



Balaam's Donkey

"What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

Numbers 22:28

Do you believe that animals can talk. Do donkeys talk? The Bible says that one donkey did. The donkey belonged to a gentleman named Balaam who was a sorcerer and very rich. Money was very important to Balaam. When King Balak wanted to stop the Jews who were being led to Canaan by Moses he knew that Balaam was his man. Balak was afraid of the Hebrew people so he offered money to Balaam if he would pursue them and curse them. But before Balaam could carry out his actions God appeared to him at night and told him not to curse the Israelites. Balaam listened to God and sent Balak's people away. He told them *"Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the Lord my God to do less or more."* So often we know the spirit

is willing but the flesh is weak.

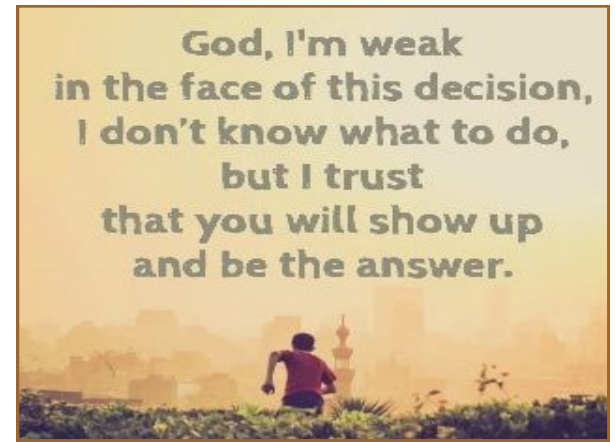
But King Balak was not one to give up easily so he sent a second group of men to Balaam telling him to carry out the curse for the money. Balaam was weak as we are sometimes so he set off to carry out the plan knowing that he would make a lot of money.

That part is easy enough to believe, but as they were traveling, the donkey saw the angel of God standing in their path brandishing a sword. How do we know that the donkey saw the angel of the Lord brandishing a sword. It is called faith! Faith in God's word and Scripture. The donkey turned and so Balaam who had not seen the angel of God started beating the donkey.

As they continued traveling, the donkey saw the angel again and the donkey pressed against a wall and crushed Balaam's foot. He beat the donkey again!

The donkey continued and again the angel spoke to the donkey This time the donkey lay down on the ground and refused to move. Again Balaam beat the donkey severely. The poor donkey asked, *"What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"*

Balaam answered the donkey *"Because you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you."* The donkey answered, *"Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?"* Numbers 22 This time, the angel opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel. The angel told him to go



back to Balak, but to do what he said, not what Balak said. Do you think after this that you would have decided to obey God.

Balaam was driven by the money, but he also feared for his life. He returned but instead of cursing the people he gave the blessings God had told him to give.

We may wonder what this story has to do with our life today. We aren't used to animals talking or are we. Can something drive us to not heed a warning that we've been given. There are stories of people who treat their animals better than they treat their children. Maybe that is true, but I am not one to judge that. God created all of us and animal lovers really love their animals and that



is o.k with me since I have always been an animal lover. However, I do believe that animals can sometimes lead us to the right actions and help save the lives of humans. They may not speak words, but their actions are sometimes louder than words. Therapy dogs and police dogs are wonderful and very intelligent companions. Animals can give much love to people.

Balaam's donkey was not ignorant. He was trying to save the people being led by Moses and he was doing the will of God.

Balaam was driven by money until he was eventually confronted by an angel of the Lord after ignoring the warning of the donkey and beating an innocent animal..

We receive warnings in our own way. We also chose to ignore some and accept the ones we want to accept. We are not only driven by money but many other things can lead us to make some bad decisions in our lives. We need to talk with God, but sometimes we don't want to listen. We are sometimes as stubborn as Balaam. Balaam had free will. He was also led by God.



When you don't know what to do, God will direct your steps.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He shall direct your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6



We also have free will to make the decision to listen or not. We have God's guidance at all times through talking with God. We have the choice.

Sometimes we are fortunate to have friends who will guide us right and offer to help us, and sometimes we get involved with the wrong people. That choice is also ours.

Balaam's donkey has been many things to many researchers. There are probably many ideas about it in our minds. Each one can lead us to think about God speaking to us whether it is through an animal, a wind, or a still small voice.

"Pets are humanizing. They remind us we have an obligation and responsibility to preserve and nurture and care for all life."

-James Cromwell

Prayer: "Lead me, Lord, lead me in Thy righteousness; make Thy way plain before my face. For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety. Teach me, Lord, teach me truly how to live, that I may come to know thee, and in thy presence serve thee with gladness, and sing songs of praise to thy glory." Amen (From "Lead Me, Lord" hymn)

1. Do you believe that the donkey talked to Balaam?
2. Does God talk with you?
3. The donkey challenges Balaam to know if he is not the same donkey that has been with him all his life. What is the meaning of this to you?
4. It is sometimes dangerous to make suggestions to others and sometimes it may not be our place to offer advice.
5. How do we determine when and if we should reach out to others.

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