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Joshua 21.

(2015)

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Joshua 21.

Topics.

- The names of the cities Benjamin gave to the Kohathites.
- Cities Ephraim and Dan gave to the rest of the Kohathites.
- Cities the half-tribe Manasseh gave to the rest of the Kohathites.
- Cities the half-tribe Manasseh, gave to the Gershonites.
- Cities Issachar, Asher and Naphtali gave to the Gershonites.
- Cities Zebulon, Reuben and Gad gave to the Merarites.
- The total number of cities given to all the Levites forty-eight cities.
- The LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: the first five books of Moses anticipated the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham concerning the Promised Land. Moses is now dead. Joshua crosses the River Jordan (about 1400 B.C.) and after a string of military victories apportioned the land according to the twelve tribes. These battles shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth that God fights for His people when they are faithful and courageous and put their full trust in Him. (Josh. 1:6-9).

At the close of the book Joshua says that he and all his house will serve the LORD and invites the people to choose whether they will serve the gods of their fathers or the gods in whose land they dwell or the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. The people choose to serve their God. (Josh. 24:15). Although anonymous the book appears to contain eyewitness testimony, some of which may have been written by Joshua himself.

NOTE: in this study I have not attempted to give detail of land areas, borders and boundaries or the locations of towns and villages etc., since I am not a master of geography or the regions of the Middle East. Added to this it is difficult and enormously time consuming to trace the exact boundaries of some sites and cities, because a number of ancient names mentioned are unknown today

Cities and Pasturelands to Be Allotted to the Levites.

Joshua 21:1-3 ----- ¹Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel. ²And they said to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, "The LORD commanded through Moses that we be given cities to dwell in, along with their pasturelands for our livestock." ³So by command of the LORD the people of Israel gave to the Levites the following cities and pasturelands out of their inheritance.

This chapter is a continuation of (Josh. 18:2-6) where Joshua began to allot the remaining land of Canaan to the seven tribes who had not yet been allocated an inheritance. Now that the whole land had been distributed to the several tribes, (though not completely possessed by them) and everyone knew the cities that belonged to them, and what they could and should part with to the Levites and

when the six cities of refuge were fixed; the Levites came to put in their claim for the cities for their dwelling since they as yet had no share in the division of the land.

Kohathites

Judah, Simeon and Benjamin gave the Kohathites thirteen cities.

Joshua 21:4 -----⁴The lot came out for the clans of the Kohathites. So those Levites who were descendants of Aaron the priest received by lot from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, thirteen cities.

In the book of Exodus, Kohath (of the tribe of Levi) had four sons, Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. During the captivity in Egypt, before Pharaoh's edict that all male infants should be destroyed Amram's wife Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt gave birth to two sons, Aaron and Moses and Miriam their sister. (Num. 26:59) (Exod. 6:20). Aaron the firstborn was three years older than his younger brother Moses and Miriam according to some sources, was seven years older than Moses, but other sources indicate that she was older than that.

The Kohathites were offspring of Korah the second son of Levi, and descendants of Moses and Aaron the first high priest. (Gen. 46:11) (Exod. 6:16-20) (Num. 3:17) (1 Chron. 6:1). They were one of the three main divisions among the Levites; the other two were the Gershonites and the Merarites also from the tribe of Levi and descendants of Moses and Aaron. As descendants of Aaron the Kohathites, Gershonites and Merarites were appointed exclusively to the priesthood while all the rest in the tribe of Levi were ranked in the common order of Levites.

- The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. (Gen. 46:11).
- These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137 years. ¹⁷The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their clans. ¹⁸The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years. ¹⁹The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites according to their generations. ²⁰Amram took as his wife Jochebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years. (Exod. 6:16-20).
- And these were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari. (Numbers. 3:17).
- The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. (1 Chron. 6:1).

The Kohathites formed one of the three divisions of the tribe of Levi; the other two being the Gershonites and the Merarites (Num. 3:17).

