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# Joshua 19

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## Joshua 19:1–51

## The Remaining Territory is Assigned

### Outline of Chapter 19:

- vv. 1–9     **The territory assigned to Simeon**
- vv. 10–16   **The boundaries and cities of Zebulun**
- vv. 17–23   **The boundaries and cities of Issachar**
- vv. 24–31   **The boundaries and cities of Asher**
- vv. 32–39   **The boundaries and cities of Naphtali**
- vv. 40–48   **The cities of Dan**
- vv. 49–51   **The inheritance of Joshua/conclusion of land distribution**

### Charts:

- v. 48     **Joshua 19:47–48 in the Greek and Hebrew**

**Introduction:** In Joshua 19, we complete the distribution of land to the remaining six tribes. You will recall that Moses was told to have Joshua and Eleazar cast lots and then to adjust the assignment of territory as per the population of the various tribes. Simeon will be the first tribe dealt with in this chapter and Simeon will be given some territory in Judah and some cities found within Judah. This is not a contradiction to find certain cities originally assigned to Judah and then assigned to Simeon. This is an adjustment, which God ordered to be done. After Simeon is given his land and cities, then the same will be done for Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan. What will follow in the next two chapters will be the cities of refuge and the cities which will be given over to the Levites. For many of you, this will be a grocery list of cities, and, for that reason, I did not go into half the detail that Keil and Delitzsch did. However, if geography is your interest, then consult their Old Testament commentary for more information. Whereas I might comment on the present-day location of a third of the cities listed herein, they probably deal with twice that many, and generally in much greater detail, citing the reasons why one site would be preferred over another.

J. Vernon McGee summarizes the distribution of land as follows: *Because the land allotted to Judah was more than it needed, the southern portion was given to Simeon. The tribe of Zebulun received a portion of land that was landlocked in lower Galilee. The inheritance of Issachar went from Mount Tabor on the west to the southern part of the sea of Galilee. It also included territory in the coastal region from north of Mount Carmel to the approximate area of Tyre and Sidon. The tribe of Naphtali settled in the area of eastern Upper and Lower Galilee. The territory of Dan was located between Benjamin and the Mediterranean Sea. Later some of the Danites migrated northward and settled near the northern part of Naphtali.*<sup>1</sup>

There is a slight change in Joshua's style in this chapter; which I didn't catch until I had almost finished with Zebulun's territory. He became a bit more economical. Rather than list the borders of a particular tribe and then list its cities, many of which were named when naming the borders of the land; he names the cities as he moves along the borders and does not name them a second time.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

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<sup>1</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 85.

## The Territory Assigned to Simeon

Joshua 15:26–32, 42 | Chron. 4:28–32

Literally:

Smother English rendering:

**And so went out the lot the second to Simeon to a tribe of sons of Simeon to their families and he [the lot] was their inheritance in a midst of an inheritance of sons of Judah.**

Joshua  
19:1

**The second lot went to Simeon, to the tribe of the sons of Simeon, to their families; the lot was in the midst of the inheritance of Judah.**

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of *yâtsâ'* (אָצַא') [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422.

We know that the second verb has the subject *lot*, as inheritance is in the feminine singular and the verb and *lot* are both in the masculine singular. Although the details are not given, apparently, after the survey of the land was done and Joshua had the information in his hands, it was decided to take some land from Judah and throw it back into the lots to be distributed. There is no indication whether this was the result of long and arduous debate or whether Joshua simply made an executive decision. The two tribes of Joshua and Simeon seemed to begin well. **Then Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted me, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I will in turn will go with you into the territory allotted you."** (Judges 1:3).

Zodhiates comments: *Simeon's allotment was in the extreme south in the territory which was already given to Judah, because Judah was not large enough to fill all of her land. This had consequences for later times. During the period of the divided monarchy, although the tribe of Simeon was politically a part of the ten tribes of Israel, the tribe's proximity to Judah led to its eventual assimilation into Judah.*<sup>2</sup>

Barnes' quote on Simeon, given back in Num. 33, bears repeating: *The tribe of Simeon, which would according to the order of birth come next [after Reuben], is not named [in Moses's blessing of the tribes in Duet. 33]. This omission is explained by reference to the words of Jacob concerning Simeon (Gen. xlix. 7). This tribe with Levi was to be "scattered in Israel." The fulfilment of this prediction was in the case of Levi so ordered as to carry with it honour and blessing; but no such reversal of punishment was granted to Simeon. Rather had this latter tribe added new sins to those which Jacob denounced. Accordingly, though very numerous at the Exodus, it had surprisingly diminished before the death of Moses (cp. Num. i:22, 23 with Num. xxxvi. 12–14); and eventually is found territory adequate for its wants within the limits of another tribe, Judah.*<sup>3</sup>

It is uncertain whether the land given to the tribe of Simeon was a contiguous piece of land or whether there were gaps where men from Judah lived. The first 13 or 14 cities are in the Negev; two of the next four towns are in the Negev and two are in the Shephelah. From the parallel passage in Judah, it sounds as though there is space between the cities in Simeon, but that cannot be determined for certain because we do not know where most of the towns are.

What Barnes gives us is the key to understanding the tribe of Simeon and the tribe of Levi. The Israelites themselves would be scattered throughout the world without a nation of their own (the nation Israel today is not the true nation Israel, despite the fact that there are a few Jews living there). When the church is raptured, many Jews will believe in Jesus Christ and become evangelists and many will not believe in Jesus Christ. Levi is scattered throughout Israel in order to provide spiritual blessing to all Israel. They represent those Israelites who are scattered throughout the nations and who will, someday, through their evangelism, become a blessing to the entire world. Simeon represents those Israelites who will not believe and who will be assimilated into the world and suffer the consequences of rejecting Jesus Christ as savior. Their being assimilated into the world does not mean that they are not seen as Jews during the tribulation; they are assimilated insofar as rejecting the gospel and they will die

<sup>2</sup> *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 621.

<sup>3</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 339.

with the unbelievers, burning in hell forever. This does not mean that Simeon will not have a part in the evangelism of the world during the tribulation. What is occurring here is representative of the future of all of Israel; not just the tribe of Simeon. Like the other tribes, 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon will come forth to evangelize the world during the tribulation (Rev. 7:7). **And I looked, and observed, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion; and with Him 144,000 having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads** (Rev. 14:1). This fulfills the prophecy of Jacob in Gen. 49:5–7: “Simeon and Levi are brothers; their swords are implements of violence. Let my soul not enter into their council. Let not my glory be united with their assembly, because in their anger the executed men and in their self-will, they hamstrung oxen. Cursed is their anger, for it is fierce and their wrath, for it is implacable. I will disperse them in Jacob, and I will scatter them in Israel.” The difference between the two tribes is that the cursing of Levi was turned into blessing.

<b>And so he had them in his inheritance: Beer-sheba, and Sheba, and Moladah;</b>	Joshua 19:2	<b>Therefore, the following cities were in Simeon’s inheritance: Beer-sheba, Sheba, Molada,</b>
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In general, the area of Judah which was given over to Simeon was the area in the Negev and along the southern border. Fourteen of the towns were in the Negev and four partially in the Negev and partly in the valley.<sup>4</sup> Beersheba was covered back in Gen. 21 or 26.

Now, the city of Sheba does not occur in Joshua 15. Therefore, there are three explanations for the occurrence of *Sheba* in this verse: (1) Sheba should be Shema, which we dealt with in Joshua 15:26 (along with Moladah). The NAB and NJB also translate it that way. This would be in agreement with the number of cities given in v. 6. (2) The REB suggests that there should not be a Shema or a Sheba—that the repetition of *sheba* is a scribal error. (3) The NKJV and NIV place *Sheba* in parentheses, making it explanatory—Beer-sheba was also known as Sheba. In partial support of explanation #3 is the fact that under the cities named in I Chron. 4:24–32, there is no mention of a *Sheba* or a *Shema*. Keil and Delitzsch write that off as a copyist’s error, saying that it should be there.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in Gen. 26:33, we read: **So he [Jacob] called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day.** And both the Massoretic text and the Septuagint list these three cities here. No commentator which I personally study considers Sheba to be a separate city.

<b>and Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Ezem, and Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah;</b>	Joshua 19:3–4	<b>Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem, Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah,</b>
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Hazar-shual was covered in Joshua 15:28, Balah (or, Baalah) and Ezem in 15:29, Eltolad and Hormah in v. 30. Bethuel is probably the uncorrupted version of Bethul (Joshua 19:4), Bethel (1Sam. 30:27); and Chesil (Joshua 15:30); and was therefore covered back in Joshua 15:30.

<b>and Ziklag, and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah, and Beth-lebaath, and Sharuhem, cities thirteen and their villages.</b>	Joshua 19:5–6	<b>Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah, Beth-lebaath, and Sharuhem; thirteen cities in all, along with their villages.</b>
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Ziklag was covered in Joshua 15:31; Lebaath in v. 32; Beth-marcaboth is probably Madmannah in v. 31; Sharuhem is likely Shilhim (v. 32); Hazar-susah is probably Sansannah in v. 31 as well. All of these cities were covered back in Joshua 15.

<b>En-rimmon, and Ether, and Ashan; cities four and their villages.</b>	Joshua 19:7	<b>En-rimmon, Ether and Ashan—four cities in all along with their villages.</b>
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<sup>4</sup> Barnes’ Notes, Volume 2, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 397.

<sup>5</sup> Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 139.

