

# Joshua 16-17 – Covenant Reward and Responsibility for Joseph

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Covenant rewards are tied to responsibility**. Yes, God gives many things. He gave you salvation. He gave you hope. He gave you peace. He gave you a church. He gave you elders. He gave you spouses and children. He gave you money. He gave you safety. He gave you much more. Now being equipped with all these blessings, God expects you to fulfil your responsibility. **You have the ability to work**. And you work because it brings glory to your Savior. You work because you want to earn rewards in heaven. **You have reasons to work**. That is what God expected the sons of Joseph to do. You will see an illustration about reward and responsibility today.

Our headings are: **That you see your ability and need to serve the Lord based on what he has provided for you, and that you continue the fight against the Devil, the world, and your flesh so that your Savior's kingdom will be more fully established.**

Our goals are: **Rewards to Ephraim, Rewards to Manasseh, The Responsibilities of Ephraim and Manasseh.**

## **Rewards to Ephraim**

1 **The lot fell to the children of Joseph** from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel, 2 then went out from Bethel to Luz, passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, 3 and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to Gezer; and it ended at the sea. 4 So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

### **1. It is natural to see the writer move from talking about Judah's reward and responsibility to Ephraim and Manasseh's rewards and responsibility. Why?**

**a. Joseph's other 9 brothers had conspired 合谋 to kill him**, so they were forced to wait for their reward.

**b. Judah and Joseph were close. Remember how Judah had hoped to rescue Joseph from death in the pit when his brothers left him there to die.** Later, Judah offered himself as a substitute for Benjamin, Joseph's whole brother, when they were in Egypt. Remember these strikingly loving words of Judah to Joseph. Genesis 44:34 "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad 孩子 (Benjamin) is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?" So Judah was a picture of life for Joseph, even as Jesus, his descendant, would preserve the souls of man from hell. So Judah got land first.

**c. Joseph was noted for his godliness more than Jacob's other sons.** Joseph supplied his entire family with food. In doing this he preserved the line of promise. **It is no wonder that God honored Joseph by assigning him two tribes, making his sons greater than he (such a blessing), and by assigning him land in Canaan before the other tribes.**

5 The border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was thus: The border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper Beth Horon. 6 And the border went out toward the sea on the north side of Michmethath; then the border went around eastward to Taanath Shiloh, and passed by it on the east of Janohah. 7 Then it went down from Janohah to Ataroth and Naarah, reached to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan. 8 The border went out from Tappuah westward to the Brook Kanah, and it ended at the sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families. 9 The separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages. 10 And they **did not drive out the Canaanites** who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.

### **2. Now let us consider the details of the division of the land to Joseph's firstborn, Ephraim, who was his born second.**

The children of Ephraim were given large amounts of land in the center of Israel. They were well protected from their enemies (This is like a big brother might say when someone threatens his young brother: "Stand behind me.")

**Ephraim was in the heart of Israel.** Because it was the heart of Israel, it was often used synonymously 同义词 for Israel. Ephraim had no foreign borders or seas to worry about.

### **3. Sadly, Ephraim did not drive out all the Canaanites as they should have.** Choosing to do things their own way, Ephraim used the Canaanites as forced laborers. Maybe they saw the financial benefits of free labor and ignored God's commands to destroy the idol 偶像 worshippers.

**Hosea 12:8** And Ephraim said, 'Surely I have become rich, I have found wealth for myself; *In* all my labors They shall find in me no iniquity that *is* sin.'

It took Pharaoh, 400 years later to conquer the land and drive out the Canaanites and give it to King Solomon.

**1 Kings 9:16** (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had

killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.) 17 And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon,  
Others believe Ephraim did not drive the Canaanites out because they were lazy, but I believe it was for greed 贪心.

**4. Lessons: God honors your faithfulness for many generations.** Joseph's kindness was from hundreds of years before but God never forgets good works. Your acts of kindness continue to bring blessings on your children years later. But considering how Ephraim failed to drive out the Canaanites, do you see how failure to remove one area of sin in your life can come back to haunt you? You have to destroy even the seed of sin. Kill temptations 试探 early.

## **Rewards to Ephraim**

1 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph: namely for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore he was given Gilead and Bashan.

**1. The next inheritance went to Manasseh, Joseph's 1<sup>st</sup> born but not his firstborn.** Manasseh held a lower place of prominence 不显著 according to Jacob, **but he was given a double portion of land** – as a firstborn was usually given. The 1st part of Manasseh land was on the east side of the Jordan and included the Golan Heights in Bashan.

**2 And there was a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families:** for the children of Abiezer, the children of Helek, the children of Asriel, the children of Shechem, the children of Hopher, and the children of Shemida; these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families. **3** But Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the **son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters.** And these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. **4** And they came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, "The **LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.**" Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, **he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers.** **5** Ten shares fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side of the Jordan, **6** because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead. **7** And the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, that lies east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah. **8** Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim. **9** And the border descended to the Brook Kanah, southward to the brook. These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook; and it ended at the sea. **10 Southward it was Ephraim's,** northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea was its border. Manasseh's territory was adjoining Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. **11** And in Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions.

