

Joshua 1:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

Analysis

The tribes pledge the same obedience to Joshua as to Moses, but with crucial condition: 'only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses' (raq Yahweh Elohecha yihyeh immakh kaasher hayah im-Moshe, (כִּי יְהִי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם יְהִי עָמָךְ כִּי מְשֻׁמְדָּר)). Their obedience depends on divine presence with Joshua. This isn't rebellion but discernment—human leaders merit following only when God empowers them. They recognize that Moses' authority came from divine presence, and Joshua's would likewise. From a Reformed perspective, this demonstrates proper submission to spiritual authority—following leaders who follow God, but recognizing that ultimate authority resides in God alone.

Historical Context

This conditional pledge protected against following leaders into apostasy—a wisdom Israel later forgot when following wicked kings. The emphasis on divine presence echoes God's promise to Joshua (1:5, 9). The tribes' response confirmed they recognized Joshua's legitimate succession to Moses' role, contingent on continued divine presence.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you discern when to follow human leadership versus when obedience to God requires resistance?
2. What evidence of divine presence validates spiritual authority?
3. Do you follow leaders blindly, or wisely discern God's presence with them?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר כִּכְלָל מִשְׁרָה: הַשְׁמָעָה
According as we hearkened be with thee as he was with Moses
H3605 H834 H413 H4872
H8085

כִּכְלָל יְהִי הָעֵדָה
unto thee only the LORD
H3651 According as we hearkened H413 H7535 H1961 H3068
H8085

מִשְׁרָה: יְהִי הָעֵדָה
be with thee as he was with Moses
thy God H5973 H834 H1961 H5973 H4872
H430

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 1:5 (References Moses): There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.