

Joshua 19:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez,

Analysis

And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez. Three additional boundary cities appear here. Rabbîth (רַבִּית) likely means "multitude" or "greatness," possibly indicating a large settlement. Qishyôn (קִישְׁיוֹן) was later designated a Levitical city (Joshua 21:28), demonstrating how tribal territories included portions allocated to Levites for their ministerial service. 'Ābēs (עֲבֵשׁ) may derive from a root meaning "white" or "gleaming," perhaps describing local limestone geology or whitewashed buildings.

Kishion's designation as a Levitical city reveals the integration of Israel's priestly tribe throughout all territories. Rather than concentrating religious leadership in one location, God distributed Levites across Israel to ensure every tribe had access to Torah instruction and proper worship. This dispersion pattern reflected God's desire for His holiness to permeate all aspects of Israelite society, not remain confined to cultic centers. The Levitical cities functioned as teaching centers, legal courts, and worship hubs, making divine instruction accessible throughout the covenant community.

Historical Context

The Levitical city system established in Joshua 21 allocated 48 cities across tribal territories for priestly service. Levites received no contiguous tribal territory ("the LORD is their inheritance," Joshua 13:33) but instead inhabited cities within other tribes' lands, with surrounding pasturelands for their livestock. This arrangement fulfilled both practical and theological purposes: practically, it distributed religious expertise throughout Israel; theologically, it demonstrated that holiness should

permeate all tribal territories, not concentrate in isolated sacred spaces. Kishion's location in Issachar's fertile valley meant Levites there likely engaged in agricultural work alongside priestly duties, modeling the integration of sacred and secular labor.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the Levitical city system challenge modern sacred-secular dichotomies that isolate spiritual ministry from daily life?
2. What does the integration of priests throughout tribal territories teach about the church's calling to be dispersed salt and light rather than withdrawn holy huddle?
3. How can we ensure access to sound biblical teaching in all spheres of society as Levitical cities did for ancient Israel?

Interlinear Text

וְרַבִּי יֵת	וְקִישִׁיּוֹן	וְאַבֶּזַי:
And Rabbith	and Kishion	and Abez
H7245	H7191	H77

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