

## A TALKING DONKEY

Numbers 21:10 - 22:35

The children of Israel traveled on through the land stopping at these places; Oboth, Ijeabarim, Zared, Arnon, Beer. At the place called Beer, the Lord told Moses to gather the people together, and he would give them water. The people sang, "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it.", and the nobles digged a well with their staves according to Moses' direction.

The children of Israel traveled on to the top of Pisgah, looking towards Jeshimon. At this place Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, "Let me pass through your land. We will not turn off the road into your fields or vineyards. We will not drink water from your wells. We will only travel along on the king's highway."

But Sihon refused Israel passage through his land. Instead, he and his armies came out to fight Israel, but the Lord delivered them to Israel and they were defeated completely. Then Israel took all those cities that had belonged to the Amorites and their king Sihon, and lived in them.

After that Og the king of Bashan, also fought against Israel. He and his people also were defeated so that there was none of them left.

Then Balak king of Moab was fearful, for he heard all that Israel had done to his neighbors. He decided that he would defeat Israel in a different way, for it was clear to him that no army could stand before the Israelites. Balak said to his elders, "Now these people will lick up all that are around us, like an ox licks up the grass of the field."

Because of this, Balak sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, saying, "Look now, there is a people that have come out of Egypt, and they cover the whole earth, and they are coming against me. Please come to me and curse these people, for they are too strong for me. Maybe if you curse them for me, I will be able to defeat them, and drive them out of the land. For I think that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed."

So the elders of Moab went on their way to speak to Balaam with rewards of divination in their hands, and they came to Balaam and gave him the words of Balak king of Moab.

Balaam said to the elders of Moab, "Stay here tonight, and I will give you my answer, whatever the Lord tells me."

Then the Lord came to Balaam and said, "What men are here with you?"

Balaam replied, "Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent them to me, asking that I would come and curse a people that has come out of Egypt, which covereth the earth."

The Lord answered Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse those people, for they are blessed."

Balaam got up in the morning and told the men that he could not go with them, because the Lord refused to let him go.

The princes returned to Balak with Balaam's answer. Balak quickly sent other princes to Balaam that were more honorable than the first ones that he had sent.

Now these princes came to Balaam with the same message, saying that Balaam should come and curse the people who had come out of Egypt. This time they brought him even greater reward if he should come with them. Balak sent this message, "Let nothing prevent you from coming to me. I will promote you to very great honor, and I will do whatever you say to me."

Balaam answered the men, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord. Now please stay tonight and I will give you the answer in the morning."

Again the Lord came to Balaam in the night, and said to him, "If the men call to you, get up, and go with them. But do exactly what I tell you to do."

So Balaam got up in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the men from Moab.

Then the Lord's anger was kindled against Balaam, for he did not want Balaam to go to Moab. He allowed Balaam to go, because Balaam continued to ask for permission, even the Lord had told him no the



first time. The angel of the Lord stood in a way as a adversary against Balaam, who was riding on his donkey. His two servants were also with him.

The donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand, so the donkey turned off the road and went into the field. Then Balaam hit the donkey to turn her back into the road.

But the angel of the Lord stood in a path between two vineyards, there being a wall on each side. When the donkey saw the angel in the path, she pushed herself against the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot, so that he beat her again.

Now, the angel of the Lord went a little way ahead and stood in a place that was very narrow so that there was to way to go either left or right. When the little donkey saw the angel again she just sat right down in the path with Balaam on top of her. Balaam became so angry at the donkey, that he hit her with his staff.

All of a sudden the Lord gave the donkey a voice to speak, and she said to Balaam, "What I have I done to you that you have hit me these three times?" Balaam answered the donkey, "You have mocked me. If I had a sword in my hand I would kill you!"

Then the donkey replied, "Am I not your donkey that you have ridden ever since I was yours until now? Have I ever done this to you before?" Balaam answered, "NO."

Now the Lord opened Balaam's eyes so that he too saw the angel of the Lord standing in the path with his sword drawn. Balaam bowed down his head and fell flat on his face.

