

Numbers 34:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about.

Analysis

And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea—The Jordan River and yam ha-melach (יָם הַמֶּלַח, 'Salt Sea,' the Dead Sea) form Israel's eastern boundary. At 1,410 feet below sea level, the Dead Sea is earth's lowest point—a stark, lifeless body of water whose 34% salinity prevents aquatic life. Yet even this barren boundary belongs to God's ordained land.

Ezekiel prophesied that eschatological waters from the temple would heal the Dead Sea, bringing life where death reigned (Ezekiel 47:8-11). This anticipates Christ's life-giving power transforming spiritual death into abundant life (John 4:14, 7:38).

Historical Context

The Dead Sea marked ancient Israel's southeastern border. Its salt was economically valuable, and its asphalt (bitumen) was exported to Egypt for mummification. The region held historical significance: Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction (Genesis 19), David's refuge at En Gedi (1 Samuel 24), and the Qumran community that preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Ezekiel's vision of the Dead Sea coming to life illustrate the gospel's power to transform spiritual death?
2. What does God's inclusion of even a lifeless sea within Israel's boundaries teach about His redemptive purposes for all creation?
3. In what 'dead' areas of your life do you need Christ's living water to bring transformation?

Interlinear Text

יֵרָד shall go down H3381	הַגְּבוּל And the border H1366	הַיַּרְדֵּי נָה to Jordan H3383	וְהִי ו H1961	תוֹצֵאתָ יוֹ and the goings out H8444	יָם sea H3220
הֵם לַח of it shall be at the salt H4417	זֹאת H2063	תְּהִי ה H1961	לְךָ מ H0	הָאָרֶץ this shall be your land H776	
לַגְּבֻלֹתַי יָם with the coasts H1367	סָבִיב: thereof round about H5439				

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 34:3 (Parallel theme): Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward:

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