

Deuteronomy 31:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying,

Analysis

That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying—Moses addressed the specific Levitical clan responsible for transporting the ark (descendants of Kohath, Numbers 3:27-32). These Levites had the sacred duty of carrying the ark during Israel's travels and tending it when stationary. Entrusting them with the law-book connected Scripture's authority with the covenant's physical symbol, the ark containing the Ten Commandments tablets.

The Levites' role as Scripture custodians established a pattern of dedicated persons responsible for preserving and teaching God's word. This wasn't democratized access where everyone kept personal copies (impractical given pre-printing technology and literacy rates) but centralized preservation ensuring textual integrity. Yet the preservation served democratized access—the Levites were to read it publicly (31:11) and teach it comprehensively (Leviticus 10:11, Nehemiah 8:7-8). The pattern continues: church leaders preserve orthodox teaching while ensuring all believers access Scripture.

Historical Context

Commanded circa 1406 BC as Moses prepared for death. The Kohathite Levites who carried the ark would soon cross Jordan (Joshua 3-4, where priests bearing the ark stopped in the riverbed until all Israel crossed). After conquest, the ark resided at Shiloh (Joshua 18:1), then moved through various locations until

Solomon placed it in Jerusalem's temple (1 Kings 8:3-9). The law-book remained beside the ark, symbolically uniting God's covenant (ark contents: Ten Commandments tablets, Aaron's rod, manna pot) with His comprehensive revelation (the law-book).

Related Passages

John 15:13 – Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 – God is love

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What's the relationship between preserving Scripture's integrity (specialized custodians) and democratizing access (public reading)?
2. How does placing the law-book beside the ark symbolize the unity of covenant and comprehensive revelation?
3. What safeguards prevent either hoarding Scripture (restricting access) or corrupting it (everyone creating their own version)?

Interlinear Text

ברית	אָרְן	בְּנֵשָׁא	בְּלֹויִם	מֹשֶׁה	אַתָּה	מִצְאָה	וְיָצָא
commanded	That Moses	H853	the Levites	which bare	the ark	of the covenant	
H6680	H4872		H3881	H5375	H727		H1285