Keil and Delitzsch claim there are four cities here and they place Ain and Rimmon in the Negev and Ether and Ashan in the Shephelah. However, we have three cities here and not four. No doubt that text in this chapter, and throughout much of this portion of Joshua, was corrupted very early on—perhaps as early as the period of the Judges. However, the Greek text gives us four cities: **Eremmon, and Thalcha, and Jether, and Asan; four cities and their villages.** Other translations list the four cities *Ain, Rommon, Ether, and Ashan* (e.g., NRSV, REB, NJB and the NIV). There is no wâw conjunction between *Ain* and *Rimmon*. I don't know if you will recall, but back in Joshua 15:32, one of our problems was the city (or, cities) *Ain and Rimmon*. Almost everyone had a different opinion of this (these) city (cities). They were two cities, they were two cities which became one, they were one city with a wâw conjunction thrown between them either as a copyist's error or a copyist's *correction*, which wasn't. In comparing this reading to the one in Joshua 15:32, we can come to no solid conclusions.

The cities Ether and Ashan were both covered in Joshua 15:42 as cities in the Shephelah. This would imply that Rimmon (or, En-rimmon) of the Negev and Ether and Ashan were fairly close to one another. For ZPEB, this was a clear example of *transference*, where two cities were placed on the wrong list.<sup>6</sup> As for Thalcha—we have no clue.

**And all of the villages which [are] around the cities the these as far as Baalath-beer Ramah-negeb—this an inheritance of a sons of Simeon to their families.** Joshua 19:8

**Along with all of the villages surrounding these cities and going as far as Baalath-beer, the Ramah of the Negev—this was the inheritance of the sons of Simeon and all their families..**

*Baalath-beer* is only mentioned here and was perhaps the shrine of a goddess. It should probably be distinguished from Balah in v. 3. We have examined Ramah in the past, but not this *Ramah*. The Greek text differs here, one reading *Baalath-beer-ramôth*.<sup>7</sup> My Greek text reads *Balek going to Bameth*. Keil and Delitzsch render this *as far as Baalath-beer, the Ramah of the south [the Negev]*. Best guess is that this is Ramoth of the Negev (1Sam. 30:27).<sup>8</sup> It may also be known simply as Baal (1Chron. 4:33) and possibly as Bealoth (Joshua 15:24). This doesn't tell us much, as these cities are all to be found on *laundry lists*, and little else is mentioned. *Bealoth* (or, *Baalath*) means *mistresses, possessors*. *Baal* means *god, owner*.

**From a portion of sons of Judah an inheritance of sons of Simeon for was a portion of sons of Judah large from them and so inherited sons of Simeon in a midst of their inheritance.** Joshua 19:9

**The tribe of Simeon took its inheritance from the midst of Judah, as their inheritance was too much for them.**

Following the second occurrence of *Judah*, we have the adjective *rah<sup>b</sup>v* (רַב) [pronounced *rah<sup>b</sup>v*] means *many, much, great*. This is followed by the *mîn* preposition, which means *from, out from, away from*. I realize that does not make a great deal of sense; however, according to BDB, with the *min* preposition, it means *too much for* (Joshua 19:9 1Kings 19:7; Prov. 26:10 is hopelessly corrupt) or *greater than* (Deut. 7:1, 17 9:12 20:1). Strong's #7227 BDB #912.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

<sup>6</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 385.

<sup>7</sup> This is according to *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, pp. 32–33. This citation goes into much greater detail about where this city is and what is its correct name.

## **The Boundaries and Cities of Zebulun**

**And so came up the lot the third for sons of Zebulun for their families and so was a boundary of their inheritance as far as Sarid;**

Joshua  
19:10

**Then the third lot came up on behalf of the sons of Zebulun and for their families. The boundary of their inheritance extended as far as Sarid;**

Zebulun is south of Asher and Naphtali (the two northern most tribes west of the Jordan) and north of west Manasseh and Issachar. NIV: *To this tribe went a portion of lower Galilee west of the Sea of Galilee and in the vicinity of NT Nazareth.*<sup>9</sup> Zebulun is pretty much landlocked between the various tribes, north of the Valley of Jezreel and smack dab between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. This does not appear to match with the words of Jacob. “Zebulun shall dwell at the seashore and he will be a haven for ships, and his flank toward Sidon.” (Gen. 49:13). What we do have is the Kishom River goes along the southern boundary of Zebulun and head out toward the sea. I think what we have to do is take Jacob’s *prophecy* for what it was—the last few words of a man to his family. Jacob took what he knew about his sons and spoke his peace—whether it was inspired is debatable. So far in history, he appears to be clearly wrong about Zebulun and on several others (e.g., Asher and Naphtali), the prophecies make little or no sense. On the other hand, when we studied this verse originally, we were able to make some sense of it; albeit, just not the sense that we would commonly take from the words which were used.

I guess that I have two problems at this point. The first problem is let’s just say that what Jacob said was not inspired by God the Holy Spirit. There is nothing in the context of Gen. 49 which states that. He did seem to be right on target now and again, but his prophecies were sometimes vague and some bordered on meaningless. It was almost as though he were speaking to his sons based upon what he knew about them personally and then, for some of them, couldn’t think of much to say, so he just made up things which sounded good. We are talking about an old man here who was not a spiritual giant. My problem is this: God the Holy Spirit did record this in God’s Word and it is a lengthy piece of dialogue. When there are one or two things recorded which a person said, then all God’s Word guarantees is that this is what they really said—or this was the essence of what they said. God’s Word does not guarantee that there is any inspiration to be attached to everything which was said in the Bible. Satan told the woman in the garden, “You will not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4b). Satan was lying; the Bible merely records that this is what he said. On the other hand, when you have an extended piece of dialogue like this spoken from the ancestor of every Jew on this earth and spoken to the fathers of the tribes of every Jew on this earth, you would think that we could attach some meaning and even inspiration to what is being said, otherwise, why record it in God’s Word?

The second problem is if we take what was said in Gen. 49 as prophecy. It is difficult to take the common reading or the common understanding of some of what Jacob said and apply it to the appropriate tribe. In some cases, the common understanding is nebulous.

Sarid may be originally *Sadud* and to be found at Tell Shadûd on the northern edge of the Plain of Esdraelon about five miles southwest of Nazareth.<sup>10</sup> Barnes: *Sarid, not yet identified, was evidently a leading topographical point on the south frontier of Zebulun. The boundary passed westward until it touched the Kishon, near Tell Kaimon..., and thence turned northward, leaving Carmel, which belonged to Asher, on its west. The territory of Zebulun accordingly would not anywhere reach to the Mediterranean, though its eastern side abutted on the sea o Galilee, and gave the tribe those “outgoings” attributed to it in the Blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 18).*<sup>11</sup> Keil and Delitzsch are adamant that Sarid is the center of the southern boundary of Zebulun, as the directions go in a westerly direction in v. 11 and an easterly one in v. 12.<sup>12</sup> Keil and Delitzsch note Knobel’s opinion that this is not a town or a city, but that it means *incision, hole* and therefore actually refers to the southern opening of the deep and narrow wady which

<sup>9</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 313.

<sup>10</sup> Paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 282.

<sup>11</sup> *Barnes’ Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 398.

<sup>12</sup> Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 140. They add *in the same manner as in ch. 16:6*.

come down from the basin of Nazareth, and is about an hour to the south-east of Nazareth, between two steep mountains.<sup>13</sup>

**And so goes up their boundary to the west and Mareal and touches in Dabbesheth and touches unto the brook which [is] facing Jokneam.**

Joshua  
19:11

**Then their boundary went up westward to Mareal, touching Dabbesheth and then the brook which faces Jokneam.**

This verse begins with *and so goes up their boundary...*; and then we have the lâmed preposition, which means *to, for*; followed by the masculine singular of *yâm* (יָם) [pronounced *yawm*], which referred to the largest body of water in the vicinity. Therefore, it can refer to the sea or to a lake. However, it is also used for the direction in which the sea is from the speaker; and throughout much of the Bible, we can take that as *to the west*. Strong's #3220 BDB #410.

Mareal is mentioned only here; the KJV and ASV both have Maralah. Keil and Delitzsch give this an extensive discussion on p. 140 of vol. 2. Dabbesheth, which means *lump*, is also found only here. It is probably on a mountain or a hill, given the name. Perhaps they are not cities but landmarks or well-known areas (at that time). In this verse we also have *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *ahl*], which means, primarily, *upon, against, above*. When *ʿal* is used in connection with something geographical, particularly *water*; it has the connotation of *contiguity or proximity*; so here, it means *by*. Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752. This is followed by the masculine plural construct of *pânîym* (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which means *face*. This word is in the plural, referring to the several features of the face. With *ʿal*, it means *facing, in front of, before (as in preference to), in addition to, overlooking*. Strong's #6440 BDB #815. We covered Jokneam in Joshua 12:22.

**And he returns from Sarid eastward a rising of the sun to a boundary of Chisloth-tabor and he goes out to Daberath and he goes up [to] Japhia.**

Joshua  
19:12

**From Sarid it on the east it returns to the boundary of Chisloth-tabor, then to Daberath and then on up to Japhia.**

We have three verbs in this verse which are often translated the same or similarly, but they are all different. The first is the Qal perfect of *shûwâv* (שׁוּבָה) [pronounced *shoo<sup>v</sup>v*]; which means *to turn back, to return, to turn around*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. The second verb is the Qal perfect of *yâtsâ* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. The third is the Qal perfect of *ʿâlâh* (עָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means *to climb, to ascend, to rise*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748. These are all very simple, very common verbs, most of which we have seen a number of times.

