

# Joshua 17 Commentary

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

**CLICK VERSE**  
To go directly to that verse

- [Joshua 17:1](#)
- [Joshua 17:2](#)
- [Joshua 17:3](#)
- [Joshua 17:4](#)
- [Joshua 17:5](#)
- [Joshua 17:6](#)
- [Joshua 17:7](#)
- [Joshua 17:8](#)
- [Joshua 17:9](#)
- [Joshua 17:10](#)
- [Joshua 17:11](#)
- [Joshua 17:12](#)
- [Joshua 17:13](#)
- [Joshua 17:14](#)
- [Joshua 17:15](#)
- [Joshua 17:16](#)
- [Joshua 17:17](#)
- [Joshua 17:18](#)

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LAND ALLOTMENTS  
(Joshua 13-21)  
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<b>JOSHUA</b> A BOOK ON SPIRITUAL WARFARE and REST HOW TO POSSESS YOUR POSSESSIONS				
<b>CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND</b>		<b>DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND</b>		<b>CLOSE OF JOSHUA'S LIFE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>		<b>ALLOCATION</b>		<b>APPEAL</b>
Josh 1:1-5:15	Josh 6:1-12:24	Joshua 13:1-21:45		Josh 22:1-24:33
<b>WARLORDS IN CANAAN</b>		<b>LANDLORDS IN CANAAN</b>		
<b>ENTERING CANAAN</b>	<b>CONQUERING CANAAN</b>	<b>DIVIDING CANAAN</b>		
<b>SECURING THE LAND</b>		<b>SETTLING THE LAND</b>		

Preparation	Conquest	Possession	Consecration
ca. 1 Month	ca 7 Years	ca. 18 Years	

[See also more detailed Chart by Charles R Swindoll](#)

**Joshua 17:1** Now this was the lot for the tribe 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.

- **the firstborn:** Ge 41:51 46:20 48:18 De 21:17
- **Machir:** Ge 50:23 Nu 26:29 27:1 32:39,40 Jdg 5:14 1Ch 2:23 7:14,15
- **Gilead:** Nu 26:29 32:33,40 De 3:13-15



Map to help visualize descriptions of boundaries of Manasseh  
 Zondervan Atlas of the Bible: C. Rasmussen (recommended resource - do not reproduce)  
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## THE FIRST BORN OF JOSEPH GETS THIRD LOT

Here is an outline of Joshua 17

1. **THE ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE'S DECISION** - Joshua 17:1-6
2. **THE BOUNDARIES OF THE INHERITANCE** - Joshua 17:7-11
3. **THE TRAGIC COMPROMISE** - Joshua 17:12, 13
4. **WANTING MORE** - Joshua 17:14-18

**Rasmussen** - The third lot fell to the second son of Joseph, Manasseh. While a portion of the tribe settled in the land of Gilead (see below), the other part settled in Canaan. Since no list of settlements is provided for Manasseh, there is somewhat of a “blank” spot on the map in comparison to tribes bordering it on the north and south. In addition, only the southwestern boundary is described in some detail (Josh 17:7–11), so that its remaining borders are difficult to define with precision. Manasseh stretched from the sea to the Jordan River; the southern boundary was conterminous with Ephraim, while on the north, from west to east, Manasseh bordered

on Asher, Zebulun, and Issachar. The boundary with these northern tribes evidently passed through the Jezreel and Harod valleys, which were divided among them. But cities such as Beth Shan, Ibleam, Dor, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, while assigned to Manasseh (v. 11), were difficult to capture because of the strength of the Canaanites in the plain, who possessed iron chariots (v. 16)—a fact well known from the annals of Thutmose III (p. 101). It probably was not until the reigns of David and Solomon four hundred years later (i.e., 1010–931 BC) that the Israelites were able to take control of these powerful cities. Since the choice land on the plains was controlled by the Canaanites, the sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) settled in the heavily forested hill country, cutting down trees to secure needed farmland (vv. 15–18). ([Zondervan Atlas of the Bible](#))



**Bashan and Gilead (ESV Study Bible)**  
(Click to Enlarge)

It is interesting that this next section is more about tribal identity than about specific geographic identity as in the previous chapters.

**Now this was the lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph-** Recall that the half-tribe of Manasseh that settled on the east side of the Jordan had received their lot, but the other half did not and now it was their turn. While he was the **firstborn**, on his deathbed blessing the patriarch Jacob switches his right hand (of blessing) from the head of Manasseh and placed it on the head of Ephraim who received the lot (See [birthright](#)) before Manasseh (see description of this patriarchal transaction in Ge 48:13-20) And as history would demonstrate it was Ephraim and not Manasseh who would exercise leadership during the period of the Judges.

**To Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, were allotted Gilead and Bashan** (see map above) - This is the allotment east of the Jordan. The other half-tribe's allotment is described below. See Machir below. **Gilead** (obviously the Person not the Place) was the great grandson of Joseph, the grandfather of Zelophehad (Nu 27:1) and the original clan leader in tribe of Manasseh (Nu 26:28-32; Nu 36:1). The clan was so strong it could be listed with Israel's tribes in Deborah's song (Jdg 5:17). They fought for recognition among other tribes (Jdg 12:4-7).

**[Machir - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)** Personal name meaning “sold.” Oldest son of Manasseh and grandson of Joseph (Joshua 17:1). He was the father of Gilead (Joshua 17:1), Peresh, and Sheresh (1 Chronicles 7:16), and a daughter whose name is not given (1 Chronicles 2:21). He had a brother named Asriel (1 Chronicles 7:14) and a wife named Maacah (1 Chronicles 7:16). Machir was the head of the family called the Machirites (Numbers 26:29). Apparently Machir along with his family had a reputation for being expert warriors (Joshua 17:1). “Because he was a man of war,” Machir was allotted the territory of Bashan and Gilead, east of the Jordan (Joshua 17:1). Apparently the territory of the Machirites started at the site of Mahanaim, on the Jabbok River, extended northward, and included the region around the Yarmuk River (Joshua 13:29-31).

**Because he was a man of war** - Why would this warrant his receipt of the territory east of the Jordan? In Numbers 32:39 we read that “The sons of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it.” Another thought is that this inheritance would be continually subjected to attacks from the adjacent pagan neighbors, Ammonites, etc.

**Madvig** - The reason for their being given land in Gilead and Bashan was that they “were great soldiers.” In Numbers 32:1–5 a different reason is given for their settling in Transjordan: They had large flocks and herds, and that land was suitable for livestock. Both reasons are applicable. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 3](#))

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 1-6. Manasseh was but half of the tribe of Joseph, yet it was divided into two parts. The daughters of Zelophehad now reaped the benefit of their pious zeal and prudent forecast. Those who take care in the wilderness of this world, to make sure to themselves a place in the inheritance of the saints in light, will have the comfort of it in the other world; while those who neglect it now, will lose it for ever. Lord, teach us here to believe and obey, and give us an inheritance

among thy saints, in glory everlasting.

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## QUESTION - [Who was Manasseh in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - There are two historically significant men named Manasseh in the Bible. [King Manasseh](#), the son of King Hezekiah; and Manasseh, Joseph's firstborn son. This article will deal with Joseph's son. [Joseph](#), Jacob's eleventh son, was sold into slavery and, through the providence of God, ended up as the vizier of Egypt. In that land, he married Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On (Genesis 41:50). Asenath was the mother of Manasseh.

Manasseh's name literally means "making forgetful"; Joseph said he chose that name "because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household" (Genesis 41:51). Joseph had a new life in Egypt and a new family.

Joseph and Asenath had a second son, Ephraim. Later, Joseph's father, Jacob, and Joseph's brothers and their families moved to Egypt to escape a famine. When Jacob was about to die, Joseph brought his sons to him for a patriarchal blessing. Jacob basically adopted the boys as his own sons (Genesis 48:5) so that they would share in his inheritance. Manasseh and Ephraim are among the twelve tribes of Israel that inherited territory in the Promised Land.

Joseph intended for Jacob to bless Manasseh more than Ephraim, since Manasseh was the firstborn and the customary recipient of the [birthright](#). However, Jacob chose to give Ephraim the greater blessing—even though Joseph objected. Jacob said, "[Manasseh] too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations" ([Genesis 48:19](#)). These words came to pass much later, when Moses took a census of all the children of Israel. Manasseh had 32,200 descendants who were age 20 and over and able to go to war, and Ephraim had 40,500 ([Numbers 1:32–35](#)). From then on, the tribe of Ephraim, the younger, is almost always listed before that of [Manasseh](#), the older (see [Numbers 2:18–20](#)). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 17:2 So the lot was made for the rest of the sons of Manasseh according to their families: for the sons of Abiezer and for the sons of Helek and for the sons of Asriel and for the sons of Shechem and for the sons of Hopher and for the sons of Shemida; these were the male descendants of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families.**

- **the rest:** Nu 26:29-32
- **the sons:** Jdg 6:11 8:2 1Ch 7:18
- **Abiezer:** Nu 26:30, Jeezer
- **sons of Asriel:** Nu 26:31
- **sons of Hopher:** Nu 26:32

## LOTS TO THE OTHER SIX SONS OF MANASSEH

**So the lot was made for the rest of the sons of Manasseh according to their families-** The rest of the sons of Manasseh refers to the half-tribe of Manasseh that had not received an allotment on the east side of the Jordan (Josh 17:1).

**For the sons of Abiezer and for the sons of Helek and for the sons of Asriel and for the sons of Shechem and for the sons of Hopher and for the sons of Shemida; these were the male descendants of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families** - The allotment is different from the previous allotments in that it deals mainly with the individuals but it does not describe how these sons parceled out the land. No geographic boundaries are given for the individual sons.

Notice the phrase **the male descendants** which sets us a striking contrast with the female descendants in the next section.

[Abiezer - Holman Bible Dictionary](#) Personal name meaning, "my Father is help." Son of Manasseh and grandson of Joseph (Joshua 17:2; 1 Chronicles 7:18 ).

[Helek - Holman Bible Dictionary](#) Personal name meaning, "portion." Son of Gilead from the tribe of Manasseh and original clan ancestor of the Helekites (Numbers 26:30 ). The clan received an allotment in the tribe's share of the Promised Land (Joshua 17:2 ).

[Asriel - Holman Bible Dictionary](#) Personal name meaning, "God has made happy." A son of Gilead and clan, Asrielites, in the tribe of Manasseh (Numbers 26:31 ). They received a land allotment (Joshua 17:2 ). In 1 Chronicles 7:14 KJV spells Ashriel.

[Shechem - Holman Bible Dictionary](#) Personal and place name meaning, "shoulder, back." Numbers 26:31; Joshua 17:2 (NOTE: In

Joshua 17:7 [SHECHEM](#) refers to the city by that name)..

**Hepher - Holman Bible Dictionary** Personal name meaning, “well” or “shame.” Original family ancestor in clan of Gilead and **father of Zelophehad** (Numbers 26:28-37 ). He belonged to the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 17:1-2 ). The youngest of the sons of Gilead, Numbers 26:32, and head of the family of the Hephherites.

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#### QUESTION - [What can we learn from the tribe of Manasseh?](#)

**ANSWER** - Israel’s twelve tribes were named for Jacob’s children or, in the case of [Manasseh](#) (and Ephraim), his grandchildren. After Jacob wrestled with Him all night, God renamed Jacob “Israel,” which means “you have struggled with God and men and have overcome” (Genesis 32:22–30). The name Israel represents not only the modern-day country but also, originally, Jacob’s offspring to whom God promised a great nation whose “descendants will be like dust of the earth . . . spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south” (Genesis 28:14).

Jacob’s grandson, for whom the tribe was named, was born in Egypt to Joseph and his wife, Asenath, daughter of the priest Potiphera. Joseph named his firstborn “Manasseh” because God had made him “forget all my trouble and all my father’s household” (Genesis 41:51).

This tribe provides us with many lessons; chief among them are messages about free will, obedience, faith, and the nature of God.

Early on, we learn that Manasseh is frequently referred to as the “half-tribe” of Manasseh. This designation highlights the choice made by some of the tribe to reside east of the River Jordan (Numbers 32:33; Joshua 13: 29–31). They believed the Transjordan was the more suitable land to raise their flocks. The rest of the tribe settled west of the Jordan, in Canaan, following Joshua’s command to enter and possess the Promised Land. As is evident throughout Scripture, God endows His children with the freedom to choose.

Exercising free will can lead to undesirable or even disastrous results, especially if we disobey God or make selfish choices. Manasseh learned this lesson—painfully—when they failed to obey God’s command to destroy the Canaanites. Part of this failure was due to a lack of faith that God would give them strength to overcome a seemingly unconquerable foe. Manasseh illustrates other human failings as well, such as greed and covetousness. The (half) tribe of Manasseh desired more land because they were “a numerous people.” They may have had the numbers, but they were unwilling to follow Joshua’s exhortation to clear “the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites” (Joshua 17:12-18).

On the other hand, the tribe of Manasseh at times exhibits faithfulness to God. Gideon, who would later become one of Israel’s best judges, questioned God when called to “save Israel out of Midian’s hand.” One of Gideon’s objections was that his “clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family” (Judges 6:15). Gideon required proof from God—twice—before he acted (Judges 6:36–40). Once convinced of God’s will, Gideon moved forward with 32,000 troops to conquer the Midianites. But then God told Gideon that he had too many troops for the job, and God reduced his corps to a mere 300 men. Following God’s lead, this paltry force routed the enemy. The battle proved God was with Gideon and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Other interesting lessons emerge. One is that God is just. Zelophehad, great-great-grandson of Manasseh, had no sons and died in the desert before entering the Promised Land. His daughters petitioned Moses, asking that the practice of male inheritance be changed so they could receive their deceased father’s property. After consulting with the Lord, Moses agreed and developed rules designed to keep property within a family (Numbers 27:1–11). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 17:3 However, Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.**

- Nu 26:33 Nu 27:1-11 Nu 36:1-13

#### Related Passages:

Numbers 36:2-3+ and they said, “The LORD commanded my lord to give the land by lot to the sons of Israel as an inheritance, and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of **Zelophehad** our brother **to his daughters**. 3 “But if they marry one of the sons of the other tribes of the sons of Israel, their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of our fathers and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; thus it will be withdrawn from our allotted inheritance.

