

# Joshua 21:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs.

## Analysis

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**All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs** (כָּל־עָרֵי בְנֵי־אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים שְׁלֹשׁ־עֶשְׂרֵה עָרִים וּמִגְרָשֵׁיהֶן, kol-arei benei-Aharon hakohanim shlosh-esreh arim umigrsheihen)—This summary verse emphasizes the distinct inheritance of **the children of Aaron, the priests** versus other Kohathite Levites (verses 20-26). The Aaronic line alone performed sacrificial duties at the altar, representing the people before God. Their thirteen cities (nine from Judah/Simeon, four from Benjamin) clustered in southern and central Canaan near Jerusalem, the future temple site—a geographic providence anticipating Solomon's temple 400 years later.

The number thirteen here represents complete provision, not curse. God allotted precisely what the Aaronic priesthood needed to fulfill their mediatorial role. The repetition of umigrsheihen ("with their suburbs") underscores that every city came with sustenance-producing pastureland—God's ministers would not beg for bread.

## Historical Context

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This distribution occurred circa 1400-1390 BC, centuries before David captured Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-10) or Solomon built the temple (1 Kings 6, circa 966 BC). Yet the clustering of Aaronic cities around the future temple mount demonstrates divine foreknowledge. When temple service required 24 priestly divisions rotating weekly (1 Chronicles 24:7-19), these nearby cities housed the priests between

their service periods. The Chronicler later confirms this list (1 Chronicles 6:54-60), emphasizing its enduring importance.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the geographic clustering of priestly cities near future Jerusalem demonstrate God's providential planning across centuries?
2. What does the distinction between Aaronic priests and other Levites teach about different callings within God's service?
3. How does God's provision of sustaining pastureland (migrash) challenge modern assumptions about faith and finances for ministry workers?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּל	עַר יָם	בְּנֵי	אַהֲרֹן	הַכֹּהֲנִים	שְׁלֹשׁ	עָשָׂר ה
H3605	All the cities	of the children	of Aaron	the priests	were thirteen	H6240
	H5892	H1121	H175	H3548	H7969	

עַר יָם	וּמִגְרָשֵׁיהֶן:
All the cities	with their suburbs
H5892	H4054