



כו כָּל-עָרִים עֶשְׂרֵה
 וּמִגְרָשֵׁיהֶן,
 לְמִשְׁפְּחוֹת
 בְּנֵי-קֹהַת,
 הַנוֹתָרִים. {ס.}

All the cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath. Joshua 21:26

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KALLERSON

Joshua 21:20-26 (The Cities of Kohath, the Levites)

Repetition is an important tool in remembering key points concerning various aspects of life. I repeat, repetition is an important tool in remembering key points concerning various aspects of life. Got it?

God knows this is true, so His word is chock full of repetition. Once, Black Hat Jay called me on Friday as he always does and said something like, “We’re reading the prophets right now and they say the same thing that we’ve already read several times.”

First, hats off to Black Hat Jay for reading the Bible. Second, this means he wasn’t dozing while reading the other passages. Hats off to that as well. When you read 1 and 2 Kings, you’ll find passages that are very similar, and at times identical, in 1 and 2 Chronicles.

After that, you will read many of the same themes again in the prophets. But there is also repetition in the later books from the earlier books, such as the genealogies in Moses that are repeated in Chronicles. And then, the New Testament will repeat some of those things again.

The reason for this is obvious; it is to make logical connections that we have not made before. However, it is also important because we simply don’t pay attention to key points unless they are repeated.

For example, in the New Testament, we are clearly and unambiguously told that the law is fulfilled. We are told many times as well. And yet, for various reasons we may not pay heed to it. That will be discussed in more detail later.

Text Verse: *“For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, ¹⁹for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”*

-Hebrews 7:18, 19

Our text verse will be repeated later while making a point about the need for repetition in Scripture. But as an example to get us thinking about it, my mom once sent me a video by one of the big wigs at Ligonier Ministries who was being interviewed during a conference.

The person doing the interview asked this obviously well-versed theologian about the status of the law. He responded with something like, “The law is done. It is over. We are not under law but grace.”

Well, isn’t that special? He got it right. The next question, I mean the very next thing that was asked by the interviewer was, “Are Christians required to tithe?”

The guy looked apoplectic. He started hemming and hawing. He breathed in heavily and exhaled accordingly. He got flush; he went pasty. He stammered and bumbled through his words. He grunted in apparent agony and then he carefully tried to exposit his thoughts as if he were Orator Orvie.

His guts groaned and his knees creaked under the stress of the tightened sinews. And, of course, through all of the convoluted words and phrases that emanated from his stammering mouth, he defended the notion that Christians are, in fact, required to tithe, thus negating the truth of his answer to the first question he was asked.

Why is repetition necessary? It is to, hopefully, convince us that doctrines are set and fixed, and that it is how the Lord expects us to see those things. The reason for these repetitious opening words is because there is a lot of repetition in today's passage from what has been seen in previous passages.

We are being shown a truth that repetition is an important tool in remembering key points concerning various aspects of life. This is especially so when it comes to theology and doctrine. We are told the same things again and again in the Bible to assure us that this is what God really means.

He says something, He says the same thing again in a different way, and then He says it again in yet another way. And sometimes, He even says the exact same thing several times. He does this explicitly, or in metaphor, simile, typology, or in various other ways as well.

Let us pay heed to what the Lord says, especially when He repeats Himself, because He wants us to be certain about His intentions when He does. This is a great lesson that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again, and... May God speak to us through His word today, and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Four, Four, Two, and Ten (verses 20-26)

²⁰ And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the children of Kohath,

The Hebrew uses a verb as a noun, *ha'notarim*. It more literally says, "And to families sons Kohath, the Levites, the remainings from sons Kohath." The meaning is derived from the previous verses.

The allotment for the tribe of Kohath was divided into two portions, the first half went to the sons of Aaron, meaning the priestly class. This was described in verses 9-19 that we looked at previously.

