

# Numbers 32 Commentary

PREVIOUS Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	<a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere ( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> )			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

**Numbers 32:1** Now the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad had an exceedingly large number of livestock. So when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that it was indeed a place suitable for livestock,

- **Now the sons of Reuben:** Nu 2:10-15 26:5-7,15-18 Ge 29:32 30:10,11
- **Jazer:** Nu 32:3,35 21:32, Jaazer, Jos 13:25 2Sa 24:5 Isa 16:8,9
- **place:** Nu 32:26 Ge 13:2,5,10,11 47:4 Jer 50:19 Mic 7:14 1Jn 2:16
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Possible Location of Jazer

Gilead

**Now the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad had an exceedingly large number of livestock. So when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that it was indeed a place suitable for livestock** - Reuben is named first only in verse 1 (undoubtedly because he is the firstborn). But Gad plainly takes the lead in this enterprise, and for the rest of the passage, Gad is named first! Lots of livestock and lots of land made them start thinking. And like most of us, our fallen flesh focuses on self and what's best for us, what's in our best interest. So they were doing what comes naturally to all of us sinners, even saved sinners! The half-tribe of Manasseh is also involved in this request but is not mentioned until Nu 32:33.

**[Compromise and Obedience \(Num. 32\)](#) - Peter Wallace** - The literary structure of Numbers 32 is impressive. The five key terms are all used seven times.

1. Gad and Reuben 1, 2, 6, 25, 29, 31, 33
  2. possession/inheritance 5, 18, 19, 22, 29, 30, 32
  3. pass over/cross the Jordan 5, 7, 21, 27, 29, 30, 32
  4. armed troops 17, 20, 21, 27, 29, 30, 32
  5. before the LORD 20, 21, 22, 22, 27, 29, 32
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### **James Smith - A CALL FOR UNITED EFFORT. Numbers 32:1-33.**

"O Lord, whome'er Thy grace has blessed,  
Causing Thy Name to be confessed;  
Wilt Thou not quicken them to see  
That each one service owes to Thee?  
Enkindle in each heart such flame  
As shall consume all coward shame.  
The time is short, and life is flying,  
And all around us souls are dying;  
Stir up, O Lord, each heart and will,  
And with Thine own compassion fill. "

The children of Reuben and the children of Gad sought their inheritance on this side of Jordan. But Moses said, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? (Nu 32:6). From this chapter we may learn that—

#### **1. All the Lord's people have a common cause.**

Though there were twelve tribes, yet were they all brethren (Nu 32:6). The weakening or strengthening of one was the weakening or strengthening of the whole. So is it in the cause of our Lord and Saviour. "I have called you friends." "Are ye not all brethren?" Ought not each one to be interested in whatever concerns the kingdom of God?

#### **2. Putting self-interest first is a great danger to the Lord's work.**

"The Reubenites said, Let this land be given thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan" (Nu 32:1-5). They saw that the land of Jazer and Gilead was just such as they wanted, so they desired there and then to settle down and let the others look out for themselves. It is a melancholy sight to see Christians settling down in the knowledge of salvation, or in the enjoyment of the doctrine of the higher Christian life, and falling out of the ranks of aggressive workers.

#### **3. Selfish interest discourages others.**

"Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land?" (Nu 32:7). There are different ways by which we may discourage our brethren in the pursuit of a deeper and more enlarged experience of the fulness of God in Christ. We may do it by bringing a slander on this good land through our own unbelief and poverty-stricken lives as Christians, or by magnifying the difficulties in the way of entering into the possession of it (Deut. 1:22-28), or by our own self-complacent indifference to their spiritual growth in grace.

#### **4. Seeking the good of others is helping on the cause of God.**

"Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" (Nu 32:6). It is a great privilege to be able to help our brethren into their rightful inheritance in Christ. In these present days there is an intense longing in the hearts of multitudes of the Lord's people for an enlargement of the coasts of their spiritual experience. It is a question if ever there was a time when there was a more crying need for pure Bible teaching. There may be much sermon preaching without the commanding power of the revealed mind of God as contained in the Scripture of truth. As the days go on it may be that teachers of the Word will be in greater demand than evangelists.

#### **5. Doing nothing is a sin against the Lord.**

"If ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out" (Nu 32:23). The sin of idleness, or of neglecting to do our part in the great campaign of the Church's work, is a sin against the Lord that will be sure to find us out. It betrays itself in cowardliness, indifference, worldliness, and finally in open sin. Why stand ye here all the day idle? Do you say no man hath hired us? Hath not the Lord hired you in purchasing you with His Blood?

#### **6. Devotion to the interests of the kingdom of God secures present blessing.**

"If ye will go armed before the Lord until He hath driven out His enemies, this land shall be your possession" (Nu 32:20-22). The

sons of Reuben and of Gad were to have their possession this side of Jordan on condition that they passed over and helped their brethren into their lot of inheritance. The reason why many Christians have not entered into a soul-satisfying portion in this present life is because they have ceased to help others. There is no class of the disciples of Jesus so happy as the workers. Those workers, of course, who are not seeking now their own, but the good of others at the command of the Lord. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

"Pleasure is only half pleasure unshared,  
O, forth then, my brother, share thine!  
Pleasure when shared is a treasure prepared,  
Excelling aught drawn from the mine."

