

Joshua 20:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

Analysis

And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh—Three Transjordan cities balance the western three. Bezer means 'fortress/gold ore,' Ramoth 'heights,' Golan 'their rejoicing.' Together, six cities ensure no Israelite lacks access to refuge.

Six is humanity's number (created on the sixth day), and these six cities served humanity's need for mercy. Yet six falls short of seven (completion/perfection)—only Christ provides perfect refuge. The cities offer temporary asylum; Christ gives eternal security (Hebrews 6:18-20).

Historical Context

The Transjordan tribes (Reuben, Gad, half-Manasseh) received equal provision with western tribes. These cities lay strategically along major routes, easily accessible to fugitives. Their eastern placement served the 2.5 tribes living beyond the Jordan.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do the six refuge cities point toward but fall short of the perfect refuge found in Christ?
2. What does equal provision for eastern and western tribes teach about God's impartial justice?

Interlinear Text

אַת	נָתְנָה	וְ	בְּרֵרֶת	לִירִיחֹו	יְרִיחֹו	בְּרֵרֶת	מִזְבֵּחַ	מִזְבֵּחַ	אַת
And on the other side	Jordan	by Jericho					they assigned		H853
H5676	H3383	H3405					H5414		
רְאֹבֶן	רְאוּבֵן	וְ	בְּמִצְבֵּה	רְאֹבֶן	בְּמִישָׁר	מִמְּפֵט	ה	אַת	
Bezer	in the wilderness	upon the plain				out of the tribe	of Reuben		H853
H1221	H4057	H4334				H4294	H7205		
בְּבִשְׁן	בְּבִשְׁן	וְ	גָּלְעָד	בְּגָלְעָד	מִמְּפֵט	ה	אַת	גָּד	
and Ramoth	in Gilead	out of the tribe					of Gad	H853	
H7216	H1568	H4294					H1410		
גָּלְעָד	גָּלְעָד	וְ	מִנְשָׁה	מִנְשָׁה	מִמְּפֵט	ה	אַת	מִנְשָׁה:	
and Golan	in Bashan								
H1474	H1316								
מִנְשָׁה:									
out of the tribe	of Manasseh								
H4294	H4519								

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 6:78 (Parallel theme): And on the other side Jordan by Jericho, on the east side of Jordan, were given them out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer in the wilderness with her suburbs, and Jahzah with her suburbs,

Joshua 21:36 (Parallel theme): And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs,

Joshua 21:27 (Parallel theme): And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh they gave Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beesh-terah with her suburbs; two cities.

Joshua 21:38 (Parallel theme): And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs,

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