

THE STORY OF MOSES

PART 16 – BALAAM'S DONKEY

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TWO SIMILAR STORIES?

- The reality of the spiritual world
- God's overwhelming love for his people
- The need for our eyes to be opened.



THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

- The story of Balaam takes place away from God's people.
- They would not have been aware of the potential danger they were in.
- God delivers Israel from this danger without them knowing
- God does the same for us today

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

- Ephesians 6:10-12

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

- Who was Balaam?
 - He had a reputation for divination and sorcery
 - He could bless and he could curse
 - Such was his reputation that King Balak was prepared to send his officials 400 miles north to ask for his services
 - He seems to be a good man, enquiring of God and refusing to do what Balak is asking of him. But is he really?

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

- God asks *“Who are these men with you?”*
 - God knows who they are, but is testing Balaam’s motives.
- God’s answer to Balaam’s questions is clear
 - *“You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.”*
- Balaam sends the messengers away – Good job!!
- Balak ups the ante with more tempting offers of reward.

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

- Balaam – *“please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the Lord will say to me.”*
- What might be in Balaam’s thinking?
 - *“Does God really not want me to do this?”*
 - *“Did God really say...”*
- It is Satan’s strategy to sow seeds of doubt regarding God’s will and God’s word.
- We need to be aware of how Satan works!

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

- God tells Balaam to go with Balaam's men.
 - Had God changed his mind?
 - As soon as Balaam sets off with these men, God is angry
- God's permission is not the same as God's will
 - God sometimes gives us over to our own will in order to learn his.
 - Remember manna versus quail.
- Has Satan won this spiritual battle?

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

- God will not allow Balaam to curse Israel, but forces him to bless Israel instead (Numbers 23 and 24)
- Did the children of Israel deserve God's blessings?
 - Probably not, but it was God's divine choice to do so.
 - Numbers 23:21 - *"No misfortune is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel. The Lord their God is with them; the shout of the King is among them."*
 - God's command was to bless and he was not about to change his mind.

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

- God's heart is to bless us
- Ephesians 2:4-9 *⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

WE NEED OUR EYES OPENED

- God tries to make Balaam's journey difficult
- Balaam refuses to stop so God speaks to him through his friend – the donkey!
- Balaam's response – he beats the donkey.



WE NEED OUR EYES OPENED

- Ephesians 1:15-22 - ... ¹⁸ *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe...*

SUMMARY

- There is a spiritual world which is at war with the Kingdom of God – we are caught up in the battle
- Because of God's love for us, he watches over us to protect us to ensure we come into all that he has planned for us.
- God will use any means possible to catch our attention



SUMMARY

- Was Balaam a good man?
- Revelation 2:14 - *I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.*
- We need to see things through God's eyes if we don't want to be deceived by Satan

TOM WRIGHT...

Jesus ... is encouraging a kind of holy boldness, a sharp knocking on the door, an insistent asking, a search that refuses to give up. That's what our prayer should be like. This isn't just a routine or formal praying, going through the motions as a daily or weekly task. There is a battle on, a fight with the powers of darkness, and those who have glimpsed the light are called to struggle in prayer – for peace, for wisdom, for a thousand things for the world and the church, perhaps a hundred or two for one's own family and friends and neighbours, and perhaps a dozen or two for oneself.