**Numbers 32:2 the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben came and spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the congregation, saying,**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben came and spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the congregation, saying** - It is interesting that they approached not just Moses but the other leaders.

**Numbers 32:3 Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon,**

- Ataroth: Nu 32:1,34-38 Jos 13:17 Isa 15:2-4 Jer 48:22,23
- Nimrah: Nu 32:36, Beth-nimrah, Isa 15:6, Nimrim
- Heshbon: Nu 21:25,26,28 Jud 11:26 Ne 9:22 Isa 15:4 16:8,9 Jer 48:2,34,45
- Shebam: Nu 32:38, Shibmah, Jos 13:19 Isa 16:8 Jer 48:32, Sibmah
- Beon: Nu 32:38, Baal-meon
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon** - These nine leaders of the other tribes. Anything they discussed in this meeting would clearly be communicated back to the individual tribes. This fact becomes the basis for Moses' reply to their request.

**Numbers 32:4 the land which the LORD conquered before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock."**

- Nu 21:24,34 De 2:24-35
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Map of Israel's Conquest East of the Jordan River  
(Source: Ryrie Study Bible)

**HAVE NEED  
FILL NEED**

**The land which the LORD conquered before the congregation of Israel**- Yes it is good, God honoring theology. While Israel did fight, God gave the victory and the land, for ultimately it ALL belongs to Him! In Dt 2:24 we read "**I (YAHWEH) have given** Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand...33 "**The LORD our God delivered him over to us, (GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY) and we defeated him (MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY) with his sons and all his people.**" But as [Wallace](#) says "they make their case based on the premise that "the LORD" struck down this land, and left it open for settlement."

**Is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock**- What is their perspective? They are looking at things from a selfish, worldly perspective, for the conquered kingdoms of Sihon and Og were NOT part of the land promised by God. That land lay on the west side of the Jordan River, a clear line of demarcation that could not be missed.

**THOUGHT** - Be wary of accepting worldly substitutes in place of the heavenly promises of God. The former may seem "good," to your eyes, but is the "best" in His eyes. Our goal should ever to be to have a heart focused on the full attainment of God's will, being quick to recognize and discard our self-will in manifold circumstances.

Was the land east of the Jordan God's "best"? Clearly the answer is "no." While it was conquered land, it was not the "Promised Land." The Reubenites and Gadites (and later sons of Manasseh Nu 32:33) looked and lusted, perhaps not as evil as Achan but still reflective of their fleshly desires. And God gave them what they wanted and it looked "good" for 700 years, but it eventually proved costly to their ancestors for they were the first victims of the Assyrian invasions and the first to be taken into exile as described in First Chronicles...

1 Chr. 5:23 Now the **sons of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land**; from Bashan to Baal-hermon and Senir and Mount Hermon they were numerous. 24 These were the heads of their fathers' households, even Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah and Jahdiel, mighty men of valor, famous men, heads of their fathers' households. 25 But **they acted treacherously against the God of their fathers and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them.** 26 So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, **king of Assyria**, even the spirit of [Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria](#), and he carried them away into exile, namely **the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh**, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara and to the river of Gozan, to this day.

"Compromise is but the sacrifice of one right or good in the hope of retaining another - too often ending in the loss of both."

**C H Mackintosh** adds "THE fact recorded in this chapter has given rise to considerable discussion. Various have been the opinions advanced in reference to the conduct of the two tribes and a half. Were they right, or were they wrong in choosing their inheritance on the wilderness side of Jordan? This is the question. Was their acting in this matter the expression of power, or of weakness? How are we to form a sound judgment in this case? In the first place, where was Israel's proper portion—their divinely destined inheritance? Most surely on the other side of Jordan, in the land of Canaan. Well, then, ought not this fact to have sufficed? Would or could a really true heart—a heart that thought and felt and judged with God—have entertained the idea of selecting a portion other than that which God had allotted and bestowed? Impossible. Hence, then, we need not to go further in order to have a divine judgment on this subject. **It was a mistake, a failure, a stopping short of the divine mark, on the part of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, to choose any boundary-line short of the river Jordan.** They were governed, in their conduct, by worldly and selfish considerations—by the sight of their eyes—by carnal motives. They surveyed "the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead," and **they estimated it entirely according to their own interests, and without any reference to the judgment and will of God. Had they been simply looking to God, the question of settling down short of the river Jordan would never have been raised at all.**"

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### Brian Bell - Notes on Numbers 32

1. "**Compromise** is but the sacrifice of one **right** or **good** in the hope of retaining another - too often ending in the loss of both."
2. **Living on the Wrong Side of the Cross!**
  1. **THE REQUEST!** (1-5) (THE REPRIMAND - 6-15)
  2. These 21/2 tribes seek permission from Moses to live on the east side of the Jordan River.
    1. Reuben & Gad were contiguous (*shared a common boarder*) when they were **encamped**. So they had many times to scheme/plan this.
    2. The request sounded reasonable, like most of the arguments which excuse compromise; but all the same it's compromise.

