

Bible Dictionary

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W Y Z

Ephraim

Fruitful. The second son of Joseph (Gen. 41:52; 46:20); but at the blessing by Jacob, Ephraim was set before Manasseh, the elder son (48:19–20). Joshua belonged to this tribe, and to him was due much of its subsequent greatness. After the settlement in Canaan, the district assigned to the two sons of Joseph included some of the richest land in the country, crossed by several important highways, and having within its limits historic sites like Shechem, Ebal, Gerizim, and Shiloh. Ephraim was notorious for its jealousy of any success gained by any other tribe (Judg. 8:1; 12:1). It was Ephraim's jealousy of Judah that in great measure brought about the separation of the two kingdoms and that Rehoboam in vain tried to satisfy by going to Shechem to be crowned.

Ephraim was given the birthright in Israel (1 Chr. 5:1–2; Jer. 31:9), and in the last days it has been the tribe of Ephraim's privilege first to bear the message of the Restoration of the gospel to the world and to gather scattered Israel (Deut. 33:13–17; D&C 64:36; 133:26–34). The time will come when, through the operation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the envy of Judah and Ephraim shall cease (Isa. 11:12–13).