

# Joshua 19:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan:

## Analysis

**And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan.** This verse traces Naphtali's southern boundary with precision, listing specific towns and geographical markers that defined tribal borders. The Hebrew word *gevul* (גֹּבֹל, "coast" or "border") appears throughout Joshua 13-21, emphasizing that God's promises have definite boundaries—generous but not unlimited.

Several place names carry theological significance. Allon (אֵלֹן) means "oak" or "terebinth tree," often marking sacred sites where God appeared (Genesis 12:6; 35:4; Judges 4:11). The mention of specific trees suggests these were known landmarks, possibly associated with covenant remembrance. Zaanannim (צִעְנָנִים) appears later in Judges 4:11 as the location near where Jael killed Sisera, connecting Naphtali's territory to future acts of deliverance.

The phrase "the outgoings thereof were at Jordan" (ve-hayah totse'otav ha-Yarden, וְהָיָה תֹצְאֹתָיו הַיַּרְדֵּן) indicates that Naphtali's border extended to the Jordan River, giving them access to this vital water source and transportation route. The Jordan formed the eastern boundary of Naphtali's inheritance, connecting them to Israel's covenant history of miraculous crossing (Joshua 3-4) and separating them from the Transjordanian tribes.

## Historical Context

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The towns listed in this verse cluster in the eastern Galilee region between the Sea of Galilee and the Huleh Valley. Archaeological identification of these sites remains tentative for several names, as typical with ancient Near Eastern toponymy, but the general geographical framework is clear. The region was characterized by basalt outcroppings, oak forests, and fertile valleys suitable for agriculture and grazing.

The Jordan River boundary gave Naphtali strategic importance, controlling crossings and trade routes from Damascus southward. The tribal territory would later become famous as the heartland of Jesus' Galilean ministry—Capernaum, Bethsaida, and other sites of Christ's miracles lay within ancient Naphtali's borders. Isaiah 9:1-2 specifically references this region: "Galilee of the Gentiles. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."

These detailed boundary descriptions served legal and administrative functions in ancient Israel, preventing inter-tribal disputes and establishing clear land tenure. Similar boundary texts appear in ancient Near Eastern treaties and land grants, but Israel's system uniquely grounded land ownership in divine gift rather than military conquest or royal favor alone.

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does the specificity of biblical boundaries challenge modern tendencies toward vague spiritualizing of God's promises and commands?
2. What does Naphtali's later prominence in Jesus' ministry teach about God's long-range purposes in tribal allotments?

3. How should the inclusion of future judgment sites (like Zaananim) in inheritance descriptions inform our understanding of God's sovereignty over both blessing and discipline?

## Interlinear Text

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וְיָהּ י' H1961	גְּבוּלָם H1366	מִי־לֶף H2501	מֵאֵל וִן H438	בְּצִעַנִים H6815	וְאָדָם י' H129
	And their coast	was from Heleph	from Allon	to Zaananim	and Adami
הֶנָּה קֵב H5346	וַיִּבְנֶה ל' H2995	עַד H5704	לִקְ וּם H3946	וְיָהּ י' H1961	תִּצְאָתָיו H8444
Nekeb	and Jabneel	unto Lakum		and the outgoings	

הֵיכָלָיו:  
thereof were at Jordan  
H3383

## Additional Cross-References

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**Judges 4:11** (Parallel theme): Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.