



Does God have your attention?

In the Book of Numbers Chapter 22 and onward we read one of the most fascinating things in scripture. Israel was passing through lands of other tribes after their Exodus from Egypt and were a great multitude. Of course the people were afraid of Israel and wanted them to stop their journey and go back to Egypt. But God had determined to bless Israel. When God blesses someone or a whole Nation nothing can reverse His decisions to bless and keep them safe, unless they reject His love and covering.

The son of the king of Midian asked for a local man who had some knowledge of the One True God but also practiced in other arts to curse Israel for him. He asked him more than once to do this and promised him promotion, gold and silver and power if he would do it. But God had told this man not to curse what God had blessed. In other words, “leave Israel alone.” But at last, this man, Balaam, gave in to the request and mounted his donkey to see Balak the leader of Midian.

Numbers 22:22 *“But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.”* Lets read on for the rest of the story. **Numbers 22:23-27** *“When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back into the way. Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall, so he struck her again. The angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick.”*

Balaam could not understand why his donkey who had served him so well for many years refused to go ahead and do what he wanted him to do, which by the way, was against the Will of God. The donkey could see what Balaam was too blind to see. The angel of the LORD was standing in the way, blocking Balaam from going any further.

Now we characterize donkeys as hard headed, stupid, stubborn, and just plain cantankerous, but compared to Balaam this donkey was an Einstein, or I should say a Madam Curie, since this donkey was a female. Now the angel of the LORD could have struck Balaam and all of his attendants and killed them, but God was generous and was trying to show him something. What was that something? **Don't go where you should not be going, and do what you should not be doing!**

So the angel of the LORD did something for Balaam. He let the donkey speak to Balaam. **Numbers 22:28** *“And 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?”* And then quite another amazing thing happened, Balaam answered the donkey and they had a conversation. **Numbers 22:29-30** *Then Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now. The donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?” And he said, “No.”* Then finally the angel of the LORD revealed himself to Balaam. **Numbers 22:32-33** *“The angel of the LORD said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was contrary to me. But the donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live.”*

And then Balaam did something we all should do when we go the wrong way. **Numbers 22:34** *“Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, “I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back.”* There is not enough room to go into all the details that happened afterward, but I encourage you to read how God turned the tables on the enemies of Israel through this man who wound up blessing Israel at the cost of offending Midian and ignoring their bribes to curse Israel. If Balaam had listened to God in the first place, and stayed home, none of this would have been necessary. Balaam knew better, he just didn't do better. Perhaps in your life journey God is trying to tell you something. Something like you are going in the wrong direction! But are you listening? I will leave you with this Wisdom.

Proverbs 16:7 *“When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.”* God can't bless wrong direction, especially when He has spoken to you in His Word about the right way to go!

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