The angel of the Lord said to him, 'Why have you beaten your donkey? I came to stand against you because your way is wicked before me, and the donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. Unless she had turned away from me, I surely would have killed you. She has saved your life!"

When Balaam heard this he said, "I have sinned, for I didn't know that you stood in the way against me. If I displease you, I will go back again."

The angel of the Lord said, "Go with the men, but speak only that word which I give you." So Balaam traveled on with the princes.

How angry it must have made the Lord to see Balaam act so rebelliously in wanting to go with the princes of Moab, and then to beat the poor little donkey besides. How gracious and merciful of God to spare Balaam rather than striking him dead, as he could have done for his wickedness. God gave Balaam every opportunity to choose to do what God wanted him to do, and yet, Balaam made the wrong choice. Balaam longed for the riches and power of Moab, so that he was willingly to go against what he knew was the truth. Balaam was looking for the riches of this world at the expense of the next.

The Lord gives each of us the opportunity to choose to do right, but if we persist in going our own way, he sometimes lets us. Hopefully, by suffering the consequences of our wrong choices, we will see that God's way is the best way.

I love this story where the Lord allows the donkey to speak to Balaam. Balaam must have been utterly amazed and shocked to hear that donkey speak. Still, Balaam's heart wasn't changed. He was only willing to obey the Lord for the moment, because of fear. No matter how many wonders the Lord does, people will still refuse to obey his voice or trust in him. God who is the Creator can make a donkey speak or open our eyes to see angels, but it seems that we often still choose to go our own way and disobey him. It is not seeing miracles that convinces men to follow God, but it is a change of heart, which only God himself can give us.

**LEARN:** But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which

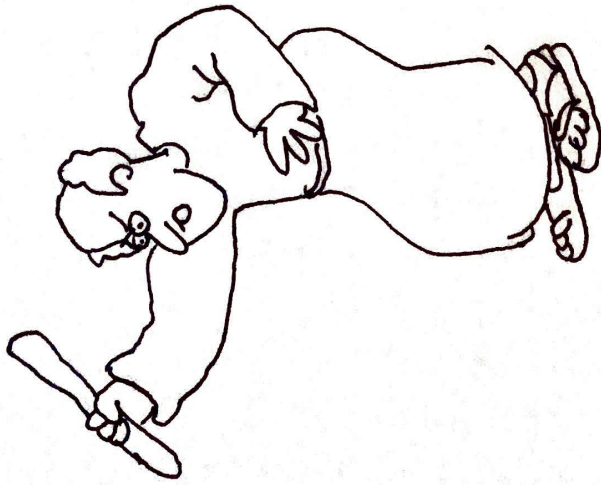
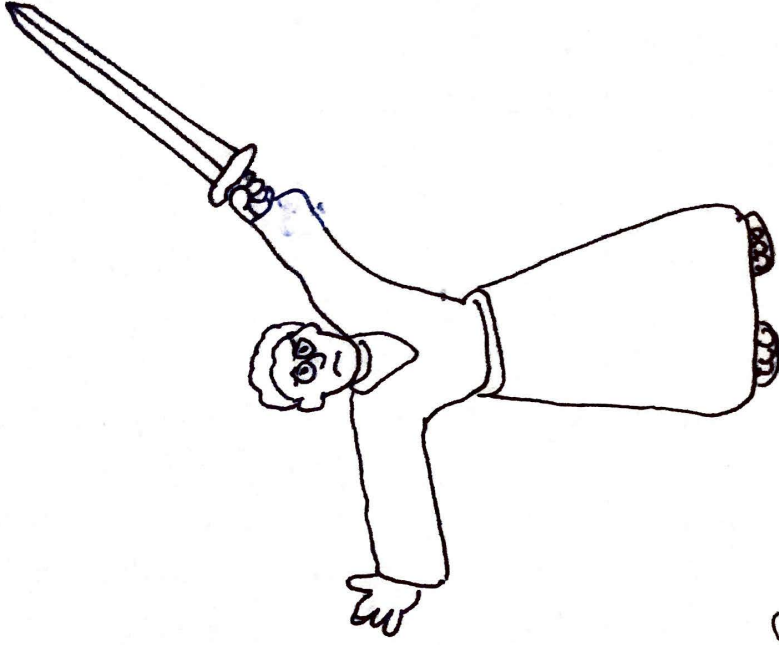
drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the LOVE of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