## THE FIVE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

However, [Zelophehad](#), the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah - For background see Nu 27:1-11+ describing the daughter's inheritance and then the qualification in Nu 36:1-13+

[Thompson](#) on vv 3-6 - Now this is a very significant set of verses because it teaches us that an inheritance is not gender biased. Men and women may earn an inheritance in the program of God.

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### QUESTION - [Who were the daughters of Zelophehad?](#)

**ANSWER** - The **daughters of Zelophehad** were five sisters named Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and [Tirzah](#) (Numbers 27:1) who came to Moses with a concern over how the Promised Land was to be divided in relation to their family. In Numbers 26:52–56, Moses was given instructions from the Lord on how to divide up the land for inheritance, but these sisters had a unique situation.

The daughters of Zelophehad came to the door of the tent of meeting, where judgments were issued, to talk to Moses [Eleazar](#), the leaders, and the congregation. Their father had died in the wilderness, and he had no sons (Numbers 27:2–3). Since only males had been counted in the census of Numbers 26, the daughters of Zelophehad saw a problem—with no father and no brothers to inherit a portion of the land, they would be left destitute. The daughters proposed to Moses that they be allowed to inherit their father's portion of the land. They asked, "Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives" (verse 4).

Since this situation was unprecedented, Moses asked God for direction (Numbers 27:5). The Lord's response was just: "What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and give their father's inheritance to them." In other words, God ruled in favor of the daughters. They could inherit their father's portion of the land as a way to provide for themselves and preserve the memory of their father.

The case of Zelophehad's daughters set a precedent and expanded the legal rights of women. Due to the ruling regarding the daughters of Zelophehad, women were included in the list of eligible heirs of property. The following became the inheritance order: son, daughter, brother, paternal uncle, and nearest clan kin. Property was not to be transferred outside of one's tribe.

In Numbers 36, we once again hear about the daughters of Zelophehad. This time it is in relation to whom they could marry. A potential problem loomed: if the daughters, who were now landowners, married men outside their tribe, they would join their husbands' tribes and take their father's property with them. This would diminish the property allotted to Manasseh, the tribe of Zelophehad (Numbers 36:1–3). Further, the land would not revert back to Manasseh during the [Year of Jubilee](#) (verse 4). The land allotment for each tribe could change significantly, due to intermarriage with other tribes.

God gave a simple solution to the potential problem. God instructed that the daughters of Zelophehad could marry anyone they wanted *within* their father's tribal clan (Numbers 36:7). No inheritance was to pass from tribe to tribe. The five sisters complied with this ruling and married their cousins on their father's side (verses 10–11). This kept the land allotment intact. Again, a case involving the daughters of Zelophehad set a legal precedent for the rest of Israel to follow.

Throughout the Bible, God shows special concern for the widow and the orphan. We read over and over how God makes special provisions for them, as He did for the daughters of Zelophehad. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Joshua 17:4** They came near before Eleazar the priest and before Joshua the son of Nun and before the leaders, saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers." So according to the command of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers.

- **Eleazar:** Jos 14:1 Nu 34:17-29
- **The Lord commanded:** Nu 27:6-7 Ga 3:28

### Related Passages:

Joshua 14:1 Now these are the territories which the sons of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which **Eleazar** the priest, and **Joshua** the son of Nun, and **the heads** of the households of the tribes of the sons of Israel apportioned to them for an inheritance,

Numbers 27:6-7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "The daughters of Zelophehad are right in their statements. You shall surely give them a hereditary possession among their father's brothers, and you shall transfer the inheritance of their father to them.

## **ZELOPHEHAD'S DAUGHTERS CLAIM THE PROMISES MADE BY MOSES**

It is notable that this is one of the earliest documentations of women's rights in the Scripture.

**They came near before Eleazar the priest and before Joshua the son of Nun and before the leaders-** These are the "administrators of the allotment of land to the tribes (Joshua 14:1). These five girls who had no brothers had originally gone to Moses and Eleazar and asked if they could receive some land as an inheritance. Moses consulted with God and God said they should receive an inheritance (Nu 27:7)

As an aside, [Eleazar](#) the High Priest and was one of the men who was with Moses in the wilderness, but here we see he has clearly been allowed to enter the promised land.

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

**Madvig** - "In the four incidents in this book where **Joshua and Eleazar** are mentioned together, **Eleazar** is always named first, perhaps out of respect for his crucial role as high priest in the casting of lots" The daughters of Zelophehad based their claim on what "the LORD commanded Moses." Whether it was primarily the rights of the father or the rights of the daughters that were being protected, an unusual privilege and a remarkable measure of equality were granted to these women. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 3](#))

**Saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers."**- They are in essence claiming God's promise by faith, a promise given by Yahweh through Moses to the daughters.

[Thompson](#) - These girls believed in the promises of God and in full conformity to what God said, they asked that they be given an inheritance. These girls were very spiritually-minded girls who were focused on God's Word. For the most part in this ancient culture, women were considered nothing. In fact, in many of the eastern countries, they still are. This is not so in God's culture. God considers them to be something and He gave them an inheritance and they received it right here. Women of God had legal rights under the Mosaic Law. When Joshua knew it was God's Word, he did it. That is good leadership. Now these daughters were respectful and submissive. But they did speak up and according to verse 6, they did get their inheritance. In Christ's day some of His most faithful supporters and financial backers were women (Luke 8:1-3). The same was true for the Apostle Paul (Acts 16:12-15). Women who put the Lord first will end up honored women.

**THOUGHT** - This faithful action by these five daughters is a reminder of the words of Peter that God "has granted to us His **precious and magnificent promises**, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.." (2Pe 1:4) The daughters had a physical promise which they laid hold of by faith. Believers have spiritual promises which must also be laid hold of by faith. Faith that believes obeys God and that is the faith He blesses. Are there promises of God which you are failing to lay hold of because unfaithfulness/disobedience?

**So according to the command of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers- NET** - " So Joshua assigned them land among their uncles, as the LORD had commanded." The NET and NLT interpret "he" as Joshua. **Amplified** also has "So according to the Lord's command, Joshua gave them an inheritance among their father's brethren." This passage reinforces the faithful obedience of Joshua to the commands from Moses. Don't miss the point that this distribution took place **according to the command of the LORD**.

**Madvig** - "Whether it was primarily the rights of the father or the rights of the daughters that were being protected, an unusual privilege and a remarkable measure of equality were granted to these women. In actual fact the daughters of Zelophehad had no "brothers" (cp. Josh 17:3), which is why the inheritance was passed on to them. The Hebrew *ah* can refer to any male relative, and it should be understood as "kinsman" or "tribesman" here ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 3](#))

**Joshua 17:5 Thus there fell ten portions to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is beyond the Jordan,**

- ten : Jos 17:2,3,14
- beside: Jos 13:29-31 Nu 32:30-42

**Thus there fell ten portions to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is beyond the Jordan-** These ten tracts of land were parceled out to the five brothers (minus Hephher) and to the five granddaughters of Hephher.

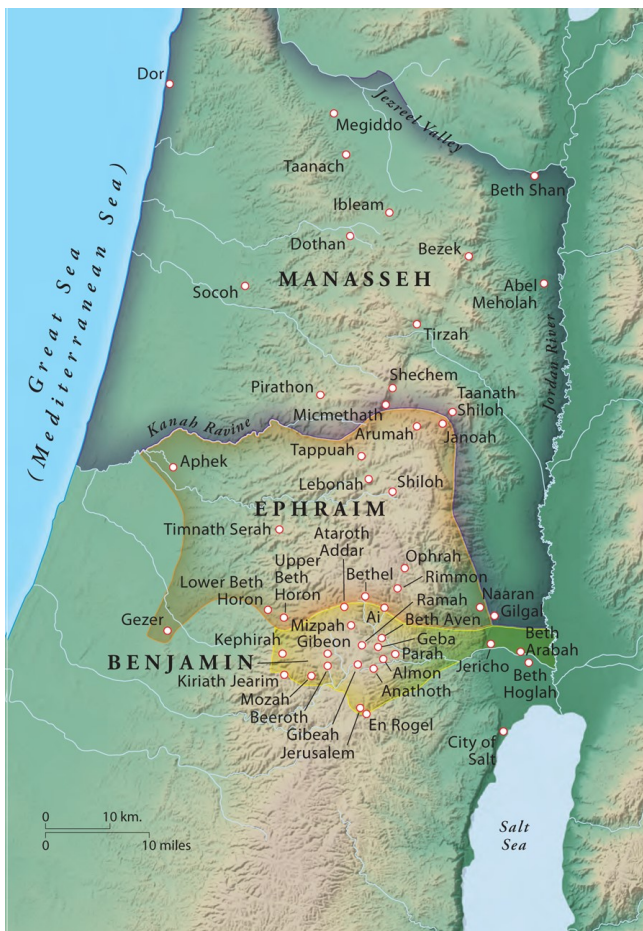
**TSK** - As there were six sons and five daughters, among whom this division was to be made, there should be eleven portions: but Zelophehad, son of Hephher, having left five daughters in his place, neither he nor Hephher is reckoned. The lot of Manasseh therefore was divided into ten parts; five for the five sons of Gilead, Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, and Shemida; and five for the five daughters of Zelophehad, Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

**Joshua 17:6 because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons. And the land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the sons of Manasseh.**

**because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons. And the land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the sons of Manasseh.**

**Joshua 17:7 The border of Manasseh ran from Asher to Michmethath which was east of Shechem; then the border went southward to the inhabitants of En-tappuah.**

- Asher: Eusebius says this was a town in his time not far from Neapolis, towards Scythopolis or Bethshan; between which towns it is also placed by the old Jerusalem Itinerary.
- Michmethah: Jos 16:6-8
- Shechem: Jos 20:7 21:21 24:1,32 Ge 34:2 37:12,14 Jdg 9:1 1Ki 12:1,25 1Ch 6:67



Map to help visualize descriptions of boundaries of Manasseh  
Zondervan Atlas of the Bible: C. Rasmussen



The border of Manasseh ran from Asher to Michmethath (see map above) which was east of [Shechem](#); then the border went southward to the inhabitants of En-tappuah (see [Tappuah](#) on map above) - The southern boundary of Manasseh was the northern boundary of Ephraim.

**Madvig** comments that "The description of "the territory of Manasseh" is very confusing. It provides little more than a clearer definition of the border with Ephraim. Opinions are divided on the proper interpretation of "Asher" here. It may refer to the tribe of Asher (cf. Joshua 19:24-31), it could be emended so as to be translated "slopes" (Boling, pp. 409, 412), or it may be a reference to some town—perhaps Yasir. For "[Michmethath](#)" see Joshua 16:6. "[Shechem](#)" is between [Mount Ebal](#) and [Mount Gerazim](#) (ED: SEE COMMENTS ON Josh 8:30-33). It is mentioned frequently in the patriarchal stories in Genesis. [Shechem](#) was chosen to be a Levitical town (Joshua 21:21) and one of the [cities of refuge](#) (Joshua 20:7). Joshua gathered all Israel in [Shechem](#) for his farewell address and covenant renewal (Joshua 24:1, 25, 32+). "[En Tappuah](#)" is the same as "[Tappuah](#)" (see Joshua 16:8). ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#).)

**Utley** - "southward" This is the term "Teman" (BDB 411 I), which denotes a compass direction. Israel marked her directions based on a person facing east (the tabernacle faced east), therefore, the south was on the left hand and the north on the right hand. Not all nations give directions in the same way. Egypt based its compass directions on a person facing south (i.e., to the head waters of the Nile, the source of all life in Egypt). The boundaries of Ephraim are found in both Josh. 16:5–10 and 17:7–12.

**TSK** on [Michmethath](#) - Situated, probably, east of Shechem, though its precise situation, as well as that of many others, cannot, at this distance of time, be ascertained. Many of these towns were small, and we may rationally conclude, slightly built; and consequently have perished more than two thousand years ago. It would therefore be useless now to look for such places; though in many instances, their ancient names have been preserved, and their sites identified. Several towns even in England, mentioned by Cesar and other ancient writers, are no longer discernible; several have changed their names, and not a few their situation.

[Tappuah - Holman Bible Dictionary](#) City of the north border of Ephraim (Joshua 16:8 ) whose environs were allotted to Manasseh (Joshua 17:7-8 ), likely the Tappuah of Joshua 12:17 and 2 Kings 15:16 .

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 7-13. There was great communication between Manasseh and Ephraim. Though each tribe had its inheritance, yet they should intermix one with another, to do good offices one to another, as became those, who, though of different tribes, were all one Israel, and were bound to love as brethren. But they suffered the Canaanites to live among them, against the command of God, to serve their own ends.

**Joshua 17:8** The land of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the sons of Ephraim.

- of Tappuah: Jos 12:17 15:34,53 16:8

The land of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the sons of Ephraim(see [location of Tappuah on map above](#)) -

**Joshua 17:9** The border went down to the brook of Kanah, southward of the brook (these cities belonged to Ephraim among the cities of Manasseh), and the border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook and it ended at the sea.

- brook of Kanah, Jos 16:8
- these cities: Jos 16:9
- the outgoings: Jos 16:3,8 19:29
- the sea: The Mediterranean

The border went down to the brook of Kanah, southward of the brook (these cities belonged to Ephraim among the cities of Manasseh), and the border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook and it ended at the sea - NLT = "Several towns south of the ravine were inside Manasseh's territory, but they actually belonged to the tribe of Ephraim."

[Kahah - Easton's Bible Dictionary](#) A stream forming the boundary between Ephraim and Manasseh, from the Mediterranean eastward to [Tappuah](#) (see [map above](#)) (Joshua 16:8 ). It has been identified with the sedgy streams that constitute the Wady Talaik, which enters the sea between Joppa and Caesarea.

