

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Settling Outside the Promised Land.*"

Please open your Bibles to **Numbers 32** and stand with me for the reading of God's Word.

**Numbers 32:1** Now the people of Reuben and the people of Gad had a very great number of livestock. And they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, and behold, the place was a place for livestock. **2** So the people of Gad and the people of Reuben came and said to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the chiefs of the congregation, **3** "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon, **4** the land that the Lord struck down before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." **5** And they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession. Do not take us across the Jordan." **6** But Moses said to the people of Gad and to the people of Reuben, "Shall your brothers go to the war while you sit here? **7** Why will you discourage the heart of the people of Israel from going over into the land that the Lord has given them? **8** Your fathers did this, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. **9** For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the people of Israel from going into the land that the Lord had given them. **10** And the Lord's anger was kindled on that day, and he swore, saying, **11** 'Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me, **12** none except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite 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 gone. **14** And behold, you have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the Lord against Israel! **15** For if you turn away from following him, he will again abandon them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all this people."

You may be seated. Let's pray.

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On Sunday mornings we have been looking at a few examples of God giving people what they want...to their own detriment.

I think this is so important, because of a mistaken notion about God...

Some people think that if God doesn't want them doing something, He will prevent them. There are people who engage in sin and their defense is, "God hasn't stopped me, so He must be okay with it. He didn't close the door, so it must be okay that I walked through it."

But it doesn't work like this.

God hasn't created a bunch of robots. We are free moral agents who can push for our will, which God can allow us to us have...even to our own detriment.

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We have seen a few examples:

- God let Moses take Aaron with him when he refused to go
- God gave the Israelites meat when they asked for it after complaining about the manna
- God let Balaam go with Balak after telling him no

In this sermon we will see one more example. I was going to do two examples, but I didn't want to shortchange this instructive account. So, expect one more sermon on this topic and then we will resume Luke 15.

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Before we jump into this account let me begin with a lesson that will provide the context we need...

**Lesson One: The Promised Land was a place of rest beyond the Jordan.**

When you think about the Promised Land, I want you to keep two things in mind:

1. It was a place of rest
2. It was beyond the Jordan

Listen to a few verses that make this clear...

**Deuteronomy 3:20** [Moses speaking to the Israelites about to enter], “Until the Lord GIVES REST to your brothers, as to you, and they also occupy the land that the Lord your God gives them BEYOND THE JORDAN.

Notice two things about the verse:

1. First, the land will give them rest.
2. Second, it lies **beyond the Jordan**.

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Another example...

**Deuteronomy 12:9** You have not yet come to THE REST...the Lord your God is giving you. **10** When you go OVER THE JORDAN and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you...and when HE GIVES YOU REST.

Again, the idea is they **go over the Jordan** and that is where they experience **rest**.

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Last example from when they are in the Promised Land...

**Joshua 22:4** The Lord your God HAS GIVEN REST to your brothers, as he promised them...which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JORDAN.

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With this in mind – that the Promised Land is a place of rest on the other side of the Jordan – we are going to pick up with the nation of Israel about to leave Moses and enter the Promised Land under Joshua.

Look at **verse 1**...

**Numbers 32:1** Now the people of Reuben and the people of Gad had a very great number of livestock. And THEY SAW THE LAND of Jazer and the land of Gilead, and behold, the place was a place for livestock.

It's hard to believe, but 2.5 tribes wanted to be on the east side of the Jordan, outside the Promised Land. For centuries it had been God's plan to have His people in the Promised Land, but these tribes wanted to settle outside it.

Notice the words **they saw the land**. This is why it happened: it looked good to them.

They were walking by sight instead of by faith:

- They chose the physical instead of the spiritual.
- The physical they could have outside the Promised Land was more attractive than the spiritual they could have inside the Promised Land.

It reminds me of when Lot and Abraham parted ways and Lot saw the land near Sodom so that's why he moved there. He also chose the physical over the spiritual, and interestingly, it was also because of livestock.

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Skip to **verse 5**...

**Numbers 32:5** And they said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession. Do not take us across the Jordan.”

