

# Joshua 13:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Eronites; also the Avites:

## Analysis

Geographic detail: 'From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Eronites; also the Avites.' The Sihor (likely the 'River of Egypt,' Wadi el-Arish) marked the southern boundary. The five Philistine cities—Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron—each had a 'lord' (seren, שָׁרֵן), unique title for Philistine rulers. This five-city confederacy made them formidable. The Avites were another unconstrained group. This detailed enumeration emphasizes the scope of unfinished business. Yet significantly, these territories are still described as Israel's inheritance—possession promised though not yet actualized. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: God promises comprehensive blessing while leaving aspects for future generations to claim through faith and obedience.

## Historical Context

The five Philistine cities formed a pentapolis (five-city confederacy) with coordinated leadership. Each 'lord' (seren) ruled independently but coordinated for mutual defense. The Philistines had migrated from the Aegean region (possibly Crete) and settled coastal Canaan around the time of Israel's exodus and conquest.

Their advanced iron technology gave military advantage (1 Samuel 13:19-22 notes they prevented Israel from having iron tools). The coastal location gave them control of Mediterranean trade and access to international commerce. Gaza was southernmost, Ekron northernmost; the chain of cities controlled the entire southern coastal plain. The Avites were remnant people surviving in the region. The unconquered status of these territories meant Israel never fully controlled their promised land borders until David and Solomon's time. This incomplete possession would haunt Israel's history, providing both ongoing challenge and recurring lesson about covenant faithfulness.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What does God's promise of comprehensive inheritance despite incomplete possession teach about 'already but not yet' aspects of Christian life?
2. How do you respond when promised blessings remain partially unfulfilled, requiring ongoing faith?
3. What role do 'unconquered territories' in your spiritual life play in developing perseverance and dependence on God?

## Interlinear Text

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וְעַד מִצְרַיִם פָּנָי עַל אֲשֶׁר רָא בְּשִׁיחַ וְרַקְעַן  
H4480 From Sihor H834 H5921 which is before H6440 Egypt H5704  
H7883

תִּחְשַׁב בְּלֹכְנָתָן אֲפָגָנָה עַקְרָבִן  
even unto the borders of Ekron northward to the Canaanite which is counted  
H1366 H6138 H6828 H3669 H2803

וְאַשְׁדוֹתִים בְּעִירָת יְמִינָה פְּלִשְׁתִּים סְרִגִּים חַמְשָׁתִים  
five lords of the Philistines the Gazathites and the Ashdorites  
H2568 H5633 H6430 H5841 H796

וְעַזְקָלוֹנִים וְעַקְרָבִונִים בְּגַתִּים וְאַשְׁקָלוֹנִים  
the Eshkalonites the Gittites and the Ekonites  
H832 H1663 H6139 H5757

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 2:18** (References Egypt): And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?

**Deuteronomy 2:23** (Parallel theme): And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah, the Captorims, which came forth out of Captor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

**Judges 3:3** (References Lord): Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.