

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

וַיַּחֲזַק	יְהִי	הַ	אֶת	פִּ	בְּאַת	וְ	לְבָלָעֵם	וְתֵאמֵר
opened	And the LORD		H853	the mouth		of the ass	and she said	unto Balaam
H6605	H3068			H6310		H860	H559	H1109
מָה	עָשָׂ	יְתִי	כִּי	לְבָ	הַפִּיתְ	נִ	זֶה	
H4100	What have I done		H0	H3588	unto thee that thou hast smitten	H5221	H2088	
H6213								
שְׁלַשְׁ	גָּלִים:							
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?