

Joshua 17:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

Analysis

Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons— This verse summarizes the theological significance of the preceding verses: women were included in covenant inheritance on equal terms with men. The Hebrew nachalah (נָכְלָה, "inheritance") carries covenantal weight—this wasn't merely economic provision but participation in the promised land, the tangible sign of covenant relationship with Yahweh. The phrase among his sons (בְּתוֹךְ בָּנָיו, betokh banav) emphasizes equality and integration, not separate or secondary status.

And the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead— This clarifies the division: the Machirites (descended from Machir, Manasseh's firstborn) held Gilead and Bashan east of Jordan, while the other descendants received portions west of Jordan. The structure emphasizes that both male and female heirs participated in the inheritance according to God's just decree. Paul's declaration that in Christ there is neither male nor female (Galatians 3:28) finds Old Testament precedent here—covenant standing transcends social hierarchies, though functional roles may differ.

Historical Context

The inclusion of women in inheritance rights, though limited to situations without male heirs, represented progressive social legislation for the ancient world. This law prevented families from being erased and widows from destitution. The

principle established here would influence later Jewish law, including provisions for levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10) and the rights of widows. Rabbinic tradition honored Zelophehad's daughters as righteous women whose wisdom and faith advanced justice in Israel. The Mishnah and Talmud discuss their case extensively, treating it as paradigmatic of how divine law addresses social realities with both justice and mercy. Archaeological discoveries of ancient Near Eastern marriage contracts show that Israelite women often had greater rights than their Mesopotamian or Egyptian counterparts.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the equal inheritance of Zelophehad's daughters foreshadow the spiritual equality of all believers who inherit eternal life through faith in Christ?
2. What does this passage teach about God's concern for preserving family identity and preventing the vulnerable from being erased or forgotten?
3. How can the church today better reflect God's justice in ensuring that those who might be marginalized receive their full inheritance in the community of faith?

Interlinear Text

בַּת	וּ	נָפְלָה	הַ	מִנְשָׁה	הַ	בֶּן	וְתִּזְבְּחֶה	כִּי		
H3588	Because	the	daughters	of	Manasseh	had	an	inheritance		
	H1323			H4519		H5157	H5159	among		
								H8432		
לְבָנָי	מִנְשָׁה	הַ	בְּגִלְעָד	וְאֶזְרָח	לְבָנָי	מִנְשָׁה	הַ	פֶּתַחְרִים:		
his	sons	had	the	land	of	Gilead	H1961	and	the	rest
H1121		H776		H1568		H1121	H4519			H3498

