

A DONKEY PROPHECIES TO A FALSE PROPHET

I. Numbers 22:1-41

A. I wonder how many of you are old enough to remember the 1950s movies about *Francis the Talking Mule*? Seven of these movies were made featuring an Army mule that talked. They were hilarious. It's likely these were the inspiration for the TV show, *Mr. Ed*. Well as they say, "*truth is stranger than fiction*" because today we'll read about a real donkey that talked...

B. The Bible's full of infamous characters. Many dastardly names are found throughout the 66 Books. *Cain*, who killed his brother Abel was the first murderer. *Esau* sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for some stew. *Korah* led a desert rebellion against Moses & Aaron. *Delilah* ratted out Samson's long-hair secret. The book of Judges is rated R for *raunchy reprobates*, wicked to the core. *Ahab & Jezebel* are at the top of the bad king & queen list. (Just like the good kings are measured by David, the evil ones are compared to Ahab.) The NT has its villains also: The Herods; Pontius Pilate; Nero (indirectly); Hymenaeus and Alexander who made shipwreck of their faith; and of course Judas Iscariot tops the list...

C. Today we meet a nefarious prophet named *Balaam*. Balaam was a shaman of pagan deities/idols worshiped by Israel's enemies. We can rightfully call him a sorcerer, a soothsayer, a fortuneteller, a practitioner of divination; a channeler of demons. Both the OT & NT condemn Balaam. (See 2 Peter 2 & Jude 1.) And even outside the Bible, excavations in modern day Jordan have unearthed his name...

D. Last Sunday we read about the conquering of kings Sihon & Og. The aftermath of carnage has left the nation of Moab shaking in their desert sandals. While the Moabites aren't in Israel's battle plans, Balak, the king of Moab fearfully believes they're the next target. The Amorites throttled Moab and now Israel has throttled the Amorites. Balak's fears, therefore, are understandable. So he takes drastic measures and seeks a prophet-for-hire to lay a curse on God's people...

C. Numbers 22:1-41 (ESV) tells the story...

1) **V1-3:** *1 Then the people of Israel set out and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. (Jericho's the real target.) 2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were many. Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel. (Has fear ever caused you to do something stupid?)*

2) **V4:** *4 And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." (The Moabites have become allies with the Midianites. So who were the Midianites? They too were descendants of Abraham. After Sarah died, Abraham married Keturah who bore him 6 sons; one of them was named Midian. When Moses fled Egypt, he went to Midian where he was a shepherd for 40 years. His first wife, Zipporah, was a Midianite. Her father, Jethro was a God-fearing Midianite priest who gave wise counsel to Moses when the task of overseeing 2-*

plus million people became overwhelming. Sadly this nomadic tribe hooks up with Moab. They'll eventually suffer the consequences!)

3) **V4-6: 4** And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." So Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, **5** sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River (i.e. **Euphrates**) in the land of the people of Amaw, to call him (**Balaam**), saying, "Behold, a people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me. **6** Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." (**Balaam's sorcery is well known. For the right price, he'll conjure up a curse or spell and cast it on your enemies.**)

4) **V7-8: 7** So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand. (**They're out to purchase a curse! They're out to make a deal with the devil!**) And they came to Balaam and gave him Balak's message. **8** And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. (**Balaam brazenly seeks permission from God to lay a curse on God's own children! Talk about gall! Talk about sorely clouded judgment!**)

5) **V9-19: 9** And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" **10** And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, **11** 'Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Now come, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" **12** God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." (**See Genesis 12:1-3**) **13** So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you." **14** So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us." **15** Once again Balak sent princes, more in number and more honorable than these. **16** And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Let nothing hinder you from coming to me, **17** for I will surely do you great honor, (i.e. **Give you lots of money!**) and whatever you say to me I will do. Come, curse this people for me.'" **18** But 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 command of the LORD my God to do less or more. **19** So you, too, please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me." (**Balaam sounds religious but he's looking for a loophole. His judgment's fogged up with dollar signs. Whatever smidgeon of Godly fear he has is corrupted by greed.**)

6) **V20-21: 20** And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you." **21** So Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. (**God's not schizophrenic! And He's never bamboozled! He's cleverly setting up a soothsayer to achieve His own purposes. Balaam's on an evil mission but God'll turn it into good!**)

7) **V22-23: 22** But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. (**Eyewitnesses**) **23** And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand. (**A donkey sees the angel but the seer**

doesn't! Do you SEE the irony!) And the donkey turned aside out of the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the road. (Strike One!)