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### [The Danger of Doing Nothing](#) (Numbers 32) - David Vance

Introduction: One of the worst things that can happen in the Christian life is nothing.

#### 1. The Temptation of nothing (v. 1-5)

Was there anything wrong with what they were asking for? If it's "all about" them, if it's all about the tribes of Reuben and Gad, their request is just fine. But what about the other tribes?

#### 2. They're thinking only of themselves, not others (v. 6-15)

How many people are living lives that are basically self-consumed and self-centered, while they're saying,

“Thank you Lord? Thank you for what you’ve given me.”

{**ED ADDENDUM: THOUGHT** - I FEAR MANY BELIEVERS HAVE FORGOTTEN Phil 3:20-21+

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.}

So, here we are in the place of comfort and prosperity and blessing, and we’ve received the promise of eternal life. Seems like there’s nothing else to do, right? From our perspective, we’ve already received everything we need—comfort now, life forevermore.

### **3. They’re thinking only of themselves, not the Lord (v. 20-27)**

What about God’s purposes in the world? Conclusion Consider Christ (Phil 2:5-8, 2Cor 8:9). We are called, not to live for our own comfort, but to live for the joy that is set before us.

**May God give us grace to live,  
not comfortable settlers,  
but zealous warriors.**

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### **David Wilkerson - GOD SAID, “CROSS OVER!”**

Be sure your sin will find you out!” This is one of the most misunderstood statements in all of God’s Word. The truth is that many sins go unexposed here on earth but will be revealed at the Judgment.

God commanded Israel: “You will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it” (Deuteronomy 11:31). Their inheritance was on the other side of Jordan where God would choose to set up His tabernacle. The Ark of the Covenant, a symbol of the Lord’s presence among them, also would be there.

Two crossings were necessary for Israel. Crossing the Red Sea was a type of leaving the world and all its idols and lust behind—a clear type of conversion. The second crossing was the Jordan, which represents dying to self and going on into the fullness of Christ. It represents death to all that is unlike Christ—all ambition, idolatry, self.

Between the two crossings was the territory of Gilead and Jazer, which bordered the Jordan and the Land of Promise. This middle ground, a place of half surrender, was totally indefensible. It was a most dangerous place to live, as it was surrounded by heathen enemies. It speaks of falling short of God’s ultimate place and purpose.

Of course, two-and-a-half tribes—Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh—felt most comfortable with this middle ground and stopped there. They said, “This is as far as we go. This suits our lifestyle just fine.”

“For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us this eastern side of the Jordan” (Numbers 32:19). These tribes were eventually overcome by the enemy. They returned to idolatry and ended up more wicked than when they were in Egypt.

Their tragic story, an example of the compromise of the Church today, shows us the terrible consequences of partial obedience. May we all obey God’s command to “cross over.”

**Numbers 32:5 They said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession; do not take us across the Jordan."**

- if we have: Ge 19:19 Ru 2:10 1Sa 20:3 2Sa 14:22 Es 5:2 Jer 31:2
- bring us: De 1:37 3:25,26 Jos 7:7
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**They said, "If we have found favor in your sight** - Septuagint has "if we have found grace in your eyes." They should have said "If we have found favor in God's sight." God had already shown them favor (grace) by promising them the land of Canaan. Perhaps they did not phrase it this way because they knew God's will was the land west of the river.

**Some of you are standing today at Jordan's banks.**

-- **Chuck Smith**

**THOUGHT** - Pastor Chuck's statement above begs a simple and yet profoundly important question -

**Will you cross over or will you continue to compromise?**

**let this land be given to your servants as a possession** - They are in a sense bargaining with Moses. We have conquered Sihon and Og, so it would be reasonable to possess this land. And since it is a spacious land and we have many cattle, then it is only logical that we be granted this land.

**do not take us across the Jordan** - This is the statement that reflected their selfishness and which held the potential to greatly discourage the other 9.5 tribes.

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**Chuck Smith - Less than the Best** - Intro: The Children of Israel now ready to enter the land God had promised them. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and 1/2 of Manasseh requested inheritance outside the land; they had become content where they were dwelling.

## **I. THERE IS A DANGER OF STOPPING SHORT OF GOD'S BEST FOR YOUR LIFE.**

A. Many of the promises go unfulfilled because we fail to claim them or appropriate them.

1. God has promised perfect peace.
2. God has promised fullness of joy.
3. God has promised to supply all our needs.
  - a. Sometimes people come saying, "I live completely by faith, can you help me out?".
  - b. This never means that God is going to support my laziness.
  - c. Paul was completely serving the Lord, yet when the need arose he made tents.
  - d. Great inconsistencies.
    1. "I have given my life completely to God." How much time does He get each day?
    2. "All I have belongs to God." When is He going to get it?
4. God has promised Living Waters.

