

Numbers 22:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

Analysis

Balaam arrives and tells Balak 'Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.' This accurately acknowledges his prophetic limitations—he cannot curse whom God hasn't cursed. Yet Balaam's later actions (counseling Moab to tempt Israel to sin) revealed that intellectual acknowledgment of God's sovereignty doesn't equal heart submission.

Historical Context

Balaam's declaration set expectations for the oracles that follow (chapters 23-24), where he repeatedly blessed Israel despite Balak's requests to curse. Each blessing increasingly frustrated Balak while powerfully prophesying Israel's blessed status and future Messiah.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How can you acknowledge God's authority verbally while still seeking ways around His will?
2. What does it mean to truly surrender all your words to speak only what God provides?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	וּבִלְעָם	אֶל	בָּלָק	קֹהֵן	בֶּן אֲמִי	אֵל יִרְיָ	עַתָּה
said	And Balaam		unto Balak		Lo I am come		
H559	H1109	H413	H1111	H2009	H935	H413	H6258
לֹא	אֲנִי לֹא	אֶדְבֹר:	מָה וְכֵן	הַדָּבָר	אֲשֶׁר	יְשׁוּעָה	
	at all	that shall I speak	any thing	the word		putteth	
H3605	H3201	H1696	H3972	H1697	H834	H7760	
אֱלֹהֵי	בִּפְּי	אֶת־	אֶדְבֹר:				
that God	in my mouth		that shall I speak				
H430	H6310	H853	H1696				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 19:21 (Parallel theme): There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Numbers 22:18 (Word): And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.

Numbers 23:26 (Parallel theme): But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do?

Numbers 23:16 (Word): And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.

