

210512-4 Nu 32, Two & One-half Tribes to Remain East of Jordan—CThurman

The time had come to execute the vengeance of the LORD against the Midianites for the wickedness they had done against the people of God. Moses commanded Israel to select out of their tribes 1,000 warriors, 12,000 total, to go to the battle with Phinehas having the silver trumpets to blow. So, they went and slew all of the males in that area, including the five kings of Midian and Balaam the false prophet. They burned their cities, destroyed the great residences (castles) of the Midianites, and took much spoil.

Then Moses, Eleazar and the princes of the congregation went to meet the warriors and saw all the spoils they had taken. Before allowing them to re-enter the camp it was necessary that the defiled be purified. On the third and seventh days purification water was to be sprinkled upon them and all the spoils.

We are in a spiritual battle because of Christ. But being in the thick of the battle, and because of our present bodily weakness we will incur defilement of the flesh and spirit along the way. (cf. 2Co.7.1) But there is a means provided for us to be cleansed as often as is necessary. Self-examination, confession of sins, and cleansing from defilement is for us that essential *spiritual* reset.

After all is cleansed, the warriors, the souls of the captives, and all of the other spoils of war, there was determined a means for distributing the spoils among the nation of Israel. First, the spoils were divided into two equal parts; one for the warriors and the other for the twelve tribes or all the camps that were afar off from the tabernacle. Then a tribute was levied. The warriors' tribute was to pay 1/500th of all their spoils to Aaron's family. The congregation's tribute was to pay 1/50th of all their spoils to the tribe of Levi (Kohath, Gershon, and Merari). In effect this tribute was a tithe. That part which the tribe of Levi received was exactly one-tenth of the total spoils of war, and that part which the family of Aaron was exactly one-tenth of Levi's part. (cf. Nu.18.25-28)

The chapter then closes with a freewill offering of thanksgiving. This was a voluntary contribution that the officers and captains dedicated to the service of the tabernacle. It was a large sum of gold jewelry given because the LORD had spared every soul of them that came into the battle.

In Numbers chapter 32 there are two tribes that desire not to cross over into Canaan. They prefer to remain where they are presently, on the land east of the Jordan River. After some discussion it is agreed with conditions, and another ½ of a tribe is also allowed to remain here. The chapter ends with the eastern land mass being distributed.

The discussion between Reuben and Gad to Moses, Moses to them, and Moses to Eleazar, Joshua and the chief fathers of the tribes of Israel goes something like this (cf. vss.2-32):

Gad & Reuben (vss. 1-5):

We want to stay here.

Moses to them (vss. 6-15):

What! You don't want to go over there?

Gad & Reuben (vss. 16-19):

No, we want to stay here, but we'll fight over there.

Moses to them (vss.20-24)

If you will do this fine; otherwise your sin will find you out.

Gad & Reuben to Moses (vss.25-27)

We will do it!

Moses to Eleazar, Joshua, and chief fathers of the tribes of Israel (28-30)

If they do this, fine; if not they must forfeit everything and come over.

Gad & Reuben (vss.31, 32):

We will do it!

1 ¶ Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle:

cattle, מִקְנֵה, a masc.noun tss. *cattle* (oft), *herd*, *flocks*; another fem. noun sometimes tss. *cattle* is בְּהֵמָה, which includes a broad range of animals.

great multitude, רַעְצוּם, a masc. sing. adj. tss. *great*, *mighty*, *mightier*, *strong*.

All of the tribes had just received an allotment of the spoils of war which included lot of livestock. But evidently they had their own livestock beside this, which they brought with them when they left Egypt 40 years earlier. (cf. Ex.10.26; 17.3; Nu.20.4, 19) However, evidently Reuben and Gad were more abundant in herds than the other tribes.

Reuben is mentioned first being the standard of the south camp, to which the tribe of Gad also belongs. Simeon has no concern in this.

and when they saw the land of Jazer* (also, Jaazer), *and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;

Here it is good to remember that Moses is narrating the history of the Pentateuch account *after the fact*. So many places are called by names that they actually receive later. For example, Gilead is called Gilead because the children of Manasseh give it this name after they take possession of it but it is called Gilead as far back as Ge.31.21, 25; 37.25. In this way the reader may understand the location where certain events took place long before it was actually called by that name.

