

Numbers 22:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.

Analysis

The angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side—God progressively narrowed Balaam's options. First, open field (v. 23) allowing escape; now, walled vineyard path limiting maneuver. The מִשְׁׁמֶת (miš'ôl, "path") between walls גָּדֵר, gādēr, stone walls marking property boundaries) restricted movement, making evasion harder.

This intensification demonstrates God's patient, escalating discipline. He doesn't immediately strike down the rebellious but progressively constrains them, limiting options until they must acknowledge His opposition. The vineyard setting is symbolic—Israel is repeatedly called God's vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7). Balaam sought to curse God's vineyard while God blocked his path through it.

Historical Context

Palestinian vineyards were typically terraced hillsides with stone retaining walls on both sides of paths. These narrow passages between walls were common in the hill country, making travel routes predictable and evasion impossible when obstacles appeared.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. When God progressively narrows your options through increasing obstacles, are you recognizing His discipline or hardening your determination?
2. How does God's patient escalation of constraints demonstrate mercy—giving you multiple opportunities to turn back before final judgment?
3. What walls is God placing in your life to prevent you from cursing His vineyard while claiming to serve Him?

Interlinear Text

אֵין רַבְכָּמִים בְּמִשְׁעָוָל מְלָא כָּה יְהִי הַיּוֹם יְמִינָךְ

stood But the angel of the LORD in a path of the vineyards a wall

H5975 H4397 H3068 H4934 H3754 H1447

מִזְהָה: אֵגֶד רַמְזֵה H2088 a wall H1447 H2088

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