

Joshua 21:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession.

Analysis

But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession.

This verse clarifies the allocation: while Hebron's urban center and surrounding pastures went to the priests, "**the fields...and the villages**" (סֵדֶה הַעֲרָבָה וְחַצְרָה) remained Caleb's personal inheritance. The term sede (סֵדֶה) refers to agricultural fields beyond the immediate migrash (pasture belt), while chatser (חַצֵּר) denotes outlying settlements. This division balanced competing claims: God's command to give Hebron to priests (Numbers 35) and His promise to give it to Caleb (Joshua 14:9).

"Caleb the son of Jephunneh" (לְכָלֵב בֶּן-יְפֻנֵּה) receives full genealogical identification, honoring his faithfulness. Caleb was the only faithful spy besides Joshua (Numbers 14:30), inheriting the specific territory he scouted 45 years earlier. His possession of Hebron's agricultural hinterland rewarded faith while accommodating priestly needs—both promises fulfilled without contradiction.

The phrase "**for his possession**" (לְאַחַזָּה) uses the term achuzzah (אַחַזָּה), meaning permanent hereditary landholding. Unlike the Levites whose cities were allocations without territorial inheritance, Caleb owned Hebron's fields as perpetual family property. This demonstrates that God's servants receive different types of rewards—Levites gained priestly privilege and divine inheritance ("the

LORD is their inheritance," Deuteronomy 18:2), while Caleb gained land-based prosperity. God's provision matches His calling; different callings warrant different provisions.

Historical Context

Caleb was from Judah's tribe but ethnically a Kenizzite (Numbers 32:12, Joshua 14:6, 14), suggesting Edomite ancestry (Genesis 36:11, 15). His inclusion in Israel and prominence in Judah demonstrates that faith, not ethnicity, determines covenant membership—a principle fulfilled in the gospel's expansion to Gentiles (Ephesians 2:11-19). Caleb's descendants apparently maintained control over Hebron's agricultural lands while priests occupied the city itself, creating a unique shared arrangement. During David's reign, this made Hebron simultaneously a royal capital (2 Samuel 2:11) and priestly city—civil, royal, and religious functions converging.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the division of Hebron (city to priests, fields to Caleb) demonstrate that God can fulfill multiple promises without contradiction when both claimants trust Him?
2. What does Caleb's 45-year wait for his inheritance teach about patient faith in God's promises despite long delays?
3. How should recognizing different callings warrant different provisions (priestly service vs. agricultural inheritance) shape expectations about God's unique plan for your life versus comparing your situation to others'?

Interlinear Text

לְכָל בָּנָתָן וְלֹא תִּתְּנַשֵּׁא
H853 But the fields of the city H853 and the villages thereof gave they to Caleb
H7704 H5892 H2691 H5414 H3612

בְּאֶחָדָתוֹ יְפָנֵן הַבָּנָן
the son of Jephunneh for his possession
H1121 H3312 H272

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