

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND MOVE ON

LESSON 14

Series Subject: Accept the Challenge and Move On!

Lessons 11-16: The Inheritance and Division of the Promised Land Josh. 13:1-21:45

Lesson 14: Children of Joseph's Allotment Josh. 16:1-17:18

Today's Study: Josh. 16:1-17:18

1. Precise Account Joseph's Children Inheritance 16:1-4
2. Portion to Ephraim/Unity Necessary/Failure 16:1-4
3. Partial and the Faithful 17:1-2
4. Petition/Daughters of Zelophehad 17:3-6
5. Possession of Manasseh/Pathetic Situation 17:7-13
6. Pride and Ease in Zion 17:14-18

Time is available only for a brief discussion of review questions from previous lesson.

INTRODUCTION

1. Highlights from Lesson 13

(a) Two quotes from Lesson 12 (*They were repeated in Lesson 13*)

- (1) "Whatever goals we have they require **commitment** for them to be realized, especially when challenges arise and times overwhelming."
- (2) "**Commitment** entails ability to work hard and keep infinite fortitude, despite the pain of adversity you will press on!! **Staying committed to your goal is one of the most fundamental principles of success!**"

(b) An overview of Judah

- (1) The tribe of Judah was first to receive its inheritance in the Promised Land as recorded in Josh. 15.
 - In Vv. 1-12, we have the outer limits of the borders listed.
 - In Vv. 13-19, we have the assignment of Hebron given to Caleb and the bordering country.
 - In Vv. 20-63, we have the names of the cities that were included in Judah's lot.
- (2) In Scripture, Judah is used in several ways, for example:
 - "**Judah**" was the fourth son of Jacob and Leah (Gen. 29:35) and his descendants belonging to the tribe of Judah.
 - "**The Kingdom of Judah**", came about when the United Kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms with two tribes forming the "Kingdom of Judah", or "Southern Kingdom" (1 Kings 12, NB Vv. 16-24).
 - Etc.

- (3) Judah means, “thanksgiving” or “praise” and the root meaning is “to thank” or “to praise” (Gen. 29:25).
- (4) God’s covenant with Judah is unconditional and will never be diminished (Psa. 78:67-68; 89:33-37; etc.)
- (5) The Bible speaks more about the tribe of Judah than any other tribe in Israel; it was through the tribe of Judah that the Messiah was promised and realized (**Gen. 49:10**; Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 33:15; Matt. 1:1, 11; etc.)

(c) Birthright of Reuben Forfeited

- (1) “Birthright”, the word denotes special privileges and advantages; the firstborn son inherited the leadership of the family and the judicial authority of his father; he was also allotted a double portion of the parental inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17, NB v. 17).
- (2) Although Reuben was the firstborn his infidelity disqualified him from receiving the birthright (Gen. 35:22; 49:4; 1 Chron. 5:1).
- (3) Joseph and Judah were the two sons on whom Reuben’s forfeited birthright developed.
 - Joseph received double portion (Gen. 48:5, 22; Deut. 21:15-17).
 - By giving each of Joseph’s sons a blessing, Jacob in fact, gave a double portion as compared to his brothers (Gen. 48:22).
 - This gift became a reality when the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh received their inheritance in the Promised Land (Num. 32; Josh. 16 and 17).
 - Judah received judicial authority (Gen. 49:8-12; 2 Chron. 21:3).
 - The tribe of Judah became the most powerful and important tribe. It not only produced great kings like David and Solomon but it was through Judah that the Messiah came into the world (as noted above).
 - Judah’s authority is anchored in the blessings of Jacob (Gen. 49:8-12) and upheld in the history of Israel (Judg. 1:1-2; 2 Kings 17:18; Psa. 78:68; etc.).

Gen. 49:10 ESV

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”

(d) A Great Day for the Tribe of Judah!

- (1) It was a crowning moment for Judah (*and all Israel*) as they each took possession of the inheritance.
 - For centuries they were wanderers, moving from place to place, having nowhere that was their own.
 - Now, at last! How gloriously wonderful! That long awaited day had come! They are no more nomads; they now have a place of their own!!

- (2) Judah was the first to receive their inheritance in the Promised Land, because they were the largest tribe and based on God's command the larger tribes were the first to be assigned their inheritance (Num. 26:52-56).
- (3) It was not an easy pathway for them but they were willing to pay the price and have come to accept the fact that the reward outweighs all the difficulties experienced.
- "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going."
 - Beloved, when situations become difficult, the strong will work harder to meet the challenges. Sometimes, when we are in a **tough** situation, we need to take action!!
 - **Rom. 8:18 Amplified Bible**
 "... For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (this present life) are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us!"
- (e) **The four borders of Judah** (Josh. 15:1-12)
- (1) The eastern border was all and only the Salt Sea (v. 5)
- The Salt Sea is also called the Dead Sea
 - The Dead Sea in really is a Salt Lake with its shores approximately 1,400 or 1,410 feet below sea level.
- (2) The southern border was that of Canaan in general (Josh. 15:1-4).
 Judah was a powerful warlike tribe and being in this area provided security from potential invasions by enemy forces.
- (3) The northern border divided Judah's lot from the lot of Benjamin (Josh. 15:6-8).
- (4) The western border went near the Great Sea.
- (f) Caleb is once more in focus as we expand briefly on what was noted in Joshua 14.
- (1) Upon securing his lot, Caleb was determined to have Debir a neighboring city liberated and offered his daughter in marriage to anyone who successfully led an assault against Debir (Josh. 15:13-19).
- It is believed that Caleb's nephew, Othniel, was already attracted to Achash who was offered and he took the challenge and successfully liberated Debir.
 - Caleb being a man of integrity, did as he had promised and gave as dowry a parcel of land. He also heeded the request to give in addition, springs of water which was an urgent need.
- (2) As we look at the amazing family of Caleb, three very important facets of a wholesome family were observed.
- The individual members felt free to share with each other their hopes and needs. This practice kept misunderstanding at a minimum.
 - There were love and submission reflected by Achsah in her relationship both with her husband and with her father; she made a reasonable request politely (Josh. 15:18-19).

- Generosity and love reflected in Caleb’s response; he gave liberally and graciously.
- (g) In Josh. 15:21-62 we have the divisions of Judah’s inheritance as well as a listing of the cities.
- (1) The Southern Region Vv. 21-32
 - (2) The Western Foothills Vv. 33-47
 - (3) The Mountain or Hill Region Vv. 48-60
 - (4) The Wilderness or Desert Region Vv. 61-62
- Verse 63 shows that Jerusalem remained unconquered.*

2. Introduction to Josh. 16:1-17:18

These two chapters (Josh. 16 & 17) could have been combined as one; both chapters are focused on the inheritance of the children of Joseph. As we saw in our previous lesson Judah and Joseph were the beneficiaries of Reuben’s forfeited birthright; Judah received the judicial authority (Gen. 49:8-12) and Joseph got the double portion (Gen. 48:5, 22; Deut. 21:15-17).

The tribe of Judah had gained momentum and became the most powerful and largest tribe in Israel; they were first to receive their inheritance in the Promised Land. Next in line was Joseph who received a double portion and was represented in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Like the tribe of Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh were given priority in the allotment of territory.

