

Judges 1:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

Analysis

And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

This verse concludes chapter 1's catalog of incomplete conquest by defining Amorite territory's southern boundary. The 'going up to Akrabbim' (ma'aleh Aqrabbim, מַעַלָּה עֲקָרְבִּים, 'ascent of scorpions') refers to a steep pass southeast of the Dead Sea marking the southern extent of Amorite presence. The phrase 'from the rock, and upward' (min-hassela vama'elah, מִן-הַסְלָעָה וָמָעָלָה) possibly refers to Sela (later Petra) or simply means 'from the crag upward,' indicating mountainous terrain.

This geographical note emphasizes Amorite persistence—they maintained defined territory despite Israelite conquest. While Israel controlled much of Canaan, significant Amorite presence remained, particularly in mountainous southern regions. This stands in stark contrast to God's command for complete conquest (Deuteronomy 7:1-5, 20:16-18). The verse functions as capstone to chapter 1's theme: incomplete obedience left enemies possessing portions of promised territory, creating ongoing conflict.

Theologically, this verse reminds readers that spiritual warfare involves defined territories—areas of life where enemy influence remains despite overall Christian profession. Just as Amorites retained defined geographical space, so remaining sin retains defined influence in specific life areas (thought patterns, relationships,

habits, priorities). Complete sanctification requires comprehensive engagement across all life territories, not merely general religious practice while tolerating specific strongholds. The New Testament calls believers to bring 'every thought captive to Christ' (2 Corinthians 10:5) and 'whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God' (1 Corinthians 10:31)—total life transformation, not compartmentalized piety.

Historical Context

The Akrabbim ascent marked Israel's southern boundary (Numbers 34:4, Joshua 15:3), a steep pass in the wilderness of Zin southeast of the Dead Sea. This rugged, mountainous terrain provided natural defense, enabling Amorite resistance against Israelite expansion. The region's aridity and lack of agricultural value made it strategically less important, possibly explaining why Israel didn't prioritize its complete conquest—pragmatic focus on more valuable territories.

Sela, if this is the 'rock' referenced, later became Petra, capital of Nabataean kingdom (4th century BCE onward). The region's dramatic sandstone cliffs and narrow canyon approaches made it virtually impregnable, explaining how Amorite remnants could maintain presence despite Israelite dominance elsewhere. However, the specific identification remains uncertain—'sela' simply means 'rock/crag' and could refer to various rocky formations in the region.

This geographical note's placement at chapter end creates literary closure while introducing chapter 2's theological interpretation. The detailed listing of unconquered territories (verses 19-36) prepares readers for the Angel of the LORD's rebuke (2:1-5) and the cyclical pattern of sin-oppression-deliverance characterizing Judges. The catalog functions as evidence supporting divine indictment: despite God's faithfulness giving victories, Israel's incomplete obedience left enemies in the land, creating conditions for apostasy and judgment.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What defined 'territories' in your spiritual life remain under enemy influence despite overall Christian profession?
2. How does comprehensive sanctification differ from compartmentalized religion that allows certain life areas to remain unconquered?
3. What would it look like to bring 'every thought captive to Christ' in your specific circumstances and challenges?

Interlinear Text

מִגְּבֹּל לְעֵקֶב יָמִים מִמּוּלָה בְּאָמֹר וְאַגְּבּוֹל
And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim from the rock
H1366 H567 H4608 H4610 H5553

וְאַמְעָלָה:
and upward
H4605

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 34:4 (Parallel theme): And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon: