***BALAAM RIDES AGAIN***

***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN!*** The children of Israel stood on the brink of the Jordan ready to cross over into the promised land and Balak, the King of Moab, was getting nervous. He knew that he could not stop Israel so he decided to call on the Prophet Balaam to put the double whammy on them. Balaam had a reputation that whenever he blessed a people they were blessed and whenever he cursed them they were cursed. Balak sent a delegation to Balaam and asked him to apply the curse-the double whammy. Balaam told them that he would be glad to curse anybody, or bless them for that matter, but first he must consult the Lord. Of course, the price had to be right; but assuming that it was, let us talk it over with the Lord first. He said, "I can't say more than the Lord wants me to say and I can say no less. You boys hang around for a while until I get the message." God told Balaam that he was not to go with the men. Further He told him that he was not to curse them. And on top of this, God told Balaam that Israel was already blessed of the Lord. Balaam came back with this message to the men from Moab and told them he could not go. When this report was given to Balak there was something about Balaam's answer that indicated that maybe he could be had-if the price was right. Balak decided to raise the ante. He sent a more honorable delegation than the first and the promise of more money. Balaam told them that he had already been told not to go; but wait a while, maybe the Lord has changed His mind. I will ask Him again and see what the Almighty has to say. This time the Lord told him to go. That is one of the Lord's favorite tricks with the wayward and disobedient. He always tells people to go ahead and do what they want to do when it is evident that they don't want to follow His Word. Go ahead, do as you please. People can always find a loophole in the Word of God to tell them what they want to do. But the Lord said, "You are not to curse Israel." Balaam mounted his favorite donkey and away he went. On the way to Balak, God sent an angel to stand in the way, an angel with a drawn sword. Balaam did not see the angel but Balaam's donkey did see him. The angel took a swipe at Balaam with the sword and the dumb ass turned aside and ran out into a field. Balaam gave him a whack and got him back on the road. Again the angel took a swipe at Balaam and this time the dumb ass jumped against a wall in a narrow place and mashed Balaam's foot. Balaam gave him another whack across his hinder parts and got him back on the road. Again the angel took a swipe at Balaam and the dumb ass hunched down on the ground and saved Balaam's neck and Balaam gave him a third whack. At this juncture the donkey looked over his shoulder and asked Balaam a very necessary question; necessary, that is, from the standpoint of the donkey. He asked him why he had smitten him three times. Balaam told the donkey: because you have mocked me three times. He told the donkey that if he had a sword in his hand he would stick him really good. At about that time the eyes of Balaam were opened and he too saw the angel. The angel told Balaam that he owed his life to the donkey. Had he not ducked me three times you would be dead. Now you go with the men just like you want to but remember no cursing Israel. So he went and I am sure all you good folk listening to this story will remember how nothing but praise came out of his mouth when he lifted up his voice to cry against Israel. What happened after this is another story that we will not go into now. We must stop at this point and consider Balaam's wild ride that day so long ago and to note that Balaam has many counterparts today who take the same ride. Wherefore we say, ***"HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN! KEMOSABE!!***

