

# Joshua 21:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

## Analysis

**And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.**

The "**children of Gershon**" (velivney Gershon, וְלִבְנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן) were descended from Levi's firstborn son (Exodus 6:16-17). Despite primogeniture, Gershon's line didn't receive priestly privileges—those went to Kohath's descendant Aaron. This demonstrates that natural birth order doesn't determine spiritual calling; God's sovereign choice does (Romans 9:10-13). The Gershonites received "**thirteen cities**" in Israel's northern territories: Issachar (eastern Jezreel Valley), Asher (coastal Galilee), Naphtali (upper Galilee), and eastern Manasseh (Bashan/Golan).

The phrase "**in Bashan**" (baBashan, בַּבָּשָׁן) specifies the fertile, cattle-rich plateau east of the Sea of Galilee. Bashan's prosperity (Deuteronomy 32:14, Ezekiel 39:18) provided excellent pastureland for Levitical livestock. The migrash (pasture lands) surrounding these cities supported the Gershonites economically, balancing spiritual calling with practical provision.

The allocation "**by lot**" (bagoral, בַּגּוֹרָל) for the third time emphasizes God's sovereign distribution. The northern positioning of Gershonite cities created a Levitical presence in Israel's remotest territories, ensuring even distant tribes had

access to Torah instruction. This fulfills God's intent that knowledge of His law pervade all Israel, not just the southern tribes near Jerusalem.

## Historical Context

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The Gershonites' northern cities included refuge cities like Kedesh in Naphtali (verse 32) and Golan in Bashan (verse 27). Their frontier positioning made them vulnerable during Assyrian invasions (732-722 BC), when northern territories fell first. Many Gershonites likely died or were exiled during this period. Yet their faithful presence in Israel's borders during peacetime demonstrates that God positions His servants even in dangerous places for kingdom purposes. Geography doesn't exempt believers from service—God calls some to spiritually difficult or physically dangerous locations.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Gershon's birthright not guaranteeing priestly privileges challenge assumptions about deserving spiritual status based on family heritage or seniority?
2. What does the Gershonites' positioning in remote northern territories teach about taking the gospel to hard-to-reach or less prestigious locations?
3. How can you faithfully maintain spiritual vitality and doctrinal purity when serving in 'frontier' contexts far from established centers of faith?

## Interlinear Text

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וְלִבְנֵי י	גֶרְשֹׁן וִן	מִמִּשְׁפַּח וֹת	מֵט ה	יִשָּׂשכָר	
And the children	of Gershon	out of the families	and out of the tribe	of Issachar	
H1121	H1648	H4940	H4294	H3485	
מֵט ה	אֲשֵׁר	מֵט ה	נַפְתָּלִי י	וּמִחֲצִי	
and out of the tribe	of Asher	and out of the tribe	of Naphtali	and out of the half	
H4294	H836	H4294	H5321	H2677	
מֵט ה	מְנַשֶּׁה	בְּבָשָׁן	בְּגוֹךְ ל	עָרֵי ים	שָׁלֹשׁ
and out of the tribe	of Manasseh	in Bashan	had by lot	cities	thirteen
H4294	H4519	H1316	H1486	H5892	H7969
עֲשָׂרָה:					
H6240					