The special service of the Kohathites was: -

- The Menorah (the seven branched Candlestick).
- The altars and all the vessels of the sanctuary and all the service thereof.
- The Ark of the Covenant and the Table of Shewbread, etc.

The Kohathites did not possess a continuous territory, but were given twenty-three cities scattered throughout the geographic region in the Kingdom of Israel. The Old Testament traces the Levitical priesthood through the three sons of Levi and continues on through the New Testament through the Sadducees until it went extinct at the death and resurrection of Christ when it was replaced with the priesthood of faithful Christians with Christ as their High Priest which endures until Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to gather the faithful to himself and establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

The three heads of the fathers of the Levites were: -

1. Kohath (Kohathites) (Josh. 21:20-26).
2. Gershon (Gershonites) (Josh. 21:27-33).
3. Merari (Merarites) (Josh. 21:34-40).

These three came before Eleazar the high priest, Joshua and the heads of the tribes at Shiloh. The inheritance that had been promised the tribe of Levi lay within the territory of every tribe.

The Levites not only waited until the other tribes were provided for, before they came before Joshua to make their claim, but they also built their claim upon a very solid foundation (the word of God) and not upon their own merits or services. Provisions for those in ministry and those who proclaim the Gospel is not a thing left to the will of the people, that they may let them lack what they need if they please. Those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel and live comfortably, but not excessively.

In the camp of Israel there were two squares surrounding the tabernacle: an inner square of priests and Levites, an outer square of the tribes of Israel, three on each side. The inner square was arranged in the following way: -

1. The priests, with Moses and Aaron, on the east, by the entrance of the tabernacle.
2. The Kohathites on the south.
3. The Gershonites on the west.
4. The Merarites on the north.

On the march the priests were the chief portion. The Kohathites carried the sacred vessels, the Gershonites the curtains and various fabrics of the tent and tabernacle, and the Merarites the bars and boards. When they received their inheritances in Palestine, the same relative order was preserved.

The Kohathites the descendants of Aaron: (v4) were the priests whose business was to serve in the temple and at the altar. The thirteen cities received from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin were, by the wisdom of God nearest to Jerusalem; the place God had chosen to put his name in, where the temple would be built, and the altars erected for sacrifices and incense. Some feel thirteen cities are far too great for the single family of Aaron but consider the following four facts.

1. It appears in (1 Chron. 24) that the two surviving sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, had twenty four sons, heads of the priestly families.
2. Aaron was one-hundred and twenty-three years old when he died (Num. 33:39) and his sons' grandchildren and great grandchildren were most likely living in the elapsing years of Joshua's life and may have numbered several thousands.
3. The cities of Canaan were for the most part small. This is manifest from the surprising number of them in proportion to the area of the land especially in the south, where the portion of the priests was situated.
4. The priests and Levites would not necessarily occupy the whole of the dwellings in the cities and the fields since there would be non-Levites who would reside within the cities to attend to the necessary work required within them and to cultivating the farmland and caring for the livestock.

Ephraim, Dan, Manasseh, gave the Rest of the Kohathites Ten Cities.

Joshua 21:5 -----⁵And the rest of the Kohathites received by lot from the clans of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.

To the rest of the Kohathites: refers to those who were ranked in the common order of Levites who did not descend from Korah in the line of Amram and Aaron, but from Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, who were not priests, but Levites. These were given out of the tribe of Ephraim, the tribe of Dan and the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities next to the Kohathites, Gershonites and Merarites who were priests.

The common order of Levites received fewer cities than was given to the Kohathites, Gershonites and Merarites, because their numbers would have been less. Part of the reason for this is that the non-priestly Kohathites had been diminished when they rose up against Moses and the ground split apart and swallowed Korah, Dathan and Abiram up with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah so all that belonged to them went down and they all perished from the midst of the assembly. (Num. 16:28-33).

Added to this the following verses show that the land was divided according to the size of the tribe (i.e., the number of names in the tribe).

