

JOSHUA

CHAPTER 17

Then allotment was made to the people of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph. To Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, were allotted Gilead and Bashan, because he was a man of war. 2 And allotments were made to the rest of the people of Manasseh by their clans, Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher, and Shemida. These were the male descendants of Manasseh the son of Joseph, by their clans. 3 Now Zelophehad the son of Hephher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters, and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4 They approached Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the leaders and said, “The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance along with our brothers.” So according to the mouth of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brothers of their father. 5 Thus there fell to Manasseh ten portions, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is on the other side of the Jordan, 6 because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance along with his sons. The land of Gilead was allotted to the rest of the people of Manasseh. 7 The territory of Manasseh reached from Asher to Michmethath, which is east of Shechem. Then the boundary goes along southward to the inhabitants of En-tappuah. 8 The land of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but the town of Tappuah on the boundary of Manasseh belonged to the people of Ephraim. 9 Then the boundary went down to the brook Kanah. These cities, to the south of the brook, among the cities of Manasseh, belong to Ephraim. Then the boundary of Manasseh goes on the north side of the brook and ends at the sea, 10 the land to the south being Ephraim's and that to the north being Manasseh's, with the sea forming its boundary. On the north Asher is reached, and on the east Issachar. 11 Also in Issachar and in Asher Manasseh had Beth-shean and its villages, and Ibleam and its villages, and the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of En-dor and its villages, and the inhabitants of Taanach and its villages, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; the third is Naphath. 12 Yet the people of Manasseh could not take possession of those cities, but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. 13 Now when the people of Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out. 14 Then the people of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, “Why have you given me but one lot and one portion as an inheritance, although I am a numerous people, since all along the LORD has blessed me?” 15 And Joshua said to them, “If you are a numerous people, go up by yourselves to the forest, and there clear ground for yourselves in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you.” 16 The people of Joseph said, “The hill country is not enough for us. Yet all the Canaanites who dwell in the plain have chariots of iron, both those in Beth-shean and its villages and those in the Valley of Jezreel.” 17 Then Joshua said to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, “You are a numerous people and have great power. You shall not have one allotment only, 18 but the hill country shall be yours, for though it is a forest, you shall clear it and possess it to its farthest borders. For you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong.”

17:1 *Manasseh...was firstborn of Joseph.* A reminder to the proud Ephraimites that Manasseh had been the firstborn, though Jacob gave priority to Ephraim when he adopted Joseph's two sons (Ge 48:14, 19). (CSB)

Even though Ephraim preceded him, Manasseh received a total allotment second only to Judah's. (TLSB)

man of war. As a condition for receiving land east of the Jordan, the clan of Machir had agreed to leave their families behind and assist in the conquest of the land (1:12–15; Nu 32:1–27). (TLSB)

17:3 *Zelophehad ... had ... only daughters.* Before Moses died, he promised the daughters an allotment along with their relatives (see Nu 26:33; 27:1–7). (CSB)

17:5 *ten portions.* Manasseh's territory was second only to Judah's in size. Then ten portions went to the five brothers (minus Hephher) and to the five daughters of Hephher. For the law protecting the inheritance rights of a daughter without brothers see Nu 27:8–11. (CSB)

17:11 *Beth Shan ... Megiddo.* These powerfully fortified cities, and others along Manasseh's common border with Issachar and Asher, were not conquered until later. When King Saul died in battle, the victorious Philistines fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan (see 1Sa 31:10), which suggests that that city was in league with the Philistines. (CSB)

17:13 *when the Israelites grew strong.* Possibly referring to the days of David and Solomon. (CSB)

17:14 *one lot and one portion.* Combined tribes claim the promise of Israel/Jacob of the double portion of the firstborn son (Gn 48:21–22). (TLSB)

people of Joseph ... numerous. The reference is to both Ephraim and Manasseh (see v. 17). The allotment to the Joseph tribes is here handled as one (see 16:1, 4)—though the two subdivisions are then described separately (16:5–17:11). (CSB)

According to the second census (Nu 26), Ephraim and Manasseh together have a population greater than any single tribe, fulfilling the prophecy of Gn 48:19–20. (TLSB)

17:15 *hill country of Ephraim.* The territory of the Joseph tribes—under the name of the legal firstborn (see note on v. 1). (CSB)

clear ground for yourselves. This region of Canaan was still heavily forested. It seems that the Israelites viewed their assigned territories primarily in terms of the number of cities that had their land cleared for farming and pasturage, not in terms of the size of the region in which these cities were located. The region assigned to the Joseph tribes was at the time not as heavily populated as others. (CSB)

Evidence is plentiful that this land, and much of the eastern Mediterranean, was heavily forested. Population pressures were the main cause of later deforestation. (TLSB)

Perizzites and Rephaites. Here listed as neighboring peoples, though elsewhere the Perizzites are said to have lived on the west bank in Canaan (3:10; 12:8) and the Rephaites in the Transjordan kingdom of Og (12:4; 13:12). See notes on Ge 13:7; Dt 2:11. (CSB)

17:16 *in the plain.* Only in the plains were chariots effective.(CSB)

chariots of iron. Chariots with certain parts made of iron (see note on 2Sa 8:7), perhaps the axles—the use of iron was a new development. (CSB)

Joshua burned some of these chariots (11:9), so wood was predominant in the chariot's construction, but iron parts could have been used in the axle, wheel rims, or as armor. (TLSB)

17:17–18 *you shall drive out*. In addition to promising a healthy population, God also promises to fight for His people to give them full possession of the land. (TLSB)

Ch 17 The tribes of Joseph move to lay claim to the promises of God by inheriting their land. But they forget His promises about acquiring His blessings. God's promises do not come up short. He promises to address our true needs in Christ. • Dear God, help me to see how all of Your promises fit together and how well You have already acted to secure my portion in Your Son, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Grant me all diligence in my calling of service to You. Amen. (TLSB)