

# *Journey Through The Cities Of Refuge*

Lesson #16

Hebron: Abraham & King David

May 6, 2026

Belief: The Bible intentionally lists the 6 cities in a specific order.

All men must begin at Kedesh where they find refuge in Jesus as their Savior.

Kedesh = to be set apart, consecrated, to sanctify, holy place

When I come to faith in and seek refuge in Jesus Christ, I am born again, new creation.

- I am justified and have eternal life.
- Adopted, holy & without blame, an heir of God, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, etc.
- I am to embrace God's call to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ to produce spiritual maturity and for God's glory.
- God uses all circumstances, including trials & afflictions that test our faith & our fortitude to conform believers to the likeness of His son.

I come to Shechem where I am to learn to live the Spirit-filled Life.

- It will be a challenge to live life as this new creation.
- It is a place of decision, worship, and struggle, often highlighting the tension between following God and yielding to selfish, sinful tendencies.
- Highlights the struggle of the believer's life in the world, where the temptation to compromise with the "flesh" is always present, demanding a renewed choice to follow God.

Hebron, 3<sup>rd</sup> City of Refuge: Hebron was Giant Country

It seems like everybody who came to Hebron faced a giant of some kind or other.

Some faced the literal, physical sons of Anak, but others faced figurative giants like obstacles, problems, trials in their lives—the kind of giants you and I face in our lives.

Hebron, a pivotal Biblical location, mentioned 72 times, serves as a profound symbol of God's covenant faithfulness, the necessity of patient faith and the rewards of wholehearted commitment. Many of the Biblical characters took their first step of faith in Hebron.

- Abraham walked in promise. Caleb claimed his reward. David was anointed as king.

Key lessons include:

- Worshiping God through all states of life
- Persevering and trusting God's promises despite delays.
- Act on wholehearted faith despite obstacles
- Recognize that God's promises are fulfilled in His time.
- Strengthening leadership through divine obedience before public promotion

Hebron is the place where God's plan began to unfold. Man's struggle meets promise.

## I. Hebron: A Place of Altars & Worship

At Hebron the Lord first showed Abram the land that would belong to him and his offspring.

Gen. 13:14-18 Abraham and Lot have separated

<sup>14</sup> And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward;

<sup>15</sup> for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

<sup>16</sup> And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.

<sup>17</sup> Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

<sup>18</sup> Then Abram moved his tent and went and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron and built an altar there to the Lord.

- A site of personal dedication and communion, fellowship with God.

Gen. 14: When Abram learns of the capture of Lot and others, he mobilizes 318 trained men, attacks at night near Dan, rescues Lot, the people and all the stolen goods.

- Gen. 15:1-7 The Promise Reaffirmed: After the events of Gen. 14, God appears and declares Himself as Abram's "shield" and "exceeding great reward." After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I Am Your Shield, Your Exceeding Great Reward."

Context: Abram had recently engaged in war to rescue Lot and others.

Abram needed to know God would protect him.

Abram had refused the reward of earthly riches.

Abram's reward was tied to the Lord's covenant promise, as yet not realized.

The Lord called Abram to trust entirely in God for protection and

to Place His Hope in God's Promise of a Very Great Reward.

- Abram's Concern: Abram respectfully questions how God will fulfill the promise of a "great nation" when he is still childless and his heir is his servant, Eliezer of Damascus. Years have elapsed, yet Sarai remains barren. By lingering delay and the practical reality of childlessness, Abram questions God's promise. Struggling with doubt
  - Prolonged barrenness clashes with the promise of countless descendants.
- The Promise of a Son: God clarifies that a biological son—not a servant—will be his heir.
- The Star Count: God takes Abram outside and tells him to count the stars, promising that his descendants will be just as numerous.
- Faith and Righteousness: Abram believes God's promise, and God credits this faith to him as righteousness.

This section is significant because it establishes the basis of justification by faith [verse 6] and highlights God's dedication to fulfilling His covenant promises despite human doubt.

Gen. 15:6 Then he believed the LORD; and He credited it to him as righteousness.

- Credited = reckoned; accounted; imputed

Abram believed God and was declared righteous.

Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

- Reaffirmation of Land: God explicitly reminds Abram that He is the LORD who brought him out of the Ur of Chaldees to give thee this land, to INHERIT IT.

