

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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

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

וַיִּבְחַר	וַיַּעַשׂ	אֲנָשִׁי	יָלֵךְ	מִכָּל	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיַּעַשׂ	אֹתָם
chose	And Moses	men	able	H3605	out of all Israel	and made	H853
H977	H4872	H582	H2428		H3478	H5414	
וַיַּעַשׂ	עָלֵיהֶם	רֹאשֵׁי	וְשָׂרֵי	אֶלְפִים	וְשָׂרֵי		
them heads	H5921	over the people	and rulers	of thousands	and rulers		
H7218		H5971	H8269	H505	H8269		
וַיַּעַשׂ	וְשָׂרֵי	רֹאשֵׁי	וְשָׂרֵי	עֶשְׂרִים:			
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:

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