As we discuss these two chapters (Josh. 16 & 17) we do need to look at an area that is fundamentally important and that is: “behavior plays an important role in our destiny.”

This will be a limited coverage but it’s my prayer that it will bless and inspire, to the glory of God!

Defining ... “behavior”.

- (a) General definition: “The way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.”
- (b) The KJV Dictionary: “Manner of behaving, whether good or bad; conduct; manners; carriage of one self (*“carriage”: a person’s bearing or deportment ... posture, attitude, etc. ... insert mine*), with respect to propriety, or morals, deportment. It expresses external appearance or action; sometimes in a particular character; more generally in the common duties of life.”

Behavior/conduct do need serious attention because it determines destiny, in fact it determines our eternal destiny. There are too many precious lives that are being destroyed, because they do not stop to think and accept the reality that how we live in the present determines our future. Someone noted: **“We can choose what**

to focus on, we can choose what things mean and we can choose what to do. Those three choices; those three decisions, really control our life.”

While this subject of behavior/conduct is applicable to all phases of life, I would like us to remember the eternal factor. **Our eternity is determined by how we behave and by our conduct before God. If we believe—giving our lives to God and follow Him—we will live with God eternally. But if we have not surrendered our lives to God—if we are determined to live by our standards—we will be doomed, separated from God eternally.** The Israelites are a good example of the facts: (a) when they doubted and rebelled against God’s will, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years (Num. 32:8-13) and all male twenty years and older who came out of Egypt, died in the wilderness except Joshua and Caleb who followed God wholeheartedly. (b) When Israel transgressed and took the forbidden items from Jericho, Israel paid an awful price (Josh. 7). When they conducted themselves by God’s command, they conquered the enemies that tried to prevent them from acquiring the promise of the Promised Land (Josh. Chaps. 6 to 12).

The “Rich Man” in Luke 16:19-31 did not go to hell because he was rich but because of the way he chose to live! We do not have time to expand but consider the fact that so many have regarded our department is of no consequence irrespective of how they live!! Morality to many is either too difficult to maintain or they regard it as something that has become obsolete and as a result they continue to live by sinful standards.

Lev. 18:4 Amplified Bible

You shall do My ordinances and keep My statutes and walk in them. I am the Lord Your God.”

We have had our days of failure but no one has to continue in a life of disobedience! God’s grace and mercy is available and everyone who is willing can amend his ways and faithfully follow God in humility, surrender, obedience and renunciation (Neh. 1:9; 2 Chron. 7:14; Isa. 55:7; etc.). God expects us to give our lives to Him, and in so doing develop the character of Christ . . . God expects us to trust Him, love Him and **pattern our lives after His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:1).**

Joshua chapters 16 and 17 present at least six powerful lessons on the behavior of believers. As we have seen before the Israelites were at a historic time, it was a time when they were distributing the lots in the Promised Land to the nine and half tribes. Although they had waited for centuries, that for which they yearned, it was now a reality! As these two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh received their inheritance, we notice the following six strong lessons on the behavior of believers: (a) Josh. 16:1-4: We have an account of the **boundary lines** of Ephraim and Manasseh. **The lesson here is God’s abundant blessing to the faithful and obedient believer.**

- (b) Josh. 16:5-10: The portion inherited by Ephraim; **a strong lesson from verse 9 showing the need to live together as one people.**
- (c) Josh. 17:1-2: The portion inherited by the half tribe of Manasseh. **The lesson here is the marginal, those who have not gone all the way and the faithful, those who endure to the end.** “Borderline Believers” exemplified by the half tribe of Manasseh that chose their inheritance on the east side of Jordan. The “faithful” are those who followed through unto the Promised Land, west of Jordan.
- (d) Josh. 17:3-6: Here we have the daughters of Zelophehad boldly making their case for an inheritance. **The strong lesson here is an example of faith in that which was promised.**
- (e) Josh. 17:7-13: Here we have the boundary lines of Manasseh (half tribe); their failure to expel the enemy. **The strong lesson here is that of failure, compromise, and evil associations with worldly neighbors.**
- (f) Josh. 17:14-18: Here we have the complaint of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh that they deserved more land. **The strong lesson noted here is that of pride and seeking “to be at ease in Zion”—and the necessity to be steadfast and zealous.**

3. **Excerpts from Josh. 16 and 17 . . . (16:1-3, 5, 10; 17:1-2, 3-4, 7, 14, 17-18 NKJV)**

“The lot fell to the children of Joseph from Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho, through the wilderness to Bethel, then went from Bethel to Luz, passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to Gezer; and it ended at the sea.

The border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families was thus: The border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper Beth Horon

And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.

There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph: namely for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore, he was given Gilead and Bashan. And there was a lot for the children of Manasseh according to their families.

But Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And they came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers saying, ‘The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.’

Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father’s brothers.

And the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethat, that lies east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah

Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, ‘Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?’

And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots and are strong.”

A. Precise Account—Joseph’s Children Inheritance/God Blesses the Faithful (Josh. 16:1-4)

As noted above, the lesson taught here is that God abundantly blesses the faithful and obedient.

1. Faithful, Obedient, Beloved and Blessed (Josh. 16:1)

(a) Joseph was one of the younger sons, of Jacob.

(1) Although he was one of the younger sons, he was the eldest by Jacob’s best beloved wife Rachael.

(2) Jacob himself greatly adored Joseph and was the most beloved son.

(3) Joseph took not only his leading role in the family but became a major source of strength and support; he became the second most powerful man in Egypt and was able to keep his family as well as Egypt alive and well cared for in a time of a grievous famine (Gen. Chaps. 42-50).

(b) The two tribes of Joseph (*Discussed in several lessons*) (Josh. 16:1)

(1) “The children of Joseph” (v. 1) refers to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh and next to Judah they received the largest inheritance of land.

(2) The inheritance these two tribes were allotted was because of Joseph’s faithfulness and obedience to God his entire life (Gen. 37:1-50:26).

(3) **Three reminders from the life of Joseph:**

- Joseph was despised by his brothers, who eventually sold him into slavery and he was wrongfully accused and imprisoned in Egypt (Gen. chaps. 37-40).
- In due time God exalted Joseph and he rose to power and became the second most powerful person in Egypt, (Gen. 41, NB Vv. 37-45).
- With him in such a leading role, Joseph was used by God to save both Egypt and his family from perishing during a disastrous and devastating famine (Gen. chaps. 42-50).

(c) **Joseph’s life exemplifies faithfulness and obedience.**

(1) He was so faithful and obedient that God promised to give his heirs a double portion in the Promised Land (Gen. 48:22; 1 Chron. 5:1).

(2) As noted before Joseph’s sons were adopted by Jacob and actually made equal with Jacob’s sons (Gen. 48:1-6, 22).

(3) Now the great day had arrived! The two tribes of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, were to receive their inheritance in the Promised Land—all because of the faithfulness and obedience of their forefather Joseph.

