

# 1 Chronicles 7:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And their possessions and habitations were, Beth-el and the towns thereof, and eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer, with the towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns thereof, unto Gaza and the towns thereof:

## Analysis

**And their possessions and habitations were** (וּמוֹשְׁבוֹתָם וּמוֹשְׁבֵיהֶם)—this territorial summary maps Ephraim's key settlements. **Beth-el** (בֵּית־אֵל 'house of God') heads the list, where Jacob dreamed of heaven's ladder (Genesis 28:19) and where Jeroboam later erected a golden calf (1 Kings 12:29), illustrating how holy places can become idolatrous shrines. The tension between Beth-el's sacred past and apostate future warns against presuming on location's holiness while abandoning covenant faithfulness.

The geographic sweep—**eastward Naaran, westward Gezer**—spans from Jordan Valley to coastal plain, showing Ephraim's extensive territory, the richest in northern Israel. **Shechem also** (שֶׁכֶם) appears prominently, the first place Abraham built an altar in Canaan (Genesis 12:6-7), where Joshua renewed the covenant (Joshua 24), and later the northern kingdom's first capital (1 Kings 12:25). Shechem's recurring covenant significance makes its mention here more than geographic data—it's theological geography, sites where God revealed himself and Israel responded in worship.

**Unto Gaza** (עַד־עֵזְרָה)—this southern extension seems anomalous since Gaza was Philistine territory. Some translations read 'Ayyah' instead, a northern city, resolving the geographic puzzle. But if Gaza is correct, it claims Ephraim's

maximum territorial ambitions reached to the Philistine pentapolis, goals never fully realized due to incomplete conquest (Judges 1:19, 29).

## Historical Context

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Ephraim dominated the northern kingdom after Solomon's death (930 BC), with Jeroboam I (an Ephraimite) establishing rival worship centers at Beth-el and Dan. The Chronicler, writing to post-exilic Judahites, presents Ephraim's original territorial blessing as contrast to their later apostasy and Assyrian conquest (722 BC). Many Ephraimites fled south to Judah during northern kingdom's collapse, and Josiah's reforms (640-609 BC) attempted to reclaim these cities for Yahweh worship (2 Chronicles 34:6-7).

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does Beth-el's transformation from 'house of God' to idolatrous shrine warn against relying on past spiritual experiences without present faithfulness?
2. What do Ephraim's extensive but ultimately lost territories teach about the danger of material blessing without corresponding spiritual devotion?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאֶחָזֵתָם	בֵּית וּמִשְׁבּוֹתָם	אֵל	וּבְנֵיָהּ:
And their possessions	and habitations	were Bethel	also and the towns
H272	H4186	H1008	H1323
וְלִמְזָחַח	וְלִמְעָבָב	גֵּזֶר	וּבְנֵיָהּ:
thereof and eastward	Naaran and westward	Gezer	also and the towns
H4217	H5295	H1507	H1323
וְשֶׁחֶם	וּבְנֵיָהּ:	עַד	וּבְנֵיָהּ:
thereof Shechem	also and the towns	thereof unto Gaza	also and the towns
H7927	H1323	H5804	H1323

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