

THE ANIMAL THAT TALKED

Numbers 22:1-41; 23:1-30.

LESSON 39 — Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: “The Lord hath sent his angel” (Acts 12:11).

Fear in the Nations

The nations that did not worship the true God had heard about the way God had been helping the Children of Israel conquer nation after nation, and there was great fear. Some of the kings were friendly and permitted the people to go through their country, but some were not friendly and went out to fight them and stop them. God remembered those who were kind to His people, and rewarded them; and He remembered those who were not kind and He punished them.

King Balak

A king called Balak feared that his country would be taken by the Israelites. He knew a man who seemed to believe in the God of Israel and he sent for that man.

Balak told Balaam to curse those people – ask God to harm them so he could defeat them. He told Balaam that he could give him much money and honour for it.

Balaam wanted to do it to earn the money. But God told him he should not curse His people. Balaam told Balak he could not do it, but Balak kept on insisting. All the while Balaam wanted to do it, and God knew he wanted to, so God let him go, to try to curse them.

The Donkey and the Angel

God always tries to keep us from doing anything that is wrong for us to do, but we do not always listen to Him and obey him. He set an angel with a drawn sword in Balaam’s path. The donkey saw the angel but Balaam did not. The donkey turned aside and Balaam beat him. Then the donkey went against the wall and Balaam’s foot was crushed by the wall. Then Balaam beat the donkey again. Now the donkey fell down, and again Balaam beat him.

Then the Lord gave the donkey power to speak, and it asked Balaam why he was beating it. Balaam said he would even kill it if he had a sword. He was very angry.

God let Balaam’s eyes be opened to see the angel and the sword. God told Balaam that the donkey had saved his life by turning away from the angel that would have killed Balaam if he had gone on.

Sin in His Heart

Balaam at last knew that God was using the donkey to keep him from doing that wrong thing. Then God made Balaam bless the people instead of curse them, and Balak knew that God was helping the Children of Israel. But Balaam was finally killed in a battle. His heart was not right with God, for in his heart he was more eager to get the money, even if it were by doing wrong, than he was eager to please God.

Sometimes children beg to do things after their parents have told them “no”. God knew what was right, and when He said “no” it was what was best. Balaam should not have wanted to do what God told him not to do.

QUESTIONS

1. Was God pleased that Balaam went with the princes of Moab? Numbers 22:22.
2. Why did Balaam want to go? Numbers 22:17.
3. How did Balaam treat his donkey when it turned aside? Numbers 22:23.
4. What did Balaam do when he finally saw the angel? Numbers 22:31.
5. What happens if we insist on having our own way? Proverbs 14:12.