Here, those of the tribe of Kohath who are not priests are to receive their allotment. As they are non-priestly Levites, their work will not look to the Firstborn role of the priestly work of

Christ, but to His other roles as the Firstborn, remembering that the Levites were taken in place of the firstborn of Israel –

“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ¹² ‘Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, ¹³ because all the firstborn *are* Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I *am* the Lord.’” Numbers 3:11-13

The work of the priests’ duties reflects that of the firstborn in sacrifices and atonement whereas the other Levites reflect all of the other duties in bearing the weight and responsibility of the law. The duties do overlap to some extent, but for these allotments next to be named, it is the latter of the two that will be referred to.

As for the name Kohath, it means either Obedience or Gathering/Assembly. Of them it next says...

²⁰ (con’t) **even they had the cities of their lot from the tribe of Ephraim.**

Rather, it precisely reads, “And it was, cities their lot, from tribe Ephraim.” The cities of the first half, those of the priesthood, were found in Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, all very near the area of Jerusalem which will someday be the focal point of worship for Israel. The providence of God, centuries in advance of it happening, determined that it would be this way.

As Ephraim borders Benjamin to the north, it means that these allotted cities are not separated any great distance from their brothers, the priests. Of the cities of Ephraim, it says...

²¹ **For they gave them Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer),**

The translation is out of the order of the text and misses some of the necessary nuances: “And gave to them city refuge the slayer, Shechem, and her common lands, in Mount Ephraim.”

The name Shechem is identical to *shekem*, shoulder. Thus, it literally means Shoulder. However, that comes from *shakam* signifying to incline, as in inclining the shoulder to a burden. Hence, it is normally translated as to rise or start early. Abarim defines Shechem as “[Having a Sense Of] Responsibility.”

Ephraim has a dual meaning of Twice Fruitful and Ashes. As has been seen in many sermons, a mountain (*har*) is a lot of something gathered. It is synonymous with a large but centralized group of people. Along with this is...

²¹ (con’t) **Gezer with its common-land,**

v'eth gezer v'eth migrasheha – “And Gezer and her common-lands.” Gezer means Part or Portion.

²² **Kibzaim with its common-land,**

Again, it more precisely reads, “And Kibzaim and her common-land.” The name Kibzaim is found only here in Scripture. Because of this, it is believed to be the same as Jokmeam found in 1 Chronicles 6:68. The German scholar Gesenius notes that both names have a similar etymology and the name may have evolved over the years.

As for the name, Kibzaim comes from *qabats*, to gather or to collect. Being a plural, it therefore means Double Gathering or Double Heap...

²² (con't) **and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities;**

More precisely: “and Beth Horon and her common-lands, cities four.” Beth Horon means House of the Hollow and also House of Freedom.

Four, according to Bullinger, “is the number of things that have a beginning, of things that are made, of material things, and matter itself. It is the number of material completeness. Hence it is the world number, and especially the ‘city’ number.” Next, the list continues with designations in another tribe...

²³ **and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land,**

As before, it is more precise, “Eltekeh and her common-lands.” Dan means Judge. Eltekeh was seen in Joshua 19:44 and this will be its last appearance in Scripture. It is an interesting name. The first portion is from *el*, God (god).

The second half may be from a root, *tq'*, not used in the Bible, but which is found in Arabic. It means to fear or to take heed. Thus, it would mean God is Dread or God-fearing. However, it could also come from *qo*, a feminine word meaning to vomit. As such, it may mean God Vomits, God Vomits Her, etc. Along with it...

²³ (con't) **Gibbethon with its common-land,**

“Gibbethon and her common-lands.” Gibbethon is an intensive form of *givah*, a hill. Thus it means Mound, Height, or Lofty Place. But, as has been seen before, *givah* is connected in the New Testament to Gabbatha, the elevated knoll where Christ was judged prior to His crucifixion. That is followed by...

²⁴ **Aijalon with its common-land,**

“Aijalon and her common lands.” Aijalon comes from *ayyal* or deer. It means Place of the Deer. However, that comes from the same as *ayil*, or ram, which is derived from a word indicating strength. Thus, as seen in Joshua 10, Place of Strength is not out of line.

²⁴ (con't) **and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities;**

“Gath Rimmon and her common-lands, cities four.” Gath Rimmon comes from *gath*, winepress, and *rimmon*, pomegranate. However, as has been previously seen, the pomegranate symbolizes harvest-ready fruit and so it can further mean Mature Mind or Harvest Ready. Thus, it is interpreted as Winepress of the Mature Mind or Winepress of the Harvest Ready.