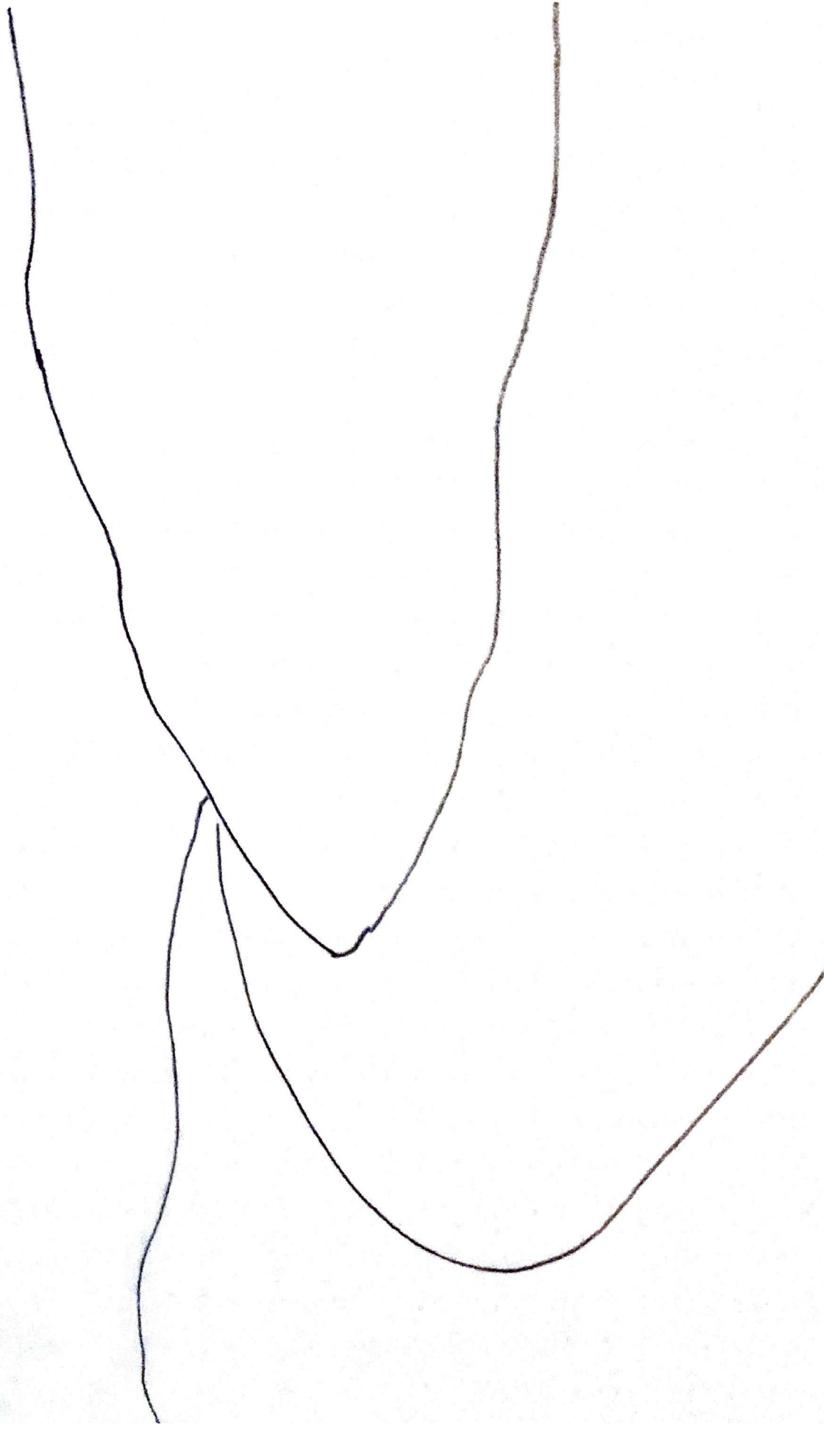
I Timothy 6:9,10

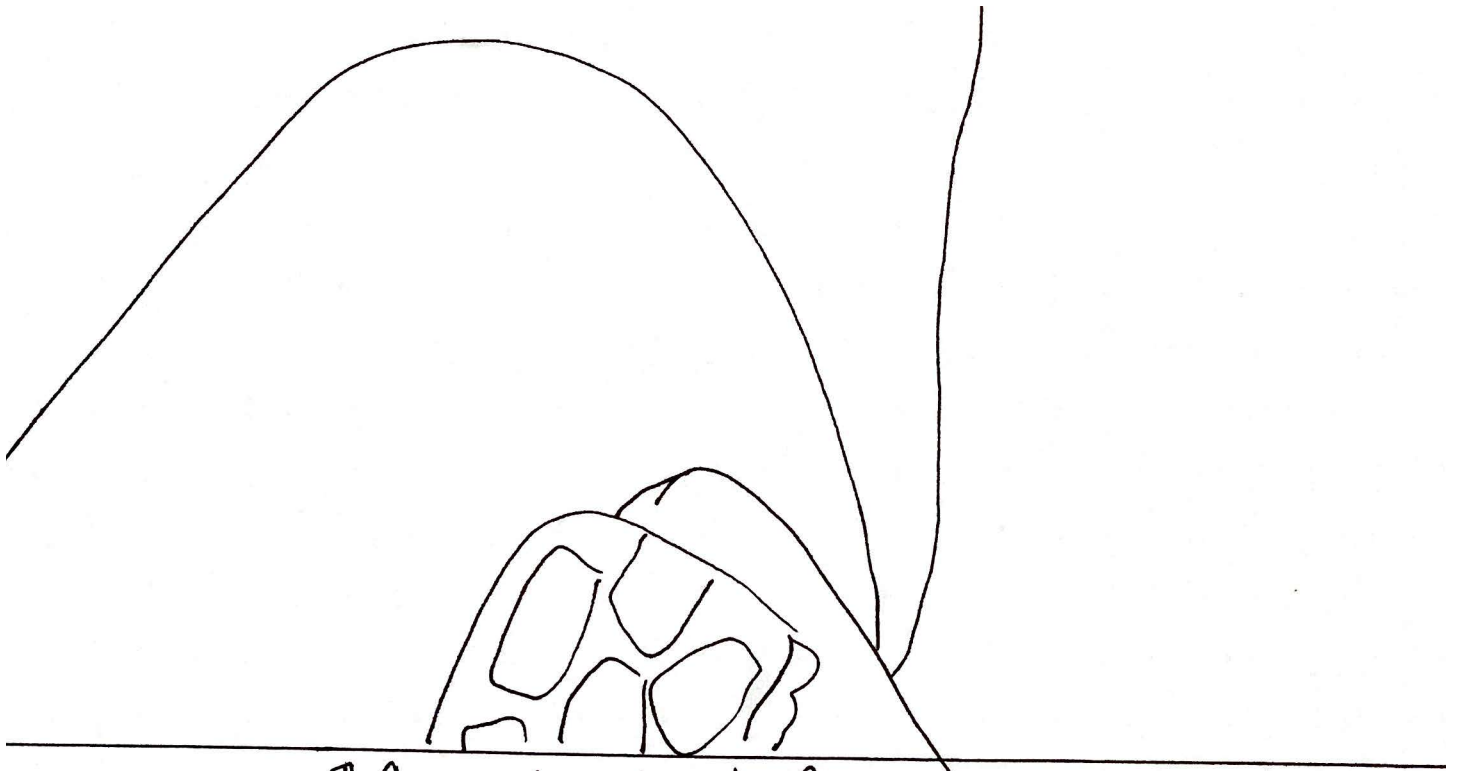


1. Color the scene and characters + wall.
2. Cut out the parts and paste them in correct place to tell the story.



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↑ Cut along this line ↑  
Tape opposite side (edges) to matching edge of scene -  
Fold back and forth to show angel - Color same as scene s!



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snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which  
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