could not defeat the Israelites, so he sought to hire a seer to place a curse on them. And that's how we meet Balaam.

B. (Book) The narrative

Numbers 22:

⁴ So Moab said to the elders of Midian,

NOTE! The Midianites were descendants of Abraham's third wife, Katurah, and neighbors of Moab. Moses married a Midianite.

"Now this company will [a]lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time. ⁵ Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which *is* near [b]the River [Euphrates] ... saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! ⁶ Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they *are* too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

NOTE! In today's world this is difficult for us to understand, and here's why. First, Balaam is a seer or priest with the ability to discover information about the future. Most seers in those days used magical arts, like Madame Orloff, Maximus, Myra Savage, Marlon the Magician of today's movie and book fame.

Therefore, people like Joseph and Daniel were also referred to as seers because they were looked at by the culture in which they lived as "diviners" or "seers" able to tap into the spirit world to foretell the future.

As in every culture, where there is darkness there is light. God always has a voice: Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in

Babylon, Melchizedek in Salem, and Balaam in Mesopotamia. In the New Testament we are told of Simon Magus who was rebuked by Phillip for thinking he could buy the Holy Spirit and its power.

The reason why Simon Magus (NT) and King Balak thought they could buy the Power (capital P) was because seers were handsomely paid. No one visited a seer or prophet without taking a gift. Seers that were good at their craft made a very good living. Hence, the King of Moab offers Balaam a very generous financial reward. (**back to our text**)

7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak.

Balaam tells the princes to wait while he seeks the LORD for advice. Departing from the princes of Moab and Midian, Balaam meets with the LORD.

12 And God said to Balaam, "You **shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."**

13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you."

In brief, the princes of Moab return to Balak, but Balak won't take no for an answer. So, he sends princes more noble than the first, offering Balaam an even greater reward if he'll come and curse the Israelites. (**On to verse 18**)

18 Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.

19 Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me."

NOW TELL ME! Did I miss something here? Is there a reason why Balaam needs to ask God a second time? Did not God already tell Balaam NOT to go with Moab, and not to curse the Israelites?

WHY DOES BALAAM WANT TO GO WITH THE PRINCES OF MOAB AND MIDIAN?

1. Was it a new business contact?
2. Did it mean more "money?"
3. Did he fear for his life?
4. Did he want to find favor with the kings of Moab and Midian?
5. Did he have an eye for the women of Moab? Ruth was a Moabite and quite attractive?
6. We don't know, exactly, but the narrative will give us a few suggestions.

LET'S BRING IT HOME? Why do we keep asking God for something? Because we want what it is we're asking Him for. Now, sometimes that's a good thing and sometimes it's not such a good thing.

God then tells Balaam to go with the princes, but God's not happy. Let us not forget, God has a PERFECT, PERMISSIVE & OVERRIDING will. And this is where the donkey comes into the narrative. (**On to verse 22**)

[LOOK] Balaam, the Donkey, and the Angel

22 Then God's anger was aroused because [Balaam] went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

NOTE: Balaam is a wealthy man with a taste for the finer things in life. He has two servants who attend to his needs.

23 Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way ... So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. [this happens two more times. After striking his donkey three times, the donkey speaks.]

28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey,

and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?”

²⁹ And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have [e]abused me [mocked]. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!”

³⁰ So the donkey said to Balaam, “*Am* I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since *I became* yours, to this day? Was I ever [f]disposed to do this to you?”

And [Balaam] said, “No.”

DOESN'T IT SEEM STRANGE THAT BALAAM IS NOT TAKEN ABACK BY THE DONKEY'S VOICE. Think about this! If an ass spoke to you ... well ... enough said. Right? Seriously, if you were riding a donkey or a horse and it spoke to you, wouldn't that freak you out? It didn't seem to bother Balaam at all. Maybe because he knew the voice of the LORD, and recognized “the voice.”

³¹ Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

NOTE: When you're brought face to face with your sin, what do you do? Do you fall on your face before God and seek forgiveness? Do you get mad at God and snub Him? Do we really think a temper tantrum is going to

manipulate God? God is not affected by our moods, but by a broken spirit and a contrite (repentant) heart.

³² And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out [g]to stand against you, because *your* way is perverse^[h] before Me.

PERVERSE IN HEBREW means “contrary.” Listen let’s be honest. We are quick to criticize Balaam, but how many times have we insisted on doing things our way, doing things that were contrary to what God wanted? Where are we presently living in disobedience to the will of the LORD? The correct word is “perverse.” Where is our living “perverse” before God? Where are we living in God’s permissive will when He is asking for His perfect will. (**On to verse 33.**)

³³ The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live.”

LISTEN CAREFULLY! I’m not trying to lay a guilt trip on you or take away the truth of God’s grace. But God will only let us live in His permissive will for so long before He exercises His “overriding will.” When that happens, it’s not a pretty picture. **1 John 5:16** says, “There is a sin that leads to death.” (Other passages that support this supposition are **Acts 5:1-10**, **1 Corinthians 11:30**, **1 Peter 1:16** and **Hebrews 12:6**)

ILLUSTRATION: I recently was told of a man who once attended GCCC and served on the Board. He took a 30-day sabbatical from God and the things of God. When the 30 days were over, he didn't believe there was a God.

³⁴ And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it \square displeases You, I will turn back."

WHY DID I ENTITLE THIS SERMON "DUMBER THAN A DONKEY!"? Doesn't he get it? Balaam says to God, "If it displeases You." Seriously! How many times and in how many ways does God have to say to Balaam, "*I don't like what you're doing, stop!*"?

III. (TOOK) THE LAST WORD

A. The conclusion of the story.

The story of Balaam starts with *Numbers chapter 22* and ends with *chapter 25* (3130 words). The narrative contains some of the most POWERFUL words and phrases in the Bible some speaking of God's character (23:19), others speaking of the coming Messiah (24:17).

In chapter 23:10, Balaam says to the Kings of Moab and Midian,

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his."

Sadly, that was not the case—he dies in battle when God commanded the Israelites to take vengeance upon Moab for causing Israel to sin. Tragic, isn't it? Balaam the “voice of God,” lived outside of Moab, but he couldn't shake the allure of worldly pleasures, and he dies in battle while living in Moab.

B. Balaam could only speak truth—God's truth.

Yet, while only able to speak truth, Balaam found a way to follow a perverse heart, corrupting the way of Israel and of himself.

As Christians, we have the truth. It's in our hearts and minds as we walk in the Spirit (**Romans 10:8**). Yet we too, like Balaam, can live contrary to what we know is truth. One lifestyle is blessed, the other is cursed. The choice is ours.

What do you say, let's walk in the truth and live in the truth? And the church said, “You betcha!”

IV. INVITATION

Where does that walk begin? By giving your life to Christ. Here's how!

Admit— your sins have separated you from God. (***Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23***);

Believe – that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal Lamb/Messiah.) (***Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22***);

Commit - yourself to His righteousness by confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. (*Isa 53:5; Col 1:22*);

Do it today! (*Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2*).

Father in Heaven, I'm sorry for the things I've done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life. Amen!