

Joshua 14:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them.

Analysis

Transition to land division: 'And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance unto them.' The plural leadership—Eleazar (priest), Joshua (military/political leader), and tribal heads—shows corporate decision-making. The priest's primacy (listed first) emphasizes this is theological work, not merely political. Land allocation involves seeking God's will through priestly intercession and lots (14:2, 18:6). The phrase 'distributed for inheritance' uses Hebrew nachal (נָחָל—to inherit, possess), emphasizing gift nature—God gives, leaders distribute what God provides. This corporate, prayerful approach to practical decisions models how God's people should make significant choices—through representative leadership seeking divine guidance.

Historical Context

Eleazar son of Aaron (high priest after Aaron's death, Numbers 20:28) represented priestly authority using Urim and Thummim to discern God's will in land allocation. Joshua provided military and political leadership. The tribal heads ensured each tribe's interests were represented. This three-part leadership

(priestly, political/military, tribal representatives) created checks and balances preventing any single authority from dominating. Ancient Near Eastern land distribution typically involved kings arbitrarily allocating territory. Israel's method—seeking God's will through lots cast before the LORD—demonstrated theocratic rather than autocratic governance. Archaeological evidence shows Canaanite conquest occurred roughly late 13th century BC, consistent with conventional Joshua dating. The territory distribution followed conquest, allowing orderly settlement rather than chaotic land-grabbing. This organized approach reflects divine design for orderly society under God's rule.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does plural, representative leadership prevent abuse of power and ensure diverse wisdom?
2. What does seeking God's will (through priestly mediation and lots) for practical decisions teach about theocratic governance?
3. How can modern churches incorporate prayerful corporate discernment in significant decisions?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁר וְאֶלְהָ

H428

H834

תְּמָלֵל

distributed for inheritance

H5157

לְבָנֵי

And these are the countries which the children

H1121

כְּנָעָן בָּאָרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל

of Israel in the land of Canaan

H3478

H776

H3667

אֲשֶׁר רָ

H834

תְּמָלֵל

distributed for inheritance

H5157

אֹותֶם

H853

אֶלְעָזָר

H499

בְּכָהָן

the priest

H3548 H3091

וְיַהוָּשָׁע

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לְבָנֵי

And these are the countries which the children

H1121

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of Nun and the heads of the fathers

H5126

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of the tribes And these are the countries which the children

H4294

לְבָנֵי

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יִשְׂרָאֵל

of Israel

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