

Numbers 33:50

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying,

Analysis

The LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying (וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב עַל־יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ לֵאמֹר)—The divine name YHWH (יהוה, the covenant LORD) appears with the verb dabar (דָּבַר, "spoke"), introducing Moses's final legislative instructions. The geographical precision—arvot Moav al-Yarden Yericho ("plains of Moab by Jordan, Jericho")—anchors divine revelation in historical space. God's word comes not in mystical abstraction but in real places at real times to real people.

This verse introduces commands for Canaan conquest (vv. 51-56): drive out inhabitants, destroy idolatry, divide the land. The timing is critical—God speaks these instructions before Jordan crossing, equipping Israel with both promise and warning. Lemor (לֵאמֹר, "saying") opens the discourse, signaling that what follows carries Yahweh's full authority. Moses stands as mediator one final time, receiving words he'll deliver but won't see fulfilled. The pathos deepens: Moses hears conquest strategy for land he'll never enter.

Historical Context

This introduction prefaces God's commands in Numbers 33:51-56, 34-36 (land boundaries, tribal divisions, Levitical cities, refuge cities). The phrase "in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho" appears multiple times in Numbers 33-36, marking this location as the setting for Moses's final prophetic ministry. Within

weeks, Moses would ascend Nebo, die, and Joshua would lead Israel across Jordan to besiege Jericho.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's specific geographical framing ("plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho") affirm that He works through concrete historical events, not merely abstract principles?
2. What does Moses's reception of conquest instructions for a land he won't enter teach about faithful obedience even when you won't personally benefit from the results?
3. How should the certainty of God's word ("the LORD spake") shape your confidence when standing at the threshold of daunting new assignments?

Interlinear Text

וַיְדַבֵּר	יְהוָה	אֶל	מֹשֶׁה	בְּעֶרְבֹת	מוֹאָב	עַל
spake	And the LORD	H413	unto Moses	in the plains	of Moab	H5921
H1696	H3068		H4872	H6160	H4124	
יְרֵד	יְרֵחוֹ	לֵאמֹר:				
by Jordan	near Jericho	saying				
H3383	H3405	H559				