**Joshua 17:10** The south side belonged to Ephraim and the north side to Manasseh, and the sea was their border; and they reached to Asher on the north and to Issachar on the east.

The south side belonged to Ephraim and the north side to Manasseh, and the sea was their border; and they reached to Asher on the north and to Issachar on the east.

**Joshua 17:11** In Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth-shean and its towns and Ibleam and its towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, and the inhabitants of En-dor and its towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns, the third is Napheth.

- **Manasseh:** Jos 16:9 1Ch 7:29 1Sa 31:10,12, Beth-shan, 1Ki 4:12
- **Ibleam:** 2Ki 9:27 1Ch 6:70, Bileam
- **Dor:** Dor, according to Eusebius, was situated on the Mediterranean, nine miles from Cesarea Palestine, towards Carmel. The village of Tortura, four leagues north of Cesarea, is supposed to nearly occupy it site. Jos 12:23 Jdg 1:27 1Ki 4:11
- **Endor:** 1Sa 28:7 Ps 83:10
- **Taanach:** Jos 12:21 Jdg 5:19
- **Megiddo:** Jdg 1:27 5:19 1Ki 4:12 9:15 2Ki 9:27 23:29,30 2Ch 35:22 Zec 12:11



Map to help visualize descriptions of boundaries  
 CLICK TO ENLARGE

### MANASSEH'S TOWNS IN ISSACHAR & ASHER

In [Issachar](#) and in [Asher](#), [Manasseh](#) had [Beth-shean](#) and its towns and [Ibleam](#) and its towns, and the inhabitants of [Dor](#) and its towns, and the inhabitants of [En-dor](#) and its towns, and the inhabitants of [Taanach](#) and its towns, and the inhabitants of [Megiddo](#) and its towns, the third is Napheth- See map above to locate several of these cities (however Ibleam, En-dor, Napheth are not on map). NET - "Within Issachar's and Asher's territory Manasseh was assigned Beth Shean, Ibleam, the residents of Dor, En Dor, the residents of Taanach, the residents of Megiddo, the three of Napheth, and the towns surrounding all these cities." Note also on the map above that the northern boundary of Manasseh was the southern boundary of Issachar, Zebulun, and Asher (and was also demarcated by the Valley of Jezreel or Esdraelon - [see this map for northern boundary](#)) Did Manasseh possess their possessions? See Joshua 17:11 and also the passage below in book of Judges...

Judges 1:27-28+ But [Manasseh](#) did not take possession of [Beth-shean](#) and its villages, or [Taanach](#) and its villages, or the inhabitants of [Dor](#) and its villages, or the inhabitants of [Ibleam](#) and its villages, or the inhabitants of [Megiddo](#) and its villages; so the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. 28 It came about when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

**Madvig** - [Manasseh's](#) allotment included several key cities in the [Valley of Jezreel](#), which extended from

the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean. Joshua 17:16 mentions the chariot problems in this area where the Canaanite "tanks" ("iron chariots") maneuvered freely (ED: THE LAND FOR NOT HILLY BUT FLAT). [Beth-shean](#) was an important fortress controlling a trading route across the Jordan. Egyptian troops were stationed there well into the twelfth century. [Taanach](#) was five miles southeast of [Megiddo](#), and the two cities frequently are mentioned together (cf. 5:19). Megiddo, located on the main route from Egypt to the north (the "way of the sea"), controlled the pass at the entrance to the Jezreel Valley. It too remained under Egyptian domination till about 1150 B.C. Dor lies along the Mediterranean coast south of Carmel; [Ibleam](#) is situated at the southern end of the Jezreel Valley near Dothan. **Joshua had defeated the kings of Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor** (Josh 12:21, 23), **but a permanent Israelite occupation did not follow.** The Canaanites, like the Amorites in Jdg 1:34-35, were determined to keep their living areas and resist Israel. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**TSK - [Beth-shean](#)**, (see also [Wikipedia](#)) the Scythopolis (see [map](#)) of the Greek and Roman writers, was situated in the plain of Jordan, west of that river, 120 furlongs (south) from Tiberias, according to Josephus, and 600 furlongs (north) from Jerusalem. (2 Mac 12:29.) It was the largest city of the Decapolis, and the only one on that side of Jordan. It is now called Bisan, 8 hours or 24 miles from Tiberias; and described by Dr. Richardson, exclusive of its ruins, as a "collection of miserable hovels, containing 200 inhabitants."

**NIV Study Bible - [Beth-shan](#) ... [Megiddo](#).** These powerfully fortified cities (and others) were not conquered until later. When King Saul died in battle, the victorious Philistines fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan (1Sa 31:10)

**[Dor - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)** (See also [Wikipedia](#)) (Place name meaning, "dwelling." Canaanite city located at modern khirbet el-Burj, twelve miles south of Mount Carmel. Its early history shows connections with Egypt under Rameses II and with the Sea Peoples, who are closely related to the Philistines. Apparently the Tjeker, one of the Sea Peoples, destroyed the city shortly after 1300 B.C. Its king joined the northern coalition against Joshua (Joshua 11:2; Joshua 12:23 ) but met defeat. The Hebrew expression here, "Naphoth Dor," or heights of Dor is unexpected, since Dor lies on the seacoast. The reference must be to Mount Carmel. Dor lay in the territory assigned Asher, but the tribe of Manasseh claimed it (Joshua 17:11 ). The Canaanites maintained political control (Joshua 17:12; Judges 1:27 ). Dor served as a district headquarters under Solomon, governed by Solomon's son-in-law Ben-abinadab (1 Kings 4:11 ).

**[Taanach - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)** - ([See also Wikipedia](#)) - Place name of uncertain meaning. One of the sites along the northern slope of the Mount Carmel range protecting the accesses from the Plain of Esdraelon to the region of Samaria. Irbid, Megiddo, and Taanach each protect strategic passes through the Carmel range. Taanach thus sat along one fork of the major north-south road of antiquity that went through Palestine, usually called the Via Maris. It also sat on an east-west road that led from the Jordan Valley to the Mediterranean Sea near modern Haifa. In the Bible, Taanach is only mentioned seven times, usually in lists such as tribal allotments (Joshua 17:11; 1 Chronicles 7:29 ), administrative districts (1 Kings 4:12 ), Levitical towns (Joshua 21:25 ), or conquered cities (Joshua 12:21; Judges 1:27 ). The most famous biblical reference to Taanach is that of the battle fought at "Taanach by the waters of Megiddo" where the Hebrew forces under Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites under Sisera (Judges 5:19 ). Taanach was a town of about 13 acres, about the same size as the better known Megiddo. Its history runs through the Bronze Ages and into the Iron Age, from about 2700 B.C. to about 918 B.C. when it was destroyed by the Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak. A large fortress was built on the site during the early Islamic period, and that fortress may well have continued in use during the Crusades. While Megiddo was apparently a major Canaanite administrative center, Taanach seems to have been less heavily populated and perhaps the home for the farmers of the surrounding area and their tenants. Excavations have shown a number of cultic objects and installations at Taanach, suggesting that it was a religious center as well.

**[En-dor - Smith's Bible Dictionary](#)** (see also [Wikipedia](#)) (fountain of Dor). (About 7 miles SE of Nazareth) A place in the territory of Issachar, and yet, possessed by Manasseh. Joshua 17:11. Endor was the scene of the great victory over Sisera and Jabin. It was here that the witch dwelt, whom Saul consulted. 1 Samuel 28:7. It was known to Eusebius, who describes it was a large village four miles south of Tabor. Here, to the north of Jebel Duhy, the name still lingers. The distance from the slopes of Gilboa to Endor is seven or eight miles, over difficult ground.

**[Beth-Shean - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)** (see also [Wikipedia](#)) Place name meaning, "house of quiet." Beth-shean stood at the crossroad of the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys, commanding the routes north-south along the Jordan and east-west from Gilead to the Mediterranean Sea. Tell el-Husn, site of ancient Beth-shean, stands above the perennial stream of Harod, the city's primary water supply, giving the city a commanding view of the two valleys.

Excavation of tell el-Husn and its surroundings were carried on by the University of Pennsylvania in several campaigns from 1921 to 1933. Settlements at Beth-shean were found to date back to the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. The city became an important Canaanite site in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages (3300-1500 B.C.), but came under the domination of Egypt's 18th dynasty in the Late Bronze Age. The name Beth-shean (or -shan) is mentioned in the Egyptian texts of Thutmose III (1468 B.C.), the Amarna

letters (1350 B.C.), Seti I (1300 B.C.), Ramses II (1280 B.C.) and Shishak (925 B.C.). Excavations have confirmed the Egyptian role in the life of Beth-shean in these periods (for example, through the discovery of scarabs and a cartouche bearing the name Thutmose III).

Biblical references to Beth-shean relate to the period from Joshua until the United Monarchy. The city is listed among the allocations of the tribe of Manasseh, though the city was within the territory of Issachar (Joshua 17:6 ). Yet Manasseh was unable to control Beth-shean until the Canaanites were subdued in the reign of David (Joshua 17:16; Judges 1:27 ). After the defeat of Saul and the Israelite army by the Philistines (ca. 1006 B.C.), the bodies of Saul and his sons were hung on the walls of Beth-shean, where a temple to the Ashtaroth was located. Some valiant men from Jabesh-gilead rescued the bodies from this sacrilege and disposed of them in Jabesh (1 Samuel 31:1 ). Later the bodies were brought by David's men in Benjamin (2 Samuel 21:12-14 ). The city is listed among those under the administration of Baana (fifth district) during Solomon's reign (1 Kings 4:12 ). Though the city is not specifically mentioned in the 1 Kings 14:25-28 account of the invasion of Shishak from Egypt, Beth-shean is listed among the cities plundered. Afterward, the city played little role in Israelite history, though the city was occupied by Israelites of the Northern Kingdom from 815-721 B.C.

The city remained abandoned for the most part until the Hellenistic period (third century B.C.), when it was rebuilt and renamed Scythopolis ("city of Scythians"). This city formed the foundation of a significant Hellenistic and Roman occupation that included temples, theater, amphitheater, colonnaded street, hippodrome, tombs, and many public buildings, which had spread to the northern, eastern, and southern quadrants around the earlier "tell." Scythopolis was the largest city of the Decapolis (Matthew 4:25; Mark 5:20 ), and the only city of the league west of the Jordan River. The city continued to flourish in the Byzantine period until it was destroyed by Arabs in A.D. 636. The modern village of Beisan preserves the ancient name of the city.

**Joshua 17:12 But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land.**

- Jos 15:63 16:10 Ex 23:29-33 Nu 33:51-56 Jdg 1:27-28 Ro 6:12-14

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 15:63+ Now as for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the sons of Judah **could not drive them out**; so the Jebusites live with the sons of Judah at Jerusalem until this day.

Joshua 16:10+ But **they did not drive out** the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers.

Exodus 23:29-33+ (**THIS DECLARATION WAS TO THE FIRST GENERATION**) "I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 30 "I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land. 31 "I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. 32 You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. 33 "**They shall not live in your land, because they will make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.**"

Numbers 33:51-56+ (**THIS DECLARATION WAS TO THE SECOND GENERATION**) "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places; 53 and you shall take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. 54 'You shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you shall give more inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. 55 '**But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live.** 56 'And as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you.'"

Judges 1:27-28+ But Manasseh did not take possession of **Beth-shean** and its villages, or **Taanach** and its villages, or the inhabitants of **Dor** and its villages, or the inhabitants of **Ibleam** and its villages, or the inhabitants of **Megiddo** and its villages; so the Canaanites persisted in living in that land. 28 It came about

when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

Romans 6:12-14+ (**THIS DECLARATION IS TO THE "NOW" GENERATION, THOSE WHO FOLLOW CHRIST**) Therefore **do not let** sin ("THE CANAANITES") **reign** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and **do not go on presenting** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the members of your body to sin ("THE CANAANITES") as instruments of unrighteousness; but **present** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) = "**JUST DO IT!**") yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

## **THEY WOULD NOT SO THEY COULD NOT!**

**But the sons of Manasseh could not take possession of these cities, because the Canaanites persisted in living in that land** - Repeatedly God has reassured Joshua and the Israelites that He is able to defeat their enemies. And yet His doing so does not give Israel (in this case the sons of Manasseh) a "pass" so to speak. In other words God's promise of His power and provision was not teaching them to "**Let go, let God**" a teaching that is NOT in the Bible! The more accurate truth is "**Let God, let's go!**" The sons of Manasseh for some reason did not engage in the "**Let God**" part of this "divine dynamic." Whether they were fearful, unbelieving, apathetic, lazy, etc, the point is that they did not engage the Canaanites. In other words, they "**WOULD NOT**" *engage* them and as a result they "**COULD NOT**" *disengage* them! Do not be deceived beloved brethren!

**THOUGHT** - We need to be careful we do not fall into this trap beloved brother or sister in Christ. God has given us His supernatural power by His indwelling Holy Spirit to defeat **EVERY "Canaanite"** lurking in the "fortress" of our heart. Our responsibility is to *engage* the enemy in [mortal \(moral\) combat](#), in faith and full dependence on the Spirit Who will enable us to put to death the "Canaanites" in our life (Romans 8:13+). If you need a reminder read Paul's wise words of warning in 1Co 10:6, 11+. And if you think you don't need a reminder, read Paul's command in 1Co 10:12+. Have you made up your mind to put the "Canaanites" to death or would you rather "compromise" with them and suffer the consequences of this "unholy yoke"?

