

# Exodus 18:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

## Analysis

**Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness**—Jethro's criteria for judges establishes qualifications for spiritual leadership. 'Able men' (אֲנָשֵׁי-חַיִּיל, *anshei-chayil*) means capable, strong, competent. 'Such as fear God' (יִרְאֵי אֱלֹהִים, *yirei Elohim*) prioritizes spiritual qualification—reverence for God precedes all other qualifications. 'Men of truth' (אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֶת, *anshei emet*) indicates integrity and reliability. 'Hating covetousness' (שׂוֹנְאֵי בָצַע, *son'ei vatza'*) means rejecting bribery and corruption. These four qualifications—ability, godliness, truthfulness, incorruptibility—apply to all church leadership (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-7). The command to 'place such over them' as rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens establishes hierarchical structure for efficient governance.

## Historical Context

This fourfold qualification system predated formal law but established enduring leadership criteria. Acts 6:3's deacon qualifications echo these standards: 'men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.'

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. Why does 'fear of God' appear first among qualifications, before ability or integrity?
2. How does 'hating covetousness' protect justice from corruption through bribery?

## Interlinear Text

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וְיֵאֵת הַ	תִּתֶּן הַ	מִכָּל	הָ עַם	אֲנִשִּׁי	יָלֵד
H859	Moreover thou shalt provide	H3605	out of all the people	H376	able
	H2372		H5971		H2428
וְכַדְמָה	אֱלֹהֵי יָם	אֱמֶת	שֹׂנְאֵי	בְּצַע	וְשִׁמְתָּ
such as fear	God	H376	of truth	hating	covetousness
H3373	H430		H571	H8130	H1215
					H7760
וְעַלֵּה מִ	וְשָׂרֵי	אֲלָפִים	וְשָׂרֵי	מֵאֹת	וְשָׂרֵי
H5921	and rulers	of thousands	and rulers	of hundreds	and rulers
	H8269	H505	H8269	H3967	H8269
חֲמִשָּׁה יָם	וְשָׂרֵי	עֶשְׂרִים:			
of fifties	and rulers	of tens			
H2572	H8269	H6235			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 6:3** (Parallel theme): Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

**Exodus 18:25** (Parallel theme): And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

**Genesis 42:18** (References God): And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

**Ezekiel 18:8** (Truth): He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

**2 Samuel 23:3** (References God): The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

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