8) V24-29: 24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. **25** And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pushed against the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall. So he struck her again. **(Strike Two!) 26** Then the angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. **27** When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. **(Strike Three!) 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 made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you." **(Who's really making a fool of Balaam--the donkey or God?! But then the donkey speaks up!)**

9) V30-35: 30 And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?" And he said, "No." **31** Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face. **32** And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before Me. **33** The donkey saw Me and turned aside before Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely just now I would have killed you and let her live." **34** Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the road against me. Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back." **35** And the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only the word that I tell you." So Balaam went on with the princes of Balak. **(God's spoken through a donkey. Now He'll speak through a soothsayer. This is humbling for all us preachers!)**

10) V36-38: 36 When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, on the border formed by the Arnon, at the extremity of the border. **37** And Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?" **(Am I not able to pay you handsomely?!)** **38** Balaam said to Balak, "Behold, I have come to you! Have I now any power of my own to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak." **(Smartest thing Balaam's said all day!)**

11) V39-41: 39 Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. **40** And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent for Balaam and for the princes who were with him. **41** And in the morning Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal, and from there he saw a fraction of the people. **(Next Sunday we'll hear the prophetic words God gives Balaam to speak...)**

D. But here's a few takeaways to chew on till we get to next Sunday...

1) When a donkey sees the truth, speaks the truth, and displays the truth while a purported "seer" is blind to the truth and speaks falsely, ditch the seer and adopt the donkey! Treat that donkey kindly! And feed it premium hay and fresh carrots!

2) Blessings and curses are not for sale. If the preacher on TV says, "You're living the curse because you're not sending him money." What's the implication? That blessings and curses are tied to money! While money can prove to be a blessing, for many it proves to be a curse. (Sorry if I sound like a broken record.) **1 Timothy 6:10** (NLT) reminds us: **10** *For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.*

3) Those who claim to be spiritual, who say they hear from God, often aren't and don't! And often they're twisted morally and ethically on the inside. They're two-faced, doubled-minded, and speak with forked tongues. Pride, greed, idolatry, and immorality in the heart of one who claims to speak for God, will eventually surface and expose the lie they're living. Listen to Jesus' word from the Sermon on the Mount found in **Matthew 6:24** (AMP) **24** *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the Lord]."*

E. 1400 years after Balaam, he was still being talked and written about. When Peter wrote his second letter, in chapter 2 he warns about false prophets. Jesus' brother, Jude shares similar warnings in his letter. Both letters are now 2,000 years old!

1) **2 Peter 2:14-17** (NLT) says cryptically: **14** *They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's curse.* **15** *They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong.* **16** *But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice.* **17** *These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness.*

2) **Jude 1:10-11** (NLT) trumpets the same: **10** *But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction.* **11** *What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion. (In your bonus notes today I'm including the full chapters from 2 Peter 2 and Jude 1.)*

F. Take this to heart as a reminder: God will take care of you. This He promises. "Eye has not seen nor ear heard what He's got laid up for you!" But our Lord Himself is the real Treasure! Yes, He knows what we need before we ask. And when it says He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, that ain't the half of it! The pivotal word is: Trust Him! The pivotal reason why? He's totally TRUST-worthy!

* God never loses. Even the devil's presumed wins, God uses to His own ends to achieve His purposes. Romans 8:28 is a bankable promise. For God's people, even the grave loses! Resurrection unto eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ is our sure and certain hope! Perhaps your faith in this promise is weak or lacking; fear not--it's still going to happen! When our teary-eyed friends and loved ones read our obituaries may they all realize down deep that we're not gone, we've just changed addresses. Heaven is our Promised Land and Jesus has won our passage across the River. And so let's never let John 3:16 become trite! * Close with Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Numbers 22:1-41 (ESV)

