

Numbers 10:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

Analysis

And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred—Hobab's (חֹבָב, Ḥōḇāḇ) initial refusal reveals the tension between natural family loyalty and divine calling. His desire to return to Midian (miḏyān) mirrors our struggle between comfort and faith. Moses' plea (v. 31-32) transforms this from mere pragmatism into covenant invitation—Hobab would share in God's promises to Israel.

The narrative leaves Hobab's final decision ambiguous, though Judges 1:16 and 4:11 suggest he eventually accompanied Israel. His expertise as a desert nomad ('êynê, 'eyes,' v. 31) was valuable, but more significant was Moses' offer to include him in Israel's blessing. This foreshadows the inclusion of Gentiles in God's covenant people.

Historical Context

Hobab was Moses' brother-in-law (Midianite, possibly the son of Reuel/Jethro). This exchange occurred as Israel prepared to depart Mount Sinai after receiving the Law. Midianites were descendants of Abraham through Keturah (Genesis 25:2), making them distant relatives of Israel. The invitation to Hobab reflects the period's tribal alliance patterns.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. When has God called you away from 'your own land' (comfort, family expectations, security) to follow Him into unfamiliar territory?
2. How does Moses' invitation to Hobab ('what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee') reflect the gospel invitation to outsiders?
3. What 'desert expertise' has God given you that could serve His people, even if you feel like an outsider?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֶל	כִּי	אֵלַי	לֵאמֹר	אֶל	אֶרְצִי	וְאֵלַי
And he said						to mine own land	
H559	H413	H3808	H1980	H3588	H518	H413	H776
וְאֵלַי	וְאֵלַי						
and to my kindred							
H4138	H1980						

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