**B. This land that Reuben and Gad wanted was not the best. They had grown accustomed to it.**

1. So many times we just get used to our situations. "What you can't cure you must endure."
  - a. We make adjustments and settle down.
  - b. This is all the farther I wish to travel with God.
2. There is a contentment which is good and there is a contentment which is bad.
  - a. The spiritual man is content with his material possessions, yet striving for more of God.
  - b. The carnal man is content with his relationship with God, yet is striving for more material possessions.

**C. Some people attend church on occasion; that is all the closer they want to get to God.**

1. They have a sort of "You don't bother me, I won't bother you" attitude.
2. Oh yes, they believe in God and would defend Him in an argument; they even joined the church but they never left Egypt.

**D. Some attend church regularly, every chance they get. They look for the things of God. They are truly God's people, yet they have stopped short of God's best.**

1. Spiritually they have come to Jordan but they have never crossed over.

## **II. THE DANGER OF STOPPING SHORT.**

**A. History tells us that these tribes were the first to fall to the Assyrians.**

1. You are far more vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy.
2. Satan finds it easier to lure you away.

**B. We are also told that the descendants of these people were the Gadarenes.**

1. When Jesus came to their coasts they asked Him to leave.
2. They had degraded from raising cattle to raising pigs.
  - a. Failing to go forward they went backwards.
3. Not entering into the promises, they rejected the greatest promise of all; God's Messiah Jesus.

**C. Some of you are standing today at Jordan's banks.**

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

- **while you yourselves sit here** 2Sa 11:11 1Co 13:5 Php 2:4
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**MOSES ENVISIONS A  
PROBABLE PROBLEM!**

**But Moses said to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, "Shall your brothers go to war while you yourselves sit here?"** - In other words the land they asked for had already been conquered by the entire nation. They would not need to fight to occupy this land. It would therefore be tempting to them to not cross over the Jordan to fight with the rest of the nation for lands that would not be theirs. Moses sees the potential for selfishness and self-interest negating their desire to help their brethren.

Recall that the **sons of Gad** had a relatively large number of men who could go to war, Moses recording "These are the families of the **sons of Gad** according to those who were numbered of them, **40,500.**" (Nu 26:18). Similarly the **sons of Reuben** were recorded in Nu 26:7 "These are the families of the Reubenites, and those who were numbered of them were **43,730.**" In addition we note later that the half tribe of Manasseh is also included in this request to remain on the east and not go to war. And Manasseh had an even larger number at 52,700 (Nu 26:34)! Now if we add up the men of war in the 2.5 tribes, we have 136,930 men! The total census was 601,730 men, so the number of men for war against the Canaanites on the west of the Jordan would be reduced by about 22.7%. So effectively almost 1/5 of the army would be lost before they even fought a battle! One can see why this would have been so discouraging to the other 9.5 tribes. If 10 spies could discourage the entire nation, surely the 2.5 tribes would massively discourage the remainder of the nation!

**Related Passages** - speaking of the selfishness of the 2.5 tribes

1 Corinthians 13:5+ (LOVE) does not act unbecomingly; **it does not seek its own**, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

Philippians 2:4+ **Do not merely look out for your own personal interests** but also for the interests of others.

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**Spurgeon - Morning and Evening -**

"Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" — Numbers 32:6

Kindred has its obligations. The Reubenites and Gadites would have been unbrotherly if they had claimed the land which had been conquered, and had left the rest of the people to fight for their portions alone. We have received much by means of the efforts and sufferings of the saints in years gone by, and if we do not make some return to the church of Christ by giving her our best energies, we are unworthy to be enrolled in her ranks. Others are combating the errors of the age manfully, or excavating perishing ones from amid the ruins of the fall, and if we fold our hands in idleness we had need be warned, lest the curse of Meroz fall upon us. The Master of the vineyard saith, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" What is the idler's excuse? Personal service of Jesus becomes all the more the duty of all because it is cheerfully and abundantly rendered by some. The toils of devoted missionaries and fervent ministers shame us if we sit still in indolence. Shrinking from trial is the temptation of those who are at ease in Zion: they would fain escape the cross and yet wear the crown; to them the question for this evening's meditation is very applicable. If the most precious are tried in the fire, are we to escape the crucible? If the diamond must be vexed upon the wheel, are we to be made perfect without suffering? Who hath commanded the wind to cease from blowing because our bark is on the deep? Why and wherefore should we be treated better than our Lord? The firstborn felt the rod, and why not the younger brethren? It is a cowardly pride which would

choose a downy pillow and a silken couch for a soldier of the cross. Wiser far is he who, being first resigned to the divine will, groweth by the energy of grace to be pleased with it, and so learns to gather lilies at the cross foot, and, like Samson, to find honey in the lion.

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## G Campbell Morgan Life Applications

Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here!—Num. 32.6.