There is another **thought** to consider -- Jesus said that as His disciples we are to be **in the world** but are not to be **of the world**. We are not to let the "**Canaanites**" in our midst **compromise** our walk with Christ (cf Jn 17:11, 15, 18, cf 1Co 5:9-10+). This begs the question of all of who are followers of Christ, are we living a holy life in the midst of an unholy people, a crooked and perverse generation (cf Php 2:15+)? Peter writes to us who reside as aliens and strangers (1Pe 1:1+, 1Pe 2:11+) in this fallen world that "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "**YOU SHALL BE HOLY** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), FOR I AM HOLY." (1Pe 1:14-16+, cf Ro 12:2+)

**Kenneth Gangel** says that the Manassehites "simply used the Gibeonite maneuver and made them forced laborers, a plan that backfired some years later.//The settling of the promised land should have been an easy task after the seven-year conquest, but we find that the tribes lacked the initiative and courage to drive out the Canaanite inhabitants completely. This problem repeats itself throughout the second half of the Book of Joshua" ([Holman Old Testament Commentary - Joshua](#))

**Utley - 17:12–13** This is parallel to Joshua 16:10 and Jdgs. 1:28. Moses' commands in Deut. 20:10–18, to allow defeated people to become servants, only applied to cities outside of Canaan. These verses reveal the disobedience of the larger tribes (cf. Num. 33:55). Even though the Canaanites were made servants, their fertility worship polluted and weakened the worship of YHWH. This would ultimately result in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.

**Howard - Cities and Territories Remaining to Be Conquered** - Another important type of information in the territorial lists deals with territories and cities that the Israelite tribes failed to conquer. These are described in two sets of passages. The first set described is "the land that remains," and it is found intact in Joshua 13:2–6 (see the commentary there). The second set is sometimes called the "conquest lacunae," that is, the cities and territories from which the Israelites were not able to drive out the Canaanite inhabitants. The most organized list of these is found in Jdg 1:21, 27–35, but previews of much of the same material are found scattered throughout the lists in Joshua. The [table below](#) shows these and compares the information on the "conquest lacunae" in Joshua with that in Judges. (Source: David Howard - [Joshua: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture Volume 5 The New American Commentary](#))

## Cities Not Conquered by the Israelites

TRIBES	JOSHUA	JUDGES	PEOPLE	CITIES
Israelites General	Josh 13:13			
Judah	Josh 15:63		Jebusites	Jerusalem
Benjamin		Jdg 1:21	Jebusites	Jerusalem
W. Manasseh	Josh 17:11-12	Jdg 1:27-28	Canaanites	Beth Shan, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo, Endor,* Naphoth*
Ephraim	Josh 16:10	Jdg 1:29	Canaanites	Gezer
Zebulun		Jdg 1:30	Canaanites	Kitron, Nahalol
Asher		Jdg 1:31-32	Canaanites	Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Aczib, Helbah, Apehek, Rehob
Naphtali		Jdg 1:33	Canaanites	Beth Shemesh, Beth Anath
Dan	Josh 19:47	Jdg 1:34-35	Amorites	Leshem

**Note** - This is a list of the so-called "Conquest Lacunae," consisting primarily of cities the Israelites did not conquer (see Kallai, Historical Geography, 102–11). It differs from the list of "Remaining Lands," which are listed together in Josh 13:2–6 and consist of territories the Israelites did not conquer (in addition to Kallai, see Na'aman, Borders and Districts, 39–73). (Source: David Howard - [Joshua: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture Volume 5 The New American Commentary](#))

**Joshua 17:13** It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely.

- **strong:** Jdg 1:28 2Sa 3:1 Eph 6:10 Php 4:13 2Pe 3:18
- **put the:** Jos 16:10 De 20:11-18 Jdg 1:30,33,35 2Ch 8:7,8

### Related Passages:

Joshua 16:10 But they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer (THUS DISOBEYING Dt 20:16-18+), so the Canaanites live in the midst of Ephraim to this day, and they became forced laborers.

### PHYSICALLY STRONG BUT SPIRITUALLY COMPROMISED!

**It came about when the sons of Israel became strong** - The time to which this refers is not clear, and some think it alludes to the reigns of David and Solomon. If context rules, this most likely refers to this initial period when the tribes were beginning to possess their possessions. Since the text says they became strong, one would expect this next phrase to say they defeated the Canaanites. After all they had the perfect model to emulate in Joshua who had waged war against the Canaanites for 7 years and achieved victory after victory. If they followed his leadership, how could they not achieve similar victory over the Canaanites? Clearly, they failed to follow the lead of their leader Joshua. In short, they failed to obey their ultimate "Joshua" Jesus the Captain of the hosts of the LORD (Joshua 5:13-15)!

**They put the Canaanites to forced labor** - God had told Israel to utterly destroy them, completely conquer them, not compromise with them!

**But** - This is a sad term of contrast marking a reversal in the direction to which God had called them and even enabled them to carry out. Today we call this rebellion which describes the act of open resistance to an established ruler, in Israel's case, Yahweh! As subsequent events will prove, there will ALWAYS be costly consequences when we "rebel" against Yahweh! The solution is not to rebel by obey!

**They did not drive them out completely** - This is almost a redundant statement because obviously they did not **drive them out completely** if they put some to forced labor.

God's word was clear in Deuteronomy 20:16-18+

"Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance (WHICH WOULD BE THE ALLOTMENT IN JOSHUA 17), **you shall not leave alive anything that breathes** 17 "But **you shall utterly destroy them**, the Hittite and the Amorite, the **Canaanite** and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you, 18 so that (**HERE IS WHY THEY MUST BE ANNIHILATED!**) they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the LORD your God.

**Holman OT Commentary** - Joshua expected that the people would also follow the Lord's command in driving out the Canaanites as they were clearly told to do, thereby following Joshua's example set in the first seven years of the conquest. But these three sins—**complacency, compromise, and complaint**—continually dogged the tracks of the tribes as they attempted to take over the land. Throughout its long and tumultuous history, Israel learned over and over again that complacency, compromise, and complaint always lead to failure...

**Forced labor** ((04522)(**mas/mac or mis/mic**) masculine noun designating forced labor or service, tribute. It refers to labor forced on someone or service demanded, usually by the state (Gen. 49:15; Deut. 20:11; 1 Kgs. 5:14; Isa. 31:8); usually overseen by a foreman or task-master (Ex. 1:11; 1 Kgs. 4:6, 12:18). A person not willing to work or a lazy person may be put to forced labor (Pr 12:24).

**Gilbrant** - Occurring over twenty times in the Hebrew Bible, **mas** has cognates attested in Tell el-Amarna, Akkadian, Old South Arabian and Ethiopic. It also appears in Middle Hebrew and Targumic. The noun denotes a government-enforced taxation, filled by labor or material goods. The latter usage is only attested in Est. 10:1, which records King Ahasuerus' empire-wide tax.

The noun is used seven times to refer to the reduction of the former inhabitants of the Promised Land to forced laborers by the invading Israelites (Josh. 16:10; 17:13; Judg. 1:30, 33, 35; 1 Kings 9:21; 2 Chr. 8:8). There was the equivalent of a cabinet post for the person in charge of forced labor. The same name appears under the reigns of David, Solomon, Rehoboam and Adoram (2 Sam. 20:24; 1 Ki. 4:6; 12:18; 2 Chr. 10:18). It is logically possible that the same individual filled this post for Solomon's reign and an overlapping portion of the others. There were lower officials involved with the implementation of the taskmasters (Exo. 1:11). All citizens were subject to the levy for forced labor for public works (1 Kings 9:15) as well as the Canaanite classes who were consigned to this status in perpetuity.

The permanent status of **mas** was a risk of war. In the instructions for how to pursue holy war, Yahweh instructs the population that they must offer peace and the status of **mas** to the inhabitants of certain besieged cities before destroying the city and killing the inhabitants (Deut. 20:11). The eventual fall of Assyria, the rod of Yahweh's vengeance against Israel, is assured by the promise that they will "fall with the sword, not of a mighty man... and he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited" (Isa. 31:8). The Book of Lamentations begins with the imagery of Jerusalem, a former princess, now reduced to an antithetical status of forced labor, imagery of defeat in war (1:1).

Forced labor could also have been the result of laziness, of unwillingness to work extra hours to produce a surplus. In the Blessing of Jacob, Issachar is accused of having strength but lacking interest in working hard for himself, preferring the lack of anxiety about his labors at the end of the day, willingly becoming a laborer (Gen. 49:15). Likewise, an aphorism in Prov. 12:24 declares, "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, while the slothful will be put under tribute." ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

**Strong's** - 1) gang or body of forced labourers, task-workers, labour band or gang, forced service, task-work, serfdom, tributary, tribute, levy, taskmasters, discomfited 1a) labour-band, labour-gang, slave gang 1b) gang-overseers 1c) forced service, serfdom, tribute, enforced payment

22v - forced(2), forced labor(13), forced laborer(1), forced laborers(5), laborers\*(2), men subject to forced labor(1), taskmasters\*(1), tribute(1). Gen. 49:15; Exod. 1:11; Deut. 20:11; Jos. 16:10; Jos. 17:13; Jdg. 1:28;



Jdg. 1:30; Jdg. 1:33; Jdg. 1:35; 2 Sam. 20:24; 1 Ki. 4:6; 1 Ki. 5:13; 1 Ki. 5:14; 1 Ki. 9:15; 1 Ki. 9:21; 1 Ki. 12:18; 2 Chr. 8:8; 2 Chr. 10:18; Est. 10:1; Prov. 12:24; Isa. 31:8; Lam. 1:1

**Joshua 17:14** Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am a numerous people whom the LORD has thus far blessed?"

- **one lot:** Ge 48:22 Nu 26:34-37 De 33:13-17
- **a numerous people:** Ge 48:19 49:22-26

#### Related Passage:

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

### SONS OF JOSEPH COMPLAIN ABOUT THEIR INHERITANCE.

**Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am a numerous people whom the LORD has thus far blessed ([barak](#))?"** - Who are the **sons of Joseph**? This must refer to both Ephraim and (WEST) Manasseh. Ponder their question for a moment. Who determined the **lot** according to Pr 16:33? So ultimately who is their complaint against? The implication is that they are not content with God's promised provision. They would have done well to realize that they did NOT deserve anything from God. That He gave them land at all is a manifestation of His magnificent grace.

**THOUGHT** - Are we ever like the sons of Joseph? God has given us a certain "lot" in life, but we are not content with His gift. To a degree, this mindset probably affects most of God's children from time to time. We need to confess and repent. Then and only then will we experience contentment. It behooves us all to meditate on Paul's predicaments described in Philippians 4:11-12+.

Not that I speak from want, for **I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am** I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

As a result of having learned to content and learned the secret, then and only then could he truly declare "I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me." (Php 4:13+). We love to quote verse 13 but sadly often simply yank it out of context and lose the full meaning of this powerful passage.

**Donald Campbell** comments "The descendants of **Joseph** registered a belligerent complaint with **Joshua**, claiming that their **allotment** was too small in light of their large population. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#))

**Madvig** - The relative sizes of the various tribes as recorded in Numbers 26 indicate that Ephraim and Manasseh should have qualified for one allotment each. When one looks at a map, however, and considers the relative size of the territory granted to each tribe, it becomes apparent that the first two lots in the territory west of the Jordan were disproportionately large (i.e., Judah and Joseph). In terms of square miles, the Joseph tribes had little reason to complain. Moreover, the land they were given was the most fertile in all Palestine. Joshua was certainly justified in resisting their request. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary Volume 3](#))

[ESV Study Bible](#) makes an interesting point that "With the influx of the Israelites into Canaan, **many settlements appear in areas never before settled: the highlands and the deserts**. To support this human settlement in those areas not so easily cultivable, the Israelites borrowed or developed fresh agricultural techniques. One principal development of settlers in the mountains was agricultural terracing. In addition, plastered cisterns and rock-lined silos are abundant at these sites; they are rare in earlier periods."

There may be some background that relates to the complaint by **the sons of Joseph** - "With the influx of the Israelites into Canaan, many settlements appear in areas never before settled: the highlands and the deserts. To support this human settlement in those areas not so easily cultivable, the Israelites borrowed or developed fresh agricultural techniques. One principal development of settlers in the mountains was agricultural terracing. In addition, plastered cisterns and rock-lined silos are abundant at these sites; they are rare in earlier periods." ([ESV Study Bible](#))

**Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary** - Verses 14-18. Joshua, as a public person, had no more regard to his own tribe than to any other, but would govern without favour or affection; wherein he has left a good example to all in public trusts. Joshua tells them,

that what was fallen to their share would be a sufficient lot for them, if they would but work and fight. Men excuse themselves from labour by any pretence; and nothing serves the purpose better than having rich and powerful relations, able to provide for them; and they are apt to desire a partial and unfaithful disposal of what is intrusted to those they think able to give such help. But there is more real kindness in pointing out the advantages within reach, and in encouraging men to make the best of them, than in granting indulgences to sloth and extravagance. True religion gives no countenance to these evils. The rule is, They shall not eat who will not work; and many of our "cannots" are only the language of idleness, which magnifies every difficulty and danger. This is especially the case in our spiritual work and warfare. Without Christ we can do nothing, but we are apt to sit still and attempt nothing. if we belong to Him, he will stir us up to our best endeavours, and to cry to him for help. Then our coast will be enlarged, 1 Chronicles 4:9,10, and complainings silenced, or rather, turned into joyful thanksgivings.

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**Blessed** (Lxx = [eulogeo](#))(01288) **barak** is a verb which literally can mean to kneel (to go to one's knees - Camel in Ge 24:11, Solomon in 2Chr 6:13) as contrasted with standing position or even a bowing at the waist). And so barak can refer to an act of adoration sometimes on bended knee. To give divine blessings (Ge 1:22, 9:1-7) To esteem greatly or adore God for His blessings (Ge 24:48, Ps 103:1) To invoke blessings upon another (Ge 24:60, 27:4, 27) The Hebrew is usually translated in the Lxx with [eulogeo](#) which literally means to speak well of and in this context to pronounce or bestow a blessing or gracious benefit upon the recipient. The English definition of to bless means "pronounce words in a religious rite, to confer or invoke divine favor upon; ask God to look favorably."

**Barak in Joshua** - Jos. 8:33; Jos. 14:13; Jos. 17:14; Jos. 22:6; Jos. 22:7; Jos. 22:33; Jos. 24:10

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### Spurgeon - Excerpt from "[The Lord Hath Blessed](#)" - Joshua 17:14

"Forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto."—Joshua 17:14.

