

“Please come and curse these people for me because they are too powerful for me. Then perhaps I will be able to conquer them and drive them from the land. I know that blessings fall on any people you bless, and curses fall on people you curse.” Numbers 22:6 NLT

lectio // Numbers 22:1-21

I've got to admit, for Balak, King of Moab, this is a solid “cold war” plan. Moab is losing, Israel is huge and winning. Why not try a little espionage and pay off an inside guy to “curse” the country so it might weaken their ability to fight. However, Israel isn't a normal country and Balaam isn't just an ordinary guy. The entourage comes to make the pitch to Balaam and God shows up to ask Balaam a question, “That night God came to Balaam and asked him, “Who are these men visiting you?” Uh, God knew who they were. Did he want to make sure that Balaam understood and has to tell God, “they're Moabites?” First time God tells Balaam to send them away with a “no,” Second time Balaam says, “not even for your palace full of gold and silver!” But God tells Balaam instead to go with them, but only do what he says to do. The next morning the story says, “God was angry at Balaam for going.” What happened? God told him to go, but then was angry when he did AND used Balaam's own donkey to stop him. Did God know something we don't about Balaam or about the situation? In cases like this it's easy to see how frustrating or confusing the situation seems. However, knowing God's character always helps me remember this. God is always right, true and just. Even in apparent situations where there is confusion or conflict in the story, I can know God's words are not the source of it. There was a bigger lesson for Balaam and Israel and even Balak the King of Moab. God has his purposes and plans and they will happen. We can understand the reasons later, well after the story ends.

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Dad,

Even when there is confusion or misunderstanding on my part, it doesn't alter your character, and thankfully doesn't alter your plans! Knowing you and trusting you is primary when things get muddy. I haven't been in Balaam's shoes with that level of pressure to try to be obedient AND get what I want out of it, but I have experienced rough parts of life and had to trust you in the middle with no sense or end in sight.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root