

# Numbers 23:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?

## Analysis

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Balaam responds 'Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?' This acknowledges prophetic obligation to speak God's words regardless of personal cost or preference. True prophets cannot tailor messages to audience expectations or financial incentives. Yet Balaam's later actions proved he sought loopholes when direct cursing was forbidden.

## Historical Context

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Balaam's constraint to speak only God's words establishes the standard for genuine prophecy throughout Scripture. False prophets speak what people want to hear (Jeremiah 23:16-17, Ezekiel 13:2-3), while true prophets speak God's words despite opposition.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How do you ensure your words reflect God's truth rather than audience expectations?

2. What cost are you willing to bear to speak unpopular truth God has revealed?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר	בְּלֹא	וַיֹּאמֶר	יְשִׁים	אֲשֶׁר	רָאָתָה	יְשִׁים	יְמִינָה	אֲשֶׁר	רָאָתָה	יְשִׁים	יְמִינָה
<b>And he answered</b>	<b>and said</b>	H3808	H853	H834	<b>hath put</b>	H7760					
H6030	H559										

  

וְהַיָּה	בְּפִי	אֲשֶׁר	רָאָתָה	לְדֹבֶר
<b>that which the LORD</b>	<b>in my mouth</b>	H853	<b>Must I not take heed</b>	<b>to speak</b>
H3068	H6310		H8104	H1696

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 22:38** (Parallel theme): 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.

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

**Numbers 24:13** (References Lord): If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak?

**Numbers 23:20** (Parallel theme): Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

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