

*The Book Of*  
**JOSHUA**  
**JOSHUA ASSIGNS CITIES TO LEVI**  
*Joshua 21:1-45*

## The Levite Cities

*Joshua 20:1-9*

## Summit At Shiloh

*Joshua 21:1-3*

## The Gathering

### Capital City

The ark had been moved to Shiloh

- Central to Israel
- Religious capital
- Political capital (theocracy)

### Delegates

Summit is called

In attendance

- The family heads from the Tribe of Levi
- The family heads from the Tribes of Israel
- The High Priest (Eleazar)
- The National Leader (Joshua)

Quite a gathering at Shiloh

## Order of Business

*Joshua 21:2*

One item on the agenda

- Assigning an inheritance for the Levites

The Levites open the meeting

- Petitioning the delegation for their inheritance
- The basis of Levite claim was the word of God, spoken through Moses **Numbers 35:1-8**

## The Allocation

*Joshua 21:3*

### The Cities

Levites were not to inherit a land territory (as per other tribes)

- Assigned cities within each of the tribal territories
- They were to be scattered throughout the land

48 Cities

- 6 cities of refuge
- 42 cities Levitical cities

They were not to be the sole occupants of the city given to them

- The Levites would be the minority inhabitants
- The majority inhabitants would be the tribal family in whose territory the city was located

It was to equitable

**Numbers 35:8**

*from the large tribe you shall give many, from the smaller tribe you shall give few*

### The Common Lands

The Levites were not only granted a city to dwell in, but “*their common lands*” also

- Common lands were the immediate area beyond the city walls
- Suburbs
  
- The first 1000 cubits (approx. ¼ mile) beyond the city wall was designated an area for out-houses to keep cattle in
- The next 2000 cubits (approx. ½ mile) beyond the first area was designated an area as fields for the cattle to graze in

### Matthew Henry

*Thus was care taken that they should not only live, but live plentifully, and have all desirable conveniences about them, that they might not be looked upon with contempt by their neighbours.*

## Claiming Your Inheritance

### Stating Your Claim

The Levites did not receive their inheritance until they stated their claim

- They came to the High Priest and their Leader
- Requested what was their based on the Word of God **Numbers 35:1-8**
- They confessed with their mouth and believed in their heart

There is an inheritance for all the saints

- To receive it, we must name it and claim it
- We come to our High Priest and Leader
- Request what is ours based on the Word of God

### Romans 10:9

*if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

### Nature of the Inheritance

- Levite Inheritance - Physical (cities)
- Christian Inheritance - Spiritual (*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places Eph 1:3*)

### The Christian Inheritance

- Forgiveness of sins
- Righteousness of Christ
- Adoption as God’s children
- Reception of the Holy Spirit
- Partakers of the new covenant
- Incorruptible hope
- Heavenly reward
- Eternal life

### False Inheritance

Sadly, some branches of Christendom have tried to make the Christian inheritance physical

- Word of Faith theology (name it and claim it)
- Physical healing
- Physical wealth

Claimed on the basis of the word of God

- However, comes from a misunderstanding of
- And a misapplication of scripture

Principle False Teachers

- EW Kenyon
- Kenneth Hagin
- Oral Roberts

- Kenneth Copeland
- Rodney Howard-Brown
- Benny Hinn
- Joel Osteen

**Matthew 6:19-21**

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

## The Levite Inheritance

### Levite Inheritance (Summary)

**Joshua 21:4-8**

#### The Tribe of Levi

##### The Three Clans

Levi had three sons, which formed the three tribal clans

- Gershon
- Kohath
- Merari

Each of the three clans

- Had multiple families
- Each with a family head
- It was these family heads who gathered at Shiloh

The assignment of cities was not done in birth order (as you might expect)

- The assignment was carried out by lot
- I.e. the Lord chose the order in which the families received their inheritance

The cities that were to be assigned were also decided by lot

- i.e. the Lord determined who received what inheritance

##### The Fourth Clan

Kohath had four sons

- One was named Amram
- He married Jochebed
- They had Miriam, Aaron and Moses

Aaron was chosen to be the High Priest

- All subsequent high priests came from the house of Aaron
- This house rose to a place of pre-eminence within the tribe of Levi
- In effect there were four tribal divisions for inheritance

