

Deuteronomy 31:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.

Analysis

And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel—the simplicity of this verse belies its gravity. Vayelekh Moshe ("And Moses went") uses the same verb that will describe his impending death (Deuteronomy 31:14, 32:50). At 120 years old, facing his final days, Moses delivers his farewell address to **all Israel** (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל kol-Yisra'el), emphasizing covenant unity and collective responsibility.

This verse marks a transition from covenant exposition (chapters 5-30) to leadership transfer and prophetic witness (chapters 31-34). "These words" refers to the choice between life and death just articulated (30:15-20). Moses' final pastoral act is not administrative delegation but theological declaration—he speaks covenant truth to the entire assembly. Like Paul's farewell at Miletus (Acts 20:17-38), Moses' final words carry urgency, authority, and pastoral love for those he will soon leave behind.

Historical Context

Deuteronomy 31 begins Moses' final month of life (circa 1406 BC). Standing in the plains of Moab, within sight of the Promised Land he cannot enter, Moses prepares Israel for life without him. For forty years he has been their mediator, judge, and prophet. His farewell address establishes Torah in written form, appoints Joshua as successor, and prophesies Israel's future apostasy and restoration. This chapter parallels ancient Near Eastern testaments where patriarchs and leaders delivered deathbed instructions.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What final words of spiritual instruction would you leave to those you shepherd if you knew your time was short?
2. How does Moses' addressing 'all Israel' (not just leaders) model the communal nature of covenant faith?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּלֶךְ	מֹשֶׁה	וַיִּדְבֹּר	אֶת	הַדְּבָרִים	הָאֵלֶּה	אֵל	כָּל
H1980	And Moses	and spake	H853	these words	H428	H413	H3605
	H4872	H1696		H1697			

יִשְׂרָאֵל:

unto all Israel

H3478