IT is not an easy task to divide land amongst different claimants. Joshua divided Canaan with strict impartiality. He was a man of God, and he was also shrewdly wise, as you may gather from many of his speeches. But, for all that, he could not satisfy everybody. He who would please all attempts the impossible. God himself is quarrelled with. If it be the design of providence to please men, it is a melancholy failure. Do we not find men everywhere dissatisfied with their portions? This man would like his lot if it were not where it is, and that man would be perfectly satisfied if he had a little more. One would be contented with what he has if he could keep it always, while another would be more pleased if life could be shortened. There is no pleasing men. We are like the sons of Joseph in the chapter before us, ready to complain of our inheritance. It should not be so. We who have pined in the wilderness of sin should rejoice that we have entered the land of promise, and we ought to be glad to have a portion among the people of the Lord. Contentment should be natural to those who are born of the Spirit of God; yea, we ought to go beyond contentment, and cry, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits."

Brethren, the best advice that I can give to each man among you is, that he should endeavour to make the best of the portion which God has given him: for, after all, Joshua had not arbitrarily appointed Ephraim and Manasseh their lots, but they had fallen to them by the decree of God. Their portions had been marked out by a higher hand than Joshua's long before. You and I ought to believe that—

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will."

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### Cut Wood Joshua 17:14–18 - Roger Campbell - [Preach for a Year: 104 Sermon Outlines](#)

- I. Introduction
- A. Joshua the Conquering Captain
  1. Joshua in charge after Moses died
  2. Moses stands for the Law
  3. Joshua a type of Christ (John 1:17)
- B. Joshua Dividing Canaan
  1. Each tribe receiving its portion
  2. Canaan pictures the Christian life
  3. We have battles to win; territory to conquer
- C. The Tribe of Joseph Receives Its Land
  1. The largest of the tribes
  2. The tribe from which Joshua came
- II. Body

- A. The Complaint of the Tribe of Joseph (v. 14)
    1. "Why ... only one lot?"
      - a. They thought their lot too small
      - b. They thought they deserved better
    2. The pride in their protest:
      - a. "I am a great people"
      - b. Even used the Lord's name to complain
    3. Many Christians are not content
      - a. "The church doesn't recognize my talent"
      - b. "Why can't I have that position?"
      - c. They complain constantly
    4. Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6-8)
  - B. The Counsel of Joshua (v. 15)
    1. Joshua tells them to cut wood
    2. Now the truth comes out
      - a. Clearing the land will take work
      - b. The tribe doesn't want the job
    3. Lessons for us from this griping group
      - a. Salvation by faith but work follows (Eph. 2:8-10)
      - b. Reaching our potential requires work
    4. What are you doing to develop your lot?
  - C. The Chariots of Iron (v. 16)
    1. The enemy is strong (Satan)
    2. We are at war with powerful forces (Eph. 6:12-18)
    3. We are equipped to win
      - a. We have the armor of God (Eph. 6)
      - b. We have the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:4)
    4. The chariots of iron were a distant threat (v. 16)
      - a. They needed to cut that wood first
      - b. Then they could defeat the iron chariots (v. 18)
- III. Conclusion
- A. Let Us Serve God Where We Are ... Now
  - B. He Will Give Strength to Work and Win Each Day

**Joshua 17:15** Joshua said to them, "If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you."

- **If you are a numerous people:** Lu 12:48
- **the Perizzites:** Ge 13:7 Ex 33:2 Ezr 9:1
- **giants: or, Rephaims,** Ge 14:5 15:20 2Sa 5:18,22

## JOSHUA CHALLENGES THEIR COMPLAINT

**Joshua said to them** - Notice Joshua's "tactic" -- since their rationale was that they were too numerous, he turns that around on them. It is like he is saying since you are so numerous like you claim, then use that numerical advantage against the adversaries. As their subsequent reply demonstrates, this is not what they wanted to hear!

**"If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you** - Joshua challenges the legitimacy of their complaint by telling them to occupy the forested area (with trees and people "like trees"). Giants were no challenge for those with a "Caleb-like" faith, for he had no fear of the giant Anakim (Joshua 14:12). The sons of Joseph also need to remember that Israel enabled by God had already defeated one giant Rephaite king, Og king of Bashan (Joshua 12:4+).

[Life Application Study Bible](#) - Notice the two contrasting attitudes toward settling the Promised Land: Caleb took what God gave

him and moved ahead to fulfill God's plan for him (Joshua 14:12). He was confident that God would help him drive out the wicked inhabitants and that he would soon fully occupy his land (Joshua 15:14, 15). In contrast, the two tribes of Joseph were given rich land and lots of it, but they were afraid to drive out the inhabitants and take full possession of it. Instead, they begged for more land. But Joshua asked them to prove their sincerity first by clearing the unclaimed forest areas. They agreed, but they failed to carry through (Jdg 1:27).

## Related Resource

- [Who were the Rephaim?](#)

**Thompson** - According to the census taken in Numbers 26, Ephraim had 32,500 (26:37) and Manasseh had 52,700 (26:34). Neither group was happy with their allotment. They all wanted more land. So Joshua says, "fine," you want it, you have it—you take for yourself the forest area and clear it and live in it (Josh. 17:15).

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## John G Butler - [Sermon Starters Volume #4](#) - PROVE YOUR TALK Joshua 17:15

"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" (Joshua 17:15).

Our text comes in a context which speaks of the dividing and settling of the land of Canaan by the Israelites. It was not a good performance, the enemy was not totally drive out of the land and many of the Israelites were complaining about their allotment. They often wanted an easier allotment that would not be difficult to settle.

### FIRST—THE PROBLEM OF GREATNESS

"And Joshua answered them." Our text concerns a complaint brought to Joshua by the tribe of Joseph (particularly the Ephraimites) that their allotment was too hard and because they were a "great" people (in number or rank or both) they should be given a better allotment. Joshua was in charge of the dividing of the land so he would also be the one to whom the discontent would criticize. Sometimes we envy people in high position, but if we knew what they had to put up with in that position we would not envy them so much. So it was with Joshua. He had a heady position but some of the territory that went with the position was not so nice. Listening to and trying to solve the complaints of dissidents has never been an enviable task. Especially was it a pain in the neck to have to deal with. The problem of Ephraimites was that they thought they were better than they were.

### SECOND—THE PROFESSION OF GREATNESS

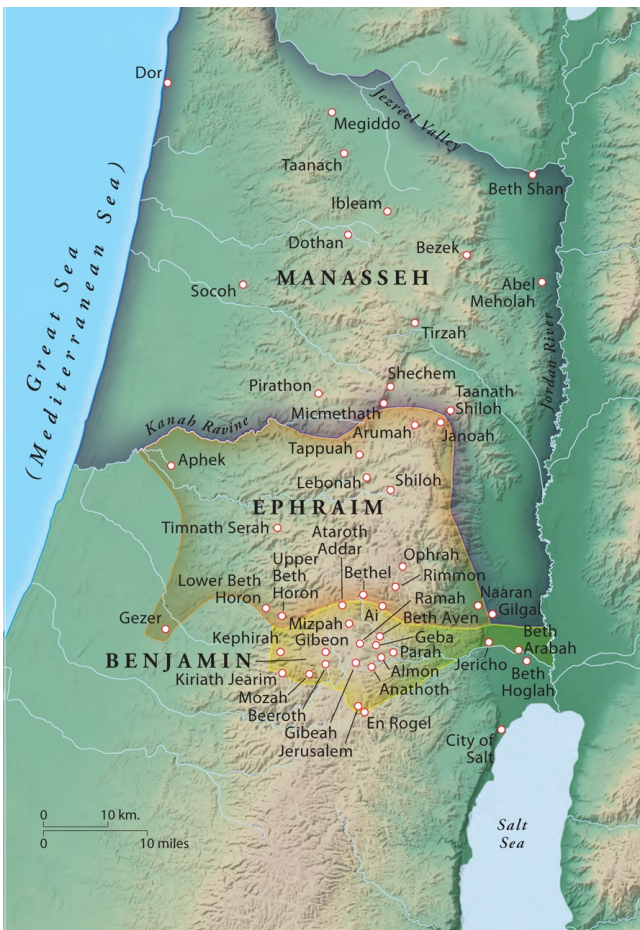
"If thou art a great people." The Ephraimites had complained that since they were a great people, they should get a better allotment. This sort of claim comes from people who think more highly of themselves than they ought (Romans 12:3). It is the complaint that wants recognition but not responsibility. They wanted privilege but not the requirements that went with the privilege. They wanted greatness but did not want to put out a great effort to achieve it. They wanted a pay increase but did not show much interest in a production increase. There kind is not extinct but still plagues society and the church. This shows up at school in those who think they should be on the team who do not qualify because their performance is deficient and in those who think they should get a better grades but do not qualify because their test scores do not even justify the grade they are given.

### THIRD—THE PERFORMANCE OF GREATNESS

"Cut down for thyself in the land of ... the giants." Joshua called the bluff of the Ephraimites. If they were so great than let them show it by a "great" performance. If you think you are so great don't go around demanding recognition. Show you greatness in your performance. True greatness is not as concerned about recognition as it is about performance. The Ephraimites need to match their talk with their walk. Such action needs to be ours too.

**Joshua 17:16 The sons of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the valley land have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth-shean and its towns and those who are in the valley of Jezreel."**

- **chariots:** Jos 17:18 Jdg 1:19 4:3
- **Beth-shean:** Jos 17:11 1Ki 4:12
- **valley of Jezreel:** Jos 19:18 Jdg 6:33 1Ki 4:12 18:46 21:1,23 2Ki 9:10,37 Ho 1:4,5



Map to help visualize descriptions of boundaries of Manasseh  
Zondervan Atlas of the Bible: C. Rasmussen

## INSTEAD OF THANKSGIVING THEY ARE COMPLAINING

The sons of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us - [Click this map](#) and note the hills north of the designation "JUDAH" to give you a good sense of where the **hill country** was located. Now the sons of Joseph begin with excuses, giving two reasons they are not receptive of Joshua's "hill country" proposal! First, the "hill country" was not sufficient, even though it was given by divine lot. Perhaps God did not realize that He had short-changed the sons of Joseph! (Being sarcastic of course).

All uses of **hill country** in Number through Judges (conquering the land) - Num. 13:17; Num. 13:29; Num. 14:40; Num. 14:44; Num. 14:45; Deut. 1:7; Deut. 1:19; Deut. 1:20; Deut. 1:24; Deut. 1:41; Deut. 1:43; Deut. 1:44; Deut. 2:37; Deut. 3:12; Deut. 3:25; Jos. 2:16; Jos. 2:22; Jos. 2:23; Jos. 9:1; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:2; Jos. 11:3; Jos. 11:16; Jos. 11:21; Jos. 12:8; Jos. 13:6; Jos. 14:12; Jos. 15:48; Jos. 16:1; Jos. 17:15; Jos. 17:16; Jos. 17:18; Jos. 18:12; Jos. 19:50; Jos. 20:7; Jos. 21:11; Jos. 21:21; Jos. 24:30; Jos. 24:33; Jdg. 1:9; Jdg. 1:19; Jdg. 1:34; Jdg. 2:9; Jdg. 3:27; Jdg. 4:5; Jdg. 7:24; Jdg. 10:1; Jdg. 12:15; Jdg. 17:1; Jdg. 17:8; Jdg. 18:2; Jdg. 18:13; Jdg. 19:1; Jdg. 19:16; Jdg. 19:18;

Here is the second (AND PROBABLY MAIN) reason the sons of Israel did not like Joshua's proposal...

**And all the Canaanites who live in the valley land have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth-shean and its towns and those who are in the valley of Jezreel ([picture of modern Jezreel Valley](#)) - Chariots of iron** would only be effective in flat areas. This use of iron was a new development. Israel did not employ chariots until much later until the time of Solomon (1Ki 9:22; 1Ki 10:26–29). Now they are beginning to sound a bit like the 10 spies who felt they were "grasshoppers" compared to the Canaanites (Nu 13:33+). They needed to remember the words Moses told them in Dt 11:4+ (they had no excuse, for they had all heard these words!) describing what God "**did to Egypt's army, to its horses and its chariots**" (Dt 11:4+)! Their memory of God's power and provision was very short (THAT NEVER HAPPENS TO US DOES IT BELOVED?!!!). They were walking by sight, not by faith (2Co 5:7). They were looking at the fearsome iron chariots and not the fearful Captain of the Lord's Host (Josh 5:13-15+). In short, they had (in Old Testament sense) taken their eyes off of Jesus (the Captain). Fear set in and drowned out faith.

**Kenneth Gangel** that the people of Joseph "also added complaint to compromise and complacency. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were not content. They had a problem. They thought that because of their size they deserved more land. Joshua told them to clear some forest land and settle there. But they complained that the forest lands wouldn't work because this would put

them too close to Canaanites with iron chariots. And we thought entitlement programs were an invention of the late twentieth century! These tribes didn't want to work or fight for their land. They wanted something given to them. Their complaining and fear got in the way of their blessing. Have you ever complained to God that he is not doing enough for you? Lord Congelton once overheard a servant say, "If only I had five pounds, I would be perfectly content." He gave her five pounds and then heard her say, "Why didn't I ask for ten pounds?" (**ED: IS THIS NOT A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION OF OUR FALLEN FLESH....GIVE ME, GIVE ME, GIVE ME?**) ([Holman Old Testament Commentary - Joshua](#))

Note that **Megiddo** and the **valley of Jezreel** ([Valley of Esdraelon](#)) had some of the best agricultural land in the area but it was "protected" by iron chariots (see this [picture of the modern fruitful Jezreel Valley](#) and also [region of Megiddo](#)). In the map above locate the upper border of Manasseh [western half-tribe] for the locations of **Megiddo** and the **Jezreel valley**.

