

Joshua 07-10-26b

Let's pick up our study now in God's Word, Joshua chapter 21, in your New King James. If you want to read with me there. The heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came near to Eliezer the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel.

Now, I need to back up just a moment and talk about where we are in the book of Joshua. Because, notice right there. What's going on here? You have Joshua as the civil leader.

You have Eliezer the priest. And this is a change. You had Moses as the civil leader.

And you had Aaron as the priest previously. We saw this toward the end of the last session. When in David's reign, you had David as the king.

You had Joab as the general of the armies. You had Abiathar as the priest. That all changes.

Because there is a shift in the national life of Israel. Under Moses and Aaron and God himself with the glory cloud. You're in the wilderness.

You are in transition. You are moving from Egypt to the land of promise. And there is this delay.

This 40 year delay because of faithlessness. And there is a need for essentially the regeneration of the nation. It's an actual regeneration.

It is another generation that rises up with the exception of Caleb and Joshua. And as I pointed out on the break and pointed out a week or two ago. It's a wonderful thing to see the settlement phase of the book of Joshua bracketed by Caleb who gets his first.

And Joshua who gets his last. Those are the men 40 years earlier who sort of set the standard of what faith is. And what faith is not.

And they enclose the settlement phase. We had the conquest phase. We had the settlement phase.

The assignment and distribution of the land and of inheritance. Then beginning in chapter 20 we had this almost strange intrusion of the cities of refuge. Why? Because now Israel is adjusting.

They are no longer transient. They are not sojourners. They are not itinerant.

They are not... This is a word I keep trying to think of for the Arabs that are in the desert. What do we call them? Bedouin and nomadic. But there is another word I can't quite

think of that means itinerant and all the other things I'm trying to say.

I've had a brain cell. Yet another one. Keep in track.

When we get up in triple digits you may want to start shopping churches. It's moving around a lot. Packing up their tents and moving.

You know what I'm talking about. That's what they were doing under Moses. That's what they did with the tabernacle in the wilderness and so on.

Then you have this transition. It is the conquest. It is the taking back in a sense of the land that God promised Abraham.

That Abraham once roamed freely. More restrictions with Isaac. More restrictions with Jacob.

Lost it all together in the times in Egypt. The 40 years buffeted about. Antagonized by the various kings and little tin pot dictators.

Little guys saying you can't pass through my land. One thing and another. Now they are in conquering mode.

They go in and retake the place from which they have been dispossessed. That's over. That phase is complete.

The settlement and the division of the spoils has been accomplished. So now what? Now you have to pay attention to life in the land. Beginning in chapter 20 we are going to have five chapters.

Each of the chapters addresses a unique aspect of living in the land. After the iniquity of the pre-flood human civilization became full. And the imagination of man's heart was only evil all the day.

God looked down and got the stench in his nostrils and said. I'm going to give this planet a good washing. And he basically.

I've been thinking about these. Is it a top loading washer? Is it a front loading washer? Well God had a universal washer. He just packed the water all over the planet and washed the whole thing.

And then after that. Noah and his family and other creatures inhabiting the ark are delivered by faith. By obedience.

And notice. God did not. I've often thought about this.

I don't know how much you think about the possibilities that God could have allowed. Or could have implemented in the bible. But you think about Noah.

And Noah is going about there being righteous in his generation. Only wicked evil all the day. He's getting real frustrated.

He's living in a decrepit downward spiraling evil society. He looks around. He's just disgusted.

His kids go to school and he's disgusted. He looks at his little entertainment puppet show in the bazaar. Whatever passed for TV and radio in those days.

And he gets disgusted. The crier comes by and calls out the news. Because they didn't have newspapers or internet.

And he gets disgusted. He hears about. Here's another one of these half angel people going around abusing.

He gets disgusted. He gets just real put out. And so God comes one day and says, Noah, I'm going to fix this.

So Noah says, well that's great. And I'm not going to be involved in this judgment. God says, no, I'm going to deliver you through it.

Everything is going to be fine. So what you do is, Noah, you go to the outskirts of your city here. And look to the east.

And you will see a flight of cherubim coming down with a wonderful submarine that's been constructed in heaven. And they've got the manual. And they're going to train you in the operation and maintenance of this submarine.

And here it is. So just sit still. Angels will come and convey you into the sub.

