

Joshua 21:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name,

Analysis

And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name,

This transitional verse introduces the detailed city-by-city listing that follows (verses 10-42). The phrase "**mentioned by name**" (yikra ethen beshem, יִקְרָא אֶתְהֶן בְּשֵׁם) emphasizes specificity—these weren't generic allocations but particular cities with historical significance. God cares about details; biblical faith is rooted in historical particularity, not abstract spirituality.

The mention of "**Judah**" first is significant—Judah was Jacob's fourth son but received the leadership blessing (Genesis 49:8-10) forfeited by Reuben, Simeon, and Levi through sin. That Judah's territory provided the most priestly cities (nine of thirteen to Aaron's line) foreshadows Judah's role as the messianic tribe. Christ our High Priest descended from Judah (Hebrews 7:14), a tribe Moses said nothing about priesthood—yet Jesus became High Priest of a better covenant (Hebrews 7:22).

"**The tribe of the children of Simeon**" is included because Simeon's inheritance lay within Judah's borders (Joshua 19:1). Simeon was "divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel" (Genesis 49:5-7) due to violence at Shechem (Genesis 34). Simeon's tribal identity eventually dissolved into Judah, fulfilling Jacob's prophecy.

Yet God's faithfulness ensured Simeon contributed to Levitical support despite their compromised status—grace operating even through flawed instruments.

Historical Context

Judah's territory in the southern highlands and Shephelah included Jerusalem (future temple site), Hebron (patriarchal burial place), and Bethlehem (David's birthplace and Jesus' birth city). The concentration of Aaronic priestly cities in Judah meant this tribe developed the strongest priestly culture and Torah knowledge. After the kingdom divided (931 BC), Judah maintained legitimate temple worship while northern Israel fell into idolatry. Judah's spiritual advantage—priests, temple, Jerusalem—didn't guarantee faithfulness (they too apostatized frequently) but provided better infrastructure for reform and renewal.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the detailed naming of specific cities challenge vague spirituality that ignores historical particularity and concrete obedience?
2. What does Judah's prominence in priestly city allocation teach about God's sovereign choice despite human unworthiness (Jacob's blessing after Judah's Tamar incident)?
3. How should understanding God's specific callings and assignments (named cities for named families) shape your approach to discerning personal vocation?

Interlinear Text

וַתֵּן ו	וּמִמֶּנֶּה	בְּנֵי י	יְהוּדָה	וּמִמֶּנֶּה
And they gave	and out of the tribe	of the children	of Judah	and out of the tribe
H5414	H4294	H1121	H3063	H4294
בְּנֵי י	שִׁמְעוֹן	אֵת	הָעָרִים	הָאֵלֶּה
of the children	of Simeon	H853	these cities	H428
H1121	H8095		H5892	H834
יְקָרָא	אֶתְּהָא	בְּשֵׁם:		
which are here mentioned	H853	by name		
H7121		H8034		

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