#### Assignment Overview

##### Kohath

Drawn from Judah, Simeon, Benjamin

- Aaronites - 13 cities

Drawn from Ephraim, Dan and West Manasseh

- The rest - 10 cities

##### Gershon

Drawn from Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, East Manasseh

- Gershonites - 13 cities

##### Merari

Drawn from Reuben, Gad, Zebulun

- Merarites - 12 cities

## Levite Inheritance (Detail)

### Aaronites

**Joshua 21:9-19**

#### Hebron

- Had become Caleb's personal inheritance **Joshua 14:6-15**
- It had also been assigned as a city of refuge **Joshua 20:7**
- Caleb would retain all the villages and associated fields

#### **2 Samuel 2:1-3**

Later God would direct King David to make Hebron the political capital of Israel for seven years

After this, David would capture Jerusalem and that would become

- Political Capital
- Religious Capital

#### Kingdom of Judah

The inheritance was drawn from Judah, Simeon and Benjamin

- Combined this would form the Southern Kingdom of Judah
- When the nation divided into two halves under King Rehoboam

### Simeon's Curse

#### Rape of Dinah

Long before Israel had inherited the promised land

- Jacob (father of the twelve tribes) and his first wife Leah
- Had six sons (Simeon & Levi)
- A daughter (Dinah)

#### **Genesis 34:1-31**

Dinah was defiled by the prince of Shechem

- Her two brothers Simeon and Levi sought revenge
- Through a process of deception and unspeakable cruelty
- Killed all the men in Shechem

Jacob was deeply offended at the actions of Simeon and Levi

#### **Genesis 34:30**

*You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the Canaanites.*

#### Curse of Jacob

Later, in Egypt, Jacob on his death **Genesis 48&49**

- Blessed all his children
- Prophetic blessing
- Simeon and Levi received a joint blessing (more of curse)

#### **Genesis 49:5-7**

*Simeon and Levi are brothers;*

*Instruments of cruelty are in habitation.*

*Let not my soul enter their council;*

*Let not my honour be united to the in assembly;*

*For in anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.*

*Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;*

*And their wrath, for it is cruel!*

*I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.*

This prophetic utterance came to pass

- As the two tribes descended from Simeon and Levi came into their inheritance
- Levi would be scattered by way of 48 cities
- Simeon would be scattered within the territory of Judah

Both Simeon and Levi were living under a curse

- The curse was God serving a warning to the two tribes
- You have chosen the path of sin instead of righteousness
- You need to change

### Decision At Sinai

430 Years after Jacob's death

- The Exodus from Egypt had occurred
- The Israel were in the wilderness
- Moses was up Mount Sinai (receiving the law)
- The children of Israel, "rose up to play"
- They formed a golden calf, drunk, ate and offered sacrifices

Moses descended from the mountain and was horrified

#### **Exodus 32:26-28**

*Moses stood in the entrance to the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the Lord's side, let him come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, "thus says the Lord God of Israel, "Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.*

The decision was placed before the children of Israel

- As the decision is placed before all men
- "Whoever is on the Lord's side, let him come to me."

The Lord had warned both Simeon and Levi that they needed to change

- Levi stood on the Lord's side – a spiritual man
- Simeon stood on the side of sin – a carnal man

When they both come into the promised land

Simeon is scattered among Judah

- He will lose his tribal identity and be absorbed into Judah
- He will fall into obscurity

Levi is scattered among the land

- He becomes the servant of God in the tabernacle (temple)
- He will rise to prominence

Two men under a curse

- In one the curse remains
- In the other the curse is lifted

### The Christian's Decision

The Christian life is one of continual decision

- Each day we must choose whom we will serve
- Each day we must choose to pick up our sword and go to war

If we continue to compromise

- If we think I've made my profession, I'm safe
- Now I can live as I please
- I can sin today and repent tomorrow
- You will lose you inheritance
- You will not bear fruit
- You will fade into obscurity

If you choose to serve the Lord

- Make the hard choices to stand
- When everyone else is compromising
- To daily pick up your sword
- You will bear much fruit
- You will gain prominence and reward
- You will be honoured by the Lord

The Lord took a people who were cursed and made them into a people who were a blessing

