

Joshua 21:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

Analysis

And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

The priests received "**Hebron**" (Chevron, חֶבְרוֹן), whose name means "association" or "alliance"—fitting for a city fostering covenant community between God and His people. The phrase "**the city of Arba the father of Anak**" (Kiriat-Arba avi haAnak, קִרְיַת־אַרְבָּע אָבִי הָאָנָק) recalls Hebron's pre-conquest identity. Arba was the Anakim's ancestor (Joshua 14:15), and the Anakim were the giants who terrified the faithless spies (Numbers 13:28, 33). That this former stronghold of Israel's most fearsome enemies became a priestly city and refuge demonstrates God's complete victory—enemies' territory transformed into centers of worship and mercy.

"In the hill country of Judah" (behar Yehudah, בְּהָר יְהוּדָה) locates Hebron at 3,040 feet elevation in Judah's central highlands, 19 miles south of Jerusalem. This elevated positioning symbolizes spiritual prominence—the city housing Abraham's burial cave (Genesis 23:19) and David's first capital (2 Samuel 2:1-4) became a priestly city. The integration of patriarchal heritage, royal history, and priestly function in one location demonstrates God's unified redemptive plan.

The phrase "**with the suburbs thereof round about it**" (veet-migrashehah

sevivotehah, (וְאַתֶּם גַּם־שָׁהַבְּתִים) emphasizes comprehensive provision. The migrash (pasture lands) surrounded Hebron completely (sevivotehah, "round about"), ensuring priests had adequate livestock support. This shows God's provision for His servants is thorough, not minimal—He provides abundantly for those dedicated to His service.

Historical Context

Hebron's transformation from Anakim fortress to priestly city is one of Scripture's great redemptive reversals. Caleb conquered it (Joshua 14:12-15) then surrendered it for priestly use—personal victory yielded to kingdom priorities. The Cave of Machpelah in Hebron contains the patriarchs' tombs: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah (Genesis 49:29-32). Archaeological evidence confirms Hebron's antiquity and continuous occupation. Today the cave remains contested by Jews, Muslims, and Christians—all claiming Abrahamic heritage. Yet biblically, Hebron's greatest significance is as a city of refuge, prefiguring Christ our refuge from divine wrath (Hebrews 6:18).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Hebron's transformation from giants' stronghold to priestly city encourage you that God can redeem your most fearsome struggles into centers of worship and ministry?
2. What does Caleb's willingness to surrender conquered Hebron for priestly use teach about sacrificing personal victory for kingdom priorities?
3. How does Hebron's role as city of refuge deepen your understanding of Christ as your refuge from judgment and the wrath to come?

Interlinear Text

וְעַנְקָן וְקָנָעַן	אָבִי אָבִי	עָרָבָן עָרָבָן	קְרִיתָן קְרִיתָן	לְפָנָן לְפָנָן	אֶת אֶת	מְלָכָן מְלָכָן	וְעַנְקָן וְקָנָעַן
And they gave	H1992	H853	them the city	H7151	of Arba	the father	of Anak
H5414				H704		H1	H6061
וְעַנְקָן וְקָנָעַן	אָבִי אָבִי	עָרָבָן עָרָבָן	קְרִיתָן קְרִיתָן	לְפָנָן לְפָנָן	אֶת אֶת	מְלָכָן מְלָכָן	וְעַנְקָן וְקָנָעַן
which city is Hebron	H2275	H2022	in the hill	H3063	country of Judah	H854	with the suburbs
H1931							H4054
סְבִיבָתָיָה:							
thereof round about	H5439						

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 6:55 (Parallel theme): And they gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, and the suburbs thereof round about it.

Luke 1:39 (Parallel theme): And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

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