1 Then the people of Israel set out and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. **2** And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. **3** And Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were many. Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel. **4** And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will now lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." So Balak the son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, **5** sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the people of Amaw, to call him, saying, "Behold, a people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me. **6** Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." **7** So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand. And they came to Balaam and gave him Balak's message. **8** And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. **9** And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" **10** And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, **11** 'Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Now come, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" **12** 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 to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you." **14** So the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us." **15** Once again Balak sent princes, more in number and more honorable than these. **16** And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Let nothing hinder you from coming to me, **17** for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do. Come, curse this people for me.'" **18** But 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 command of the LORD my God to do less or more. **19** So you, too, please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me." **20** And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you." **21** So Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. **22** But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. **23** And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand. And the donkey turned aside out of the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the road. **24** Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. **25** And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pushed against the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall. So he struck her again. **26** Then the angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the

right or to the left. **27** When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. **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 made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you." **30** And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?" And he said, "No." **31** Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face. **32** And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before Me. **33** The donkey saw Me and turned aside before Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely just now I would have killed you and let her live." **34** Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the road against me. Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back." **35** And the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only the word that I tell you." So Balaam went on with the princes of Balak. **36** When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, on the border formed by the Arnon, at the extremity of the border. **37** And Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?" **38** Balaam said to Balak, "Behold, I have come to you! Have I now any power of my own to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak." **39** Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. **40** And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent for Balaam and for the princes who were with him. **41** And in the morning Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal, and from there he saw a fraction of the people.

1 Timothy 6:10 (NLT)

10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

Matthew 6:24 (AMP)

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the Lord].

2 Peter 2:14-17 (NLT)

14 They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's curse. **15** They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong. **16** But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice. **17** These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness.

Jude 1:10-11 (NLT)

10 But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction.

11 What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion.

[Bonus Goodies](#)

Numbers 22-24 - Balaam / Bible Study - Spoken Gospel

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CK4O_OMhjno

Did Balaam's Donkey Really Talked to Him? - GotQuestions.org

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjjCTSEDjP4>

The False Prophet - Ligonier Ministries

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/false-prophet>

Discovering the Gospel in Numbers - Tim Keller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVhH4NPYrxk>

Francis the Mule Talks in a Courtroom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVhH4NPYrxk>

[More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras](#)

[Genesis 12:1-3 \(ESV\)](#)

1 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. **3** I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

[Deuteronomy 18:20-22 \(ESV\)](#)

20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ **21** And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’-- **22** when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.

[Ezekiel 13:1-9 \(ESV\)](#)

1 The word of the LORD came to me: **2** “Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel, who are prophesying, and say to those who prophesy from their own hearts: ‘Hear the word of the LORD!’ **3** Thus says the Lord God, Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! **4** Your prophets have been like

jackals among ruins, O Israel. **5** You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel, that it might stand in battle in the day of the LORD. **6** They have seen false visions and lying divinations. They say, 'Declares the LORD,' when the LORD has not sent them, and yet they expect Him to fulfill their word. **7** Have you not seen a false vision and uttered a lying divination, whenever you have said, 'Declares the LORD,' although I have not spoken?" **8** Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Because you have uttered falsehood and seen lying visions, therefore behold, I am against you, declares the Lord God. **9** My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of My people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord God.

Jeremiah 14:13-15 (ESV)

13 Then I said: "Ah, Lord God, behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'" **14** And the LORD said to me: "The prophets are prophesying lies in My name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. **15** Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name although I did not send them, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not come upon this land': By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed.

Jeremiah 23:16-17 (ESV)

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. **17** They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.'"

Matthew 7:15-20 (AMP)

15 Beware of the false prophets, [teachers] who come to you dressed as sheep [appearing gentle and innocent], but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16** By their fruit you will recognize them [that is, by their contrived doctrine and self-focus]. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? **17** Even so, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the unhealthy tree bears bad fruit. **18** A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. **19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Therefore, by their fruit you will recognize them [as false prophets].

Acts 20:28-31 (NIV)

28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. **29** I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. **30** Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. **31** So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

1 John 4:1-6 (NLT)

1 Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. **2** This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. **3** But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here. **4** But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. **5** Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the world listens to them. **6** But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.

