

# The Ass

by Harriet N. Cook

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*The sermon teaches us valuable lessons of humility, meekness, and patience from the biblical account of the ass and its symbolism.*

**Scripture:** Numbers 22:28, Job 39:5, Psalm 104:11, Isaiah 1:3, Zechariah 9:9

**Topics:** "Humility And Obedience", "Gods Provision"

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## Description

Harriet N. Cook reflects on the significance of the ass in the Bible, highlighting its role as a symbol of meekness, humility, gratitude, and even the ability to speak when necessary. Through stories like Balaam's talking ass and Jesus riding into Jerusalem on an ass, we are reminded of the importance of humility and obedience in our lives, contrasting the ass's loyalty and understanding with our own shortcomings. The wild ass is also mentioned, emphasizing its freedom and independence in the wilderness, serving as a reminder of God's provision and care for all creatures.

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## Transcript

Perhaps you may have seen the ass, though it is not very common in this country. It has some resemblance to a horse, but is not as large, and generally seems rather sleepy and dull. In some countries, such as those where the Bible was written, it is a fine large animal, and the people use it for riding. Some persons mentioned in the Bible owned a great many asses. Abraham had sheep, and oxen, and asses and camels; and Job had at one time five hundred asses, and afterwards he had a thousand. A great many years ago, long before Christ came into the world, the rich men and the judges used to ride upon asses: so we read in the 10th verse of the 5th chapter of Judges, "Speak, ye that ride upon white asses, ye that sit in judgment." After this time many fine horses were brought into those countries, and the kings and great men liked them for riding: so the ass was used by the poorer people who could not buy a horse. You remember that when our blessed Savior was entering Jerusalem a few days before his death, he rode upon an ass; thus showing his meekness and humility, even while the multitude were shouting his praises, and spreading their garments in the way to do him honor. How shall we be like our Savior, if we let pride stay in our hearts?

The ass is very gentle and patient, and does not seem angry even when he has a very heavy load to carry. I should be very sorry to have him treated unkindly. Though he seems so dull, he loves his master, and will sometimes find him out and run to him even when he is in a crowd of men. God says, in the Bible, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not

consider." Is it not a sad thing that the dull ass should be more grateful than we are?

Would it not seem to you very wonderful to hear a dog or a horse speak, so that you could understand what he said? It would be a strange thing indeed—a miracle; but you will find in the 22d chapter of Numbers that an ass once spoke to his master. The master's name was Balaam. He was a wicked man, and he was riding on an ass to a place where he knew God did not wish him to go. As they were journeying an angel with a drawn sword in his hand stood in the way, but Balaam did not see him. The ass saw him, and was so afraid that she turned aside out of the road, and went into a field; then Balaam was angry and tried to drive her back into the way. They had now come to a path of the vineyards, having a wall on each side, and there the ass saw the bright angel again. In trying to avoid the angel, the ass crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he was more angry and struck her again. Then the angel went forward a little distance, and stood where the path was so narrow that it was impossible to pass him. The ass was now so much frightened that she would go no farther, and fell down in the road; and Balaam beat her in a great passion. Then the ass spoke to Balaam and said, "What have I done to thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?" And when Balaam exclaimed, "I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee," she only replied, "Am I not thine ass upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?" Can we not learn, even from the ass, a lesson of meekness and patience?

The wild ass is often mentioned in the Bible, as in Psalm 104:11. "They (the springs) give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst." They live in desert places, and go about in great companies with one for their leader. You will find these words about them in the 39th chapter of Job: "Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing." Travellers who have seen great herds of wild asses say that the beautiful animal agrees exactly with this fine description, written so many years ago.

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