Gen. 15:8 And he said, LORD God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

- What follows seems strange to us. God cut a covenant. He made a bond in blood.

Gen. 15:9-10 And He said unto him, Take Me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, a ram of three years old, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.

Question: How did Abram know what to do with the animals? Did God tell him?

This was a standard, well-known, and established practice for formalizing covenants in the Ancient Near East. The Hebrew words for "cut a covenant" mean exactly that—literally cutting the animals into pieces.

Similar to practices in Jeremiah 34:18-19, this ceremony was known as "cutting a covenant." It signified a binding contract where both parties walked between the pieces in a figure 8. As they walked around the sacrifice they would look down at the pieces and each man would make an oath: "May what has happened to these animals happen to me if I break this covenant."

Gen. 15:11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Unclean birds of prey [represent Satanic activity in the Bible] swooped down on the offering animals—an evil omen. The forces of evil and opposition seek to disrupt God's plans.

By driving them away, Abram is asserting his faith in God's promises and his determination to protect the sacred covenant from any threats.

Note: Five is the number of God's grace. The 5 animals foreshadow the multifaceted, comprehensive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They represent a complete, God-ordained covenant sacrifice that covers all aspects of sin, foreshadowing Christ's ultimate substitutionary death, priesthood, and accessibility to all people.

Significance of the Specific Animals

- Heifer [Three-year-old]: Represents Christ's service, sacrifice, and the cleansing from impurity, later linked to purification rites in Numbers 19.
- She-Goat [Three-year-old]: Symbolizes Christ as the sin-bearer, paralleling the scapegoat used to atone for sin.
- Ram [Three-year-old]: Foreshadows substitutionary atonement, directly recalling the ram provided in place of Isaac in Genesis 22.
- Turtledove & Pigeon: Represent accessibility to the poor, symbolizing that Christ's sacrifice is available to all, regardless of economic status, and represents purity.

Note: Death passed upon all the animals, for without shedding of blood is no remission.  
Where there is no remission, there can be no inheritance.

Based on what we know of this covenant ritual, what we expect to see next is God and Abram taking turns walking between the animal halves. This would bind each of them to the covenant. If either were to break the covenant, they agreed the violator would suffer the same fate as these animals.

Gen. 15:12-14

- As the sun sets, a "deep sleep" and "terrifying darkness" fall upon Abram, setting the stage for a divine message. [includes new information from Gen. 12]
- The Prophecy [vv. 13-14]: God clarifies that Abram's descendants will be strangers and slaves in a foreign land. They will afflict them for 400 years, but God will punish the oppressor nation and lead them out with great wealth.

A Profound Truth Is Taught In Type.

Abram learns: The Inheritance Can Be Reached Only Through Suffering!

1. His heirs would have to pass through the furnace before they entered into that which God had prepared for them.
  2. First the suffering; the four hundred years' "affliction." Then the inheritance.
- Deut. 4:20 But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day.

Example set by Jesus Christ: First the "sufferings;" then "the glory."

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

Acts 14:22 [AMP]strengthening *and* establishing the hearts of the disciples; encouraging them to remain firm in the faith, saying,

"It is through many tribulations *and* hardships that we must enter the kingdom of God."

Spurgeon: "There are no crown wearers in Heaven who were not cross-bearers here below."

Gen. 15:15-16 Abram would be spared these afflictions; die in peace & be buried in a good old age. [Abram's personal peace]

In the "fourth generation" Abram's descendants would return again to Canaan, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.

What happens next is vital and necessary for our salvation:

Gen. 15:17-18a And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that Behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram,

The Smoking Fire Pot and Flaming Torch in Genesis 15:17 are a theophany:  
A Visible Manifestation of God's Presence.

Recall Abram's Question: How will I know that I will INHERIT the LAND?

- God alone passing between the divided animal pieces to seal a unilateral covenant with Abram, Confirming His Unconditional Promise.
- God committing Himself to bear the consequences in the event that Abram or his descendants fail to uphold the covenant.
- God alone passing through the covenant, representing His glory and protection.

Why can this covenant NOT be broken? Because God alone made the covenant.

