



**BUCK & BRAY
SERIES
#1**

**Nathaniel's
Wake Up Call**

“Nathaniel!”

That was the third time Nathaniel’s father, Malachim had called. Like many boys and girls Nathaniel’s age, he was very adverse to having to take care of mundane chores. He knew what his father wanted him to do, “Take care of the donkeys!” He wanted to take care of glamorous things like his father and uncles were about to embark on. You see, they were Levites.

Nathaniel and his parents had settled down in the suburbs of Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites. Occasionally there was

some excitement when a murderer fled to their city of refuge trying to pull a fast one on them, saying the killing was just an “accident”. Well, the trial would follow and “*whamo*” he was exposed!

Lately though, nothing new had happened and it was time for his father and uncles to head on some long journey to collect the Levitical offerings from the other tribes of Israel. They would come back with all kinds of blessings of animals and food! His father would also get to help with the service of the Lord in the Tabernacle in Shiloh. Now that was exciting! Poor Nathaniel, all he got to do was take care of donkeys! How boring.

“Nathaniel!” Uh oh. Father sounded mad that time. “Yes dad!” He decided to answer quickly, but not without that

hint of ‘grump’ in his voice and look.

“I shouldn’t have to call you repeatedly to do your chores. How would you like it if your mother took care of you with that attitude? Only doing your laundry after you badgered her, or only making you dinner when I made her feed you? You should be ashamed!” scolded Nathaniel’s father.

“I’m sorry father,” Nathaniel offered, looking downcast. “I just find it so hard to wait for the day I’ll be big enough to make the journey with you. Then I’ll really get to do service for the Lord!”

“Now wait a minute, my boy. Taking care of your responsibilities *is* serving the LORD. You’ll understand better when you’re older. Now go along and do your part.”

To Nathaniel, the donkeys had a plush life. Someone serving them while they seemed to return little for their keep. They



were just young donkeys, so weren't used for a lot of load hauling yet.

Nathaniel's father had recently bought these donkeys from a priest who said there was something superior about them. "They seemed to read my mind", he said. "Always just one step ahead of you. For instance, I go in to get her ready for either hauling a small load

or saddling up for a ride. I'd say to her, 'Let's go for a ride to town, or let's haul those linens Tirzah made to the merchant and what would you know, but she'd walk over to the right tack.'

These donkey's didn't look so sharp to Nathaniel. Well, Nathaniel went about his 'duty' to clean the stalls for the donkeys and to feed and water them. Complaining the whole while, when all of a sudden he was impacted with a sudden forceful shove to his posterior side right into the pile of muck he had just raked up. He was a sight, and he smelled like it too! He turned, furious, to find out what had happened. There stood one of the two donkeys. The other was off to the side just hee-hawing as fit as you please. Nathaniel thought he would teach that ol' donkey a real lesson

and use that rake handle on the donkey. He swung at the donkey's rear, but fortunately missed. To his surprise, what happened next was a day he would never forget. The donkey spoke! "You know something Nathaniel, you're a lot like that mean Balaam that beat my mother something fierce."

Nathaniel froze. He was old enough to know animals don't talk and said so. "You talked! Animals can't talk, I must be mad!"

"Well, you're right about the mad part, but wrong about the talking. At least, our mother and we can talk. Ever since Balaam hit mother, she's been able to talk. When we came along, we just inherited the ability too I guess. Since we're talking, allow us to introduce ourselves. I'm Buck, of which you got a taste a moment ago,

and this is my sister Bray.”

“How do you do?” Nodded Bray politely.

Nathaniel, coming to his senses, suddenly remembered the knock which started this whole conversation. “Hey, why did you kick me?”

“We’d had enough of hearing your murmuring, that’s why! Your race sure does a lot of that. On that whole trek your ancestors made through the desert for 40 years, they never stopped complaining. You know why? I’ll tell you why! They didn’t have any faith in the LORD. Look at me. Isn’t my talking enough to bolster your faith?”

Your father is right, God cares about everything you do. The task isn’t the important thing as much as the faithfulness with which you do it. Our mother was a prime example. Even though Balaam

accused her otherwise, she had always been a good servant to him. For her nobility in faithfulness in the boring, mundane affairs of life, she was going to be spared by that angel with the sword. *What's more, she got the gift of speech!* Learn the lesson from us donkeys, “He who will faithfully look out for the care of the churl on his back may be preparing that back to carry a King!”