Dan is directly west of Ephraim. Therefore, these Levitical cities are again closely joined with the others, keeping the family together in their allotments.

²⁵ **and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land**

“And from half-tribe Manasseh, Tanach and her common-lands.” Manasseh means both To Forget and From a Debt. Tanach is a KJV misspelling which simply followed the mistake of the Geneva Bible. This was then subsequently followed by the NKJV. It is the same name used five other times in Scripture and translated as Taanach.

The meaning of it is uncertain. Some think it is derived from an Egyptian or Arabic word. There is no corresponding root word found in Scripture. Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names notes an equivalent Arabic verb that means to wander and thus translates it as Wandering Through. Also, it next says...

²⁵ (con') **and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: two cities.**

“and Gath Rimmon and her common-lands, cities two.” Gath Rimmon is the same name just noted in the territory of Dan. John Lange takes this repetition as a copyist's error by stating Gath Rimmon instead of Ibleam that was noted in Joshua 17:11 and which is identified later in 1 Chronicles 6:70 as Bileam, a Levitical city. The Greek translation would tend to support this but other translations such as the Vulgate, Peshitta, and Lamsa all say Gath Rimmon.

The number two is the number of division or difference. However, when there are two things, they will contrast but also confirm a whole, such as the two natures of Christ Jesus. They contrast, but they confirm His full nature, being both God and Man.

This half-tribe of Manasseh is directly north of Ephraim. Therefore, like the other allotments for Kohath, these Levitical cities are again closely joined with the others. Because of this, the entire family is tightly knit together in their allotments. With that, the allotment ends with...

²⁶ **All the ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath.**

It more precisely reads, "All cities ten, with their common-lands, to families sons Kohath, the remainings." This then defines the second allotment to the Kohathites, the non-priestly class.

Ten signifies the perfection of divine order. As Bullinger notes, "It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete." As Kohath has been divided into two separate portions of allotted cities, those for priests and those for the Levites, it means there is a contrast between the two and yet they are two parts of a whole.

*Again and again, the truth is there for us to see
The work of Christ is not limited to just one group of people
His grace is available to all who will bow the knee
Together anyone can come worship 'neath the steeple*

*He is the God of the Jew, it is true
But He is also the God of Gentiles from every nation
There is nothing to exclude either me or you
Whether Japanese, British, German, or Haitian*

*God shows us this repeatedly
That He is the God of all mankind
When we call out to Him through Jesus, He sets us free
The chains are gone and we are no longer blind*

*Children of God! See what He has done for us!
Thank You, O God, for having sent Jesus*

II. Explaining the Typology

Of these allotments to Kohath, most of the names have been seen and explained in previous passages. A careful study, using the same meanings and typology as before, will reveal the meaning of what is being pictured.

As these allotments are to Levites, they will obviously detail aspects regarding Christ as the Firstborn in His work under the law. However, the content of the passage is mostly centered on the naming of the cities. And so, this will not only reflect the work of Christ, but how it then applies to His people.

In the naming of these tribal lands, Christ's work is typologically anticipated. In the naming of the cities, the effect of His work as it is realized in His people is anticipated. Together, you will

see that these verses anticipate the gathering together of Jews and Gentiles into one body. In other words, the pattern runs consistently. There is the work of Christ and then there is how His work is realized in His people.

Mount Ephraim (Twice Fruitful/Ashes) looks to the gathering together of a group of people (the mount) based on the work of Christ who is Twice Fruitful through His work, bringing in Jew and Gentile. But the work itself is represented by the Ashes, signifying His afflictions to bring this about.

Shechem, [Having a Sense of] Responsibility, looks to the believer who understands his violation of the law and has accepted Christ's fulfillment of it. Being a city of refuge, it indicates the fully sufficient work of Christ both for salvation and for eternal security in that salvation.