In these words Moses revealed the wrong principle actuating Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They desired to settle and prosper on the wrong side of Jordan in order to escape the responsibilities of war. Moses, by his speech and action, brought them to a confession of willingness to share that responsibility with the rest of the tribes, but the whole story is one of failure. It was a wrong desire on the part of the tribes. The distinctly avowed purpose of Jehovah was that they should go over Jordan. They desired to compromise, and indeed succeeded in doing so. In the case of Moses it is notice-able that we have no account of his seeking Divine guidance, as he had so constantly done in other matters. His own first conviction was against granting the request. He pointed out that in essence it was of the same spirit which their fathers had manifested forty years before, and which had resulted in the long and weary discipline. Urging their plea and promising to cross the Jordan to help in the coming conflict, the desire of these people triumphed, and Moses permitted their settlement. Subsequent events proved the wrong of that decision. The whole event should teach us that no merely selfish desire for early and easy realization of peace and prosperity should ever be permitted to interfere with the declared will of God. No policy of compromise can ever justify a coming short of Divine purpose. Peace-able settlements on the wrong side of the river are the inspiration and causes of conflict in subsequent days.

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## Numbers 32:6-7 Woodrow Kroll - Back to the Bible

Discouraging by Default by Tony Beckett and Woodrow Kroll

Numbers 32-34, Mark 9:30-50

Key Verses: Numbers 32:6-7

"Looking out for number one" is an old saying, but its sentiment is as popular as ever. We have been taught that we can have it our way and that we deserve a break today.

Too often a Christian can be subtly sucked into thinking about self with little regard for others. The follower of Christ, however, must remember that every believer is part of the Body and must consider how individual actions affect others.

This is not a new problem. The Reubenites, Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh liked the look of the land east of the Jordan. It was suitable for livestock. Their request to stay there seemed reasonable.

But Moses saw the effect it would have on Israel: "Shall your countrymen go to war while you sit here? Why do you discourage the [nation]?" (Numbers 31:6-7).

To their credit, when reminded of similar past situations and when made aware of how their action would affect others, these tribes did not choose to be discouragers. Yes, their families and livestock remained, but the men went to war with the rest of Israel.

Too often people in the church think of themselves and not how their choices might discourage others. Determine to encourage others by your actions as well as your words.

You can be an encourager or a discourager. Putting your interests first can discourage others. Choose to be an encourager. (Copyright Back to the Bible. Used by permission. All rights reserved)

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## Numbers 32:7 "Now why are you discouraging the sons of Israel from crossing over into the land which the LORD has given them?"

BGT Numbers 32:7 καὶ νὰ τὸ διαστρέψετε τὸς διανοήσασθε τὸν υἱὸν Ἰσραὴλ μὴ διαβναίεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ κυρίου ὃ ὤσιν αὐτοῖς

NET Numbers 32:7 Why do you frustrate the intent of the Israelites to cross over into the land which the LORD has given them?

NLT Numbers 32:7 "Why do you want to discourage the rest of the people of Israel from going across to the land the LORD has given them?"



ESV 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?

NIV Numbers 32:7 Why do you discourage the Israelites from going over into the land the LORD has given them?

- wherefore: Nu 32:9 21:4 De 1:28
- discourage: Heb. break, Ac 21:13
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A DISCOURAGING WORD IS HEARD

**Now why are you discouraging the sons of Israel from crossing over into the land** - Note that Moses does not say "You might discourage them," but that you already are "discouraging the sons of Israel," with the request for the conquered land on the Eastern side of the Jordan. The Septuagint translation has "you are turning away, corrupting, distorting ([diastrepho](#) in present tense = ongoing!) the minds (dianoia - seat of perception and thinking) of the sons of Israel." Note that Moses says they are even **discouraging** them **from crossing over**, much less actually entering into battle!

Discouragement is one of the devil's most effective weapons.

**Discouraging** ([05106](#))(**nu**) means to hinder, restrain, frustrate, discourage, forbid, thwart. Preceded by a negative, it means not to permit something, as for example performance of a vow (Nu 30:5, 8, 11). In Nu 32:7,9 it means to stop an action which should be carried out God thwarting the plans or designs of people (Ps. 33:10 = "He **frustrates** the plans of the peoples."). It is used in a figurative, idiomatic expression "do not let my head **refuse** it" (Ps. 141:5).

Nu - 8x in 7v - discouraged\*(1), discouraging\*(1), forbid(2), forbidden(1), forbids(1), frustrates(1), refuse(1). Num. 30:5; Num. 30:8; Num. 30:11; Num. 32:7; Num. 32:9; Ps. 33:10; Ps. 141:5

**Which the LORD has given them** - Moses reminds them the land is a gift from God. But the sons of Israel still had to go in and conquer the land (cf God's Sovereignty/Man's Responsibility).

**THOUGHT** - Is not this same principle operative in our lives as believers? Clearly it is! And so Peter writes that God's "divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**" (2 Pe 1:3+) as well as granting us His "**precious and magnificent promises**" (2 Pe 1:4+). And Paul adds that we have been blessed "with **every spiritual blessing** in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph 1:3+). The point is that in Christ Jesus we each have these possessions and promises and yet we still must daily war in the power of Spirit against our flesh (Gal 5:16, 17+, 1 Pe 2:11+, 2 Cor 10:3-5+, 1 Ti 6:12+, etc) in order to "conquer" and experientially possess our possessions. Does that make sense? This is another way of describing our daily growth in Christ-likeness or progressive sanctification. We will not perfectly possess these precious possessions until we are changed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor 15:52) are [glorified](#) and forever like Christ (1 Jn 3:2+)! Lord hasten the day when our faith shall be sight, the sight of our blessed Redeemer! Amen.

