

# Joshua 13:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba;

## Analysis

**And their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon—**Aroer (אֶרֹוֹר) was a fortified city on the northern rim of the Arnon gorge, marking Reuben's southern boundary. The Arnon River (נַחַל אַרְנוֹן) served as a natural fortress, a deep canyon cutting through the Moabite plateau. This boundary had been established when Israel defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites (Numbers 21:24-26).

**The city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba—**The "city in the midst of the river" likely refers to a fortress-city in the Arnon valley itself, strategically positioned. Medeba (מִדְבָּא) was a Moabite city about six miles south of Heshbon, sitting on the Transjordan plateau. These detailed geographical markers preserved tribal boundaries and documented God's faithfulness in giving specific territorial promises. Precision in boundaries prevented future disputes and demonstrated that God's promises are concrete, not abstract.

## Historical Context

The Arnon River (modern Wadi Mujib) is a dramatic gorge cutting approximately 1,700 feet deep into the Transjordan plateau, flowing westward into the Dead Sea. Aroer's ruins still exist today. Medeba appears on the famous 6th-century Madaba Map mosaic. The Moabite Stone (9th century BC) mentions these same cities, confirming their historical significance in regional conflicts.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How do specific geographical boundaries in Scripture demonstrate God's attention to detail in fulfilling promises?
2. What can we learn from God establishing clear boundaries for each tribe about the importance of defined roles and responsibilities?
3. How does the conquest of fortified locations like Aroer demonstrate that no obstacle is too great when God fights for His people?

## Interlinear Text

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יְהִי י	לָהֶם	הַגֹּב וְל	מֵעֲרוֹעַר	אֲשֶׁר	עַל	שְׂפַת
H1961	H1992	And their coast	was from Aroer	H834	H5921	that is on the bank
		H1366	H6177			H8193
הַנָּחַל	אֲרֹנִי	וְהָעִיר	אֲשֶׁר	בְּתוֹךְ	הַנָּחַל	וְכָל
of the river	Arnon	and the city	H834	that is in the midst	of the river	H3605
H5158	H769	H5892		H8432	H5158	
הַמִּישֹׁר	עַל	מִדְבָּא:				
and all the plain	H5921	by Medeba				
H4334		H4311				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 13:9** (Parallel theme): From Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon;

**Joshua 12:2** (Parallel theme): Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon;

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