

entire length of the last mountain height on the northern end of Shephelah. This site would be almost impossible to take from the north. It would likewise be inaccessible from the lowlands of the Philistine plain on the west. Since valleys surrounded on the south and east, it was similarly hard to attack from any of these points. The Ephraimites could have taken the city with God's help, but they were dilatory in their duties. When the book of Joshua was written, the Canaanites were still there. The author says that they were there "unto this day."

### TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 16

1. What two tribes are called "children of Joseph"?
2. What river was on the east border of these tribes?
3. What sea was on their west border?
4. Near what town did the southern border of the children of Joseph begin on the east?
5. Was Beth-el along the southern border of the children of Joseph?
6. Along what river did the northern border of Ephraim run out to the sea?
7. Did Jericho belong to Ephraim?
8. In what tribe's territory did Ephraim inhabit separate cities?
9. From what town did Ephraim fail to drive out the Canaanites?
10. Were these Canaanites made to serve under tribute?

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 17

- Vv. 1-13 *Inheritance of Manasseh west.* One half of the tribe of Manasseh received land east of the Jordan; but the other half was to have territory which was north of Ephraim, lying between

## JOSHUA

the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Manasseh was the elder of Joseph's two sons, but he did not receive the preeminence. Ephraim was preferred above the older Manasseh when Jacob crossed his hands and gave his right-hand blessing to Ephraim and his left-hand blessing to Manasseh (Genesis 48).

Vv. 14-18 *The complaint of the children of Joseph.* The descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh complained, saying they were a large and prosperous group of people and needed more land than was given to them. Joshua heard their complaint and offered a very suitable solution. He suggested that they develop to the fullest the land in which they were living before they asked for more. Since they had not yet fully conquered the territory, this was a challenge to the children of Joseph to set an example for the rest of the tribes by reaching the fullness of their potential.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Neither male nor female.* In Christ there is no bond or free; neither is there male or female (Galatians 3:28). Each has a role to play by nature, and a woman's soul is just as precious in the sight of God as the soul of a man. The same was ultimately true under the Old Testament dispensation. The Bible teaches that man has the preeminence, but woman's place as a help meet for him has always been respected in the eyes of God. This truth was borne out in the provisions made for men who had no sons. In such cases, their daughters inherited their land and goods.

2. *It is good for brothers to dwell together.* How pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalms 133:1). This was the cry of the psalmist, and such a condition is exemplified by the associations of Ephraim and Manasseh. They were brethren. They were both sons of Joseph. Jacob had placed his hands on both of them and adopted them as his own sons. When the inheritances of the people of Israel were assigned, Ephraim and Manasseh had lots which were next to each other. Brethren in Christ should dwell together in such peace and pleasantness as well.
3. *"Stir what you have."* During World War II, sugar was rationed in the United States. A preacher told about asking for a little more sugar for his coffee as he ate lunch in a restaurant. The waitress' curt reply was, "Stir what you have." This is what Joseph told Ephraim and Manasseh to do. They were complaining that they needed more land. Joshua told them to make better use of what they had. Christians should use their talents to the fullest of their ability instead of complaining because they do not have more talents.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### *Inheritance of Manasseh West 17:1-13*

There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he was the first-born of Joseph; to wit, for Machir the first-born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.

2 There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hephher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the

male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

3 But Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

4 And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

5 And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan;

6 Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

7 And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah.

8 Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim;

9 And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea:

10 Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east.

11 And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and

the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of En-dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries.

12 Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

13 Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

1. *Who was Machir?* 17:1

Machir was the eldest son of Manasseh. This inheritance had already been given to him (Numbers 32:39-42). His people had led in conquering Bashan, and his descendants were given the territory as an inheritance. This land lay east of the Sea of Galilee and was the north end of the territory east of Jordan. Their fierce warring had earned for Machir the title of "a man of war." Their land had formerly been the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan.

2. *How many sons did Manasseh have?* 17:2

Six other sons of Manasseh were listed in addition to Machir. The men listed were not the men who settled the land but the sons of Manasseh from whom those Israelites of Joshua's day were descendants. The total of these men was 52,700 as they were numbered before crossing the Jordan into Canaan (Numbers 26:34).

3. *Who was Zelophehad?* 17:3

Zelophehad was a descendant of Manasseh who had no sons to inherit his land. His daughters petitioned Moses in this respect. Moses and the elders decided that it was proper for them to inherit as long as they married men who were members of their own tribe (Numbers 36). This became a statute in Israel. Such a provision prevented the woman's inheriting land in her tribe and her husband's

inheriting land in another tribe. At the same time, it gave recognition to the woman as an heiress. The five daughters were given by name here and in Numbers 36.

4. *Did the territory of Manasseh include Shechem?* 17:7

Some confusion exists in the minds of some commentators who study these statements about the land, but it seems apparent from the text that the land of Manasseh stopped at Michmethah which lay "before Shechem." Other passages of Scripture bear out the fact that Ephraim possessed Shechem. Manasseh's territory lay north of Shechem. Shechem was an important site. Abraham first stopped there when he entered Canaan (Genesis 12:6). Jacob bought land there when he returned from Haran (Genesis 33:19). In the present time, it is the center of bustling activity; and it has always been an important site in Palestine.

