



INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

TEACHING REFORMED THEOLOGY ONLINE
TO PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE

Newsletter

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Bristol, VA – October/2016

"Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness."
(2 Peter 2:15-16 ESV)

Would you, dear reader, please be in prayer for our instructors and students with regard to purity of doctrine and of heart? We are not aware of any particular reason for concern, but Peter warns us of the necessity to always be vigilant.

The Donkey and the Prophet

Pastor Jorge Barros

What is more difficult: for a donkey to speak or a prophet to listen to God?

In Numbers 22-24 we find the intriguing story of Balaam, the prophet and the strange miracle of the donkey that spoke.

We certainly do not doubt that the donkey spoke. After all, as Jesus said, for God all things are possible, even for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God, which is harder than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24-26). Nevertheless, the natural man still refuses to glorify God and thank him (Romans 1:21). Therefore, to make a donkey speak to a religious leader, crazed by greed for riches, is something highly suggestive, instructive, appropriate, and remarkable.

Balaam was a prophet of God and knew that, as a prophet, he was obligated to faithfully communicate the word of God (Numbers 22:18). He was, however, a man that was driven by a quest for fame and power, rather than humble service to God.

He had attained international fame, when Balak, king of Moab, sent for him from afar and offered him great riches and honor if he would curse the people of Israel. This time, however, things were to be different. God sent his Angel to him and not just any angel, but the Angel of the Lord, his Eternal Son, the Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ (before his incarnation).

Although not at first, Balaam saw Jesus Christ with a sword in his hand.



It seems that this may have been the only way in which the prophet Balaam personally and intimately experienced the Word of God—as a sword lifted up against him and not as the spiritual bread by which a man lives (Matthew 4:4). If so, that would be contradictory and sad indeed, but sadly, it is possible for a prophet to not embrace the very word he announces.

On that occasion, God kept Balaam from pleasing the king through deceptive words and instead, he spoke the true words of God, faithfully communicating the Gospel itself. In symbolism he foretold the final victory of Jesus Christ over the enemies of God and of humanity, prophesying truth, righteousness and peace (Numbers 24:17). Jesus, in his redemptive work, is the end and heart of all prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

Before the prophet did so, it was his donkey that saw the Angel of the Lord, turned aside, balked, and was beaten by the prophet. However, "the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey" (Numbers 22:28), and she rebuked him with justice and wisdom.

God made a donkey speak and also, which is even more extraordinary, He made a religious man, a corrupt prophet, first listen to God and then speak the truth before men.

While the donkey recognized the danger and saved her master's life, the prophet was so mastered by greed that, even after proclaiming the glorious blessings of the Lord for Israel, he still sought their destruction. He counseled Balak to seek to bring God's judgment on them by drawing them into sexual immorality and idolatry through worldly enticements (Numbers 25; 31:16).

A talking donkey should not amaze us more than our own capacity to ignore the righteousness of God and to spurn His word, even while being religiously active. Whether religiously active or not, we all need to someday pray to God with humility, sincerity, and intensity, "Open my eyes, that I might behold wondrous things out of your law," (Psalm 119:18) and, "... Help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). True doctrine alone or sound theology cannot deliver us from slavery to sin.



Jorge Barros has his Masters in Systematic Theology and New Testament from the Andrew Jumper Presbyterian Center for Graduate Studies (São Paulo, Brazil). He was minister of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and currently has his ministerial credentials with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He taught at the Presbyterian Seminary of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and currently teaches New Testament courses for the IRTC. He maintains a bilingual website (English and Portuguese) www.jesusuniqueways.com and a blog <http://blogigrejareformada.blogspot.ca/>.

Pastor Jorge Barros's testimony about the IRTC

"As an instructor in the Biblical Theology Department of the IRTC and as a humble member of an institution and team focused on the glory of God while teaching on matters related specifically to the New Testament, I have experienced the priceless satisfaction of seeing students discovering, deepening and marveling at the impressive unity of the Holy Scriptures, at the compelling centrality of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, and at the absolute sufficiency of Scripture as an instrument for God's redemptive revelation."

4th Term of 2016



The last 10-week academic term for the year started on October 10th and are scheduled to finish on December 16th.

