

Numbers 22:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you.

Analysis

Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave—Balaam initially obeyed God's prohibition (v. 12). The Hebrew **מֵאָנָה** (mē'ānā, "refuseth") is emphatic: Yahweh absolutely denied permission. Yet Balaam's wording is telling: he told Balak's princes "the LORD refuseth," not "I refuse" or "God forbids this sin." His passive construction reveals divided loyalty—technically obedient while leaving the door open for negotiation.

Ancient Near Eastern prophets were often hired for divination or curses, making Balaam's profession lucrative but spiritually compromised. His reluctance to definitively reject Balak foreshadows his eventual capitulation when the offer increases.

Historical Context

In the 13th century BC, professional diviners like Balaam were common throughout Mesopotamia and the Levant. Kings regularly employed them for blessing armies or cursing enemies. Balaam's international reputation (he lived in Pethor near the Euphrates, ~400 miles from Moab) indicates he was considered exceptionally powerful.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. When you technically obey God while leaving room for future compromise, what does that reveal about your heart?
2. How does framing God's clear "no" as merely His current position (rather than absolute truth) open you to temptation?
3. What professional or financial opportunities tempt you to negotiate with God's clear commands?

Interlinear Text

בְּלֹא שֶׁר וְ שֶׁר בְּלֹא בְּלֹא בְּלֹא בְּלֹא בְּלֹא
רָISEN UP וְ Balaam in the morning and said unto the princes of Balak
H6965 H1109 H1242 H413 H559 H8269 H1111

לֹבֶל נִיְתְּנֵת מִיא מִיא יְנַצְּחָמָה אֶל אֶל בְּלֹא בְּלֹא
to go H413 you into your land H3588 refuseth for the LORD to give me leave
H1980 H776 H3985 H3068 H5414

עַמְקָם: לֹבֶל נִיְתְּנֵת
to go H5973
H1980

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