

Numbers 22:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?

Analysis

God coming to Balaam and asking 'What men are these with thee?' demonstrates divine omniscience interrogating not for information but for revelation. God knew the messengers' identity and purpose; the question forced Balaam to articulate the situation, revealing his own heart. This mirrors God's question to Adam 'Where art thou?' (Genesis 3:9) and to Cain 'Where is Abel thy brother?' (Genesis 4:9). God's questions are pedagogical and judicial, not informational. They expose human hearts before rendering judgment or instruction.

Historical Context

God's appearance to Balaam in the night (verse 20) parallels His nighttime revelations to other non-Israelites like Abimelech (Genesis 20:3) and Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:19). These nocturnal revelations often came as dreams or visions, the primary modes of prophetic experience. That God would speak to a pagan diviner shows His sovereignty over all revelation and His determination to protect Israel from cursing.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do God's questions to us function to reveal our hearts rather than inform Him?
2. What does God speaking to pagans teach about His universal sovereignty?
3. How should we respond when God asks questions we know He already knows the answer to?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹא	אֵלֶּה יְהוָה	אֶל	בְּלָעָם	וַיֹּאמֶר	מִי	הָאֲנָשִׁים	לָהּ
came	And God	H413	unto Balaam	and said	H4310	What men	H428
H935	H430		H1109	H559		H582	

עָמָר:
H5973

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 20:3 (References God): But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

Numbers 22:20 (References God): And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.