They will batten down the hatches. And you'll be all set. God says, you build an ark.

It's not Noah's fault that society is corrupt and worthy of judgment. It's not Noah's fault that God chose water to judge it with. And Noah could say, well, why do I have to build an ark? I mean, that's a lot of work.

Nobody's ever seen an ark. What is an ark? Pitch? Gopher wood? You've given me some dimensions, but it's not real specific. Is it a box? Does it have a keel? Is there any steering gear? Do I need propulsion? How does this work? God says, so many cubits, so many cubits, so many cubits.

Get to work. Build your salvation. Work out your salvation.

I have given you the information. You work out your salvation. Salvation is something we work out based on information.

And all of the Calvinist and all the Reformed theology people and all the villager self

people in terms of process theology and dominion theology and all the rest of it, people need to look at the word of God. God says, look, there is sin on earth, there is righteousness in heaven, and there is judgment coming from the righteousness in heaven on the sin on earth. But there is grace.

To obtain that grace, to be delivered by that grace, you have to do something. Let me ask you a question. Did Noah participate in his salvation in being delivered from the judgment of the flood? Did he cooperate with God? And did he contribute in some way? Yes, yes, of course he did.

He built the ark. It didn't come down on balloons from heaven. Angels did not come and waft him up above the waves and put an umbrella over his head and say, well now Noah, if you'll just sit here on this cloud, let me fluff this up for you.

Isn't that an awful judgment down there? Well, are you comfy? Oh, did you get wet? Here's a roll of paper towel. Just wait until the judgment is over with. Noah built his own ark.

When Israel is in Egypt, the most graphic and universally recognized picture of salvation that there is, Moses climbs Mount Sinai, look at that bush, and God is talking to him and says, look, we're going to deliver the people, so what I want you to do is go to the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses, just come down the mountain here, and in a second, the children of Israel are going to materialize. I'm just going to lift them up and I'm going to transport them. I'm going to grab them by the hair of the head.

The Holy Spirit is going to, if He can do one prophet, He can do the whole country. I mean, He's God. He's going to take the whole nation of Israel.

Don't need to part the Red Sea, just lift them over it. Don't need to feed them in the wilderness, just bring them right to Sinai. Pick them up by the hair of the head.

Drop that brick, buddy. Here we go. We're going to Mount Sinai.

Drop them all down there. Thunder and glory. Tablets come down.

All right. Head north, turn left. Here's the promised land.

Let's get this thing done. Wipe out the Amorites and let's go for it. What did they have to do? They had to march.

They had to feed themselves. They had to bring their flocks and herds. They had to obey.

They had to put blood on the doorposts. They had to cooperate, if you will, in their deliverance. And any of those who did not obey did not avail themselves of God's grace.

What if somebody said, you know, a lamb is really expensive. It took me months just to save up enough money to get a sheep and now I've got the... Here's a lamb. You want me to slay this lamb just so I can slop some blood on my doorpost? What's the matter with you? How do you build a flock if you keep slaughtering your lambs all the time? What's this whole thing with sacrifice? How am I ever going to build up any kind of a competitive herd against all these other people grazing and using water out of the wells and so on if I keep having to slaughter my animals? What kind of a nonsensical sacrificial system is this where I take the best of my flock? I mean, haven't you ever heard of evolution? You know, survival of the fittest? I'm taking the fittest and slaughtering them and keeping the weakest.

What kind of a God am I worshiping here? It's the kind of God who says obedience is a part of your salvation. Faith is a part of your salvation, your daily ongoing deliverance. You have to trust that even though you're killing the best and brightest out of your flock, you're going to prosper anyway.

That even though what you are commanded to do is counterintuitive, build a boat on dry land with a clear blue sky in a place where it has never rained, that God knows what he's talking about. Faith and obedience is a cooperation. If you want to use the word cooperate, I'm not afraid of it.

Does God say obey? All that the Lord has said we will do? It's an action word. It means do something. Of course we are supposed to do.

God is at work in you to will and to do. We are supposed to do, and doing is not cooperation in the salvific, meritorious sense. You can do something and have no merit.

Remember the story that Jesus told about the servants who were out in the field working the Master's stuff all day long. They come in and they're hungry and the Master says, make my supper. And so they make his supper before they make their own.

