

Numbers 10:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.

Analysis

Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness—Moses appeals to Hobab's practical knowledge: **thou mayest be to us instead of eyes** (וְהָיָתָ לָנוּ לְעֵינַיִם, wəhāyîṭā lānū lə'ênayim). This phrase acknowledges human instrumentality within divine guidance—the pillar of cloud led Israel, yet human wisdom remained valuable.

This challenges both hyper-spiritualism (ignoring practical wisdom) and rationalism (trusting only human knowledge). God often provides direction through consecrated human expertise. Moses' humility in seeking help, despite having direct divine revelation, models leadership that honors others' gifts while maintaining ultimate dependence on God's guidance.

Historical Context

The 'wilderness' (מִדְבָּר, midbār) between Sinai and Canaan was Hobab's native territory. His Midianite knowledge of water sources, safe routes, and camping sites would prove invaluable. This occurred circa 1446-1406 BC during Israel's wilderness wandering. Moses' request shows the value of local expertise in unfamiliar terrain.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. When have you been tempted to rely solely on 'spiritual guidance' while ignoring practical wisdom God has provided through others?
2. How can you be 'eyes' for others in areas where God has given you specialized knowledge or experience?
3. What does Moses' humble request teach about leadership—even when you have divine authority?

Interlinear Text

עַל	כִּי	יֵן	אֶתְּ	נוֹ	תַּעֲזֹב	בְּ	נָא	אֵל	וַיֹּאמֶר
H5921	H3588	H853	Leave	H4994	H408	And he said	H559		
חֲנִית	נוֹ	יָד	עָנָה	כִּי					
H2583	how we are to encamp	H3045	us not I pray thee forasmuch as thou knowest	H3651					
לְעֵינֵינוּ:	לָנוּ וְהָיָה יְתָר בַּמִּדְבָּר								
H5869	and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes	H0	H1961	in the wilderness	H4057				

Additional Cross-References

Job 29:15 (Parallel theme): I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.

