

Numbers 22:13–40

God Opens the Mouth and Eyes, and Sees the Heart

Friday, October 4, 2024 ▫ Read Numbers 22:13–40

Questions from the Scripture text: What did Balaam tell whom to do (v13)? What reason did he give them? But how do the princes of Moab explain it (v14)? What does Balak now do (v15)? What message did they deliver from Balak (v16)? What did they promise in his behalf (v17)? What request did they repeat? What did Balaam suggest Balak could give him (v18)? But what did he say that he still could not do? What does he call YHWH? But what does he ask them to do (v19)? For what purpose? What does God permit Balaam to do (v20)? On what condition? What does Balaam do in the morning (v21)? But what was God's disposition to Balaam's going (v22)? So, Who stood in his way? As what? What/who was with him? Of these four, who saw Whom (v23)? Doing what? How did the donkey respond? Then how did Balaam respond to the donkey? Where did the Angel of YHWH stand next (v24)? Who saw (v25)? How did it respond? With what effect? And what response from Balaam? Where did the Angel of YHWH stand next (v26)? Now what did the donkey do (v27)? With what response from Balaam? Who opened what (v28)? What does the donkey say? To whom? How does Balaam respond to a donkey talking to him (v29)? What did he wish? Why? What argument does the donkey present (v30)? Who caves in to the other's argument? Now Who opens what(v31)? What does Balaam see? How does he respond? Whose question does the Angel of YHWH now repeat (v32)? What does He say that He has done? Why—what does He say about Balaam's way? Before Whom? What does He say the donkey has seen and done (v33)? What does He say would have happened if she didn't? What does Balaam confess in v34? What does he finally consider at the end of v34? How does the Angel of YHWH's response in v35 compare to v20? What does Balak hear (v36)? What does he do? At which city does he meet him? What three questions does he ask (v37)? But what does Balaam again explain to Balak in v38? Who now goes with whom to where (v39)? What does Balak do there (v40)? And to whom does he give the meat?

What do we learn from a talking donkey? Numbers 22:13–40 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-eight verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the Lord opens the mouth, opens the eyes, and sees the heart**.

It is the Lord Who opens the mouth. This much Balaam keeps telling Balak (v8, 18, 38). This the Lord also repeats to Balaam (v20, 35). This the Lord emphasizes by even doing it for a donkey (v28)! Our words belong to Him, and we must use them well. Not only must they always keep the third and fifth and sixth and seventh and ninth commandments (and all the rest of them!), but our words must always be with grace (Col 4:6), and we must never speak idle words (Mt 12:36).

It is the Lord Who opens the eyes. The language of v31 with respect to Balaam's eyes is almost the same as that in v28 with respect to the donkey's mouth. The Lord literally opens Balaam's eyes, so that he can see Jesus... and Balaam is duly terrified! Of course, it is implied that it was YHWH Who had been opening the donkey's eyes ever since v23. But we read nothing of the two servants' eyes being opened. What a marvel it must have been to them, first to hear the donkey (v28), then to hear their master arguing back to a donkey (v29), then to hear their master yielding to the donkey's argument (v31), and finally to see their master hastily throwing himself upon his face (end of v31)!

Of course, the reason that he was on his face is the Christophany in front of him. This Angel of YHWH, with sword drawn, is YHWH Himself. He accepts the worship that is offered (v31). He judges Balaam's actions as "before Me" (v32, literally "opposite Me"). And the strongest proof of all is that He identifies Himself in v35 as the same speaker as in v20.

We need our eyes opened, the veil to be removed, the scales to fall. We need the Lord to give us to see Him, to see the danger of our sin before Him, and to see Him offering us forgiveness and life by His grace.

The Lord Who sees the heart. Why is it wicked for Balaam to go in v21, but acceptable in v35? Balaam's heart is different. In v21, he has obtained permission, but goes because it pleases himself (especially because it pleases him to obtain the riches, cf. 2Pet 2:15, Jude v11). But that's his own way, and it is perverse before the Lord (v32). Only when Balaam is going not because it pleases himself, but because it pleases the Lord (v34), is it permissible. It is the man's heart upon which the Lord especially sets His eye. We must make our hearts the priority before Him, looking to Him for grace to maintain them (cf. Ps 19:14, 139:23–24).

In what situations have you most needed to remember that it is the Lord Who has opened your mouth? What does He use to open our eyes, and what use are you making of it? What have you seen of your sin? What have you seen of Christ? What is your habit, in relating to the Lord, for maintaining your heart before Him?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving to us the privilege of speech. Grant that we would serve You with all of our words. And give us to see ourselves rightly, to see our sin rightly, and especially to see Christ rightly. Help us to offer unto You not just our behavior, but especially our hearts—not living to please ourselves as much as we can get away with, but pleasing You as much as we possibly can. Grant all of this through Christ, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP23B "The Lord's My Shepherd" or TPH216 "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Numbers chapter 22 verses 13 through 40. These are God's words. So Balaam, Rose in the morning and said, to the princes of Moab, go back to your land for Yahweh, has refused to give me permission to go with you. And the princes of Moab Rose and went to Balaam and said Balaam refuses to come with us.

