

Numbers 24:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

Analysis

Balaam declares himself 'He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.' This describes genuine prophetic experience—hearing God's words, seeing visions, entering trance states with spiritual eyes open. Yet even authentic prophetic gifting doesn't guarantee righteous character, as Balaam's later wickedness proved (2 Peter 2:15-16, Jude 11, Revelation 2:14).

Historical Context

Balaam was a real prophet who genuinely contacted Yahweh, showing God can use imperfect vessels to speak truth while disapproving their character. This warns against assuming gifting indicates spiritual maturity or divine approval.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How can someone exercise genuine spiritual gifts while having corrupt character?
2. What does Balaam's example teach about distinguishing between gifting and godliness?

Interlinear Text

שָׁמַיִם	מִקְרָא	הַאֲלֹהִים	אֲשֶׁר	אֶל	אֶת	שְׁמָמָן	עִמָּךְ	נָאָמֵן
He hath said	which heard	the words	of God		H834	the vision	of the Almighty	
H5002	H8085	H561	H410			H4236		H7706
which saw	falling	open	into a trance	but having his eyes		עִינָיו:		
H2372	H5307	H1540		H5869				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 1:17 (Parallel theme): And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Revelation 1:10 (Parallel theme): I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Ezekiel 1:28 (Parallel theme): As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Numbers 12:6 (Word): And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.