

Numbers 22

1. Have you ever heard a weird story and just found it unbelievable?
 - a. Beating Mario, Luke hiking app trail, Tiffany choir of Taylor Swift
2. What about a story from the Bible
 - a. The whole earth was flooded
 - b. The seas parted
 - c. Jesus walked on water
 - d. Jesus rose from the dead
3. What about a talking Donkey?
 - a. Did you know there is a talking donkey in the Bible - Mr Ed
 - b. The story is a little long today, so we are going to read it in parts
 - i. But we are going to talk about a talking donkey and why that matters to us.
4. What we will see is that - **When God makes a promise, He delivers.**

22 The Israelites traveled on and camped in the plains of Moab near the Jordan across from Jericho. **2** Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. **3** Moab was terrified of the people because they were numerous, and Moab dreaded the Israelites. **4** So the Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will devour everything around us like an ox eats up the green plants in the field."

Since Balak son of Zippor was Moab's king at that time, **5** he sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the Euphrates in the land of his people. **[a][b]** Balak said to him, "Look, a people has come out of Egypt; they cover the surface of the land and are living right across from me. **6** Please come and put a curse on these people for me because they are more powerful than I am. I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that those you bless are blessed and those you curse are cursed." **7** The elders of Moab and Midian departed with fees for divination in hand. They came to Balaam and reported Balak's words to him. **8** He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will give you the answer the LORD tells me." So the officials of Moab stayed with Balaam. **9** Then God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?" **10** Balaam replied to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent this message to me: **11** 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the surface of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. I may be able to fight against them and drive them away.'" **12** Then God said to Balaam, "You are not to go with them. You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed." **13** So Balaam got up the next morning and said to Balak's officials, "Go back to your land, because the LORD has refused to let me go with you." **14** The officials of Moab arose, returned to Balak, and reported, "Balaam refused to come with us."

1. God has begun to fulfill his promise - Genesis 15.17-21 - **17** When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared and passed between the divided animals. **18** On that day, the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "I give this land to your offspring, from the Brook of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River: **19** the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, **20** Hethites, Perizzites, Rephaim, **21** Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."

- a. **Israel started out as a small nation on the run, but now it is strong and feared**
 - i. Do the promises of God seem impossible to you?
 - ii. Have you thought of them not as what God will give you, but as how he will change you along the journey?
- b. So Balak (Moab) is scared and calls on Balaam and asks for a curse
 - i. Balaam - Who is he?
 - 1. Talks with God
 - 2. But not a Follower of God
 - a. This is a warning for us - just because something seemingly powerful happens to someone, it doesn't mean we are to follow them -
 - b. Just because you have success in life or even ministry doesn't mean you are a follower of God - or even blessed by him.
 - c. God can you use a donkey - don't think too highly of yourself
 - i. *Matthew 7.22-23 - 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?' 23 Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers.'*
 - ii. Balaam talks to God
 - 1. "Who are these men?" - Why are you with these guys?
 - a. Casting pearls to pigs
 - b. Like giving your joyride candy to your toddler brother - he doesn't care
 - 2. Balaam really wants this to be something he can do
 - a. He wants the money
 - b. He's not foolish enough to go against God
 - 3. God says I won't - I've already made a promise - "for they are blessed."
 - a. God fulfills what he has said
 - i. This is the hope that we have in Christ - He said he would give them land, and he did
 - ii. He said he would send a savior, and he did
 - iii. He said he is coming again, and he will
 - iii. Balaam sends them away, and they tell Balak

15 Balak sent officials again who were more numerous and higher in rank than the others. **16** They came to Balaam and said to him, "This is what Balak son of Zippor says: 'Let nothing keep you from coming to me, **17** for I will greatly honor you and do whatever you ask me. So please come and put a curse on these people for me!'" **18** But Balaam responded to the servants of Balak, "If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the command of the LORD my God to do anything small or great. **19** Please stay here overnight as the others did, so that I may find out what else the LORD has to tell me." **20** God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "Since these men have come to summon you, get

up and go with them, but you must only do what I tell you.” **21** When he got up in the morning, Balaam saddled his donkey and went with the officials of Moab.**22** But God was incensed that Balaam was going,