Then Balaam again sent princess more numerous and more honorable than they. When they came to Balaam and said to him, thus says Balaam son of the poor. Pleased that nothing hinder you from coming to me for, I will certainly honor you greatly and whatever. I will do whatever you say to me.

Therefore, please come curse this people for me. Then Balaam answered and said, to the servants of Balaam, the Balaam were to give me his house full of silver and gold. I could not go beyond the word of Yahweh, my God to do less or more. Now therefore please you also stay here tonight that I may know what more y'all play will say to me.

When God came to Balaam at night and said to him, If the men come to call you rise and go with them. But only the word, which I speak to you. That you shall do. So Balaam Rose in the morning, settled as donkey and went with the princes of Moab.

God's anger was aroused because he went. And the angel of Yahweh took his stand in the way. As an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him. Now, the donkey saw the angel of Yahweh standing, in the way. With his drawn sword in his hand and the donkey Turned aside out of the way and went into the field.

Sublime. Struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. Then the angel, if you always stood in a narrow path, between The Vineyards with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. And when the donkey saw the angel of Yahweh, she pushed herself against the wall.

And Crush Balaam's foot against the wall. So he struck her again. Then the angel of Yahweh went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn. Either to the right hand or to the left. And when the donkey saw the angel Yahweh, she lay down under Balaam's anger was aroused and he struck the donkey with his staff.

Then, Yahweh 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 abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand. For now, I would kill you.

So, the donkey said to blame Am I not your donkey on which you have written ever since I became yours to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you? And he said, no. Then, Yahweh opened belyam's eyes. And he saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

And the angel, if you always said to him, Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold I have come out to stand against you because your way is perverse. Before me. The donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely I would also have killed you by now.

And let her live. From William said to the angel of Yahweh, I have sinned. For I did not know you stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases, you, I will turn back. Then the angel have, you always set to blame? Go with the men but only the word that I speak to you.

That you shall speak. Subwayum went with the princes of black. No one black heard, the belyam is coming. He went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the border at the Arnon, the boundary of the territory. Then black said to Bland, did I not earnestly?

Send to you calling for you. Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you? I'm blame set to Black, look, I have come to you. Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth. That I must speak.

So, the lamb went with black and they came to kill Jeff hazat. Then black offered oxen and sheep. Then you send some double air into the princess. Who are with him.

So far the reading of God's inspired and And Aaron twerked.

Well, there are At least three themes here in this passage And these are the three that we're going to. Consider now, and most likely will still be the three that we consider when we come. To the evening. Sermon on the Lord's day. The first is that it is the Lord.

Who opens the mouth, the Lord, who opens them out? He's the one who made us speaking creatures to begin with. If the Lord didn't give us to be rational creatures and speaking creatures, then there would be no difference between us and donkeys. As far as. Our ability to speak.

So the Lord has opened our mouths and this is this gives us the responsibility to him which is one of the repeated ideas both in last week's passage in this week's passage in the next couple weeks passages. Is that we really ought only to say that which serves the Lord not necessarily as a prophet in which you need special Revelation for every particular word that comes out of your mouth.

What the scripture does command us? Gives two Commandments that are very specific to speech. Bearing, the lord's name. which must not be done. Actually, in verse 3 and verse three command the third commandment And then, the way we speak about our neighbor in the ninth commandment and of course, our speech must obey.

Fifth commandment honoring. Who are over us when we speak to them more about them, there's requirements. And that way of speaking, sixth commandment that. Not speak hatefully or Attacking despising. The other seventh commandment. we be careful with How we speak that a certain way of speaking about or someone Would be reserved for our spouse, that particular Marital way of speaking and so forth.

More comprehensively, the scripture tells us. Let your speech be always with Grace. Seasoned with salt, we should always speak. From our new nature in Christ and never speak from our flesh. Lord Jesus. Teaches us that out of the Overflow of the heart. The mouth speaks. And therefore, We need to be careful that we are.

speaking always with Grace, and in that context, he says that men will give answer for every Idol word that they speak. So every word we speak should be intentionally serving the lord. and Even when we talk to others, serve the Lord, in the way we talk to and the way we engage with others, it is the Lord who opens the mouth, this of course.

Comes to a head in the passage when he opens the donkey's mouth. And she reasons. It makes an argument. Based on not the fact that she can see the angel and he doesn't I want you opens Her mouth. She doesn't say you idiot. Don't you see there's an angel who's about to kill us.