Chisloth-tabor is found only here and MacMillan places it in Issachar. ZPEB and The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia both identify it with Chesulloth, which is in the list of cities belonging to Zebulun (Joshua 19:18). It has been guessed that this is the modern-day *lksâl*, which is two miles southeast of Nazareth. Another suggests that it is located more to the north.<sup>14</sup>

*Daberath* probably means *pasture land*. It is west of Mount Tabor and falls into Issachar's territory (I Chron. 6:72), although it is used in this verse to mark out the boundaries of Zebulun. Furthermore, this city was given over to the Levites (Joshua 21:28). It has been suggested that Barak defeated Sisera here (Judges 4); however, this city is not mentioned in that chapter. ZPEB suggests that it may be identified with modern Deburiyeh.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 140, citing *Seetzen*, ii. pp. 151–2 and *Robinson*, iii. p. 183. Keil and Delitzsch do offer a city cite as well on p. 140.

<sup>14</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 972.

<sup>15</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 1.

There are two people named Japhia in Scripture, neither of which would be associated with this city. It is found only here. ZPEB identifies it with Yafa, which is about 1.5 miles southwest of Nazareth. *Josephus fortified it in the Roman war.*<sup>16</sup> Keil and Delitzsch eliminate the present-day Hepha (or Haifa or Khaifa), which is on the Mediterranean near Carmel; as well as Jafa, *since the boundary was running eastwards, and cannot possibly have turned back again towards the west and run from Deburieh beyond Sarid. If the positions assigned to Chisloth-tabor and Dabrath are correct, Japhia must be sought for on the east of Deburieh.*<sup>17</sup>

**And from there he passes along eastward a sunrising Gath-hepher, Eth-kazin and he goes out Rimmon and he bends the Neah.**

Joshua  
19:13

**From there the boundary passes along to east toward the sunrising to Bath-hepher, to Eth-kazin; then it goes to Rimmon and bends around to Neah.**

*Gath*, by itself, means *winepress*; and there were at least four or five different Gath's known apart from the Bible. Although most of the time when we here of the town of Gath, we should think of one of the five cities of the Philistines, this may not always be the case. Gath-hepher is the hometown of Jonah (2Kings 14:25). ZPEB identifies it with Khirbet ez-Zurra, which is 3 miles northeast of Nazareth. Nearby is a village *Meshhed, which is the traditional site of Johnah's tomb*. There has been archeological evidence which indicates this place was occupied during the time of Jonah and Jerome visited this tomb during his lifetime.<sup>18</sup> Barnes tells us that the tomb can still be found *a short way from Nazareth, on the road to Tiberias.*<sup>19</sup>

Eth-kazin is mentioned only here. I don't know if it is just assumed that these cities, unless otherwise mentioned, simply belong to Zebulun. Herein, we are only looking at the borders of Zebulun, not its cities. However, that indicates a change in Joshua's style. He is being more economical. He is listing both the borders and the cities of Zebulun, which will be made clear in the next two verses.

We already realize that there are several Rimmon's in Scripture, both people and cities. This city was given over to the Levites, which is mentioned in I Chron. 6:77 and this city is probably identical to the city Demnah found in Joshua 21:35 (the confounding of the *d* and *r* in the Hebrew has been mentioned previously). It is identified in ZPEB as being six miles north-northeast of Nazareth at the modern Rummaneh.<sup>20</sup> Keil and Delitzsch concur with ZPEB.

*Neah* is found only here and the verb found with it is uncertain, indicating that the text is quite weak here.

**And turns around the boundary from north of Hannathon and were his ends [at] a Valley of Iphtahel.**

Joshua  
19:14

**The boundary turns around from the north at Hannathon, and it ends at the Valley of Iphtahel.**

Hannathon is found only here, but the Amarna Tablets, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C. mentions it twice; and Tiglath-pileser III (747–727 B.C.) mentions it once.<sup>21</sup> Iphtahel is a valley on the northern border of Zebulun and is mentioned only here and in v. 27 in the description of the border of Asher.

<sup>16</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 496. I don't know if this was a misstatement, as Josephus was an historian. I just flat out need to get a copy of the writings of Josephus. ZPEB references (Josephus; *Life*. 45; Josephus *The Jewish War*. II. xx. 6).

<sup>17</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 141.

<sup>18</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, pp. 658–660. The Amarna Tablets indicate, for instance, that there is more than one Gath in the ancient world.

<sup>19</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 398.

<sup>20</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 119.

<sup>21</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 31.



I have mentioned the Amarna Tablets before and it is about time that I gave you a better idea as to what they actually were. Therefore, let's examine the **Amarna Tablets—finished!**

**And Kattath, and Nahalal, and Shimron, and Idalah and Bethlehem, cities twelve and their villages.**

Joshua  
19:15

**Also, the cities of Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah and Bethlehem—twelve cities in all along with their villages.**

Kattath is mentioned only here and possibly equivalent to Kitron mentioned in Judges 1:30.<sup>22</sup> Nahalal is probably Nahalol found in Judges 1:30. These are both cities wherein dwelt Canaanites that the tribe of Zebulun was unable to dispossess so they enslaved them instead. I said *unable*, but we are not given the full story. Knowing that slave trade in our country was once a very active concern, it would not take much of an imagination to think that the Israelites might have enslaved the Canaanites for their labor rather than destroy them. This would make perhaps more economic sense.

Shimron was covered in Joshua 11:1. Idalah is mentioned only here and is guessed to be a mile southwest of Bethlehem.<sup>23</sup> It is *Iralah* in some manuscripts. *Bethlehem* means *house of food* (or, *bread*) and this Bethlehem of Zebulun is not the Bethlehem that you are thinking of. That is in Judah. The judge Ibzan of Judges 12:8–10 is said to be from Bethlehem and it is guessed that this is the Bethlehem referred to, although Josephus apparently disagrees. *This town is some seven miles northwest of Nazareth and some remains have been found indicating its importance as a town in earlier times.*<sup>24</sup>

Barnes: *Only five [cities] have been mentioned, and the names in the verses preceding are apparently not names of Zebulonite cities, but merely of points in or near the boundary line. It would therefore appear that seven names have disappeared from the text, and perhaps also the definition of the western frontier.*<sup>25</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch go into great detail here, supporting what Barnes wrote, and concluding that a verse has dropped out here, as in Joshua 15:59 and 21:36.<sup>26</sup>

**This an inheritance of sons of Zebulun to their families the cities the these and their villages.**

Joshua  
19:16

**This was the inheritance of the sons of Zebulun which was given to their families—these cities and their villages.**

I imagine after Judah and the sons of Joseph, Joshua's hand began to get tired from recording all of this. What is interesting is that some of the related material is found over in I Chronicles.

You may or may not notice that in later verses, the formula seems to be *This an inheritance of tribe of the sons of...*, however, here it is simply *This an inheritance of sons of Zebulun*. As a matter of fact, the Septuagint and the Vulgate read as do the other passages.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

<sup>22</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 778.

<sup>23</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 241.

<sup>24</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 539–540. ZPEB also references *Antiquities* by Josephus; (V. vii. 13). This would not be the Bethlehem where Rachel was buried (Gen. 35:19).

<sup>25</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 398.

<sup>26</sup> For their three reasons, see Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 142.

## The Boundaries and Cities of Issachar

**To Issachar went out the lot of the fourth to sons of Issachar to their families.** Joshua 19:17 **The fourth lot fell on Issachar; to the sons of Issachar and their families:**

This next portion of land was given by lot over to the tribe of Issachar, who was born to Jacob and Leah, the handmaiden of Rachel. Issachar was her firstborn and Rachel had Jacob father this child so that it would be as though it were her child, as Rachel had still not given birth yet. They were southwest of the Sea of Galilee with Beth Shan in the south, the Jezreel Valley on the west, and Mount Tabor at their northern border. In this passage, their border is not given, but only the cities named. Joshua perhaps is being a little less verbose, and depending upon the fact that he has already laid out the boundaries for the surrounding territories, so that there would be no reason to repeat those here.

**And so was their territory: Jezreel and the Chesulloth and Shunem and Hapharaim, and Shion, and Anaharath;** Joshua 19:18–19 **The following cities belonged to the territory of Issachar: Jezreel, Chesulloth, Shunem, Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath,**

The Jezreel Plain is the most fertile area of the territory of Issachar. We will cover the city of Jezreel in 1Sam. 29. Chesulloth we covered a few verses back. Anaharath is found only here, located in the Valley of Jezreel approximately two miles south of En-dor. Hapharim (or, Hapharaim) is another town mentioned only here; however, Shishak has this in his list of conquered cities in Palestine circa 918 B.C. One of its suggested locations is 10 miles northwest of Bethlehem.<sup>27</sup> Shion is found only here and is thought by ZPEB to be about fourteen miles southeast of Mount Tabor.<sup>28</sup> Anaharath occurs only here and is thought to be located where the modern-day en-Na'urab is today, in the Valley of Jezreel, two miles south of En-dor.<sup>29</sup>

Shunem is a town about which we know considerably more. *It was located three miles north of Jezreel near Mount Gilboa at the foot of Little Hermon.* It is at almost the most northern portion of Issachar at the border of Issachar and Zebulun. Thutmose III (1490–1436 B.C.) compiled a list of cities which he had conquered and had dominion over, and Shunem was included on that list. In fact, there were a number of areas throughout Palestine which were under Egyptian control at that time. The sudden weakening of Egypt and her leadership when Moses led his people out also allowed the Israelites to move into Palestine and take the land. Shunem also appears on the Amarna letters where it was said to have been overthrown by Lab'aya early on in the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The city was rebuilt shortly thereafter under Biridiya, also mentioned in the Amarna letters. Saul opposed the Philistines in this area. Saul had hoped to occupy Mount Gilboa and this battle led to the death of Saul on Mount Gilboa (1Sam. 28:4). Abishag was a nurse who cared for David prior to his death. She was called a Shunammite, which is the feminine form of Shunem. Adonijah tried to marry her in hopes of strengthening his claim to the rulership of Israel (2Kings 2:13–22). Finally, Elisha stayed at Shunem frequently at the home of a woman whose son Elisha predicted would be born. This was the famous young man whom Elisha also restored life to. Elisha went through Shunem on his way to Samaria. *The modern Solem probably marks the site of ancient Shunem.*<sup>30</sup> Today, Shunem is identified with Solam (or, Sulem), which is *a small and poor village on the slope of Little Hermon.*<sup>31</sup>

**and Rabbith, and Kishion, and Ebez, and Remeth, and En-gannim, and En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez;** Joshua 19:20–21 **Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, Remeth, En-gannim, En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez.**

<sup>27</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 410.

