

Numbers 10:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

Analysis

When it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel—Moses' invocation (שׁׁוּבָה יְהֹוָה shuvah YHWH) whenever the cloud halted uses the verb 'return' (שׁׁוּב), not merely 'remain,' suggesting dynamic divine presence rather than static location. The phrase **many thousands** (רְבָבָות אֲלֹפִים) rivvot alfei, literally 'ten thousands of thousands') emphasizes Israel's vast multitude under God's protection.

This verse pairs with 10:35 to form liturgical brackets around Israel's march—'Rise up, LORD' (קְרַבָּה יְהֹוָה) when departing, 'Return, LORD' when encamping. These invocations became fixed elements of Jewish liturgy and appear in synagogue ark ceremonials. The pattern establishes that all movement (spiritual and physical) requires divine initiative and presence, foreshadowing Christ's promise to be with His church always (Matthew 28:20).

Historical Context

This verse concludes the section on cloud movements and trumpet signals (Numbers 9:15-10:36), establishing liturgical patterns for Israel's wilderness journeys. Moses spoke these formulas at each camp and departure throughout the 38-year wandering period (ca. 1445-1407 BC).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do Moses' invocations ('Rise up... Return') model dependence on God's presence for all life transitions?
2. What does Israel's need for divine presence in both movement and rest teach about continuous reliance on God?
3. How can you develop liturgical practices that acknowledge God's presence in your daily comings and goings?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּבְנֵה הָ	שׁׁוּב הַ	יְהִי הָ	רַבְבָּת	אֶלְף
And when it rested	he said	Return	O LORD	unto the many
H5117	H559	H7725	H3068	H7233
				H505

וַיַּבְנֵה הָ

of Israel

H3478

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 1:10 (References Lord): The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.