- You shall inherit the land by lot according to your clans. To a large tribe you shall give a large inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a small inheritance. Wherever the lot falls for anyone, that shall be his. According to the tribes of your fathers you shall inherit. (Numbers. 33:54).
- As for the cities that you shall give from the possession of the people of Israel, from the larger tribes you shall take many, and from the smaller tribes you shall take few; each, in proportion to the inheritance that it inherits, shall give of its cities to the Levites." (Numbers. 35:8).

The common order of Levites being much smaller in numbers naturally received a smaller inheritance.

Gershonites

Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh gave the Gershonites Thirteen Cities.

Joshua 21:6 -----⁶The Gershonites received by lot from the clans of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

The following verses shows that Gershon was a son of Levi: -

- These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137 years. (Exodus. 6:16) (Numbers. 3:17) (1 Chron. 6:1, 16) (1 Chron. 23:6).

Gershon was the firstborn of the three sons of Levi the other two sons were Libni, (also known as Ladan) and Shimei

- The sons of Gershon were Ladan and Shimei. (1 Chronicles. 23:7) (1 Chron. 26:21) (Exodus 6:17) (Numbers. 3:18).

The tribe of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the other half-tribe of Manasseh in the land of Canaan gave the Gershonites thirteen cities in Northern Palestine (Josh. 21:6) (Josh. 21:27-33) (Josh. 21:6).

The special service of the Gershonites was: -

- Carrying of the curtains and their cords for hanging, the coverings and the screens.
- The instruments of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting on the journeys in the wilderness, under the supervision of Ithamar the son of Aaron.

The work of the Gershonites was less exalted than that of the Kohathites, who mostly carried the holy utensils and symbols, but more exalted than that of the

Merarites who carried the boards. Wagons and oxen were given to the Gershonites, the Merarites and the Kohathites according to what they had to carry.

- Two wagon and four oxen were given to the Gershonites.
- Four wagons and eight oxen were given to the Merarites.
- No wagons or oxen were given to the Kohathites.
- Two wagons and four oxen Moses gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service. ⁸And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. ⁹But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because they were charged with the service of the holy things that had to be carried on the shoulder. (Num. 7:7-9)

Merarites

The tribe of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun gave the Merarites twelve cities.

Joshua 21:7 ----- ⁷The Merarites according to their clans received from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

All twelve tribes from their own inheritance of cities gave the Levites cities from their own portion of land, which means the Levites were intermixed throughout the nation of Israel. In this way the whole body was knit together, that it would have the best possible chance of growing as one body into the full maturity of God. There is no doubt that God by His Spirit was in full control of the lot and had determined where the lot fell.

The name of Levi comes from the Hebrew word (*Leviy*) and means attached; to twine, to unite and to join. Joshua's work of dividing the land of Canaan was not only directed by his wisdom, but also by the Spirit of God to preserve the union of the twelve tribes. By spreading the tribe of Levi throughout Israel they would act as a bond of union to bring the tribes of Israel together and joining them all to their God.

The Tribes of Israel Gave to the Levites, as the LORD Commanded Moses.

Joshua 21:8 ----- ⁸These cities and their pasturelands the people of Israel gave by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

These cities did not lie all together which means that the Levites were intermixed within all Israel's cities this fulfilled the following prophecy Jacob spoke to his sons while on his death bed: -

- Cursed be their (Simeon and Levi) anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. (Gen. 49:7).

It was so ordered that the Levites would be divided and scattered in Israel for the benefit of the tribes, that they might have the assistance of the priests and Levites, to instruct them in the knowledge of the laws and commandments of God, and all divine things:

As the LORD had commanded Moses: (v8) refers to the following Scripture: -

- The LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, ²"Command the people of Israel to give to the Levites some of the inheritance of their possession as cities for them to dwell in. And you shall give to the Levites pasturelands around the cities. (Num. 35:1-2).

The cities and pasturelands were for the Levites livestock and their farmlands, crops, clothing and all their material possessions needed for living etc.