NO MORE - NO LESS Let us consider that statement first of all that Balaam made when he told the first delegation, "I can say no more or less than the Lord wants me to say." That is a statement worthy of Peter and Paul. It is a good statement for any preacher of the gospel-say no more than the Lord says and no less. But did Balaam follow his own advice? Let us see, God said: (1) Don't go with them, (2) Don't prophesy against them, (3) 1 have blessed them. When Balaam returned to the delegation from Moab he only told them part of what God said. He told them the Lord said don't go. He never mentioned that they were blessed or that he was not to curse them. Because of this incomplete message he gave to Balak's men, Balak was moved to send back another group with the promise of great honor and riches. It was then that Balaam said, "Let me see if the Lord has changed His mind." ***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN.*** We see it many times today. Many ride the same dumb ass that Balaam rode. They want to see if God has changed His mind. We have noticed it much in recent times with the statement that has oft been made -WE MUST RE-THINK OUR POSITION, WE MUST RE-READ CERTAIN BIBLE PASSAGES, WE MUST RE-READ THE RESTORATION FATHERS. What this boils down to is we don't like what God's Word says; let us see if we can find a loophole. Maybe God has changed his mind. One faithful preacher was telling some preachers in a preacher's meeting about the scriptural injunction against women preachers and elders. When he finished speaking he told me that another preacher in the group told him that if he would stop saying things like that he would be more spiritual. That is the first time I ever heard that spirituality is gained by getting away from the Word of God. It would naturally follow that the farther away from the scripture you get the more spiritual you would become, according to that preacher. So go ahead, re-think your position, re-study the scriptures. You will find out that God will tell you just what you want Him to tell you. Sure, we have always said that baptism by immersion is for the remission of sins, but let us re-think our position. Go ahead, God will tell you what you want to hear. Sure, we have always said the Lord's Supper on every Lord's Day, but the time has come to re-think our position and the Lord will tell us what we want to hear. The Lord will always tell you to go your hell-bound way. So go ahead and re-think your position. ***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN.***

And now KEMOSABE here is something else to consider. THE DONKEY'S VOICE Some folk may not believe that a donkey can talk. To you who are of such little faith, I point to the parrot. Can not the parrot talk? So what is so unusual about a donkey speaking? After all the donkey has a neck, teeth, lips, tongue, palate, nose, lungs, larynx, pharynx, as well as all the other necessities. All he needs is for God to allow him to do it. Perhaps a greater miracle in the minds of men would have been if those people then had one of our cassette recorders they would have found that harder to believe than a donkey speaking.
The best reason, however, I have for believing that a donkey could talk is not only because it is written as a true story, but because the Apostle Peter believed it. Peter said that Balaam was rebuked for his own transgression-a dumb ass spake with a man’s voice and stayed the madness of the prophet. That is enough for me. Of course that might not be enough for some. Many people do not believe that Peter meant what he said in Acts 2:38 when he spoke of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. But the crowning proof that the donkey could talk is found in modern day religious life especially on television. Every time I hear some loud-mouthed, gut-mouthed atheist say there is no God I can hear the braying of a DONKEY -HE HAW, HE HAW, HE HAW. Every time I hear of denominational speakers on our convention programs I hear the braying of a DONKEY -HE HAW, HE HAW, HE HAW. I wonder why some of the big denominational convention leaders don't invite some of our preachers to be on their programs and tell them how to do it? It is either because they have more sense or because we don't have anybody smart enough to tell them anything. I cannot put too much stress on this point -HE HAW, HE HAW, HE HAW!!! Every time I hear our preachers say on our convention programs that they expect all people to go to heaven regardless of obedience to the Word of God, I hear the braying of a DONKEY-HE HAW, HE HAW, HE HAW! ***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN.***

And now KEMOSABE let us consider why God spoke through a donkey. WHY THROUGH A DONKEY? Of all the animals in the animal kingdom why did God choose the donkey to speak to Balaam? I suppose the most obvious reason was because Balaam was not riding an elephant or a giraffe or a tiger, he was riding a donkey. But there is something ironic about the fact that the Lord spoke through a donkey. Remember when the devil spoke to Adam and Eve he chose the smartest animal he could find-the serpent. He was more subtle than any of the beasts of the field. The devil chose the smartest animal he could find, but when the Lord spoke to Balaam through an animal, He chose the dumbest he could find. Peter's statement about the dumb ass has a subtle meaning that says more than the donkey was merely a dumb animal. You see ladies and gentlemen; Balaam was a smart man. He was recognized as a great orator, a great speaker. But on this day the dumb ass put Balaam in the shade in the matter of articulation. What a speech the donkey made! The donkey's speech indicated that he could ascertain the will of God. This dumb ass could understand what the Lord wanted done and the brilliant Balaam could not see it. The dumb ass could see that he was not supposed to go where Balaam wanted him to go. Why couldn't Balaam see it? Not only could the dumb ass see it, he saw it three times. First, he ran out into a field; second, he jumped to the side; thirdly, he crunched down on the ground. It was as plain as it could be. Don't go this way; yet Balaam could not see it. If the dumb ass saw it, where did that put Balaam on the intelligence scale? There are many like Balaam today. Smart people who cannot see the obvious. Consider the plan of salvation from that perspective. Take what Peter said about the response to the gospel. They said what must we do? Peter said in such simple terms, "Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. " Why can't you see it? Many smart people can't see it. While I am not a betting person, I would not be afraid to bet on this sure thing. If Balaam's donkey were here, I'll bet you he could understand. Why can't you? ***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN***.