The imagery of the smoking firepot and blazing torch in Genesis 15 finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Just as Jehovah alone passed through the animal pieces to ratify the covenant, Jesus took upon Himself the full responsibility of securing salvation for humanity.

God put Abram to sleep so he wouldn't have to walk through.

This points forward to the coming grace through Jesus dying on the cross, taking on the punishment for all our transgressions.

About 2,000 years after Abram died, a King was born.

A king whispered about from the days of Adam, Noah, and Abram.

A King who being truly God passed through the pieces of the animals, promising to become like the carcasses and bear the curse of the covenant. The King who has bound us to Himself through the very blood he promised to shed at a covenant ceremony before Abram.

The Smoking Pot and The Flaming Torch:

- Foreshadow the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire that guided the Israelites
- God's presence was manifested as smoke and fire at Mt. Sinai.

Ex. 13:20-22 So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. <sup>21</sup> And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. <sup>22</sup> He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

Ex. 14:1-2 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Tell the children of Israel to turn back and encamp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea.

God shows us that the confrontation with the Egyptians at Baal-Zephon is not by accident, or a coincidence. He intentionally turns the Israelites around and leads them to a place that He has chosen for the great spiritual conflict with the Egyptians.

Remember: God had been triumphing over not only the Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but also the supposed power of their gods. The plagues were a drumbeat of victory as the gods of Egypt were, one by one, displayed to be impotent and powerless.

- Yahweh wanted the Egyptians to know that He is the LORD GOD [14:4].

Ex. 14:3-4 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They *are* bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in. Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain glory over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the Lord.'" And they did so.

By leading the Israelites to camp "opposite" this idol, God set the stage for a spiritual confrontation. Pharaoh likely believed his god, Baal-Zephon, had trapped the Israelites, only for the true God to demonstrate His supreme power over both the sea and the pagan deity.

History and background of Baal Zephon: This myth was discovered in recovered tablets in 1922. Yamm, a Canaanite god, was the sea serpent god described as a seven-headed, chaotic sea serpent representing chaos and destruction. He was consistently pictured as tyrannical, angry, violent and harsh. He was known as the antagonist who battles the storm god Baal for divine kingship and control of the cosmos.

Baal, the god of storms and fertility, challenged Yamm's rule. Baal struck Yamm with a club, causing him to fall. He then used a second club to strike Yamm between the eyes, bringing the sea god down completely. Following the defeat, Baal pulled, broke apart and separated Yamm's frame which he dragged to the council hall to proclaim himself king. His victory established Baal as the ruler of the gods and demonstrated his power over chaos and the sea. His victory over the serpent cemented his status as the primary deity in the Canaanite pantheon.

The location of this myth is associated with Baal-zephon where he reigned after his victory. It serves as a crucial geographical marker in the Exodus narrative, framing the scene where God displayed victory over Egyptian and Canaanite deities by splitting the sea. Sea is Yamm in Hebrew. God "separates and rips apart" the Red Sea at Baal-Zephon. God is declaring that He is the Creator God. He is the LORD of ALL CREATION.

It is no surprise that the LORD stopped Israel and turned them around to meet and defeat not only Pharaoh and his army, but also to display His power over Baal-Zephon and defeat him at the mountain of his glory and power. Yahweh would lead His people directly through the sea...the sea which the Egyptians believed were under the control of Baal-Zephon!

Ex. 14:19-20 God protected the Israelites from the pursuing Egyptian army by moving the pillar of cloud and the angel of God behind them. This barrier stood between the two camps all night, creating darkness for the Egyptians while illuminating the path for Israel, preventing the armies from meeting.

- This act shows God transitioning from a guide to a defender, ensuring the safety of His people during a seemingly hopeless situation.

It was no accident that God chose to bring this conflict into the sharpest spiritual focus and to a climax of incredible proportions.

God was showing His people, in the most amazing and startling ways, not only that He was Lord over all other gods and over nature but was teaching His people Israel what happens to those who worship false gods.

Gen. 17 Abram is now 99 years old and residing near Hebron where he had been living since splitting from Lot. God appeared to him there to reaffirm the covenant, change his name, and initiate the covenant of circumcision.

Abram =exalted father to Abraham = father of a multitude

- In Hebrew, God added the letter 'ה' (heh) from His own name (YHWH) to Abram, symbolizing a divine connection, a change in destiny, and the power to bring forth life, overcoming previous infertility.