- For Moses had given an inheritance to the two and one-half tribes beyond the Jordan, but to the Levites he gave no inheritance among them. ⁴For the people of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. And no portion was given to the Levites in the land, but only cities to dwell in, with their pasturelands for their livestock and their substance. ⁵The people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses; they allotted the land. (Joshua 14:3-5).

Kohathites.

The Names of the Cities Judah and Simeon Gave to the Kohathites.

Joshua 21:9-16 ----- ⁹Out of the tribe of the people of Judah and the tribe of the people of Simeon they gave the following cities mentioned by name, ¹⁰which went to the descendants of Aaron, one of the clans of the Kohathites who belonged to the people of Levi; since the lot fell to them first. ¹¹They gave them Kiriath-arba (Arba being the father of Anak), that is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, along with the pasturelands around it. ¹²But the fields of the city and its villages had been given to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession. ¹³And to the descendants of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasturelands, Libnah with its pasturelands, ¹⁴Jattir with its pasturelands, Eshtemoa with its pasturelands, ¹⁵Holon with its pasturelands, Debir with its pasturelands, ¹⁶Ain with its pasturelands, Juttah with its pasturelands, Beth-shemesh with its pasturelands—nine cities out of these two tribes.

Following are the cities the tribe of Judah and Simeon gave to the Kohathites: -

1. Kiriath-arba which is Hebron in the hill country of Judah (also a city of refuge).
2. Libnah.
3. Jattir.
4. Eshtemoa.
5. Holon.
6. Debir.
7. Ain.
8. Juttah.
9. Beth-shemesh.

These nine cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Kohathites out of the two tribes of Judah and Simeon.

The fields of the city and its villages had been given to Caleb: (v12) refers to the one thousand and two thousand areas of land surrounding the Levitical cities spoken of in the following verses: -

- The LORD spoke to Moses by the Jordan River at Jericho, saying, ²"Command the people of Israel to give to the Levites some of the inheritance of their possession as cities for them to dwell in. And you shall give to the Levites pasturelands (suburbs in KJV) around the cities. ³The cities shall be theirs to dwell in, and their pasturelands (the suburbs in KJV) shall be for their cattle and for their livestock and for all their beasts. ⁴The pasturelands (the suburbs in KJV) of the cities, which you shall give to the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits all around. ⁵And you shall measure, outside the city, on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits, the city being in the middle. This shall belong to them as pastureland (suburbs in KJV) for their cities. (Num. 35:1-5).

Upon first reading these verse there appears to be an apparent discrepancy between (v4) and (v5) with regard to the measurement of one thousand and two thousand cubits, but the statements in the two verses refer to two totally different things there is actually a total of three thousand cubits. The confusion most likely come about with the fact the word suburb comes from the Hebrew word (*migrash*) and can refer to a suburb, the open country where flocks are driven for pasture or the area around a building.

A thousand cubits was half a Sabbath day's journey and the distance was pretty near half a mile which means each city was to contain a considerable quantity of ground all around their city for their livestock, cattle crops, suburbs and villages (approximately three and a half miles around each city). The one thousand and two thousand cubits could have been laid out in either of the following two ways: -

1. The first thousand cubits all around the city were to be used for vineyards, olive-yards, farming and livestock and the two thousand cubits beyond it were to be used for suburbs and villages of the city. In this scenario each city given to the Levites would be surrounded by one thousand cubits of pasturelands and then another two thousand cubits for suburbs and villages.
2. The first thousand cubits all around the city were to be used for suburbs and villages of the city and the two thousand cubits beyond it were to be used for vineyards, olive-yards, farming and livestock. In this scenario each city given to the Levites would be surrounded by one thousand cubits of suburbs and villages of the city then another two thousand cubits of pasturelands.

