

Acts 13:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

Analysis

And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan—Paul references the conquest of Canaan, recounting God's redemptive acts in Israel's history. The "seven nations" (Greek: ἔθνη ἑπτὰ, *ethnē hepta*) recalls Deuteronomy 7:1, where God lists the Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The verb **destroyed** (καθελῶν, *kathelōn*) means "to cast down" or "overthrow," emphasizing God's sovereign power in removing obstacles to His covenant promises.

He divided their land to them by lot (κατεκληρονόμησεν, *kateklēronomēsen*)—This compound verb literally means "to distribute as an inheritance." Paul highlights God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21). The "lot" system (Joshua 14-19) demonstrated divine sovereignty in the land distribution, not human merit. This historical recitation in Paul's Antioch sermon establishes that salvation history flows from God's initiative, preparing his audience to receive Jesus as the culmination of these promises.

Historical Context

Paul delivered this sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch during his first missionary journey (c. AD 47-48). Speaking to Jews and God-fearing Gentiles, he traces Israel's history from the Exodus to David, establishing continuity between God's past faithfulness and the gospel. The conquest and settlement of Canaan (c.

1406-1375 BC) was foundational to Jewish identity as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to Israel strengthen your confidence in His promises to you through Christ?
2. What does the "casting down" of seven nations reveal about God's power to remove obstacles to His redemptive purposes in your life?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	καθελὼν	ἔθνη	ἐπτά	ἐν	γῇ	Χανάν
And	when he had destroyed	nations	seven	in	land	of Chanaan
G2532	G2507	G1484	G2033	G1722	G1093	G5477
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κατεκληροδότησεν	αὐτῶν	τὴν	γῇ	αὐτῶν		
	by lot	their	G3588	land	their	
	G2624	G846		G1093	G846	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 7:1 (Parallel theme): When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

Psalms 78:55 (Parallel theme): He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

Acts 7:45 (Parallel theme): Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

Joshua 14:1 (Parallel theme): And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them.

Joshua 19:51 (Parallel theme): These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.