

Numbers 21:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth:

Analysis

From Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth—These three place names form a wordplay pregnant with meaning: Mattanah (מַתָּנָה, "gift"), Nahaliel (נַהֲלֵל, "valley of God"), and Bamoth (בָּמוֹת, "high places"). The progression maps spiritual ascent: from God's gift, through God's valley, to elevated worship. Whether intentional naming or Moses' theological reading of geography, the sequence preaches.

Israel's physical journey became parabolic. God's gifts lead through valleys (testing, formation) to heights (victory, worship). The toponyms suggest every encampment taught covenant truth—geography as pedagogy.

Historical Context

These locations were in the Moabite highlands north of the Arnon. Bamoth appears elsewhere as Bamoth-baal (Numbers 22:41), suggesting Canaanite high-place worship that Israel would later confront. The journey brought them progressively higher, both geographically and toward conflict with Canaanite religion.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What gifts from God have led you through valleys toward higher purposes you didn't initially see?
2. How does physical journey sometimes mirror spiritual progression in your walk with God?
3. Where might God be using geography, circumstances, or ordinary details to teach you theological truth?

Interlinear Text

בְּתַחְוֹת: וּמִמְּפָלֵא לְ וּמִמְּפָלֵא לְ וּמִמְּפָלֵא לְ
And from Mattanah **and from Nahaliel** **and from Nahaliel** **to Bamoth**
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