

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 (יְהוָה צִוָּה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה, "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 (עַל־פִּי יְהוָה, "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

וַתֵּקֶרְבּ בְּנֵה	וּלְפָנַי י	אֶלְעָזָר ר	הַכֹּהֵן	וּלְפָנַי י	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ ע
And they came near	and before	Eleazar	the priest	and before	Joshua
H7126	H6440	H499	H3548	H6440	H3091
בֶּן	נֹון י	וּלְפָנַי י	הַנְּשִׂאִים	יֹאמֵר ר	יְהוָה
the son	of Nun	and before	the princes	saying	The LORD
H1121	H5126	H6440	H5387	H559	H3068
צִוָּה					commanded
					H6680
אֶת	מֹשֶׁה ה	וַתֵּן	לָבֹנוּ	נָחֳלָה	בְּתוֹךְ
H853	Moses	he gave	H0	them an inheritance	among
	H4872	H5414		H5159	H8432
					our brethren
					H251
וַתֵּן	לָהֶם	אֶל	פִּי י		יְהוָה
he gave	H0	H413	Therefore according to the commandment		The LORD
H5414			H6310		H3068
נָחֳלָה	בְּתוֹךְ	אֶת	אֲבֹתָם:		
them an inheritance	among	our brethren	of their father		
H5159	H8432	H251	H1		

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.