

# Joshua 19:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising.

## Analysis

**And then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising.** This verse maps Naphtali's western and southern boundaries, showing how tribal territories interlocked like a divine mosaic. The verb "turneth" (shav, שָׁב) uses the same root as "return" or "repent," illustrating how boundaries redirect and define—just as God's commandments establish righteous limits.

The name Aznoth-tabor (אֲזָנוֹת תְּבוֹר) means "ears of Tabor," likely referring to prominent peaks or ridges near Mount Tabor. Mount Tabor itself became famous as the site of Deborah and Barak's mustering point against Sisera (Judges 4:6, 12-14), and later as a traditional site of Christ's transfiguration. God's geographical allocations thus prepared the landscape for future redemptive acts.

The phrase "reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising" demonstrates the careful coordination of tribal borders. Naphtali's territory touched three other tribes, plus the Jordan River. The mention of Judah seems unusual here (Judah was far south); most scholars understand this as a reference to a Judahite enclave or possibly a textual reference to the Jordan boundary shared with eastern territories.

The comprehensive boundary description ensured each tribe knew its nachalah (נַחֲלָה, inheritance) precisely.

## Historical Context

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Mount Tabor rises 1,886 feet above sea level, dominating the eastern Jezreel Valley and serving as a natural landmark visible for miles. Its strategic position made it militarily significant throughout Israelite history. The mountain lay at the junction of Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar territories, making it a natural gathering point for northern tribes.

Naphtali's borders with Zebulun and Asher created a northern tribal bloc that often acted in concert, as seen in Deborah's song (Judges 5:18) praising both Naphtali and Zebulun for risking their lives in battle. This geographical proximity fostered cultural and military cooperation, demonstrating how God's land distribution created natural alliances for mutual defense and blessing.

The "sunrising" (mizrach ha-shemesh, מִזְרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ) refers to the east, using the sun's daily pattern for orientation. Ancient Israelites used natural phenomena for direction: east (sunrise), west (sea/sunset), south (right hand when facing east), north (left hand). This orientation system appears throughout Scripture, grounding theological truth in observable creation.

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. How do the interlocking tribal boundaries illustrate the church's interdependence and need for defined but cooperative relationships between local congregations?

2. What does God's preparation of specific geographical sites for future redemptive acts (like Mount Tabor) teach about His sovereignty over history and geography?
3. How might Naphtali's borders with multiple tribes inform our understanding of Christian unity that respects distinct identities while requiring mutual cooperation?

## Interlinear Text

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וְשָׁב	וְהָיָה וְלִ	מִיָּם	אֶזְנוֹת	תָּבֹר
turneth	And then the coast	on the west side	H0	to Aznothtabor
H7725	H1366	H3220		H243
וַיֵּצֵא	מִשָּׁם	חֹקֵק קָה	פָּגַע	בְּזִבְלֹן
and goeth out	H8033	from thence to Hukkok	and reacheth	to Zebulun
H3318		H2712	H6293	H2074
מִן הַיָּם	וּבְאַשֶׁר	פָּגַע	מִיָּם	וּבִיהוּדָה
on the south side	to Asher	and reacheth	on the west side	and to Judah
H5045	H836	H6293	H3220	H3063
עַל הַיַּרְדֵּן	מִזְרָח	הַשָּׁמֶשׁ:		
upon Jordan	toward the sunrising	H8121		
H3383	H4217			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 33:23** (Sin): And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south.