

# 119

## MINISTRIES

*“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”*

### **Parashah Points: Balak - Listen When A Donkey Talks**

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Balak, and it goes from Numbers 22:2 to Numbers 25:9.

This Torah portion tells the story of Balak, who hires Balaam to curse Israel. It also tells the story of Balaam’s talking donkey and the story of how Balaam blessed Israel rather than cursing them. The parashah concludes with a story of many Israelite men committing idolatry and fornication with the daughters of Moab and Midian. Phinehas stops the plague caused by this depravity by killing one of the couples who were engaging in pagan worship.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about self-control in the midst of frustration.

We are all emotional people and we feel deeply. That’s how God created us. But a problem arises when we assume that our feelings reflect the absolute truth of any situation. Our feelings reflect *only how we interpret* a situation. New information or another perspective, however, often leads to a different interpretation.

Consider the story of Balaam’s donkey. Balaam was riding his donkey, but the donkey kept turning from the path and eventually crushed Balaam’s foot against a wall. Balaam’s immediate reaction was to beat his donkey. Why? Because Balaam was emotional. He felt like his donkey was trying to make him feel foolish:

#### **Numbers 22:28-29**

*Then the Lord [YHWH] opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" And Balaam said to 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."*

Because Balaam felt foolish, he reacted to this situation by beating and cursing his donkey. But his

donkey wasn't trying to make Balaam feel foolish. In reality, the donkey was saving Balaam's life! What Balaam didn't know at the time was that the Angel of YHWH was going to kill him if he continued down a certain path:

### **Numbers 22:28-29**

And the angel of the Lord [YHWH] said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me and turned aside before me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let her live."

Based on the information Balaam had before the Angel of YHWH confronted him, his feelings were understandable. However, his actions—that is, beating his donkey—were not a good example of how we should handle our feelings. After all, Balaam knew his donkey his entire life (Numbers 22:30). He should have known better. He should have stopped, taken a deep breath, and looked around before immediately reacting out of hurt and anger. Balaam eventually found out what was really going on, but it was only after he had already reacted in a hurtful way.

How often have you reacted from your hurt feelings, which led you to do or say something you later regretted? Like Balaam, how often have you lashed out at people who were simply trying to warn you about going down a destructive path? How often have you cursed those who care about you and severed relationships because people offended you?

Unlike Balaam, we must not immediately assume that we have all the facts or that we know someone's true motives. We must avoid reacting to a situation by saying or doing something hurtful. We must lead our feelings instead of letting our feelings lead us.

Additionally, we should consider that our friends who are willing to offend us are most likely trying to help us! A true friend is willing to rebuke you. You might think they are being a complete jerk in the moment, but sometimes God speaks through a "donkey." Be humble. And instead of reacting out of emotion, try listening to what they have to say.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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2) FB banner text (Short sentence or two)

In this week's Parashah Point on the portion Balak, we read a story that makes someone stop and say to themselves, I need to "listen when a donkey talks."

4) A short summary of the teaching for the Vimeo description

In this week's Parashah Point on the Torah Portion Balak, we read Numbers 22:28-29 where we find the

Balaam learned that it's important to listen when a donkey talks. We need to learn not to simply react to what we think we know.

(Include keywords, longer description, and some key scripture verses)

Parashah Points, Balak, Listen when a donkey talks, Torah Portion, Balaam, talking ass, talking donkey, Balaam's donkey, Numbers 22:28-29