2. **The Boundaries of these Two Tribes** (Josh. 16:1-3)
- (a) As noted before, the precise boundaries of the different tribes are difficult to be determined today for several reasons, for example: name changes, cities buried beneath ruins, etc.
 - (b) We also noted that these passages should not be ignored because of the many names, difficult to pronounce names, not knowing the geography, etc.; although these may be factual yet there is so much to be learnt from these accounts.
 - (c) In regards to the allocation of land to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, these areas are quite well recognized.
 - (d) These two tribes were in many respects next in importance to Judah:
 - (1) This double tribe had been blessed by Jacob so that the two sons of Joseph should rank with their uncles as founders of tribes (Gen. 48:5).
 - (2) When Jacob was pronouncing his blessings on Joseph and his sons, he had determined that Ephraim, the younger son should take the rank before Manasseh (cf. Gen. 48:19; Ezek. 37:16-17).
3. **Desirable Location** (Josh. 16:1-4)
- (a) The portion allotted to Ephraim and Manasseh was in the very heart of the land of Canaan.
 - (1) It extended from Jordan in the east (Josh. 16:11) to the sea, the Mediterranean Sea, in the west, so that it enclosed the whole breadth of Canaan from side to side; and obviously, the fruitfulness of the soil answered the blessings both of Isaac and Moses (Gen. 49:25-26; Deut. 33:13; etc.).
 - (2) The allocation of these two tribes are not described in details as we have with the accounts of the other tribes; primarily, what we have are the limits and boundaries and not the cities within them.
 - (b) The location of these tribes was very desirable.
 - (1) It was composed of a district that was both fertile and beautiful.
 - (2) Beside the sacred valley of Shechem, it included some of the finest parts of Palestine, the mountains of Ephraim, and the great and fertile maritime plain of Sharon.
 - (3) It was proverbial (*well know, famous, etc.*) for its flowers, notable the “rose of Sharon; perhaps a species of mountain tulips.
 - (c) **Note a few significant places related to this lot.**
*I will **briefly** comment on two, and make a brief note on another two:*
 - (1) “. . . **the waters of Jericho . . .**” (v.1)
 - The one brook, which is found in the neighborhood of Jericho.
 - As we saw in a previous lesson, Jericho was cursed by Joshua (Josh. 6:17, 26).
 - The water was not beneficial and was a cause for the unfruitful situation of the area (2 Kings 2:19).
 - Eventually the water was healed by Elisha (2 Kings 2:19-25).
 - The water is also referred to as “Elisha’s Spring.”

- The people who settled in this area in those days did so to take advantage of the fresh water which was such a scarcity in the harsh desert environment just north of the Dead Sea.
- Elisha's Spring, made Jericho an oasis or "City of Psalms" in the otherwise dry surroundings. The perennial (perpetual, ceaseless, etc.) spring continued to produce plenty of water which has a temperature of 26 degrees Celsius.

(2) Valley of Shechem

- Shechem was the first capital of "The Kingdom of Israel" ("The Northern Kingdom") (1 Kings 12:25).
 - Afterwards it was Tirzah (1 Kings 14:17; 15:21; 16:6, 23). Tirzah was a town in the Samarian highlands, northeast of Shechem which was conquered by Joshua (Josh. 12:24).
 - It was later removed by King Omri who built his capital in Samaria (1 Kings 16:24), which continued as such until the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:5).
- Shechem was a very ancient commercial center due its position in the middle of vital trade routes through the region.
- In the Hebrew "*Shechem*" means "*shoulder*", an apt description of the towns location in the narrow valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, approximately 40 miles north of Jerusalem.
- Today the world calls it Nablus a Palestinian Authority City in the West Bank.
- It was at Shechem where Joshua assembled the tribes and strongly admonished them to follow God wholeheartedly (Josh. 24).
 - In reference to Joshua's use of Shechem to present such a solemn charge to the people one scholar wrote: "***For this solemn act he [Joshua] did not choose Shiloh, the site of the national sanctuary . . . but Shechem, a place which was sanctified as no other was for such a purpose as this by the most sacred reminiscences from the times of the patriarchs.***" (reminiscence: memories, recollections, etc.).
 - Shechem was highly received; it was there Moses reaffirmed the covenant Israel had with God. Note carefully Deut. 27, NB Vv. 9, 12-13).
 - In Josh. 24, Israel was brought back to this sacred place, a place of great significance! He brought them back to the same place where God warned them to obey or be chastened (Deut. 27 and 28; Josh. 8:30-35).
- Another important feature in regards to Shechem: It was there Abraham received his first promise from God (Gen. 12:6-7); and where Jacob settled after returning from Mesopotamia and it was here that he

purified his house from the strange gods, burying all their idols under the oak (Gen. 35:2-4).

(3) **Mount Ephraim**

The central mountainous district of Israel extending from Bethel to the plain of Jezreel.

(4) **The Sharon Plain**

The Sharon Plain is the central section of the Coastal Plain of Israel. The plain lies between the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Samarian Hills to the east.

4. **Practical Application**

(a) **God blesses the faithful and obedient believer!**

(1) Joseph's life vividly demonstrated what it means to be genuinely faithful and consistently obedient.

- He adhered to the commandment of God no matter what it cost to do so!
- As we study the life of Joseph one of the most arresting things noticed in Joseph's life is his strong spirit of morality and virtue, of honesty and being a diligent hard-worker.
- **He firmly stood up for what was the will of God in his life!**
 - Joseph refused to commit adultery because he was loyal to God (Gen. 39:9).
 - The sin of adultery might remain hidden from Potiphar, but never from God.

(2) His service was, "service, as to the Lord, and not to men." (Eph. 6:7 KJV).

- Joseph didn't waste time on the job and he refused to take advantage of the officers in charge of his work . . . no "curry favor" sought nor was desired.
- His commitment was evident, while serving in Potiphar's house or during the years of his imprisonment or as leader of the land of Egypt.
- In all situations, Joseph's life was a confession of his faithfulness and obedience to God. Because of his commitment God blessed him with a double inheritance in the Promised Land, which was materialized in the allotment received by the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

(3) Beloved, God will bless us, if we are faithful and obedient; He has thus promised and will do accordingly (2 Peter 3:9).

- **Matt. 25:23 Amplified Bible**
"His master said to him, Well done, you upright (honorable, admirable) and faithful servant! You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little; I will put you in charge of much. Enter in and share the joy (the delight, the blessedness) which your master enjoys."
- **Rev. 22:14 Amplified Bible**

“Blessed (happy and to be envied) are those who cleanse their garments, that they may have the authority and right to [approach] the tree of life and enter the gates into the city [Gen. 2:9; 3:22, 24].”

- See also John 14:21, 23; John 15:10; Rom. 2:10; Eph. 6:8.

(b) **God honors the second birth!**

(1) It should be remembered that Manasseh was the firstborn son of Joseph, and Ephraim was the second born.

- However, when Jacob blessed the two sons, he blessed Ephraim over Manasseh (Gen. 48:13-22).
- Clearly observed in this act, Jacob’s blessing, was that Jacob reversed the birth order of the two sons.
- Warren W. Wiersbe states: **“God rejects our first birth and gives us the second birth. God accepted Abel and rejected Cain; He rejected Ishmael and accepted Isaac, Abraham’s second son; He rejected Esau and accepted Jacob.”**

(2) Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph.