1. They come back - they really need the help
 - a. They are putting on the ritz
 - b. And the fight against sin can be similar to this - we think we’ve beaten it and then it knocks at the door again
2. Balaam reveals his hearts
 - a. He should’ve just sent them away - the Lord has already given his answer
 - i. He wanted a different answer, though, so he questioned the lord again
 - ii. “Since these men” - since you listen to them now, go!
3. This is why he is angry - he gave Balaam over to the desire of his heart - to gold and riches - Balaam is the rich young ruler - enticed by the gold of the world - not the word of the lord

22b and the angel of the LORD took his stand on the path to oppose him. Balaam was riding his donkey, and his two servants were with him. **23** When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing on the path with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the path and went into the field. So Balaam hit her to return her to the path. **24** Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow passage between the vineyards, with a stone wall on either side. **25** The donkey saw the angel of the LORD and pressed herself against the wall, squeezing Balaam’s foot against it. So he hit her once again. **26** The angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn to the right or the left. **27** When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she crouched down under Balaam. So he became furious and beat the donkey with his stick. **28** Then the LORD opened the donkey’s mouth, and she asked Balaam, “What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?” **29** Balaam answered the donkey, “You made me look like a fool. If I had a sword in my hand, I’d kill you now!” **30** But the donkey said, “Am I not the donkey you’ve ridden all your life until today? Have I ever treated you this way before?” “No,” he replied. **31** Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the path with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam knelt low and bowed in worship on his face. **32** The angel of the LORD asked him, “Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look, I came out to oppose you, because I consider what you are doing to be evil. **33** The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away from me, I would have killed you by now and let her live.”

1. The Angel of the Lord Appears
 - a. The donkey can see him, but the powerful man who convenes with God cannot
 - b. And this isn’t happening so that the Lord can save his people - Balaam’s proclamation will have no power over them - the Lord wants to save Balaam
2. The Donkey saves Balaam
 - a. Balaam thought he was going to go and defeat the Lord’s army, but he is being saved by a donkey
 - b. His donkey takes the beating, so that he can be saved
 - i. Balaam sins against his donkey, yet still it saves him

- c. Why have you done this? - Which I feel like my response to the talking donkey would be - whoa, a talking donkey
 - i. But he responds with anger, not knowing the very thing he is angry and desiring to kill is his savior
 - d. Who does this remind you of? Who are you an enemy of that took the beating so that you would be saved
 - e. Christ took the beating on your behalf, so that you might be saved
3. Then the Lord showed Balaam what the donkey could see, and he could not
- a. It's the Lord who reveals himself to us

34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the path to confront me. And now, if it is evil in your sight, I will go back."**35** Then the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you are to say only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's officials.**36** When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite city[d] on the Arnon border at the edge of his territory. **37** Balak asked Balaam, "Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?"**38** Balaam said to him, "Look, I have come to you, but can I say anything I want? I must speak only the message God puts in my mouth." **39** So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. **40** Balak sacrificed cattle, sheep, and goats and sent for Balaam and the officials who were with him.**41** In the morning, Balak took Balaam and brought him to Bamoth-baal. From there, he saw the outskirts of the people's camp.

1. Balaam Obeys the Lord
 - a. So now he finally listens - he at least seems to partly understand that his life is more valuable than riches and Gold
 - b. How far into your sin do you need to travel before you recognize its failings?
 - c. Ultimately, he will bless the people of God, but it seems for his own momentary preservation.
2. When we read the Old Testament, one of its purposes is to show us again and again that when God makes a promise, he will keep it
 - a. Raleigh to Mitch - "You should've said maybe."
 - b. When the Lord said he would give the people a land, he did
 - c. When he said I will send a savior he did
 - d. When he said I will come again he meant it
 - e. And when he said he will never let you go, he won't
3. There is a warning here also
 - a. You may think from this passage that Balaam began to follow God
 - b. He did - you see sometimes - we say the right thing and do the right things, and we believe it is enough, we may even repent of a few sins, but if our motives aren't with a heart devoted to God, we aren't a changed person
 - c. Numbers 31 - Balaam dies in a war with Israel
 - i. Just as the Lord promised to save those who love him
 - ii. He promises to crush his enemies