

**Numbers 34:1** ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,  
**Numbers 34:2** Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, *even* the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)  
**Numbers 34:3** 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:  
**Numbers 34:4** 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 Kadeshbarnea, and shall go on to Hazaraddar, and pass on to Azmon:  
**Numbers 34:5** And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea.

This chapter opens with the LORD telling Moses to instruct the people of Israel regarding the borders of the land that He was giving them. It was basically the territory identified as the land of Canaan.

The general borders as first revealed to Abraham appear to be a bit different.

*Genesis 15:18–21* “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, **from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.**”

I have always considered “the river of Egypt” to be a reference to the Nile. So, in my mind there is a huge difference in the borders being defined in this chapter than those of a land stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates Rivers.

I could never do justice to this description, so I will quote from JFB for a description of this border.

“According to the best biblical geographers, the leading points here defined are as follows: The southwest angle of the southern boundary should be where the wilderness of Zin touches the border of Edom, so that the southern boundary should extend eastward from the extremity of the Dead Sea, wind around the precipitous ridge of Akrabbim (“scorpions”), thought to be the high and difficult Pass of Safeh, which crosses the stream that flows from the south into the Jordan — that is, the great valley of the Arabah, reaching from the Dead to the Red Sea.”

**Numbers 34:6** And *as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border.*

The western border was easily identified as the Mediterranean Sea.

Coffman had an interesting note about this border: “Strangely enough, the children of Israel were never able to possess that seacoast. Not even in the glorious reigns of David and Solomon did the land of the Philistine belong to Israel.”

**Numbers 34:7 And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor:**

**Numbers 34:8 From mount Hor ye shall point out *your border* unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad:**

**Numbers 34:9 And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazarenan: this shall be your north border.**

I have no clue as to the geographical names mentioned in these verses. After looking at several commentaries, none of which seem certain of their conclusions, it seems to be a reference to a mountainous area possibly similar to Israel's current border with Lebanon. Hor is possibly a reference to Mount Hermon.

The Jewish Study Bible defines this border as follows: "The northernmost border, at Hazar-enan, is tentatively identified with the oasis of Qayatein 70 miles northeast of Damascus."

**Numbers 34:10 And ye shall point out your east border from Hazarenan to Shepham:**

**Numbers 34:11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward:**

**Numbers 34:12 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.**

The NIV Commentary offers the following explanation of the eastern border: "The line from the northernmost point that traverses to the south finally to join the southern tip of the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee is the most precarious to attempt to draw. Perhaps a grand curve is intended that includes the sweep of much of southeastern Syria (Aram). The sites Shepham and Riblah are unknown today. The Sea of Kinnereth (another name for the Sea of Galilee) and the Jordan form the traditional eastern border for the southern part of the line."

**Numbers 34:13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:**

**Numbers 34:14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received *their inheritance*; and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance:**

**Numbers 34:15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan *near* Jericho eastward, toward the sunrising.**

This section is basically stating that the borders defined in the preceding verses comprised the land that would be determined by lot as each tribe's inheritance.

The inheritance of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh were outside these borders. JFB notes that this included the area between the Arnon

River and Mount Hermon—Reuben in the south, Gad to their north and the half tribe of Manasseh in the area furthest north.

**Numbers 34:16 ¶** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

**Numbers 34:17** These *are* the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun.

**Numbers 34:18** And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance.

**Numbers 34:19** And the names of the men *are* these: Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

**Numbers 34:20** And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud.

**Numbers 34:21** Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon.

**Numbers 34:22** And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli.

**Numbers 34:23** The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod.

**Numbers 34:24** And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan.

**Numbers 34:25** And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach.

**Numbers 34:26** And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan.

**Numbers 34:27** And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi.

**Numbers 34:28** And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud.

**Numbers 34:29** These *are they* whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

This section of verses basically identifies the men from each tribe that would be involved in dividing the land. Eleazar and Joshua would oversee the division of the land. The names are listed in the order in which the land inheritance would be identified.

Coffman provided an interesting list of the names and their meanings of each of the chosen leaders of the tribes:

ELEAZAR ... God is helper.

JOSHUA ... Jehovah is salvation.

CALEB ... Bold (also "dog" as applied to animals).

SHEMUEL ... Heard of God.

ELIDAD ... God has loved.

BUKKI ... Mouth of Jehovah.

HANNIEL ... Grace of God.

KEMUEL ... Congregation of God.

ELIZAPHAN ... God is protector.

PALTIEL ... Deliverer of the Lord.

AHIHUD ... Brother of honor.

PEDAHEL ... God has saved.