

Joshua 19:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

Analysis

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families—The formula **the inheritance** (נַחֲלָת נַחֲלַת nachalat) **according to their families** (לְמִשְׁפְּחוֹתָם l'mishpechotam) appears throughout Joshua 13-19, emphasizing that land distribution followed family structure, not individual preference. Each mishpachah (clan, extended family) received portions within the tribal territory, ensuring that inheritance passed through generations. This system prevented land consolidation by the wealthy and maintained tribal identity.

Asher's inheritance fulfilled Jacob's blessing: "his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties" (Genesis 49:20). The coastal region's fertility and trade access provided exactly the richness predicted. Yet Judges 1:31-32 reveals Asher failed to drive out Canaanites from key cities, living among them instead. The nachalah was perfect; Asher's possession was incomplete. This parallels the Christian life: our inheritance in Christ is complete (Ephesians 1:3), but our experiential possession requires ongoing faith and obedience. We must "work out" what God has "worked in" (Philippians 2:12-13).

Historical Context

Asher's tribal inheritance system, distributing land by families rather than individuals, created economic stability and prevented the landless poverty that plagued other ancient societies. The family-based allocation ensured that even if

individuals failed, the clan structure preserved inheritance. This system continued until the Babylonian exile disrupted tribal territories.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the family-based inheritance system (nachalah according to mishpachot) inform Christian community structure and intergenerational faithfulness?
2. What parallels exist between Asher receiving full inheritance but possessing it incompletely and Christians' positional versus experiential sanctification?
3. How does Asher's failure to drive out Canaanites despite receiving perfect territory warn against blaming circumstances when incomplete obedience is the real issue?

Interlinear Text

זֶה	נַחֲלָת	מִטֵּה	בְּנֵי	אֲשֵׁר
H2063	This is the inheritance	of the tribe	of the children	of Asher
	H5159	H4294	H1121	H836
לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם	הָעָרִים	הָאֵלֶּה	וּמִצְרֵיהֶן:	
according to their families	these cities	H428	with their villages	
H4940	H5892		H2691	