

Joshua 13:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites:

Analysis

More unconquered territory: 'From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites.' The extensive catalog—Canaanite lands, Mearah, Sidonian territory, Aphek, Amorite borders—shows significant unconquered regions, particularly in Phoenician (Sidonian) territory along the northern coast. These wealthy, advanced civilizations remained independent. God's statement of this unconquered territory comes as He tells Joshua 'thou art old and stricken in years' (verse 1), suggesting one generation couldn't complete the entire conquest. This teaches that God's kingdom work spans generations—each faithfully serving their time while entrusting future progress to God's sovereignty and successive generations' faithfulness. Believers must embrace their specific calling without demanding to see every promised outcome fulfilled in their lifetime.

Historical Context

The Sidonians (Phoenicians) were highly advanced in trade, navigation, and craftsmanship. Their cities (Sidon, Tyre) would become wealthy Mediterranean trading powers, remaining independent throughout most of Israel's history. Solomon later employed Phoenician craftsmen for temple construction (1 Kings 5:6). Aphek was a strategic city in the northern territory. The phrase 'borders of the Amorites' indicates the northern extent of Canaanite civilization. These northern territories were never fully conquered by Israel—they remained

independent Phoenician city-states. Archaeological evidence confirms advanced Phoenician culture and extensive trade networks. The significance: Israel's borders never matched God's maximum promised extent (Genesis 15:18 promises from Egypt to Euphrates River). Only briefly during David-Solomon's empire did Israel approach this, and even then through treaties rather than conquest. The lesson: full kingdom realization awaits God's timing; meanwhile, faithfulness in our generation matters regardless of incomplete fulfillment.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do you faithfully serve your generation while accepting you won't see all promised outcomes fulfilled?
2. What does God's multi-generational plan teach about patient faithfulness versus demanding immediate complete results?
3. How can you contribute to kingdom work that will continue beyond your lifetime?

Interlinear Text

מִתְּמִימָה	כָּל	אֶצְזָל	בְּפִנְעָן	וּמִשְׁעָב	אֲשֶׁר
From the south	H3605	all the land	of the Canaanites	and Mearah	H834
H8486		H776	H3669	H4632	
לְאַיִלְגָּם	עַד	אֶקְהָלָה	עַד	בְּגַלְגָּלָה	בְּאַמְרִים
that is beside the Sidonians	H5704	unto Aphek	H5704	to the borders	of the Amorites
H6722		H663		H1366	H567

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 19:30 (Parallel theme): Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages.

1 Samuel 4:1 (Parallel theme): And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

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