Gezer (Portion) signifies the inheritance that has been received because of Christ's work. That is further explained in the next city, Kibzaim (Double Gathering) – the effects of Christ's work as Paul explains in Romans 9:24, saying, "even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

It is, therefore, another confirmation of what Ephraim (Twice Fruitful) signifies. Ephraim reveals the matter from the perspective of Christ accomplishing it while Kibzaim reveals it from the perspective of how it is realized in those He saves. He is Twice Fruitful; they are a double gathering.

Beth Horon explains the state of this gathering, dwelling in the House of Freedom, meaning from the guilt of imputed sin.

As there are four allotted cities (the world/city number) in Ephraim, it signifies that its effects encompass the entire world. No ethnicity or group is left out. This is seen, for example in the words of Matthew 28 –

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.' Amen." Matthew 28:18-20

The next tribe for allotments is Dan. It refers to Christ who is the Judge of all people. The named cities show how that is then realized in those who are His people.

Eltekeh, God-fearing, speaks for itself. Having come to Christ, those who are His have demonstrated that this is our position in Him.

This is more precisely reflected in the next name, Gibbethon, or Mound. It looks to the spot where Christ was judged (Gabbatha), and in turn, the place where our sin was judged by God in Him. It is this that brought us to the God-fearing state.

That is next followed by Aijalon (Place of Strength). It is where the believer looks to, meaning to the full, final, finished, and forever work of Christ Jesus as our place of strength for eternal salvation.

Gath Rimmon (Winepress of the Mature Mind) follows logically next. It refers to the effects of Christ's work in us. Everything that is contrary to holiness and godliness will be pressed out of us as we grow in Christ. Obviously, this is something that is different in each person.

But to God, for those in Christ, we are already positionally in this state, even if not yet actualized. However, the great day ahead will be when it is fully realized in us. Until then, we are to press on in Christ –

“Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.” 1 Corinthians 14:20

In Dan, there were also four allotted cities. This conveys the same meaning as in Ephraim. The effects of Christ cover all people groups in the world; none are excluded from His work.

Finally came the half-tribe of Manasseh. The dual meaning of He Shall Forget/From a Debt, signifies that Christ shall forget the past deeds of the person who has come to Him because He has paid their sin debt.

Due to the nature of the name Taanach, only speculation can be made. But if Jones' definition, Wandering Through, is correct, it is a sufficient description of believers as they await glorification. How many times do believers use this, or a similar phrase, to speak of their lives in Christ?

Gath Rimmon carries the same signification as just named in the allotments in Dan.

The two cities confirm the scope of Christ's work. It contrasts, for Jews and for Gentiles, and yet it confirms the whole body of believers, thus supporting the two mentions of four cities each.

Though it is only a few verses, they form a marvelous rendering of what God has done for us in and through the Person of Jesus Christ. And more, the pattern is consistent with all that has been seen so far. Time and again, there is seen the work of Christ and then there is seen the effects of that work for His people.

Understanding this, the final note of there being ten cities confirms this as well. As a whole, ten total cities reveal the perfection of divine order being worked out through Jesus Christ. Nothing is wanting. The number and order are perfect. The whole cycle is complete.

With that noted, a look at the totality of the Kohathite allotments can be considered. The two divisions look to the work of the Firstborn, that of His priestly work of sacrifice and atonement as well as that of the other Levitical work of Christ, bearing the responsibility of the law. As a whole, these tribal allotments explain the work of Christ, and the cities speak of how that is realized in His people.

Though these verses repeat a lot of info, they are also structured in a way that provides new information while also confirming the same thought that has been presented in numerous ways already.

The great thing about this approach is that the more we see such repetition in typology, we can be assured that the typology is correct because the pictures keep matching, even if they have been presented with different aspects, such as borders, cities, tribes, etc., or be it peculiar stories about various travels, certain objects (such as the serpent on the pole), and so on.

When the typology results in the same thing being expressed again and again, we can conclude that God must be repeating this so that there is no mistake in our theology.

