

God's Promises Fulfilled
The Israelites settle in
Invitation to Promise Series – Part 9
Joshua 20-21
Dec 13-14, 2025

Introduction

- Salt and Light
 - Mt 5:13–16 - “*You are the salt of the earth,...*”¹⁴ “*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.*”¹⁵ *Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.*”¹⁶ *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*”
 - Eph 5:8–10 – “*...at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*”⁹ *(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),*”¹⁰ *and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.*”
 - God invites us to be salt and light. Whether at home, work, family or friends.
 - What this means:
 - Truthful Guidance – we are the light that helps others see what is really going on and helping them not stumble through life. We are the ones who point to Christ as their true guide. We are the ones who believe and hold to Truth and share that truth when possible.
 - Preservation – We are not only buying people time to discover God’s work in their lives, but to be the ones actively sharing the love of Christ to those around us and drawing others to salvation.
 - Flavor – We are the present bodily Holy Spirit in every place we go. We should be the joy, love, hope, patience, and goodness in our areas. We should make people’s lives better around us because we are there.

We are called to be SALT and LIGHT

- Last Week
 - We talked about the 12 tribes of Israel getting all of their territory allotments in the Promised Land – which sounds boring but, we learned as well that just as they were given an inheritance, so are we as Christians. God has given us blessings, some of which we already use and some that we will need to struggle to walk into.
 - 8 Principles of taking new territory - Also, we learned along the way 8 principles for taking new territory:
 1. There is always more territory to take – until our lives radiate the freedom and power that Christ demonstrated, there’s more for us.
 2. God’s more interested in our health and freedom than we are – As our Savior, God saves us, but we don’t get to be in the way.
 3. You’re never too old to take new territory – 85 year old warrior Caleb

4. Good enough is not good enough – a woman who didn't have a water source. The world will settle for earthly things, we must not.
 5. Women are equal heirs – daughters inherit like Christ's ministry. Ladies should battle for all that Jesus says they get.
 6. It's tempting to put it off – 'how long? Go take it!'
 7. Anything not taken today becomes bondage tomorrow – wrecking their future.
 8. An easier route is not better – Dan = legacy was ruined. Obedience to God's plan is the only true way.
- This Week
 - The Levite's Turn - So, what happened to them?
 - What about justice in the new land?

Lesson

- Count to 10 and Breathe
 - Assignment of the 6 Cities of Refuge
 - Joshua 20:1-9 – *"Then the Lord said to Joshua, ² 'Say to the people of Israel, 'Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, ³ that the manslayer who strikes any person without intent or unknowingly may flee there. They shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood. ⁴ He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and explain his case to the elders of that city. Then they shall take him into the city and give him a place, and he shall remain with them. ⁵ And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not give up the manslayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unknowingly, and did not hate him in the past. ⁶ And he shall remain in that city until he has stood before the congregation for judgment, until the death of him who is high priest at the time. Then the manslayer may return to his own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled.' "*
 - 6 Cities of Refuge – 3 on either side of Jordan. One in North, Central, South
 - The issue of intent – Intent is everything in this set of laws. The point is whether or not it was premeditated or even intended. If it was accidental there is no guilt on that person. But how will we know if someone meant to or not? What if they were lying? That's why you needed a system with unemotionally involved people to sort it out: Thus, cities of refuge.
 - avenger of blood. – family-style justice.
 - Levites and Judges justice – trained in discerning and determining legal matters and guilt or innocence. They were the authorities in the land and their decisions were binding.
 - Homebase until change in leadership – innocent has to stay like homebase. If you go home or outside, the avenger can kill you without penalty.