**Jezreel - Holman Bible Dictionary** meaning "God sows" (OR "GOD SCATTERS"), refers to a major valley, a northern city, a southern city, and the son of Hosea 1:1 . The Old Testament uses the name to refer to the entire valley of Jezreel which separates Galilee from Samaria, including the valley of Esdraelon. The valley was important militarily as a battle site for Deborah (Judges 4-5), Gideon (Judges 6-7), Saul (2 Samuel 4:1), Jehu (2 Kings 9-10), and Josiah (2 Kings 22:1 ). The geography of Palestine made Jezreel a major route for travel from north to south and from east to west. 2. The northern city of Jezreel, which guarded the corridor to Beth-shan, was the site of the royal residence of Omri and Ahab where the incident of Naboth's vineyard occurred (1 Kings 21:1). 3. David's wife Ahinoam was from the southern city of Jezreel which is located in the vicinity of Ziph (1 Samuel 25:43-44 ). 4 . The prophet Hosea named his son Jezreel as a symbol to indicate the evil nature of the dynasty of Jehu which began with much bloodshed in Jezreel. The name also symbolized that God will sow seeds of prosperity after the destruction (Hosea 1:4-5; Hosea 1:10-2:1). Robert Street

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the meaning of Jezreel? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the significance of Megiddo in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Utley - "Jezreel" The name means "God sows".** Like several names in this list it can refer to a place and a person.

1. a place
  - a. city—Josh. 15:56; 1 Sam. 25:43  
(1) in Judah, Josh. 19:18  
(2) in Issachar,
  - b. valley—Josh. 17:16; Jdgs. 6:33
  - c. district—1 Kgs. 21:23; 2 Kgs. 9:10, 36, 37
2. a person
  - a. 1 Chr. 4:3
  - b. Hosea 1:4

**Joshua 17:17 Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "You are a numerous people and have great power; you shall not have one lot only,**

- **You are a numerous people:** Jos 17:14

**YOU ARE ABLE TO  
PROVIDE FOR YOUR NEEDS!**

**Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "You are a numerous people and have great power** - Joshua is old and primarily an administrator but he is still a seasoned military man and he gives the sons of Joseph two reasons they should not be fearful - you have a numerical and power advantage!

**You shall not have one lot only** - **NET** = "You will not have just one tribal allotment."**NLT** = "you will be given more than one portion."

**MacDonald** - When Joshua said, "You shall not have only one lot" (v. 17b), he didn't mean that they would get additional land but that they must occupy all the land that had been given to them. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**Joshua 17:18 but the hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong."**

- **the hill country:** Jos 17:15 15:9 20:7
- **for you shall drive out the Canaanites** Jos 11:4-6 13:6 Nu 14:6-9 De 20:1-4 Ps 27:1,2 Isa 41:10-16 Isa 51:12,13 Ro 8:31,37 Heb 13:6

**but the hill country shall be yours** - Now ponder this scenario a moment. God had given the sons of Joseph a lot and they should have been content but were not. They started whining and complaining, which in some OT scenes was a sure recipe for the disciplining hand of the LORD. And yet in this case Joshua shows them grace upon grace. They did not deserve another lot, but in grace (and mercy) Joshua, the administrator in charge bestows it on them. This is unmerited favor in real-time!

**For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours**- The hill country was a rugged country but Joshua explains they will clear it and possess it.

**Kenneth Gangel** " As Israel's military commander and chief executive officer, Joshua set a helpful example in the way he dealt with Joseph's people: "Clear the land and drive out the Canaanites and stop your bellyaching." We need to learn how to help ourselves and others when we get stuck in the spiritual mud of complacency, compromise, or complaint..([Holman Old Testament Commentary - Joshua](#))

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** has an interesting note - That the Central Ridge was once heavily forested is attested by acorns and terebinth seeds and deer antlers found in many excavations and a wild boar's tooth at Gezer, as well as cypress and pine lumber in King Saul's fortress at Gibeah (Tell el-Ful).

**For** - Term of Explanation. Here Joshua elaborates on how they will be able to clear and possess the land.

**you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong**- Yes the Canaanites are strong, and yes, the Canaanites have iron chariots, but who did the sons of Joseph have? The answer is obvious -- they had Yahweh. Joshua surely recalled the promise of Yahweh in Joshua 13:6

"All (HOW MANY?) the inhabitants of the hill country (from Lebanon as far as Misrephoth-maim, all the Sidonians, I will drive them out from before the sons of Israel; only allot it to Israel for an inheritance as I have commanded you.

**ESV Study Bible** note on **chariots of iron** - In contrast to the lighter chariots of Joshua 11:4+, the chariots of iron of the plains-dwelling Canaanites were of heavier construction, perhaps armored with iron fittings and sporting iron-shod, six-spoked wheels (see also Jdg. 1:19+). Daunting as such military machinery must have been, Joshua insisted that it was no impediment to the eye of faith ([ESV Study Bible](#))

**Donald Campbell** sums up this last section - "While there is some similarity between this section and the one recording Caleb's request (Joshua 14:6-15), their outlooks were opposite. Caleb's request was motivated by faith, whereas that of the Josephites stemmed from fear. The purpose, however, of this episode may well be to alert the Israelites to the fact that the tribes had to act in courageous faith if they were to possess the Promised Land fully. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament](#))

The sons of Joseph were also present when Moses gave this encouragement to Israel in the time of battle...

"When you go out to battle against your enemies and **see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you**, do not be afraid of them; (WHY NOT?) for the LORD your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you. (Dt 20:1+)

**Thompson** - If we are to lay hold of great blessings and a great inheritance, we need to learn these same lessons. We have the power of God to succeed in our lives, but we must do our part in working and warring for God; and if we do we will win. We cannot sit idly by and earn a great inheritance. We need to get active. Arthur Pink said, "men will excuse themselves from labor on any pretense." What amazes me about this is that God put up with this and still does today. God gives us so much and often times it is not enough. We whine and complain and are not satisfied. God says fine—you want more, I'll give you more and then you will whine and complain about that. There is an inheritance that is there for the earning. We cannot earn salvation, but we can lay up treasures in heaven.

**Cyril Barber** - We cannot conclude our perusal of these chapters without taking note of the failure of these tribes to trust the Lord for victory. God's promise of help was as explicit as His command for these nations to be destroyed (cf. Exodus 23:23–33; 34:11–16; Deuteronomy 7:1–6). Apparently inertia led first to an uneasy coexistence, and then to full acceptance with intermarriage taking

place. It wasn't long before God's people began worshiping the gods of the Canaanites. ([Joshua: A Devotional Exposition](#))

**Irving Jensen** ([Joshua- Everyman's Bible Commentary: Rest-Land Won](#)) -The complaint of Ephraim and Manasseh was strong and bitter. They felt they deserved a larger inheritance since God had blessed them with such a large population, and the habitable areas to dwell in were in their estimation too small. Joshua's answer was both a rebuke and a solution. A truly great people should be able to take the small and make it big. His solution was for them to apply brawn and cut down the wooded forest and make room. Then, having established themselves firmly in the hill country, they would be able to drive out the heavily armed and formidable Canaanites in the north valley regions, which threat was the basic reason for their complaint in the first place. If Judah had to deal with enemies from all sides, the sons of Joseph could not expect an easier inheritance! Joshua's closing words to them (17:17-18) were a strong encouragement and challenge, applicable also to Christians today:

“Thou art a great people, (POSITION)  
and hast great power; ... (POWER)  
forest, thou shalt cut ... down ... (TOIL)  
for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites....” (TRIUMPH)

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**Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook -Joshua 17:18 - Divine Expulsion** - (See similar topic - Expulsive Power of a New Affection). IT is a great encouragement to valour to be assured of victory, for then a man goes forth to war in confidence, and ventures where else he had been afraid to go. Our warfare is with evil within us and around us, and we ought to be persuaded that we are able to get the victory, and that we shall do so in the name of the Lord Jesus. We are not riding for a fall, but to win; and win we shall. The grace of God in its omnipotence is put forth for the overthrow of evil in every form: hence the certainty of triumph.

Certain of our sins find chariots of iron in our constitution, our former habits, our associations and our occupations. Nevertheless we must overcome them. They are very strong, and in reference to them we are very weak; yet in the name of God we must master them, and we will (ED: YES, BUT ONLY AS WE ARE SUPERNATURALLY ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT - See Romans 8:13+). If one sin has dominion of us we are not the Lord's free men (cf Ro 6:12-14+). A man who is held by only one chain is still a captive. There is no going to heaven with one sin ruling within us, for of the saints it is said, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Up, then, and slay every Canaanite, and break to shivers every chariot of iron! (cf Col 3:5+) The Lord of hosts is with us, and who shall resist His sin-destroying power?

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**Streams in the Desert - "The hill country shall be thine." (Josh. 17:18, R. V.)**

THERE is always room higher up. When the valleys are full of Canaanites, whose iron chariots withstand your progress, get up into the hills, occupy the upper spaces. If you can no longer work for God, pray for those who can. If you cannot move earth by your speech, you may move Heaven. If the development of life on the lower slopes is impossible, through limitations of service, the necessity of maintaining others, and such-like restrictions, let it break out toward the unseen, the eternal, the Divine.

Faith can fell forests. Even if the tribes had realized what treasures lay above them, they would hardly have dared to suppose it possible to rid the hills of their dense forest-growth. But as God indicated their task, He reminded them that they had power enough. The visions of things that seem impossible are presented to us, like these forest-covered steeps, not to mock us, but to incite us to spiritual exploits which would be impossible unless God had stored within us the great strength of His own indwelling.

Difficulty is sent to reveal to us what God can do in answer to the faith that prays and works. Are you straitened in the valleys? Get away to the hills, live there; get honey out of the rock, and wealth out of the terraced slopes now hidden by forest.—Daily Devotional Commentary.

Got any rivers they say are uncrossable,  
Got any mountains they say 'can't tunnel through'?  
We specialize in the wholly impossible,  
Doing the things they say you can't do.  
—Song of the Panama builders.

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**F B Meyer - Joshua 17:18 The hill country shall be thine. (R.V.)**

The hills were steep, irregular, covered with forest. "These shall be yours," said Joshua to the children of Joseph; "you are a great people, and have great power; cut down the forest, terrace the slopes, turn their bare declivities into cornfields and vineyards; fill these vast untenanted spaces with life and song."



There is always room higher up. — When the valleys are full of Canaanites, whose iron chariots withstand your progress, get up into the hills, occupy the upper spaces. If you can no longer work for God, pray for those who can. If you cannot move earth by your speech, you may move Heaven. If the development of life on the lower slopes is impossible, through limitations of service, the necessity of maintaining others, and such-like restrictions, let it break out towards the unseen, the eternal, the divine.

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**Kenneth Gangel** The Power of Positive Thinking -- No, not the famous self-esteem book by Norman Vincent Peale, but the magnificent words written by Paul in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Those attitudes largely marked the conquering Israelites for seven years. Then the entitlement programs began, and complacency, compromise, and complaint began to get the better of the day. In our spiritual warfare we might try combating those three negative C words with some positive T words—think, try, and trust.

Like the Israelites entering Canaan, we should not expect the surrounding culture to reinforce positive choices. A recent announcement by the University of California that it would no longer require SAT scores for admission is only one demonstration of the "dumbing down" of education in recent years. Among the boat builders on Britain's Clyde River there is a saying: "Once iron men came here to build wooden ships; now wooden men come to build iron ships."

Thinking is a key commodity, and the Philippians passage is extremely important. But trust teaches us that dependence is a key posture. We cannot lead unless other people trust, and we cannot lead unless we are completely dependent on the Heavenly Father for every resource essential for spiritual victory. One heresy that hinders Christians in their drive for conquest in spiritual warfare is the idea of prosperity gospel, the notion that God's blessing is measured by size or number. This carnal imposition leads to imperial leadership and self-glory, the exact opposite of Paul's praise for suffering.

I grieve to think of the millions of dollars wasted by evangelicals building enormous and elaborate places of worship while the Third World starves and mission boards struggle to keep their people on the field. Remember the words of C. T. Studd? "Some men die in ashes; some men die in flames. Some men die inch by inch, playing silly games."

And finally, instead of complaining, try—because perseverance is a key attitude. Outside Vancouver's Empire Stadium stands a piece of statuary commemorating a great moment in sports history. I once drove to the stadium just to photograph the statute. It dates back to 1954—Roger Bannister and John Landy in the "miracle mile." Landy led all the way but turned and lost stride as Bannister passed him and broke the tape. The statute captures that exact instant.

So many Bible characters provide examples of excellence for us to emulate. Then there is Demas, who started ministry and quit because the lure of the world was too great. We all need perseverance to finish our lives with excellence in spiritual warfare, and some need encouragement just to finish the next week. I implore you by God's grace and in the name of Jesus never to accept mediocrity in anything you do as a Christian. That was the problem with the tribes. The conquest was a howling success, but the occupation was soiled by mediocrity ([Holman Old Testament Commentary - Joshua](#))

## **DRIVING OUT THE CANAANITES AND THEIR IRON CHARIOTS**

**NOTE - BELOVED THIS IS A SERMON YOU MUST READ AND LISTEN TO (I HAVE LISTENED OVER 5 TIMES AND WILL LISTEN AGAIN). WE ALL BATTLE WITH OUR FALLEN "CANAANITE" FLESH AND THIS SERMON IS ONE OF THE BEST TREATMENTS OF FIGHTING THAT BATTLE I HAVE EVER HEARD/READ. BUT ONE READING/HEARING WILL NOT SUFFICE! READ, TAKE NOTES, PRAY AND GO OVER IT AGAIN. YOU WILL NOT REGRET IT IN TIME OR ETERNITY. A THOROUGH GRASP AND PRACTICE OF THE PRINCIPLES SPURGEON EXPLAINS WILL PAY GREAT DIVIDENDS IN YOUR PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION!**

- [Listen to a reading of this sermon.](#)

A Sermon DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 12TH, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“For thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be Strong.”—Joshua 17:18.

