



“STOP KICKING THE DONKEY”

Number 22:1-35 Study Verse: Numbers 22:22-32

Domestic violence has become a part of the American culture. There is not a day that goes by that the headlines of the local newspapers are not reporting on some form of domestic violence. Violence has become an integral part of how America has learned to exist. Violence is prevalent in our homes, educational systems, business centers, and unfortunately, in our places of worship. There is no segment of society, which is exempt from violence.

Domestic violence estimates range from 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend per year to three million who are physically abused by their husband or boyfriend per year. Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime. Nearly one-third of American women (31%) report being physically or sexually abused at some point in their lives. In 2001 more than a half million (588,490 women) were victims of non-fatal violence committed by an intimate partner. Women of all races are about equally vulnerable to violence by an intimate. The number of persons involved in domestic acts of violence, in Georgia, is staggering.

These acts are much more than transgressions against the law. These are immoral behaviors, which must be addressed at all levels and especially from the pulpit. I do not want to preach a sociological, psychological, or cultural sermon, but rather to look into the Word of God to see if a simple lesson can be gleaned from the violent behavior of a man called Balaam.

In the 22nd chapter of the Book of Numbers there is the story of a man with a violent disposition who abused his closest ally. Balaam was a prophet who was called by King Balak to place a curse on the Israelites. The king wanted to defeat God's chosen people. At first Balaam refused to go, but after seeking God's counsel he consented to go to Moab. On the journey, his faithful, trusted donkey saw something, which Balaam did not see. He saw the angel of God blocking their path so the donkey refused to proceed. In fact, at one point he simply laid down and refused to move. Balaam was angry and on three occasions beat the donkey unmercifully. Finally the Lord "told the donkey to speak and it asked Balaam, 'What have I done to you that made you beat me three times?'" It was realized after some discussion that the donkey had done nothing wrong, and that Balaam was simply ignorant to what God was doing.

There is no excuse for violence of any nature against any of God's creations. Abusers, who use violence as a source for their own need are sick and in need of help. God was using the donkey to prevent Balaam from doing something God did not ordain, but Balaam, as do many others, was set on accomplishing his own agenda. When his own selfish agenda was thwarted, he resorted to using violence to express his frustration.

God has a plan for your life. He said, "Love Me and your neighbor as yourself." Many people do not love God nor themselves and violence reigns. Through prayer and meditation, let God reveal what He wants you to do and when your personal desires appear blocked, rather than to get angry and violent, seek God's guidance. God will give you perspective, patience, and peace as He finally did for Balaam.

Read Numbers 22, 23, 24 in their entirety, and see toward whom you are "kicking," abusing, belittling or acting violent. Then, seek God's counsel to see His divine plan for your Life.

Pastor Gerald L. Durley