

Numbers 26:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and of Hepher, the family of the Hepherites.

Analysis

Of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and of Hepher, the family of the Hepherites—Shemida (שֵׁמֶד, 'name of knowing' or 'wise fame') suggests reputation built on understanding, while Hepher (חֵפֶר, 'a pit/well' or 'shame') seems less auspicious. Yet Hepher's clan produced Zelophehad, whose daughters revolutionized inheritance law (Numbers 27:1-11).

This juxtaposition—'wise fame' beside 'the pit'—mirrors Scripture's pattern: God chooses foolish things to shame the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27). The Hepherites, despite their inauspicious name, became agents of covenant justice and women's rights. The census doesn't rank clans by prestige but counts them equally, each essential to Israel's completeness. No clan is expendable; the 'least' may birth landmark legal precedent.

Historical Context

The Hepherites' later significance through Zelophehad's daughters (v. 33) shows how census genealogies preserve information that becomes crucial later. This clan's name appears in Joshua's land division (Joshua 17:2-3), where the daughters' inheritance is formally granted. Their case became precedent for property law throughout Israel's history (Numbers 36).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Hepher's story of 'the pit' producing legal reformers encourage believers from disadvantaged or stigmatized backgrounds?
2. What does the equal counting of prestigious and humble clans teach about God's valuation versus human social hierarchies?
3. How might Zelophehad's case, arising from 'shameful' Hepher, typologically point to Christ bringing redemption through the shame of the cross?

Interlinear Text

וְשֵׁמִידָה	מִשְׁפָּט	חַתָּה	הַשְׁמִידָעִים	וְשֵׁמִידָה	מִשְׁפָּט	חַתָּה
And of Shemida	the family		of the Shemidaites	and of Hepher	the family	
H8061	H4940		H8062	H2660	H4940	

בְּחַפְרִים
of the Hepherites
H2662

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