

Numbers 23:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.

Analysis

God 'met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.' This second oracle followed the same pattern—God controlled Balaam's speech. The repetition emphasized divine sovereignty: attempts to manipulate Balaam into cursing failed because God, not Balak, determined prophetic content. This prefigures Jesus' teaching that disciples speak what the Spirit gives (Matthew 10:19-20).

Historical Context

The second oracle (vv.18-24) intensified the blessing, declaring God doesn't lie or change His mind (v.19), and that He sees no iniquity in Jacob. Each successive oracle made Israel's blessed status more emphatic, frustrating Balak further.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God putting words in prophets' mouths guarantee reliability of Scripture?

2. What comfort comes from knowing God's blessing on His people cannot be revoked or changed?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּקַּח	יְהוָה	אֶל	בַּלָּעַם	וַיִּשֶׂם	דָּבָר	בְּפִי	וַיֹּאמֶר
met	And the LORD	H413	Balaam	and put	a word	in his mouth	and said
H7136	H3068		H1109	H7760	H1697	H6310	H559
שׁוּב	אֶל	בַּלָּק	וְכֹה	תִּדְבֹר:			
Go again	H413	unto Balak	H3541	and say			
H7725		H1111		H1696			

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 23:5 (Word): And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.