



GIANTS & CHARIOTS OF IRON
Joshua 17:14-18

Woodland Park Church of Christ
27 February 2022

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." 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." 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.**" Joshua 17:14-18


CONTEXT

- Joshua ordered to divide the land on the west side of Jordan River among nine and one half tribes, but there was still more land to be settled. **Joshua 13:1-7**
- Recall that Reuben, Gad and one-half of Manasseh had been promised lands that were conquered east of Jordan. **Joshua 1:12-15; 13:8-12**
- Caleb received his share first when lands west of Jordan divided (**Joshua 14**) –
 - Remember Caleb was unmoved and uninfluenced by the naysaying, fearful majority (**trends**) → **See Numbers 13:30**

God rewards faithfulness and steadfastness

- Judah gets its allocated share (**Joshua 15**) → Caleb's tribe
- Land grants made to Ephraim (**Joshua 16**) and Manasseh (**Joshua 17:1-11**)
- Now, the children of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) approach Joshua with issue about their allocation. Remind you that they were the grandchildren of Jacob. *See Genesis 48:1-6.*
- Problem → You did not give us enough!

*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?"** Joshua 17:14*

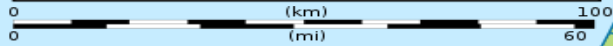


Instead of *thanking God for what He had done and making the most of it*, Ephraim and Manasseh grumbled about the “share” they received!

Can you relate to this or are you here!?

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Around 1200-1050 B.C.
(according to the Book of Joshua)



I. DO NOT ABUSE GOD'S BLESSINGS

- Of all the men in Israel, God elevated Joshua to lead His people into The Promised Land. **Joshua 1:1-6**
- Joshua was a descendant of Ephraim, the younger of Joseph's two sons. **See Genesis 48:1-5; Numbers 13:8**
- Many believe that Joseph's descendants came to Joshua expecting favorable treatment – looking for a hook-up.
 - “We are brothers, we go way back to grandpa Joseph, so give us special consideration.”
- Joshua still had to parse out land to seven tribes; he understood this.
- God detests those who abuse their authority and exhibit partiality and pervert justice.

You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. ²⁰ **You shall follow what is altogether just**, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you. **Deuteronomy 16:19-20**

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but **to do justice**, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? **Micah 6:8**
[ESV]

- Leaders have to be especially cautious.
 - Elders (bishops); deacons; ministers
 - Parents
 - Supervisors/managers → Folk like me are watching!
- Lose credibility when we show (or even give the appearance of demonstrating) partiality.
- Lose the confidence and trust of those we are leading – giving way for the devil to gain a foothold.

Simply, we need to use our blessings (talents, positions, influence, affluence) to the glory of God and not give others occasion to cast aspersions or question our faithfulness, integrity, or character! **See Romans 14:16**

II. GRUMBLING AND COMPLAINING NEVER MAKE THINGS BETTER

- Instead of thanking God for bringing them into the fatness of Canaan, Ephraim and Manasseh belly-ache about the “size” of their allotment.

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” ⁶ So we may boldly say: “The LORD *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” **Hebrews 13:5-6**

Now **when the people complained, it displeased the LORD**; for the LORD heard *it*, and His anger was aroused. So **the fire of the LORD burned among them**, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp.

Numbers 11:1

I am certain this episode had to have been shared with the children of Ephraim and Manasseh, if they did not personally recall it. Remember, Joshua was an Ephraimite.

Do all things without complaining and disputing,¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, **Philippians 2:14-15**

Complaining has never –

- converted a lost soul!
- comforted the bereaved or visited the sick!
- worked a shift!
- cooked a meal!
- read a book, written a paper, or completed a course!
- paid a bill!

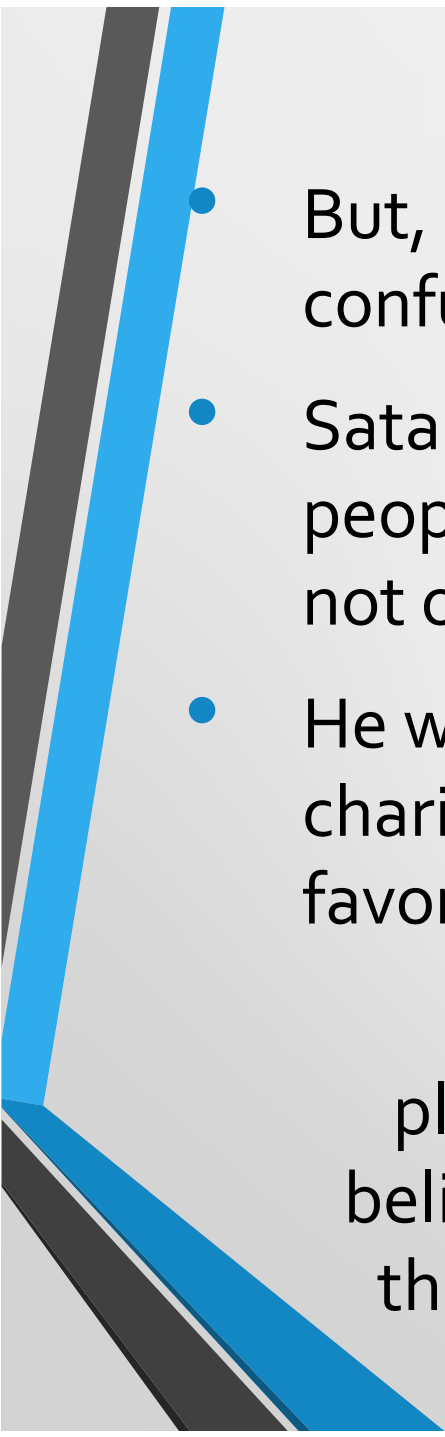
The primary offspring of chronic complaining are discontentment and strife. **See Romans 12:18**

III. OFT TIMES THE BLESSING IS RIGHT BEFORE US

- Many times what we pray and long for is a relative arm's length away.
- However, the devil presents the obstacle, adversity, and challenge, then many lose heart.
- The devil distorts our vision, muddies the water, and pollutes the air.
- Instead of focusing on the blessing and victory beyond the difficulty, we relegate ourselves to *victim status* and submit in defeat.

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.**” 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.**” Joshua 17:15-16

- Interestingly, Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) had more land than the other tribes.
- So, the problem wasn't that they lacked land . . .
- They did not want to confront the Canaanite charioteers.
- Taking on the chariot-driven warriors would be challenging, but they were not invincible.
- Evidently, they had forgotten the stones and the God who brought them out of Egypt, who had preserved them for 40 years in the wilderness, and who had beaten back the Canaanites. See **Joshua 4:4-7**

- 
- But, it is par for Satan's course to create confusion, fear, and doubt.
 - Satan likes nothing more than to have God's people focus on the obstacle or challenge and not on God.
 - He wants us to be paralyzed by the giants and chariots of iron instead of being moved by the favor of God!

But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. **Hebrews 11:6**

- God provides peace in times of chaos/turmoil.
- God gives comfort in periods of sorrow and discomfit.
- God offers strength when we're weak.
- God gives the VICTORY, when the devil wants us to give up and cry victim!

Even when we face giants and run up against enemies driving chariots of iron, God is there, and He is who He says He is!!

Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- **Be added to the Lord's body**
 - Hear the gospel (**Acts 15:7; I Corinthians 15:1-4**)
 - Believe (**Acts 15:7; Rom. 10:17**)
 - Repent (**Acts 2:38**)
 - Confess (**Acts 8:37; Rom.10:10**)
 - Be baptized (**Acts 2:38, 8:38**)

Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- **Be reconciled unto the Lord** (1 John 1:8-9); or
- **Desire prayer** (James 5:16).