

Ezekiel 48:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh.

Analysis

And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh. Manasseh, Joseph's firstborn, receives the fourth portion. In Joshua's distribution, Manasseh received territory on both sides of the Jordan—half-tribe east, half-tribe west (Joshua 17:1-13). Here, Manasseh receives unified, undivided inheritance, symbolizing wholeness and restoration from previous division.

Historically, the half-tribe of Manasseh east of Jordan was among the first exiled by Assyria (1 Chronicles 5:25-26) due to idolatry and unfaithfulness. The eastern tribes' separation from the sanctuary made them vulnerable to apostasy. **Ezekiel's vision places Manasseh entirely within the land proper, closer to the central sanctuary (v. 8-10), correcting the spiritual danger of geographic separation from God's presence.**

The Hebrew name Měnăššē (מְנַשֶּׁה) means "causing to forget"—Joseph named him thus because "God has made me forget all my hardship" (Genesis 41:51). In Ezekiel's restoration, God causes Israel to forget their exile and hardship, not through denial but through overwhelming grace. The tribe that symbolized forgetting past sorrows now experiences God's forgetting their past sins (Jeremiah 31:34).

Historical Context

Manasseh's divided inheritance reflected historical realities: the Transjordan tribes requested territory east of Jordan for their livestock (Numbers 32). Moses granted the request but warned of danger in not crossing over with their brothers. The eastern tribes built an altar that nearly caused civil war (Joshua 22), illustrating tensions created by geographic separation.

King Manasseh (687-642 BC) was Judah's most wicked king, promoting child sacrifice and filling Jerusalem with innocent blood (2 Kings 21:1-18). Yet he repented in Babylonian captivity and sought God (2 Chronicles 33:10-13). The tribal allotment for Manasseh thus carries double significance: restoration of the divided tribe and forgiveness for the wicked king who bore its name.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Manasseh's unified inheritance speak to believers about God healing our internal divisions?
2. What does geographic proximity to the sanctuary teach about the importance of nearness to God's presence?

Interlinear Text

פָּאַת עַד קֶד מִהָּ פָּאַת נַפְתָּלִי גַּב יַל גַּב יַל וְעַל

H5921 And by the border of Naphtali side from the east side

H1366

H5321

H6285

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H6285

אֶתְנָשָׁה מִנְשָׁה אֶתְנָשָׁה

unto the west portion for Manasseh a

H3220

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