

Deuteronomy 32:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Analysis

For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance (ki cheleq YHWH 'ammo Ya'aqob chebel nachalato)—cheleq (portion) and nachala (inheritance) reverse expected language. Israel inherits Canaan from God, but remarkably, God claims Israel as HIS inheritance. Chebel (measuring line/allotted portion) was used in land distribution (Joshua 17:5); God measured out Israel for Himself.

This mutual inheritance establishes reciprocal covenant relationship: God possesses Israel, and Israel possesses God (Psalm 16:5: 'The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance'). The imagery portrays divine ownership—God treasures Israel as His personal possession (segullah, Exodus 19:5), not due to Israel's merit but sovereign elective love (7:7-8).

Paul applies this theology to the Church: believers are God's inheritance (Ephesians 1:18), and God is ours (1 Corinthians 3:21-23). Election magnifies grace—God chose a people for Himself before they chose Him.

Historical Context

Jacob (Israel's patriarch) represents the entire nation corporately—God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob continues through their descendants. The inheritance language connects to the land promises but transcends geography: ultimate inheritance is covenant relationship with God Himself. This distinguishes

Israel's religion from pagan polytheism where gods were territorial or functional—YHWH is a relational, covenant-keeping God who personally commits Himself to His people. The New Testament universalizes this election through Christ—believers from all nations become God's inheritance (1 Peter 2:9-10), fulfilling God's promise that Abraham's seed would bless all peoples (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8-9).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 – God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does understanding yourself as God's treasured inheritance (not just God as yours) transform your identity and purpose?
2. In what practical ways can you live as someone who belongs exclusively to God as His 'portion'?

Interlinear Text

נָשְׁלָתוֹ כִּי בְּלִי יְמִינָה בְּעֵד יְמִינָה עַמְּדָה יְמִינָה לְקָדְמָה יְמִינָה

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 10:16 (References Lord): The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts is his name.

Jeremiah 51:19 (References Lord): The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name.

1 Kings 8:53 (References Lord): For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.

1 Kings 8:51 (Parallel theme): For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron:

Isaiah 43:21 (Parallel theme): This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

Psalms 135:4 (References Lord): For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

Psalms 78:71 (Parallel theme): From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

Ephesians 1:18 (Parallel theme): The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Exodus 15:16 (References Lord): Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

1 Samuel 10:1 (References Lord): Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?