

TEN MINUTES IN THE BIBLE SERIES

DONKEY KNOWS BEST

Reflection:

How often do we become so focused on what WE want, we fail to notice what GOD may be showing us?

Balaam was determined to follow the path that promised him reward. He couldn't see the danger ahead – but his donkey could.

Sometimes the 'obstacle' that frustrates us may actually be protecting us.

Sometimes wisdom comes from the person we least expect to hear it from.

And sometimes GOD has to get our attention in a way we simply cannot ignore.

Before we dismiss the voice in front of us, perhaps we should stop and ask: What am I not seeing?

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DONKEY KNOWS BEST

By J.S. Jacklin

10-minute play inspired by Numbers 22: 12-35

A self-important prophet becomes obsessed with a king's promise of riches until his supposedly foolish donkey and an exasperated angel show him that sometimes the one we refuse to listen to is the one trying to save us.

CHARACTERS: 3 (1m, 1f, 1m/f)

BALAAM Male (confident, self-important man who believes he is considerably more important than he is.)

DONKEY Female - BETSY (*just ears, tail and harness/reins - walks upright-intelligent, practical and increasingly exasperated with her master.*)

ANGEL Male or Female (*dressed in all white, carrying a small sword - calm, dry and utterly unimpressed by Balaam.*)

SETTING:

Pethor, near the Euphrates River. BALAAM sits on a blanket-draped rock reading a scroll. DONKEY lies at his feet.

BALAAM (*Opens scroll.*) What does King Balak want now?

DONKEY (*Barely opens one eye.*)

BALAAM (*Reading.*) "Dear, Balaam. We have a situation here in Moab."
(*Looks at DONKEY.*) Sounds serious.

DONKEY (*Yawns.*)

BALAAM Apparently there are thousands of Israelites wandering all about.
(*Reading.*) "They have become a concern to us." (*To DONKEY.*)
Kings are always concerned about something, aren't they Betsy?

DONKEY (*Glares at BALAAM with clenched jaw in response to being called 'Betsy'*)

BALAAM (Reading.) "We would like you to curse them." (Proudly.) And there it is!

DONKEY (Sits up with curiosity.)

BALAAM You know, Betsy, (DONKEY glares.) ...being a prophet isn't so glorious. I have been given a very special gift. (DONKEY mouths the rest in unison.) I can bless. I can curse. (Beat.) Quite a responsibility.

DONKEY (Rolls eyes.)

BALAAM Somebody has to do it. (Reading.) "And, of course, we will make it worth your while." (Big, greedy smile.) Worth my while?

DONKEY (Suddenly interested.)

BALAAM (Reads.) "Silver. Gold. Whatever you desire."

DONKEY (Jumps to feet excited.)

BALAAM The king has got my attention now. (Closes eyes.) Let me ask permission from God. (Prays.) Nope.

DONKEY (Drops back to ground.)

BALAAM He doesn't want me to go. Apparently, these people who the king wants cursed, are *blessed*.

DONKEY (Nods approvingly.)

BALAAM Still... (Looks at scroll.) We're talking gold here, Betsy!

DONKEY (A disapproving side glare.)

BALAAM A house.

DONKEY (Interested, despite himself.)

BALAAM (Trying to impress DONKEY.) A BIG house.

DONKEY (Considers it.)

BALAAM With servants.

DONKEY (Looks at Balaam.)

BALAAM And indoor plumbing.

DONKEY (Jumps to his feet with excitement.)

BALAAM I knew you would see it my way, Betsy-old-girl. (*Glare.*) (*Closes eyes again.*) Let me ask one more time. I'll re-word it. (*Prays.*)

DONKEY (*Stares in anticipation.*)

BALAAM (*Fed up.*) Still 'no.'

DONKEY (*Consoles BALAAM with a tap on the shoulder.*)

BALAAM (*Conniving.*) Don't worry, Besty. I have a plan. We'll go to Moab.

DONKEY (*Stares at BALAAM.*)

BALAAM I'll look around. I'll talk to the king. Take in the situation and then, I'll see what he has to offer. After that... we can make a deal.

DONKEY (*Looks up at BALAAM, shaking his head, as if to say, "Don't do this!"*)

BALAAM What? I'm not agreeing to anything. I'm just... going. As a courtesy.

DONKEY (*Starts quietly backing away.*)

BALAAM Not so fast, Betsy!

DONKEY (*Freezes.*)

BALAAM We've got a road trip.

DONKEY (*Points emphatically in the opposite direction.*)

BALAAM Moab is that way. (*Points in different direction.*)

DONKEY (*Points another other way.*)

BALAAM Your sense of direction is appalling. I'll lead. Come on, Betsy-Boo. (*Glare.*) Let's get this show on the road.

DONKEY (*Upset, throws the blanket over himself and the reins.*)

BALAAM That's the spirit.

They begin walking – BALAAM humming/whistling a merry tune, DONKEY shaking his head disapprovingly. When suddenly an ANGEL appears in front of them, sword drawn. DONKEY STOPS IN HIS TRACKS.

BALAMM What is it, Betsy?

DONKEY (*Motions with his head to the ANGEL.*)

BALAAM Got a kink in your neck, old-girl?