

Numbers 23:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.

Analysis

Balaam's instruction 'Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me' reveals his uncertainty about receiving divine revelation. The Hebrew *ulay* (peradventure/perhaps) shows he could not command God's presence. This contrasts sharply with Mosaic prophecy where God spoke regularly and reliably to His appointed prophet. Balaam's tentative approach exposed him as an outsider to covenant relationship. He could not presume on divine communication but must wait to see if God would condescend to speak. True prophets know God's voice; Balaam hoped for it.

Historical Context

Balaam's phrase 'the LORD will come to meet me' (*yiqareh YHWH liqrati*) uses language of divine encounter. Moses regularly experienced such encounters at the tent of meeting (Exodus 33:11). Balaam's hope that God might meet him shows he understood Yahweh's personal nature, unlike impersonal pagan deities. However, his uncertainty revealed he had no covenant relationship guaranteeing divine communion.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does covenant relationship with God provide assurance of His presence versus uncertain hope?
2. What distinguishes authentic prophetic calling from freelance spiritual practitioners?
3. How do believers know God's voice versus mere hope that He might speak?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר	וַיֹּאמֶר	בָּלָאָם	לְבָלָק	הַתִּיִצֵּב	עַל	עֲלֹתְךָ
said		And Balaam	unto Balak	Stand	H5921	by thy burnt offering
H559		H1109	H1111	H3320		H5930
וְאֵלֶיךָ	אֵלַי	יָקֹם	יְהוָה	לִקְרַאתִי		
H1980	H194	will come	peradventure the LORD	to meet		
		H7136	H3068	H7125		
וְדָבָר	מֶה	יֹאמַר	וְהִגַּדְתִּי	לְךָ	וְיִלָּךְ	שָׁפִי:
me and whatsoever	H4100	he sheweth	me I will tell	H0	H1980	to an high place
H1697		H7200	H5046			H8205

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 23:15 (Sacrifice): And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet the LORD yonder.

Numbers 24:1 (References Lord): And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

