

Numbers 18:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

Analysis

God tells Aaron: 'Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.' The Hebrew 'cheleq' (part/portion) and 'nachalah' (inheritance) emphasize that while other tribes received land, priests received God Himself. This principle declares that those devoted entirely to God's service have God as their supreme reward - a relationship more valuable than material wealth. David echoes this: 'The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance' (Ps 16:5). This foreshadows believers' ultimate inheritance - knowing God in Christ (Phil 3:8) - and ministers' contentment in spiritual rewards (1 Pet 5:2-4).

Historical Context

Priests and Levites received no tribal territory like other Israelites, instead receiving forty-eight cities scattered among tribes (Num 35:1-8) and tithes from Israel's produce (Num 18:21-32). This distribution prevented priestly power consolidation while ensuring their presence among all tribes for teaching and worship leadership. Their dependence on others' tithes required faith and reminded them that ministry is serving God, not accumulating wealth. After the exile, neglect of Levitical support caused temple service to suffer (Neh 13:10-12), showing the importance of supporting God's ministers.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. If you lost all material possessions, would God alone satisfy you as your inheritance?
2. How does viewing God as your supreme portion affect your relationship with money and possessions?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֶל	אַהֲרֹן	בְּאַרְצָם	לֹא
spake	And the LORD	H413	unto Aaron	in their land	H3808
H559	H3068		H175	H776	
תִּנָּח לְ	חֵלְקָב	לֹא	יְהוָה	לְבָ	
Thou shalt have no inheritance	neither shalt thou have any part	H3808	H1961	H0	
H5157	H2506				
בֵּין יְ	חֵלְקָב	וְנִחַל תִּבְ	בֵּין יְ		
among	neither shalt thou have any part	and thine inheritance	among		
H8432	H2506	H5159	H8432		
בְּנֵי יִ	יִשְׂרָאֵל:				
the children	of Israel				
H1121	H3478				

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 44:28 (References Israel): And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I am their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession.

Deuteronomy 10:9 (References Lord): Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

Joshua 13:33 (References Lord): But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.

Lamentations 3:24 (References Lord): The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Deuteronomy 14:27 (Parallel theme): And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

Deuteronomy 12:12 (References Lord): And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

Joshua 14:3 (Parallel theme): For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them.

Revelation 21:3 (Parallel theme): And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Psalms 142:5 (References Lord): I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

Psalms 16:5 (References Lord): The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.