Unlike the other tribes the Levites were to have no single territorial domain allocated to them like the other tribes, but were to be spread throughout the land in certain cities given to them for their use and these cities were to be surrounded by widespread pasturelands, suburbs and, villages. The dimensions and area of the land to surround each city were not left to the Israelites, to give what ground they pleased or that suited them, but were fixed by the LORD.

- The fields of pastureland belonging to their cities may not be sold, for that is their possession forever. (Lev. 25:34).

Hundreds of years ago Moses had promised to give Caleb this land and now Joshua and the people of Israel had given it to him. (Joshua 14:6-14). God graciously provided for keeping His laws and statutes amongst all the tribes of Israel by spreading and mixing the Levites throughout their cities and in this way His word would be heard in all parts of the land. Likewise Christians have the Gospel globally spread amongst the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kohathites

The Names of the Cities Benjamin Gave to the Kohathites.

Joshua 21:17-19 ----- ¹⁷then out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasturelands, Geba with its pasturelands, ¹⁸Anathoth with its pasturelands, and Almon with its pasturelands—four cities. ¹⁹The cities of the descendants of Aaron, the priests, were in all thirteen cities with their pasturelands.

Cities the tribe of Benjamin gave to the Kohathites: -

1. Gibeon.
2. Geba.
3. Anathoth.
4. Almon.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Kohathites out of the tribe of Benjamin. So the Kohathites, the descendants of Aaron, the priests, were given a total of thirteen cities with their pasturelands.

The Names of the Cities Ephraim Gave to the Rest of the Kohathites.

Joshua 21:20-22 ----- ²⁰As to the rest of the Kohathites belonging to the Kohathite clans of the Levites, the cities allotted to them were out of the tribe of Ephraim. ²¹To them were given Shechem, the city of refuge for the manslayer, with its pasturelands in the hill country of Ephraim, Gezer with its pasturelands, ²²Kibzaim with its pasturelands, Beth-horon with its pasturelands—four cities.

Cities the tribe of Ephraim gave to the rest of the Kohathites: -

1. Shechem in the hill country (also a city of refuge).
2. Gezer.
3. Kibzaim.
4. Beth-horon.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were give to the rest of the Kohathites out of the tribe of Ephraim. The rest of the Kohathites refers to those who were ranked in the common order of Levites who did not descend from him in the line of Amram and Aaron, but from Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, who were not priests, but Levites. For further information concerning the Kohathites see the notes following (v4-5) above.

The Names of the Cities Dan Gave to the Rest of the Kohathites.

Joshua 21:23-24 ----- ²³and out of the tribe of Dan, Elteke with its pasturelands, Gibbethon with its pasturelands, ²⁴Aijalon with its pasturelands, Gath-rimmon with its pasturelands—four cities.

Cities the tribe of Dan gave to the rest of the Kohathites: -

1. Elteke.
2. Gibbethon.
3. Aijalon.
4. Gath-rimmon.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were given to the rest of the Kohathites out of the tribe of Dan.

Names of Cities the Half-Tribe Manasseh, Gave to the Rest of the Kohathites.

Joshua 21:25-26 ----- ²⁵and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Taanach with its pasturelands, and Gath-rimmon with its pasturelands—two cities. ²⁶The cities of the clans of the rest of the Kohathites were ten in all with their pasturelands.

Cities the half-tribe of Manasseh gave to the rest of the Kohathites: -

1. Taanach.
2. Gath-rimmon.

These two cities all with their pasturelands were given to the rest of the Kohathites out of the half-tribe of Manasseh in the land of Canaan.

The total number of cities given to the rest of the Kohathites was ten.

Names of Cities the Half-Tribe Manasseh, Gave to the Gershonites.

Joshua 21:27 ----- ²⁷And to the Gershonites, one of the clans of the Levites, were given out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan with its pasturelands, the city of refuge for the manslayer, and Beeshterah with its pasturelands—two cities.

Cities the half-tribe of Manasseh gave to the Gershonites: -

1. Golan in Bashan (also a city of refuge).
2. Beeshterah.

These two cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Gershonites out of the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Names of Cities Issachar Gave to the Gershonites.

