

Ezekiel 46:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the Lord GOD; If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it shall be their possession by inheritance.

Analysis

The inheritance law—'if the prince give a gift of his inheritance unto his sons, it shall be theirs by inheritance... But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince'—protects family patrimony while allowing temporary gifts. Sons receive permanent inheritance; servants receive temporary grants reverting at jubilee. The Hebrew דֶּרֶר (deror, 'liberty') refers to the jubilee year when debts canceled and property returned (Leviticus 25:10). This prevents permanent alienation of tribal inheritance. Reformed theology sees spiritual application: believers are sons (Galatians 4:4-7), not servants, receiving eternal inheritance (1 Peter 1:4). What Christ gives His children cannot be revoked—eternal security of the believer. Temporary earthly positions differ from permanent spiritual adoption.

Historical Context

The jubilee year (every 50th year) featured comprehensive restoration—land returned to original families, Hebrew slaves freed, debts forgiven (Leviticus 25). This prevented permanent socioeconomic stratification and reminded Israel that God owned the land (Leviticus 25:23). Naboth's vineyard incident illustrates this principle—he refused to sell ancestral inheritance even to the king (1 Kings 21:3). The distinction between sons and servants parallels Paul's contrast between bondage and sonship (Galatians 4:1-7). Jesus distinguished servants who don't know the master's business from friends who receive full disclosure (John 15:15).

The inheritance law ensured no family permanently lost their portion in Israel—just as God's elect never lose their inheritance in Christ (Romans 8:38-39).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Do you live as a son (permanent heir) or servant (temporary employee) in your relationship with God?
2. How does understanding your eternal, irrevocable inheritance in Christ affect daily priorities and eternal perspective?
3. What temporary 'gifts' from God's hand do you cling to as permanent when they're meant to be released at His 'jubilee'?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	אֵלֵינוּ	כִּי	יֵתֵן	הַנֶּשֶׁאִי	מִתְּנָה
H3541	Thus saith	the Lord	H3068	H3588	give	If the prince	a gift
	H559	H136			H5414	H5387	H4979

לְאִישׁ	לְבָנָיו	בְּיִרְשָׁה:	הָיָא	לְבָנָיו	תְּתֵנָּהּ
unto any	of his sons	by inheritance	H1931	of his sons	H1961
H376	H1121	H5159		H1121	

אֲחֻזָּתָם	הָיָא	בְּיִרְשָׁה:
it shall be their possession	H1931	by inheritance
H272		H5159

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 21:3 (Parallel theme): And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram; because he was the firstborn.

Galatians 4:7 (References God): Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

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