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What we have in the Book of Joshua is the founding of the physical land that was promised by God hundreds of years previously, to Abraham and the patriarchs. The promise was always in the minds of the overall nation of Israel, but in the hearts of all Israelites who truly loved the Lord. What this shows is that the land given to Israel was by the direct fiat and law of God, Who much later allocated the various portions to the tribes via Joshua and the elders.

Therefore, what we have in this book in particular, plus others, is the variety of acts that made the ownership of Israel very clear. It was a land legally handed over to the Hebrews (strangers in the land) who transformed into 'Israelites'. And, though Jesus warned of the downfall of Jerusalem, He never prophesied the total destruction of His chosen people.

Verses 1&2

1.

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

2.

There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hephher, and for the children of Shemida: these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

It seems that a separate lot (using pebbles) was cast to decide the land portions to go to the half-tribe of Manasseh. The reason appears to be *"for he was the firstborn of Joseph"* (even though Jacob preferred Ephraim to Manasseh). This lot gave his descendant, Machir, the land of Gilead and Bashan, famed for its fierce wild bulls.

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The land was further divided into the areas given to the various (ten) families within the tribe. The six male descendants only are mentioned. One son did not have a male issue, only daughters (see next section). This was a time of shuffling the land of Canaan around until all the borders were established, and the tribes settled into their inheritance. It must have been a complex matter of logistics.

Verses 3-6

1.

But Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

2.

And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

3.

And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan;

4.

Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

As always the documenting of families and names is precise and accurate. This is how even modern Jews can usually trace their families and tribes back through the millennia. Verse three gives us the names of five daughters. Note that one daughter is named 'Noah'. Though the same in English, the name is different from that of Noah of the Flood. The Noah in this text is **N o'ah**

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) which is a proper feminine noun, whereas the famed Noah of the Flood was

Noach

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נח)
) which is a proper masculine noun. The spelling in English is the same, but not in the Hebrew, where each is pronounced and spelled differently. I make this distinction because so many unbelievers try to make minor matters into huge 'errors'!

As before, when Caleb asked for the special inheritance promised by God through Moses, so these daughters came to Joshua and the high priest, to ask for their own special inheritance promised by God through Moses. And so their portions of land were granted, ten in all, which were over the Jordan. The sons inherited Gilead.

Verses 7-10

1.

And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of Entappuah.

2.

Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim;

3.

And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea:

4.

Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east.

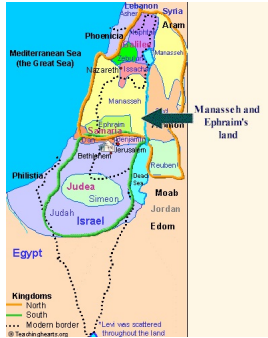
The 'coasts' or borders of Manasseh are now given in outline. Tappuah ('the apple city') was on the border between Manasseh and Ephraim. It seems that the two tribes had land and cities in

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each other's allocated areas, no doubt causing many disputes in the future. Note how the map below differs from some other maps, because it shows how the land of Manasseh ran to the Mediterranean Sea. On the map Tappuah was roughly above the letter 'm' in 'Ephraim'.



Verses 11-13

1.

And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries.

2.

Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

3.

Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

Here we read that three former countries run by various Canaanite peoples were now under the rule of the tribe of Manasseh. Yet, the tribe could not get rid of the indigenous Canaanite tribes. However, over the years, the tribe of Manasseh gained in strength and though they allowed the various Canaanites to stay, they had to pay Manasseh tribute, whether by money, gold or

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goods. This was another error on the part of God's people, for God demanded that ALL Canaanites should be driven out of the land. Instead, as idolaters and pagans they continued to be like a festering sore amongst what should have been a pure godly people.

Today, Christians allow all manner of people to influence their minds and hearts... from heretics in the local churches, to godless denominations, to partnering with the cult of Roman Catholicism, to taking in spiritualistic practices of charismaticism, to siding with and befriending the idolatrous company of Muslims. All these and more cause Christians to devalue their own beliefs and to trivialise God and His word. What God demands is that we completely drive out these people from amongst us. But, instead, some bring these godless people into their midst, favouring them and even despising the people of God. And so the visible Church is corrupted.

Verses 14-18

1.

And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto?

2.

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.

3.

And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel.

4.

And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only:

5.

But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of

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it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.

As expected of any large numbers of people, some argued their case for more. Joseph's descendants, the tribe of Ephraim, argued that because they were a "great people" they should inherit even more. Joshua told them that if they wanted to prove their greatness they should conquer the mountain regions and cut down all the big trees, where lived the giants (the *rapha*) and Perizzites! It can be seen from the way Joshua spoke to them that he was controlling his distaste.

The spokesmen for Ephraim said that the mountain region they inherited was not enough. They also pointed out that the Canaanites who lived there were powerful, for they even had iron chariots in their armies. Joshua acknowledged that Manasseh and Ephraim together were a "great people" with "great power" so they would have more than one portion. Thus, he gave them the mountain and its entire forest; they could cut the trees down and profit thereby. This work included driving out the Canaanites who would be defeated, despite having many iron chariots and military might. In our own day, the undoubted might and hatred in the enemies of God are obvious – but if we apply ourselves to the task, we can drive them out by godliness.

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