

Joshua Chapter 16 Commentary

1 And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Bethel, 2 And goeth out from Bethel to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth, 3 And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Bethhoron the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea. 4 So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

This chapter gives us the boundaries of the tribe of Ephraim, which is in the land of promise. Remember, one-half of this tribe was given their inheritance on the east side of Jordan. Looking at a map showing the boundaries of each tribe, we find that the properties of the two one-half tribes of Manasseh are not conjoined, but well separated.

5 ¶ And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was *thus*: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Atarothaddar, unto Bethhoron the upper; 6 And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanathshiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah; 7 And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan. 8 ¶ The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. 9 ¶ And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

In verse nine we are told that some of the cities, which fell within the defined borders of Manasseh, were given to Ephraim. We presume that the property ascribed to Ephraim was not large enough for their increased numbers, according to the blessing of Jacob in: ***De 33:17 "and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."***

Matthew Henry points out: when they entered the land of promise Manasseh was larger than Ephraim, seen in: Nu 26:34, 37; 34 "These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred. 37 These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph after their families." Apparently, by the time they were assigned their properties the numbers of Ephraim had surpassed the numbers of Manasseh, thus requiring more than the designated property.

10 And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

Again, apparently from unbelief, or maybe covetousness, Ephraim did not destroy all the occupants of their property, but took them under tribute. Therefore, we say it could have been covetousness, for they perceived they could use them as slaves, and get much gain without having to do the work themselves. Surely, as God has said; they will become a thorn in their sides in the future.

A lesson, we can draw from this chapter, is do not neglect to do the whole will of God if you wish the continued blessing of God in your life as a Christian.