

Numbers 31:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Analysis

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה)—This prophetic formula introduces divine legislation for war spoils distribution. Following Israel's victory over Midian (31:1-24), God provides detailed instructions for mechelek (division) of the plunder, demonstrating that even military success belongs to Yahweh.

The timing matters: purification rituals completed (31:19-24), God now establishes precedent for holy war economics. This isn't human policy but covenant law—spoils aren't mere military reward but theocratic redistribution under divine sovereignty. The pattern prefigures NT principles: all increase comes from God (1 Cor 3:6-7), requiring faithful stewardship.

Historical Context

Written ca. 1400 BC during Israel's wilderness wandering. Ancient Near Eastern warfare typically gave victorious soldiers total rights to plunder. God's regulations here were radically different—requiring division between combatants and community, with tribute to Yahweh through the priesthood.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does God's ownership of war spoils challenge modern assumptions about 'earning' wealth through effort?
2. What NT principles of stewardship and community sharing echo this OT distribution system?

Interlinear Text

לֵאמֹר:	יְהוָה	אֶל	מֹשֶׁה	לֵאמֹר:
saying	And the LORD	^{H413}	unto Moses	saying
^{H559}	^{H3068}		^{H4872}	^{H559}

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