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### Brian Bell - You want to discourage your brothers from entering into the land?

1. Remember, they're asking the one guy who **would do anything to enter but can't**...Moses!
2. Uh, didn't we already learn this lesson from 10 other guys that didn't want to go into the land? (10 spies w/bad report)

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### David Jeremiah -GIANTS

Why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land? NUMBERS 32:7

In the Book of Numbers, the twelve spies returned from searching out Canaan. Two of them were upbeat, saying that with the Lord's help they could take the land. But the other ten discouraged the Israelites, planting seeds of doubt and pessimism. They worried about the giants in the land and about the fortified cities. As a result, the people's morale collapsed.

One of the problems with being discouraged is that we also become discouraging. When we fail to trust the Lord with our giants, we're telegraphing a message to others: "The Lord can't help you with your giants either." Discouragement becomes as contagious as smallpox.

Discouragement was one of Paul's concerns when he was persecuted. He was afraid his imprisonment would discourage his converts. Writing to the Thessalonians, he said, "We didn't want any of you to be discouraged by all these troubles. You knew we would have to suffer, because when we were with you, we told you this would happen" (1 Thessalonians 3:3-4 CEV).

If you're facing a difficulty now, may the Lord help you respond to it so that others will be encouraged to trust Him too.

**Numbers 32:8 "This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land.**

- Nu 13:2-26 Nu 14:2 De 1:22,23 Jos 14:6,7
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

Deuteronomy 1:22-23 "Then all of you approached me and said, 'Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter.' 23 "The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe.

Numbers 14:2 All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!

### **MOSES REMINDS THEM OF THE EFFECT OF 10 DISBELIEVING SPIES**

**This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land-** The leaven of disbelief and resulting discouragement introduced by 10 of the 12 spies returning from the Land contaminated the minds of the entire tribe. This is the second generation and they needed to be reminded of the price paid by the first generation for disobedience.

**THOUGHT** - There is a principle here -- beware of speaking discouraging words to others whether it be your spouse, your children, etc! The dictionary defines discouragement as "anything that makes us less confident and hopeful." Another way to look at it is to say that encouragement is the act of putting courage into someone. Therefore, discouragement is anything that takes the courage out. -- Once upon a time the devil decided to have a garage sale. He did it because he wanted to clear out some of his old tools to make room for new ones. After he set up his wares, a fellow dropped by to see what he had. Arrayed on a long table were all the tricks of his infernal trade. Each tool had a price tag. In one corner was a shiny implement labeled "Anger—\$250," next to it a curved tool labeled "Sloth—\$380." As the man searched, he found "Criticism—\$500" and "Jealousy—\$630." Out of the corner of his eye, the man spotted a beaten-up tool with a price tag of \$12,000. Curious, the man asked the devil why he would offer a worn-out piece of junk for such an exorbitant price. The devil said it was expensive because he used it so much. "What is it?," the man asked. The answer came back, "It is discouragement. It always works when nothing else will." (from [Ray Pritchard](#))

**Numbers 32:9 "For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the sons of Israel so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them.**

- Nu 13:23-33 14:1-10 De 1:24-28
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **PATHOGENESIS OF DISCOURAGEMENT**

[Pathogenesis](#) describes the development of a disease or morbid condition.

**For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw the land-** Why would Moses mention **Eschol**? That was the name of the valley in the vicinity of Hebron from which the Israelite spies brought back a cluster of grapes so large that two men were required to carry it between them on a pole (Nu 13:22-24+). This "payload" of grapes should have encouraged them to take God up on His promise to give them this land, because clearly it was a good land!

**They discouraged the sons of Israel** - Their discouraging words effectively nullified the "testimony of the grapes," the visible evidence of the goodness of God and the the land. Their words were like blinders preventing the people from seeing the goodness of the LORD in His bounty of berries!

**So that** - The result of discouragement contaminated the minds of the sons of Israel and as a man thinks so he is (Pr 23:7)! In this case the discouraging thoughts bred unbelief which in turn led to failure to act on the truth of God's promise.

**They did not go into the land which the LORD had given them**- They disbelieved, disobeyed and were disinherited from God's gift.

**THOUGHT** - It is a dangerous thing to spurn the gifts of God. Of course His greatest gift was not the land but the life of His Son. To disbelieve in this great gift will yield an eternal great gulf between one's soul and God (Lk 16:26KJV+). As believers we should live with an attitude of gratitude continually in our heart and mind so that we do not fail to possess the precious and magnificent promises God has given us in Christ - "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Cor 9:15).