Look how Moses felt about this request...

**Numbers 32:6 But Moses said to the people of Gad and to the people of Reuben, “Shall your brothers go to the war while you sit here?”**

Entering the Promised Land meant lots of fighting as they removed the Canaanites. Moses is concerned that these tribes won't help.

**Numbers 32:7 Why will you discourage the heart of the people of Israel from going over into the land that the Lord has given them?**

Moses also knows if these tribes don't enter, it might discourage the other tribes from entering.

**Numbers 32:8 Your fathers did this, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land.**

Kadesh Barnea is where the rebellion occurred with the 12 spies. All 12 tribes – with only a few exceptions, such as Joshua and Caleb – didn't want to enter the Promised Land and it discouraged all the people.

Moses sees the potential for something similar to happen again, so in the following verses he recounts what happened forty years earlier as a warning...

**Numbers 32:9 For when they (the spies) went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the people of Israel from going into the land that the Lord had given them. 10 And the Lord's anger was kindled on that day, and he swore, saying, 11 ‘Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me, 12 none except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite 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 gone.**

Now watch Moses really bring the heat...

**Numbers 32:14 And behold, you have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the Lord against Israel! 15 For if you turn away from following him, he will again abandon them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all this people.”**

Moses says:

- They are like their fathers who rebelled 40 years earlier.
- He calls them **a brood of sinful men.**
- He says they are going **to increase [God's] anger against Israel [and cause him to] again abandon them.**
- Finally, he says their behavior will result in the destruction of the entire nation.

Moses said that if these 2 ½ tribes settle outside the Promised Land the entire nation will be destroyed. Can you think of anything worse than being responsible for the destruction of all God's people?

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So of course there is no way they are going to be able to settle outside the Promised Land.

Look at **verse 33**...

**Numbers 32:33 And Moses GAVE TO THEM, to the people of Gad and to the people of Reuben and to the half-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 and its cities with their territories, the cities of the land throughout the country.**

You wouldn't believe it if it wasn't written here: Moses actually let these 2 ½ tribes settle outside the Promised Land.

They pushed for it, and they got it.

I don't believe for a second that God wanted them there, but He let them have what they wanted. This is a painful example, not just of a person, but of a group of people wanting something and getting it to their own detriment.

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Now let me pause and explain something that can help us as we read the Old Testament...

**Luke 7:35 [Jesus said], "Wisdom is justified by all her children."**

We have talked about this many times: what does the word justified mean?

Declared righteous.

So the wisdom of certain decisions is often justified – or declared righteous, or shown to be right – by the children – or by what is produced – from the decision.

For example:

- If I say, *"I've got a great diet. It's wonderful,"* but I follow it and end up gaining weight and becoming diabetic, it's clear my diet wasn't wise.
- If I say, *"I have a great investment strategy,"* but I end up broke, it's clear my investment strategy wasn't wise.
- If a child tells his parents, *"I'm going to hang out with these people"* and the parents say, *"We don't think it's a good idea; they're going to be a bad influence"* but the child does anyway and ends up in lots of trouble, this reveals:
  - The parents' wisdom.
  - The child's foolishness.

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This is important, because sometimes when you read the Old Testament God doesn't tell us whether people's actions are wise or foolish, leaving us to figure it out for ourselves.

It doesn't always work, but I would encourage you to look at what is produced from people's decisions to determine whether they're wise or foolish.

One example I have shared with you in the past is polygamy. Men in the Old Testament took multiple wives. God doesn't condemn their actions, which could lead us to think maybe it was okay. But if you look at what is produced from every polygamist relationship in the Old Testament you never see peace, harmony, and joy. Instead, you see turmoil, strife, and conflict.

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And when we apply this approach to the 2.5 tribes settling outside the Promised Land, we will see it was foolish...and this brings us to Lesson two...

**Lesson Two: The 2.5 tribes got what they wanted to their detriment.**

Let's look at the children produced by the decision to settle outside the Promised Land.

Please turn to the right to **Joshua 22**. We won't turn back to Numbers. Look at **verse 10**...

**Joshua 22:10** And when they came to the region of the Jordan that is in the land of Canaan, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of imposing size.

They built an altar, and not just any altar. It was a huge one.

Why did they do this?

Because they were on the east side of the Jordan far from the religious life of the nation. It was not easy for them to make it to the tabernacle. So, they built their own altar for sacrifices and worship.

Look what happened...

**Joshua 22:11** And the people of Israel heard it said, “Behold, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built the altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the people of Israel.” **12** And when the people of Israel heard of it, **THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL GATHERED AT SHILOH TO MAKE WAR AGAINST THEM.**

The other 9 ½ tribes saw what the 2 ½ tribes did and it almost caused a civil war!

This wouldn't have happened if 2.5 tribes settled in the Promised Land.

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Go ahead and turn to **1 Chronicles 5**.

The first nine chapters of **1 Chronicles** contain the most extensive genealogies in the entire Bible.

If you look at the headings in **1 Chronicles 5** you will probably see that:

- Verses 1 through 10 are about the tribe of Reuben
- Verses 11 through 22 are about the tribe of Gad
- Verses 23 to 26 are about the half tribe of Manasseh.

These are the 2 ½ tribes that settled outside the Promised Land.

The Jordan, which served as a natural boundary for the Promised Land, also protected the Israelites from enemies...sort of like the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean do for the United States.

By settling outside the Promised Land these two and half tribes were more exposed to enemies. Look at **verse 26...**

**1 Chronicles 5:26** So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he took them into exile, namely, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river Gozan, to this day.

The 2.5 tribes were hauled off to captivity and conquered before the rest of the nation.

I'm guessing when that happened, they wished they had settled in the land with their brothers.

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The “wisdom” of their decision to settle outside the Promised Land was shown to be foolishness.

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Now considering **1 Corinthians 10:6 and 11** and **Romans 15:4** say these things took place as examples for us and were written for our instruction, the question isn't can we learn from this. The question is what should we learn from this?

Let me provide a lesson that points us in the right direction...

### Lesson Three: The Promised Land's physical rest prefigures spiritual rest in Christ.

Hebrews 3 and 4 teach that the Promised Land is a picture or type of the spiritual rest we have in Christ.

Despite what some of our hymns teach, the Promised Land is not a picture of heaven. There's no sin to resist or enemies to fight in heaven.

Instead, the Promised Land is a picture of our Christian lives in Christ.

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A few reminders to help the typology become clear...

#### **Egypt is a type of the world**

Joseph invited his brothers and their families into Egypt. **Exodus 1:5** says this was 70 people total.

**Exodus 1:7** says they **were fruitful and increased abundantly...the land was filled with them.**

**Exodus 12:37** says Moses delivered six hundred thousand men from Egypt, which means there were probably around two-to-three million people total.

Egypt served as a womb for Israel to grow from seventy people to millions of people.

Here's the parallelism between Israel's journey and our journey:

- Israel was born into Egypt like we're born into the world.
- Israel grew in Egypt like we grow in the world.
- Israel was delivered from Egypt at Passover like we're delivered from the world by our Passover Lamb, Christ.
- Israel struggled with wanting to return to Egypt, like we struggle with wanting to return to the world.
- Israel was tempted to turn to Egypt for help instead of turning to God like we are tempted to turn to the world for help instead of turning to God.

#### **Moses Is a Type of the Law**

The Law was given to Moses, which is why it's known as "The Law of Moses" and "The Mosaic Law."

Moses delivered Israel from Egypt like the Law delivers us from the world...

**Romans 3:20** **By the law is the knowledge of sin.**

The Law convicts us of sin, we repent, and turn from the world to Jesus.

#### **Joshua Is a Type of Jesus**

Joshua and Jesus have the same name, but Jesus is Greek, and Joshua is Hebrew. They both mean, "Jehovah is salvation":

- Joshua led God's people in the Old Testament into the physical Promised Land.
- Jesus leads God's people in the New Testament into the spiritual Promised Land.