WHEN the children of Israel had come to Canaan, and by God’s good care had entered into the land that flowed with milk and honey, they were not immediately at rest, for the Canaanites were there—there in possession, there in strong cities, which seemed to be walled up to heaven; and they had to drive out these Canaanites before they could possibly possess the country. In fact, this was the reason why they were sent there. The Canaanites had been outlawed of God. They had been guilty of such horrible offences that he had adjudged their race to destruction. It was necessary for the purity of the world that ancient races which had become so horribly depraved should be removed from it, and the Israelites were brought to the land, as the Lord’s executioners, to smite the Canaanites, and exterminate them. Some have dared to speak of it as a hideous massacre; but being commanded of the great Judge, who has the power of life and death, it is to be solemnly regarded as a terrible execution for which there was a stern necessity. We may rest well assured that he who commissioned his officers to slay had the most urgent reason for the employment of their swords. God knew best what was needful for the morals of the world, and he came to the conclusion that the iniquity of the Amorites was full, and that they could not be longer endured. The Israelites could not, therefore, enter upon their inheritance without first driving out the aboriginal races, since these had become the adversaries both of God and man.

You will see, then, dear friends, that Canaan is hardly a full type of heaven. It may be used so in a modified sense; but it is a far better emblem of that state and condition of soul in which a man is found when he has become a believer, and by believing has entered into rest, but not into an absolutely perfect deliverance from sin. He has come to take possession of the covenant heritage, but finds the Canaanite of sin and evil still in the land, both in the form of original sin within, and of temptation from without. Before he can fully enjoy his privileges he must drive out his sins. It is absolutely needful, before he can experience the blessings of the covenant of grace to the full, that he should contend with the iniquities and evils which are within him and around him. He must drive out the various tribes of enemies which, for a long time, have been dwellers in the land of his nature. No doubt, many young Christians think that, when they are converted, the warfare is all over. No, the battle has just begun. You have not come to the winning-post: you have only come to the starting-point. You have entered upon the land in which you will have to fight, and wrestle, and weep, and pray, until you get the victory. That victory will be yours, but you will have to agonize to obtain it. He that has brought you into this condition will not fail you nor forsake you; but, at the same time, not without strong contentions and earnest strivings will you be able to win your inheritance. Be not deluded with the idea that you may sit down at your ease, for the very reverse will happen to the true heir of heaven.

I speak at this time to many who understand the meaning of spiritual warfare, and I scarcely need remind them that they are called to be men at arms, and not men at ease. I speak to some, perhaps, who do not yet understand much of warfare; but they will know before long, for no believer’s sword will long sleep in its scabbard. Sin is a powerful enemy; and if you are a child of God, you will have to fight against it. If you are an heir of the true Canaan, you are born first to a heritage of warfare, and ultimately to the vast inheritance of unbroken and everlasting peace.

“The land of triumph lies on high,  
There are no fields of battle there;  
Lord, I would conquer till I die,  
And finish all the glorious war.”

Our text is a war-speech to the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim. Joshua said to them, “Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only.” But he told them that while he gave them two lots, they would have to drive out those who were then in possession:—“Thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.” May the Holy Spirit inspire us for our life-struggles by the meditations of this hour!

#### **I. Our first reflection shall be—WE MUST DRIVE THEM OUT.**

It is a command from God—“Thou shalt drive out the Canaanites.” Every sin has to be slaughtered. Not a single sin is to be tolerated. Off with their heads! Drive the sword into their hearts! They are all to die. Not one of them may be spared. The whole race is to be exterminated, and so buried that not a bone of them can be found. Here is a labour worthy of all the valour of faith and the power of love.

They must all be driven out, for, every sin is our enemy. I hope we have no enemies in this world among our fellow-men. It takes two to make a quarrel; and if we will not contend, there can be no contention. We are neither to give nor to take offence; but if it be

possible, as much as lieth in us, we are to live peaceably with all men. I trust that we have forgiven everybody who has ever harmed us, and would desire to be forgiven by all against whom we have done anything wrong. But every sin, every evil, of every shape, is our true enemy, against which we are to wrestle to the bitter end. You cannot say to any sin, "You may dwell in my heart and be my friend." It cannot be your friend: evil is our natural and necessary enemy, and we must treat it as such. The seed of the woman will never find a friend in the seed of the serpent, any more than Eve found a friend in the serpent that beguiled her. Any pretence of friendship with iniquity is mischievous. If you are a friend of sin, you are not a friend of God. All sorts of sins are our enemies, and we are to hate them with our whole soul. If you can say of any sin, "I do not hate it," then you may gravely question whether you were ever born again. One of the marks of a child of God is that, although he sins, he does not love sin. He may fall into sin, but he is like a sheep which, if it tumbles into the mud, is quickly up again, for it hates the mire. The sow wallows where the sheep is distressed. Now, we are not the swine that love the slough, though we are as sheep that sometimes slip with their feet. Would to God that we never did slip! What a misery sin is to us! Evil is the worst of evils to godly men. The Lord send us all the sorrow he pleases: if he will but prevent our ever falling into sin, the greatest of our griefs will be away. Every sin hates us, and we hate every sin. There is no sin, dear friends, that can help you, in any case whatever; but it must seriously harm and hinder you. Sin is that ill wind which blows nobody any good. There is no beauty in sin. There is no comfort in sin. There is no strength in sin. There is nothing whatsoever good in sin. From the crown of its head to the sole of its foot it is all bruises and putrefying sores. There is nothing to be said in its favour; and I am sure that no heir of heaven would take up its cause and plead for it. It is evil, only evil, and that continually. While you hate sin, sin hates you. It will do you all the hurt it can; it will never be satisfied with the mischief that it has wrought you. It will try to lead you farther and farther into danger, so as to bring you down to hell. Sin would utterly destroy you, if it could, and it certainly could and would, if the grace of God did not prevent. Proclaim, then, a ceaseless warfare against all sin. Cry, "war to the knife with sin!" The Canaanites war with you; take care that you war with them. Up with the blood-red banner! Draw the sword, and never sheath it again. So long as there remains sin in our heart, or in our life, or in the world, it is to be fought against to the death.

Again, we should contend against all these Canaanites, and drive them out, for sin is our Lord's most cruel enemy. Jesus abhors all evil, and evil in every shape persecuted him. All sorts of sins he bore in his own body on the tree. From our sins, all of which were laid upon him, came the lashings of his back, when the ploughers ploughed deep furrows. From our sins came the bloody sweat that covered him from head to foot. From our sins came the crown of thorns, the nails, the spear, the vinegar and gall, and the dread death of agony. Sin—oh, how our Lord loathes it! In putting it away from us he drank of that cup from which, for a moment, he started, saying, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" and this it was which caused him such an agony. Sin to Jesus was horror, torment, death. Jesus abhors sin with all the force of his holy nature. Saved by Jesus, will you not hate sin as he did? Would any person here lay up in his drawer as a treasure the knife with which his father was murdered? Our sins were the daggers that slew the Saviour. Can we bear to think of them? Oh, that our tears might flow at the very thought of our horrible conduct towards our Lord, whom we slew by our sins: and may we never, never, never indulge any one of all our iniquities, for no one of them is innocent of the murder of our best Beloved. They conspired to take away his life; let us execute them at once.

"Oh, how I hate those lusts of mine  
That crucified my God;  
Those sins that pierced and nail'd his flesh  
Fast to the fatal wood!

"Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die;  
My heart has so decreed:  
Nor will I spare the guilty things  
That made my Saviour bleed.

"Whilst with a melting, broken heart,  
My murder'd Lord I view,  
I'll raise revenge against my sins,  
And slay the murderers too."

Remember, brethren, we cannot have Christ and have any one sin reigning in our hearts. We come to Christ as sinners, but when we receive Christ we hear him say, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Sin may look into our nature, as it does, with its tempting witcheries. Sin may ride through our nature, as it does, trampling down all that is good. Sin may lurk in our nature, as it does, ready to plot against the King of kings; but it cannot reign in our nature, for it has come under another sovereignty: Christ is on the throne. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life" within our nature at this present time. It is not possible that we could set a single sin on any throne, even though it should be lower than Christ's throne; neither can we obey the lusts thereof. Our Lord Jesus will not share his dominion even with an angel, much less with a sin. If thou wilt have iniquity enthroned in thy heart thou must be lost. There is no hope for thee. Thou mayest have Christ and quit thy sin; but thou canst not have Christ and hug thy sin. Christ shall

help thee to slay thy sin; but if thou sayest, "No, but I will indulge this evil," even though thou addest, "Is it not a little one?" thou wilt perish in thine iniquity. If there be one darling sin that thou wouldst spare, Christ and thy soul will never agree. There can be no peace between thee and Christ while there is peace between thee and sin, let that sin be what it may. I have known men give up drunkenness, and when they have signed the pledge they have thought, "Now I am somebody"; and they have gone on with some other habit which was quite as bad. I am glad enough to see you total abstainers; but that will not save you. Drunkards cannot enter heaven; neither can liars, nor thieves, nor fornicators, nor unbelievers. You have driven out one Canaanite, but how about the rest? One man has said, "I cannot bear prodigality. The extravagant expenditure of that young profligate is abominable." Just so, but is not avarice abominable also? I do not suppose that you ever would spend too much money, for you are a mean old screw. You would never be tempted to waste your money, for you love it too well. Extravagance is not in your line; but you may as surely be ruined by covetousness and greed as by prodigality. Covetousness may be a better sort of vice for your pocket, but it will be nothing better for your soul when you have to stand before the judgment bar of God. One man loathes hypocrisy, but then he is cruel, hard, and unforgiving; another man will never swear, but he will lie as fast as a horse will gallop. I have known a man hate lying, and yet he has been given to lechery. I have known another who has been perfectly pure from fleshly sin, but then he has been as proud as Lucifer himself; and pride will destroy a man as much as any other form of sin. The fact is, the whole nest of unclean birds must be thrown to the ground. All the eggs of the cockatrice must be crushed. Let us pray—

"The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from its throne,  
And worship only thee."

Suppose that one of our missionaries were to come back from India, and say, "I have achieved a great marvel among the natives. All through one of the districts I went and preached, and wrought wonders. I found them worshipping gods made of the mud of the Ganges! I showed them the folly of it, and they broke their mud-gods to pieces. And some of them had wooden gods, and I induced them to burn them all. But there were some beautiful gods—gods of marble, and of gold, and of silver, and I had not the heart to meddle with them, for they were so artistic, so valuable, and so venerable. Why, one of them had eyes of diamond; and another had about his wrist a bracelet of rubies." Alas, Mr. Missionary! we see no reason for your self-congratulation. So you left the people worshipping those precious gods, did you? What good have you done? None whatever. It is evidently as evil an idolatry to worship a god of gold as it is to worship a god of mud. Now, if we come among you, and so deal with vice and improve the education and morals of the masses that we elevate the people, what have we done if we end there? We have taken away one set of sins, but have left others. We have broken the mud-gods, but if we leave the gold and silver gods, what good have we done, as before the sight of the Lord? Many men have been delivered from the bottom rank of lusts, and so far so good; but then the higher ranks of spiritual wickednesses in high places have been left untouched, and what has been the net result? Something for this world, but nothing for the next; something for morality, but nothing for spirituality. In the long run we shall not have done much even for morals, for the most loathsome of vices flourish, side by side with great apparent refinement. Even the King of Sodom was a perfect gentleman. Many an infamously unclean liver is a man honoured in society because of his cultured mind. Sins of all sorts must go, when grace takes possession of the soul. Bring out the golden calf! This costly idol must be ground to powder, and strewed upon the water. The golden calf is as detestable before the Lord as the most beggarly gods of wood. One form of enmity to God is as obnoxious to his law as another. Sin in satin is as great a rebel as sin in rags. You may wash sin in eau-de-Cologne, but it smells none the sweeter.

Remember, also, dear friends, that a man cannot be free from sin if he is the servant of even one sin. Here is a man who has a long chain on his leg—a chain of fifty links. Now, suppose that I come in as a liberator, and take away forty-nine links, but still leave the iron fastened to the pillar, and his leg in the one link which is within the iron ring, what benefit have I brought him? How much good have I done? The man is still a captive. If you had a bird here—say, a canary—and it was all free except one leg, it would not be a free bird then. "It is only held by a single bit of cotton," you say. Still the bird is not at liberty: it cannot fly as it pleases. As long as a man is held a captive by a single vice, no matter how small it is, he is still in bondage to iniquity. If any one sin binds him, masters him, he is not the Lord's free man. He is still a slave in the worst form of slavery: he is under the dominion of evil. Hence, you see, I spoke not too largely, when I said, "Down with them all!" They must all be conquered, every one. Not one single sin must be allowed to occupy the love of our heart and the throne of our nature.

There are certain sins that, when we begin to war with them, we very soon overcome. These Israelites, when they were up in the mountains, and in the woods, soon got at the hill-country Canaanites and destroyed them; but down in the plain, where there was plenty of room for horses and chariots, the Israelites were puzzled what to do; for some of these Canaanites had chariots of iron, which had scythes fixed to the axles, and when they drove into the ranks of an army, they mowed down the people as a reaping machine cuts down the standing corn. For a while this seems to have staggered the Israelites altogether; it was a terrible business to think about, and fear exaggerated the power of the dreadful chariots. Dread made them powerless, till they plucked up courage; and when they once plucked up courage, they found that these chariots were not nearly so terrible as they were supposed to be.

There were ways of managing and mastering them, if Israel would but trust in God, and play the man. When a man is converted by divine grace, certain sins are readily overcome: they fly away at once, never to return. I hardly recollect, after talking with thousands of converts, hearing any brother say that he found it difficult to give up swearing. I have often heard people express their wonder that though they had never for years used a single sentence without an oath, yet, from the moment of their conversion, no profane word ever escaped their lips. I remember one who said, having been a profane swearer of the worst kind, that some years after his conversion, a hogshead rolled on his toe, and an ill word escaped him for which he was nearly broken-hearted; but that during all his life beside, since his conversion, he never remembered that such a folly and sin had come near him. Swearing is a kind of Canaanite that is soon settled off—driven out and slain. So it is with many other forms of evil. We get our sword at their throats quickly, and by God's grace we are clean rid of all temptation to return to them. Such sins, though once powerful, are left dead on the field of battle. Glory be to God! Goliath's head is off, Sisera has the nail through his temple, Eglon is stabbed to the heart. The enemies of God and of our souls are dead. I know that some of you could bear testimony that your favoured sins became so disgusting to you that you have never had a temptation to wander in that direction; and if a desire towards them has crossed your mind, you have revolted against it, and cast it away from you with indignation.

