

# Joshua 15:52

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean,

## Analysis

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### **Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean,**

**Arab** (אַרָב, arav) means "ambush" or possibly derives from roots meaning "desert" or "evening." This should not be confused with the ethnic designation "Arab" (אַרָבִי, aravi), though both share linguistic roots. If "ambush" is correct, the name might describe strategic military positioning or recall a significant battle at this site. The name's potential military connotations remind us that inheritance requires vigilant defense—God's gifts don't guarantee automatic security but call for active stewardship and protection.

**Dumah** (דּוּמָה, dumah) means "silence" or "stillness," from the root damam (דָּמַם, "to be silent, still"). This evocative name might describe the city's quiet location, or it could carry ominous overtones—the silence of desolation or death. Isaiah uses related imagery speaking of "the burden of Dumah" (Isaiah 21:11), likely referring to Edom. The name reminds us that God values silence and stillness (Psalm 46:10; Habakkuk 2:20); amid activity and conquest, His people must cultivate quiet trust and contemplation.

**Eshean** (אֶשְׁחָן, eshan) is of uncertain etymology, possibly related to roots meaning "support" or "staff." This city appears only here in Scripture, preserving an otherwise lost historical detail. The brief mention demonstrates Scripture's comprehensive approach to documenting inheritance—no allotment was too small to record, no city too obscure to mention. God's faithfulness extends to details, not merely grand narratives. Every family received precisely what God ordained, recorded for perpetual witness.

## Historical Context

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These southern hill country cities formed part of Judah's defense network against threats from Edom and desert raiders. The region's aridity required sophisticated water management and limited population density. Arab (Khirbet er-Rabiyeh) has been tentatively identified, though certainty remains elusive. Dumah's location is similarly uncertain, though the name's association with silence might reflect isolation rather than large population. The preservation of these minor cities in biblical records contrasts with their absence from other ancient Near Eastern sources, demonstrating Scripture's unique concern for comprehensive territorial documentation. Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian records typically mention only major cities conquered or tributaries extracted, omitting smaller settlements. Joshua's detailed lists serve covenant purposes: establishing tribal boundaries, ensuring equitable distribution, and providing legal documentation for property claims.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does the name Arab ("ambush") remind you that spiritual life involves both receiving God's gifts and vigilantly defending against enemy attacks?
2. What role does silence (Dumah) play in your spiritual life—do you cultivate stillness to hear God, or does constant activity drown out His voice?
3. Why do you think God preserved names of obscure cities like Eshean that appear nowhere else—what does this teach about His valuation of the seemingly insignificant?

## Interlinear Text

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אֲרָב	וְדֹמָה	וְעִשְׂיָן:
<b>Arab</b>	<b>and Dumah</b>	<b>and Eshean</b>
H694	H1746	H824

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