

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

עָתָה אֵל יְהֹוָה בְּאַתְּ מִלְּעָדָךְ
said And Balaam unto Balak Lo I am come
H559 H1109 H413 H1111 H2009 H935 H413 H6258

וְשָׁם אָשָׁר פָּדַב רָמָא וּמָה אָדָבָר אָוֹךְ לְהַלְכָה
at all that shall I speak any thing the word putteth
H3605 H3201 H1696 H3972 H1697 H834 H7760

אֲלֹהָ יְהֹוָה בְּפִי אָתָה אָדָבָר
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.

