

# Joshua 15:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah;  
sixteen cities with their villages:

## Analysis

**And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages:**

**Gederoth** (גִּדְרוֹת, gederot) means "walls" or "sheepfolds" (plural of geder, גִּדֵּר), suggesting either a fortified settlement or pastoral economy. The name appears in 2 Chronicles 28:18 among cities the Philistines captured during Ahaz's reign, demonstrating the Shephelah's contested status throughout Israel's history. That God gave these border cities to Judah showed His intention for Israel to expand, not merely survive.

**Beth-dagon** (בֵּית־דָּגוֹן, bet-dagon) means "house of Dagon," referencing the principal Philistine deity—a fish-god associated with grain and fertility. Multiple cities bore this name, indicating Dagon worship's prevalence in Canaan. Israel's inheritance of Dagon's "house" symbolizes Yahweh's triumph over false gods. Later, the ark's presence caused Dagon's statue to fall and break (1 Samuel 5:2-4), dramatically demonstrating Yahweh's superiority over Philistine deities. The preservation of this pagan name in Judah's territory reminds believers that we inherit a fallen world's structures, called to transform them for God's glory.

**Naamah** (נַעֲמָה, na'amah) means "pleasant" or "lovely," likely describing the site's attractive location or fertility. This name appears as a personal name (Genesis 4:22; 1 Kings 14:21), showing the interrelation between place names and personal names in Hebrew culture. **Makkedah** (מַקְדָּה, maqqedah) was the cave where the

five Amorite kings hid and were later executed by Joshua (10:16-28), becoming a memorial to God's judgment on Canaan's wicked rulers. The enumeration "sixteen cities" provides administrative precision, confirming these lists' documentary character.

## Historical Context

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Beth-dagon's name testifies to Dagon worship's widespread influence. Dagon temples existed at Gaza (Judges 16:23), Ashdod (1 Samuel 5:2), and elsewhere in Philistia. Ugaritic texts describe Dagon as "father of Baal," revealing complex Canaanite mythology Israel confronted. The fish-god association likely derived from dag (דָּג, "fish"), though some scholars suggest connection to dagan (דָּגָן, "grain"). Archaeological excavations at Philistine sites have uncovered temple complexes, though definitively identifying Dagon temples remains challenging. Makkedah's cave execution site would have served as ongoing reminder of divine judgment—ancient Israel passed such places and recounted God's mighty acts to subsequent generations.

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. How should Christians approach cultural institutions and structures that bear the marks of false worship (like Beth-dagon)—with complete withdrawal or redemptive engagement?
2. What memorials or reminders has God placed in your life (like Makkedah's cave) that testify to His past faithfulness and call you to ongoing obedience?
3. How does the contrast between Dagon's house (pagan temple) and Naamah (pleasant, lovely) reflect the mixed spiritual landscape believers navigate in a fallen world?

## Interlinear Text

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וְגֵדֶרֶת	בֵּית	בֶּגְדָן	וְנָעֻם	וּמַקֵּדָה	עָרִים	שִׁשָּׁה
<b>And Gedereth</b>	<sup>H0</sup>	<b>Bethdagon</b>	<b>and Naamah</b>	<b>and Makkedah</b>	<b>cities</b>	<b>sixteen</b>
H1450		H1016	H5279	H4719	H5892	H8337
עִשָּׂר	וְחִצְרֵיהֶן:					
H6240	<b>with their villages</b>					
	H2691					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 10:21** (Parallel theme): And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.