- By birth he was to receive the lesser inheritance.
- However, Jacob reversed the birth order and given the greater inheritance to Ephraim.
- **Clearly illustrated in this act is the fact that God rejects our first birth and demands that we are born again, that we receive the second birth created by the Holy Spirit (John 3:1-11; 1 Cor. 12:3).**
 - We must be born again, experience the second birth in order to be acceptable to God.
 - A spiritual rebirth is essential—absolutely essential—if we desire to be with God eternally.
- Jesus declares the sharp distinction between being born of the **flesh** (physical birth) and being born of the **spirit** (spiritual regeneration). The one gives physical life, the other spiritual life (John 3:6)
 - **Titus 3:5 NKJV**
“not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”
 - **1 Peter 1:23 NKJV**
“having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”
 - See also John 3:3; 1 Cor. 2:14; James 1:18; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1.

B. Portion to Ephraim/Unity Necessary/Failure Josh. 16:5-10

One very important lesson to be learnt from these verses is the necessity to live together in unity, as one nation.

1. Border of Ephraim (Josh. 16:5-8)

Ephraim's northern border began at the edge of the Jordan Valley and ran west near Shiloh, but south of Shechem, then followed the Wadi Kanah down to the Mediterranean Sea.

2. **Integrated Community** (Josh. 16:9)

- (a) Ephraim's inheritance included some cities and villages within the territory of Manasseh.
- (b) This act of uniting these tribes was necessary because the tribe of Ephraim had grown larger than Manasseh.
 - (1) In the plain of Moab when Moses conducted a second census (a) Manasseh numbered 52,700 (Num. 26:34) and (b) Ephraim numbered 32,500 (Num. 26:37).
 - (2) Later in their history, preceding entering Canaan, the population grew; in his blessing recorded in Deut. 33, Moses noted: *"They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."* (Deut. 33:17 KJV).
- (c) Distributing the inheritance in this manner among both tribes was fair and equitable and a way of enhancing unity.
 - (1) Definitely, this combining was indeed a blessing in disguise because it created a situation for the tribes to mingle together.
 - (2) The people went about their daily activities within each other's territories, which naturally generated a spirit of unity and cooperation.
 - (3) There are many references in regards to the call and necessity for unity. One favorite is Psa. 133; note a few brief pointers:
 - David showed that harmony is pleasant, precious, priceless and powerful . . . it does wonders among God's people, it does wonders in the home, in our societies, etc.
 - Unfortunately, genuine harmony is not always evident as it should be among God's people (the Church ...Universal)!!
 - People disagree and cause divisions over unimportant issues.
 - Some delight in causing tension by discrediting others.
 - **Harmony is important because:**
 - It makes the Church a positive example to the world and helps to draw people to the Lord (John 13:35; 1 John 4:20).
 - It helps us cooperate as a body of believers as God meant us to be and give us a foretaste of heaven (John 17:11, 22).
 - It renews and revitalizes ministry because there is less tension to sap our energy (Acts 2:41-47; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 2:1-5).
 - Living in harmony does not mean that we will all agree on everything; there will be many opinions just as there are notes in a musical chord.
 - But we must agree on our purpose in life—to work together for God.
 - **Our outward expression of harmony will reflect our inward harmony of purpose.**
 - **Psa. 133:1 NKJV**

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity.”

3. Failure to expel the enemy (Josh. 16:10)

(a) This was a tragic and costly failure by Ephraim (v. 10).

(1) Whether it was because of cowardice, carelessness, compromise, or coming short of faith, it was a situation that should have been avoided by all means.

- This was a terrible act of disobedience against God.
 - The Canaanites were to be destroyed (Num. 33:50-56; Deut. 12:1-4)
 - No alliance was to be made because of the possibility of being led away from God. (Deut. 7:1-5).
- As we discussed in other lessons, the Canaanites were to be destroyed because they were grossly corrupt, evil and cruel people. Mixing with them would lead to apostasy and ruin.

(2) Their failure to completely drive out the Canaanites was unfortunately typical of other tribes as well.

(b) The Canaanites were kept in servitude: “The Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites . . . and they became slaves required to do forced labor.” (Josh. 16:10b Amplified Bible).

(1) **It is a possibility** (*we can only assume*) that this was the reason not to completely expel the Canaanites because they wanted **forced laborers**. Nevertheless, even this convenience does not justify their disobedience to God’s command.

- If they had the power to make the people of Gezer forced laborers, then certainly they had the power to defeat them completely; especially because Gezer was a city that Joshua had already conquered (Josh. 10:33; 12:12) and God had guaranteed He would drive out the remaining enemies in Canaan (Josh. 13:6).
- This sort of compromise seemed innocent, but it became the way that much idolatry and immoral worship came into the people of Israel. This is one reason why we see so many struggles in the days of the judges (as recorded in the Book of Judges).

(2) In essence there were two possible reasons why the Ephraimites didn’t expel the enemy completely.

- **First**, they wanted peace at any cost! We see the same today when the Church (Universal) prefers to be “politically correct” and enjoy peace with the world instead of standing up for righteousness and true holiness.
- **Second**, they wanted wealth. For the sake of ease and money, they disobeyed God and fell short of what He wanted for them, as we also see today. Unfortunately, so many within the Church (Universal) are power driven and popularity oriented, to the extent that they seek ease and money above faithfulness and obedience to God.

- (c) The downward path began not only by failing to destroy the enemy but living among them.

*Below, I will **briefly** note two highlights from Jer. 31 (Read the chapter for context) which deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel. I will also note a few references from Hosea.*

(1) **God's love for Ephraim!**

- Ephraim's name came to stand for all the northern ten tribes, after the division of the of the united Israelite Kingdom, God's love for Ephraim was clearly demonstrated. NOTE:

Jer. 31:9 NKJV

"For I am a father to Israel, **And Ephraim is my firstborn.**"

- Note God's everlasting love in Jer. 31:2-6.
- In v. 9, God has a heart of a father is seen in His attitude toward **Ephraim His firstborn.**

- Unfortunately, this love was made to suffer deeply.

Jer. 31:20 NKJV

"Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still, Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD."

- In this verse note how the Love of the Heart of God throbs for Ephraim.
- Note these statements (**v. 20**) (*Read Vv. 18-20*).
 - "Is Ephraim My dear son"
 - "I earnestly remember him"
 - "My heart yearns for him"
- "My heart yearns" (NKJV)
"My bowels are troubled" (KJV)
 - This means, My emotions are stirred.
 - Oh, the pain and grief of a parent's heart for his/her child (Example: The father of the "Lost Son" ... Luke 15:11-32, read the chapter).

(2) **Finally, the situation had to be faced!**

- The KJV uses "Ephraim", some translations use "Israel". As noted before, "Ephraim" or "Israel" in this situation is referring to the "Northern Kingdom."
- The Northern Kingdom had sunk into the most degrading sins; this happens when God's people mix and adapt to the sinful lifestyle of the unrighteous (Note again Josh. 16:10). The problem here was Ephraim **mixing or blending** with the unrighteous until they (Ephraim) were saturated with sin!! The result was that they became like the heathen peoples.

Hosea 7:8, 11 NKJV

“Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake unturned. . . . Ephraim also is like a silly dove without sense.”

