



# REFLECTIONS

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**The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin, [t]heir allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph: It then went to the northern slope of Beth Hoglah and came out at the northern bay of the Salt Sea, at the mouth of the Jordan in the south. This was the southern boundary.**

*Joshua 18:11, 19*

## Lesson from the Dead Sea

Surrounded by steep barren mountains and rocky desert sand, the Salt Sea is the lowest place on earth. The Jordan River reaches its end there, today some 1400 feet below sea level. The place now known to most as the Dead Sea is a curiosity to the millions drawn to witness its salty shores over the years. Nothing lives there. Nothing can. But you might never know by just looking.

Water as blue as the sky and rolling waves as impressive as the largest oceans become attractive invitations to visit its sandy beaches. But a swim in its briny waters is like no other place. Almost 35% of the water volume is salt! —enough to prevent a human body from sinking in it. People go there just to see if they can. But like a road that dead ends into a dumping ground, the Dead Sea is the burial place for everything flowing into it. Usefulness ends there—a place where nothing lives.

The Dead Sea is sustained by the continuous flow of its only significant water source, the Jordan River. But in recent years the flow into the Dead Sea has not kept pace with nature's evaporative force that sucks water from it. As a result, the area of the Sea has been shrinking about three feet per year since 1930. Some blame upstream water diversion for reducing the volume of water flowing into it, others believe diminished volume is caused by continuous drought; but whatever the cause, areas once buried beneath briny waters have now uncovered mineral rich silt delivered there over the centuries by the Jordan. What once seemed dead and buried is alive—resurrected, perhaps to be the most fertile giver of life on earth.

The river of life seems much like the Jordan River to me. Life flowing from one generation to the next, to the next, carrying both good and bad all blended into one steady river meandering through this world enriching, nurturing, feeding, and supporting life along the journey. Yet mixed within the good are contaminants and other materials, all used up, headed into a salt-laden grave. A place where nothing lives.

But for good things, a dark cold grave is not the end. Beyond the grave there's the giver of life again. Jesus showed us that.

And it's also a lesson from the Dead Sea.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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