Joshua 21:28-29 ----- ²⁸out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its pasturelands, Daberath with its pasturelands, ²⁹Jarmuth with its pasturelands, En-gannim with its pasturelands—four cities.

Cities Issachar gave to the Gershonites: -

1. Kishion.
2. Daberath.
3. Jarmuth.
4. En-gannim.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Gershonites out of the tribe of Issachar.

Names of Cities the Asher Gave to the Gershonites.

Joshua 21:30-31 ----- ³⁰and out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its pasturelands, Abdon with its pasturelands, ³¹Helkath with its pasturelands, and Rehob with its pasturelands—four cities.

Cities Asher gave to the Gershonites: -

1. Mishal.
2. Abdon.
3. Helkath.
4. Rehob.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Gershonites out of the tribe of Asher.

Names of Cities Naphtalie gave to the Gershonites.

Joshua 21:32-33 ----- ³²and out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its pasturelands, the city of refuge for the manslayer, Hammoth-dor with its pasturelands, and Kartan with its pasturelands—three cities. ³³The cities of the several clans of the Gershonites were in all thirteen cities with their pasturelands.

Cities Naphtali gave to the Gershonites: -

1. Kedesh in Galilee (also a city of refuge).
2. Hammoth-dor.
3. Kartan.

These three cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Gershonites out of the tribe of Naphtali.

The total number of cities with their pasturelands that were given to the rest of the Gershonites from the tribes of Israel was thirteen.

Merarites.

Names of Cities Zebulun Gave to the Merarites.

Joshua 21:34-35 ----- ³⁴And to the rest of the Levites, the Merarite clans, were given out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its pasturelands, Kartah with its pasturelands, ³⁵Dimnah with its pasturelands, Nahalal with its pasturelands—four cities.

Cities Zebulun gave to the Merarite: -

1. Jokneam.
2. Kartah.
3. Dimnah.
4. Nahalal.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Merarites out of the tribe of Zebulun.

Names of Cities Reuben Gave to the Merarites.

Joshua 21:36-37 ----- ³⁶and out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its pasturelands, Jahaz with its pasturelands, ³⁷Kedemoth with its pasturelands, and Mephaath with its pasturelands—four cities.

1. Bezer.
2. Jahaz.
3. Kedemoth.
4. Mephaath.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Merarites out of the tribe of Reuben.

Names of Cities Gad Gave to the Merarites.

Joshua 21:38-40 ----- ³⁸and out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its pasturelands, the city of refuge for the manslayer, Mahanaim with its pasturelands, ³⁹Heshbon with its pasturelands, Jazer with its pasturelands—four cities in all. ⁴⁰As for the cities of the several Merarite clans, that is, the remainder of the clans of the Levites, those allotted to them were in all twelve cities.

Cities of refuge Gad gave to the Merarites: -

1. Ramoth in Gilead (also a city of refuge).
2. Mahanaim.
3. Heshbon.
4. Jazer.

These four cities all with their pasturelands were given to the Merarites out of the tribe of Gad. The total number of cities with their pasturelands that were given to the Merarites from the tribes of Israel was twelve.

The Total Number of Cities Given to all the Levites Forty-Eight Cities.

Joshua 21:41-42 ----- ⁴¹The cities of the Levites in the midst of the possession of the people of Israel were in all forty-eight cities with their pasturelands. ⁴²These cities each had its pasturelands around it. So it was with all these cities.

The total number of cities with their pasturelands that were given to all the clans of the Levites from the tribes of Israel was forty-eight with six of them being cities of refuge, three on the eastern side of the Jordan River and three on the western side.

God's Promise Fulfilled

The LORD Gave to Israel all the Land that He Swore to Give to their Fathers.

