

Numbers 16:44

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Analysis

"The LORD spake unto Moses, saying"—for the second time in this chapter (see v. 36), Yahweh dabar (דָּבַר הָיָה) introduces divine speech. The repetition emphasizes that what follows carries full divine authority—not Moses's frustration with persistent rebels but God's own response. The simplicity of the phrase masks the terror of what comes next: God's intention to consume the entire congregation.

This formula appears over 300 times in Scripture, establishing the prophetic authority of the Pentateuch. Each occurrence reminds readers that Moses spoke not his own words but divine revelation, a pattern fulfilled perfectly in Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

Historical Context

Moses functioned as mediator of the old covenant, the human instrument through whom God revealed the Law and guided Israel. His unique access to God (Exodus 33:11, Numbers 12:6-8) would not be matched until Christ. This verse's position—immediately before God announces intent to destroy Israel—highlights the tension between divine justice and mediatorial mercy.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the repetition of "the LORD spake" emphasize divine agency in both judgment and instruction?
2. What does God's continued speaking through Moses despite Israel's rebellion teach about covenant faithfulness?
3. How should we respond when Scripture records God's intention to judge, knowing His character includes both justice and mercy?

Interlinear Text

לֵאמֹר: מֵשֶׁה אֶל יְהוָה הָיָה וַיֹּאמֶר
speake And the LORD unto Moses saying
H1696 H3068 H413 H4872 H559

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