

Numbers 10:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Analysis

Over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. Simeon marched with Reuben's division, under their commander Shelumiel (שְׁלֻמִּיֵּל, "God is my peace"). The name ironically contrasts Simeon's violent history—Jacob cursed Simeon and Levi for their fierce anger and cruel wrath at Shechem (Genesis 34, 49:5-7). Yet God's renaming through leadership appointments offers redemption: the tribe of violence is led by one whose name proclaims divine peace.

Simeon's pairing with Reuben is significant—both tribes faced paternal curse yet continued in Israel. Simeon would eventually be absorbed largely into Judah (Joshua 19:1), their distinct identity fading. This verse records their temporary prominence under God's organization, showing that present structure doesn't guarantee future survival apart from covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

Shelumiel brought Simeon's offering at the tabernacle dedication (Numbers 7:36-41) and assisted with the census (Numbers 1:6). Simeon numbered 59,300 fighting men initially (Numbers 1:23) but decreased dramatically to 22,200 by the second census (Numbers 26:14)—the only tribe to decline, losing over 60% of their warriors. This catastrophic reduction likely resulted from judgment during the Baal-Peor apostasy (Numbers 25), where a Simeonite prince, Zimri, brought a Midianite woman into camp and was executed by Phinehas. Simeon's subsequent

weakness led to their absorption into Judah, fulfilling Jacob's prophecy that they would be "divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel" (Genesis 49:7).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Shelumiel's name ("God is my peace") leading violent Simeon illustrate God's transformative grace that redefines identity?
2. What warning does Simeon's later dramatic decline offer about how present privilege doesn't ensure future blessing apart from faithfulness?
3. How might God be using your current responsibilities to rename you—to make you what your past would never suggest?

Interlinear Text

וַעַל	אָפֶּתֶת	מִטֵּה	בְּנֵי	שִׁמְעֹן	לְשִׁלְמִיֵּאל
H5921	And over the host	of the tribe	of the children	of Simeon	was Shelumiel
	H6635	H4294	H1121	H8095	H8017
בְּנֵי	צֻרִישַׁדָּי:				
of the children	of Zurishaddai				
H1121	H6701				

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 1:6 (Parallel theme): Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.