- The prophet, Hosea, declared of Ephraim (Northern Kingdom) **Hosea 11:12a; 12:1a, 14a NKJV**
“Ephraim has encircled Me with lies Ephraim feeds on the wind Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly. . . .”
- God’s love for Ephraim prevailed but they had become so sinful that judgment was imminent; therefore, the pleas was for Ephraim (Israel) to seek God!
Hosea 11:8a NKJV (*Read the chapter*).
“How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?”
- More sorrowful words could hardly be spoken than:
Hosea 4:17 NKJV: “Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.”
- Despite the sin, **God will heal the repentant!!** (*Read Hosea 14*)
Hosea 14:4, 8 NKJV
“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from him. . . . Ephraim shall say, ‘What have I to do anymore with idols? I have heard and observed him, I am like a green cypress tree; Your fruit is found in Me.’”

(d) **Ephraim’s history teaches the danger of lingering sin!!**

- (1) These people became weak and slothful concerning God’s will.
- (2) They became profit seekers rather than prophetic preachers; they had the Canaanites **serve under tribute** (Josh. 16:10).
- (3) They became so spiritually weak that the temptations to idolatry and immorality overcame them.
- (4) They entered into the spiritual darkness in which **“everyone did what was right in his own eyes** (Judg. 17:6).

(e) **We are admonished to get rid of anything that will be an encumbrance in our relationship with God.** (*Briefly note a few pointers*).

- (1) Our earthly pilgrimage is also referred to as a race. It is a **lifelong test of faith** in this world but we must hold fast (Heb. 10:19-25, 38, NB Vv. 23, 38).
- (2) Every believer is to run the race like a winner, staying focus on receiving that which is granted! (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- (3) **See Heb. 12:1**
 - The race must be run by throwing off “the sin which so easily ensnares us” . . . and steadfastly keep “looking unto Jesus” who is, Himself, persevered to the end by enduring the cross!
 - The race must be run with an awareness that our greatest danger is the temptation to give up and yield to sin (Heb. 12:1, 4) . . .
 - . . . to tempt us with a desire to return to “that country from whence they came” (Heb. 11:15) **but they never looked back but looked forward to a better country** (Heb. 11:16). Faithfulness to God is imperative (James 1:19-21; 4:7-12).

- . . . and to have us once more become citizens of the world. The body of believers in Hebrews 11 gave up what they could see for what they could not see and focused on the promises of God (Heb.11:13; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15).

(4) The Israelites failure and mixing with the unrighteous strongly reminds us of the danger of compromise (**Josh. 15:63; 16:10**).

- By allowing small pockets of Canaanites to remain, the whole nation was finally corrupted.
- By Israel's selling out for acclamation from the wicked, the sinful people became increasingly powerful and numerous.
- **God has always insisted that the only safe policy for any person remaining victorious is an unconditional surrender and commitment of himself to God.**

James 4:7, 10 Amplified Bible

"So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you. ... Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant]."

(5) Beloved, sin must be forsaken: Job 11:14; Isa. 55:7; Eph. 4:22; 1 Peter 2:11; etc.

C. Partial and the Faithful Josh. 17:1-2

In this situation we have the examples of (a) "The Marginal Believer" and (b) "The Faithful Believer."

Introduction

Presented here was the land inherited to the tribe of Manasseh. Two strong lessons are noted in this tribe (a) "the borderline believer" and (b) "the bold and faithful believer." Manasseh's firstborn son was Makir or Machir, whose name is sometimes used to refer to the half tribe of Manasseh that inherited the land of East Jordan (Gen. 50:23; Num. 26:29). It should also be noted that the descendants of Makir (Machir) were sometimes referred to as the Gileadites (Judg. 12:5); who were known as great warriors.

Our text shows that the inheritance of Manasseh was divided; half of the tribe had their inheritance on East Jordan and the other half on the west of Jordan. Those who had their inheritance on the east of Jordan demonstrated a half-hearted commitment by compromising to stay in the fertile plains of East Jordan, instead of crossing the Jordan River into the Promise Land of God. Their decision was a choice of compromise with the world; they were motivated by the worldly appeal of the fertile land instead God's requirement to cross the Jordan river and enter the Promised Land. As a result of their selfishness, covetousness, and compromise they are seen as a strong example of the borderline believers.

In contrast to the compromising half tribe of East Jordan, the rest of the families of Manasseh inherited the land of West Jordan (Josh. 17). Their inheritance was inside the Promised Land, which is a strong lesson of being faithful and obedient believers.

1. Borderline Believers

(a) The half-tribe of Manasse . . . East Jordan

(These were the descendants of Manasseh's first son, Machir or Makir . . . these are an example of the Borderline Believers)

- (1) They were outside the land God had promised them; they were on the east side of Jordan; the Promised Land was on the west side of Jordan.
- (2) Moses was not happy with their choice but allowed it when they agreed to accompany their brothers in arms to liberate Canaan (Num. 32).
- (3) What was their motive? (Num. 32:1). They had a lot of livestock and this land was ideal for such need. However, they had not seen the Promised Land, and based on what the spies had reported the land was indeed rich and fruitful (Num. 13:26-27).
- (4) What are the dangers of the borderline land?

- **In the Promised Land, the Jordan River and other natural land features created means of natural defense.**

- These natural defensive means would help in preventing sudden attacks and would allow for better strategic position for the Israelites within the Promised Land.
- For the “**borderline tribes**,” east of Jordan this would not be the case. In fact, they experienced many attacks and later in their history, they were the first ones taken in the Assyrian captivity.

- **Delay in necessary and urgent aid.**

An even worse situation was that the Jordan River would be a major hindrance in them getting needed help from their brothers. Also if the other tribes needed their help in a crisis, there would be a significant delay.

- **Effective communication would be obstructed.**

The problem was not only in the area of military or other means of aid but the separation by Jordan would also drastically reduce effective communication with their brothers in the Promised Land. This would eventually allow other peoples and their religion to influence these borderline tribes away from God.

(b) Pointers in Regards to the Borderline Believers.

Some pointers with limited references . . . add to if you so desire.

- (1) Definition: “Borderline Believer” is one who lives on the border of believing or below it. The tell-tale revelatory sign of a borderline believer is that they never get very far into Christianity, they always linger near the border.
- (2) **Some features of the “Borderline Believer”:**

- The borderline believer focuses only on the immediate and not the future. *The East Jordan Tribes for example saw the benefits mainly for their livestock; while this was a fact, the location was not the best for future generations* (2 Cor. 4:18).
- The borderline believer is in constant danger of seeking a worldly life instead of a godly life (Col. 3:1-4)
- The borderline believer seeks to obey God based on their way and under their terms. They prioritize comfort and make decisions on what they see (1 John 2:15-17, NB v. 16).
- Despite God's great plans for our lives (Jer. 29:11; Eph. 2:10); the borderline believer tends to make his own plans (Prov. 14:12).
- The borderline believer focuses on what is comfortable and easy above the perfect will of God (Matt. 10:32-39; 26:36-46).
- *(This is similar to the above)*. The borderline believer is more interested in the exaltation of self instead of dying on the cross (Gal. 2:20; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23).