<sup>29</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 152.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 423.

<sup>31</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 398.

Rabbith is very likely Daberath, which is mentioned in Joshua 21:28 and I Chron. 6:72 as a Levitical town. LXX β lists it as Daberoth. Ebez is mentioned only here. Kishion is probably the same as Kedesh in I Chron. 6:72, making it a Levitical town (this was covered in the **Doctrine of the Three Kedesh's** back in Joshua 12:22). Remeth is thought to be the same as Ramoth, which is found in I Chron. 6:73 as a Levitical city and that it is identical to Jarmuth in Joshua 21:29. Keil and Delitzsch go into quite a bit of detail as to its location and why Knobel is probably wrong in his identification of Remeth.<sup>32</sup> En-gannim, which means *fountain of gardens*, is mentioned in Joshua 21:29 as a Levitical city. ZPEB points out that it is probably the same as Anem in I Chron. 6:73, which is attributed to a Scribal corruption of the name.<sup>33</sup> Barnes is more emphatic than ZPEB on this point, and mentions that it would be identified with the modern-day Jenin, found along the road between Jerusalem and Nazareth at the entrance of the Plain of Jezreel. En-haddah is found only here. Beth-pazzez is found only here and located somewhere near Mount Tabor.

**And touches the boundary in Tabor, and Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh and was ends of their boundary at the Jordan; cities, sixteen and their villages.** Joshua 19:22

**And touches the boundary of Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh; and the boundary ends at the Jordan. There were sixteen cities in all, along with their villages..**

Mount Tabor plays a moderately prominent role in Jewish history; at least more than most of these cities. The first problem is semi-obvious—Is this a city at the foot of Mount Tabor or is it just a boundary marker? ZPEB does not have a different listing for a city and the language used here seems to indicate that the border doesn't include a city, but touches this landmark. Keil and Delitzsch list it as a city and not as the mountain, and cite the fact that there are remains of old walls, ruins, arches and houses found on Mount Tabor; *and round the summit there are the foundations of a thick wall built of large and to a great extent fluted stones.*<sup>34</sup> If this is the case, then we have fifteen and not sixteen cities. Be that as it may, ZPEB places Mount Tabor in the Valley of Jezreel, 10 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee. It is thought by most to be a mountain on the border of Issachar and Zebulun, and therefore identified as Jebel et-Tur (*mount of height*). *Although it rises only 1,843 ft. above sea level, it is a prominent feature of the landscape. It is rather steep, somewhat symmetrical, and has a rounded top. From the summit one has a lovely view in all directions.* From it, one can see the city of Nazareth, Mount Carmel, the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River, and this mountain overlooks the Valley of Jezreel. It is possible that Moses referred to this mountain prophetically in Deut. 33:18–19, when he wrote: **And of Zebulun he said, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going forth, and Issachar, in your tents. They will call peoples to the mountain; there they will offer righteous sacrifices for they will draw out the abundance of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand."**

Mount Tabor will play a role in the drama of Deborah, Barak and Sisera, in Judges 4. We find it mentioned again in Judges 8:18. We find Mount Tabor mentioned in poetry (Psalm 89:12 Hos. 5:1). God speaks of Mount Tabor in Jer. 46:18: **"As I live," declares the King, Whose name is Jehovah of hosts, "Surely, one will come up like Tabor among the mountains or like Carmel by the sea."**

In between the testaments, ZPEB gives this history of Mount Tabor: *Atabyrium, the city which Antiochus the Great took in 218 B.C., was apparently on Mt. Tabor since Polybius describes it as a "conical hill" near Scythopolis (Bethshan, Hist. V, 70, 6). The Jews under Janaeus took the mountain in 105 B.C., but lost it to the Romans under Pompey in 70 B.C. (Josephus, Antiquities, XIII. xv. 4).*

What Mount Tabor is most famous for is being identified, but not positively, with the Mount of Transfiguration. *That tradition was well established by A.D. 326 when Helena, the mother of Constantine, built the first Christian shrine on its summit. The hill suffered the vicissitudes of war which destroyed older shrines and made way for new ones. The Crusaders maintained it after their arrival in the Holy Land until Saladin's victory at the Horns of Hattim in 1187.*

<sup>32</sup> See Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 143.

<sup>33</sup> To be fair, it is likely that the Scribes throughout the ages were dealing with very, very poor manuscripts, particularly from sections of God's Word as this, and probably did the best that they could. Information for this city was taken from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 307.

<sup>34</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 145.

The Muslims made a fort of the mountain twenty-five years later, but that was shortly destroyed and the summit was relatively empty until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Greek Orthodox built a monastery and the Franciscans a basilica of the transfiguration of the top. That basilica has three sections—one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.<sup>35</sup> All that being said, it is possible that the Tabor mentioned here is a city located somewhere near Mount Tabor and given over to the Levites (I Chron. 6:77).

Shahazumah is on the northern boundary of Issachar and it might be in the dual, and therefore mean *two high places, two hills* or *double hill*. Modern El Kerm is suggested as an identification because of its suitable location on the divide between the watersheds of Issachar and Naphtali.<sup>36</sup> Beth-shemesh is the name of at least three cities found in Naphtali (Joshua 19:38), Judah (Joshua 15:10) and here in Issachar (and mentioned only in this verse). My desire was to place Beth-shemesh as a border town between Issachar and Naphtali, which almost works, except that it appears that the Beth-shemesh in Naphtali about 25 miles northwest of the Beth-shemesh of Issachar.<sup>37</sup> Barnes suggests that Beth-shemesh here should be Bessum, but does not indicate why.

**This [is] an inheritance of a tribe of sons of Issachar to their families, the cities and their villages.**

Joshua  
19:23

**The preceding was the inheritance give to the tribe of Issachar; a list of its cities and their villages.**

And this ends the territory allotted to the third remaining tribe in this chapter.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

## The Boundaries and Cities of Asher

**And so came out the lot the fifth to sons of Asher to their families. And so was their territory Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph,**

Joshua  
19:24–25

**Then the fifth lot was cast on behalf of the tribe of Asher and its families. Included in their territory was Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph,**

Asher is an almost parallelogram-shaped country bordered by the Mediterranean Sea on the west, going as far north as Sidon of Phœnicia, the Litani River on the north, Naphtali on the west, with Zebulun and West Manasseh as its southwest and south borders, respectively. Mount Carmel also marks its southern border.

The word which I translated *territory* here is the same word found back in v. 22 translated *boundary*. Helkath is mentioned here and in Joshua 21:31 as a city given to the Levites (it is spelled *Hukok* in I Chron. 6:75, which Keil and Delitzsch attribute to a copyist's error<sup>38</sup>). ZPEB mentions that it is found in secular writings which date to the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C., but did not specify what writings. ZPEB places this city eight miles west of the south end of Galilee. Barnes identifies it with the modern-day Yerba, seven or eight miles northwest of Acre. Hali is found only here. Beten is found only here and answers to the name of Bethseten in Eusebius' *Onomasticon*.<sup>39</sup> Achshaph was mentioned back in Joshua 11:1 and 12:20.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 4, p. 302.

<sup>36</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 369.

<sup>37</sup> See map #71 and #72 in *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; pp. 61–62. We will go into details in distinguishing them in Joshua 19:38.

<sup>38</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 526.

**and Allammelech, and Amad, and Mishal; and he touches Carmel the west and to Shihor-libnath;**

Joshua  
19:26

**Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal; and the border touches Carmel on the west, going to Shihor-libnath.**

Allammelech and Amad are mentioned only here. About Mishal, little is known, other than it was given over to the Gershonite Levites (Joshua 21:30 | Chron. 6:74). Mount Carmel belongs to Asher in some maps and to Manasseh in others. I think the indication here is that Asher is bordered by Mount Carmel. Mount Carmel will be covered in 1Kings 18:30. In the Hebrew Bible, Shihor and Libnath are one city, unknown apart from this passage. Shihor-libnath means *black white* and is mentioned only here. Libnath, as a separate city, is unknown apart from this passage. It is suggested by Barnes that this is a river, probably the Blue River (Nahr Zerka), which reaches the sea eight miles south of Dor and whose name also means *black white*.

**And he turns a rising of the sun; Beth-dagon and he touches Zebulun and a Valley of Iphtahel northward; Beth-emek and Neiel. And it goes out to Cabul from northward.**

Joshua  
19:27

**And the boundary of Asher turns toward the east, to Beth-dagon; then it borders Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtahel in the north; Beth-emek and Neiel both belong to Asher. Then the border goes to Cabul toward the north.**

In the Hebrew, there is no neuter gender, so the *he* in this verse, as throughout most of this chapter, refers to the *border*. *Beth-dagon* means *shrine of [the god] Dagon or house of corn*. There are several Beth-dagon's to be found in and out of Scripture and they are covered in Joshua 15:41. The Valley of Iphtahel means *El opens* and was also mentioned in Joshua 19:14. Beth-emek, meaning, possibly, *house of the low ground*, is found only here. Neiel, which is on the border between Zebulun and Asher, is found only here and, according to ZPEB, possibly identified with the modern Khirbet Ya'nin in the Plain of Acco.

