Friday 27th November

Numbers 22: 21-40

Key Verse 22:31

Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So, he bowed low and fell facedown.

Why was God angry? After all, Balaam was doing what God had told him to do (v20, 21)

Peter and Jude tell us that Balaam's motives were profit and 'the wages of wickedness'. (2 Peter 2:15, Jude 11)

God saw through his superficial show of spirituality and just saw Balaam's greed. Perhaps Balaam intended to negotiate a better price when he eventually meets Balak, probably his richest customer yet.

Balak was desperate for Balaam's help (v36,37) but Balaam wasn't ready yet. First God had to teach him a lesson.

The donkey becomes a living rebuke to Balaam. This man who dealt with spirits didn't see the angel of the Lord but the donkey did!! The donkey turned aside three times when confronted by the angel but Balaam pressed on with his wicked intentions. Balaam gets angry with the donkey. God is angry with Balaam. Balaam beats the donkey, Balak bribes Balaam. The donkey has been faithful to Balaam who himself doesn't understand faithfulness to God. Then eventually the dumb animal is enabled by God to speak. The ultimate lesson for Balaam is that he should submit to the same power and only say what God has given him to say (v35, 38).

Balaam is oblivious to what is really going on until God opens his eyes (v31) and he sees the angel and realises his life has been spared. Now he is ready to pass on God's words.

We need God to open our eyes on a daily basis so that we are alive to what God says in his word. Balaam was blinded by selfish motives as to how God was trying to stop him and work through him.

This story is about a man who tried to deceive others with an outward show of spirituality but had a corrupt inner life.

When we take off our anti-transmission masks is there still one, we are wearing? We can avoid Balaam's mistake by facing ourselves and realising that God is willing to accept us, forgive us and make is new within.