

Numbers 24:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

Analysis

And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way—Balaam's departure (וַיָּשָׁב וַיֵּלֶךְ ...וַיָּשָׁב qam... vayelexh vayashav, 'rose... went... returned') marks the oracle sequence's conclusion. The parallel structure—**Balaam returned to his place, Balak went his way**—emphasizes anticlimactic separation after the dramatic prophecies. Despite supernatural encounters and profound oracles, both men returned to their former paths.

Tragically, Numbers 31:8,16 and Revelation 2:14 reveal Balaam later advised Midianites to seduce Israel through intermarriage and Baal-worship, causing the Peor plague (Numbers 25). Though unable to curse Israel directly, Balaam found indirect means to profit from Israel's destruction. Peter warns against 'the error of Balaam' (2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11)—using spiritual gifts for personal gain while compromising moral integrity.

Historical Context

Balaam returned to Pethor (Mesopotamia, 22:5) after failing to curse Israel. However, he soon reappeared in Midianite territory (modern Jordan), where he counseled the Baal-peor seduction scheme (Numbers 31:16). He died in Israel's judgment on Midian (Numbers 31:8), earning infamy as paradigm of prophetic corruption.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Balaam's 'return to his place' after supernatural encounters warn against hearing God's word without transformation?
2. What does Balaam's later advice causing Israel's Peor sin teach about the danger of prophetic gifting divorced from moral character?
3. How can believers ensure that encounters with God produce heart change rather than merely temporary religious experience before 'returning to your place'?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּקֶם	בָּלָעַם	הָלַךְ	וַיָּשָׁב	לְמִקְוֵהוּ	וְגַם	בָּלָק
rose up	And Balaam	also went	and returned	to his place	H1571	and Balak
H6965	H1109	H1980	H7725	H4725		H1111
הָלַךְ	לְדִרְכּוֹ:					
also went	his way					
H1980	H1870					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 31:8 (Parallel theme): And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.