It's plain enough when Jesus said he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. That is simple enough. I truly believe Balaam's donkey could see it, why can't you? Remember Peter said that a dumb ass stayed the madness of the prophet. His word, not mine. ***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN.***

Perhaps the reason some cannot see the obvious is the same reason that Balaam could not. It says when his eyes were opened he saw the angel with the drawn sword. His eyes had been closed before. He was blinded by covetousness and the desire for the honor that Balak had promised. Some now have eyes that are closed by lust, booze, covetousness, the desire to please others, and many other sins of the flesh. Even a dumb ass could see that you are headed for destruction. ***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN.***

From a theological perspective, eyes are closed because of a vested interest. It is hard for a person to see the right way -eyes closed by the promise of a pension and financial security. If the price is right, like Balaam, the words of Jude are appropriate, "They run riotously in the way of Balaam for hire." The price is right; Balaam seems so blinded by covetousness that he doesn't seem surprised at the fact that a donkey talked. It seemed natural to him to converse to the dumb ass. ***HI OH DONKEY, BALAAM RIDES AGAIN, KEMOSABE***. EB 2001

**IT’S YOUR FUNERAL**

During my ministry of over 55 years, I have never had a funeral where I can remember that the corpse wore a watch. It is a wise decision that the bereaved make to strip the corpse of all time pieces. After all the deceased has no need for a watch. His body isn't going anywhere, yet. No planes to catch, no deadlines to meet, time is over as far as he or she is concerned. The decree of the angel in Revelation -- Time shall no longer be has already made true in the life of the dead body.
 Then too, I don't recall having a funeral where there was a wallet in the hip pocket of the deceased. There was no need for money or credit cards. No more need to raise a mortgage payment and no more chance to send a check to the "God Is Just A Prayer Away" radio ministry. Even the money of a billionaire would not do him any good as far as buying life is concerned. Peter tells us that we were redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold from your manner of life handed down from your father, but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ.

Then again I don't recall having a funeral where the corpse had a set of keys with him. No car keys, no house keys. He won't be going home anymore and he won't be driving anymore. The only key he would need would be a key to the casket and there is only one key for that and the Lord is the only one who has the key. In Revelation the first chapter Jesus said, "He had the keys to Hades and death."

There is no duplicate set of keys to either place. The Lord will unlock the graves and He will unlock the spirit world and raise up the body and unite it with the spirit.

No need for keys, watches, money or credit cards when you die. I just thought I would remind you of that fact just in case any of you were figuring on taking it with you.

Remember since there will be no time as Paul said in Ephesians 5:16, "REDEEM THE TIME FOR THE DAYS ARE EVIL." Since you can't take your pocketbook with you do as the Lord said in the Sermon on the Mount, LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURE ON THE EARTH BUT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURE IN HEAVEN. Since you will have no need for your keys, remember how the Lord said to Peter, "I WILL GIVE UNTO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM." Remember how Peter unlocked the door into the Church on the day of Pentecost when he told the inquiring thousands, "Repent and be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." EB October, 1997

GIJAPA’s Prison Ministry

Over six years ago, after receive many requests from prisoners for Biblical information after hearing the radio broadcast I responded by sending a pew size Bible with Bible studies included. Apologetic they let me know that the lighting