

Exodus 18:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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—Moses' implementation follows Jethro's qualifications precisely. The verb 'chose' (וַיִּבְחַר, vayivchar) indicates careful selection based on the criteria in verse 21. The hierarchical structure—thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens—creates manageable ratios of oversight. For 2+ million people, this required approximately 78,600 judges (assuming 600,000 men plus families). This massive delegation distributes authority while maintaining order. The 'heads over the people' (רָאשֵׁי אֲמָלִים, rashim al-ha'am) establishes clear chain of command. This organizational structure prefigures the church where elders oversee flocks (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet 5:2) and various roles distribute ministry (Rom 12:4-8).

Historical Context

This judicial system established at Rephidim became the administrative backbone for Israel's governance. When Israel later requested judges throughout their land, the structure was already established (Deut 16:18).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does hierarchical structure (thousands to tens) balance efficiency with personal care?
2. What does distributing authority among tens of thousands of judges teach about shared leadership?

Interlinear Text

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|--------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------|
| וְבָחַרְתִּי | מֹשֶׁה | אֲנָשִׁים | יָכוֹל | יֵשׁוּעַ | וַיַּעַשׂ | אֶת־ |
| chose | And Moses | men | able | out of all Israel | and made | |
| H977 | H4872 | H582 | H2428 | H3478 | H5414 | H853 |
| רָאשֵׁי | עַל | הָעָם | וְשָׂרֵי | אֲלָפִים | וְשָׂרֵי | |
| them heads | | over the people | and rulers | of thousands | and rulers | |
| H7218 | H5921 | H5971 | H8269 | H505 | H8269 | |
| מֵאֲרֵב | וְשָׂרֵי | חֲמִשָּׁים | וְשָׂרֵי | עֲשָׂרִים: | | |
| of hundreds | and rulers | of fifties | and rulers | of tens | | |
| H3967 | H8269 | H2572 | H8269 | H6235 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 1:15 (Creation): So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

Exodus 18:21 (Parallel theme): 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:

