

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 16

This chapter gives us an account of the lot of the children of Joseph, Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manasseh, one half having settled on the other side Jordan; and first the borders of the whole lot in general are given, (^{<1640>}Joshua 16:1-4); and then the borders of the tribe of Ephraim in particular, (^{<1640>}Joshua 16:4-8); and it is observed, that this tribe had besides separate cities among the children of Manasseh, and that there were some Canaanites, particularly in Gezer, not driven out by the Ephraimites, (^{<1640>}Joshua 16:9,10).

Ver. 1. *And the lot of the children of Joseph fell*, etc.] Or, “went out” ^{f378}; of the pot or urn, this being the next lot that was drawn to that of Judah, the government being Judah’s, and the birthright Joseph’s, (^{<1642>}1 Chronicles 5:2); and by his children are here meant the tribe of Ephraim, and the tribe of Manasseh: or the line and border according to the lot went forth

from Jordan by Jericho unto the water of Jericho on the east; by which it appears, that this was the southern border of the lot; for the tribe of Benjamin, in which Jericho was, lay between Judah and Ephraim, and the border began at Jordan, where it flowed near Jericho, and proceeded to a water which belonged to that city, and is generally thought to be the waters Elisha healed, (^{<1649>}2 Kings 2:19-22);

to the wilderness that goeth up throughout Mount Bethel; this was the wilderness of Bethaven, (^{<1682>}Joshua 18:12); Jarchi interprets it of the border that went up through Mount Bethel; which is true, and so might the wilderness also, for which the Targum is express; mention is made of a mountain on the east of Bethel, (^{<1618>}Genesis 12:8).

Ver. 2. *And goeth out from Bethel to Luz*, etc.] For though these two places in time became one, yet they were originally distinct. Bethel, at which Jacob stopped, and who gave it its name, was a field adjacent to the city of Luz, (^{<1681>}Genesis 38:11,19); and therefore with propriety may be, as they here are, distinguished:

and passeth along unto the borders Archi to Ataroth; or to Archiataroth; these two words being the name of one and the same place, and to be joined as they are, in the Greek version, and others; and is the same with Atarothaddar, (^{<6646>}Joshua 16:5 18:13). Ataroth was its proper name, but it had these additional epithets to distinguish it from another Ataroth; (see ^{<6647>}Joshua 16:7); Jerom ^{f379} makes mention of Atharoth by Ramma, in the tribe of Joseph, and of another in the tribe of Ephraim, now a village at the north of Sebaste, or Samaria, four miles from it, called Atharus; the former is here meant.

Ver. 3. *And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti,* etc.] This place is now unknown, though no doubt well known to the sons of Joseph, when this lot fell to them, and its border was described:

unto the coast of Bethhoron the nether: so called to distinguish it from Bethhoron the upper, (^{<6648>}Joshua 16:5); this was about twelve miles from Jerusalem; (see Gill on ^{<6600>}Joshua 10:10"); and to Gezer: which was about a day's journey from Bethhoron, as appears from the passages in the Apocrypha:

“39 So Nicanor went out of Jerusalem, and pitched his tents in Bethhoron, where an host out of Syria met him. 40 But Judas pitched in Adasa with three thousand men, and there he prayed, saying, ... 45 Then they pursued after them a day's journey, from Adasa unto Gazera, sounding an alarm after them with their trumpets.” (1 Maccabees 7)

Jerom ^{f380} says in his time it was a village called Gazara, four miles from Nicopolis, or Emmaus. It is the same with Gadara, as it is sometimes called by Josephus, who says ^{f381}, the tribe of Ephraim took in the land from the river Jordan to Gadara; this was a royal city; (see ^{<6649>}Joshua 10:33);

and the outgoings thereof are at the sea: the Mediterranean sea.

Ver. 4. *So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.*] As it fell to them by the lot; by Manasseh is meant the half tribe of Manasseh, one half of that tribe having been settled by Moses on the other side Jordan; and next follows an account of the borders of the inheritance of Ephraim in particular, as that of the half tribe of Manasseh is given in (^{<6670>}Joshua 17:1-18).

Ver. 5. *And the border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was [thus],* etc.] Or what follows is the description of it:

even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Atarothaddar, unto Bethhoron the upper; the first was on the south of the inheritance, and the latter on the north, as Masius has placed them: who has given us a type of this description, by which it appears that this lot is here described in its breadth from south to north.