Joshua 21:43-45 ----- ⁴³Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. ⁴⁴And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. ⁴⁵Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

This is a general winding up of the history from the thirteenth chapter, which narrates the occupation of the land by the Israelites. All the promises made, had been, or were in the course of being fulfilled. Although the conquest of Canaan was not fully completed in the time of Joshua, as it was afterwards under David, yet we see by these verses that the expectations of Israel were abundantly satisfied. They received all that they hoped for.

The armies of Israel who had marched shoulder to shoulder, and shared the fierce battles on many a bloody field, were now becoming peaceful farmers and shepherds. This entire chapter is a total change in the lifestyle Israel has lived since they crossed the Jordan River and entered the land of Canaan. This is a monumental moment in Israel history.

God's sovereign will: the difference between the miraculous conquest of Canaan and the ordinary facts of history is not that God did the one and Israel did the other; both are equally involved, though in different methods. In the field of human affairs, as in the realm of nature, God is immanent over both. Even though God's working maybe complicated by the mysterious power of man's free will to set itself in antagonism to His will it matters not since in some mysterious and impossible manner for us to solve, His sovereign will is supreme.

The very powers which are arrayed against God are acting within His sovereign purposes, and their end is by His appointment. No one needs to understand what cannot be understood in order to believe that there is no power but of God, and that from Him are all things, and to Him are all things.

A practical lesson: Joshua was a great and faithful man of God highly skilled in warfare who led the armies of Israel to triumphant victory over all their enemies throughout the land of Canaan, but without God on their side the people of Israel would have been humbled, defeated and destroyed. This principal teaches us who are running the Christian race, that we must never think too much of our natural strength or of our own talents and abilities or even trust in our leaders and forget that our unseen and ever-present Commander is on our side.

God's Promise to Abraham: God had promised Abraham to give to his seed the land of Canaan for a possession and now they dwelt in it. Some feel that the statement, "The LORD gave unto Israel all the land," (v43) is an incorrect statement since though they have subdued and possessed the majority of it their still remains some to be yet conquered and possessed, but the following verses show that God never intended to give Israel total possession of the land all at one time.

- I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. ³⁰Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land. (Exodus 23:29-30).
- The LORD your God will clear away these nations before you little by little. You may not make an end of them at once, lest the wild beasts grow too numerous for you. (Deuteronomy. 7:22),

The statement, "The LORD gave unto Israel all the land," (v43) means God had given them the actual possession of the greatest part of it and the right to the whole country that had been promised them and authorized Israel to subdue and possess the rest of the land and to exercise absolute dominion over all the people remaining in it as soon as it was needful for them. This of course would be when their numbers were increased. All of this was exactly according to God's promise for the Israelites when their numbers were large enough to care for and cultivate the whole land it would then be time for them to possess it all.

God never expected Israel to expel all the inhabitants of Canaan at once, but He did give them the power to possess the rest and have absolute dominion over all the people remaining in it as soon as it was needful and convenient for them to do so, which was little by little, until the Israelites were so increased as to occupy the whole land so that no part of it would lie waste and become barren, and wild beasts of the field should multiply upon their farmlands.

God had fulfilled all His part of the covenant. It was not part of His purpose that the native population should be annihilated suddenly. When Israel was faithful to the LORD there was not an army of Canaan that could stand against them. Had they remained faithful to the LORD God would have continued to give them the same triumphant victories. Israel's downfall was not a lack on God's part, but the result of the people of Israel slothfulness in not driving out all the Canaanites and their sinful indulgence to the idolatries and abominations of the people of Canaan whom they harboured in their midst.

It was the inertness of the Israelites which prevented the completion of the conquest when the allotment of Canaan was made by Joshua; as it was their subsequent backslidings which caused God to turn the tide of victory against them. The conquest of Canaan was already a perfect work since if Israel had remained faithful their victory and possession of the Promised Land was guaranteed, because it was based upon the promise of God. Just as in the New Testament a Christians triumph and entry into the heavenly Canaan is accomplished to all the faithful in Christ's Kingdom for it is founded upon grace and the promise of God who cannot lie. (Titus 1:2).

End.