

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, אֶרֶץ אַחֲזָתָם אֲשֶׁר נִעְחֲזוּ בָהּ) 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, גַּל, 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

וַיָּשׁוּבוּ returned H7725	וְלִכְוֹ H1980	בְּנֵי יִ And the children H1121	רְאוּבֵן of Reuben H7205	בְּנֵי יִ And the children H1121	גַּד of Gad H1410
וְחֶצֶץ יוֹ and the half H2677	שֵׁבֶט tribe H7626	מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁה of Manasseh H4519	מֵאֵת H853	בְּנֵי יִ And the children H1121	יִשְׂרָאֵל of Israel H3478
מִשֵּׁלָה out of Shiloh H7887	אֲשֶׁר H834	אֶרֶץ to the land H776	כְּנָעַן of Canaan H3667	לְכָת H1980	אֶל H413
					אֶרֶץ to the land H776
הַגִּלְעָד of Gilead H1568	אֶל H413	אֶרֶץ to the land H776	אֲחֻזָּתָם of their possession H272	אֲשֶׁר H834	
וְנֶאֱחָזוּ whereof they were possessed H270		בָּהּ H0	עַל H5921	כִּפִּי according to the word H6310	יְהוָה of the LORD H3068
בְּיָד by the hand H3027	מֹשֶׁה of Moses 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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