

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 (ים מלך, '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

Psalm 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

וְיַעֲשֶׂה
shall go down And the border to Jordan וְיִהְיֶה
H3381 H1366 H3383 H1961
תַּוְצַאַת
and the goings out sea
H8444 H3220

בְּמִזְבֵּחַ
of it shall be at the salt מִזְבֵּחַ הַזֹּאת
H4417 H2063 H1961 H0
בְּאֶרְצֵךְ
this shall be your land
H776

לְגָבְלַת יָם
with the coasts thereof round about
H1367 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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