

Asses

The Oxford Concise Dictionary describes an ass as –

1. a donkey or similar horse like animal with long ears and a braying call,
2. Informally used of a foolish or stupid person.

In this article, we shall see that the animal itself is anything but foolish, and seen very much as a useful, but hard working, part of God's Creation.

In the Old Testament we find the term ass 145 times in 132 verses
In the New Testament we find the term ass 9 times in 8 verses.

Lord Shaftesbury, born in the nineteenth century, spent most of his life crusading against child prostitution; slavery, child labour, the opium trade, and slum housing.

Because of his desires to see a betterment of the lower classes, he was invited, and became a fellow 'coster' – a street vendor with a donkey and cart – by the costermongers of London.

The London costermongers told Lord Shaftesbury that their donkeys which rested one day in seven could travel thirty miles a day with their loads, while those donkeys that worked seven days a week could only travel fifteen miles a day.

So you lose seventy-five miles of travel each week by working your donkey every day, and have a sick, seedy-looking donkey in the bargain; while you gain 3,900 miles of travel in a year, and have a sleek, nice-looking donkey, by running him according to the Ten Commandments. What has a donkey got to do with the Ten Commandments?

Reread Deuteronomy 5:14. "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou".

Therefore, God who gave this Commandment to Moses on Mount Sinai – the Creator of both man and beast – knew what was best for both.

Other than the serpent speaking to Eve, Genesis 3:1, the only other record of an animal speaking to a human is the ass speaking to the Prophet Balaam, Numbers 22:28.

There are, however, three remarkable facts in the Scripture regarding asses

Balaam and his Ass, Numbers 22

Balaam, a Gentile diviner, is infamously portrayed in the Scriptures as he bargained with Balak, the king of Moab, for worldly power and riches in return for cursing God's People, Israel.

Thus 'the wages of iniquity' 2 Peter 2:15 were of more value to Balaam than the words of Solomon, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" Ecclesiastes 1:2, which would have brought the Gifts of Righteousness.

Saddling his ass that he might fulfill his lusts he remained blind to what the ass could see, that the ass – obedient to his creator – would be able to give Balaam an indelible message that what God states, God means.

God's message to Balaam was "Go, and I will put MY WORDS in your mouth". However, Balaam's lust was overriding God's Commands, and his intent was to sell Israel to Balak.

This meant that God knew, and what God knew made Him angry.

God used the ass to enforce His demands, and Balaam got the message again, THIS TIME FROM THE ASSES MOUTH.

Luke 2:1–7.

Before the birth of Jesus, Augustus decreed that all should return to their own city – their birth city – to be taxed.

Although there is very little said in the Gospels regarding any transport or beasts of burden in Joseph's family, it would seem most unlikely that Joseph, as a carpenter, would have owned an ass as a beast of burden. It would also seem most likely that an ass would have been used to transport their belongings, along with a very pregnant Mary, for the journey from Galilee to Bethlehem.

Our Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

Both Matthew (21:5) and John (12:15) record how Jesus used an animal favoured by kings, to ride into Jerusalem as THE KING OF KINGS.

Dear reader, whilst many may refer to you as an ass – a foolish or stupid person – because you believe in the Gospel of Salvation, they are the Balaam (ass) – the foolish or stupid person – for not believing, yet lusting after that which they cannot take into eternity.