Signifies a divine covenant affirming that, despite his old age and childlessness, he would become the ancestor of numerous nations and a spiritual lineage.

God promises them a son, Isaac, within a year, and introduces circumcision as the "everlasting covenant" sign.

Abraham obeys by circumcising all males in his household. God is called the God of Abraham.

Gen. 18:1-3, 9-10, 13-14 Then the Lord appeared to him by oaks of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

The Biblical Oaks of Mamre are associated with Hebron, where Abraham pitched his tent, built an altar and entertained three visitors.

Gen. 18:14 Is anything too difficult *or* too wonderful for the LORD? At the appointed time, when the season [for her delivery] comes, I will return to you and Sarah will have a son." AMP Mamre means strength and vigor to 2 people who are well past childbearing.

They are in the place of strength as the Lord comes to them. By the strong oak trees.

Gen. 23:1-2 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; <sup>2</sup> So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba [Hebron] in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

V. 3-18 Abraham purchased a parcel of land from the Hittites, a people in the land who were fierce warriors. The Hittites who lived there at the time offered Abraham the spot of his choosing. They were friends with Abraham because of the battle he fought to rescue Lot. Abraham gave all their stuff to them.

He chose a cave in the field of Ephron who offered it to Abraham as a gift, but Abraham insisted on paying fair and square, ultimately purchasing it for 400 shekels of silver.

It included both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field. This is the first recorded Jewish purchase of land in Israel and the only parcel of land that Abraham ever owned.

He demonstrated his faith in the Lord's covenant to give him all the land one day.

By purchasing the Cave of Machpelah to bury Sarah, Abraham demonstrated that death does not break God's promises, showcasing a long-term, spiritual perspective on divine inheritance.

Abraham's 1<sup>st</sup> piece of the promise was a grave.

Gen. 23:19-20 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre [that *is*, Hebron] in the land of Canaan. <sup>20</sup> So the field and the cave that *is* in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

- The Burial Place of the Patriarchs: Later, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob were also buried there. It is a sacred ancestral site. [Gen. 23:17-20]

Act of Faith: God's promises were "rooted" and realized in Hebron. The Patriarch's burials in Hebron represent the eternal link between the Jewish people and the Promised Land.

Lessons learned from Abraham in Hebron emphasize unwavering faith, obedience through trials, such as the binding of Isaac, and patience in waiting for God's promises.

Key lessons include: Rely on God during life's tests, practice generosity, and

maintain peace with others, all while viewing oneself as a pilgrim in a temporary world.

Unwavering Faith and Obedience: Abraham's life demonstrates that true faith requires obeying God's call, even without knowing the future. His obedience in potential sacrifices demonstrated a profound trust that God is faithful and powerful enough to fulfill His promises, even in hopeless situations.

Enduring Life's Tests: Trials are not punishments, but opportunities to develop character and deepen one's relationship with God.

Passing these tests requires active commitment rather than passive fear.

King David Reigns In Hebron - Where Struggle Meets Promise - The Giant Of Delay  
After King Saul's death, Israel was in disarray and in great need of unity.

The tribes of Israel were still divided in their support between King Saul's family line and the rise of the new young king, David.

David, age 30, was Directed By God to go to Hebron. [II Sam. 2:1]

Historical and Spiritual Significance: Hebron was the burial place of the patriarchs and connected David directly to the covenant promises made to Abraham.

II Sam. 2:4 Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and anointed David king over the house of Judah. This anointing marked the beginning of David's reign and the establishment of the Davidic line, which holds messianic significance in Christian theology.

#### David's 7½ Year Reign in Hebron

- A crucial, divinely guided and preparatory period that shifted power from Saul's lineage to David's line.
- By taking the throne first in Hebron, David linked his monarchy to the Abrahamic Covenant land grant [Gen. 15:18-21], publicly Rooting His Kingship In God's Promises.
- Hebron's Levitical status [Joshua 21:11-13] and designation as a city of refuge [Joshua 20:7] proclaimed the Judicial Righteousness expected of the new king [II Sam. 8:15].
- The seven-and-a-half-year interval offered a proving ground for David's judicial reforms, military leadership, and covenantal faithfulness that won national credibility.