Uh-Huh. But she makes a good argument based on her, faithfulness her belonging to him. The emphasis on. Now, obtaining her and his writing on her and her faithfulness to him, Etc. The focuses on their relationship and her track record. And, Amazingly. He doesn't say, hey, wait a minute, you can talk.

No he argues with her. This all must have been very astounding to the two servants. Who were with them according to verse 22. he argues with her and he has to concede her argument and admit that she has a point into verse 30. And he just says, no, nope.

You never did this. Ever acted like this to me. so it the Lord who opens the mouth. And when we open our mouths with Idle words, Or self-serving words. we are worse than balance donkey.

And so, the first thing is that the Lord opens the mouth. The second thing is that the Lord opens the ice, The donkey was able to see, The angel of y'all play standing with the sword. And apparently, the two servants, could not see the angel of you always stand.

The sword or they would have. Pointed out to belyam that. The donkey was saving in his life. In fact, we don't ever have Indication here, that the two servants eyes were opened at any point. in this passage it must have been astonishing to them when the Lamb's eyes were opened and he suddenly falls on his face.

Before this, in this, in the middle of this narrow path. On the way. And the two servants can't see the angel now. You know, they just heard the donkey talk. They just heard the master argue with the donkey and now the Masters up his face in the path, they must have thought that everything was going, insane.

But there are unseen realities, unseen realities, that although the Lord does not Open our physical eyes to see them. He does tell us about them in his word. He tells us that we are always before his face and that he is always with us that his eyes go to and fro throughout the Earth.

That his eyelids are always. Focused upon and testing. The children of men. We have no excuse. Because we cannot see the spiritual world with our physical eyeballs. The Lord has. Told us about it and we must draw a proper conclusions. We don't need like Elijah parade for gehazi. To be able to see the legions of angels that may or may not be active around us.

We know that they are ministering Spirits sent forth to serve those who inherit salvation. We know that we're inheriting salvation, We know, not just, Of the labor of angels on our behalf but we know. Of the Lord's working. All things according to the Council of his will. Supreme power.

But most of all, we know Jesus. And it is, he especially who stands in the path before. Belen. For. Not only is he called the angel of Yahweh. The messenger of Yahweh or We might say the word. If we use the language of John chapter 1, but he also accepts bellium's worship when belyam, Falls down in front of him.

He, when he does finally give bull. I am leave to continue with men on the way to Black. He gives the same instruction before as he had before that, he may not speak anything. Except what he tells him to speak as he says, in verse 35, is quite evident that this isn't merely an angel that where it says, when it says angel of Yahweh, here it is.

The angel who is Yahweh? and so we continue to see as we see throughout the entire Old Testament that The true and living God, who is Triune father, Son and Holy Spirit from Everlasting to Everlasting from all eternity. That he has presented to us. In his Triune being in his trying nature, giant character.

even in the Old Testament, and this reminds us how desperately, we need the atonement of the Lord. Jesus Christ for us. How desperately we need for him to become, man, to be our righteousness to suffer God's Wrath, in our place as the federal head. A new Humanity of a of a new race in the Covenant of Grace.

Because, Although, there is a Cute contemporary worship song. that goes open my eyes Lord. I want to see Jesus to reach out and touch him and say that I love him. if you could see Jesus apart from the righteousness and sacrifice of Jesus, you would not be trying to reach out and touch him.

You would be destroyed by your fear and undone and on your face and knowing that he is a righteously and justly wrathful God with his sword drawn to slay, you William says he wishes he's had a sword in his hand so he could kill the donkey. Well, Bloom was wrong to do that.

And when he said that there was a literal, Theophany appearance of God christophany in front of him with a sword in his hand to kill him which he was right to do. And this is how Jesus is towards us. Apart from his grace, apart from his righteousness, apart from his sacrifice.

But he has as it were pierced himself executed, the Judgment on himself. Poured out his wrath on himself. For us. And this is what we need. Our eyes opened to see the most To see Jesus as he is and as he is presented to us. Who has not appeared to us now, as an angel of Yahweh standing in front of us with a sword.

But who is The son of man into whose hands all kingdom and glory and judgment have been given. And who will? having who will cast Sinners? Who are found apart from him in the last day. Body and Soul. Into hell. And so we must by the spirit.

Have our eyes opened to see Jesus as he is and to see him as Savior. And indeed, to come to him and receive Forgiveness. To come to him. That we might be received and no longer be our own and be found in ourselves and be found in our sin and be found in the first Adam.

But to be his and to be found in him and to be found in his righteousness. And to be in him as the last Adam Of the new Humanity, the redeemed Humanity. The last theme we see here, the first was that, it is the Lord who opens the eyes.

