

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

לֹא תַּעֲשֵׂה אֶל אָבִרְבָּנָל יְהוָה הָיָה אֶתְמָר
spake And the LORD H413 unto Aaron in their land H3808
H559 H3068 H175 H776

לֹא תַּעֲשֵׂה תְּנַתֵּן לֹא יְהוָה הָיָה
Thou shalt have no inheritance neither shalt thou have any part H3808 H1961 H0
H5157 H2506

בֵּית וְעַמְּךָ תְּנַתֵּן תְּבִרְכָּה אֶת
among H589 neither shalt thou have any part and thine inheritance among H8432
H8432 H2506 H5159

בְּנֵי 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.