

Numbers 36:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.

Analysis

Moses' command 'according to the word of the LORD' establishes that the solution comes from divine wisdom, not human compromise. The verdict that Zelophehad's daughters may marry whom they wish 'only to the family of the tribe of their father' balances their individual freedom with tribal integrity. They have both rights (to inherit, to choose husbands) and responsibilities (to preserve tribal boundaries). This teaches that biblical freedom is not absolute autonomy but liberty within the framework of covenant community. The Reformed understanding of liberty as freedom for righteousness, not license for selfishness, is illustrated.

Historical Context

This ruling refined the earlier decision (Numbers 27) without overturning it. The daughters maintained inheritance rights but with a condition that protected tribal integrity. This balance demonstrated that God's justice considers both individual and corporate dimensions. The solution satisfied both concerns—family continuity and tribal stability.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does true freedom operate within the context of covenant responsibility?
2. What does balancing individual rights with community needs teach about Christian liberty?
3. In what ways should personal freedom be exercised with consideration for corporate impact?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּצֵא	מֹשֶׁה	אֶת	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	עַל	פִּי
commanded	And Moses	H853	of the sons	of Israel	H5921	according to the word
H6680	H4872		H1121	H3478		H6310
יְהוָה	יֹאמַר	כִּי	מִטֵּה	בְּנֵי	יוֹסֵף	דְּבָרִים:
of the LORD	saying	H3651	The tribe	of the sons	of Joseph	hath said
H3068	H559		H4294	H1121	H3130	H1696

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 27:7 (Parallel theme): The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.