

# Joshua 16:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah;

## Analysis

**And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah**—this verse traces Ephraim's northern boundary, which separated it from Manasseh. The border's complex path **toward the sea** (westward) and then turning **eastward** reflects the irregular terrain of hill country boundaries following ridges, valleys, and existing settlements.

**Michmethah** (מִיכְמֶתָחַ) served as a western reference point, while **Taanath-shiloh** ("approach to Shiloh," תַּאנַּת שִׁלֹּה) indicates proximity to Shiloh, where the Tabernacle was established (18:1; 19:51). This placed Ephraim adjacent to Israel's worship center, giving the tribe special religious significance during the period of Judges and early monarchy. **Janohah** (יָנוּחַ) marked the eastern portion of the boundary.

The geographical precision, though challenging for modern readers, served critical purposes: preventing tribal disputes, ensuring equitable distribution, and establishing legal documentation. These boundaries were recorded not merely for historical interest but as binding property descriptions with economic and social implications for generations. The complexity also demonstrates Scripture's roots in concrete historical reality rather than mythological abstraction.

## Historical Context

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Shiloh served as Israel's central sanctuary for approximately 300 years (c. 1390-1050 BCE), from Joshua's time until the ark's capture by Philistines (1 Samuel 4). Ephraim's territory encompassing Shiloh gave the tribe immense religious prestige and influence. Archaeological excavations at Shiloh reveal evidence of destruction around 1050 BCE, consistent with Jeremiah's reference to God's judgment on Shiloh (Jeremiah 7:12-14; 26:6). The site's religious importance made surrounding boundaries politically significant, as control of approaches to the sanctuary affected pilgrimage routes and offerings. The detailed boundary descriptions in Joshua resemble ancient Near Eastern land grant documents and treaty texts that meticulously defined territorial limits. Such precision was essential in agricultural societies where land provided the economic foundation for survival and prosperity.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does Ephraim's proximity to Shiloh—Israel's worship center—challenge you to consider whether geographical blessing translates to spiritual faithfulness or can breed presumption?
2. What boundaries in your spiritual life protect your calling and prevent conflicts with others' responsibilities and gifts?
3. How do you respond when God's blessings place you near centers of spiritual activity—with humble service or prideful assumption of superiority?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֵּצֵא א	הַגֹּב וּל	הַיָּמָה	הַמִּכְמֶתַח	מִצָּפֹן
went out	And the border	toward the sea	to Michmethah	on the north side
H3318	H1366	H3220	H4366	H6828
וַיֵּלֶךְ ב	הַגֹּב וּל	מִמֶּזְרַח ח	תְּאֵנָה ת	שָׁל ה
went about	And the border	by it on the east	H0	unto Taanathshiloh
H5437	H1366	H4217		H8387
וַעֲבָר ר	אוֹת ו	מִמֶּזְרַח ח	יְנוֹחָה:	
and passed	H853	by it on the east	to Janohah	
H5674		H4217	H3239	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Joshua 17:7** (Parallel theme): And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah.