

Life's Little Interruptions

Thought for the Week:

If God can speak through a donkey, He can speak through anything and anyone. A person should always be attentive to the words of others, always listening for the voice of the LORD.

Commentary:

The angel of the LORD appeared on the road with a drawn sword to stop him. To Balaam the angel was invisible, but the donkey on which Balaam was riding could see the angel.

To avoid the angel with the drawn sword, the donkey veered from the road into a field. Irritated with his steed, Balaam struck the donkey to force her back onto the road.

A second time the angel appeared in front of the donkey. Balaam still did not see it, but the donkey did. This time the donkey was carrying Balaam through a narrow street between two vineyard walls. There was not much room between the walls. To avoid the angel, the donkey pressed against one wall, crushing Balaam's foot in the process.

Irritated and in significant pain, Balaam struck the donkey again.

A third time the angel appeared in front of the donkey. This time the way was so narrow that there was no room for the donkey to turn to the left or the right. So the donkey lay down. Still unable to see the angel, Balaam was so angry that he thrashed the poor beast with a stick.

In his blindness, Balaam did not realize that the irritating behavior of his donkey was actually saving his life. The LORD said, "If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live" (Numbers 22:33).

Life is full of irritating obstacles that get in the way of our plans. Throughout any given day, a person experiences countless distractions and complications. It is easy to become impatient and upset with the things and people that get in the way of what we are trying to accomplish. We should learn a lesson from Balaam. Those irritating obstacles might be from the LORD. God may have other plans for us. Rather than get upset when our plans are derailed, we should seek the LORD's direction. In Balaam's life, God was in the midst of the interruptions. The next time the car breaks down or the flight is canceled or some other unforeseen interruption rears up, rather than get irritated, remember the story of Balaam.

People of faith sometimes speak of God opening and closing doors. This is an idiom that refers to God's divine direction in life. For example, suppose a person set out to take a job in a certain field. He submitted an application for a position for which he was fully qualified. He was confident that the job would be his. Inexplicably, he did not get the position. A person like Balaam would become bitter over the disappointment. A person of faith would say, "God closed that door. He knows what is best. I will look elsewhere."

When seeking direction in life, a person needs to keep an eye on the donkey to see what God might be saying.