

Numbers 10:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

Analysis

Moses invites his brother-in-law Hobab (also called Reuel/Jethro) to accompany Israel to the Promised Land, promising 'we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.' This invitation reveals several truths:

1. God's blessing on Israel could extend to associated Gentiles who aligned themselves with God's people
2. The promise of doing good to others reflects covenant blessings' communal nature—God's people prosper together
3. Moses recognized Hobab's practical knowledge of wilderness travel could benefit Israel ('thou mayest be to us instead of eyes,' verse 31)
4. Faith welcomes others to share covenant blessings rather than hoarding them exclusively.

Hobab initially declined (verse 30) but apparently reconsidered, as his descendants (the Kenites) later dwelt among Israel (Judges 1:16; 4:11). This episode illustrates that covenant relationship with God creates a community that blesses outsiders who join it. The principle extends to the church, where believers invite others to experience the blessings of relationship with God through Christ. Gospel invitation offers genuine good—not manipulation or empty promises—because God has 'spoken good' concerning His people.

Historical Context

Hobab was a Midianite, the son of Reuel (also called Jethro), Moses' father-in-law who had advised Moses about delegating judicial responsibilities earlier (Exodus 18). The Midianites were descendants of Abraham through Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2), making them distant relatives of Israel. Hobab's knowledge of the wilderness regions would have been valuable for finding water, pasture, and safe camping locations. The Kenites (Hobab's descendants) maintained friendly relations with Israel throughout the conquest and judges period, with Jael the Kenite famously killing Sisera to help Israel (Judges 4:11-22). This demonstrates how individuals and families from outside ethnic Israel could join the covenant community and be blessed along with God's people. The pattern anticipates the gospel's inclusion of Gentiles into God's family through faith in Christ. Hobab's eventual acceptance of Moses' invitation shows the attractiveness of God's blessing—when genuinely experienced and offered, covenant blessings draw others to join God's people.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' invitation to Hobab model the church's responsibility to invite outsiders to experience God's covenant blessings?
2. What does the promise 'we will do thee good' teach about the communal nature of covenant blessings that can be shared with others?

Interlinear Text

הָתָּה	פָּמְדִינִי	רְעוֹאָה	לְבָנִי	לְחֶבֶב	מִשְׁהָא	אֶםְרָה
said	And Moses	unto Hobab	the son	of Raguel	the Midianite	father in law
H559	H4872	H2246	H1121	H7467	H4084	H2859
אֶםְרָה אֲשֶׁר	הַמְּקוֹם	אֶל	אָנָּה חָנוּ	נִסְעָה יָמִן	מִשְׁהָא	
And Moses	We are journeying		H587	H413	unto the place	H834
H4872	H5265				H4725	H559
לְבָנָה וְהַטְבָּה אֶת זֶה אֶת הַלְּכָם		לְכָה	לְכָה מִתְּבָנָה	אֶת נֵהֶר	וְהַלְּכָה	
for the LORD	I will give		H0	H1980	H854	H0
H3068	H5414					
יִשְׂרָאֵל:	עַל טוֹב	דְּבָרְךָ	יְהִי הָאָמֵן	פָּ		
for the LORD	hath spoken	good	H5921	concerning Israel	H3588	H3068
		H2896				

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 12:7 (References Lord): And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Exodus 2:18 (Parallel theme): And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day?

Exodus 3:1 (Word): Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

Judges 4:11 (Word): Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.

Genesis 32:12 (Good): And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