(c) **Five Warnings from the Book of Hebrews.**

*The Jews held on to tradition instead of an in-depth relationship with God through Jesus Christ (Example see **Mark 7:1-23, NB Vv. 9-13**). Too many people feel good just because they went to church and participated in the ceremonies and yet they miss God's power to change during the rest of the week. Unfortunately, too many are committed and satisfied with only a form of godliness yet lack the power of God (**Isa. 20:13; Matt. 15:8; 2 Tim. 3:5; etc.**).*

Note Five Warnings from the Book of Hebrews:

- (1) The danger of drifting from the truth (**Heb. 2:1-4**).
*The problem isn't that they rejected the truth but that they neglected the truth (**Read 2:3**).*
- (2) The danger of doubting the truth (**Heb. 3:7-14**).
*Here we see the danger of resisting what we know is right. This makes us become desensitized to the things of God (**Read v. 8**).*
- (3) The danger of not practically demonstrating the truth (**Heb. 5:11-6:20**)
*Note the admonition given for their spiritual immaturity (**Read 5:12-14**); he then warns them about falling away (**Read 6:4-8**). There is victory by remaining loyal to Christ in faith and love (**Read 6:9-20**).*
- (4) The danger of drawing away from the truth (**Read Heb. 10:26-39**).
*This happens because of the fear of what others think about us. We should never lose hope, too much is at stake; it is a privilege we have in Jesus Christ and an awesome responsibility!! (**Read Vv. 35-38**).*
- (5) The danger of denying the truth (**Heb. 12:18-29**).
*A strong warning to all Christians who are not only tempted but inclined to turn away from Christ. When we think of the privileges through Jesus Christ, it would be a waste and total disaster to disobey God's warning!! (**Read Vv. 25-29**).*

2. Confident, faithful and Obedient

(a) One tribe with two different examples!

In regards to the half tribe of Manasseh that remained on the east side of Jordan, we saw that they manifested compromise, selfishness and covetousness. On the other hand, the other half tribe manifested confidence, faithfulness and obedience.

(b) The half tribe that moved on to the Promised Land believed in the promise of God and decided to remain faithful and obedient.

(1) Their example provides a very strong lesson for us: we must remain faithful and obedient to God!

- It means that we will go God's way and not our way. It means that our all is on the altar of sacrifice, to the glory of God!!
- Beloved, we must reject the world and follow after God, with the determination never to compromise with the ungodly lifestyle to which so many are adapting.

(2) Like Abraham we will be obedient and maintain our faith in God!!

Heb. 11:8-10 ESV

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."

(3) As noted before, we have a guaranteed inheritance and just as the enemies did everything to prevent Israel from possessing the Promised Land, even so Satan and his host continue and will continue to try and prevent us from obtaining and enjoying our inheritance.

- Paul was not ashamed nor intimidated by the negative experiences but maintained his focus on Him who is able.

2 Tim. 1:12 NKJV

"For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and **am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.**"

- The witnesses in Heb. 11 maintained their faith! Beloved! We must continue in faith and obedience against all odds and circumstances posed by the enemies.

Heb. 11:6 Amplified Bible

"But without faith it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that **He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him [out].**"

3. The blessings of Joseph ... passed on to his ancestors.

- (a) The heritage of good and noble parents is to be cherished!
- (1) Such awesome privileges should serve to be a challenge to pay careful attention to such good and wholesome examples.
- It is important to remember that virtue is not hereditary and there is a need for everyone to prove himself worthy of the trust placed in him/her.
 - Note the following quote on virtue:
“A grateful heart is a beginning of greatness. It is an expression of humility. It is a foundation for the development of such virtues as prayer, faith, courage, contentment, happiness and well-being.”
- (2) The people of Manasseh inherited their portion **“by their families”** (v. 2).
- No one was forgotten, provision was made for everyone.
 - It was an awesome opportunity but it must be noted that for them to survive, improvements had to be made and properly maintained!
- (b) The situation in regards to this inheritance presents some likeness to the Christian life.
- (1) **First**, the Christian comes into a rich heritage.
- Paul speaks of the believer as one “in whom also that after you believe, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:13-14).
 - He reminds the Christian “that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance” (Col. 3:24).
 - Peter declares that such people have begotten “to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 1:4).
- (2) **Second**, the believers are to improve themselves. They are reminded to “fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:12). **Note 1 Tim. 6:11-12:**
- Paul uses active and forceful verbs to describe the Christian life: run, pursue, fight, hold tightly.
 - Some think Christianity is a passive religion that advocates waiting for God to act.
 - On the contrary, we must have an active faith, training, working hard, sacrificing and doing what we know is right.
 - **Christian service, like athletics, requires training and sacrifice. Our discipline and obedience largely define whether or not we will be contributors or merely spectators.**
 - Beloved, let us protect what we have received, improve ourselves, maintain steadfastness in our commitment, faithfulness and obedience: 2 Tim. 2:22; 4:6-8; 1 Cor. 9:25-26; etc.
- (c) I will close this pointer with one of my favorite references (*Israel received their promised inheritance, we are assured of ours!!*). **Psalm 16:6**
NKJV: “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places: yes, I have a good heritage.”

Common English Bible: “The property lines have fallen beautifully for me; yes, I have a lovely home.”

The Complete Jewish Bible: “Pleasant places were measured out for me; I am content with my heritage.”

Holman Christian Standard Bible: “The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.”

D. Petition/Daughters of Zelophehad Josh. 17:3-6

The lesson noted here is faith in that which was promised.

1. Zelophehad’s daughters (Num. 27:1-11; 36:1-12; Josh. 17:3-6)

(a) Introduction (Num. 27:1-11)

The account presented here is in regards to a man who had no sons (see Num. 26:33) and his daughters were concerned about their rights of obtaining an inheritance and preserving their father’s name in the land (Num. 27:4). Their action in approaching Moses, Eleazar and the leaders of Israel was an unprecedented act of courage and conviction.

(b) Zelophehad died in the wilderness (Num. 27:3).

(1) He was among those who died during the wilderness wandering (Num. 26:64-65; 32:10-13).

(2) These bold and remarkable women fully understand the nature of the wilderness experience and what it means to make a claim for their family.

(c) Moses inquired of God on their behalf (Num. 27:5).

(1) In this verse (v. 5) we have seen a possible example of how cases operated under the law:

- The governing law would be proclaimed.
- Then legitimate exceptions or special considerations would come to the elders and perhaps Moses himself.
- Moses would then await a decision from the Lord.
- In this case the Lord gave a favorable decision for the women.

(2) Num. 36:1-13 provides more information in regards to this account.

To summarize: The issue was in regards to the daughters’ marital status and the necessity to maintain the lot within the family. The outcome was: they, daughters of Zelophehad, had to marry someone among their tribe so that the family allotment would not pass from tribe to tribe (Note Num. 36:5-13, NB Vv. 8-9).

2. Manasseh’s portion . . . ten plots of land plus East Jordan (Josh. 17:5)

(a) No sons were born to Zelophehad, he had only daughters.

(1) This created a problem in regards to preserving the family name. If there were no sons the family name would eventually cease to exist.

- In the ancient world, a father’s property was divided among his sons, never among the daughters.
- By law, daughters were prohibited from receiving and owning property.

