

Joshua 15:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages:

Analysis

From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages:

This verse describes Judah's western boundary, extending from **Ekron** (the northernmost Philistine city) westward to the Mediterranean Sea ("the great sea," הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל, hayam hagadol). The phrase "all that lay near Ashdod" (כָּל אֲשֶׁר עַל-יָד אֲשְׁדֹד, kol asher al-yad ashdod) indicates comprehensive territorial claim—not merely Ashdod itself but its entire sphere of influence, including dependent towns and agricultural hinterland.

Ashdod (אֲשְׁדֹד, ashdod) ranked among Philistia's most powerful cities, approximately three miles from the Mediterranean coast. The name possibly derives from a root meaning "fortress" or "stronghold," appropriate for this heavily fortified city. When the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant, they brought it to Ashdod's temple of Dagon, where God humiliated the Philistine deity (1 Samuel 5:1-7). The city later resisted Nehemiah's rebuilding efforts, its residents intermarrying with Jews and corrupting covenant purity (Nehemiah 13:23-24).

The comprehensiveness of this grant—"all that lay near Ashdod, with their villages"—emphasizes God's generous provision. He didn't give Judah merely scattered settlements but coherent territories with complete economic infrastructure. Yet this generous grant remained largely unfulfilled. Ashdod, like Ekron, stayed predominantly Philistine, demonstrating the tragic gap between divine promise and human appropriation through unbelief and disobedience. The

prophets later pronounced judgment on Ashdod (Amos 1:8; 3:9; Zephaniah 2:4; Zechariah 9:6), warning of its eventual destruction.

Historical Context

Ashdod (Tel Ashdod/Isdud) was one of the five Philistine pentapolis cities, controlling a major harbor and trade routes. Archaeological excavations revealed 23 occupation layers spanning from Canaanite through Hellenistic periods. The city's massive fortifications—walls over 12 feet thick—made it nearly impregnable. Psamtik I of Egypt besieged Ashdod for 29 years (c. 635-605 BCE), according to Herodotus, demonstrating its defensive strength. The Assyrians conquered it under Sargon II (711 BCE, referenced in Isaiah 20:1), and Uzziah later broke down its walls (2 Chronicles 26:6). Post-exilic Ashdod's residents spoke their own language (Nehemiah 13:24), showing persistent cultural distinctiveness despite proximity to Judah.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the gap between God's comprehensive grant ("all that lay near Ashdod") and Israel's partial possession challenge your understanding of claiming spiritual promises?
2. What coastal territories or boundary areas in your spiritual life remain unconquered, requiring fresh faith and obedience to possess fully?
3. How should Christians engage with powerful cultural centers (like Philistine cities) that neighbor but resist God's kingdom—through isolation, confrontation, or strategic engagement?

Interlinear Text

מֵעֶקְרוֹן	וְגַם	כָּל	אֲשֶׁר	עַל	יָד	אַשְׁדּוֹד
From Ekron	even unto the sea	H3605	H834	H5921	all that lay near	Ashdod
H6138	H3220				H3027	H795
וּמִצְרֵיהֶן:						
with their villages						
H2691						

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