

Numbers 34:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Analysis

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying—The covenant formula וַיִּדְבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה (vayedaber YHWH el-Moshe lemor, "And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying") introduces divine instruction for Canaan's division. This marks transition from Transjordan settlement (already accomplished) to detailed plans for the nine-and-a-half tribes' western inheritance.

The formula's appearance here (following Transjordan accounting) emphasizes that land distribution wasn't human negotiation but divine allocation. God Himself would determine boundaries, supervisors, and tribal territories—nothing left to chance or conquest politics. The subsequent list (vv. 17-29) names Eleazar, Joshua, and ten tribal princes as divine appointees for this sacred task, establishing theocratic (not democratic or autocratic) land distribution.

Historical Context

This instruction came during Israel's final encampment at Moab's plains (c. 1406 BC), shortly before Moses' death. The land division wouldn't occur until after Canaan's conquest (Joshua 14-19), but God provided the administrative framework in advance. The named leaders (Eleazar, Joshua, tribal princes) would implement this plan over seven years, ensuring orderly settlement rather than chaotic land-grabbing.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does divine prescription of land division (versus conquest-based claims) teach about God's sovereignty over earthly territories?
2. How does advance planning for inheritance distribution demonstrate God's faithfulness to promises made to Abraham centuries earlier?
3. In what ways should the church's organization and resource allocation flow from divine instruction rather than human pragmatism?

Interlinear Text

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

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