

Numbers 32:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

Analysis

We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance—This oath specifies duration: "not return...until" establishes an open-ended commitment dependent on completing God's purposes, not their convenience. "Every man his inheritance" (ish nachalato, אִישׁ נַחֲלָתוֹ) emphasizes comprehensive fulfillment—not partial success but full possession of promised territory by all tribes.

The Hebrew nachalah (נַחֲלָה, inheritance) denotes divinely-granted permanent possession passed to descendants, not merely conquered territory. They commit to stay until God's covenant promises are completely fulfilled for all Israel. This postponed gratification and sacrificial service for others' benefit exemplifies covenant love (chesed, חֶסֶד). Their houses and families would wait years while they fought for their brothers. This models the principle that in covenant community, no one is blessed in isolation—blessing flows to all or none.

Historical Context

The conquest took approximately seven years, with initial campaigns followed by lengthy mopping-up operations (Joshua 11:18). Reuben and Gad's warriors thus spent years away from newly-built homes and young families, fulfilling their oath faithfully. Their commitment proved crucial to conquest success—forty thousand additional warriors provided substantial military strength. Later history shows these Transjordan tribes faced greater assimilation pressures and were first

carried away in Assyrian captivity (1 Chronicles 5:25-26), perhaps indicating the spiritual risks of geographical separation from Israel's center.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does this pledge teach about postponing personal gratification for covenant community welfare?
2. How does their commitment to stay "until every man his inheritance" model completeness in fulfilling obligations?
3. In what ways should Christians prioritize others receiving God's promises even when it delays personal enjoyment?

Interlinear Text

ל א	נָשׁ וּב	אֶל	בְּתֵי יִנּוּ	עַד	הִתְנַחֵל
H3808	We will not return	H413	unto our houses	H5704	have inherited
	H7725		H1004		H5157
בְּנֵי י	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	אֵשׁ	נַחֲלָתוֹ:		
until the children	of Israel	every man	his inheritance		
H1121	H3478	H376	H5159		

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