Sorry, is the Lord, who opens his mouth, the second was the Lord, who opens? The eyes and the As the Lord, who looks on the heart. And what we're getting at here, is the difference, why was it bad? When William went the first time didn't, God say. If the men come to call you rise, go with them.

But only the word, which I speak to you that you shall do. And then he goes in verse 21 and then it says God's anger was harassed because he went What's the difference between that and verse 35? Where the angel tells him. The angel of Yahweh or Yahweh tells him to go.

But only the word that the Lord speaks to him, shall he? Speak? And belyam went That okay, when previously, the Lord was angry and the difference is the heart. Boiam had already told them that he couldn't come. He'd already sent refusal. As soon as they appeared, he should have said.

I already told you that I have been forbidden to come not. You know, wait a night and I'll see if I can get a second opinion from God. His desire in the first going was not. To do what God wanted. But to do a belyam wanted. Hoping that he might still be able to get the silver and the gold.

In fact, this ultimately becomes The way by which

Israel. Falls into great sin with The moabite women on the Council of the Lamb. Who does eventually figure out a way to earn his gold? And becomes in second Peter 2, and in the book of Jude The part of which we'll get to Lord willing next week, becomes an example and a warning in the whole of scripture for the danger of greed.

To those who profess. The Lord as their lord. And so he was going because he wanted to He should have known. That the Lord was against him. He should not have needed. His eyes opened to see an angel with a sword in front of him, even if he just understood it as a strange Providence, This donkey that he has had for many years and had been perfectly faithful that entire time suddenly became the most abusive obstinate.

Donkey in the world, as he was taking this trip that the Lord had forbidden him to go on in the first place with his heart, full of Desire that somehow he could overturn, the Lord's, declaration that he's already made, that the people are blessed in order to get the money.

We need to have tender consciences before God. So that when we do strike out set forth in our lives, After something, that we know in our heart of hearts, God has already Refused Us in his word. That when his Providence comes to us in the way. And, Does unusual things.

To block up the way or, or make it painful that we would have a tender enough conscience to say. I knew that the Lord was against this from his word. And here I was trying to do it anyway. And in his Mercy. He has hindered me from it and we turn back and repent.

And stop. Going off. In our way willfully, and you can see, that He answers in verse 34. Now, he's not operating according to what pleases him? He says, if continuing displeases you I will turn back. In verse 34. So the difference between verse 21 and verse 35, Is that now belyam is not going because it pleases himself.

Now, William is going because it pleases the Lord. And he's going with a mind to be submissive to the Lord. Although of course, he's still a sinner like we are. And in the end, his greed is going to get the best of him. In the matter of prophesying over.

Israel, he's going to be obedient. But it turns out that he was the one who Gave. Block the advice. to get the moabite women to Allure. The Israelite Amendment. Will come to that. Later. But the Lord looks on the heart. And he expects us to take stock of to consider as we do things, not just, is it permitted?

But am I doing it to please? The Lord. Those who treat God's Commandments as rural boundaries within which we can do, what we please. So long as we don't cross the technical line. Have the Lord standing before them against them with his sword drawn. Instead, we must maintain a heart before the Lord, that seeks to be doing whatever pleases him and immediately to stop from whatever might displease him taking his Commandments as a reminder.

That we are to live for his pleasure. Not ours. And that ideally, By his grace. It would become our pleasure to please him. And those two things would not be. In contradiction to one another. And so those are the three great themes things for us to be thinking about and applying to our life already, but especially preparing to sit under and hear.

in the worship, Lord's Day Afternoon. We're in the family worship. Lord's in the sermon, Lord's Day Afternoon. That it's the Lord who opens the mouth? As the Lord, who opens the eyes. And that the Lord sees and tests the heart. Can you help us? Respond well to him.

Into those truths about. Our engagement with him or his engagement with us. Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven. We thank you for this passage. We thank you. For your mercy, even to This greedy willful Prophet belayam. Because we oh, Lord have been greedy our hearts go after the Comforts and pleasures of this world rather than Finding our comfort and pleasure in you.

And what pleases you? And so we thank you for how patient you have been with us. And we pray that you'd forgive us and keep helping us. In particular, we pray that your Holy Spirit. make this portion of your word to take root in our hearts that we would remember that you have opened our mouths and so We would use our mouths in a way that Always honors you.

You would make us. Search and the scriptures, and meditate upon them. Desiring that we would know Christ, rightly and that we would know the danger of our sin before him and yet the A wonderful. Offer, and reality of himself and the gospel. Indeed, Grant to our faith to see Christ as Our Redeemer.

And to serve him and we do pray that you would help us to maintain a tender heart. That we would not. Try to live for ourselves. But, That we would love to please you grant that we ask in Jesus name. Amen.