There are two Cabul's—one here and one to be found in north Galilee (see 1Kings 9:13). Cabul of Asher is to be found on its eastern border and is guessed to be about nine miles east-southeast of Acre; however, it is not to be identified with Kabura on the Ramses III lists, as Kabura is further south.<sup>40</sup> Apparently, this Cabul has the same name today and it is four to five miles west of Jotapata and about ten miles southeast of Acre.

**And Ebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, as far as Sidon a great.**

Joshua  
19:28

**And Ebron, Rehob, Hammon and Kanah, as far as Sidon the great.**

Vv. 28–30 deal with the cities in northern Asher. Ebron is found only here, but was probably the result of a Scribal error and should be Abdon, which is a city in Asher given over to the Levites (Joshua 21:30 | Chron. 6:74). Some codices actually have *Abdon* instead. ZPEB identifies this city with the modern Khirbet 'Abdeh, which is ten miles north-northeast of Acre.<sup>41</sup>

There are several Rehob's, including two in Asher (see also Joshua 19:30). Although the spelling is the same in the Hebrew, the Septuagint distinguishes between them. *Rehob* means *broad open place, plaza, market*. One of the Rehob's was given over to the Gershonite Levites (Joshua 21:31 | Chron. 6:75). We will see in Judges 1:31 that the Asherites could not drive out the Canaanites from one of the Rehob's. Ramses II from Amara, mentioned a city Rehob next to Dor, which would mean that one of these Rehob's would be found in the southern plain of Acco.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, pp. 679–680.

<sup>41</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 7 and Vol. 2, p. 183.

<sup>42</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 57.

Kanah of Asher is the city in the furthest north of Asher. There can still be found today a village of Qanah but six miles southeast of Tyre.<sup>43</sup> There are two Hammon's, although not both in Asher. This one is south of Tyre and on the western border of Asher. It is found only here.<sup>44</sup>

We mentioned Sidon in Joshua 11:8, but will cover it in greater detail in Acts 27:3.

**And turns the boundary the Ramah and as far as a city fortified of Tyre; and turns the boundary Hosah and are his ends the sea from Mahalab Achzib.**

Joshua  
19:29

**Then the boundary turned toward Ramah and went as far as the fortified city of Tyre, turning back to Hosah. The end of the boundary is at the Mediterranean Sea, from Mahalab, Achzib,**

I thought that perhaps it was just me, but the literal translation of the Hebrew in describing Asher's border seems stilted and confusing (as does much of the description in this chapter). In the discussion of Ramah of Asher, ZPEB writes: *The boundary description of the Asher tribe, the exact line of which is difficult to follow, apparently places the town of Ramah...somewhere between Great Sidon and "the fortified city of Tyre."* ZPEB claims that this Ramah should be sought northwest of the modern Tyre, claiming that its generally accepted site, er-Râmiyeh, is too far south.<sup>45</sup> According to Barnes, the site of ancient Ramah is marked by the city of the same (or, similar) name today and that it is twelve miles southeast of Tyre. Tyre is the famous Phœnician city that we will cover in Ezek. 26. The city Hosah is mentioned only here and, as best as we can determine, was south of Tyre.

Mahalab is probably identical with Ahlab mentioned in Judges 1:31 as another place that was not cleared of Canaanites. ZPEB places this where the city Khirbet el-Mahalib is today. There are two Achzib's—one in Judah and one in Asher. I is another place from whence the Canaanites were not driven. *Eusebius places Achzib on the road from Ptolemais to Tyre. In NT times it was called Ecdippa, now identified with modern ez-Zib, eleven miles from Acco.*<sup>46</sup>

I have noticed that there are a lot of cities found in both Asher and Judah with the same names. Given the corruption which is obviously inherent in this text, I wonder if, when these names had become unreadable, or when there were not enough cities to meet the number 22 found in v. 30 (due to the manuscript being unreadable or in pieces); I wonder if some well-meaning Scribe did not just borrow names from Judah to give us the number of names that we need.

**And Ummah, and Aphek, and Rehob; cities, twenty-two and their villages.**

Joshua  
19:30

**Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob; twenty-two cities in all along with their villages.**

The city of Ummah is found only here. Several Greek manuscripts list the city Acco (later called Ptolemais) here instead, which would make better sense. We will cover Acco in Judges 1:31. We covered the various Aphek's back in Joshua 12:18 in an extended doctrine. We covered Rehob a couple verses back.

It is very likely that over time, many of these cities dropped out of the text, as the number of cities does not match with the number of cities listed. Furthermore, the borders given do not always include cities which belong to Asher but are on the border; or they are mountains, rivers or territories and not cities at all.

<sup>43</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 778.

<sup>44</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 29.

<sup>46</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 38.

**This an inheritance of a tribe of sons of Asher to their families the cities the these and their villages.**

Joshua  
19:31

**This was the inheritance given to the sons of Asher and to their families—these cities and their villages.**

This closes out the cities given over to Asher, which is probably one of the most corrupt portions of the Old Testament.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

## The Boundaries and Cities of Naphtali

**To sons of Naphtali came out the lot the sixth for sons of Naphtali and their families:**

Joshua  
19:32

**The sixth lot fell to the sons of Naphtali and of their families:**

Naphtali was also some what of a parallelogram in its borders, stretching between Asher and east Manasseh, including the mountains which border Asher on the west. It was bordered above by the mountains of Lebanon and below by Zebulun and Issachar. Most of Naphtali is north of the Sea of Galilee, the sea being its southernmost point. The modern-day valley of Huleh belongs to Naphtali. The tribe of Dan will occupy a spot northeast of Naphtali.

**and so was their boundary from Heleph from an oak in Zaananim and Adami-nekeb (or, Adami of the pass) and Jabneel as far as Lakkum and so was their ends the Jordan.**

Joshua  
19:33

**Their boundary began at Heleph, from the oak forest in Zaananim and this border included Adami-nekeb, Jabneel as far as Lakkum and ended at the Jordan River.**

Helph and Lakkum are found only here. Some Bible's have *from Allon in Zaananim* (e.g., the KJV and Young), but it appears as though it should read *from the oak in Zaananim* (NKJV, Rotherham, NASB). Barnes suggests that this should read *the oak forest in Zaananim*. We have often seen a word used in the singular in the Hebrew to stand for many of the same (e.g., the Canaanite was in the land). There is also reason to believe that this is a hyphenated name, like Elon-zaananim or Elon-bezaananim. This city is found only twice in Scripture—here and in Judges 4:11 with that sordid Deborah, Balak and Sisera story. ZPEB devotes a rather lengthy discussion as to its location.<sup>47</sup>

*Adami-nekeb* means either *red lands of the pass, fortress of the pass or ground of the pass*. Barnes says that its name is derived from the color of the soil in that area. This is given as two names in the KJV and in the Septuagint, although there is no wâw conjunction between them in the Hebrew (keep in mind that we are dealing with a portion of Scripture which is very corrupt, so that doesn't mean anything). ZPEB identifies this with the Bronze age site Khirbet Damiyeh, which is *five miles southwest of Tiberias on the west side of the Sea of Galilee controlling a pass on a caravan rout from the area east of Galilee to the plain of Acco. This plain, however, appears to be several miles from the Naphtalie-Zebulun border. None of the names in the list of fortified Naphtali cities (19:35–38) are identified with the border cities in vv. 33, 34 unless Adami and Adamah are the same.*<sup>48</sup>

Jabneel is another city whose name is found in Joshua 15 (v. 11), which has somewhat of a history. The Jabneel that we find here is found only here. It means *God builds* and I am beginning to think more and more that the names of the cities in Joshua 15 were used here when the manuscript was unreadable.

<sup>47</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 1025.

<sup>48</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 58.

**And turns the boundary westward Aznoth-tabor and he goes from there [to] Hukkok and he touches in Zebulun from a south and in Asher, touching from westward and in Judah<sup>49</sup> the Jordan a rising of the sun.**

Joshua  
19:34

**The the boundary turns toward the west to Aznoth-tabor, going down from there to Hukkok. It is bordered by Zebulun in the south and Asher in the west and on the east by the Jordan River at the lake.**

This passage makes a little sense, as the border of Naphtali to the west is Asher, and to the south is Zebulun; however, also to the south it borders Issachar and then a piece of the Jordan. It is pretty far removed from Judah; in fact, between them is west Manasseh, Ephraim and Benjamin. So I don't know what is up with that. Barnes explains it in this way: [*Re: Judah upon Jordan*] i.e. to the "Havoth-jair" (Num. xxxii. 41), which were on the opposite side of Jordan. Jair, from whom these towns or villages were named, traced his ancestry in the male line through Hezron to Judah (Num. xxvii. 1); and it is likely that he was assisted by large numbers of his kinsmen of that tribe in his rapid conquest of Bashan. Hence the Havoth-jair were, in all likelihood, largely colonized by Judahites, especially perhaps that portion of them nearest the Jordan. Thus that part of the river and its valley adjacent to these settlements was spoken of as "Judah upon Jordan," or more literally "Judah of the Jordan" (cp. Num. xxii. 1).<sup>50</sup> I give the entire quote because after reading it and looking up the passages, I am still in the dark. Barnes' contention is that Judah helped in the conquest of the area and a small number of them moved into the area right where the Jordan meets the Sea of Kinnereth and are immediately east of there. The passages do not allude to such an occurrence and nothing can be found to substantiate that. The NIV solves this problem by simply leaving out the name *Judah* (ditto REB, NAB, NJB). It is not found in the Greek Bible and I do not find Barnes' explanation compelling enough to leave it in.

