

Joshua 13:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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;

Analysis

Detailing Transjordan: '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.' This continues the detailed geographic description of Reuben and Gad's territory (verses 9-13 parallel verses 2-7, providing comprehensive record). The repetition emphasizes memorial function—precise records ensure future generations know exactly what God gave their ancestors. The Arnon River (southern boundary), Medeba (central plateau city), and Dibon (important Moabite city conquered by Israel) define the territory. This detailed cataloging serves both practical (legal land claims) and theological (memorial of God's faithfulness) purposes. Scripture's attention to such details shows that God cares about specifics, not just generalities. His provision includes particular places, defined boundaries, concrete inheritance—not vague spiritual platitudes.

Historical Context

Aroer guarded the Arnon gorge's northern rim, a strategic defensive position. The 'city in the midst of the river' likely refers to a settlement on an island or peninsula in the Arnon. The Medeba plateau was fertile highland suitable for agriculture and grazing. Dibon, famous from the Mesha Stele (Moabite Stone), was significant city frequently contested between Israel and Moab. These territories changed hands multiple times in subsequent centuries—Israel held them during periods of strength, lost them during weakness. The detailed geographic description served

legal purposes: defining tribal boundaries to prevent disputes and establish clear inheritance divisions. It also served memorial purposes: future generations would know God gave specific territories to their ancestors. The specificity reflects ancient Near Eastern land description conventions, confirming the text's historical grounding. Modern archaeological surveys and excavations have identified many sites mentioned, validating biblical geographic accuracy.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 – Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does Scripture's attention to specific geographic detail teach about God's concern for concrete realities, not just spiritual abstractions?
2. How do detailed records of God's past provision serve faith-building purposes for future generations?
3. What specific, concrete evidences of God's faithfulness in your life should you record for your spiritual descendants?

Interlinear Text

מְעָרוֹעַ ר	אֲשֶׁר	עַל	שְׁפָת	כָּל	וְאַרְנוֹן
From Aroer	H834	H5921	that is upon the bank	of the river	Arnon
H6177			H8193	H5158	H769

המישר וכל הפל בתוֹר אֲשֶׁר יְבָעֵר
and the plain and all the river that is in the midst of the city H834 H8432 H5158 H3605 H4334

עַד מִדְבָּר אֶדְםָן
unto Dibon H5704 of Medeba H4311

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 13:16 (Parallel theme): 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;

Numbers 21:30 (Parallel theme): We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which reacheth unto Medeba.

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