

The Book of Joshua

The Division of the Land

The Cities of the Priests and the Conflict at the Jordan

Text: Joshua 21 - 22

I. The Inheritance of Levi

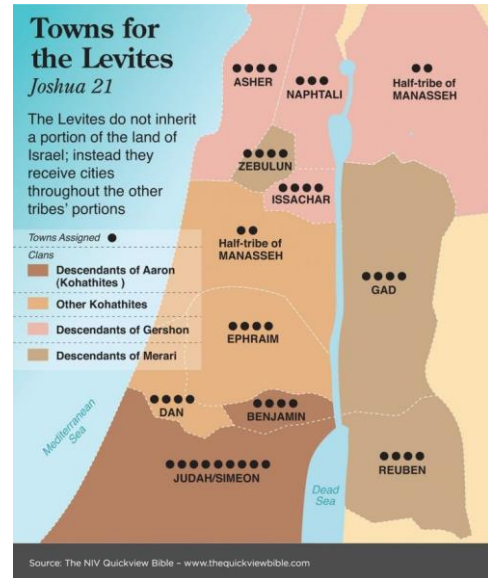
A. Note that Eleazar, the High Priest, is mentioned once again before Joshua - indicating God's desired order for the nation of Israel.

B. The Levites came to lay claim to their inheritance from God.

1. Remember that their inheritance was a spiritual one - the priesthood.
2. Thus, they would not receive a single piece of land as a tribe.
3. Rather, they were to be given cities from each of the other tribes.
4. This ensured that the people remembered their need of the priests.
5. It also kept the priests close to the people so they would remember their needs.

C. In all, the Levites received 48 cities, including the cities of refuge (vs. 41-42).

(Joshua 21:1-42)



II. The Promise Fulfilled

(Joshua 21:43-45)

- A. Just as God promised, He gave Israel the land of Canaan.
- B. Just as God promised, they possessed and dwelt in the land.
- C. Just as God promised, they had rest from war in the land.
 1. The fact that their enemies were delivered into their hand does not mean that all of the Canaanites had been driven from the land.
 2. Instead, it indicates that they were no longer a military threat.
- D. Just as God promised, all came to pass - not one thing failed!

III. The Departure of the Trans-Jordan Tribes

(Joshua 22:1-8)

- A. The 2½ tribes that had settled on the east side of the Jordan River were allowed to return to their land after fulfilling their promise to the nation.
- B. However, Joshua warned them to make sure to remain true to the Law of God and their identity as the people of Israel.
 1. Their separation from the other tribes - even if only by the Jordan River - was a danger to their spiritual welfare.
 2. They must be diligent in maintaining fellowship with their brethren and with God.

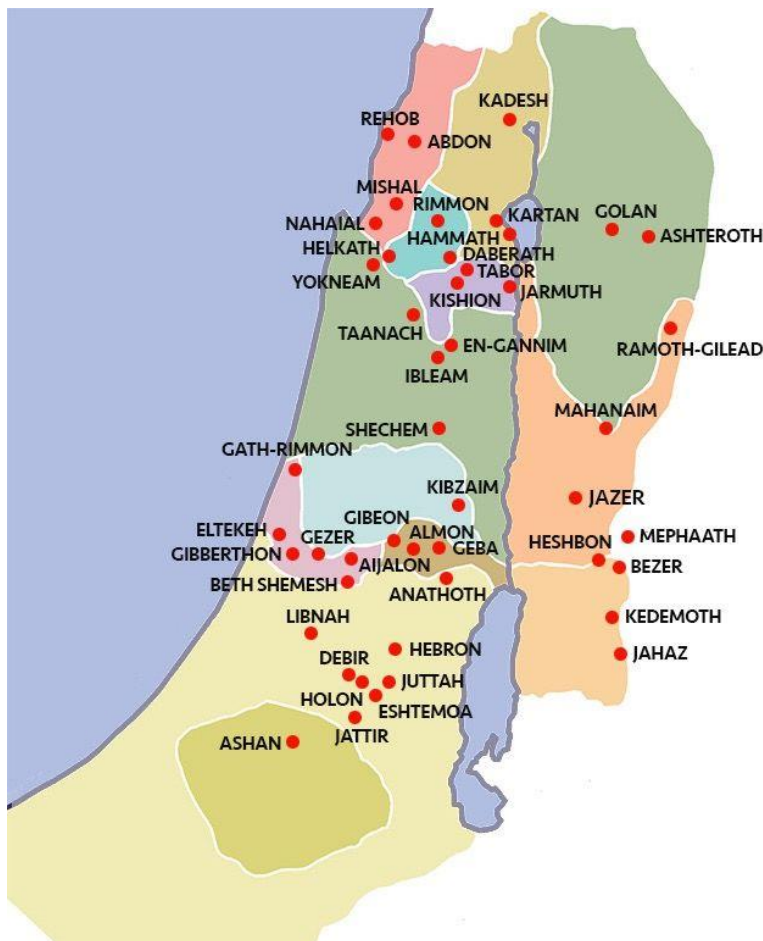
IV. The Conflict at the Jordan River

(Joshua 22:9-34)

- A. As the 2½ tribes came to the Jordan River, they stopped to build an altar.

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1. It is described as “a great altar to see” - that is, one that was large and could be viewed from a distance.
2. It was built on the east side of Jordan, but could be seen by those on both sides of the river.
- B. When the other tribes heard what had been done, they gathered at Shiloh and made plans to go to war with their brethren.
 1. They thought that the eastern tribes were going against the Law of God by building a new altar - thus, instituting a new, unauthorized worship.
 2. This kind of rebellion could not be tolerated and had to be opposed.
- C. After being reprimanded by their brethren, the leaders of the 2½ tribes explained why they had made this altar.
 1. They were not trying to rebel against the Lord.
 2. They were not building an altar on which to offer sacrifices.
 3. Instead, they had built it as a reminder that they were also a part of the nation of Israel.
 4. It was to be a witness between the tribes on the east and west of the Jordan River that they were one nation who served the same God.
- D. Their brethren were pleased with their explanation and war was avoided.
- E. The altar was named “Ed” meaning, “Witness.”



CITIES FOR LEVITES
IN TIME OF JOSHUA