5. *Who possessed Tappuah?* 17:8

The city of Tappuah belonged to Ephraim. Men of Ephraim possessed it. At the same time it is clear that it lay on the border of Ephraim and Manasseh. The men of Manasseh probably possessed the fields around Tappuah on the north, but the town itself was inhabited by the Ephraimites. Many important border towns enjoyed this kind of situation. Although legally belonging to one tribe, some of these cities fell largely under the commercial and social influence of a neighboring tribe.

6. *Where was the river Kanah?* 17:9

The river Kanah rose in the hill country of Ephraim and made its way westward to the Mediterranean Sea. It was a natural boundary between Ephraim and Manasseh. Manasseh had the land lying on the north and Ephraim possessed the land on the south of the river. The stream was not navigable; but it did provide water, especially in the rainy season. Its chief importance, however, was in its being a landmark which served as a boundary.

7. *What sea was Manasseh's west border? 17:10a*

The Mediterranean Sea formed the west border of Manasseh. The maritime plain was theirs for the taking. The sloping hills which rose up from the sea were also available to the men of Manasseh. This gave the people an outlet to the sea and its commerce as well as access to the rich marine life which was in the sea. Since both Ephraim and Manasseh failed to drive out the Philistines who lived along the seacoast, neither of these Israelite tribes became great seafaring people.

8. *What were the northern and eastern borders of Manasseh? 17:10b*

On the north, Manasseh reached to the territory of the tribe of Asher. On the east, these people reached to the territory of the tribe of Issachar. In actuality, his east border reached to the Jordan River, but the southern border of Issachar ran in a diagonal line from the northwest to the southwest and thus formed much of Manasseh's northeastern border.

9. *Why did Manasseh possess cities in Issachar? 17:11*

Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor, En-dor, and Megiddo, with their towns, were listed as cities which were in Issachar but possessed by the people of Manasseh. Natural borders, such as the Kishon River, apparently made it practical for Manasseh to possess these rather than Issachar, since they lay south of the river and across the river from the main part of Issachar's territory. V. G. Blaikie, (*The Book of Joshua, The Expositor's Bible*, page 304), says that these cities were very important to the defense of the Esdraelon Plain and that it was therefore necessary that they be held by some tribe stronger than Issachar.

10. *Why could Manasseh not drive out the Canaanites? 17:12*

Manasseh may have been numerous and strong, but she was not able to do all God expected the people to do.

They possessed many cities, even taking possession of some which lay in the territory of her neighbors, but the people could have done better. Perhaps they trusted in their rich heritage and did not reach the potential which was possible for them. Heredity is never a guarantee of success; success takes hard work.

*11. How did most of the children of Israel deal with the Canaanites? 17:13*

God had commanded the children of Israel to drive out the Canaanites. He expected His people to exterminate them, lest they pollute the people with their idolatrous ways. Evidently, the rest of the children of Israel were like the children of Manasseh. They were not strong enough or ambitious enough to do what God commanded them to do. They allowed the Canaanites to be subject to task work. This was the agreement made with the Gibeonites who had deceived Joshua. The Gibeonites were made to be hewers of wood and drawers of water (Joshua 9). The people of Israel put the Canaanites under tribute and made them perform servile tasks.

*The Complaint of the Children of Joseph 17:14-18*

14 And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?

15 And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

16 And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.

17 And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only:

18 But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

12. *What was the request of the children of Joseph? 17:14*

The children of Joseph asked for more than one lot and one portion. Ephraim must have led in this request. They were saying that since the descendants of Manasseh received two portions in two lots—one east of the Jordan and one west of the Jordan—they, too, should receive an equal amount of territory. Manasseh west may have joined in the request, since the complaint is attributed to “the children of Joseph.”

13. *What was Joshua's answer? 17:15-18*

In effect, Joshua told them to make full use of what they had. The territory which they possessed was very mountainous, but it would be possible for them to terrace the hillsides and grow crops on the slopes. The Perizzites were Canaanite villagers; and if the children of Joseph had driven out all these people from their villages and taken possession of them, they would have had plenty of room.

14. *Why mention the chariots of iron? 17:18*

No record is made prior to this time of the Israelites having any chariots for warfare. Their battles were fought by men with swords and spears. Her soldiers were on foot and at a disadvantage when going against those who had these chariots. Jabin, king of Hazor, the leader of the northern coalition, had used these chariots against the children of Israel (Joshua 11:6). The people of Israel had defeated these Canaanites in this engagement. The chil-

dren of Joseph were fainthearted in feeling that they would not be able to possess the land since their enemies had these chariots. They were evidently looking for an excuse.

### TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 17

1. Who was Machir?
2. Who was Zelophehad?
3. Where was Bashan?
4. What was Manasseh's western border?
5. Which tribe lay south of Manasseh?
6. What tribe lay north of Manasseh?
7. What tribe lay east of Manasseh?
8. What river lay between Manasseh and Ephraim, near their western borders?
9. What did the children of Israel do to the Canaanites who lived among them?
10. What was the name given to the mountain in the land of the children of Joseph?

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 18

- Vv. 1-10 *The remaining land divided into portions.* There were seven portions of land left to be assigned; and after the children of Joseph were settled in the midst of the land, the remaining territory was divided into lots for those tribes which had not yet received their portions. Joshua was determined to complete the work which had been assigned to him by God.
- Vv. 11-20 *Benjamin's inheritance.* The first tribe of the seven remaining without an inheritance was Benjamin. The territory assigned to these people lay just north of the land given to the