

Numbers 23:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram.

Analysis

The statement 'God met Balaam' shows divine initiative despite Balaam's manipulation. The Hebrew *vayiqar Elohim* (and God met) indicates God sovereignly chose to encounter Balaam, not because the ritual compelled Him but because He would protect His people. God met Balaam to put His own words in the prophet's mouth (verse 5), ensuring that blessing, not cursing, would result. This demonstrates God's sovereignty over even pagan prophets and His determination to accomplish His purposes regardless of human schemes.

Historical Context

God's meeting with Balaam parallels His earlier prohibition in chapter 22. Throughout the narrative, God sovereignly directs Balaam's words despite the prophet's mercenary motives. This divine control over false prophets appears elsewhere: God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 9:12), sent lying spirits to false prophets (1 Kings 22:22), and used even Satan's actions for His purposes (Job 1-2). God's sovereignty extends over all powers, even opposition.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereignty over false prophets comfort His people under spiritual attack?
2. What does God's control of Balaam teach about His comprehensive rule over all spiritual forces?
3. How should we pray when spiritual opponents seem powerful?

Interlinear Text

שִׁבְעַת אֶת אֵל יוֹי אָמַר בְּלַעַם אֶל אֱלֹהֵי יִמְּךָ רַ
met **And God** **H413** **Balaam** **and he said** **H413** **H853** **seven**
H7136 H430 H1109 H559 H7651

וְאֵל וְאֵל פָּר עֹלָא עָבַר כְּתִי בַמִּזְבְּחִים:
altars **unto him I have prepared** **and I have offered** **a bullock** **and a ram**
H4196 H6186 H5927 H6499 H352

בַּמִּזְבְּחִים:
altars
H4196

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 23:16 (Parallel theme): And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.