**Numbers 32:10 "So the LORD'S anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying,**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF

**So the LORD'S anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying,**

**Numbers 32:11 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully,**

- from twenty: Nu 14:28,29 26:2,64,65 De 1:35 2:14,15
- because: Nu 14:24,30 Jos 14:8,9
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FAILURE TO ENTER THE LAND

**None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob** - Moses recounts the punishment on the first generation who failed to believe God's promise because of the discouragement of the 10 spies.

**for** - Term of explanation. Explaining why the sons of Israel failed to enter the promised land.

**They did not follow Me fully** - Mark it down that partial obedience is in fact disobedience. Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey.

**PARTIAL DISOBEDIENCE IS COMPLETE DISOBEDIENCE!**

**THOUGHT** - Do not be deceived: delayed obedience is immediate disobedience and partial obedience is complete disobedience. Is there some issue where you are only partially obeying what God has commanded?

**Numbers 32:12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully.'**

- for: Nu 14:24,30 26:65 De 1:36 Jos 14:8,9
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE TWO EXCEPTIONS TO THE FAITHLESS SONS

**Except** - Term of contrast. Contrast is between those forbidden to enter the promised land and those allowed to enter the promised land.

**Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun,**

**For** - Term of explanation. Explains why they were allowed to enter the land.

**They have followed the LORD fully** - This describes their complete obedience. Note that it was not their obedience per se that allowed them to enter but it was their faith in God and His promises. Their faith was the source of their full obedience.

**THOUGHT** - The principle in this passage is of vital importance. What it clearly demonstrates is that faith is not a passive word, but in fact is an "action" word. If we say we believe and don't obey, the truth is that we really don't believe! Faith and obedience are like a horse and buggy. Faith pulls the wagon along obediently (so to speak). If we say we believe in Jesus, one of the best ways we can tell if that belief is saving belief is whether it energizes obedience. Don't misunderstand. We are not speaking of perfect obedience which is impossible in these mortal bodies still containing our fallen flesh, our propensity to sin. We are however speaking of a general tendency in our life to joyfully obey the precepts of God, knowing that this delights Him (1 Sa 15:22). Our obedience does NOT save us, but is one piece of evidence demonstrating that we are genuinely saved. Stated another way, we are speaking of our life's general direction, not perfection! See discussion of [Obedience of faith](#).

Jesus said it this way

- "If you **love Me**, you will **keep My commandments**." (Jn 14:15)
- "If anyone **loves Me**, he will **keep My word**; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." (Jn 14:23)
- "He who **does not love Me does not keep My words**; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. (Jn 14:24)

**Numbers 32:13** "So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed.

- wander: Nu 14:33-35 De 2:14 Ps 78:33
- until all: Nu 26:64 De 2:15 1Co 10:5 Heb 3:16-19
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE FORTY YEAR FUNERAL MARCH!

**So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed.**

**Numbers 32:14** "Now **behold**, you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of the LORD against Israel.

- an increase: Ge 5:3 8:21 Ne 9:24-26 Job 14:4 Ps 78:57 Isa 1:4 57:4 Eze 20:21 Mt 23:31-33 Lu 11:48 Ac 7:51,52
- to augment: De 1:34,35 Ezr 9:13,14 10:10 Ne 13:18 Isa 65:6,7
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES IS GIVING A STRONG WARNING

**Now behold, you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of the**

**Numbers 32:15 "For if you turn away from following Him, He will once more abandon them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."**

- if ye turn: Lev 26:14-18 De 28:15-68 30:17-19 Jos 22:16-18 2Ch 7:19-22 2Ch 15:2
- he will yet: Nu 14:30-35
- ye shall: Jer 38:23 Mt 18:7 Ro 14:15,20,21 1Co 8:11,12
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DESTRUCTION IS DECREED**

**For if you turn away from following Him** - This seems to be directed primarily at the sons of Gad and sons of Reuben, who were in effect acting like the 10 spies who disbelieved God and refused to follow Him into the promised land.

**He will once more abandon them in the wilderness** - This is a frightening warning, signifying not only would sons of Gad and Reuben not enter the land, but no one of the sons of Israel would enter the land. The only place left for them was the wilderness, but this time no time frame is given like before (40 years).

**And you will destroy all these people** - Who are these people? In context this refers to the entire nation of Israel. They would all be destroyed, even as their fathers, the first generation out of Egypt, were destroyed in the wilderness.

**Numbers 32:16 Then they came near to him and said, "We will build here sheepfolds for our livestock and cities for our little ones;**

- Nu 34:22 Ge 33:17
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GADITES AND REUBENITES APPROACH MOSES WITH A PLAN**

**Then they came near to him and said, "We will build here sheepfolds for our livestock and cities for our little ones** - This is what the Gadites and Reubenites will do for their families.