- When they married they received a dowry or wedding present from the father but that was all.
- The value of the dowry, the bride received depended on the wealth of the father.
- Very important to remember: when a daughter married she became a full-fledged member of the family into which she married.

(2) Action taken by the daughters of Zelophehad.

- As noted above, we saw their boldness and faith in presenting their petition to Moses to be granted inheritance among the tribe.
- As we saw, with tenderness and compassion Moses presented their petition to God who graciously gave His approval.

(3) **Now, the long-awaited day arrived (Josh. 17:3-6), for the daughters of Zelophehad.**

- They were the ones who made the claim to Joshua and the leaders of Israel.
- Similarly, we saw Caleb who had no doubt about the promise made to him, likewise “claimed” his inheritance (Josh. 14:6-15).
- Oh Beloved! We just have to take it to the Lord and leave it there!! Indeed!! Leave it there, take your needs to the Lord and leave it there!! He will bring it to pass!!

Psa. 37:5 Amplified Bible

“Commit your way to the Lord [roll and repose each care of your load on Him]; trust (lean on, rely on and **be confident**) also in Him and He will bring it to pass.”

(b) The final outcome of the lots.

(1) **NOTE:**

- In regards to Manasseh’s territory there were ten portions that went to five brothers (minus Hopher) and to the five granddaughters of Hopher.
- *The six remaining sons of Manasseh are listed in Josh. 17:2 . . . **two clarifications (briefly):***
 - “Abiezer” (Josh. 17:2 is the same person “Jeezer” (Num. 26:30-32, NB v. 30).
 - “Hopher” is the father of “Zelophehad” who had no sons.

(2) The inheritance of Manasseh was divided into ten portions (plots, etc.) of land plus East Jordan.

- Five plots were given to the daughters of Zelophehad, in lieu of the Hopher’s family.
- Five plots were given to the other five families (see Josh. 17:2).
- East Jordan or Gilead (Josh. 17:6) was given to the other descendants, these were the compromising families of Manasseh.

E. Possession of Manasseh/Pathetic Situation Josh. 17:7-13.

The strong lesson to be noted here is an unfortunate observation of: "Failure, compromise and evil association with worldly neighbors."

1. Here we have a short account of the lot of the half tribe of Manasseh. At this time, we will not be listing these borders (See Josh. 17:7-11 for a listing).
2. There was great communication between the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.
 - (a) The city of Tappuah belonged to Ephraim, but the country was adjoining to Manasseh (v. 8); there was likewise many cities of Ephraim that lay within the border of Manasseh (v. 9) also noted in chap. 16:9.
 - (b) Manasseh likewise had cities with their accessories in the tribes of Issachar and Asher (v. 11). The intermixing was good for maintaining harmony and genuine brotherly love.
3. **Manasseh failed to expel the enemy** (Josh. 17:12-13).
 - (a) Although the children of Manasseh inherited choice locations, they "could not drive out the inhabitants of the cities" (v. 12); but they used them as forced laborers (v. 13).
 - (1) Maybe, they were just doing what the Ephraimites did (Josh. 16:10).
 - (2) The subsequent history of these people revealed the lethal power of such alliances.
 - (3) As noted before, failing to expel the enemy from the Promised Land was in direct violation of God's will (Num. 33:50-56; Deut. 7:1-5; 12:1-4).
 - (b) This is a clear and powerful lesson of failure and a warning against compromise and evil association with the unrighteous.
 - (1) Israel knew that God had instructed them to conquer and destroy all the Canaanites (Num. 33:50-56; Deut. 12:1-4; 20:16-18).
 - (2) The Canaanites had become so corrupt and evil that they were beyond turning to God. They were to be utterly destroyed lest their influence corrupt the Israelites and turn them from God (*as noted in other lessons*) (Ex. 34:11-16; Deut. 7:1-5).
 - (3) **Beloved! God's people always become powerless when sinfulness is tolerated in their lives!**

F. Pride and Ease in Zion Josh. 17:14-18

The lesson here is pride and seeking "to be at ease in Zion" and the necessity to be steadfast and zealous.

Introduction

As noted in another lesson, the distribution of the Promised Land by lot was an effective system and was well received by the people. There was very little evidence of a lack of satisfaction but obviously we will never please everyone and here is an example of such fact, seen in a lack of satisfaction by the children of Joseph, tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Their complaint is a clear and strong lesson of conceited pride and the desire

to be at ease in Zion, it also revealed the urgent necessity for steadfastness and zealously.

1. **Complaint** (Josh. 17:14)

(a) **Josh. 7:14 NKJV**

“Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now.”

(b) Their reason for complaining.

(1) Their inheritance was not large enough, and as a result they desired more land!

- Based on their population they were considerable numerous.
- Because of the blessings of God, they were a great people; God had personally blessed them in a very special way (Gen. 48:1-6; 49:22-26).
- They were from the same tribe, Ephraim, as Joshua himself (Num. 13:8). Why would Joshua not want his own family and tribe to have more territory?

(2) We know what they stated to be the reasons for their complaint but there was something deeper to be noted.

- As we observe and analyze, it will be seen that their selfish and bitter complaint was the expression of their deep-seated pride!
- Obviously, they felt that they were special and that they deserved special treatment. This is still a systemic problem among so many today, resulting in a host of negative issues.

2. **Challenge given to the two tribes** (Josh. 17:15).

(a) A challenge is extended to the discontent (v. 15)

(1) Joshua’s response was wise, wonderful and workable! Since they were a great people what was really needed was to go and get busy, there was work to be done.

(2) These tribes had not completely taken the mountain country in their midst, because it would be hard and dangerous work.

(3) If they needed to increase their territory, two areas were to be addressed.

- They were to clear the forest.
- They were to drive out the enemy.

(b) Note the contrasting attitudes towards settling in the Promised Land.

(1) Caleb’s attitude with that of Ephraim and Manasseh

- Caleb took what God gave him and moved ahead to fulfill God’s plan for him (Josh. 14:12).
 - When they spied the land, even then Caleb was fully persuaded and confident that with God victory was assured (Num. 13:30; 14:6-12).

- Forty-five years later he was still confident that with God’s help he would drive out the enemy occupying his inheritance (Josh. 14:11-12; 15:14-15).
 - In contrast, the two tribes of Joseph were given lots of rich land, but they were afraid to drive out the inhabitants and take full possession of it. However, they insisted on getting more land!
3. **Counter-response was made by the tribe** (Josh. 17:16)
- (a) Joshua’s challenge brought to light the besetting issues characterizing these tribes; they were: self-satisfied, laid-back and sluggish.
- (1) Note their response to Joshua’s challenge:
- “. . . the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron . . .”(v. 16)
 - In other words, “the enemy is too strong and too well equipped to be conquered (v. 16).
 - This takes us back to the spies’ report in Num. 13:26-14:12.
- (2) Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible notes:
 “Simply stated, these two tribes were ‘at ease in Zion,’ gripped by a spirit of inactivity, idleness, slothfulness, self-satisfaction. They had allowed themselves to become complacent, lethargic, sluggish, and apathetic. They did not want to undertake the difficult task of clearing out forests and driving out formidable enemies.”
- (b) In essence, they wanted “easy land” given to them!
- (1) They didn’t mind receiving and enjoying but were unwilling to do what was necessary to make their goals become reality.
- (2) They wanted it nice and easy instead of taking God’s promises and going out and taking what God had given them.
- (3) We won’t go in details but this principle applies just as strongly today; if we desire more of something, the first thing to do is to be faithful where we are!!
4. **Counter-reaction!** (Josh. 17:17-18)
- (a) As noted above Joshua was a fellow Ephraimite and it may be that these two tribes were expecting some favoritism (*noted earlier*).
- (1) Note however, that when Joshua reissued the challenge (see v. 15), he was just as direct as before: if these two tribes wanted to secure their inheritance, they should realize that it was going to happen only by them going to work and conquer the enemy (Vv. 17-18).
- (2) These two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, were powerful people.
- They were strong enough to clear out the forest and being valiant soldiers they were able to conquer the enemy.
 - Irrespective of how they responded the only way to obtain their desired goal was made quite clear and remained unchanged: they had to clear

