

Joshua 22:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

Analysis

And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

The word "rest" (heniach, הַנִּיח) comes from nuach (נוֹחַ), meaning to settle, be quiet, or cease from warfare. This rest fulfills God's explicit promise in Deuteronomy 3:20: "Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren." The conquest phase is complete enough that the condition for their release is met. This "rest" is partial—localized peace allowing settlement, not the permanent eschatological rest Hebrews 4 describes. Yet it represents substantial fulfillment of covenant promises.

The phrase "therefore now return" (ve'atah shuvu, וְעַתָּה שׁוּבּוּ) uses shuv (שׁוּבּ), the rich Hebrew word meaning to turn back, return, or restore. Their return isn't retreat or abandonment but rightful inheritance of what God promised. "Get you unto your tents" refers to their family dwellings—after years of military tents, they can return to domestic life. The phrase "land of your possession" (eretz achuzatkhem, אֶרֶץ אֲחֹזָתְכֶם) uses achuzah (אֲחֹזָה), meaning inherited property or

permanent holding—not temporary residence but ancestral inheritance for their descendants.

Historical Context

The timing of this dismissal corresponds to Joshua 14:10, which indicates approximately seven years elapsed since Kadesh Barnea. The major Canaanite coalitions were defeated (southern campaign Joshua 10; northern campaign Joshua 11), though mopping-up operations would continue (Joshua 13:1-7 notes much land remained unconquered). The strategic military victory allowed tribal settlement even while localized conflicts continued. The Transjordan territory—conquered from Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan (Numbers 21:21-35)—was already developed with existing cities and agricultural infrastructure. Unlike western Canaan requiring clearance and settlement, the eastern territory was ready for immediate occupation. The dismissal occurred from Shiloh, where the tabernacle was established (Joshua 18:1), approximately 20 miles north of Jerusalem and 40 miles from the Jordan River.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How do you discern when God has brought sufficient 'rest' to move from one season of service to the next He's prepared for you?
2. What possessions or callings that God has given you are you neglecting while pursuing obligations that He's already fulfilled?
3. How does understanding 'rest' as God-given (not self-achieved) change your approach to work-life balance and the transition between ministry seasons?

Interlinear Text

וְעַתָּה	הִנֵּה	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	לְאַחִיכֶם
H6258	H5117	H3068	H430	H251
hath given rest	And now the LORD		your God	unto your brethren
כִּאֵשׁ	רַבָּה	וְעַתָּה	פָּנָו	לְכָלְךָ
H834	H1696	H0	H6437	H1980
as he promised		וְעַתָּה	them therefore now return	
לְכָלְךָ	אֶל	אֶל	אֶל	אֶשְׁר
H0	H413	H776	H272	H834
you unto your tents	and unto the land	of your possession		
מֹשֶׁה	עַבְדָּךְ	יְהוָה	בְּעֵבֶר	
H4872	H5650	H3068	H5676	
which Moses	the servant	And now the LORD	you on the other side	
gave				
H5414				

בָּרֶקְעָן

Jordan

H3383

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 13:8 (References Lord): With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them;

Numbers 32:18 (Parallel theme): We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

Deuteronomy 3:20 (References God): Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.