2 Peter 2:1-22 (NLT)

1 But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. **2** Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. **3** In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed. **4** For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell, in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment. **5** And God did not spare the ancient world--except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. So God protected Noah when He destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood. **6** Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people. **7** But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. **8** Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day. **9** So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment. **10** He is especially hard on those who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority. These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at supernatural beings without so much as trembling. **11** But the angels, who are far greater in power and strength, do not dare to bring from the Lord a charge of blasphemy against those supernatural beings. **12** These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed. They scoff at things they do not understand, and like animals, they will be destroyed. **13** Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They delight in deception even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals. **14** They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's

curse. **15** They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor, who loved to earn money by doing wrong. **16** But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice. **17** These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness. **18** They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With an appeal to twisted sexual desires, they lure back into sin those who have barely escaped from a lifestyle of deception. **19** They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. **20** And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. **21** It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life. **22** They prove the truth of this proverb: "A dog returns to its vomit." And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud."

Jude 1:1-25 (NLT)

1 This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ. **2** May God give you more and more mercy, peace, and love. **3** Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to His holy people. **4** I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. **5** So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later He destroyed those who did not remain faithful. **6** And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. **7** And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment. **8** In the same way, these people--who claim authority from their dreams--live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings. **9** But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels, did not dare accuse the devil of blasphemy, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (This took place when Michael was arguing with the devil about Moses' body.) **10** But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. **11** What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion. **12** When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots. **13** They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their

shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness. **14** Enoch, who lived in the seventh generation after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, "Listen! The Lord is coming with countless thousands of His holy ones **15** to execute judgment on the people of the world. He will convict every person of all the ungodly things they have done and for all the insults that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." **16** These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter others to get what they want. **17** But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ predicted. **18** They told you that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. **19** These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them. **20** But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, **21** and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love. **22** And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. **23** Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives. **24** Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into His glorious presence without a single fault. **25** All glory to Him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are His before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.

Psalm 83:1-18 (NLT) - A song. A psalm of Asaph.

1 O God, do not be silent! Do not be deaf. Do not be quiet, O God. **2** Don't you hear the uproar of Your enemies? Don't You see that Your arrogant enemies are rising up? **3** They devise crafty schemes against Your people; they conspire against Your precious ones. **4** "Come," they say, "let us wipe out Israel as a nation. We will destroy the very memory of its existence." **5** Yes, this was their unanimous decision. They signed a treaty as allies against You--**6** these Edomites and Ishmaelites; Moabites and Hagrites; **7** Gebalites, Ammonites, and Amalekites; and people from Philistia and Tyre. **8** Assyria has joined them, too, and is allied with the descendants of Lot. *Interlude* **9** Do to them as You did to the Midianites and as You did to Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River. **10** They were destroyed at Endor, and their decaying corpses fertilized the soil. **11** Let their mighty nobles die as Oreb and Zeeb did. Let all their princes die like Zebah and Zalmunna, **12** for they said, "Let us seize for our own use these pasturelands of God!" **13** O my God, scatter them like tumbleweed, like chaff before the wind! **14** As a fire burns a forest and as a flame sets mountains ablaze, **15** chase them with Your fierce storm; terrify them with Your tempest. **16** Utterly disgrace them until they submit to Your name, O LORD. **17** Let them be ashamed and terrified forever. Let them die in disgrace. **18** Then they will learn that You alone are called the LORD, that You alone are the Most High, supreme over all the earth.

Pulling the Wool Over Someone's Eyes

Where'd that phrase come from: *Pull the wool over someone's eyes*? This term is from the early 1800s and means to fool or lie to someone and get away with it through

deception and trickery. From the early 1600s to present day, judges in Europe adorn wigs made from wool. In the United States it was a passing phase for our founding fathers to wear them. Pulling the wool over someone's eyes depicts an unscrupulous person such as a deceitful lawyer when they are successful in lying to a judge and getting away with it. This is likened to physically pulling the wig (wool) down over the judge's eyes until he/she cannot see properly to make an educated decision based on truth. The slightly earlier form of this phrase was to spread the wool over someone's eyes.

- Amy Reeves, *The Goldendale Sentinel*, Goldendale, Washington, December 13, 2016.

8 Symptoms of False Doctrine

By J.C. Ryle (1816 - 1900)

<https://www.jcryle.info/2017/01/8-symptoms-of-false-doctrine.html>

Many things combine to make the present inroad of false doctrine peculiarly dangerous.

