

Joshua 17:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

Analysis

And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren—The daughters approach the highest authorities of Israel: the high priest (representing divine will through Urim and Thummim), the civil leader, and the tribal princes. Their petition is grounded not in emotional appeal but in explicit divine command. The phrase Yahweh tzivah et-Moshe (יהוה צוה את-משה, "the LORD commanded Moses") appeals to established precedent and God's revealed will.

Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father—Joshua's immediate compliance demonstrates fidelity to divine instruction over cultural convention. The phrase al-pi Yahweh (על-פי יהוה, "according to the mouth of the LORD") appears frequently in Joshua, emphasizing that land distribution was not arbitrary human decision but implementation of divine decree. Their inheritance was among the brethren of their father—they received equal standing with male heirs, a radical departure from surrounding cultures where women had minimal property rights.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Code of Hammurabi, Middle Assyrian Laws, Hittite Laws) generally excluded women from inheritance unless no male heirs existed, and even then, property often reverted to the husband's family. Israel's willingness to grant inheritance to daughters based on divine command demonstrated submission to revealed law over cultural tradition. The presence of Eleazar the high priest in this transaction (he succeeded Aaron and served alongside Joshua) indicates the theological significance—land allocation was a sacred act, not merely political. The location was likely Shiloh, where the tabernacle stood (18:1), making this a formal legal proceeding conducted in God's presence.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the daughters' appeal to God's previous command (rather than their personal feelings or needs) model the proper basis for petitioning God?
2. What does Joshua's immediate obedience to God's established command teach about the importance of implementing biblical principles even when they challenge cultural norms?
3. In what areas of life might God be calling you to advocate for justice based on His revealed character and commands, even when it goes against traditional expectations?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּתְהַכֵּב בְּנָה	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	הַפְּתָחָה	אֶלְעָזָר ר	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי
And they came near	and before	Eleazar	the priest	and before	Joshua			
H7126	H6440	H499	H3548	H6440	H3091			
the son of Nun	and before	the princes	saying	The LORD	commanded			
H1121	H5126	H6440	H5387	H559	H3068	H6680		
אֶת הַמֶּשֶׁה	לְכָל הַמִּשְׁמָרָה	בְּתֵבֶת וְבָתֵּר	אֶת בְּנֵי אֶחָת	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי
H853	Moses	he gave	H0	them an inheritance	among	our brethren		
	H4872	H5414		H5159	H8432	H251		
וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	אֶל לֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי
he gave	H0	H413	Therefore according to the commandment	H6310	The LORD	H3068		
H5414								
וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	אֶת בְּנֵי אֶחָת	בְּתֵבֶת וְבָתֵּר	אֶת בְּנֵי אֶחָת	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	אֶת בְּנֵי אֶחָת	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי	וְלֹפֶנְתִּי
them an inheritance	among	our brethren	of their father	H1				
H5159	H8432	H251						

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 3:28 (Parallel theme): There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Joshua 14:1 (Parallel theme): 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.