Nu.26.29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites.

2 The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came

Notice how the names of Reuben and Gad are reversed here. Why? We do know that it was not because Gad was more in number than Reuben. (cf.

Nu.ch.26.) It might be because Gad led in this matter, and that because he had the most livestock.

and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

3 Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

Probably the land that they can readily see from where they are presently located, because all of these places appear to be located north of the river Arnon to about 40 miles north to Jazer.

4 Even the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:

5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.

for a possession, לְאִחְזָהּ, fem. sing. noun אִחְזָהּ, is always tss. a possession; vss. 5, 22, 29, 32.

bring us not over, אֶל־תַּעֲבִרְנוּ, for negation, not, & תַּעֲבִרְנוּ, a Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb עָבַר, tss. to send over, to pass over, to make a sound, to bring over, to carry over, to conduct, etc.

This is the land which the whole host of the nation of Israel only recently conquered together. (cf. Nu.21.23-35, the falls of the kings Sihon and Og, and the city of Heshbon and the kingdom of Bashan.) Their remarks are at first perceived by Moses to be a rejection of the land of promise.

6 And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?

7 And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

discourage ye, תַּבְּוִאִין, Qal fut. of the verb נָוָה, nōh, tss. to discourage (marg. break, Wigram); Nu.5, 11, disallow; Ps33.10, to make of none

effect; Ps.141.5, to break; so to take away the love, the affections for that which they had formerly set their hearts upon.

Is it right for you to stay where we have all fought here while the others must go on to fight there?

Here are the numbers of the warriors that constitute the southern camp under the standard of Reuben, as they stand presently. Beside this let's put the numbers of the tribes that desire to remain on the east of Jordan, Reuben, Gad and add also the half the tribe of Manasseh, though they are not yet in this consideration.

Numbers ch.26 Census of Reuben's Camp		Them desiring to remain on the east of Jordan	
Reuben	43,730	Reuben	43,730
Simeon	22,200	Gad	40,500
Gad	40,500	½ of Manasseh (52,700)	26,350
Total	106,430		110,580

Now there are some adjustments to these numbers. But as it stands right now the numbers of them that desire to stay on the east of Jordan outnumber the whole southern camp under the standard of Reuben by 4,150 warriors. So, yes, it is quite understandable that at first hearing of this Moses would be very concerned that Israel might become discouraged once again from entering into the land of Canaan.

8 Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land.

So Moses recites Israel's terrible sin against the LORD 40 years earlier.
(vss.9-13)

9 For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol,
[the valley of the cluster of grapes]

and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them.

... at the evil report of 10 men that returned after spying out the land for forty days.

**10 And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying,
11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old
and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and
unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:**

**12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun:
for they have wholly followed the LORD.**

**13 And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander
in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the
sight of the LORD, was consumed.**

All of this being recorded in Numbers chs. 13, 14.

**14 And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men,
to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel.**

*to augment, לִפְּוֹת, lis-pōth, Qal infin. verb of פָּוַח, sa-phah, tss. to
augment, to add, to put, to join.*

**15 For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the
wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.**

Here is an instance when it is important to hear the whole matter.

*Pr 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly
and shame unto him.*

Few things are probably so discouraging to us personally than to hear someone contradict what we understand to be the truth of the word of God. But perhaps we haven't heard correctly. Perhaps we have learned correctly. Whatever it is good for us all to learn to hear the whole matter out. I'm not infallible and there are times when I need correction. The same is true for you.

Moses is thinking that this could cause at least a whole other whole generation of men to die in the wilderness, that is if the whole nation is not completely rejected.

16 ¶ And they came near unto him, and said,

So they begin to clarify their intent.

