

Joshua 15:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ekron, with her towns and her villages:

Analysis

Ekron, with her towns and her villages:

Ekron (עֶקְרוֹן, eqron) was the northernmost of the five principal Philistine cities, meaning "emigration" or "eradication." Despite its assignment to Judah here and its capture by Judah (Judges 1:18), Ekron remained predominantly Philistine throughout most of Israelite history. The city's god Baal-zebub (בַּעַל זְבוּב, "lord of flies") was consulted even by apostate Israelite kings (2 Kings 1:2-3), demonstrating persistent pagan influence. The prophets pronounced judgment against Ekron (Amos 1:8; Zephaniah 2:4; Zechariah 9:5-7), predicting its eventual destruction.

The designation "with her towns and her villages" (וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ וְחִצְרֶיהָ, uvenoteyha vachatsereyha) uses feminine possessive forms, personifying the city as a mother with dependent daughters (banot, בָּנוֹת, literally "daughters") and surrounding villages (chatserim, חִצְרִים, "enclosures" or "settlements"). This language reflects ancient urban hierarchy—major cities controlled surrounding agricultural settlements, creating economic and defensive networks. The comprehensive grant indicates God's intention: Judah should possess not merely Ekron itself but its entire territory.

The partial fulfillment of this promise—Ekron's assignment to Judah but persistent Philistine occupation—demonstrates the pattern throughout Joshua and Judges: God grants inheritance, but Israel must actively possess through faith and obedience. Incomplete conquest brought persistent trouble, as these Philistine

cities became thorns in Israel's side for centuries (Judges 2:3), testing their covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

Ekron (Tel Migne) was the largest Philistine city, covering 50 acres during Iron Age II. Excavations revealed massive olive oil production facilities—over 100 oil presses producing estimated 1,000 tons annually, making it the ancient world's largest industrial olive oil operation. The Philistines, part of the Sea Peoples who invaded the eastern Mediterranean c. 1200 BCE, established a pentapolis (five-city alliance): Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. These cities maintained distinct Aegean culture while gradually adopting Canaanite language and customs. The famous Ekron inscription (c. 700 BCE) names five Philistine kings and dedicates a temple to their goddess, providing rare firsthand evidence of Philistine religion and political structure.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why do you think God assigned Philistine territory to Israel despite knowing they wouldn't fully possess it—what does this teach about divine promises versus human responsibility?
2. How does incomplete spiritual conquest in your life (like Israel's failure to fully possess Ekron) create ongoing problems and temptations?
3. What does Ekron's persistent paganism (Baal-zebub worship) despite being in Israel's territory warn about tolerating unbelief in Christian communities or hearts?

Interlinear Text

עֶקְרוֹן	וּבְנֵי יָהּ	וְשִׁכְרֵיהֶם:
Ekron	with her towns	and her villages
H6138	H1323	H2691

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 13:3 (Parallel theme): 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:

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