

## August 18

**Scriptures:** Read Joshua 21

**Key Verse:** “The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers.” (Joshua 24:44a)

### Overview

The tribe of Levi received no territorial allotment, because their inheritance was the Lord (13:33; 14:3; 18:7; Deut.18:1-2). However, as promised by Moses (Num.35:1-3) and organized by Joshua, the tribe of Levi did receive a total of 48 cities, with the surrounding pastureland, scattered throughout all the tribes of Israel. The prophecy of Jacob concerning Levi was similar to that of Simeon, in that both tribes would be divided and scattered, but what sounded like a curse for Levi was, in reality, a blessing (Gen.49:5-7). The Lord had chosen the tribe of Levi to represent Him before all Israel because they displayed holy zeal and commitment to God in the event of the golden calf (Ex.32:26). Their dispersion throughout the land, including east of the Jordan, was for the spiritual welfare of the nation and would also serve as a unifying bond for the whole country.

The Lord was responsible for the placement of each Levitical and priestly city because, once again, He overruled through the casting of lots. Some of these appointed cities were in the hands of their enemies, yet they were still assigned as Levitical cities in anticipation of the complete conquest (e.g., v.21, Gezer was not conquered until the time of Solomon).

The three sons of Levi were Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. The priestly family of Aaron was from the descendants of Kohath. They received precedence because of their position, and though they were the smallest group, they received the largest number of cities, thirteen in all (v.19). It is worthy of mention that eleven of the priestly cities were within the inheritance of Judah; the other two were in neighboring Benjamin. God, arranged it so that the priests would be surrounding the future capital of Jerusalem in Judah, where He intended to establish His Name. In this we can see that it was God’s plan for the conquest to be completed much more rapidly so that Jerusalem would be the place of His sanctuary long before it finally came to be in the time of David. The people’s lack of faith and repeated apostasy, however, affected the perfect will of God for Israel.

The last three verses of this chapter serve as a beautiful concluding summary of how the Lord had fulfilled all His promises to Israel. It expresses God’s great faithfulness and that the people’s expectations were fully satisfied, for they received all they hoped for. The Lord will never let us down. He is the only true source of lasting fulfillment.

Although the full occupation of the land was yet to be seen, Israel still had a firm hold on the land and had rest (v.44) from the advances of any enemy. Their borders were secure and there was no power that could move them. Now that they had entered into the Promised Land, after forty years of discipline in the wilderness, God gave them rest at last.

There is still another divine promise of rest that God has in store for His people which can come only through faith in Jesus Christ and belief in His Gospel (Heb.4:1-3), and that is the ultimate

rest which the faithful, obedient believers will find: “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet.1:4). “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest” (Heb.4:11).

### **Prayer**

Yes, Lord, help us to be diligent to enter Your rest. You promised Your beloved rest. We receive this for our peace of mind, our eternal home, and even for a good sound sleep each night.