

# Numbers 35:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities.

## Analysis

**And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits**—The הַאֲפָתִים בְּאַמְמָה (‘alpayim bā’ammāh, two thousand cubits) on each side creates apparent tension with verse 4's one thousand cubits. Rabbinic interpretation resolves this: verse 4 describes the inner ring (open space from the wall), verse 5 the outer ring (additional fields and vineyards), totaling 2,000 cubits of suburban land.

The fourfold repetition (east, south, west, north) emphasizes completeness and equal allocation regardless of direction. This prevented favoritism based on terrain or proximity to roads. The Levitical inheritance, though landless in the tribal sense, was nonetheless substantial, secure, and evenly distributed—a different kind of inheritance centered on service rather than conquest.

## Historical Context

The measurement system was applied uniformly across all 48 Levitical cities distributed throughout Israel's tribal territories. The symmetrical allocation (equal measurements in all directions) was unusual in ancient land grants, which often followed natural boundaries or reflected political power. This divine prescription

ensured fairness regardless of the city's location or the generosity of the surrounding tribe.

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's insistence on equal provision in all directions challenge human tendencies toward favoritism and unequal treatment?
2. What 'different kind of inheritance' has God given you that may not look like worldly success but is nonetheless substantial?
3. Where might God be calling you to service-centered living rather than acquisition-centered living?

## Interlinear Text

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וְמִדְתָּה	מ	מִן	וְאַתָּה	בַּעֲרֵב	לְמִזְבֵּחַ	בְּמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	בְּמִזְבֵּחַ
And ye shall measure		from without	and the city	H853	side	on the east		
H4058		H2351	H5892		H6285			H6924
two thousand	cubits	H853	side	and on the south	two thousand			
H505	H520	H520	H6285	H5045	H505			
cubits	H853	side	and on the west	two thousand	cubits			
H520	H6285		H3220	H505	H520			H853
side	and on the north	two thousand	cubits	and the city				
H6285	H6828	H505	H520	H5892				
shall be in the midst	H2088	H1961	H0	this shall be to them the suburbs				
H8432				H4054				
בְּמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ	וְמִזְבֵּחַ
and the city								
H5892								