

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, איש נחלתו) emphasizes comprehensive fulfillment—not partial success but full possession of promised territory by all tribes.

The Hebrew nachalah (נָחָלָה, 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

הַתְּנִיחַל עַד בַּתְּנִינָה נְשָׁוֹב אֶל יְהוָה
H3808 We will not return H413 unto our houses H5704 have inherited
H7725 H1004 H5157

בְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁרָאֵל תִּמְלִתָּה
H1121 H3478 H376 H5159
until the children of Israel every man his inheritance

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