Aznoth-tabor is found only here. It means *ears of Tabor* and probably in the neighborhood of Mount Tabor. Hukkok is called Hukok in I Chron. 6:75 and is a city given over to the Gershurite Levites. Barnes suggests that Hukkok is on the western slope of Tabor and Aznoth-tabor is on the eastern.

**And cities of fortification, the Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath and Chinnereth;**

Joshua  
19:35

**And the fortified cities, Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth,**

The city of Ziddim is found only here. The Talmud calls this city Caphar Hittai, which would be the modern Hattin, which is five miles northwest of Tiberias.<sup>51</sup> Zer is found only here. In this verse, we have the other *Hammoth* (see Joshua 19:28), which was given over to the Gershonite Levites (I Chron. 6:76—where it is called *Hammon*) and is probably identical with Hammoth-dor found in Joshua 21:32. ZPEB suggests that it is identical to the Emmaus referred to by Josephus in Josephus' *Antiquities*; XVIII. ii. 3: and in *War*; IV. i. 3.<sup>52</sup> This is not the same as the city named Hamath in the northeast mentioned in Num. 13:21 and Joshua 13:5. *Hammoth* comes from the root *to be warm* and was probably known for its hot springs (I don't think that we have any evidence of that today, however). Barnes identifies it with the modern-day ammaus, which is near Tiberias.

According to the tradition of the Rabbins, Rakkath was later rebuilt by Herod and named Tiberias. It means *bank-shore*, and Barnes is happy with that identification. However, modern scholarship identifies it with Khirbet el-Quneitireh, which is near the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, a mile and a half north of Tiberias.<sup>53</sup>

As most of us have gotten a handle on it—The Sea of Chinnereth in the Old Testament is the New Testament Sea of Galilee. We are assuming that this verse refers to a city by the same name. A hill with the name Tel 'Oreimeh

<sup>49</sup> *Judah* is found in the Hebrew text, but not the Greek.

<sup>50</sup> Barnes' *Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 399.

<sup>51</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 1059.

<sup>52</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 23.

<sup>53</sup> Paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 28.



is on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee, overlooking the fertile plain. *Archeological evidences show it to have been occupied at the time of Joshua.*<sup>54</sup>

**and Adamah, and the Ramah, and Hazor, and Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor;** Joshua **Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor,**  
19:36–37

Adamah, meaning *ground* or *red ground*, is found only here. Ramah of Naphtali is found only here. Since it means *height*, it is the name of several cities in Palestine, although this one is not alluded to again. However, ZPEB devotes one full column to the identification of this particular Ramah and to the extra -Biblical references to it. However, since we find this one only here, I will not pursue this any further.<sup>55</sup> We covered Hazor of Naphtali (which means *enclosure*, a common name for a city), when Joshua invaded the northern cities of Palestine in Joshua 11:1.

Kadesh (which means *sanctuary*) is also the name of several cities in Palestine, and ZPEB calls this the most prominent of the various Kedesh's found in Scripture (obviously, not including Kedesh-barnea on this list). Since this was often referred to as Kedesh of Naphtali and Kedesh in Galilee, there would obviously be several cities with the same name in Palestine. It is a refuge city, so named in Joshua 20:7; and a city given over to the Gershonite Levites (Joshua 21:32 | Chron. 6:76). Barak, of Judges 4, lived in this particular Kedesh and he assembled troops from both Naphtali and Zebulun in this city (Judges 4:10). The king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser, captured this city along with many others in the region of Naphtali, and carried away the surviving Israelites as captives (2Kings 15:29), circa 733 B.C., during the reign of Pekah. It is likely that the small town of Kades and the nearby mount Tell Kades, preserve the name of Kedesh of Naphtali.<sup>56</sup>

Edrei of Naphtali is mentioned only here. ZPEB identifies it with city #91 on the campaign list of Thutmose III at Karnak.<sup>57</sup> En-hazor, which means *settlement spring*, is one of at least five different Hazor's found in the Bible. This particular one is mentioned but once.

**and Yiron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh; cities—nineteen and their villages. This an inheritance of a tribe of sons of Naphtali to their families; the cities and their villages.**

Joshua  
19:38–39

**Yiron, Megdal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh; nineteen cities in all, along with their villages. That was a listing of the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Naphtali, the cities and their villages which belonged to their families.**

Yiron is found only here, and ZPEB suggests that it is the modern Yarun in northern Galilee.<sup>58</sup> There was a Migdal-gad mentioned in Joshua 15, with the other cities of Judah. Migdal-el and Horem occur only here. However, it is possible that Migdal-el can be identified with the New Testament city Magdala (or, Magadan), mentioned in Matt. 15:39 (**And dismissing the multitudes, He got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan**). *[It] is now the miserable village of El Mejdal.*<sup>59</sup>

Beth-anath means *house of [the goddess] Anath*. This is one of the cities occupied by Canaanites who were not destroyed as God had commanded Israel, but were enslaved instead (Judges 1:33). The same was true of the occupants of Beth-shemesh (which means, *temple of the sun [-god]*). ZPEB goes into greater detail as to

<sup>54</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 799.

<sup>55</sup> For further information, see *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 29.

<sup>56</sup> As always, I am indebted to the research of ZPEB; *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 779.

<sup>57</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, pp. 205–206, which references ANET, 242; Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible* [1967], p. 150.

<sup>58</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 1022.

<sup>59</sup> *Barnes' Notes, Volume 2*, reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 400.

identifying this Beth-shemesh with its exact location in Naphtali.<sup>60</sup> There is another Beth-shemesh in Judah/Dan, called Ir Shemesh in Joshua 15:10–19:41.

Again, we have the problem of the number of towns not matching the number which is given. The border towns mentioned in v. 33 would not be a part of the sixteen cities numbered here. There is at least one city missing—Karthan (or, Kirjathaim), which Naphtali gave up to the Levites in Joshua 21:32–I Chron. 6:61. This alone suggests that our list is an imperfect one.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

## The Cities of Dan

<p><b>To a tribe of sons of Dan, to their families, came out the lot, the seventh; and so was a boundary of their inheritance: Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh;</b></p>	<p>Joshua 19:40–41</p>	<p><b>the seventh lot fell to the tribe of Dan and his families; the territory of Dan included the following cities in its inheritance: Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir-shemesh,</b></p>
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The tribe of Dan is bordered on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Below Dan is Judah, and it appears as though some of the cities of Judah were given over to Dan (recall that God told Moses that after casting the lots, there would need to be some adjustments made according to the population of the individual tribes. Benjamin bordered the eastern foot of Dan. Ephraim is both east and north of Dan; and west Manasseh is north of Dan. Ephraim apparently also gave up some towns to Dan. The NIV Study Bible reads: *[Dan is] an elbow of land squeezed between Ephraim and Judah and west of Benjamin. The port of Joppa marked the northwestern corner of Dan.*<sup>61</sup> *It is situated for the most part in the lowland (Shephelah), including, however, the hill country between the Mediterranean and the mountains, and extended over a portion of the plain of Sharon, so that it belonged to one of the most fruitful portions of Palestine.*<sup>62</sup> The boundaries have already been given with the other tribes. Once we get to the area of Dan, we hardly have any pretense of giving out an exact boundary, but Joshua lists only the cities which belong to them.

We will cover Zorah in Judges 13; Eshtaol in Judges 18. Ir-shemesh is mentioned only here, but it is suggested to be identical with the Beth-shemesh mentioned in Joshua 15:10; however, this would not be the Beth-shemesh which properly belongs to Naphtali (Joshua 19:38–Judges 1:33), as Ir-shemesh belongs to Dan (our passage). Some codices have *En-shemesh*, which means *fountain of the sun* rather than *city of the sun*. Some also suggest that Ir-shemesh is equivalent to Har-heres (or *Mount Heres*), because of the order that it is found here and in Judges 1:35. Furthermore, *heres* and *shemesh* both mean *sun* in the Hebrew. We will discuss this in more detail when we study the **City of Beth-shemesh in Judah** in 1Sam. 6:9.

<p><b>Shaalabbin, and Aijalon, and Ithlah, and Elon, and Timnah, and Ekron;</b></p>	<p>Joshua 19:42–43</p>	<p><b>Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron,</b></p>
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Shaalabbin is probably equivalent to Shaalbim, which is found in Judges 1:35. The Amorites living there were not destroyed, but became forced labor, interestingly enough, not by Dan, but by the house of Joseph (which bordered Dan). This city is probably located fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, three miles northwest of Aijalon and eight miles north of Beth-shemesh. We find this city mentioned elsewhere, but in rather uninteresting passages such as references to Eliahba the Shaalbonite (2Sam. 23:52–I Chron. 11:33). It was a city that a deputy of King Solomon's lived in (1Sam. 4:1–9).

<sup>60</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 545.

<sup>61</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 314.

<sup>62</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 150.

