

Joshua 21:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jarmuth with her suburbs, En-gannim with her suburbs; four cities.

Analysis

Jarmuth with her suburbs, En-gannim with her suburbs; four cities.

These final two cities complete Issachar's contribution to the Gershonite allocation. Jarmuth (יֶרְמוּת) in Issachar should not be confused with the Canaanite royal city of the same name in Judah defeated by Joshua (Joshua 10:3, 5, 23). Multiple cities bore identical names throughout Israel—a reminder that careful contextual reading is essential for biblical interpretation. The parallel in 1 Chronicles 6:73 calls this city Ramoth, likely a shortened form or variant spelling.

En-gannim (עֵין גַּנִּים, "spring of gardens") derives its name from natural water sources supporting cultivation. The name reflects the area's agricultural productivity—springs were precious in ancient Palestine's climate, enabling gardens and orchards. Modern Jenin preserves the ancient name. Levitical cities often occupied agriculturally productive areas, ensuring sustainable economic base while maintaining dependence on tithes from surrounding communities.

The summary "four cities" confirms Issachar's equitable contribution to Levitical support. Each tribe gave according to its size and resources—larger tribes contributed more cities, smaller tribes fewer. This proportional system reflected biblical principles of equity and fairness (2 Corinthians 8:13-15). God doesn't demand identical contributions from all but expects generosity according to capacity.

Historical Context

The Jezreel Valley's fertility made Issachar's territory particularly productive, generating agricultural surplus that supported significant Levitical populations. The concentration of Levitical cities in this region created a teaching network throughout Israel's breadbasket. When these farming communities obeyed God's law and faithfully tithed, both farmers and Levites prospered. When apostasy came, both suffered (Haggai 1:6-11).

En-gannim's location on the road from Jerusalem to Galilee made it a natural stopping point for travelers. Levites in such cities could offer hospitality, teaching, and judicial services to travelers, spreading covenant knowledge beyond their immediate locale. The city's gardens and springs made it attractive for rest and refreshment—combining physical provision with spiritual instruction exemplifies holistic ministry.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do the springs and gardens of En-gannim illustrate the relationship between God's physical provision and spiritual blessing?
2. What does proportional giving according to capacity teach about supporting gospel ministry in the church today?
3. In what ways are you stewarding the resources God has given you to support those called to full-time ministry?

Interlinear Text

אֶת	יְרֵמוֹת	וְאֶת	מִגְרָשָׁהּ	אֶת	עַיִן	גִּנֵּי יָם	וְאֶת
H853	Jarmuth	H853	with her suburbs	H853	H0	Engannim	H853
	H3412		H4054			H5873	
	מִגְרָשָׁהּ	עָרֵי יָם	אַרְבָּע:				
	with her suburbs	cities	four				
	H4054	H5892	H702				

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