

Study Guide



Joshua 16 & 17 – April 23, 2017 Ephraim and Manasseh

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we walk through Joshua we are going to see how Joshua relates to our everyday battle of faithfulness. **Our aim and our prayer for this study is to gain the wisdom we need for the battle of faithfulness.** During our time in Joshua we will be adapting our study guide from [Crossway's book, Knowing the Bible: Joshua, A 12-Week Study](#) by Trent Hunter. We recommend you purchase this book and use it in your Community Groups and for personal study as we go through Joshua. We have copies of the book available in our bookstore.

For this weeks study on Joshua please check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

South Sudan & NOLA Baptist— For further information visit norrisferrychurch.org or contact Jared Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Please see the list of local ministries under the "Walk" section below.

Calendar

April 30th— Baptisms; Church Picnic
May 7th— Member's Meeting
May 26th-31st— [Student Life Camp](#)
July 11th-16th— Fort Worth Mission Trip

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[Jesus, Firm Foundation](#)":

How firm a foundation, you saints of the lord
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word
What more can he say than to you he has said
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled

Fear not, he is with us, oh be not dismayed
For he is our god, our sustainer and strength
He'll be our defender and cause us to stand
Upheld by his merciful, almighty hand

How firm, our foundation
How sure, our salvation
And we will not be shaken
Jesus, firm foundation

The soul that is trusting in Jesus as lord
Will press on enduring the darkest of storm
And though even hell should endeavor to shake
He'll never, no never, no no never forsake
He'll never, no never, no no never forsake

How firm, our foundation
How sure, our salvation
And we will not be shaken
Jesus, firm foundation

Age to age he stands
Faithful to the end
All may fade away
But he will remain
He will remain!

How firm, our foundation
How sure, our salvation
And we will not be shaken
Jesus, firm foundation.

Commentary

These chapters describe the tribal allotment of “the sons of Joseph” (Josh. 16:1, 4), Ephraim and Manasseh. Again, this is not merely another careful land survey. At the start of chapter 16 you may notice a peculiarity, Joshua 16:4 reads, “The people of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, received their inheritance.” Yet in verse 5, Ephraim receives an inheritance first, opposite his birth order. This subtle swapping of order highlights God’s sovereign designs in the story of salvation. In Genesis 48, against human convention (and their father Joseph’s expectation), Jacob blessed Ephraim with priority over Manasseh (Gen. 48:1-22). Likewise, a generation earlier, Jacob was chosen over Esau, and Isaac over Ishmael the generation before that; so goes much of the story of the Bible. Judah was not the oldest or particularly virtuous, but God chose Judah so that Israel’s future ruler would come from his loins (Gen. 49:8-12). **So it is witnessed again: salvation in its planning and accomplishment is entirely of the Lord.**

In the course of dividing the land, an ominous qualification is offered: “Yet the people of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maacathites, but Geshur and Maacath dwell in the midst of Israel to this day” (Josh. 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13). The story of Joshua is mostly optimistic. But this growing refrain portends a haunting reality: the victory has been sweeping, but what remains could spoil it all (Lev. 18:24-25; 20:1-5). **Israel’s failure of faith is clear from their trepidation before “all the Canaanites who dwell in the plain have chariots of iron” (17:16). These refrains create tension in the storyline of Joshua, which leads us to Christ, the only answer to human sin.**

Discussion

1. Chapters 11 and 12 tell of the battles that were fought and kings that were killed in the land of Canaan. Chapters 16 and 17 tell of the allotment of lands to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh who were descendants from the sons of Joseph. Notice that Manasseh was the eldest son of Joseph (Josh 17:1) and Ephraim was the younger son of Joseph. It seems strange that the account of Ephraim's allotment was covered in chapter 16 before the account of Manasseh's allotment in chapter 17. Please read Genesis 48:8-20 to find a clue to explain why the younger was given his inheritance before the elder. In what order were the sons of Joseph given their blessing from their grandfather, Jacob in Genesis 48? Was this order of blessing by Jacob to his grandsons a mistake on his part?
2. How is this story similar to the story of Jacob's and Esau's blessings from their father, Isaac in Genesis chapter 27? Which of them received their father's blessing for the eldest child—the younger or the older? What was Paul's explanation of this story concerning Jacob and Esau in Romans 9:10-16? Does God always bless the youngest? Does God always bless the oldest? Does God always bless the one who seems to be the most deserving? Why does God say he chose the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 7:6-8—because they were a great people? Because they were a powerful people? Why?
3. What do these stories about how God dealt with his people tell us about God?
4. Read Joshua 17:3-6 regarding the daughters of Zelophehad who were descended from Manasseh. Zelophehad had no sons, but only daughters. The custom was that inheritance of land was passed down through sons and not daughters. Ordinarily the family of Zelophehad would have lost the land of their father because there were no sons to claim the inheritance. We see in these verses that the five daughters came forward to claim their father's land which they argued was rightfully theirs. They referred back to a ruling made by Moses concerning this issue. This ruling by Moses is recorded in Numbers 27:1-11. Please read these verses. What do you think about the courage of these daughters to come before Joshua and earlier before Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the chiefs of the whole congregation with their petition? How did Moses make his decision regarding their request?

5. Read Joshua 17:14-18. What was the complaint of the people of Joseph—the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh? What was Joshua's response to their complaint?

6. What reason did the people of Joseph give to explain why they could not gain extra land for themselves? How did Joshua respond to their excuses why they could not occupy extra land? What does this exchange with Joshua reveal about what is in the heart of the people of Joseph?

7. What were some takeaways from the sermon? Did the Holy Spirit convict you? Did the Lord reveal something new about his character?

Application

1. What challenges are you facing in your family, work, or relationships that require faith and courage to confront (like the challenge to the people of Joseph to occupy the extra territory that they needed)? Are you tempted to do nothing—to procrastinate doing the difficult things that are required? Please share with your community group members what challenge you are facing and ask for their prayers to support you.

12 Tribes of Israel

Approximate borders assigned during the Conquest



Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Joshua to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased
Young life
Heart of hope
First priority
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center
Community renewal
Grief counseling
Celebrate recovery
Samaritan counseling
Last call ministries
Golden age ministries
Rescue mission
Luke's lighthouse
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!