

Numbers 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Analysis

God's declaration 'And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying' introducing His claim on Israel's firstborn emphasizes divine initiative in establishing this substitution. God speaks first, establishing His rights and His provisions. Human beings don't negotiate terms with God but receive His gracious arrangements. The pattern throughout Scripture: God speaks, establishes His covenant, provides the means of fulfilling its obligations, and commands obedience.

Historical Context

This divine speech introduced the substitution principle where Levites replaced Israel's firstborn in God's service. The Passover deliverance established God's claim on the firstborn (Exodus 13:1-2), and here He provides the means of satisfying that claim through Levitical service.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does God's initiative in speaking and establishing covenant terms challenge any notion that humans can negotiate religious arrangements with God?
2. What does this teach us about receiving God's gracious provisions for satisfying His righteous claims rather than attempting to fulfill them independently?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּבֶר	יְהוָה	אֵל	מֹשֶׁה	לֵאמֹר:
spake	And the LORD	^{H413}	unto Moses	saying
^{H1696}	^{H3068}		^{H4872}	^{H559}

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