- As the capital of Judah, Hebron was a secure, strategic location that allowed David to build a strong foundation before conquering Jerusalem.

God's progressive revelation often unfolds in stages: Hebron to Jerusalem

Waiting and Preparation: This period served as a "waiting room," proving David's patience and obedience, where his army grew stronger while the house of Saul grew weaker.

During this time, David's followers increased, turning his small band of 600 men into a powerful force.

Transition from Conflict: David's rule in Hebron included a "long war" against the house of Saul, managing tribal tensions and proving his military leadership.

Divine Timing: This season demonstrated God's pattern of preparing leaders in private before public elevation, acting as a prototype for the Messiah's kingdom.

Key: It was a period of waiting, preparing, and solidifying authority, leadership and power, building his family, and receiving the covenant anointing from the elders of all Israel.

Hebron served as David's capital for seven and a half years before he moved his capital to Jerusalem where he would reign for 33 years over ALL Israel and Judah.

- Hebron bridged the gap from a regional ruler to a national king.

It took another seven years for the nation to come together and receive their promised king.

David's anointing at Hebron by Judah and later by "all the tribes" [II Samuel 5:3] parallels the twofold anointing of the Messiah:

- First rejected but received by a remnant; later acknowledged universally

II Samuel 5:1-3 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said,

"We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us,

you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the Lord said to you,

'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'

David made a covenant with Israel's elders and they anointed him King of Israel.

Hebron was a critical, stable, and foundational period in David's life that prepared him for his 33-year reign in Jerusalem. Hebron wasn't the final destination for David.

It was a necessary steppingstone in his ascent to kingship.

By giving him Hebron, God was asking him to trust Him in the process.

The season at Hebron became a place of submission, obedience, and immense humility.

"Hebron times" in a Christian's life refer to specific spiritual seasons of deep fellowship, preparation and spiritual training.

They are often characterized by challenging periods of waiting.

Hebron Times: It is a season designed to transition a believer from selfish pursuits to consecrated living, where one is meant to "move" their tent to a place of closer companionship with God.

Building Altars of Communion: Similar to Abraham, who built an altar to the Lord in Hebron, this is a moment for establishing a personal place of worship and consistent, deep communion with God, particularly after separating from worldly distractions.

Conquering "Giants" of Doubt: Hebron was inhabited by the sons of Anak, seen as insurmountable giants by the faithless. It represents the moment a believer faces profound obstacles, or "giants" [like grief, unforgiveness, bitterness, past failures, fear, doubts, your prodigal] and walks by sight, rather than by faith and trusting in God's promises.

Patience in Preparation: Waiting: David reigned in Hebron for seven and a half years before becoming king over all Israel. This represents a "Hebron season" of waiting, preparation, humility, and obedience, often marked by challenging circumstances that develop character before a greater purpose is revealed.

A Place of Refuge and Restoration: As one of the cities of refuge, Hebron serves as a place for the believer to receive spiritual restoration and healing in Christ.

Burial" of the Old Life: Hebron is where the patriarchs were buried. Spiritually, this represents the death of the self-life and the burying of personal ambitions to fully follow God.

Resurrection Hope: As the burial place of the patriarchs and matriarchs, Hebron represents the anchoring of hope in the future resurrection, holding onto promises even in the face of death.

Rom. 8:17-18 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

<sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Rev. 2:25-26 Only hold on to what you have until I come.

To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.

Rev. 5:10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.

Made or appointed #4160. poieó: This verb always stresses purposeful action.

In every dimension of redemptive history—from the making of the cosmos to the making of disciples— poieó anchors Scripture's call to active, obedient faith. [Biblehub.org]

Context: THEM = the redeemed people of God—believers from every tribe, language, people, and nation who have been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. They are described as being made a kingdom and priests to serve God and are destined to reign upon the earth.

Consider: When I know God's purpose and plan for my future, I desire for Him to do His work in me and prepare me. I may have many "Hebron" experiences, but it will be worth it all.

Question: Do I truly believe God and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him?

Ps. 37:7a, 9b Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

Ps. 130:5 I wait [patiently] for the LORD, my soul [expectantly] waits, And in His word do I hope. [AMP]