1. There is an undeniable zeal in some of the teachers of error: their "earnestness" makes many think they must be right.
2. There is a great appearance of learning and theological knowledge: many fancy that such clever and intellectual men must surely be safe guides.
3. There is a general tendency to free thought and free inquiry in these latter days: many like to prove their independence of judgment, by believing novelties.
4. There is a wide-spread desire to appear charitable and liberal-minded: many seem half ashamed of saying that anybody can be in the wrong.
5. There is a quantity of half-truth taught by the modern false teachers: they are incessantly using Scriptural terms and phrases in an unscriptural sense.
6. There is a morbid craving in the public mind for a more sensuous, ceremonial, sensational, showy worship: men are impatient of inward, invisible heart-work.
7. There is a silly readiness in every direction to believe everybody who talks cleverly, lovingly and earnestly, and a determination to forget that Satan often masquerades himself "as an angel of light" ([2 Corinthians 11:14](#)).
8. There is a wide-spread "gullibility" among professing Christians: every heretic who tells his story plausibly is sure to be believed, and everybody who doubts him is called a persecutor and a narrow-minded man.

All these things are peculiar symptoms of our times. I defy any observing person to deny them. They tend to make the assaults of false doctrine in our day peculiarly dangerous. They make it more than ever needful to cry aloud, "Do not be carried away!"

Who Were The Midianites?

By S. Michael Houdmann

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Midianites.html>

Question: *Who were the Midianites?*

Answer: [Abraham](#) had more sons than just Isaac (by Sarah) and Ishmael (by Hagar). He also had six sons by [Keturah](#), his wife after the death of Sarah: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah ([Genesis 25:2](#)). The Midianites were the descendants of Midian and therefore children of Abraham. They settled in “the land of the east” ([Genesis 25:6](#)). Most scholars believe the land of Midian was officially on both sides of the Gulf of Aqaba, although the Midianites showed nomadic tendencies later in their history (see [Habakkuk 3:7, ESV](#)).

When Moses fled the wrath of Pharaoh, he traveled to Midian ([Exodus 2:15](#)). There, Moses met and married his wife, Zipporah, and served his father-in-law, Jethro, as a shepherd for forty years. The fact that Jethro was “a priest of Midian” ([Exodus 2:16](#)) indicates that the Midianites, at least during Moses’ time, still retained the knowledge of the God of their father Abraham (cf. Jethro’s words and actions in [Exodus 18](#)). At the end of Moses’ time in Midian, [God appeared to Moses](#)—still in Midian—and commissioned him to lead the Israelites out of slavery ([Exodus 3–4](#)).

As the children of Israel traveled through the wilderness, they employed the services of a guide familiar with the desert—Moses’ Midianite brother-in-law, Hobab ([Numbers 10:29](#)). However, the relations between the Israelites and the Midianites began to sour when the Midianites joined forces with the [Moabites](#) in order to hire Balaam to curse Israel ([Numbers 22](#)). Later, when Israel fell into idolatry and sexual sin with the Moabite women ([Numbers 25](#)), we find that a prominent Midianite woman was also involved ([Numbers 25:6](#)). The Lord then told Moses to wage war against the Midianites: “Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them. They treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the Peor incident involving their sister Kozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader” ([Numbers 25:17–19](#)). The Israelites did eventually attack the Midianites, meting out divine retribution against their enemies ([Numbers 31](#)). Five kings of the Midianites were killed, as was Balaam ([Numbers 31:8](#)). This battle was one of the last things Moses accomplished as leader of the Israelites.

During the time of the judges, “the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country” and plundered the land ([Judges 6:3](#)). For seven years, “Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help” (verse 6). God answered their cries and raised up [Gideon](#) as a deliverer. With just 300 men, Gideon defeated the armies of the Midianites, although the foe was “thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore” ([Judges 7:12](#)). Of course, God was involved, and He was the One who granted the victory over the Midianites (verse 22).

Later references to the Midianites include allusions to God's victory over them ([Psalm 83:9](#); [Isaiah 10:26](#)). And, in a prophecy of Israel's future glory in the Messianic kingdom, Isaiah writes, "Herds of camels will cover your land, / young camels of Midian and Ephah. / And all from Sheba will come, / bearing gold and incense / and proclaiming the praise of the Lord" ([Isaiah 60:6](#)).

For Further Study:

[The Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible by Geisler & Holden](#)

- While he is not the author of every article on GotQuestions.org, for citation purposes, you may reference our CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.