

# 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 Ekronites; also the Avites:

## Analysis

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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 Ekronites; 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, סֵרֶן), 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

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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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מִן	הַשִּׁיחַ	וְרֹאשׁ	עַל	כִּנֹּר	מִצְרַיִם	וְעַד
H4480	From Sihor	H834	H5921	which is before	Egypt	H5704
	H7883			H6440	H4714	
גַּב	וְעַד	עֶקְרוֹן	צָפֹנָה	לְכַנָּעַן	תִּחְשַׁב	
even unto the borders	of Ekron	northward	to the Canaanite	which is counted		
H1366	H6138	H6828	H3669	H2803		
חֲמִשָּׁה	סֵרָיִם	פְּלִשְׁתִּים	הַעֲזָתִים	וְהָאֲשְׁדּוּדִים		
five	lords	of the Philistines	the Gazathites	and the Ashdothites		
H2568	H5633	H6430	H5841	H796		
הָאֲשִׁקְלוֹנִים	הַגִּתִּיתִים	וְהָעֶקְרוֹנִים	וְהָעַמֹּנִים			
the Eshkalonites	the Gittites	and the Ekronites	H5757			
H832	H1663	H6139				

## 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 Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor, 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.