And when they get all done, what do they say? We are unprofitable servants. We have done no more than what the Master asked us to do. We're just barely earning our keep.

We are not a profit. We're not a benefit. We haven't contributed anything to our Master.

We have simply done what is expected of us. It's expected that a slave would do his Master's bidding in the field. It is expected that he would recognize the priority of his Master and make his meal first when he comes to the house and not get up and say, well, you know, I didn't see you out there slaving in the hot sun.

Now I've got to make your food? Forget that. I'm heading to the larder and I'll eat. And when I'm good and ready, I'll give you your... I mean, you know, it's unthinkable.

Doing what you're supposed to do does not achieve merit. It's a shame that theology

doesn't understand this. Well, you look at Israel and God's constant requirement of them.

Faith and obedience. Faith and obedience. Even watch and pray, if you think about it.

What is watching? Watching is the confident expectation that what God has said is true, whether it's positive or negative. The devil roams the earth like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. So watch.

That's a promise. I take it on faith that God wasn't shining me on when he said there's an adversary who is seeking me, that there are principalities and powers that are opposing me and trying to wrassle me down and keep me from walking in the light, keep me from going up the straight road through the narrow gate and reflect God's glory. That's the last thing Satan wants.

He wants to wrassle me down. He wants to entangle me. He wants to ensnare me.

He wants to make an example of failure out of me. So being alert is a matter of faith. Praying is a matter of obedience.

Pray without ceasing. Let your requests be made known to God. With thanksgiving.

Make intercession. Pray for those that have the rule over you. Prayer is an act of obedience.

It is disobedient to not pray. People say, oh, I used to pray, but then I gave it up because I realized God knows everything. He's going to do what He wants to do.

I don't have any business telling Him. Listen, you don't have any business not praying. It is a command.

It's not an option. Pray in the imperative occurs many, many times in the New Testament for church-age believers. We are commanded to pray.

Pray for each other. Pray for those that have the rule over us. Offer thanksgiving.

Let our requests be made known unto God. That is the avenue to peace. So, do not let somebody fly this little inflatable Mickey Mouse down the parade highway of, oh, if you do anything, you're cooperating in your salvation.

That is just complete balderdash. Look at the Word of God. God made Adam and Eve their first set of clothes.

Who do you think made all the clothes after that? Did God say, and behold, Eve conceived and gave birth and called her son Cain, and God did come forth and make him a suit of clothes. And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bear a son, and they called his name Abel, and God did come forth and sew him a set of clothes. And

after the Cain and Abel thing, here came Seth, and here came God.

God is not in the tailor business. God showed them, look, this is how you make clothes. I'll do it for you once.

You do it for yourself ever after. And ever after, we sacrifice the animal. We skin and tan the thing.

We sew it together and make our own covering to hide our nakedness. It's God's grace. Our fig leaf thing, our tossed salads don't work.

So, what does all this have to do with the cities of the Levites? These chapters now, after the wandering and the regeneration in the wilderness, there is positional regeneration in Egypt. They are born again through water and through blood as a nation, and they come forth. But there is experiential regeneration in terms of living faith in the wilderness.

The initial generation does not have faith and obedience, and they drop in the wilderness. They do not make it to the destination. They have to be, as a nation, regenerated in the experiential sense.

Work out your salvation, fear, trembling, all that the Lord has said we will do. That next generation comes in, and because they are faithful and because they are obedient, they do cross. They do come in, and they do enter the conquest phase.

The conquest phase is complete. What follows conquest? What is the fruit of faith and obedience? In addition to victory, it is possession. They come into possession of the land.

When is the last time these people possessed any land of their own? It has been 440 years since they possessed anything of their own in terms of land, in terms of legacy, in terms of something to pass down as an inheritance. Now they possess. Well, you have got to now look to life in the land.

What is fascinating about chapter 20 and forward is this foreshadows because we are strangers and sojourners on this earth. Our citizenship is in heaven. Our possession is in heaven.

At least, hopefully, it is in heaven. What does the Lord Jesus say? Don't be worrying about stuff piling up down here where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break in and steal. Lay up for yourself what? Treasure, possession, inheritance in heaven.

To him that overcomes, I will grant things on the other side of the veil, on the other side of the end of this life. That is where you want your citizenship. That is where you want your Palatuma privileges that Paul talks about.

