

Numbers 22:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

Analysis

God miraculously 'opened the mouth of the ass' to speak to Balaam, asking 'What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?' This unprecedented miracle (2 Peter 2:16 calls it unique) revealed God's power over creation and rebuked Balaam's stubborn persistence in wrong direction. That a dumb beast saw God's angel while the prophet remained blind showed spiritual blindness can afflict even those who hear from God.

Historical Context

This is the only biblical account of an animal speaking besides the serpent in Eden. The miracle served double purpose: revealing the angel blocking Balaam's path and shaming the prophet whose moral sight was inferior to his donkey's.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. When has God used unexpected or humbling means to correct your wrong-headed persistence?
2. How can someone hear from God yet remain spiritually blind to His obvious opposition?

Interlinear Text

וּפָתָהּ	יְהוָה	אֶת	פִּי	הָאֵת וֵן	וַתֹּאמֶר	לְבָלָעַם
opened	And the LORD	H853	the mouth	of the ass	and she said	unto Balaam
H6605	H3068		H6310	H860	H559	H1109
מָה	עָשָׂה יְהוָה	לִי	כִּי	הִכִּיתָ נִי		זֶה
H4100	What have I done	H0	H3588	unto thee that thou hast smitten		H2088
	H6213			H5221		
שָׁלֹשׁ	הַנִּלְמָד:					
me these three	times					
H7969	H7272					

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 2:16 (Parallel theme): But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

Luke 1:37 (Parallel theme): For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Exodus 4:11 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?