

Numbers 26:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites.

Analysis

Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites—Shupham (שׁוּפָם, 'serpent' or 'bare/smooth') and Hupham (חֻפָּם, 'protected/covered') appear only here and in Genesis 46:21 under variant spellings (Shephupham, Huppim). The textual variants suggest these were smaller clans or possibly merged lineages, reflecting the fluidity of tribal organization over 400 years.

The 'serpent' and 'protected' pairing creates theological tension—Benjamin's wolf-like ferocity (serpent-cunning) balanced by divine covering. This echoes Jacob's blessing that Benjamin 'dwells between his shoulders' (Deuteronomy 33:12), suggesting both vulnerability and special divine protection. These lesser-known clans remind us that census records preserve even minor lineages; every family matters in covenant accounting. The Shuphamites and Huphamites would inherit their portion just as surely as Bela's prominent clan.

Historical Context

These clans' relatively obscure status in Scripture contrasts with Bela's prominence (King Saul descended from Becorath, possibly Becher-related, 1 Samuel 9:1). Yet their inclusion ensured they received land in Benjamin's territory. Small clans often merged or were absorbed, but this census memorialized them at this crucial moment before Conquest.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the careful recording of minor clans like Shupham and Hupham encourage believers who feel insignificant in God's larger purposes?
2. What does the 'serpent/protected' pairing teach about how God's covering enables His people to operate with wisdom and courage?
3. How might textual variants in clan names remind us that God's covenant faithfulness transcends precise record-keeping and embraces real, messy families?

Interlinear Text

לְשׁוֹפָם	מִשְׁפַּחַת	הַשּׁוֹפָמִי	לְחוֹפָם	מִשְׁפַּחַת
Of Shupham	the family	of the Shuphamites	of Hupham	the family
H8197	H4940	H7781	H2349	H4940
הַחוֹפָמִי:				
of the Huphamites				
H2350				

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