But certain other sins are much tougher to deal with. They mean fight, and some of them seem to have as many lives as a cat. There is no killing them. When you think that you have slain them, they are up and at you again. They may be said to have chariots of iron. These sins are sometimes those which have gained their power—their chariots of iron—through long habit. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No, he never shall, but the grace of God can work the change. The grace of God has taken all the spots out of many leopards, and all the black out of crowds of Ethiopians. But occasionally old, deep-seated habits come up again from their graves by a hideous resurrection. Did you never catch yourselves with a snatch of an old song coming to your memory, when you have been in prayer? When you have drawn very near to God, have you not been suddenly startled with the recollection of a filthy thing into which you once plunged? Terrible is the power of habit which has long held sway. It is not easy to uproot the oak of many a year's growth. These habits make chariots of iron, into which your sins mount, and they become terrible enemies to our holy desires and fervent resolves.

Some sins get their chariots of iron from being congenial to our constitution. Certain brethren and sisters are sadly quick-tempered; and as long as ever they live, they will have to be on their guard against growing suddenly angry, and speaking unadvisedly with their lips. They are quick and sensitive, and this might not in itself be a serious evil; but when sin wields that quickness and sensitiveness, evil comes of it. How many a sincere child of God has had to go for years groaning, as with broken bones, because of the quickness of his temper! As for these constitutional sins, you must not excuse them. I beseech you mark what I say about this; for many are ruined by supposing that their constitutional faults are hardly faults at all, but unavoidable accidents. You must not say of any sin, "I cannot help it." You have to help it. You must not say, "Oh, but it is natural to me." I know that it is natural—that is the very reason why you have to be doubly on your guard against it. Everything that is of nature—ay, and of your fallen nature when it is at its best—has to be put under the feet of Christ, that grace may reign over every form of evil.

Frequently the chariot of iron derives its force from the fact that a certain sin comes rushing upon you on a sudden, and so takes you at a disadvantage. If a man had notice of a temptation, he might be able to overcome it; but temptations never give us notice: can we expect them to do so? The sailor does not expect to have notice of every gale of wind that blows upon him. The soldier in battle does not reckon to have notice of every bullet that is coming his way. By what apparatus could we be kept aware of every advance of the evil one? The very essence of temptation often lies in the suddenness of it: we are carried off our feet or ever we are aware. Yet we must not say, because of this, "I cannot help it"; for we ought to be all the more watchful, and live all the nearer to God in prayer. We are bound to stand against a sudden temptation, as much as against a slower mode of attack. We must look to the Lord to be preserved from the arrow which flieth by day, and the pestilence which walketh in darkness. We are to cry to God for grace, that, let the gusts of temptation come how they may, and when they may, we may always be found in Christ, resting in him, covered with his divine power.

Dear friends, sometimes these sins get power from the fact that, if we do not yield to them, we may incur ridicule on account of them. Many a true believer who could burn at the stake cannot bear to be laughed at. Many persons are remarkably sensitive to a jest, or a sarcasm. They could bear to be flogged more easily than to be ridiculed. So the powers of darkness assail them with sneers, and jeers, and flouts, and gibes. These are to them as chariots of iron. I have no doubt that our soldier friends, who are about to be baptized to-night, will have a hard time of it in that respect. I pray God to strengthen them in the barrack-room, and make them like men in chain-armour, who cannot be wounded by sword or arrow. I would not, if I could, prevent any of you from being persecuted in your measure. Should not soldiers fight? I would stay the persecution for the sake of the persecutor; but for the sake of you who have to bear it, I would hardly lift a finger to screen you, because the trial is an education of the utmost value. We shall never see champions if there is no fighting. Brethren, some of us have lived in warfare so long, that we should be half afraid if we were long free from assault. We have been called pretty nearly every name now; and if there remain any other forms of abuse, we are waiting for their filthiness to be poured on our head. Yet our slanderers and revilers have not broken a single bone. They have not hurt our faith, nor blighted our hope, nor chilled our love, nor stopped our communion with God. Indeed, we are the better

for the fire, the anvil, and the hammer with which our enemies have been good enough to work upon us. More closeness to God, more confidence in him, and more joy in him often come to the child of God when he is most under fire. Still the trial of cruel mockings makes sin seem to have chariots of iron.

Perhaps one of the things that is worst of all to a Christian is, that certain sins are supposed to be irresistible. It is a popular error, and a very pernicious one. "These chariots of iron," the Israelites said, "it is of no use to try to contend with them." So they gave up the plains to the Canaanites. It is a sad calamity when a Christian person says, "I can keep straight in everything except that. Do not touch me there. You must allow me a great deal of latitude in that direction. Please make large allowances for my peculiar constitution." All such pleading is mischievous. Listen to me, my sister. I will make allowances for you; but I beseech you, do not make any allowance for yourself. My brother, I implore you, do not take out a license to sin. If I make a kind excuse for you in sympathy with your weakness, being a man like yourself, it is one thing; but for you to make an allowance for yourself will be most injurious to your soul. You have to overcome and destroy the sin for which you claim toleration. Mark that! You must not—you dare not—allow any sin to master you; and if you know that it does overpower you, do not therefore claim that you may indulge it, but draw an inference of the opposite sort: because it has mastered you, concentrate your entire strength upon its utter destruction. Sin must come down: let not your eye spare it. The Canaanite must be driven out: the finest and fairest of the race must fall by the sword. We cannot enter heaven with a single sin remaining in us, for "they are without fault before the throne of God." Ere we can pass the pearly portal every spot and wrinkle must be removed from us. See your calling, brethren. Look at it well. **Do you not need heavenly strength? Will you not seek for the Holy Spirit?**

## **II. I now turn to the second head. I have said that we must drive them out. The second head is that THEY CAN BE DRIVEN OUT.**

I do not say that we can drive them out, but I say that they can be driven out. It will be a great miracle, but let us believe in it; for other great wonders have been wrought. Note first that you and I have been raised from the dead. Is it not so? "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." If a dead man has been raised, then anything can be done with the man who is now made alive. Do not tell me that there is a spot on the face of newly-risen Lazarus that cannot be washed away: I do not believe it. Do not tell me that there is a bent finger that cannot be straightened: after having seen the dead man live I am certain that the living man can be perfected. He that could raise Lazarus from the dead, can cause his grave-clothes to be unbound, can raise him beyond his imperfections and infirmities, can make him perfect in every good work to do his will. It can be done. The raising from the dead is the evidence that it can be done.

You have also by divine power been led to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as the result of divine grace within your heart, what is there that you cannot do? Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is a very simple thing, say you. I know it is, but still it is the greatest thing a man ever does. "What shall we do," said they to Jesus, "that we might work the works of God?" And he said, "This is the work of God"—this is a God-like work, the highest kind of work that ever can be done—"that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." If you have been enabled to believe, you can be enabled to be holy. He that led you to exert faith, can lead you, by faith, to overcome any and every iniquity.

In the next place, you have already conquered many sins. Look at the heaps of Canaanites that you have killed. Begin at the beginning, where God began with you in the work of grace in your soul: is there not a wonderful difference between what you were then and what you are now? Were there not sins entrenched in your nature, like the Canaanites in their walled cities? But Jericho fell flat to the ground. Hosts upon hosts of unbeliefs and iniquities dwelt within your daily life, but you have driven them out. By God's grace you have resisted temptation, and escaped from lusts, and risen above doubts. You have hitherto overcome through the blood of the Lamb. You can say, "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength." He that has helped you so far can surely help you even to the conclusion of the fight. Do not doubt that the almighty power of divine grace, which has achieved so much, can achieve yet more. Be strong and very courageous, for the Lord of hosts himself is at your side.

Have you not seen other Christians conquer? Oh, let your memory charge you now with brethren and sisters in whom you saw great infirmities and sins at the commencement of their spiritual career; but how they have grown! How they have vanquished inbred sin! The tears come into my eyes when I think of certain members of this church—some in heaven, and some still among us. I remember what they used to be, and what they are now, and I can hardly believe that they are the same persons. Fierce temper has been tamed, strong passions have been bound, black melancholy has been chased away. When they first joined the church, they were good, useful, sound men, but the pear was very hard; I should not have liked to put my teeth into it: they were stern, self-willed, and obstinate. The fruit was not only hard, but sour, for with all their zeal they were tart, sharp, and the reverse of gentle. But now, how mellow they are! What a sweet smell of ripeness there is about them! How ready they are to be taken to the great feast above! What God has done for them he can do for you. He can get that hardness out of you. That greenness, that sourness—he can graciously remove. Every man among us has to wear out at least one pair of green slippers; and when he has worn them out, then he puts on something better by way of travelling gear, and has his feet "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." We generally begin with a fool's boots at first, but God, who makes the foolish wise, makes men of us at length. He who trains the

babes, till out of their mouths he brings forth mighty witness to his Word, can do the same with us.

Beloved, we have been talking about what can be done and what cannot be done. Have we thought about it? We are dealing with the Almighty; and with him all things are possible. I think I see the battle now going on, the enemy seems to prevail, and the timid hearts of the soldiers of the cross sink within them. Listen! You have not yet drawn upon your reserves. Do you not know that within call there is eternal power and Godhead, waiting to help you in your struggle against all evil. Call up your reserves! Intreat your great ally to send reinforcements in this hour of need. Beseech the Lord to give you more grace; and as you have received life at his hands, pray that you may receive it yet more abundantly.

Does any man know how holy he can be? "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." God give us grace to pray, and watch, and believe, and expect, and may the prayer of my dear brother Williams be fully answered, for he just now prayed that "the weakest among us may be as David, and David as the angel of God."

God help us to feel that the Canaanites can be driven out.

**III. And then we close with our third head, and that is, THEY SHALL BE DRIVEN OUT.** They must be driven out; they can be driven out; they shall be driven out.

They shall be driven out. That is a speech for a monarch. "Must" is for the king, and "shall" is for the King of kings. Well, well, we venture to say it, because we only give the echo of his sovereign tones. This is what Christ died for. He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. Christ died to save his people, not from some of their sins, but from all their sins. His precious blood cleanseth from all sin. His perfect atonement secures perfection to his saints. The death of sin is guaranteed by the death of Christ. Let us pray to-night fervently—

"Let the water and the blood,  
From thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse us from its guilt and power."

Brethren, this is what Christ lives for. Up in heaven he pleads for us, and "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The desire of his heart is that we may be kept from sin. "Holy Father, keep them through thy Word." He pleads that, though Satan may desire to have them and sift them as wheat, they still may be preserved. Christ in heaven is the pattern of what we shall be, and he will not fail to mould us after his own model. We shall one day be perfectly conformed to his image, and then we shall be with him in glory. Our Lord's honour is bound up with the presentation of all his saints in spotless purity to himself in the day of his glorious marriage.

This is what the Holy Spirit is given for. He is not given to come into our hearts, and comfort us in our sins, but to deliver us from all evil, and to comfort us in Christ Jesus. He quickens, he directs, he helps, he illuminates; he does a thousand things; but, chiefly, he sanctifies us. He comes into the heart to drive out every other power that seeks to have dominion there. By the living Spirit of God, who dwells in you, as God within his temple, I charge you cry to him that every Dagon may be broken, every altar of Baal cast down, every golden calf ground to powder.

O brothers and sisters, let us never from this time forth write out a pass for any sin to come and go in our hearts. We will have no licensed sin; no place in which evil may claim a lodging. We will not have a spare bed for iniquity, nor give it house-room, even in the barn or the out-house. Do not let us idly say, "I cannot get over that sinful habit." You can get over it: you must get over it. Do not say, "I will draw the line there. I really must tolerate that one particular fault." Do not tolerate it! It will ruin you. How dare you say, "I must drink so much poison"? Touch it not. Oh, that the poison of iniquity may never come near your lips, however sweet it may seem to the carnal taste!

This is the very object of the gospel which we preach to you; and we have preached in vain unless you are striving against sin. Ours is a holy gospel, and if it does not make you holy, it has done nothing for you. This, especially, is the meaning of the ordinance of baptism for which the pool is now open before you. It is one of the meanings of believer's baptism that you are henceforth buried with Christ—dead to your old sins, and risen with Christ in newness of life. What a farce it is if you are still living in sin! I shall thank God that I baptized none of you, if I see you still alive unto sin as you used to be. If you and I are unholy, we stab religion in its vital parts, and murder our profession. When we make up our minds that we will allow any sin within us, we do to that extent deny to Christ the travail of his soul. Nothing grieves the Spirit of God like unholiness; and nothing pleases Christ like seeing his disciples walking in his footsteps.

I wish that I were able to speak more instructively upon such a subject as this; but I speak to myself, and I feel the effect of the truth as I utter it. I pray that I may speak to all here present with practical result. I doubt not that I address many dear brethren who are far in advance of myself, and to them I say, "Go on, dear friends, from strength to strength; and may the Lord help you to tread all the

powers of darkness down, and win the day speedily." But I speak to others that are far behind me; and I am sorry that they are so, for I am very far from having attained, although I press forward with all my heart. If you be living children of the living God, lay hold upon that promise, "By little and by little, I will surely drive them out." If you cannot conquer all the Hivites and Jebusites to-day, at least down with one, and then with another. May the mighty grace of God, without which you can do nothing, help you to keep your sword out of its sheath, driving at the very heart of sin with your utmost strength, until the last sin shall lie dead at the feet of Christ, and you shall be perfectly happy because he has made you perfectly holy. There is no fear of your stopping here upon this sin-defiled earth if you have once reached the point of perfectness. This is a poor world for the completely sanctified. God does not leave his ripe wheat out in the fields too long: he takes the sheaves home to his barn when they are quite ready. We shall soon be with him where he is when we are made like him. The Lord grant it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.