

Joshua 22:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Analysis

And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

The formal naming "children of Reuben and...Gad and...half tribe of Manasseh" emphasizes their collective identity and shared action. They "departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh" creates subtle tension—are they departing from Israel or merely leaving Shiloh's location? This ambiguity will fuel the coming crisis. Shiloh, Israel's worship center where the tabernacle dwelt (Joshua 18:1), symbolized covenant unity. Leaving Shiloh meant leaving the physical presence of Israel's worship life.

The geographical detail "the country of Gilead" (eretz haGil'ad, אֶרֶץ הַגִּלְעָד) refers to the mountainous Transjordan region. The repetition "land of their possession, whereof they were possessed" (eretz achuzatam asher ne'echezu bah, מִזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר נִאֲכַזֵּה בָּה) uses emphatic language stressing legitimate ownership. The phrase

"according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses" grounds their inheritance in divine authorization, not human preference or land-grabbing—this matters crucially when conflict arises in verses 10-34.

Historical Context

Gilead designated the Transjordan highlands between the Yarmuk River (north) and the Arnon River (south), dominated by forests and pasturelands ideal for livestock. The region's name comes from the mountainous terrain (gal, גָּל, meaning heap or mound). Numbers 32:1-42 records the original territorial grant to Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh. Shiloh, approximately 20 miles north of Jerusalem in the Ephraimite hill country, served as Israel's religious capital during the judges period (c. 1400-1050 BCE). The tabernacle remained there until the ark's capture by Philistines (1 Samuel 4). Archaeological excavations at Tel Shiloh confirm significant Late Bronze/Iron Age I occupation, though destruction layers are debated. The Jordan River valley descent from Shiloh required crossing steep wadis and traversing the Jordan itself—a natural boundary creating both physical and psychological separation between east and west.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What legitimate callings or possessions have you received 'according to the word of the LORD' that others might misunderstand or criticize?
2. How do you maintain spiritual connection to the body of Christ when life circumstances create physical or relational distance?

3. When has obedience to God's clear direction inadvertently created misunderstanding or conflict with fellow believers?

Interlinear Text

גָּד בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן בְּנֵי גָּד
 returned And the children of Reuben And the children of Gad
 H1980 H1121 H7205 H1121 H1410
 H7725 H1121 H7205 H1121 H1410

וְשֵׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי מַתָּה אֶת בָּנָי מִתְּחַצֵּת
 and the half tribe of Manasseh And the children of Israel
 H2677 H7626 H4519 H1121 H3478
 H2677 H7626 H4519 H1121 H3478

אֶל לְלִכְתָּה כְּתָעַל מַשְׁלֵה הַמִּשְׁלֵה
 out of Shiloh to the land of Canaan to the land
 H7887 H834 H776 H3667 H1980 H413 H776
 H7887 H834 H776 H3667 H1980 H413 H776

אֲשֶׁר אֶחָזָתָם אֶל כִּזְבָּן
 of Gilead to the land of their possession
 H1568 H413 H776 H272 H834
 H1568 H413 H776 H272 H834

וְהַנְּחָזָה בְּכָה עַל
 whereof they were possessed according to the word of the LORD
 H270 H0 H5921 H6310 H3068
 H270 H0 H5921 H6310 H3068

מֹשֶׁה בְּיַד
 by the hand of Moses
 H3027 H4872

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 32:26 (Parallel theme): Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead:

Numbers 32:29 (References Lord): And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed

to battle, before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession:

Numbers 32:1 (Parallel theme): Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;

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