That is where you want to lay hold. We can be like Caleb. We can be like Joshua where God has already designated.

Caleb, it is going to be 40 years of testing before you get there. But when you get there, you already have a guaranteed inheritance. That is where we sit.

We have a guaranteed inheritance that we are laying hold of by faith and by obedience now. Caleb didn't sit around just saying thumbs up every time Moses spoke from Mount Sinai and God said, well, look at that Caleb. He is really a strong assenter.

He is really a strong agreeer. He is a real great yes man. So, Caleb, here is your mapped out inheritance.

How did Caleb earn that inheritance? When Moses said, men, go spy out the land and bring back a report, he went. He covered the ground. He carried stuff.

He reconned. He took notes. He came back and he gave a faithful report.

He was faithful and he was obedient to his commission. That is why he inherited. Joshua, my goodness, was he faithful? Was he obedient to his commission? That is why his name is Yeshua.

He is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even looking at Moses, as wonderful as Moses was, Moses basically brokered a divine message from God at Sinai. Moses did not lead the troops in battle.

Moses did not do all night marches. He didn't go out there and swing his sword. He stood up there with the staff in his hand while Joshua was down there swinging the sword.

Joshua is the commander of the army. Joshua is the warrior. Joshua is the one that makes it happen.

Yeshua. So, how fitting that Caleb, as the man of faith and the man of obedience and the man of patience, he needed patience. So that after you have suffered a while, you receive the promise.

He was patient and he waited. Everything he had waited for and everything he had hoped for, his fondest dreams were fulfilled, his favorite patch of ground. You know how it is.

Everybody is shocked. You look around. You see a thing and you think, ah, that one.

That's what I want. Oh, wow, that's it. It's perfect.

Well, he saw that when he was on his recon. He said, you know, there's the sweetest little hill there. It's full of Canaanites at the moment, but that's no big deal.

It's a great piece of ground. And God gave it to him. And he went up there and dispensed with the little infestation problem.

And that just made it that much sweeter. To take it instead of just receiving it. Well, that's the picture.

So in these chapters now, 20 through 24, these five chapters here, what we are going to see is, this is possession talk. This is possession policy. Now that you're in.

Let me ask you something. This is what I asked myself when I was cranking through the preparation for this lesson. I asked myself this question.

I asked you this question. I spent a great deal of my life, and I know you have as well, studying the Word of God and figuring out, here's what goes on in this life, and these are the consequences in the next. Won't it be great to be somewhere in the realm of those who do it right, who don't fail, who don't fall back under perdition, who aren't gathered in bundles and burned, as it were, that make it, that do it right.

We want to walk the narrow road. We want to go through the straight gate. We want the glory of the Lord Jesus to reflect off of us.

We want to wear a right robe. We want to be on a horse with Him when He returns. We want to rule and reign.

We want to be overcomers with the white stone, and the new name, and the hidden manna, and all those wonderful things. If you have any passion for God at all, you want that. And we struggle with, how can I be consistent in my faithfulness and in my obedience, and qualify, and be pleasing in the sight of the Lord Jesus.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of your Lord. I can't think of any set of words anybody who loves God would want to hear more than those.

Well done. Can you imagine if the God of creation looks at you and says, Well done. I can't even think about it.

But let's say that happens. Now what? Are you going to be a bas-relief? Frozen in a state of perpetual bliss? I made it. Take my picture.

Here I am. Jesus and me. You know, seeing these people to meet the President, shaking hands.

I got the picture. Here I am. I made it.

Now what? How do we go forward? Okay, you got there. Well, that's what these chapters are. It's a fascinating glimpse into the future of those who have taken possession and are now dwelling in the promise.

So these are not sort of like afterthought appendices. I was reading a commentary and they said, Well, you know, the main story of Joshua is the conquest and the division of

the land is kind of a legal treaty document to sort of make it all official. But then these chapters are just appendices.

They didn't know where to put this stuff but they wanted to say it so they just kind of, Oh, it's horrifying to look at it that way. This is the gravy. This is the icing.

This is the big payoff. Now, as a nation, you made it through slavery. You were delivered out of slavery.

You made it through 40 years in the wilderness. You fended off armies and temptations and gone across the Jordan and slain the Canaanites and you got apathetic and you got kicked in the rear end and now you got your tribal possession. Everybody is distributed.

