

Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 93.2)

LESSON 16 (STUDY NOTES)

“I Cannot Go Beyond the Word of the Lord”

Hook	The first meme I ever created was “You keep quoting that Bible verse. I do not think it means what it think it means.” Well get ready, because the memorable story of Balaam and his talking donkey has some interesting and even inspiring twists.
Goal	Class members should learn from each of the characters in this story and gain greater strength to act according to their principles even in the face of opposition and act gently and lovingly in the face of harshness (that last lesson was from the donkey)
Overview	(see below)
Conclusion	

I. Sunday School

- a. How do we understand this story? (genre: folktale, bit of satire, but with deeply serious messages). Also composite, as I will discuss in part 2.
- b. Review reading
- c. What do we learn from the story of Balaam?
 - i. Balak
 - ii. Balaam
 - iii. The Donkey! (bring up the idea of animals sometimes sensing things including spiritual things better than humans, story of soldier/medic dogs, cats and death)
- d. Acting on promptings
- e. Prophets

II. Scholarship

- a. Balaam in and out of the Bible (including a literary history of Balaam stories)
- b. Prophecy in the Ancient Near East

III. Study Notes

- a. Return to the reading
- b. Decision making and “hesitation”. Healthy and unhealthy hesitation.
- c. In order to act without hesitation, how can we be sure what God is telling us to do?

- d. Hearing prophets, inside and outside the faith.
- e. Talking donkeys, scripture, and literalness (for the story discuss from both literal and then non-literal perspectives, see what we gain from each)

My approach to listening to leaders

1. Listen with an open heart, allow their words to challenge your preconceptions
2. Give them every benefit of the doubt
3. Take their words to the Lord
4. Let those answers and your feelings in turn challenge leaders' words when needed, as Oaks said.

Resources

<http://www.radiolab.org/story/91701-animal-minds/>

Oaks, Dating vs. Hanging out <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2006/06/dating-versus-hanging-out?lang=eng>

Oaks, Two Lines of Communication <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2010/10/two-lines-of-communication?lang=eng>

Sunday School, Revelation II <http://www.mormonsundayschool.org/032-doctrine-covenants-lesson-6-revelation-ii/>

Kahneman Thinking fast and slow

Mormon Matters, Recognizing the Spirit <http://mormonmatters.org/2012/03/07/77-78-recognizing-the-spirit/>

Kugel, How to Read the Bible

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0743235878/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0743235878&linkCode=as2&tag=mormstorsunds-20

McKenzie, How to Read the Bible (on Genre)

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004S0D2MG/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B004S0D2MG&linkCode=as2&tag=mormstorsunds-20