

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
4-5-23

Joshua 16

Allotment For Ephraim And Manasseh The Sons Of Joseph – Verses 1-4

¹ The allotment for Joseph began at the Jordan, east of the springs of Jericho, and went up from there through the desert into the hill country of Bethel. ² It went on from Bethel (that is, Luz), crossed over to the territory of the Arkites in Ataroth, ³ descended westward to the territory of the Japhletites as far as the region of Lower Beth Horon and on to Gezer, ending at the Mediterranean Sea. ⁴ So Manasseh and Ephraim, the descendants of Joseph, received their inheritance.

16:1-4 Although Joseph was one of Jacob's 12 sons, he did not have a tribe named after him. This was because Joseph, as the oldest son of Jacob's wife Rachel, received a double portion of the inheritance. Joseph's double portion was divided between his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, whom Jacob considered as his own (Genesis 48:5). The largest territory and the greatest influence in the northern half of Israel belonged to their tribes.

The Borders Of The Province Of Ephraim – Verses 5-10

⁵ This was the territory of Ephraim, according to its clans: The boundary of their inheritance went from Ataroth Addar in the east to Upper Beth Horon ⁶ and continued to the Mediterranean Sea. From Mikmethath on the north it curved eastward to Taanath Shiloh, passing by it to Janoah on the east. ⁷ Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah, touched Jericho and came out at the Jordan. ⁸ From Tappuah the border went west to the Kanah Ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Ephraimites, according to its clans. ⁹ It also included all the towns and their villages that were set aside for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites. ¹⁰ They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor.

16:5-10 And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer: Their failure to completely drive out the Canaanites is typical of all the tribes. Even within the Promised Land there remained important work to do and battles to fight.

16:10 The Israelites did not fully conquer for two reasons. First, they wanted peace at any cost. Second, they wanted wealth. For the sake of ease and money, they disobeyed God and fell short of what He had for them — as we do today also.

16:10 This sort of compromise seems innocent, but it became the way that much idolatry and immoral worship was adopted by the people of Israel. This is one reason why we see so many struggles in the days of the Judges.

Joshua 17

Distribution Of The Land Among The Remaining Families Tribe Of Manasseh – Verses 1-2

¹ This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph's firstborn, that is, for Makir, Manasseh's firstborn. Makir was the ancestor of the Gileadites, who had received Gilead and Bashan because the Makirites were great soldiers. ² So this allotment was for the rest of the people of Manasseh—the clans of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher and Shemida. These are the other male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph by their clans.

17:1-2 The one "lot" for the tribe of Manasseh, that is the one piece of land, is divided into two pieces: one piece for Ephraim and one piece for Manasseh. Although Manasseh is the first-born (Genesis 41:51), first Ephraim, who is counted as the first-born (Genesis 48:13-Proverbs) received his part of the inheritance. After that Manasseh gets his share of the inheritance. Machir seems to have been the only son of Manasseh (Genesis 50:23). The other sons are then in fact those of Machir.

The Inheritance Of Zelophehad's Daughters – Verses 3-6

³ Now Zelophehad son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons but only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah. ⁴ They went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our relatives." So Joshua gave them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, according to the LORD's command. ⁵ Manasseh's share consisted of ten tracts of land besides Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan, ⁶ because the daughters of the tribe of Manasseh received an inheritance among the sons. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the descendants of Manasseh.

17:3-4 Although women did not traditionally inherit property in Israelite society, Moses put justice ahead of tradition and gave these five women the land they deserved (see Numbers 27:1-11). In fact, God told Moses to add a law that would help other women in similar circumstances to inherit property as well. Joshua was now carrying out this law. It is easy to refuse to honor a reasonable request because "we have never done it that way before." But, like Moses and Joshua, we should look carefully at the purpose of the law and the merits of each case before deciding.

The Boundaries Of The Western Half-Tribe Of Manasseh And Their Incomplete Occupation Of That Land – Verses 7-13

⁷ The territory of Manasseh extended from Asher to Mikmethath east of Shechem. The boundary ran southward from there to include the people living at En Tappuah. ⁸ (Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah itself, on the boundary of Manasseh, belonged to the Ephraimites.) ⁹ Then the boundary continued south to the Kanah Ravine. There were towns belonging to Ephraim lying among the towns of Manasseh, but the boundary of Manasseh was the northern side of the ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. ¹⁰ On the south the land belonged to Ephraim, on the north to Manasseh. The territory of Manasseh reached the Mediterranean Sea and bordered Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. ¹¹ Within Issachar and Asher, Manasseh also had Beth Shan, Ibleam and the people of Dor, Endor, Taanach and Megiddo, together with their surrounding settlements (the third in the list is Naphoth). ¹² Yet the Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. ¹³ However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely.

17:7-12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities: Their failure here is after the same pattern as the failure of the tribe of Ephraim in Joshua 16:10.

17:13 But the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land: Of course, the Canaanites would be determined to dwell in that land. What was lacking was complete determination from the people of Israel. They were satisfied to put the Canaanites to forced labor.

Joshua Answers The Complaint Of The Sons Of Joseph – Verses 14-18

14 The people of Joseph said to Joshua, “Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people, and the LORD has blessed us abundantly.” **15** “If you are so numerous,” Joshua answered, “and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites.” **16** The people of Joseph replied, “The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel.” **17** But Joshua said to the tribes of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—“You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment **18** but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, you can drive them out.”

17:14 Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people: Manasseh and Ephraim were large tribes. Their combined number was greater than any other single tribe. Here, they complain that they have not been allotted adequate land.

17:15 If you are a great people: Joshua’s reply is both wise and wonderful. He tells them, “if you are a great people, then go and get the land for yourself; fully occupy what the Lord has given you.” These tribes had not completely taken the mountain country in their allotted territory, because it would be hard and dangerous work.

17:14-15 Notice the two contrasting attitudes toward settling the Promised Land: Caleb took what God gave him and moved ahead to fulfill God’s plan for him (14:12). He was confident that God would help him drive out the wicked inhabitants and that he would soon fully occupy his land (15:14-15). In contrast, the two tribes of Joseph were given rich land and lots of it, but they were afraid to drive out the inhabitants and take full possession of it. Instead, they begged for more land. But Joshua asked them to prove their sincerity first by clearing the unclaimed forest areas. They agreed, but they failed to carry through (Judges 1:27). The principle applies just as strongly for us today; if we desire more of something, the first thing to do is to be as faithful as we can where we are.