

Numbers 23:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.

Analysis

Balaam states 'I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.' The phrase 'I cannot reverse it' emphasizes absolute impossibility—no power can undo God's blessing once pronounced. God's blessing on Israel wasn't conditional on perfect obedience but flowed from His sovereign choice and covenant faithfulness. This anticipates the New Testament teaching that nothing can separate believers from God's love (Romans 8:38-39).

Historical Context

Despite Israel's repeated rebellions chronicled in Numbers, God's blessing remained secure because it rested on His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not Israel's performance. This grace-based security prefigures salvation by grace through faith.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the irreversibility of God's blessing provide assurance of your security in Christ?
2. What attempts to curse or condemn you are futile because of God's blessing in Christ?

Interlinear Text

וְבָרַךְ לְקַחְתִּי אַל אַבְרָהָם
H2009 and he hath blessed H1288 Behold I have received H3947 and he hath blessed H1288 H3808

אֲשִׁיבָנָה:

and I cannot reverse
H7725

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 22:12 (Blessing): And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.

Genesis 22:17 (Blessing): That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

Genesis 12:2 (Blessing): And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Isaiah 43:13 (Parallel theme): Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

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.

1 Peter 1:5 (Parallel theme): Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Numbers 22:38 (Word): 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.

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