

# 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 (גָּבוּל, "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 (אַלְוִן) 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 (צְעַנְנִים) 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, וְהִי תְּצַאֵת וְתַּחֲדֵשׁ 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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**Psalm 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 Zaanannim) in inheritance descriptions inform our understanding of God's sovereignty over both blessing and discipline?

## Interlinear Text

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אָדָם וְבָצָעַנְנִים מִאָלָם יְהִי וְגַבּוֹל מִן הַיָּם

H1961 And their coast was from Heleph from Allon to Zaanannim and Adami

H1366

H2501

H438

H6815

H129

תְּצַאָת יְהִי וְקַבְּבָחָר לְיִבְנְאָה עַד לְקַן וּמִן יְהִי

Nekeb and Jabneel unto Lakum and the outgoings

H5346

H2995

H5704

unto Lakum

H1961

and the outgoings

H8444

בְּרִיאָה:

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.

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