Aijalon, or Ajalon, which means *place of deer*, is the city which overlooks the Valley of Aijalon, which is between Jericho and the Mediterranean Sea. Barnes describes it: *The modern Yalo. It lies upon the side of a hill to the south of a fine valley which opens from between the two Bethhorons right down to the western plain of the Philistines, exactly on the route which the Philistines, when expelled from the high country about Michmash and Bethel, would take to regain their own country. Aijalon would be 15 or 20 miles from Michmash.*<sup>63</sup> Remains have been discovered at the site Tell el-Qoa'a in that area which date back to 2000 B.C. In the Amarna letters of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C., this city is called Aialuna. You will recall when the five kings banded together and attacked Gibeon, the allies of Israel, Joshua was bound by his word to protect them. When pursuing these five kings, Joshua called out, **in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."** (Joshua 10:12b).

This city was given over to the Levites, but the Canaanites living within were never completely eradicated. Aijalon is not mentioned again until I Sam 14, where Saul and Israel have destroying the Philistines of that area—it is said **that they struck them down from Michmash to Aijalon** (1Sam. 14:31a). Ephraim was within spitting distance of this town, and it is said that Ephraim gave this town over to the Levites in 1Chron. 6:69. This is a bit of a problem. So we need to deal with that. In 1Chron. 6, the tribe of Dan is never mentioned, but two cities of Dan are mentioned as being given from Ephraim to the Levites. My educated guess is that a verse was eliminated which had the name of Dan in it from between 1Chron. 6:68 and v. 69.

During the separation of Judah and Israel, the cities which were between occasionally changed hands. Aijalon originally fell to Judah, and Rehoboam fortified it to help protect both Judah and Jerusalem (2Chron. 11:10). During the reign of Ahaz, the Philistines raided these cities in the Shephelah and occupied Aijalon (2Chron. 28:18).<sup>64</sup>

Itlah found only here. Elon is the name of several different people in the Bible. We find in the Septuagint the city of Elon mentioned in Judges 12:12 instead of Aijalon, primarily because the names are identical apart from the vowels. Other than that, this city is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture (2Kings 4:9 might be an exception).

There were two Timnah's in the land of Judah, and this is apparently the one found in Joshua 15:10, which was covered at that time and herein given over to Dan. It is also known as Timnath. We covered Ekron in reasonable detail back in Joshua 13:3a. It was a city of Judah given over to the tribe of Dan.

**and Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath, and Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon, and Me-jarkon, and the Rakkon with the territory opposite Joppa.** Joshua 19:44–46

**Elteke h, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon, Me-jarkon, and Rakkon along with its territory opposite Joppa.**

Eltekeh (or Elteke) was a city of Dan later assigned to the Kohathite Levites (Joshua 21:23). When Sennacherib was traveling to Timnah and Ekron, he stopped long enough in 701 B.C. to destroy Eltekeh. It will be in this area that the great drama between Sennacherib, King Hezekiah, Isaiah and Egypt will unfold (2Kings 18–19). *A natural place for these allies [the Jews, the Ekronites, and the Egyptians] to meet and take their stand would have been on the high road between Ekron and Jerusalem.*<sup>65</sup> We will cover this city in greater detail in 1Chron. 6:67–70.

In the previous verse, there was the city Aijalon which belongs to the Danites, is given over to the Levites from Dan; and then appears to be given over to the Levites by Ephraim. The same story goes for Gibbethon (Joshua 19:45 21:23 1Chron. 6:69), as well as the same explanation. A story of intrigue between Zimri, Omri, Nadab, a son of Jeroboam, Baasha and Baasha's son, Elah, involving the rulership over the Northern Kingdom takes place here (1Kings 15:27 16:15–20). You can either read it for yourself, wait to we get there, or so the summary in ZPEB.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Barnes' Notes; *1 Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 35.

<sup>64</sup> This material was primarily paraphrased or taken from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 92.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 296.

<sup>66</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 711.

*Tje cotu (modern Tell Melat) was an important fortress on the eastern branch of the Way of the Sea, the route used by Thutmose III in his Syrian campaigns, and by Esarhaddon in his attack on Egypt.*<sup>67</sup> We will cover this city in greater detail in 1Chron. 6:67–70.

Jehud is called Azor in the Septuagint, which ZPEB attributes to a variant reading. *It is identified with modern el-Yahudiyeh, eight miles southeast of Jaffa.*<sup>68</sup> Bene-barak means *sons of Barak* or *lightning* (perhaps, *sons of blessing?*) And is one of the cities which was conquered by Sennacherib. ZPEB identifies it with the modern el-Kheiriyeh, which is in the northwest suburbs of Tel Aviv.<sup>69</sup>

Gath-rimmon means *wine-press of Rimmon* and is mentioned here, Joshua 21:24 and 1Chron. 6:69. Although it is found in Joshua 24:25, that is probably a typo. ZPEB suggests that it might be 4½ miles northeast of Joppa. Me-jarkon means *waters of the Jarkon* or *pale* or *green waters*. ZPEB suggests that the name, green waters, *may reflect the considerable quantity of organic soil which the river carries at certain times and which gives it its greenish appearance.*<sup>70</sup>

ZPEB places Rakkon about fifteen miles north of Joppa and near the Mediterranean Sea, although this seems rather far. Conder (whoever he is) suggests a tell six miles north of Joppa. The Septuagint omits this city altogether, and some match this with Me-jarkon for that reason, although they are quite different no matter how you slice it. ZPEB suggests that the copyist for the Septuagint made an error of homoeoteleuton, which means that his eye skipped from one passage to a very similar passage a short ways down and picked up his copying there.<sup>71</sup>

There is a Baalah in Judah on the northern border (Joshua 15:11, 29) which may be the same as Baalath here. In any case, these two cities would be very near to each other. This would be in keeping with the re-distribution of the cities according to population. Once the remainder of the land was mapped out and brought to Joshua, there was some re-figuring which had to take place. If that is not the case, then this is the only place where this city is mentioned. Now, there is a Baalah in southern Judah, which might be Balah or even Bealoth, and that was given over to Simeon (Joshua 19:3). ZPEB lists six different Baalah's, so to speak, which are likely reducible to three. Apart from naming the various cities as boundaries (Joshua 15:9–11, 29 19:3, 45 1Chron. 4:33 13:6), we don't hear anything else about them. The only similar city that we hear anything about is a city for storage built by Solomon west of Gezer (1Kings 9:18 2Chron. 8:6). And it is very likely that this was not built from scratch but rebuilt by Solomon, meaning that it could be the city on the border of Judah and Dan. For more discussion of this city, see Joshua 9:17 15:9, 60.

We will cover Joppa when we get to the book of Jonah.

**and so went out a border of sons of Dan from them. And so went up sons of Dan and so they fought against Leshem and so they captured her and so struck her by a mouth of a sword. And so they possessed and so they settled in her and so they called to Leshem Dan as a name of Dan, their ancestor.**

Joshua  
19:47

**And the territory of the sons of Dan was extended because the sons of Dan went up and fought with Leshem and captured it. Then they struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and settled in it; and they called Leshem Dan after the name of Dan their father.**

Out of nowhere, we suddenly have a little narrative, so this calls for examination of a few other translations:

<sup>67</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 711.

<sup>68</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 431.

<sup>69</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 517.

<sup>70</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 4, p. 177.

<sup>71</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 28.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And when the boundary of the sons of Dan. went out beyond these then went up the sons of Dan and fought against Leshem and captured it and smote it with the edge of the sword and took possession thereof, and dwelt therein, and they called Leshem—Dan, after the name of Dan their father.
NASB	And the territory of the sons of Dan proceeded beyond them; for the sons of Dan went up and fought with Leshem and captured it. Then they struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and settled in it; and they called Leshem Dan after the name of Dan their father.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And the border of the sons of Dan goeth out from them, and the sons of Dan go up and fight with Leshem, and capture it, and smite it by the mouth of the sword, and possess it, and dwell in it, and call Leshem, Dan, according to the name of Dan their father.

Leshem is a form of Laish, and is found only here. This verse appears to be an addition made sometime later, as what appears to be described here is Judges 18. My guess is that this addition was made by Joshua or a later editor<sup>72</sup> and for very good reason. The tribe of Dan was given some coastal area to the direct south of Ephraim. However, Dan apparently was never able to take all of this area, being forced to remain in the hill country by the Amorites (Judges 1:34). So, what they did do is go far north and take Laish, which was nestled between Naphtali and east Manasseh, north of the Sea of Galilee. Therefore, they had a tract of land in the far north as well as the coastal region (which would have been primarily settled by the very rugged Philistines). Because Dan settled that far north and renamed that area, we have the phrase *from Dan to Beersheba*, which designates the most southern and northern parts of Israel, and therefore takes in all of Israel (Judges 20:1). If Joshua added this portion of Scripture or inserted it when coming back years later to write his book, that would place Judges 18 completely out of chronological sequence (to which all Biblical authorities that I am aware of would agree). This would also mean that this incident took place during the lifetime of Joshua.

The other possibility is that this passage is a gloss—added later by an unknown hand. It is a passage like this where you can see the harm caused by the innocent adding of a little information to Scripture and presenting it as Scripture. It theoretically calls into question the authorship and therefore the veracity of this entire book. This is why the adding to and taking from Scripture was forbidden in the strongest terms: “You will not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you.” (Deut. 4:2). I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away from him his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book (Rev. 21:18–19).

What I personally believe to be the case is that Joshua wrote Joshua 1–12, and perhaps a little more (again, my thinking is that Joshua wrote one or two chapters more, but that he did not personally write down all of Joshua 13–22). When the land was distributed by lot, it is obvious that some official would be recording this information. I would vote for Phinehas ben Eleazar here, but the *who* is relatively unimportant, is God the Holy Spirit may have provided clues for conjecture, but He did not provide us with undeniable proof. At some point, these last few chapters were appended to the book of Joshua, along with the last two chapters, which form a neat ending to this book. When this was done, the person who appended this to the book of Joshua (again, Phinehas would be a reasonable editor), also added in this verse, which records an incident which occurred sometime later.