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Listen to these verses that tie this together...

**Galatians 3:23 We were kept under guard by the law.**

Israel was kept under Moses, like we were kept under the law.

**Galatians 3:24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.**

We were under the law and then under Christ, like Israel was under Moses and then under Joshua.

**Galatians 3:25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

Just like Israel was no longer under Moses when they were under Joshua, we are no longer under the law when we are under Jesus: **Romans 10:4 Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.**

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To make it perfectly clear...

The transition from being under Moses and then under Joshua, pictures the transition from being under the Law and then under Christ.

Just as Moses could only take Israel so far, the Law can only take us so far.

Just as Israel couldn't enter the Promised Land under Moses, we can't enter the spiritual Promised Land under the Law.

Why?

Because there's no rest under the Law. Israel had to be under Joshua to experience rest like we must be under Jesus to experience rest.

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Because the Promised Land prefigures our spiritual rest in Christ, let's talk about what it means for us to settle outside the Promised Land and forfeit our rest. Another way to say it is this...

The 2 ½ tribes didn't press into the Promised Land and experience God's best and sometimes we don't press into the spiritual rest Christ offers to experience God's best.

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I see three ways this happens with us, and I want to briefly talk about each...and this brings us to lesson four part one...

**Lesson Four: We settle outside the promised land when we don't rest in Christ's (Part One) finished work.**

It is not remotely restful trying to work to be saved. When we think we must work to be saved, it is exhausting. I know from years as a Catholic.

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But let me back up a little...

The priests might have been the hardest workers in the Old Testament.

**Matthew 12:5 Jesus said, "On the Sabbath the priests in the temple PROFANE THE SABBATH, and are blameless."**

They worked so hard on the Sabbath – which was supposed to be a day of rest – that they profaned it.

The tabernacle and temple had many furnishings, but none for resting because the priests' work was never done...

**Hebrews 10:11 Every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. Hebrews 10:12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.**

Priests had to continually offer sacrifices because none of them could **take away sins**. In contrast...

**John 1:29 Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

As our High Priest, He **sat down** because His work was done. Jesus rested, and He offers that rest to us...

**Matthew 11:28–30 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**

Jesus offers rest to **all who labor and are heavy laden** which is how you feel when you think you're responsible for your salvation.

We can rest in Jesus' finished work:

- We don't have to wonder if we've done enough because it's not about what we do. It's about what Jesus has done.
- It's not about our unrighteousness. It's about Jesus' righteousness given to us.

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The next part of lesson four...

**Lesson Four: We settle outside the promised land when we don't rest in Christ's (Part Two) forgiveness.**

There's a difference between being convicted of sin we're committing that we should repent of...and doubting whether we are forgiven for sins we have committed.

Some Christians spend years struggling with guilt from things they have done.

But they shouldn't...

**Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.**

We're freed from shame and guilt, because Jesus paid for our sins.

We can rest in Christ's forgiveness, because He took the punishment our sins deserve.

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The last part of lesson four...

**Lesson Four: We settle outside the promised land when we don't rest in Christ's (Part Three) victory over Death.**

Can you think of any things that destroys peace and causes anxiety more than fear of death?

But when we fear death, we aren't resting in Christ's victory over it.

**Hebrews 2:15 says Jesus [releases] those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**



This doesn't say we are in bondage to death, although that's true. This says we are in bondage to THE FEAR OF DEATH!

There's no rest for us when we fear death.

But Jesus frees us from that bondage...

**1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.**

As much anxiety as there is for us when fearing death, there is equal peace and rest for us when we know we have eternal life through Christ.

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Let me conclude with this...

Just as 2.5 tribes chose less than God's best by settling outside the Promised Land, we can – spiritually speaking – choose less than God's best when we settle outside all Christ offers us.

God wants us to press into the Promised Land to experience the spiritual rest available to us.

Don't forfeit what the Lord wants us as His children to have!

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I will be up front after service, and if you have any questions about anything I've shared, or I can pray for you in any way I would consider it a privilege to speak with you.

Let's pray.