Buck knew just the story to make Nathaniel think, “There was this man who had two sons. He lived just outside a city working his fields. Now this man dearly loved his sons. The sad thing was that his younger son was a rotten one, if every there was one. The father and his older son were always working to help this younger one reform. The father gave his son so much to try and help him get

on the right course, but the younger son never seemed to appreciate it. He took it for granted, almost as if he thought he had all the good things coming to him.

Now in this town there was a wicked ruler, but he had a beautiful daughter. She could rightly be said to be a princess. One day, the younger son met this ruler's daughter. He was certainly not an honest one and he lied about his family. He passed himself off as the son of some nobleman. Time passed and the two decided to get married. The lord of the city was very agreeable to the marriage and offered the young man the position of a priest. Now you know that is forbidden to all, except those born in the line of Aaron! Well, like I said, he was a wicked ruler. The day of the wedding came, and do you know what that young man did?"

Nathaniel was thoroughly wrapped up in the story by now, but he hadn't a clue.

“I tell you, it was utterly shameful! At the wedding, he acted as if his father wasn't even his. The man he should have shown such honor and respect to! He treated him as if he was some hired servant he was tolerating. His brother was snuffed as well, for you see, he had the smell of the field upon him.

The wicked ruler, strangely enough, didn't care when he found out his father wasn't some great nobleman. He was impressed with the flashy way this young man could pass himself off. He thought, ‘It really doesn't matter where he came from. What matters is if he will cast off that past and follow me. He will be a great asset, especially as a priest who can help run the city the way I want it run.’

This young man was more than willing to dash his family's hearts if he could satisfy that great longing he had for the things of the flesh: a beautiful wife, luxurious living, comfort, servants, people trembling before him. The service of a priest also appealed to his pride, besides he thought it might even earn him points with God. Oh, this young man thought he had made it at last. *But, there is a but!* Not hardly had he finished the marriage celebration than the evil began to fall upon him. They had just dashed off on a wedding trip and behold, they were ambushed along their route. Their lives were spared, but they certainly suffered loss. Now, I wish I could tell you how this story ends, but it has only just begun.”

“Wow”, Nathaniel was disgusted. Not

at Buck, mind you, but at the young man in the story. “What a mean, heartless, unthankful son! How could he treat his father and brother like that?”

“That’s a very good question, and I wish I knew the answer, but do you know what I saw in that story?”

“No, what?”

“In one sense, it is like your taking on the mundane chores. Your parents do so much for you. You have the choice of remembering them in gratitude or being irritated by their holding you back from certain ambitions. You can be like the older son or like the younger one.

“It also reminded me of how we treat God, and his people. He has given so much to help us, constantly reaching out. His people also try to help us get on the right path, but we get our eyes

off Him and focus on the things of this world. We may even fool ourselves into thinking we are serving God when we have really scorned Him and his love for us. We continue in this way and God's judgment soon begins to come. No matter what, we will begin to bear the fruit of such a life.

“The end of the story, is up to each of us. Will we continue, or will we turn back, remembering God and the brethren? Will we be disgusted with ourselves over the ingratitude we have shown to God or will we carry on turning our backs on Him?”

Nathaniel sat there, thinking about the serious lesson he had just received. He was a smart little boy though, he was not going to be like that Baalam fellow who didn't listen to the words of this

donkey's mother. Amazing, the donkey continues to speak for God. Now he knew why God had enabled the gift of speech to remain.

A little more sobered, Nathaniel remembered the words of his father and determined to not dishonor the LORD or his parents by murmuring in the little tasks. He determined to be more grateful and considerate.

A little embarrassed, but slightly wiser now, Nathaniel actually thanked his new found friend for the well-placed kick.

Nathaniel's mother smiled as she stepped out back and heard the laughter of her son and the fervent braying of two donkeys just over the hill. It was good to hear him joyful again.

Meaning of some words in this story:

adverse - repelled, opposed

ancestors - older relatives that have died

Balaam - A wicked man who inquired of God, for other people, for pay.

churl - a mean, worthless, disgusting person

city of refuge - Any city in Israel, designated by law, for someone to flee to who has killed someone. He will get his trial there. All accidental killers would be protected. All murders would be killed.

glamorous - wonderful, fascinating

Levites - members of one of twelve family groups making up the original nation of Israel

Levitical - relating to the provisions for Levites

mundane - boring, routine

posterior - rear

priest - The highest office in tabernacle service. Born into the office.

Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites - located in north-eastern Israel

Shiloh - a city where the tabernacle of God was kept

suburbs - outer areas for living outside a city

Tabernacle - a place/tent where God was approached in worship and sacrifice

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