Now, this does not mean that the person who recorded this information in the first place and who appended it to the book of Joshua was acting outside of God’s will, nor does it mean he was violating Deut. 4:2. If the book of Joshua stopped with a chapter or two about the distribution of the land, it would come down to us seeming quite incomplete. Since a trusted believer no doubt recorded the distribution of the land, there is nothing wrong and nothing unscriptural for this to be appended to the book of Joshua. In the adding of these few chapters to what Joshua himself had written, it only seemed natural to explain why the tribe of Dan was not occupying the land that had been distributed to them. Had the last message of Joshua been left out, or the circumstances of his death, this would have been an insult to Joshua; so certainly that was added, if only out of respect.

<sup>72</sup> We have thoroughly discussed this in the introduction to this book.

**This an inheritance of a tribe of sons of Dan to their families—the cities the these and their villages.**

Joshua  
19:48

**This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Dan given to their families—all of these cities along with their villages.**

Although this does not mark the end of the names of cities, this is the end of the distribution of the inheritance. We do have two more chapters to plough through—one naming the cities which would be *cities of refuge* and one which would be a listing of the cities given over to the Levites. We also find here some serious discrepancies between the Septuagint and the Massoretic text. I will compare these below:

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

### Joshua 19:47–48 in the Greek and Hebrew

#### The Hebrew Massoretic text:

...and so went out a border of sons of Dan from them. And so went up sons of Dan and so they fought against Leshem and so they captured her and so struck her by a mouth of a sword. And so they possessed and so they settled in her and so they called to Leshem Dan as a name of Dan, their ancestor. This an inheritance of a tribe of sons of Dan to their families—the cities the these and their villages.

19:47–48

#### The Greek Septuagint:

[This is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan, according to their families, these [are] their cities and their villages; and the children of Dan did not drive out the Amorite who afflicted them in the mountain; and the Amorite would not allow them to come down into the valley, but they forcibly took from them the border of their portion. And the sons of Dan went and fought against Lachis, and took it, and struck it with the mouth of the sword; and they lived in it and called the name of it Lasen-dan; and the Amorite continued to live in Edom and in Salamin; and the land of Ephraim prevailed against them, and they became tributaries to them.

Obviously, the Greek and the Hebrew are quite different at this point. Not only are these verses transposed in the Greek, but there is a great deal said about the Amorite in the Septuagint which is not said in the Hebrew. The Greek gives us a better explanation is to why the tribe of Dan went north and conquered a completely separate territory.

[<<Return to Chapter Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

### The Inheritance of Joshua/Conclusion of Land Distribution

**And so they finished to distribute the land to her boundaries and so gave sons of Israel an inheritance to Joshua ben Nun in their midst in accordance with a mouth of Y<sup>e</sup>howah.**

Joshua  
19:49–50a

**Finally, they finished distributing the land and defining the boundaries; then the sons of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua ben Nun in the midst of the land according to the command of Jehovah.**

Joshua has been a great national hero, as was Caleb, and he certainly deserved to be given the honor of a plot of land just for him. This is what is given to him. *In accordance with a mouth of Y<sup>e</sup>howah* belongs with this verse, so I placed it there myself.

**They gave him the city which he asked—Timnath-serah in [the] hill country of Ephraim and so he rebuilt the city and so he settled in her.** Joshua 19:50b

**They gave him the city that he asked for—Timnath-serah, which was in the hill country of Ephraim. Then Joshua rebuilt the city and settled there.**

The verb in the middle of this verse is the Qal imperfect of *bânâh* (בָּנָה) [pronounced *baw-NAWH*], which means *to build, to rebuild, to restore*. We have this verb meaning the latter in Num. 32:24, 37–38 Joshua 6:26 1Kings 16:34 Isa. 45:13 Amos 9:14. Strong’s #1129 BDB #124. Now, in Num. 14:6–9, 24 and Joshua 14:6–15, Caleb was promised a special allotment, but we do not have a Biblical recording of the same being promised to Joshua. However, this does not mean that God had not promised such a thing; it just means that it hadn’t been recorded or the record of this promise has been lost.

It is interesting that Timnath-serah has not be mentioned until now. It means *precinct remaining*; and was perhaps given that name by Joshua tongue-in-cheek. This was the last bit of land to be parceled out and he set it aside for himself. Here is pretty much the sum total of what we know about this city, apart from what is in v. 49: **And they buried him [Joshua] in the territory of his inheritance in Timnah-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash** (Joshua 24:30). Apparently the letters were transposed here or in Judges 2:10, where the name is given as Timnath-heres, which means *portion of the sun*. You will recall the oft-time repeated phrase in the book of Solomon (Ecclesiastes)—*the man under the sun*, and this appears to be Joshua’s portion given to him in the world. Whether the transposition of the letters was an accident or a play on the words, we do not know. ZPEB suggests the modern sites of Khirbet-tibneh, which is twelve miles northwest of Ramallah; or Kafr-haris, which is located twelve miles southwest of Nablus and seven miles from Shechem. ZPEB seemed to place a lot less credence in the latter location. Some traditions have this as being the place where Joshua asked the sun to stand still in the sky (Joshua 10:13). There is no strong reason to support either identification.<sup>73</sup> McGee places it eleven miles from Shiloh and calls it barren and one of the worst spots that Joshua could have chosen. NIV places it in the southwest corner of Ephraim, facing the sea, which sounds better than the previous ideas, primarily because I like the ocean and the seas, but this identification is given without substantiation.<sup>74</sup>

Mount Gaash is found only in Joshua 24:30 and Judges 2:10. Other traditions claim that the different name was in commemoration of that event. A third school holds that *heres* is simply a Scribal error—it is *sera* written backwards. We have the mention of a Wadi Gaash in 2Sam. 23:30 and 1Chron. 11:32, neither of which give us even the slightest clue as to the location of Gaash. ZPEB supposes it to be twenty miles southwest of Shechem.<sup>75</sup>

When Israel first approached the Land of Promise from the south, almost fifty years previous, Moses sent out twelve spies, one from each tribe, all from gen X. All twelve spies returned speaking of how marvelous and prosperous the land was that they were about to enter; however, ten of spies came back with fear in their hearts and propogandized the people to dissuade them from attacking the occupants of the promised land. Only two men did not concur, and that was Joshua and Caleb. It is their inheritance which frames the inheritance given to the twelve tribes. Caleb received his inheritance in Joshua 14, and Joshua received his here. The other tribes fell in between these two great heroes.

McGee’s explanation of the area that Joshua chose may have been tainted by the point McGee wanted to make. The point itself is on target, so I will repeat it. *The Israelites...were perfectly willing to let this man of God have a small barren place as his portion. In my opinion it is equally as shameful to see a church or Christian organization that has been served by a faithful worker let that worker grow old and retire without making any arrangement for a pension for him. Cold-blooded business corporations take care of their employees when they retire, but God’s people often fail to do this.*<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 5, p. .752

<sup>74</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; pp. 314–315.

<sup>75</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, pp. 617–618.

<sup>76</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 87.

These the inheritances which [caused to] inherit Eleazar the priest and Joshua ben Nun and the heads of the fathers to tribes of sons of Israel by lot in Shiloh before faces of Y<sup>e</sup>howah a door of a tent of meeting; and so they finished to divide the land.

Joshua  
19:51

These were the cities which Eleazar the priest and Joshua ben Nun and the heads of the fathers caused to be given as inheritances to the tribes of the sons of Israel by lot in Shiloh in the presence of Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting; and so they finally finished dividing the land.

*Inherit* is in the Piel perfect, but it was not Eleazar or Joshua who did the inheriting, but they directed the inheriting of the land. It was the people of Israel who inherited the land.

The second to the last verb is the Piel imperfect of *kālâh* (הִלָּךְ) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to bring an end to, to finish* (which are Piel meanings). Strong's #3615 BDB #477. Then we have the *lâmed* preposition and the final verb, the Piel infinitive construct of *châlaq* (חָלַק) [pronounced *chaw-LAHK*], which means *to divide, to apportion, to allot, to share*. Strong's #2505 BDB #323.

Paul, in Antioch, summarized the events from the last couple chapters of Genesis to here: “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. And for a period of about forty years, He put up with them in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—about 450 years.” (Acts 13:16b–19).

McGee gives a reason that God went into as much detail as He did in this book of Joshua: *This section reveals how much detail God gave concerning Israel and the land. The land and the people go together. God not only gave them the land of Canaan, He also gave a particular area to a particular tribe. He gave each tribe a certain section of land. God was concerned about each individual and his possession. In this God has a lesson for you and me today. It tells us that God is concerned about our personal lives. My friend, for Him your private life is not private—He knows you like a book. A rather godless neighbor said to me one day, “I want to go out into the desert where I can be by myself, and away from everybody.” Well, that is a normal desire. We all need to get away from people once in awhile. But I reminded him—and I don’t think he appreciated it—that he wouldn’t get away from God. I said, “You can’t run away from Him, brother. He will be right out there in the desert waiting for you.” It is wonderful, friends, to get away from people like that, if we are getting away for fellowship with the Lord.*<sup>77</sup>

[<<Return to Outline>>](#)

[<<Return to the Chart Index>>](#)

[<<Site Map>>](#)

[<<Return to the Joshua Homepage>>](#)

[<<Return to Beginning of this Chapter>>](#)

<sup>77</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Joshua Judges*, ©1976 by Thru the Bible Books; p. 86.