

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

עַל־תְּעַלְתָּךְ עַל הַתִּצְאֵב לְבָלָק בֶּלְעָם וְיֵאמֶר
by thy burnt offering on stand Balak Balaam said

H5930

And Balaam

H1109

unto Balak

H1111

Stand

H5921

by thy burnt offering

H5930

לְקִבְאָתִי יְהֹוָה יָקֹר ה אֹלֵל וְאֶלְכֵה
to meet the LORD peradventure the LORD will come H1980

H1980

H194

H7136

YHWH

H3068

to meet

H7125

שְׁפִינָה וְלֹא לְר וְלֹא מִמְּה וְלֹא נִי וְלֹא דָתִי וְלֹא רִדְבָּר
to an high place me I will tell H0 H1980 he sheweth H7200 me and whatsoever
H8205

H1697

H5046

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.