the forest and expel the enemy and they would have more usable land for the families of the tribes (Vv. 17-18).

- (3) Note the following quote from Matthew Henry:

“Many wish for larger possessions who do not cultivate and make the best of what they have, think they should have more talents given them who do not trade with those with which they are entrusted. Most people’s poverty is the effect of their idleness; would they dig, they would not beg.”

(b) **How should one handle a hard-to-please—people—a people ever inclined to quarrel and be dissatisfied?**

- (1) Joshua blended kindness with firmness.
- (2) He would not change God’s appointments to please the whims of empty boasters.
- (3) He challenged their slothfulness.
- (4) He gave no special advantage to those wished to trust God’s mercy, but were unwilling to “strive to enter in” (Luke 13:24).
- (5) Such people must learn that “he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give the power over the nations” (Rev. 2:26).

5. **Practical Application . . . Lessons to be Learnt from Attitude of Ephraim and Manasseh’s Complaint**

The following is a compilation based on excerpts from The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible.

(a) **We must not be gripped with a spirit of pride.**

- (1) Scripture is clear: pride and haughtiness, conceit and self-exaltation are sins that will be judged by God
- (2) See Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 8:2; 1 John 2:15-16; etc.

(b) **We must not be complacent, “at ease in Zion”.**

- (1) The passive, inactive, idle, complacent, lethargic, slothful, indifferent life will be cursed by God.
- (2) See Matt. 24:12-13; Luke 12:47; James 2:14; 4:17; etc.

(c) **We must be steadfast and zealous for God.**

- (1) We must be the exact opposite of these two tribes. We must persevere, endure until we receive the full inheritance promised by God, until we reach the other shore and the glorious fulfillment of the Promised Land of heaven.
- (2) See Rom. 12:10-11; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27; 2 Peter 3:17; Heb. 4:14; etc.

1 Peter 1:3-5 NKJV

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in**

heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

2 Tim. 2:15 Amplified Bible

“Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.”

Lesson 14 Review Questions

- Complete each of the following (*Highlights from "An Overview of Judah ..."*).
 - "The tribe of Judah" was first _____
in the Promised Land as recorded in Josh. 15.
 - "Judah" was the fourth _____
(Gen. 29:35) and his descendants belonging to the "tribe of Judah."
 - "The Kingdom of Judah," came about when the United Kingdom of _____

(1 Kings 12, NB Vv. 16-24).
- As it relates to the Hebrews, define "birthright." Give reference.

- Complete the following:
"The tribe of (a) _____ became the most (b) _____ and
important tribe. It not only produced great (c) _____ like (d) _____
and (e) _____ but it was through Judah the (f) _____
came into the (g) _____."
- Why would it have been possible to combine Joshua chapters 16 and 17 into one
chapter?

- Complete by choosing the correct answer:
"We can choose what to focus on; we can choose what things mean and we can choose
what to do. Those three choices; those three decisions _____
_____."
 - are not really important
 - really control our life
 - are overemphasized by many
 - must always be disregarded

6. (a) Answer True or False. (b) Explain your answer.
“Behavior has nothing to do with anyone becoming separated from God eternally.”

7. We quoted Eph. 5:1 in our lesson; briefly explain what lesson is taught in this verse.
What emphasis is placed on “followers” or “imitators?”

8. We noted six important “Practical Lessons” in Joshua chapters 16 and 17 that are relevant to each six main points of this lesson (Lesson 14). Briefly list all six pointers with their references.

9. Briefly explain in what way the portion allotted to Ephraim and Manasseh were regarded as “desirable”.

10. List some important features about “the waters of Jericho” (Josh. 16:1).

11. What was the first capital of the Northern Kingdom (or Israel)? Note also the areas to which the capital was later relocated.

12. List three important features of Shechem.

13. Choose the correct statement from the jumbled listing below to complete each of the following (*Related to facts noted about Joseph*).

- (a) Joseph's life vividly demonstrates what it means to be _____
_____.
- (b) He adhered to the commandment of God no _____
_____.
- (c) He firmly stood up for what was _____
_____.
- (d) Joseph refused to commit adultery because _____
_____.

Jumbled Listing

- (a) the will of God in his life.
- (b) he was loyal to God.
- (c) genuinely faithful and consistently obedient
- (d) matter what it cost to do so.

14. In our lesson we saw examples of God reversing the birth order; for example, Isaac accepted not Ishmael, Ephraim given the greater inheritance above Manasseh; etc. How was this fact illustrated as it relates to our Christian experience?

15. Briefly explain in what way was Ephraim's inheritance was an integrated one and how was this beneficial.

16. List, with references, some ways in which “harmony” is very important to the body of believers (*Three pointers were briefly presented*).

17. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh did not drive out the Canaanites but instead used them as forced laborers. In what way was this failure among the nation of Israel, detrimental?

18. Ephraim’s history teaches **the danger of lingering sin**. List the pointers noted in our lesson in regards to this fact.

19. What is the **only safe way** for a believer to remain victorious (give reference)?

20. In discussing the “borderline believer”, what five warnings were highlighted from the Book of Hebrews (*briefly note these pointers with references*)?

21. The inheritance received by the “children of Joseph” presented some likeness to the Christian life. Briefly note two pointers noted in our lesson ... with references.

22. Briefly explain why the daughters of Zelophehad had to make a petition to Moses and the leaders of Israel (Num. 27:1-11) in order to obtain an inheritance.

23. What was Ephraim’s and Manasseh’s complaint in regards to their inheritance and what was Joshua’s recommendation?

24. Complete the following:

“Simply stated, these two tribes were ‘at (a) _____ in Zion,’ (b) _____ by a spirit of (c) _____, idleness. (d) _____, self-satisfaction. They had allowed themselves to become (e) _____, lethargic (f) _____, and apathetic. They did not want to (g) _____ the difficult task of (h) _____ out forest an (i) _____ out formidable enemies.”

25. By observing Joshua’s strategy in his response to the complaining tribes, what steps were noted how to handle **“hard-to-please-people, prone to quarrel and be dissatisfied?”**

26. Upon noting the overall assessment of Ephraim, what practical lessons are to be regarded and applied by all believers ... with references) *Three pointers noted in our lesson)?*
