

Numbers 31:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred,

Analysis

And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred—The Hebrew מַחֲצִית (machatzit, "half") emphasizes the exact division of war spoils. This verse introduces the accounting of the non-combatant half: warriors kept their portion (vv. 25-41), but the congregation's share required priestly oversight. The verb חָלַק (chalaq, "to divide/apportion") reflects Moses' role as mediator of God's distributive justice.

The separation between warriors (אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה, anshe ha-milchamah) and congregation (עֵדָה, edah) models the biblical principle that those who bear risk in battle receive priority share (cf. 1 Samuel 30:24), while the community still participates in God's provision through proportional distribution.

Historical Context

Following Israel's victory over Midian (Numbers 31:1-12), Moses implemented divine instructions for equitable spoil distribution. The warriors who risked their lives received half, while the entire congregation received the other half—ensuring both valor and community welfare were honored. This accounting occurs at the plains of Moab (c. 1406 BC), just before entering Canaan.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this division model both individual reward for labor and communal participation in God's blessings?
2. What does Moses' mediating role in distribution teach about godly leadership in stewarding resources?
3. In what ways should the church balance rewarding those who labor while ensuring the whole body benefits from God's provision?

Interlinear Text

וּמִמֶּחָצַיִת	בְּנֵי יִ	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	אֲשֶׁר	חָצָה ה	מֹשֶׁה ה	מִן
half	And of the children	of Israel's	H834	divided	which Moses	H4480
H4276	H1121	H3478		H2673	H4872	
הָאֲנָשִׁים יִם	הַצְּבָאִים:					
H376	that warred					
	H6633					

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