**2. The rest of the people of Manasseh were given land on the west side of the Jordan,** just north of their brother Ephraim. Their land was assigned by God – by lot. Whatever God wanted to give them, they got. And even though Joshua was from Ephraim, he did not show partiality 不偏袒 to Ephraim, nor was he unfair to Manasseh. **As a special blessing, Manasseh became the largest geographic tribe in Israel.**

**3. Further, while land was usually assigned through male headship, God especially marked out women (and their descendants) for land.** This was a special honor. These women stayed in their tribe rather than marry out of it which would have destroyed their husbands' names.

**12** Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. **13** And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

**4. Sadly, like Ephraim, Manasseh did not drive out the Canaanites in their land, but rather, chose to make them into servants.** It seems like the Canaanites made profits for Manasseh by sea trade. Greed won. Obedience lost.

**5. Lessons: Bypassing 绕过 God's means of getting rich, though common, always leads to corruption 腐败 and confusion** Often God's people prefer their own means of getting rich. This has never ended well in Christian history. Further, **on top of the previous applications, do you see how God cares for his daughters as well?** He gave them the protection they needed and the land they needed. Do you realize how he has angels in charge to protect the weak? **Psalm 91:11** For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.

## **The Responsibilities upon Ephraim and Manasseh.**

14 Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "**Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people,** inasmuch as the **LORD has blessed us** until now?" 15 So Joshua answered them, "**If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself** there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you."

**1. On top of the land east of the Jordan to Manasseh, and the land on the west side of the Jordan to both tribes, they needed more land.** They were large tribes numerically – Manasseh especially. So they came and asked Joshua for more land. Notice how **they did not see the large number of people in the tribe as a curse,** as we often do today. They saw it as a blessing. Children are a heritage, not an affliction, from the Lord.

**2. Joshua's response 回应 was that they needed to work and clear more land for themselves, and defeat the Canaanites who were living in their land.** Joshua did not say: Let me steal from someone because they have more land than they could use. **No, Joshua pointed them to their covenant responsibility.** Joshua did not pray for a miracle – that the earth would open and swallow their enemies. He challenged them to work. They were trained to work.

16 But the children of Joseph said, "**The mountain country is not enough for us;** and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel."

**3. But even with the mountain, it was not enough for the 2 tribes. And they believed that the enemy in the valley was too much for them to fight.** They said that the enemy had chariots of iron. But the whole chariots were not made of iron. They had sharp iron scythes 镰刀 on their sides and they would drive those chariots into a crowd of soldiers and cut down many soldiers in one pass. IOW, the enemy was too big for them so they were trying to dodge the fight.

17 And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, "You are a **great people and have great power;** you shall not have only one lot, 18 "but the mountain country **shall be yours.** Although it is wooded, **you shall cut it down,** and its farthest extent shall be yours; for **you shall drive out the Canaanites,** though they have iron chariots and are strong."

**4. Again, Joshua did not give them a way out of their covenant responsibility.** They still had to provide for their children. They still have to drive out the enemy, big as they were. Instead, Joshua encouraged them not to fear. He encouraged them in the physical and spiritual strength they had from God. He encouraged them in the promises of God.

**5. Today, you have rewards on earth, and you have rewards in heaven.** Yes, the enemy – the world, the Devil, and your flesh – Muslims, government - are big...fearsome...and strong. But the application is just the same.

1John 4:4 You are of God, little children, and **have overcome** them, because **He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

John 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and **greater works than these he will do,** because I go to My Father.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ **who strengthens me.**

Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things **we are more than conquerors** 得胜有余 through Him who loved us.

**6. The ½ tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan, who were good soldiers, and who were given the Golan Heights as a reward, had a major responsibility as well.** They had to help secure Israel. The tribes were mutually dependent.

## **Conclusion:**

Ephraim and Manasseh were honored by God and given land in Canaan after Judah. And they were given encouragement to conquer more. Sadly, they ignored their covenant responsibility in one way: They did not destroy the Canaanites, choosing rather to use them for their profit, short-circuiting God's way. They bypassed God's method of success.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: What blessedness you have in Jesus Christ who has brought you across your spiritual Jordan and given you new life. He daily showers you with gifts of his love. You have his presence, his people, and his promises. You have his Spirit and power. Fulfill your covenant responsibilities. Fight for his kingdom. Announce his salvation to those who would surrender and his condemnation to those who would fight him. Doing this would honor Christ and would heap up your rewards in heaven.

Finally, if you are not a Christian you will end as the Canaanites. How can you be saved from that horrible end? You can surrender to God as a sinner and ask him to see Christ's life and death as yours.