

Joshua 22:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

Analysis

So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

The blessing (barak, בָּרָךְ) was more than well-wishes—it invoked divine favor and prosperity on their journey and future. Ancient Near Eastern blessings carried covenantal weight, pronouncing God's goodness on those departing. Joshua, as God's appointed leader, functioned in priestly capacity, speaking God's benediction over faithful servants. The act of blessing before departure appears throughout Scripture (Genesis 24:60; Numbers 6:24-26), expressing both gratitude and intercession.

The phrase "sent them away" (shalach, שָׁלַח) means to release, dispatch, or send forth with purpose. This wasn't dismissal but commissioning to their inheritance. The repetition "and they went unto their tents" emphasizes the completion of their military obligation—they transition from warriors to settlers, from temporary military camps to permanent family dwellings. The simplicity of the statement belies the emotional weight: reunions with wives, children grown unrecognized, parents aged or deceased.

Historical Context

Ancient military discharge ceremonies involved formal recognition, division of spoils, and authoritative release from obligation. Joshua's blessing established that

the Transjordan tribes departed with honor, not as deserters or covenant breakers. The journey from Shiloh to Transjordan crossed the Jordan River valley and ascended the eastern highlands—approximately 40-60 miles depending on destination. After seven years of military campaigns, these men returned as veterans to families who had maintained farms, raised children, and defended settlements in their absence. The reunion would have been bittersweet—joy at return tempered by grief for casualties who fell in Canaan's conquest. Archaeological evidence from this period (Late Bronze/Early Iron I transition, c. 1400-1200 BCE) shows settlement expansion in Transjordan, consistent with biblical chronology of tribal establishment.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Who in your spiritual community needs your blessing and affirmation as they transition to new seasons of service or life?
2. How do you handle endings and transitions—with gratitude and blessing, or with unexpressed resentment or premature detachment?
3. What does it mean to bless those you've served alongside, especially when their departure creates inconvenience or loss for you personally?

Interlinear Text

בָּרוּךְ מְלֹא כְּלָלִים אֵל יְלִכֵּה וְיִשְׁלַחַם יְהוָשָׁע עַל יִבְרָכָה
blessed So Joshua them and sent them away H1980 H413 unto their tents H168

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 14:13 (Blessing): And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

Exodus 39:43 (Blessing): And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

Genesis 47:7 (Blessing): And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Luke 24:50 (Blessing): And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

2 Samuel 6:18 (Blessing): And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

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