We will build **sheepfolds** **here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:**
repair sheep pens,
 enclosures

we will build, נִבְנֶה, niv-neh, Qal fut. of the verb בָּנָה, tss. *to build, to build up, to make, to repair* (Jud.20.48, *they set on fire all the cities that they came to; 21.23, and repaired* (built) the cities); **v.16, 24, 34, 37, 38.**

folders, גִּדְרוֹת, gid-rōth, fem. pl. noun גִּדְרוֹת, g'-deh-rah, tss.
[sheep]folders, [sheep]cotes, *folders, hedges, a wall*; **v.24.**

a sheepfold & sheepcote are the same thing, a pen or shelter for sheep.

17 But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

will go armed, נִחַלְצֵנּוּ, ney-cha-leytz, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of the verb חָלַץ, cha-latz, tss. *to be armed, to be armed soldiers, to be delivered, to take away, etc.*; **vss. 17, 20, 21, 27, 29, 30, 32.**

ready, חֻשִׁים, chu-shim, Qal part. pass. masc. of the verb חָוֵשׂ, choosh, tss. *to make haste, to hasten, to be ready.*

in ... cities, בְּעָרֵי, be-erai, fem. pl. noun עָרִים, with prefixed preposition בְּ, in, to עִיר, eer, city.

fenced, הַמִּבְצָר, masc. sing. noun מִבְצָר, miv-tzar, tss. *a strong hold, a fenced [city], a strong [city], a hold [of Tyre], a fortress, a defended [city]*.

18 We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

have inherited, הִתְנַחֵל, Hithpael (reflexive) infin. of the verb נָחַל, nachal, tss. *to inherit, to possess, to divide*.

19 For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward.

As Benjamin would do in Jud.21.23 to rebuild their cities after Israel had set them on fire so Reuben & Gad (and as we shall see, ½ the tribe of Manasseh) propose to leave a good military presence to rebuild and protect their interests here while they commit a certain and sufficient number of their warriors go on to fight with their brethren on the western side of the Jordan River. (cf. Jos.4.12, 13, 40,000 warriors)

Leaving behind a good military presence was necessary because there were enemies all around them. Also, it is certain that the Amorites were not eradicated from the land. (Jos.5.1; 10.5)

To get a good perspective of the military forces involved let's consider all of the facts. Consider the camp sizes and the total number of warriors without including Reuben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh. Then How many Reuben, Gad, and of the ½ tribe of Manasseh are committed to the fight on the western side of Jordan. How many that mean are left behind to rebuild and protect. All of these things considered we have the grand total of Israel's full military force.

Judah's Camp	201,300
Reuben's Camp (Simeon)	22,200
Ephraim's Camp (Ephraim, Benjamin & ½ Manasseh)	104,450
Dan's Camp	163,200

Total Warriors w/o Reuben, Gad & ½ of Manasseh	491,150
Add Rueben, Gad, & ½ Manasseh commitment *	40,000 **
Total Military Force to go to Canaan	531,150
Add those that remained on the east of Jordan **	70,580 *
Total of Israel's Military Force (cf. Nu.26.51)	601,730

* 40,000 were committed to helping their brethren fight on the west of the Jordan River.

** the total warriors of Reuben, Gad, and ½ of the tribe of Manasseh = 110,580.

** The size of the force that remains on the east of Jordan to rebuild and protect only equals 8 ½ % of the Israel entire military force.

Also, let's consider the size of land mass in light of these things. To this time that land mass which Israel has taken possession of on the east side of the Jordan River is roughly about a ¼ of the whole area Israel shall possess on both sides of the River by the time this campaign is complete. In other words, Israel has more than enough military strength to possess the other ¾ of the land before them, the LORD being their helper.

20 And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

21 And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

22 And the land be subdued before the LORD:

[this is, brought under their dominion.]

be subdued, הִנְכַבְּשׁוּ, Niphal (simple pass.) pret. of the verb כָּבַשׁ, tss. to subdue, to keep under, to force, to bring into subjection, to bring into bondage.

then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

guiltless, נְקִיִּים, n'-qiy-yeem, a masc. pl. adj. of נָקִי, nah-qee, tss. clear, blameless, quit, innocent, guiltless, free, exempt.

