

Joshua 12:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hephher, one;

Analysis

The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hephher, one—Tappuah (תַּפּוּחַ, tappuah, 'apple' or 'citadel') appears both as a border town (12:17, 15:34) and later as land allotted to Manasseh's daughters (17:8), demonstrating how conquest lists became inheritance documents. The name's dual meaning (fruit and fortress) captures Canaan's character—a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8) yet requiring military dispossession before enjoyment.

Hephher (חֶפְזֵר, chepher, 'a pit' or 'shame') later becomes significant as the territorial designation for Zelophehad's daughters (Numbers 26:33, Joshua 17:2-3), whose successful petition for inheritance rights established precedent for female land ownership. This seemingly minor king's defeat enabled revolutionary gender justice within Israel's legal framework, illustrating how God's providential conquest creates space for redemptive social reform.

Historical Context

Tappuah is identified with Sheikh Abu Zarad in the Shephelah, an agricultural region known for fruit production. Hephher's location remains uncertain, though it lay within Manasseh's western territory. The mention of Hephher connects directly to the Zelophehad daughters narrative (Numbers 27), demonstrating how conquest lists preserved legal and genealogical records essential for tribal land distribution.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Hepher's defeat enabling the daughters of Zelophehad's inheritance show God's providence working through conquest for justice?
2. What does Tappuah's dual meaning (fruit and fortress) teach about spiritual blessings requiring spiritual warfare to possess?
3. In what ways do seemingly insignificant victories in your life prepare groundwork for later significant developments?

Interlinear Text

מֶלֶךְ	תַּפּוּאָה	אֶחָד:	מֶלֶךְ	הַ	אֶחָד:
The king	of Tappuah	one	The king	of Hepher	one
H4428	H8599	H259	H4428	H2660	H259

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 4:10 (Parallel theme): The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hepher: