

Joshua 17:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he was the firstborn of Joseph—Manasseh receives priority as Joseph's firstborn (though Jacob crossed his hands to bless Ephraim, Genesis 48:14-20, the birthright legally belonged to Manasseh). The Hebrew goral (גּוֹלָל, "lot") indicates the sacred casting of lots by which God directed tribal allotments (Proverbs 16:33).

For Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan—Machir's descendants, the Machirites, were renowned warriors who had already conquered the Transjordanian territories of Gilead and Bashan under Moses (Numbers 32:39-40; Deuteronomy 3:13-15). The phrase ish milchamah (אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה, "man of war") honors their military prowess. This verse establishes that Manasseh's inheritance was divided: half-tribe east of Jordan (already settled), half-tribe west of Jordan (about to receive allotment).

Historical Context

The tribe of Manasseh was unique in receiving territory on both sides of the Jordan River. The Transjordanian portion (Gilead and Bashan) was fertile, suitable for cattle raising, and had been conquered during Moses' campaigns against Sihon

and Og (Numbers 21:21-35). Gilead became famous for its balm (Jeremiah 8:22) and Bashan for its oaks and cattle (Ezekiel 27:6; Amos 4:1). This dual inheritance meant Manasseh straddled Israel's eastern frontier, serving as a buffer against Aramean and Ammonite threats. Archaeological evidence from Tell el-Hammeh and other sites confirms Late Bronze Age occupation and destruction layers consistent with Israelite conquest narratives.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's recognition of Machir as 'a man of war' affirm that some believers are called to specific vocations requiring strength and courage?
2. What does the division of Manasseh's inheritance across both sides of the Jordan teach about the diversity of God's provision within His people?
3. How can we honor both spiritual birthright and actual contribution (like Machir's military success) in understanding our roles in God's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

ה וְאַכִּי מִנְשָׁה הַגּוֹנֶל לְמִטְתָּה
H1961 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh H3588 H1931
H1486 H4294 H4519

בְּכָר וְבָכָר לְמִכִּיר יוֹסֵף בְּכָר וְ
for he was the firstborn of Joseph to wit for Machir for he was the firstborn
H1060 H3130 H4353 H1060

אֲבִי הַגִּלְעָד בֵּית מִנְשָׁה אֲבִי
of Manasseh the father of Gilead H3588 H1931 H1961 בֵּית
H4519 H1 H1568 because he was a man H376

וּבְבָשָׁן: הַגִּלְעָד לְזִיהִי מֶלֶךְ הַ
of war H1961 H0 of Gilead and Bashan H1568 H1316

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 41:51 (Parallel theme): And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

Numbers 26:29 (Parallel theme): Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites.

Genesis 50:23 (Parallel theme): And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

Genesis 46:20 (Parallel theme): And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him.

Genesis 48:18 (Parallel theme): And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