By God's grace we have begun the last period of our school year. Certainly, a new block of studies arouses expectations for both new students and old. They understand and believe that, despite the hard work ahead, they will reap spiritual fruit for both their personal life and their

service in the Kingdom. What a blessing it is for both the local churches and for the broader expansion of the Kingdom, to have a college committed to convey biblical and theological knowledge that pierces deep into the heart, resulting in actions that glorify God. The IRTC fulfills what is written in 2 Timothy 2:1-2, *"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."* It believes, however, that this sublime task is too large, and therefore encourages others to join in this very challenging mission.

Because we can count on this new virtual learning environment and on the new website, all of us who are part of the IRTC have a special reason to be grateful to the Lord. The students are motivated and able to fulfill their ministerial functions more efficiently because of the IRTC's great organization and their provision of excellent services and resources.

The courses offered in this 4th Term along with their teachers are:

- 1) Old Testament Historical Books – Prof. Paulo Henrique Brasil e Souza
- 2) Creation, Providence and Doctrine of Man – Dr. Paulo Roberto Batista Anglada
- 3) Holy Spirit and the Church – Dr. Leandro Antônio de Lima
- 4) Acts and the Pauline Epistles – Prof. Jorge Luis Barros de Souza
- 5) Creeds and Confessions – Dr. Héber Carlos de Campos Jr.
- 6) Christian Education – Prof. Sérgio Paulo de Lima

An IRTC student's testimony



Below is the testimony of brother Giovan Amaral Casteluber, pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Pampulha in Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil. At the IRTC, he is taking his Masters in

Biblical Studies.

"Dear brothers, certainly, GOD leads the life of his servants in a blessed way, always making all things work together for the good of those whom He has called. He is the Faithful One described in His inerrant Word!"

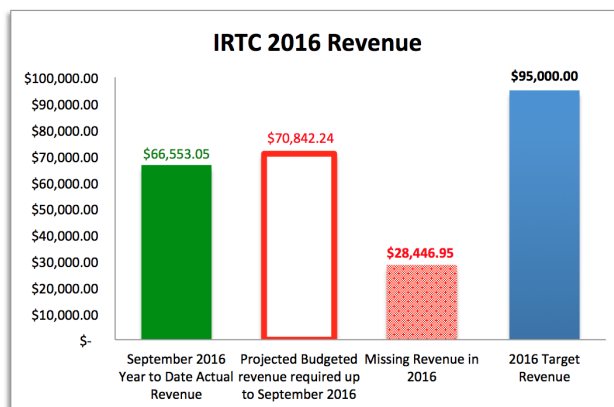
I say this because just over two years ago, I received encouragement from the beloved elder Dr. César to study at the IRTC, and so I did. Today, there are five from our church who are enjoying the privilege of being part of the student body of this beloved school. We have been edified and at the same time challenged because the reformed orthodoxy has not been ignored but instead has been making our hearts burn with orthopraxy which shines forth glory to the LORD.

Thus our life and ministry have been encouraged by the kindness and seriousness of the teachers inspiring us to put what we learn into practice. In the pulpit entrusted to us, we hope to be transmitting the pure, simple and powerful knowledge of the Scriptures that we have acquired. We must urge every man of GOD to search for Him, so that with godliness each one can serve ever more and better the One who enlisted him."

Financial Status - September 2016 Update

Daniel Portela, Executive Vice-President

We would like to thank all of our brothers and sisters who have supported our college. Up to the end of September 2016 we have received close to \$66,553 of the \$95,000 budgeted for the year (70%). There are still some months left for us to reach our budget, and so we pray that our Lord may raise up more supporters for our ministry.



If you still have not joined our support team, here are some ways to assist our ministry:

1. Pray for the IRTC, its teachers, leaderships, students and financial situation
2. Contribute financially to the IRTC through PayPal
3. Refer prospective students to the IRTC
4. Share this newsletter to disseminate the work and the needs of the IRTC

If the Lord moves you to contribute in some way, please visit the "Donations" page on our website (www.pro-rege.net/ds14.htm). There you will find all the information necessary for making your contribution in the USA. Canadian donors, please make your donations at www.irtcsociety.ca.

May the grace and peace of our Lord be with you all.

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