- How the priesthood and Levites work
 - Some recap – it's important = the central tribe that influences not just the nation at that time but their entire history and interaction with Jesus Christ to come.
 - Why we care – We (Christians) are the Levites and priesthood of today.
 - Their priesthood; **Our priesthood** - Num 18:7 – "I give your priesthood as a gift."
 - 1 Pe 2:9–10 – "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession..."
 - They were salt and light sprinkled through their nation – **we are salt and light sprinkled through our nations.**
 - They were an inheritance to God specifically – **we are the bride of Christ**
 - They protect the revelation of God – **we study the Word and promote Truth**
 - They minister to people on God's behalf – **we minister to people on God's behalf.**
 - They didn't get to build their own kingdom in this world – **we are builders of the Kingdom of God not our own.**
 - They got closeness to God that others didn't – **we get closeness to God that others don't.**
 - I think you get the picture...
 - Seemingly Strange choice – **Levi was a man of war and blood.** Jacob's 3rd son (of Leah) **and his brother Simeon were super aggressive.** Most famously, (Dinah):
 - Ge 49:5–7 - "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. ⁶Let my soul come not into their council; O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they oxen. ⁷Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."
 - Tough tribe – At the foot of Mt. Sinai, golden calf, Moses called for any who would stand for God. The Levi tribe immediately responded = killing the guilty (3,000). And it was that moment that Moses proclaimed that the Levites were 'ordained for the service of the LORD, so that He might bestow a blessing on them.'
 - Not just Levi but Phinehas as well – Aaron's grandson. **he drove a spear through a couple while they were in the act.** Intense family line.
 - Different Role – Right when they got into the wilderness coming out of Egypt God set the Levite tribe apart and gave them a different role = Tabernacle. The Levite tribe's job was to be in charge of that holy place at all costs. kill anyone that tried to get too close or touch anything. So it starts to make sense...
 - Levites are God's firstborn offering – instead of firstborn from every family Levi was His portion (inheritance).
 - 3 Sub-Groups - **Levi's three sons**
 - Gershon –move all the curtain walls
 - Merari - infrastructure carriers.
 - Kohath – their job was to guard and move the most holy things:

- Priests are Aaron's line only – although Aaron's line is WITHIN the tribe of Levi, and in the subclan of Kohathites, they are the only ones who get to be priests.
 - The theory is tested (Korah's rebellion) – Numbers 16, Kohath tribe & Reuben leaders = 250 chiefs. They were all killed by God.
 - The confirmation of Aaron's line (Num 17) – almond blossoms.
- Pros and Cons – there were good and bad things about being a Levite.
 - Benefits
 - Closest to God
 - Best food
 - Usually a constant salary
 - Authority
 - Downsides
 - No freedom of options on life
 - No large territory
 - Strangeness: These priests and Levites are secular and born into it
 - Contingent on tithes
- The Plan for Salt & Light
 - Levites come for their inheritance allotment
 - Joshua 21:1-2 – *"Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel. ² And they said to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, 'The Lord commanded through Moses that we be given cities to dwell in, along with their pasturelands for our livestock.'"*
 - Roles in the Promised Land – once Shiloh the holy site was set up into general Levite work
 - Eleazar the priest – Eleazar was one of Aaron's sons and acting 'high priest' = spiritual leader.
 - Joshua – military and political leader of the nation.
 - Tribal heads – localized.
- Allotment of Cities – Chapter 21 remainder
 - Aaron's 3 Sub-clans
 - Merari = 12 in Transjordan
 - Gershon = 13 in the North
 - Kohath (biggest) = 23 Middle & South
 - Total = 48 Levitical cities evenly sprinkled around.
 - 6 were also Cities of Refuge.
- Every Time
 - God's Promises are Fulfilled

- Joshua 21:43-45 – *"Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. ⁴⁴ And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. ⁴⁵ Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass."*
 - The Lord provided – This is a powerful statement. God came through. He did it. He took a relatively rebellious and resistant people and still got them to do what He needed them to do in order to fulfill promises He had made to their forefathers.
 - They had the majority = win for God – they didn't get it all done but they had the majority and that was enough to call it a win for God at that point.
 - Rest AROUND them – This doesn't mean there weren't more territory pieces to handle WITHIN, it meant that externally they didn't have any wars going on with the surrounding people groups like Egypt, Ammon, Tyre, or Aram.
 - Not one of their enemies COULD withstand – There was no enemy people group that COULD withstand them if they were operating in faith and with the Lord. But some DID withstand (Dan). But it was not the failure of God, it was the failure of the people to do what they needed to do.
 - Not one of God's promises failed – God didn't let any of His promised words fall to the ground. What's so amazing is that we know God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is a God of His word. He keeps His promises. He knows how to get things done.

Conclusion

- God Came Through - Though promises may be delayed, God never disappoints.
- Are we taking our territory that is rightfully ours? Or giving over to the enemy?
- Are we the salt and light serving in our area?
- Do we see our inheritance as a gift?