

Numbers 27:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.

Analysis

The law extends further: 'if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family.' The Hebrew *she'ero ha-karov* (his nearest kinsman) ensures someone would always inherit. This prevented escheat (property reverting to the state) and maintained family continuity. The principle teaches that covenant community maintains interconnected responsibilities—we are our brother's keeper. New Testament parallel: the church as family ensures no believer is truly orphaned or abandoned (Mark 10:29-30).

Historical Context

This law prevented the Israelite monarchy or tribal leadership from accumulating property from extinct families. Unlike ancient Near Eastern kingdoms where kings claimed ownerless property, Israel's theocratic system protected family rights even for distant kin. This limited state power and maintained economic decentralization, preventing the concentration of wealth that oppresses the poor.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does covenant community provide for those without immediate family?
2. What modern structures ensure vulnerable believers aren't abandoned?
3. How does limiting state power protect individual and family rights?

Interlinear Text

וְאִם	וְאִם	לֹא	לֹא	וְנִתְתָּן	אַת
H518	H369	H0	And if he have no brethren	then ye shall give	H853
			H251	H5414	
תְּחִלַּת	תְּחִלַּת	לֹא	לֹא	אָבִיו	
his inheritance	And if he have no brethren	unto his father's			
H5159	H251	H1			

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