

Joshua 13:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families.

Analysis

And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families—Reuben (רְאוּבֵן), Jacob's firstborn, received his inheritance east of the Jordan. The phrase l'mishpechotam (למשפחותם, "according to their families") emphasizes that land distribution was organized by clan structure, ensuring fairness and order. Though Reuben lost his birthright through sin (Genesis 35:22, 49:3-4), God's grace still provided an inheritance.

This allocation recalls Numbers 32, where Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh requested land east of Jordan. Moses granted it conditionally—they must fight alongside their brethren. This verse marks the fulfillment of that promise. The Transjordan tribes received their inheritance first but bore responsibility to help secure the land for all Israel, demonstrating that personal blessing carries corporate responsibility in God's kingdom.

Historical Context

The Transjordan territory was conquered under Moses before his death (Numbers 21:21-35, Deuteronomy 2-3). Reuben's territory lay south of Gad, extending from the Arnon River to the region near Heshbon. This area, modern-day Jordan, featured fertile plateaus suitable for the livestock that motivated Reuben's original request (Numbers 32:1-5).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Reuben receiving an inheritance despite losing his birthright illustrate God's grace?
2. What does the principle 'according to their families' teach about God's concern for order and fairness in distributing blessings?
3. How does the responsibility of the Transjordan tribes to fight for their brethren apply to believers who have received blessings?

Interlinear Text

וַתֵּן	מֹשֶׁה	לְמִטָּה	בְּנֵי	רְאוּבֵן
gave	And Moses	unto the tribe	of the children	of Reuben
H5414	H4872	H4294	H1121	H7205

לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם:

inheritance according to their families

H4940