

Numbers 33:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month.

Analysis

Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there—Aaron's death was divinely ordained, not accidental. The phrase **at the commandment of the LORD** (עַל־פִּי יְהוָה, 'al-pî YHWH, literally 'upon the mouth of Yahweh') indicates sovereign appointment. Aaron's time was complete.

The chronological marker—**in the fortieth year** after Exodus, **the first day of the fifth month** (about July/August)—gives precise dating. Aaron died five months before Israel crossed Jordan, having served as high priest for nearly 40 years. His exclusion from Canaan (like Moses') resulted from the rebellion at Meribah (20:12, 24). Even faithful servants face consequences for sin, yet God honored Aaron with a mountaintop death and mourning period (20:29).

Historical Context

Aaron was 123 years old (v. 39), having been consecrated as high priest at age 83 (Exodus 7:7). His death marked the end of the Exodus generation's leadership core. The fifth month (Av in the Hebrew calendar) became associated with tragedy—later, both temples were destroyed in this month.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that Aaron died 'at the commandment of the LORD'—by divine appointment rather than chance?
2. How should we understand that faithful leaders like Aaron and Moses faced severe consequences (exclusion from Canaan) for their failures?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַל	וְאַהֲרֹן	הַכֹּהֵן	אֶל	הָרֹרֶה	עַל
went up	And Aaron	the priest	H413	Hor	into mount
H5927	H175	H3548		H2023	H5921
פִּי	יְהוָה	וַיָּמָת	בְּשָׁנָה	שָׁמָּה	קְאָרְבַּע יָמִים
at the commandment	of the LORD	and died	H8033	year	there in the fortieth
H6310	H3068	H4191		H8141	H705
לָצֵאת	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	מֵאֶרֶץ	מִצְרַיִם	לַחֹדֶשׁ:
were come out	after the children	of Israel	of the land	of Egypt	month
H3318	H1121	H3478	H776	H4714	H2320
הַחֲמִישִׁי	בְּאֵת	לַחֹדֶשׁ:			
day of the fifth	in the first	month			
H2549	H259	H2320			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 10:6 (References Israel): And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and

there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead.

Deuteronomy 32:50 (Parallel theme): And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

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