- That is the believer's destiny and inheritance
- Don't let it be lost

## Kohath

### **Joshua 21:20-26**

The rest of the Kohathites inherited 10 cities

- Gath-Rimmon
- Ibleam

Kohathites had two cities of refuge

- Hebron
- Shechem

Levi had tried to take Shechem illegitimately

- The work performed in our strength (the flesh)
- Results in a curse

Levi then submitted to the Lord and took Shechem legitimately

- The work performed in God's strength (the spirit)
- Results in a reward

## Gershon

### **Joshua 21:27-33**

The Gershonites inherited 13 cities

- Two cities of refuge
- Golan
- Kedesh

## Duties of the Levites

### **Numbers 4:1-33**

Kohathites	Oversaw the erection and collapse of the tabernacle when making and breaking camp
Kohathites	Care of Furnishings (Ark of the Covenant, Table of Showbread, etc.)
Gershonites	Care of Decorations (curtains and coverings)
Merarites	Care of Structure (the pillars and the boards of the temple)

Everyone within the priesthood

- Had their sphere of influence and responsibility
- The Gershonites having faithfully tended and cared for covering that went over the top of the tabernacle
- Now are given responsibility to tend and care for the top of the country

### **Luke 16:10 ESV**

*One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much*

## Merari

### **Joshua 21:34-42**

The Merarites inherited 12 cities

- Two cities of refuge
- Bezer
- Ramoth

## The Levite Challenge

### God's Assignment

### The Levitical Assignment

The Levites were a family of priests

- Under a curse

- But by chose to be on the Lord's side
- The curse was lifted
- The Lord raised them to a place of prominence and influence

Their duty was twofold

- To minister to the Lord
- To minister to the people

The common man did not have access to the Scriptures

- It was the duty of the Levite to go to the people
- Communicate to them what they possessed and what the people lacked

The Lord scattered them throughout the land

- In whichever city they dwelt, they were a minority
- In whichever city they dwelt, they were to be a Godly influence

## The Christian Assignment

The Levites are picture of the church of Jesus Christ

### 1 Peter 2:9

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; who once not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

### We Are Called

We were once under a curse

- Now that curse has been lifted
- We have obtained mercy
- The Lord has raised us to a place of prominence and influence

Our duty is twofold

- To minister to the Lord
- To minister to the people of the world

The common man does not know the Scriptures

- It is our duty to go to the people
- Communicate to them what we possess and what they lack

The Lord has scattered us throughout the land

- In whichever city we dwell, we are a minority
- In whichever city we dwell, we are to be a Godly influence

### We Are Placed

The Lord placed His priests in specific cities

- That was where they were to live and minister His word

**Question:** Where has the Lord placed you?

**Answer:** Has he placed you in Maidstone, Marden, Rochester, Wick, Isle of Wight?  
You are to minister there!

**Question:** Has he placed in you in a family with young children?

**Answer:** You are to minister there!

**Question:** Has he placed in you in a job or work environment?

**Answer:** You are to minister there!

**Question:** Has he placed you in Calvary Chapel Maidstone, Bible Beach Church?

**Answer:** You are to minister there!

## Three Wonderful Gifts

**Joshua 21:43-45**

## Land

### **Joshua 21:43**

*So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.*

Almost 700 years had passed since God made a covenant with Abraham

- He had promised Abraham:
- *“To your descendants I will give this land.” **Genesis 12:7***
- Now we read:
- *“the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn”*

Our God is faithful and true

- We can trust His promise and His word

All of the spiritual blessings He has promised us in Christ

- He will give to us
- We know some of these now
- But on the basis of these we know
- He will come to gather us to Himself
- We will spend eternity with Him

## Rest

### **Joshua 21:44**

*The Lord gave them rest all around according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.*

- Israel had worked hard under the whip of Egypt
- Israel had wandered long under the aridness of the wilderness
- Israel had warred non-stop under the Canaanite opposition

Now the Lord gave them rest

Now the Lord gave them victory

But we have a promised rest **Hebrews 4**

- Rest which is peace with God
- Rest which is freedom from sin
- Rest which is has a sure and certain hope

The unbelief of the ten spies kept Israel from that rest

- Our unbelief will keep us from that rest

What those ten spies said could never happen, did happen

- Canaan was won
- We can have rest

## Word

### **Joshua 21:45**

*Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.*

The Lord gave Israel His word

- He kept all His promises – *“All came to pass”*
- The Lord has given us His word
- We can trust it
- We can stand on it
- It will never fail us