Cities of refuge are suddenly introduced and you say, Whoa, what about that? In the land of possession for Israel, there are still problems and the biggest problem is the fallen nature of man. Why is there any murder in the land? If everybody's got a chicken in the pot and the figs on the tree as it were, why would there be murder cases and manslaughter? Why would brother raise his hand against a brother? Because you're not in a perfected state. You're not in a perfected environment.

This is the dwelling in the land. This is a vision of the millennial kingdom specifically for Israel. There is still sin.

Why does the king of the kingdom have to rule with a rod of iron? I thought all the ne'er-do-wells got wiped out at the end of the tribulation. Why doesn't he rule with a piece of macaroni? Why doesn't he rule with a big fluffy peacock feather or something? You can approach. You can approach.

Why a rod of iron? Who are these vessels that get smashed in pieces? There is still sin in the millennial kingdom. There is death. There is imprisonment.

There is hunger. We know this from the parable of the sheep and goats. We know this from the fact that at the end of the millennial kingdom there is going to be an innumerable quantity of people who rise up like the tares that never bore any fruit in the field.

They grew and they flourished and they prospered and they looked just like wheat, but when it came time to bear fruit, they were fruitless because they are not wheat. God keeps the little magnetic attractor for these iron filings down in the bottomless pit. And at the 999.9 year mark, Satan is released.

And all of these surreptitious, game-playing, pseudonymous, living under a pseudonym, anonymous, faking their obedience, faking their compliance, all the time chafing, all the time grousing, all the time ungrateful. When they know Him as God, they do not glorify Him as God, they are not thankful, they are vain in their imagination, their foolish heart

is dark, but they are compliant, biding their time, waiting. When can I get out from under this chafing, irritating domination by God and His King? Satan is released and he says, I am here.

You want to talk about deliverance from slavery? You want to talk about another exodus? Here I am. It's like the anti-exodus. And I am the anti-Moses, and I'll be the anti-Yeshua, and we will start our own anti-kingdom with an anti-possession for all of the anti-God population.

And they swallow it, hook, line, and sinker, they rise up, they surround the camp of the saints at Gog Magog, and this time God is through messing around. There is no trumpet and bowl and vial and angels holding back this and letting forth that. There is no voices and thunders.

There is a giant fireball that comes down and incinerates that whole mess. The Gog Magog rebellion is handled in about a nanosecond. They are all arranged and swelled up in their arrogant, fuming, righteous indignation or unrighteous indignation.

They are so important, and they are going to take the thing over. This is a travesty. Why do they surround the camp of the saints? We can't have you all around.

You tolerated us for 999.9 years, but we can't tolerate you at all. So be gone, you milk and honey drinking, God worshipping, wimpy types. We've got the big guy here now, and we're taking over.

Why doesn't he come up and lead them away? And say, take your old Jerusalem. Don't want it anyway. We're going to Australia.

We're going to the outback. We're going to what you call it, rock there, the big flat thing. We're all going to have a new kingdom over there.

No, no, no. They have to destroy. They have to eliminate and eradicate that which they hate.

They can't leave it. They can't live and let live. Have the believers lived and let live? Do you think believers cannot detect the terrors? Didn't the servants come to the master and say, somebody sowed terrors amongst the wheat.

He says, leave them alone. I know you can see them. I know you've spotted them.

Don't try to weed them out. Leave them there. We'll tolerate them.

Deal with them later at the harvest. But the reverse is not true. And you will find that while a country with Christian foundations is tolerant of all religions, other religions are not tolerant of those Christians.

Just look at Gog Magog if you want the truth of this principle. There are examples all over the place. But this is what's going to happen at the end.

So in Joshua's conquered Canaan, the first thing that has to be done is to set up these cities of refuge because blood is still going to be getting shed. And sometimes it's on purpose and sometimes it's not. But courts still have to adjudicate.

And sin still has to be identified and judged. And there is an avenger of blood for every murder. There is an avenger of blood for every homicide.

There is a judgment lurking, waiting around the edges. And those cases are not resolved until the death of the high priest. Or for the murderers, they hopefully get judged, found guilty, and executed by the avenger of blood in their localities.

But this is life in the land. And so chapter 20 has shown us that aspect. Now, the question arises, how far does this echo forward? It's pretty easy to see in the Millennial Kingdom.

