



Joshua - Chapter Sixteen

III Joshua 13:1-21:45 - Dividing the Land (continues)

III.b Joshua 14:1-19:51 - Western territories (continues)

Summary of Chapter Sixteen

This chapter describes the land allocation to Ephraim, the first of the two tribes descended from Joseph.

III.b.vi Joshua 16:1-10 - The Territory of Ephraim

Refer to the chapter summary above.

¹ The allotment of the Josephites went from the Jordan by Jericho, east of the waters of Jericho, into the wilderness, going up from Jericho into the hill country to Bethel; ² then going from Bethel to Luz, it passes along to Ataroth, the territory of the Archites; ³ then it goes down westwards to the territory of the Japhletites, as far as the territory of Lower Beth-horon, then to Gezer, and it ends at the sea.

Joshua 16:1-3

Chapters 16-17 describe the allotment of the Josephites, i.e. the inheritance given to the tribes of Ephraim (16:5-10), and of Manasseh (17:1-13).

⁴ The Josephites – Manasseh and Ephraim – received their inheritance.

Joshua 16:4

The Josephites – Manasseh and Ephraim, were the descendants of the two sons of Joseph born in Egypt before the patriarch Jacob arrived. Jacob subsequently 'adopted' these two children as if they were his own: *<<Therefore your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are*

now mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are>> (Genesis 48:5). Genesis Chapter 48 also records that, although Manasseh was the firstborn son of Joseph and therefore the one who should receive the main inheritance rights, Jacob gave Ephraim that blessing, and it was his descendants that became one of the major tribes of Israel. In fact, the name Ephraim became synonymous with the ten tribes of the northern kingdom in later years: *<<Ephraim shall become a desolation on the day of punishment; among the tribes of Israel I declare what is sure>>* (Hosea 5:9).

⁵ The territory of the Ephraimites by their families was as follows: the boundary of their inheritance on the east was Ataroth-addar as far as Upper Beth-horon, ⁶ and the boundary goes from there to the sea; on the north is Michmethath; then on the east the boundary makes a turn towards Taanath-shiloh, and passes along beyond it on the east to Janoah, ⁷ then it goes down from Janoah to Ataroth and to Naarah, and touches Jericho, ending at the Jordan. ⁸ From Tappuah the boundary goes westwards to the Wadi Kanah, and ends at the sea. Such is the inheritance of the tribe of the Ephraimites by their families, ⁹ together with the towns that were set apart for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites, all those towns with their villages. ¹⁰ They did not, however, drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer: so the Canaanites have lived within Ephraim to this day but have been made to do forced labour.

Joshua 16:5-10

They did not, however, drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. Their failure to completely drive out the Canaanites is typical of all the tribes. Even within the Promised Land there remains important work to do and battles to fight.

The Canaanites have lived within Ephraim to this day but have been made to do forced labour. Perhaps the people of Ephraim were guilty of this compromise because they wanted forced labourers among them. Even this convenience does not justify their disobedience to God's command. If they had the power to make the people of Gezer forced labourers, they certainly had the power to defeat them completely, especially because Gezer was a city that Joshua had already conquered; refer to Joshua 10:33 and Joshua 12:12. This sort of compromise seems innocent, but it became the way that much idolatry and immoral worship came into the people of Israel. This is one reason why so many struggles are recorded in the days of the Judges.

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, just as many do today also.



Tribal Land Allocations