

Joshua 16:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan.

Analysis

And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan—the boundary description now traces the eastern border, descending from the hill country back to the Jordan Valley. The phrase **went down** (yarad, יָרַד) accurately describes the dramatic descent from highlands (2,000+ feet elevation) to the Jordan Valley (825 feet below sea level), a drop of nearly 3,000 feet.

Naarath (נָאָרָת or נָאָרָת) was a town in the Jordan Valley, while the border's terminus **at Jordan** completed the circuit begun in verse 1. This closed boundary description established Ephraim's territorial integrity—a defined inheritance with clear limits. The mention of **Jericho** recalls the conquest's beginning (Joshua 6), connecting Ephraim's inheritance to God's miraculous victory that initiated Israel's possession of Canaan.

The return to the Jordan River creates geographic symmetry: the boundary begins at Jordan (v. 1) and ends at Jordan (v. 7), enclosing Ephraim's territory. This completeness illustrates the sufficiency of God's provision—Ephraim received all it needed, with boundaries protecting its inheritance. The pattern reflects biblical themes of wholeness, completion, and divine order.

Historical Context

The Jordan Valley's unique geology created a distinct ecological zone called the ghor (rift valley). Despite the Jordan River's presence, the valley's extreme heat and low elevation made agriculture challenging without irrigation. The climate supported date palms and tropical vegetation but required different farming methods than the hill country. Jericho, called "city of palm trees" (Deuteronomy 34:3), benefited from natural springs making it a fertile oasis. The dramatic elevation change from Ephraim's highlands to the Jordan Valley created diverse microclimates within the tribal territory, allowing varied agriculture: grapes and olives in the hills, dates and grain in the valley. This diversity contributed to Ephraim's prosperity and strategic importance. The eastern boundary at Jordan marked the limit of Cisjordan (western) tribes, distinguishing them from Transjordan tribes (Reuben, Gad, half of Manasseh) who had received inheritance east of the river.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the completeness of Ephraim's bounded inheritance encourage you to embrace the specific calling God has given you rather than coveting others' territories?
2. What significance does it hold that Ephraim's boundary connected to Jericho, reminding each generation that their inheritance resulted from God's miraculous intervention?
3. How do you maintain perspective during the "descents" in life—recognizing that valleys as well as highlands comprise your God-given inheritance?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־הַיַּם
and went out at Jordan

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 7:28 (Parallel theme): And their possessions and habitations were, Beth-el and the towns thereof, and eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer, with the towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns thereof, unto Gaza and the towns thereof:

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