Does it extend beyond that? Is there any echo or any foreshadowing of the kingdom of the Father in this? And the answer to that is, no, there is not. How do we know? Because what happens at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, at the Great White Throne, death and hell are cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

After that, there is the melting of the elements with the fervent heat. There is a new heaven and a new earth. A new Jerusalem.

There is no night. There is no sea. There is no place for these things to come forth.

That is a completely different paradigm. And this does not go forward. Because although the nation of Israel has been, if you will, regenerated through that 40 years of wandering, and the next generation is there, it's got the faith and obedience, they are still essentially mortal.

And that's why they can die. And that's why they can be held accountable for taking life. And that's what you have in the period between Joshua and the monarchy.

But the shadowing of the kingdom of the Father comes later. It's not here. This partakes of and reflects the future in terms of the millennial kingdom.

So, you have the city of refuge idea. And it is a reminder that even in the millennium, there is grace, there is salvation that can be obtained by faith and is reflected in obedience. And its ongoing benefits are claimed and enjoyed through continued faith and continued obedience.

It doesn't mean if you become faithless and disobedient that you've lost your salvation. What it does mean is you will step outside the city and the avenger of blood is going to

get you. You've left the area where God's grace can be dispensed.

And you've entered the area of judgment. So, that's what these chapters are about. That's chapter 20 in a nutshell.

Chapter 21, Cities of the Levites. The heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came near to Eliezer the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel. And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The Lord commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in with their common lands for our livestock.

So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance at the commandment of the Lord these cities and their common lands. And this is after. And as I mentioned before, it kind of reminds me of the tradition in the Mernikur where the senior people go last.

Joshua is the last one to get his inheritance, that portion in terms of land. The Levites, you save the best till last. The last should be first, the first should be last.

And those who are first in the sojourning phase and in the living regeneration phase are sort of last when it comes to collecting their inheritance. Levites, you would say, well, if there's one special tribe in Israel, it would be the Levites. Their inheritance is God.

They are special. They have access to the holy precincts and the restricted and limited sanctified things of God. But they are the last to get a land inheritance, and it's not even a land inheritance.

These are cities on loan, as it were. They are tenants of cities that belong to their brethren. So, the lot that came out for the families of the Kohathites, even for the priests, these assignments are made by lot.

This is a determination made by God. Who are you, oh man, to answer back to God? If Joshua sat down with a list and said, well, you Kohathites, here's the cities I'm going to give you, they could go back later and impugn Joshua's character. They could say, well, he was bribed, he was under the influence, he was unwise, we don't like what he said, we don't like what he did.

But you can't argue with God. God determines the fall of the lot, so it is what it is. However the lot falls, get over it, unless you want to go argue with God, which the priests would be the last guys to do, hopefully.

So the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. The children of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, had 13 cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin. Now, you know from our study of the apportionment of the land where this area is.

Where are Judah and Benjamin and Simeon? Remember, Simeon is the transient thing, they get some land down there south of Judah for a while, and later on, they're nothing. They migrate up to the north and they disappear. This is ultimately the southern kingdom of Judah, right? Now, why would God cause the lot to fall for the Kohathites, the sons of Aaron, who are the actual priests, they're not just any old Levites, they are the priestly Levites, custodians of the ark and the worship life of Israel.

Why would God cause their lot to fall in Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon? What area of the land is going to be independent and belong to Israel the longest? What's the last part that they ever lose? Judah, and Benjamin, and Simeon, this little area which will become the southern kingdom. God puts the priests there, He causes the lot to fall there, why? There will always be a priest in Israel. As long as Israel is a nation, it would have been pretty unfortunate, it would have been pretty short-sighted of God to put the Kohathites and the sons of Aaron up in Dan, where, well, these guys get conquered and waylaid and led astray, and now we got no priests.

God makes perfect provision. God looks ahead. God knows what we need before we ask.

He knows what's going to happen in the future and He makes provision. They might have said, well, you know, I really was hoping to be further north. I was hoping, you know, I kind of like that area where we painted the rocks and wrote the law.

It seems like that would be an appropriate place for a priest. God says, no, go down south. Of course, if you've ever seen pictures of the Judean hillsides down there, that's a really pretty country.

I've only seen it in pictures. But that's where they go. The lot came up for the Kohathites, the children of Aaron, the priest, who are of the Levites, had 13 cities from the tribe of Judah.

What perfect provision by God. That is going to be Israel as long as there is an Israel. The rest of the children of Kohath had 10 cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

There are priests up in those regions. There is no excuse for them to go astray. There is no excuse for them not to be faithful and obedient.

Because there is the teaching of God's word, there is the spiritual leadership and guidance that they need up there. 10 cities for what will ultimately be 10 tribes up there. But that will go away, and the heart of it is still going to be down in Judah.

The children of Gershon had 13 cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, from the half-tribe of Manasseh, and Bashan. Where's Bashan? Other side of the Jordan. Remember the half-tribe of Manasseh over there? The children of Merari, according to their families, had 12 cities from the

tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, from the tribe of Zebulun.

What you'll also find here if you look at the sizes of the tribes and the size of their allotment, is that there is an even distribution of Levites through these places. There is no excuse. It's sort of like leaven in reverse.

Instead of leaven, leavening the whole lump, and leaven being sin. Well, this is the sprinkling of men who know better. Men who are going to be assembling and receiving their training and working with the priests and so on.

The children of Israel gave these cities with their common lands, verse 8, by lot to the Levites as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses. So they gave from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon these cities which are designated by name, which were for the children of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, for the lot was theirs first. Kiriath Arba, you remember that's a very famous town, we've talked about it before, which is Hebron in the mountains of Judah with the common lands surrounding it.

What else do we know about Kiriath Arba? What else is it besides a Levitical city? What else? How many different ways is Hebron special? It's a city of refuge, right? It's one of the two that's going to survive when the other four go away. It is a Levitical city. It is a priestly city.

Caleb is down there. It's all good in Hebron. That is a great, great city.

Where did David first rule? The history of that town goes back, I mean, we don't have time to cover it, but you think about everything that's gone on in Hebron. That is a town to see. I want that on my millennial itinerary.

When they finally work their way back to my number, year 798 of the millennium, and they say, okay, Sam, it's your turn. You get to go take the tour. That's a city I really want to see is Hebron and to think about all the things that have gone on there.

But that's a priestly city. It's a city of refuge. It's going to be David's capital, his first capital in Judah.

It's the first by lot. It's in the first batch. It's given to the first families of the priests.

And it's the first city mentioned in the mountains of Judah with the common land surrounding it. But the fields of the city and its villages, they gave to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, as his possession. Who would you like to have for a neighbor? Who would you like to be living near in Israel? I say the people who lived in Hebron and the priests who went and dwelt in Hebron, what a deal.

Got any kind of a perimeter security problem in Hebron? Not for long. Thus to the

children of Aaron the priest, they gave Hebron with its common land, a city of refuge for the slayer, Libna with its common land. Look how much space is given to Hebron here.

It's like three whole verses. Three and a half verses are given to Hebron. None of these others are just listed.

You have Libna, Jetir, Eshtimoah, Holon, Debir, Ein, Judah, and Bethshemesh, city of the sun, with its common land. Sun city. They used to call Las Vegas sin city.

Well, this is sun city. Nine cities from those two tribes and from the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its common land, Giba with its common land, Anathot, Almon, all the cities of the children of Aaron the priest were thirteen cities with their common lands. And this is an interesting thing.

What's thirteen composed of? It's seven and six. Six. These six things are great.

Seven are even better. These six things that the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination. Six and seven.

Six is the insufficiency, the incomplete number of man's history, six thousand years of human history, doesn't quite get it. You've got to get to the seventh. It's six plus seven.

And there is this mixture because you've got the imperfection of those tribes and they didn't quite take all of the land, but you've got the perfection of God's word and the stewardship of it and the administration of it and the availability of God's grace through it. And I think that thirteen is not without significance. It's six plus seven.

And you don't quite get there. Ultimately, even with all of this provision, there's going to be trouble in Israel because of imperfect, incomplete obedience. And it's really something for us to meditate on.

And that's what we'll need to do until next week where we'll pick up here in the middle of chapter 21, but let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the graphic and impressive way that it presents the truth that you would have for us.

And we pray to God the Holy Spirit will help us to remember it and see its application as we plan and decide and implement our tasks and fulfill our responsibilities in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.