

Balaam's Talking Donkey

(Numbers 22:1-41)

Yearly Theme: "Patience is..."

Series Title: "Preserving Patience"

March 6th, 2022

Something to think about:

As a parent sometimes it is very frustrating when I ask my children to do something, and they disobey. Even if my child "obeys", but makes it very clear they are unhappy to be doing so, it tests my patience even more than if they had simply disobeyed. I think every parent has been in that place of frustration when dealing with a disobedient child. If I'm honest I often lose my temper in those moments, sometimes I am justified in my frustration, and sometimes I'm not. I often think about the fact that if I am justified in my frustration with my child's disobedience, how much more is God justified in His frustration with my disobedience? This thought often frightens me. However, in the story of Balaam, we are going to see God showing patience in a time when His anger is completely justified. His patience is unique in this passage and paints a beautiful picture of God's love and protection not only for His chosen people, but also for His entire creation. This whole messy story culminates in a unique and powerful vision of Christ and the hope that he brought not just to the nation of Israel but to the whole world. Let's take a look...

Turn in your Bibles to: Numbers 22:1 – 41

Here's the takeaway this morning:

Key Point: "GOD is patient with His entire creation"

Like last week, what can we learn about the effects of deceit from this passage today?...

- **"God is Slow to anger"**

- This is the whole point of our series this year, but we should constantly be looking to God and His example as we interact with the world and as we interact with non-believers.

- **"The position of our heart matters in our obedience"**

- God becomes angry with Balaam because His heart doesn't belong to God.
- Even here in the Old Testament we see a picture of a personal God who desires a loving relationship with His creation above all else.

- **"How could God use them?"**

- We see God using Balaam who is a foreign pagan priest to deliver one of the first glimpses of the salvation of the world. (Numbers 24:15-25)
- We should always test the words that someone speaks against scripture for their authenticity, but we cannot discredit truth because of its source.
- God is the God of all of creation and he can and will use all things in His creation to further His kingdom, that is why it is extremely important that we know God intimately so that we can recognize His truth no matter the mouthpiece he uses.

Something to take home:

We are going to become frustrated and angry in life. This story of Balaam and his donkey should give us comfort that we serve a God who is patient. It should also convict us to show the same patience in our life to others. Paul paints a picture of God's kingdom being a tree with branches grafted on to it. We get the picture of God as a patient and careful gardener taking care of His tree, adding to it, trimming it, and using the things around it to grow the tree. Does this mean that we have free reign to do what we want in life, and to test God's patience? No. Paul tells us that we are not to go on sinning to bring glory to God and demonstrate his patience and forgiveness. However, this passage should remind us that God is slow to anger, great in His patience, unusual in His ways, and consistent in His truth. God speaks truth no matter who he speaks it through and it is our responsibility to be in such good relationship with Him that we can recognize His truth, no matter who speaks it, and imitate God in His patience.

Key Point: *“God is patient with his entire creation.”*