Ver. 6. *And the border went out towards the sea,* etc.] The Mediterranean sea:

to Michmethah on the north side; of the border, the same on which Bethhoron was, from whence the border proceeded on to this place, of which we have no other account but in (^{<6170>}Joshua 17:7); by which it appears to have been near Shechem, and in sight of it;

and the border went about eastward unto Taanathshiloh; this seems to be the same Jerom^{f382} calls Thenath in the tribe of Joseph; and who observes there was in his day a village of this name ten miles from Neapolis (or Shechem) to the east, as you go down to Jordan:

and passed by it on the east to Janohah: which the above writer^{f383} wrongly calls Janon, and says, that in his time a village of this name was shown in the country of Acrabatena, twelve miles to the east from Neapolis or Shechem; the border passed by Taanath on the east of it, and went on this place.

Ver. 7. *And it went down from Johanan to Ataroth,* etc.] This is different from Ataroth before mentioned, (^{<6162>}Joshua 16:2); there were several places of this name, as before observed; this seems to be that which Jerom places four miles from Sebaste or Samaria, (see Gill on "^{<6162>}Joshua 16:2");

and to Naarath; Jerom^{f384} says, that Naarath was in his time called Naorath, a village of the Jews, five miles from Jericho; and is the village Josephus^{f385} calls Neara, where was a water, half of which Archelaus turned, and led to the field planted with palm trees, near Jericho; and, according to the Jewish writers^{f386}: there was a place called Noaran near to Jericho, which seems to be this:

and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan; where it ended this way, which was eastward.

Ver. 8. *The border went out from Tappuah westward*, etc.] Which was different from the Tappuah in the tribe of Judah, (^{<6653>}Joshua 15:34); this was in the tribe of Ephraim on the border of Manasseh, (^{<6678>}Joshua 17:8);

unto the river Kanah; supposed by some to be the brook Cherith, by which Elijah hid himself, (^{<4178>}1 Kings 17:3,5); though objected to by others; it seems to have had its name from the reeds which grew in it, or on the banks of it:

and the goings out thereof were at the sea; if the river Kanah was the brook Cherith, this must be the dead or salt sea: but that is never called “the sea”, rather the Mediterranean sea is meant, and consequently Kanah could not be Cherith, which was at too great a distance from this sea:

this [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families; that is, this is the description of the border of it; for the cities within are not mentioned, and the descriptions in general are very obscure.

Ver. 9. *And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim*, etc.] The tribe of Ephraim, being much larger than the half tribe of Manasseh, besides the lot that fell to it, described before by its boundaries, had several particular and distinct cities given to it: which

[were] among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh; some that were upon the borders of Ephraim, and within the territory of Manasseh, and it may be where it jetted out in a nook or corner, (see ^{<6678>}Joshua 17:8,9);

all the cities with their villages; not the separate cities only, but the little towns adjacent to them.

Ver. 10. *And they drove not out the Canaanites which dwelt in Gezer*, etc.] Which was the border of their tribe length ways, and was near the sea, (^{<6648>}Joshua 16:3); in this they did not obey the command of God, and either they did not drive them out, because they could not, God not delivering them up into their hands, because of their sins; or through their slothfulness, or it may be through covetousness, being willing to make some advantage to themselves by them, being a trading people, which seems to be intended in the next clause:

but the Canaanites dwelt among the Ephraimites unto this day; which Joshua, the writer of this book, might truly say, and be no objection to it,

since the same is observed after his death, (~~1002~~Judges 1:29); and indeed they continued to dwell there until the times of Solomon, when it was taken by Pharaoh king of Egypt, and given as a present to his daughter, the wife of Solomon, (~~1005~~1 Kings 9:15-17); and though this clause does not furnish out an argument against the writing of this book by Joshua, yet, from the instance given, it appears it must have been written before the times of Solomon, and so not by Ezra, as some:

and serve under tribute; so that they were under their power, and therefore could have driven them out, or slain them, as by the command of God they should; but they spared them for the sake of the tribute they received from them, which seems to agree with the character of the Ephraimites, (~~2818~~Hosea 12:8).