

# Joshua 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them.

## Analysis

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Levite exceptionalism: 'For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them.' The repetition of Transjordan allocation (previously mentioned) emphasizes the distinction with Levi's unique situation. Levites received no tribal territory because 'the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance' (13:33). This represents radical dependence on God—no agricultural land, no economic self-sufficiency, complete reliance on tithes and offerings from other tribes. Numbers 18:20: 'Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance.' This models ministry calling: those serving God's people full-time depend on God's provision through His people's support. The Levites' landlessness paradoxically made them Israel's wealthiest tribe spiritually—God Himself was their possession.

## Historical Context

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The Levitical system distributed Levi's descendants throughout Israel in forty-eight cities (chapter 21) rather than giving them contiguous tribal territory. This ensured priestly presence and instruction throughout the nation. Economically, Levites received tithes (ten percent of agricultural produce and livestock, Numbers 18:21-24) and portions of sacrifices, providing livelihood without land ownership. This system required faith—Levites depended on other tribes' obedience to tithing commands. When Israel was faithful, Levites prospered (2 Chronicles 31:4-10);

when unfaithful, Levites struggled (Nehemiah 13:10). The landless status also kept Levites from becoming powerful landed aristocracy threatening theocratic governance. Their dependence on voluntary support theoretically kept them humble and grateful. The system prefigures New Testament ministry patterns: 'they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel' (1 Corinthians 9:14), depending on God's provision through His people's generosity.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What does the Levites' landlessness (God as their inheritance) teach about radical dependence on God?
2. How does the tithing system, requiring God's people to support those serving Him full-time, reflect mutual covenant responsibility?
3. In what ways should those in full-time ministry maintain the Levitical spirit of dependence on God rather than worldly security?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי	נָתַן	מֹשֶׁה	נִחֵל	שְׁנֵי	הַמִּטָּה	וְחֵצִי
H3588	had given	For Moses	none inheritance	of two	tribe	and an half
	H5414	H4872	H5159	H8147	H4294	H2677
הַמִּטָּה	מֵעַבֵּר	לְיַרְדֵּן	וְעַל	לְלוֹיִם	לֹא	נָתַן
tribe	on the other side	Jordan	but unto the Levites		H3808	had given
H4294	H5676	H3383	H3881			H5414
נִחֵל	בְּתוֹכָם:					
none inheritance	among					
H5159	H8432					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 13:14** (Parallel theme): Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them.

**Joshua 13:8** (References Moses): With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them;

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