

# Joshua 15:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From thence it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast.

## Analysis

**From thence it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast.** The southern boundary concludes at the Mediterranean, having traced from the Dead Sea through the Negev. Azmon (עֲזְמוֹן) was likely a fortress settlement in the southwestern Negev. The "river of Egypt" (nachal Mitsrayim, נַחַל מִצְרַיִם) refers to Wadi el-Arish, a seasonal watercourse in northern Sinai—not the Nile.

The phrase "this shall be your south coast" (zeh yihyeh lakhem ge'vul negev, זֶה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם גְּבוּל נֶגֶב) employs emphatic Hebrew: "THIS shall be to you..." The definitive language brooks no ambiguity. God's territorial assignments are authoritative and final. The boundary's conclusion "at the sea" (ha-yam, הַיָּם)—the Mediterranean—establishes the western terminus, completing the southern border's description.

This verse demonstrates covenant precision: God's promises include specific geography, not nebulous spirituality. The detailed borders prevented tribal disputes and established clear jurisdictions. For Christians, this specificity illustrates how God's spiritual promises—eternal life, adoption, inheritance in Christ—are equally definite and reliable, anchored in the historical work of Christ at a specific time and place.

## Historical Context

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The River of Egypt (Wadi el-Arish) formed the traditional southwestern boundary between Canaan and Egypt, mentioned in the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 15:18) and Solomon's kingdom extent (1 Kings 8:65). This seasonal watercourse, dry most of the year, flows only during winter rains. The boundary's placement here, rather than at the Nile, reflects geopolitical realities—Egypt's sphere of influence extended into Sinai, but Israel's covenant land stopped at Wadi el-Arish. Archaeological surveys identify numerous fortresses along this border from various periods, confirming its role as a major political boundary. The Mediterranean coast in this region features sandy beaches and shifting dunes, less suitable for harbors than Lebanon's rocky coast to the north, explaining Israel's limited naval development.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the definitiveness of 'this shall be your south coast' encourage you to accept God's assignments in your life rather than coveting others' inheritances?
2. What does the boundary's precision teach about the importance of respecting God-ordained limits and boundaries in relationships, ministry, and responsibilities?
3. How can Judah's defined territory illustrate the Christian's spiritual inheritance—specific, guaranteed, but requiring appropriation through faith?

## Interlinear Text

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מִצָּרַיִם	בְּנֵי הַיָּרְדֵּן	וַיֵּצֵא	עֶצְמוֹ וְנָה	וַיַּעֲבֹר
of Egypt	unto the river	and went out	toward Azmon	From thence it passed
H4714	H5158	H3318	H6111	H5674
לָכֵן	מֵהָיָה	זֶה	יָמָה	גִּבּוֹל
H0	H1961	H2088	H3220	H1366
				coast
				and the goings out
				H8444
				גִּבּוֹל
				coast
				H1366
				נִגְבִּי:
				this shall be your south
				H5045

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 34:5** (References Egypt): And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea.

**Joshua 13:3** (References Egypt): 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: