

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

From Darren: Numbers 22:21-23:30 Luke 1:57-80 Psalm 58:1-11 Proverbs 11:12-13

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Numbers 22:21-23:30

22 **21** So the next morning Balaam got up, saddled his donkey, and started off with the Moabite officials. **22** But God was angry that Balaam was going, so he sent the angel of the LORD to stand in the road to block his way. As Balaam and two servants were riding along, **23** Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand. The donkey bolted off the road into a field, but Balaam beat it and turned it back onto the road. **24** Then the angel of the LORD stood at a place where the road narrowed between two vineyard walls. **25** When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it tried to squeeze by and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. So Balaam beat the donkey again. **26** Then the angel of the LORD moved farther down the road and stood in a place too narrow for the donkey to get by at all. **27** This time when the donkey saw the angel, it lay down under Balaam. In a fit of rage Balaam beat the animal again with his staff. **28** Then the LORD gave the donkey the ability to speak. "What have I done to you that deserves your beating me three times?" it asked Balaam. **29** "You have made me look like a fool!" Balaam shouted. "If I had a sword with me, I would kill you!" **30** "But I am the same donkey you have ridden all your life," the donkey answered. "Have I ever done anything like this before?" "No," Balaam admitted. **31** Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the roadway with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam bowed his head and fell face down on the ground before him. **32** "Why did you beat your donkey those three times?" the angel of the LORD demanded. "Look, I have come to block your way because you are stubbornly resisting me. **33** Three times the donkey saw me and shied away; otherwise, I would certainly have killed you by now and spared the donkey." **34** Then Balaam confessed to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I didn't realize you were standing in the road to block my way. I will return home if you are against my going." **35** But the angel of the LORD told Balaam, "Go with these men, but say only what I tell you to say." So Balaam went on with Balak's officials. **36** When King Balak heard that Balaam was on the way, he went out to meet him at a

Moabite town on the Arnon River at the farthest border of his land. **37** “Didn’t I send you an urgent invitation? Why didn’t you come right away?” Balak asked Balaam. “Didn’t you believe me when I said I would reward you richly?” **38** Balaam replied, “Look, now I have come, but I have no power to say whatever I want. I will speak only the message that God puts in my mouth.” **39** Then Balaam accompanied Balak to Kiriath-huzoth, **40** where the king sacrificed cattle and sheep. He sent portions of the meat to Balaam and the officials who were with him. **41** The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth-baal. From there he could see some of the people of Israel spread out below him.

23 1 Then Balaam said to King Balak, “Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven young bulls and seven rams for me to sacrifice.” **2** Balak followed his instructions, and the two of them sacrificed a young bull and a ram on each altar. **3** Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stand here by your burnt offerings, and I will go to see if the LORD will respond to me. Then I will tell you whatever he reveals to me.” So Balaam went alone to the top of a bare hill, **4** and God met him there. Balaam said to him, “I have prepared seven altars and have sacrificed a young bull and a ram on each altar.” **5** The LORD gave Balaam a message for King Balak. Then he said, “Go back to Balak and give him my message.” **6** So Balaam returned and found the king standing beside his burnt offerings with all the officials of Moab. **7** This was the message Balaam delivered: “Balak summoned me to come from Aram; the king of Moab brought me from the eastern hills. ‘Come,’ he said, ‘curse Jacob for me! Come and announce Israel’s doom.’ **8** But how can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I condemn those whom the LORD has not condemned? **9** I see them from the cliff tops; I watch them from the hills. I see a people who live by themselves, set apart from other nations. **10** Who can count Jacob’s descendants, as numerous as dust? Who can count even a fourth of Israel’s people? Let me die like the righteous; let my life end like theirs.” **11** Then King Balak demanded of Balaam, “What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies. Instead, you have blessed them!” **12** But Balaam replied, “I will speak only the message that the LORD puts in my mouth.” **13** Then King Balak told him, “Come with me to another place. There you will see another part of the nation of Israel, but not all of them. Curse at least that many!” **14** So Balak took Balaam to the plateau of Zophim on Pisgah Peak. He built seven altars there and offered a young bull and a ram on each altar. **15** Then Balaam said to the king, “Stand here by your burnt offerings while I go over there to meet the LORD .” **16** And the LORD met Balaam and gave him a message. Then he said, “Go back to Balak and give him my message.” **17** So Balaam returned and found the king standing beside his burnt offerings with all the officials of Moab. “What did the LORD say?” Balak asked eagerly. **18** This was the message Balaam delivered: “Rise up, Balak, and listen! Hear me, son of Zippor. **19** God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not

carried it through? **20** Listen, I received a command to bless; God has blessed, and I cannot reverse it! **21** No misfortune is in his plan for Jacob; no trouble is in store for Israel. For the LORD their God is with them; he has been proclaimed their king. **22** God brought them out of Egypt; for them he is as strong as a wild ox. **23** No curse can touch Jacob; no magic has any power against Israel. For now it will be said of Jacob, ‘What wonders God has done for Israel!’ **24** These people rise up like a lioness, like a majestic lion rousing itself. They refuse to rest until they have feasted on prey, drinking the blood of the slaughtered!” **25** Then Balak said to Balaam, “Fine, but if you won’t curse them, at least don’t bless them!” **26** But Balaam replied to Balak, “Didn’t I tell you that I can do only what the LORD tells me?” **27** Then King Balak said to Balaam, “Come, I will take you to one more place. Perhaps it will please God to let you curse them from there.” **28** So Balak took Balaam to the top of Mount Peor, overlooking the wasteland. **29** Balaam again told Balak, “Build me seven altars, and prepare seven young bulls and seven rams for me to sacrifice.” **30** So Balak did as Balaam ordered and offered a young bull and a ram on each altar.

Psalm 58:1-11

58 1 Justice—do you rulers know the meaning of the word? Do you judge the people fairly? **2** No! You plot injustice in your hearts. You spread violence throughout the land. **3** These wicked people are born sinners; even from birth they have lied and gone their own way. **4** They spit venom like deadly snakes; they are like cobras that refuse to listen, **5** ignoring the tunes of the snake charmers, no matter how skillfully they play. **6** Break off their fangs, O God! Smash the jaws of these lions, O LORD ! **7** May they disappear like water into thirsty ground. Make their weapons useless in their hands. **8** May they be like snails that dissolve into slime, like a stillborn child who will never see the sun. **9** God will sweep them away, both young and old, faster than a pot heats over burning thorns. **10** The godly will rejoice when they see injustice avenged. They will wash their feet in the blood of the wicked. **11** Then at last everyone will say, “There truly is a reward for those who live for God; surely there is a God who judges justly here on earth.”

Proverbs 11:12-13

11 12 It is foolish to belittle one’s neighbor; a sensible person keeps quiet. **13** A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence.

Luke 1:57-80

1 57 When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son. **58** And when her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very merciful to her, everyone rejoiced with her. **59** When the baby was eight days old, they all came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father. **60** But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John!" **61** "What?" they exclaimed. "There is no one in all your family by that name." **62** So they used gestures to ask the baby's father what he wanted to name him. **63** He motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone's surprise he wrote, "His name is John." **64** Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God. **65** Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. **66** Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, "What will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was surely upon him in a special way. **67** Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy: **68** "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. **69** He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, **70** just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago. **71** Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. **72** He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant— **73** the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. **74** We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, **75** in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live. **76** "And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. **77** You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. **78** Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, **79** to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace." **80** John grew up and became strong in spirit. And he lived in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.