23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

will find ... out, a Qal fut. of the verb מָצָא, mah-tzah, tss. to find, to find out, to suffice, to befall, to get, to come upon or to, to light upon, to meet, to get hold upon, to take hold on, to hit, to be enough, to deliver, to be present.

Pr 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

In other words, if they do not do as they have said, their sin will be discovered and it is certain that they shall receive a just judgment from the LORD.

24 Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep;

Repair

pens or enclosure

v.16, 24, 34, 37, 38

v.16, גְּדֵרֹת

and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

This appears to be the program that the nation of Israel implemented to take possession of the land. As they move through the land destroying the cities and driving out the inhabitants they will leave behind a force sufficient enough to begin the work of rebuilding, repairing and protecting what they've obtained. This program was to continue until the whole land was subdued.

25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth.

26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle,
the herd animal livestock

our flocks, מִקְנֵיהֶם, miq-neh, a masc. noun tss. cattle, possession, herds, and beasts.

cattle, בְּהֵמָה, b'-hey,mah, a fem. noun tss. *cattle, beasts, all manner of beasts.*

shall be there in the cities of Gilead:

27 But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith.

to battle, לְמִלְחָמָה, lam-mil-cha-mah, see the fem. noun מִלְחָמָה, mil-cha-mah, tss. a war, a battle, a fight.

28 ¶ So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel:

29 And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession:

30 But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.

31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.

32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours.

33 And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about.

cf. Deu.3.4, when this was originally take by Israel from the Amorites on the eastern Jordan River:

Deu.3.4 And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

5 All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwallled towns a great many.

6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city.

...

8 And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon ...

This is the first instance in this chapter of the mention of Manasseh. And here we are told that only one-half of this tribe desires to remain on the eastern side of the Jordan River..

Now, at this time Manasseh ranks 6th largest in the tribe of Israel.

In order of the greatest to the least.

1st Judah, 76,500 – 2nd Dan, 64,400 – 3rd Issachar, 64,300 –
4th Zebulun, 60,500 – 5th Asher, 53,400 – **6th Manasseh, 52,700** –
7th Benjamin, 45,600 – 8th Naphtali, 45,400 – **9th Reuben, 43,730** –
10th Gad, 40,500 – 11th Ephraim, 32,500 – 12th Simeon, 22,200.

Manasseh saw the greatest increase in military strength during the 40-year sojourn. It grew in number from 32,200 to 52,700, an increase of 20,500 men of war. Half of these 52,700 desire to remain on the eastern side of the Jordan River, so 26,350. The other half of this tribe will have possession of land on the western side of the Jordan River.

Nu 34:13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:

14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance; and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance ...

34 And the children of Gad built (or, rebuilt) Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

35 And Atroth, Shopan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,

36 And Bethnimrah, and Bethharan, fenced cities: and folds for sheep.

37 And the children of Reuben built (or, rebuilt) **Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,**

38 And Nebo, and Baalmeon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.

Deu.3.12 ¶ And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.

...

16 And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon;

17 The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, under Ashdothpisgah eastward.

39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it.

Deu.3.13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.

...

15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir.

40 And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.

Nu 26:29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites.

It appears that Moses gave this land to Machir because he was a valiant man, a man of war.

Jos 17:1 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.

war, fem. sing. noun מִלְחָמָה, mil-cha-mah, tss. war, battle, fight.

41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof,

thereof – that is, of Gilead, just below Chinnereth

and called them *Havothjair.*

the area

42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

Deu.3.14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day.

Argob being what is the most northern area, perhaps reaching up to Mt. Hermon. (cf. Deu.3.8, 10)

And so this conquest must have been done soon after Moses gave to them the terms of this agreement. This being done they are prepared for the time when Israel should crossing the Jordan River. Ultimate Reuben, Gad and the ½ tribe of Manasseh met their burden and returned to their inheritance.

Jos.22.1 ¶ Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

2 And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

3 Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

4 And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

6 So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

7 Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan: but unto the other half [referring to Ephraim] thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them,

8 And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

9 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.