

Joshua 13:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

Analysis

God commands Joshua to divide the land among the nine and a half tribes west of Jordan. Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh had already received Transjordan territories (13:8-32). The imperative 'divide this land' (challeq et-haarets hazot, חַלֵּק אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת) demands immediate action despite unconquered areas. This demonstrates faith principle: distribute promised inheritance before complete possession, trusting God to fulfill His word. The land division wasn't based on conquest completion but divine promise certainty. Each tribe received specific boundaries and cities (chapters 14-19), creating tribal confederation structure that maintained Israel's identity for centuries. From a Reformed perspective, this parallels believers receiving promises of eternal inheritance before experiencing full glorification—we possess positionally what we'll experience completely in the eschaton (Ephesians 1:11-14, 1 Peter 1:3-5).

Historical Context

The land distribution took place at Shiloh after establishing the tabernacle there (18:1). Ancient Near Eastern land allocation typically followed conquest, but Israel's system uniquely emphasized divine gift rather than mere military achievement. Tribal boundaries (Joshua 13-19) established permanent land tenure preventing the land concentration that created peasant classes elsewhere. The tribal confederation structure without centralized monarchy distinguished Israel from surrounding nations, though Israel later demanded kingship (1 Samuel 8). Archaeological surveys show Iron Age I settlement patterns consistent with tribal

territorial descriptions, confirming the historical reliability of Joshua's boundary lists. The detailed geographical descriptions served legal purposes establishing property rights and preventing future disputes.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What promises has God given you that require faith to claim before seeing complete fulfillment?
2. How does distributing land before complete conquest challenge your tendency to wait for perfect conditions before acting?
3. What does tribal land distribution teach about balancing corporate unity with distinct individual callings?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה ה	חֵלֶק	אֶת	הָאֶרֶץ	הַזֹּאת	בְּנִחְלָה
H6258	Now therefore divide	H853	this land	H2063	for an inheritance
	H2505		H776		H5159
לְתִשְׁעַת	הַשִּׁבְטִים	וְחֵצִי	הַשִּׁבְטִים	הַמְּנַשֶּׁה:	
unto the nine	tribe	and the half	tribe	of Manasseh	
H8672	H7626	H2677	H7626	H4519	