

Numbers 36:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel:

Analysis

The family heads of Gilead (Joseph's descendants through Manasseh) coming before Moses demonstrates responsible leadership concerned about tribal integrity. Their question about the daughters of Zelophehad's inheritance addresses the practical implications of earlier rulings. If the daughters marry outside their tribe, their inherited land would pass to another tribe, permanently diminishing Manasseh's territory. This shows that justice requires considering not just immediate cases but long-term consequences. The Reformed emphasis on wisdom and foresight in applying principles is reflected here.

Historical Context

The earlier ruling (Numbers 27) gave daughters the right to inherit when there were no sons. This protected family continuity and individual justice. But tribal leaders recognized a potential problem—if these women married outside Manasseh, tribal boundaries would be affected. Their concern balanced individual rights with communal integrity, showing that both matter in covenant community.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does responsible leadership anticipate long-term consequences of immediate decisions?
2. What does balancing individual justice with community integrity teach about wise governance?
3. In what ways should church decisions consider both immediate fairness and long-term implications?

Interlinear Text

גִּלְעָד לְבָנֵי י מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֲבֹת רֹאשִׁי י וַיִּקְרַב ו
of Gilead of the children of the families fathers And the chief came near
H1568 H1121 H4940 H1 H7218 H7126

מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת מְנַשֶּׁה ה לְבָנֵי י מַכִּיר לְבָנֵי י
of the families of Manasseh of the children of Machir of the children
H4940 H4519 H1121 H4353 H1121

הַנְּשָׂאִים וְלִפְנֵי י מֹשֶׁה וְלִפְנֵי י וַיְדַבֵּר ו יוֹסֵף לְבָנֵי י
the princes and before Moses and before and spake of Joseph of the children
H5387 H6440 H4872 H6440 H1696 H3130 H1121

יִשְׂרָאֵל: לְבָנֵי י אֲבֹת רֹאשִׁי י
of Israel of the children fathers And the chief
H3478 H1121 H1 H7218

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 27:1 (Parallel theme): Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

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