

Joshua 14:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe.

Analysis

Method of allocation: 'By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe.' The use of lots (goral, גורל) wasn't gambling but seeking divine guidance. Proverbs 16:33: 'The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.' The lots revealed God's sovereign allocation, removing human favoritism. The distinction between nine-and-a-half tribes (receiving land in Canaan proper) and two-and-a-half tribes (already possessing Transjordan) shows precise accounting. The appeal to Moses's command establishes continuity—Joshua implements what Moses directed (Numbers 26:52-56, 33:54). This demonstrates faithful succession: honoring predecessor's directives while fulfilling one's own distinct role. The casting of lots also prevented disputes—no tribe could claim favoritism or unfairness since God Himself determined allocation.

Historical Context

The use of lots to determine land division fulfilled Moses's specific instructions (Numbers 26:55, 33:54). The lot system, administered by Eleazar through Urim and Thummim, ensured divine rather than human determination of tribal territories. This method was uniquely Israelite—surrounding nations allocated land through royal decree or military might. Ancient Near Eastern treaties sometimes used lot-casting for certain determinations, but Israel's comprehensive use of lots for territorial allocation was distinctive. The two-and-a-half tribes (Reuben, Gad, half-Manasseh) had already received Transjordan territory (chapter 13), so nine-

and-a-half tribes received portions in Canaan proper. Levi received no territorial inheritance but cities scattered throughout other tribes (chapter 21), fulfilling Jacob's prophecy (Genesis 49:7) and ensuring priestly presence throughout Israel. The lot system created permanent, divinely-ordained boundaries that tribes couldn't later dispute as merely human arrangements.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does casting lots (seeking divine guidance) for significant decisions remove human bias and prevent disputes?
2. What is the relationship between following predecessors' directions (Moses's commands) and fulfilling your own distinct calling?
3. How should Christian communities seek divine guidance for major decisions today?

Interlinear Text

בְּגוֹרַל ל	נַחֲלָתָם	כָּאֵשׁ ר	צִוָּה	יְהוָה	בְּיָד
By lot	was their inheritance	H834	commanded	as the LORD	by the hand
H1486	H5159		H6680	H3068	H3027
מֹשֶׁה	לְתִשְׁעַת	הַמִּטָּה:	וְחֵצִי	הַמִּטָּה:	
of Moses	for the nine	tribe	and for the half	tribe	
H4872	H8672	H4294	H2677	H4294	

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 34:13 (References Lord): And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:

Numbers 33:54 (Parallel theme): And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit.

Proverbs 16:33 (References Lord): The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

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