

Numbers 27:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

Analysis

Moses' prayer for a successor addresses God as 'LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh,' acknowledging God's sovereignty over all humanity and His perfect knowledge of every person's character. Moses' concern that 'the congregation of the LORD' not be 'as sheep which have no shepherd' demonstrates pastoral care for God's people extending beyond his own lifetime. This reveals that godly leaders care more about ministry continuation than personal legacy. Moses' submission to God's choice of successor models humble acceptance of divine providence.

Historical Context

This request occurred shortly after God informed Moses he would die without entering Canaan (verses 12-14). Rather than bitterness or self-pity, Moses immediately thought of the people's future welfare. The shepherd imagery later employed by Jesus (John 10) has roots in passages like this. Moses' concern for continuity ensured Israel wouldn't collapse after his death, demonstrating strategic thinking about long-term spiritual health.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' concern for successor leadership challenge ministry focused on personal legacy rather than gospel advance?
2. What steps are you taking to prepare and equip those who will continue ministry after you?

Interlinear Text

עַל	אֵשׁ	בָּשָׂר	לְכָל	בָּרוּךְ	תִּהְעַת	אֱלֹהִים	תְּ	יְהֹוָה	וְ	יְמִינְךָ
set	Let the LORD	the God	of the spirits	H3605	H7307	H430	H3068	H3068	H6485	

בְּעִדָּה:
over the congregation
H5712

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 16:22 (Spirit): And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

Hebrews 12:9 (Spirit): Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

Jeremiah 3:15 (Parallel theme): And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Acts 20:28 (Spirit): Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Matthew 9:38 (References Lord): Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

John 10:11 (Parallel theme): I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Deuteronomy 31:14 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Ezekiel 34:23 (Parallel theme): And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

Ezekiel 37:24 (Parallel theme): And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

1 Samuel 12:13 (References Lord): Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

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