To understand this, we can look at what is open and explicit in Scripture and see how absolutely necessary it is to repeat the same thought again and again. For example, the fulfillment and ending of the law by Christ is mentioned so many times in the New Testament that there should be no doubt among Christians that it is true. A short, but not all-inclusive list will show us this –

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17

“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.” John 19:30

“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” Romans 3:31

“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”
-Romans 6:14

“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.” Romans 7:4

“But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.”
-Romans 7:6

“For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”
-Romans 10:4

“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”
-Romans 2:16

“For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.” Galatians 2:19

“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain.” Galatians 2:21

“This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Galatians 3:2

“But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’” Galatians 3:11

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’).” Galatians 3:13

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5

“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Galatians 5:18

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” Ephesians 2:14-16

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out

the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” Colossians 2:13, 14

“For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, ¹⁹ for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”
-Hebrews 7:18, 19

“In that He says, ‘A new *covenant*,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” Hebrews 8:13

“Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *offerings* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*’ (which are offered according to the law), ⁹ then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second.” Hebrews 10:8, 9

That is only twenty examples of the law being completed and ended. It took a few minutes to compile and a couple of minutes to read. And yet, it is only a very brief representation of what the New Testament says about this issue.

If one were to take all of the examples, explanations, metaphors, and subtle hints that are made concerning the matter, we would be here for a long time. It is a point of doctrine that is so clearly and precisely stated that surely nobody could get it wrong, could they?

Well, no. Such is sadly not the case. In fact, to one degree or another, and speaking in the broadest sense, almost nobody gets it right. Sometimes it is purposeful, like Stammering Stanley that was mentioned in our opening comments concerning tithing. He could not give up on the law when it came to money.

Sometimes it is purposeful because of pride. That is the type Paul warns the most vehemently against. They are the Judaizers of the world, boasting in flesh, and thus rejecting the grace of God in Christ. To them, the law is a means to an end. Christ, even if He is brought into the picture, is really only an object to be placed on a shelf, out of the way of the one whose works are to bring attention to prideful self.

There are those who say they get grace, but who still personally cling to one or two or ten points of law, thinking, “Surely I need to do this or not do this.” Grace is that hard to understand, and it is reflected in the teaching of innumerable people who claim that we must do something from the law in order to please God. Eventually, you can see where grace really is not their stand at all.

Although the passage today wasn’t really focused on the law versus grace, that doctrine is a marvelous point to show how hard it is for us to get what God is telling us. It is seen moments

after the fall in Genesis 3, again and again throughout the books of Moses, dozens of times so far in Joshua, and the verses just cited show us that it is a key point in the New Testament as well.

As for the typology of this passage, that of the sufficiency of Christ to save and the broadness of its effects upon Jews and Gentiles, that escapes many people as well. There are Jews who believe that only Jews will be saved. There are those who teach that Jews and Gentiles are saved in different ways. There are those who teach that various groups of Gentiles are outside of God's mercy. And so on.

This passage is clear, just as the many already studied are and as many will be as the Old Testament continues to unfold. This continues as the New Testament is properly studied. So pay attention to the repetition. It is there for a reason. And if you ever come across typology explained by someone that doesn't appear to match everything else you have learned, you can bet that he has misinterpreted what is being conveyed.

Pay attention to the word, pay attention to how people evaluate the word, and pay heed to stay on the straight path concerning key points of doctrine that are clearly and explicitly stated in Scripture. These things are important. So pay attention.

Closing Verse: *"Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."* 1 Timothy 4:16

Next Week: Joshua 21:27-33 *What will we find out what about the typology we are being shown?* (The Cities of Gershon) (48th Joshua Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It is He who has defeated the enemy and who now offers His people rest. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Cities of Kohath, the Levites

And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites
The rest of the children of Kohath it would seem
Even they had the cities of their lot
From the tribe of Ephraim

For they gave them Shechem with its common-land
In the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer)
Gezer with its common-land
Did they ever produce a famous music player?

Kibzaim with its common-land and one more
Beth Horon with its common-land: cities four

And from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land
Gibbethon with its common-land, pretty swell
Aijalon with its common-land
And Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities as well

And from the half-tribe of Manasseh
These they did accrue
Tanach with its common-land
And Gath Rimmon with its common-land: cities two
All the ten cities with their common-lands according to the math
Were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...