**TSK** - This proposal was very equitable, and it was honestly made and faithfully executed; though it did not imply that all men capable of bearing arms should go, and so leave their families and possessions defenceless, but only a sufficient detachment of them. Among the inhabitants of the land were the Ammonites, Moabites, Idumeans, and the remains of the Midianites and Amorites; and as it was impossible for the women and children to keep the defended cities, when placed in them, many of the men of war must of course stay behind. In the last census (ch. 26), the tribe of Reuben consisted of 43,730 men; the tribe of Gad 40,500; and the tribe of Manasseh 52,700; the half of which is 26,350; which together amount to 110,580. Now from Jos 4:13, we learn, that of these tribes only 40,000 armed men passed over Jordan to assist their brethren: consequently 70,580 men were left behind for the defence of the women, the children, and the flocks: which was amply sufficient for this purpose.

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[Brian Bell](#) -

1. **THE REASSURANCE!** (16-32)
2. Ok, it might not be the best for **God** nor the best for **others**(break moral of the people)...but it will be really nice for **our cattle!**  
Can we, can we?
3. We **solemnly swear** to fully support the other 9 1/2 tribes in conquering Canaan. Can we, can we?

**Numbers 32:17 but we ourselves will be armed ready to go before the sons of Israel, until we have brought them to their place, while our little ones live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land.**

BGT Numbers 32:17 κα με ς νοπλισ μενοι προφυλακ πρ τεροι τ ν υ ν Ισραηλ ως ν γ γωμεν α το ς ε ς τ ν αυ τ τ πον κα κατοικ σει ποσκευ μ ν ν π λεσιν τετειχισμ ναι ς δι το ς κατοικο ν τ α ς τ ν γ ν

LXE Numbers 32:17 and we will arm ourselves and go as an advanced guard before the children of Israel, until we shall have brought them into their place; and our possessions shall remain in walled cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

NET Numbers 32:17 but we will maintain ourselves in armed readiness and go before the Israelites until whenever we have brought them to their place. Our descendants will be living in fortified towns as a protection against the inhabitants of the land.

NLT Numbers 32:17 Then we will arm ourselves and lead our fellow Israelites into battle until we have brought them safely to their land. Meanwhile, our families will stay in the fortified towns we build here, so they will be safe from any attacks by the local people.

ESV Numbers 32:17 but we will take up arms, ready to go before the people of Israel, until we have brought them to their place. And our little ones shall live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

NIV Numbers 32:17 But we are ready to arm ourselves and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place. Meanwhile our women and children will live in fortified cities, for protection from the inhabitants of the land.

- Nu 32:29-32 De 3:16-20 Jos 4:12,13
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BEARING ARMS ALONG WITH THEIR BROTHERS

**But** - This introduces a contrast of what they will do for their brethren, the sons of Israel.

**we ourselves will be armed ready to go before the sons of Israel**- NLT = "lead our fellow Israelites into battle." Moses will alter this slightly with a theologically accurate description in Nu 32:20 saying "if you will arm yourselves BEFORE THE LORD for the war." The implication is that while they are the human warriors, the Captain of the Hosts, Yahweh is the true Leader of the nation into battle. The Septuagint translates "**go before**" with the noun **prophulake** literally meaning a guard in front of or an advance guard. Clearly they are willing to go in the front which in theory is the most dangerous place to be in an advancing army. This surely seems to reflect their courage in this context. So which they were somewhat self-focused in seeking the land east of the Jordan, once they were corrected by Moses, they seem quite courageous. **Ready to go** means swiftly, quickly, immediately. **Milgrom** paraphrases it this way "And we will hasten as shock-troops in the van[guard] of the Israelites."

Nevertheless the Gadites and Reubenites and men of Manasseh were true to their word, Joshua recording both **'before's'**...

The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over in battle array **BEFORE the sons of Israel, just as Moses had spoken to them**; about 40,000 equipped for war, crossed for battle **BEFORE the LORD** to the desert plains of Jericho. (Jos 4:12,13)

Moses reiterates the valiantry of these tribes in Deuteronomy

"To the **Reubenites and to the Gadites** I gave from Gilead even as far as the valley of Arnon, the middle of the valley as a border and as far as the river Jabbok, the border of the sons of Ammon; 17 the Arabah also, with the Jordan as a border, from Chinnereth even as far as the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah on the east. 18 "Then I commanded you at that time, saying, 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess it; **all you valiant men shall cross over armed before your brothers**, the sons of Israel. 19 'But your wives and your little ones and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall remain in your cities which I have given you, 20 until the LORD gives rest to your fellow countrymen as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God will give them beyond the Jordan. Then you may return every man to his possession which I have given you.' (De 3:16-20)

**Rashi** comments - Literally "before" them (OJPS), that is, at the head of the whole invasion force. For they were great heroes: "Blessed be He who enlarges Gad! Poised is he like a lion to tear off arm and scalp" (Deut. 33:20). Moses made this explicit when he later reminded them what he had told them at this time: "You must go as shock-troops, warriors all, at the head of your Israelite kinsmen" (Deut. 3:18). When we are told at the battle of Jericho that "the armed men went before them" (Josh. 6:13), this is Reuben and Gad fulfilling their pledge.

**Until we have brought them to their place** - **Until** expresses their confidence that they will lead their brethren to conquest of the land.

**While our little ones live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land**- The **inhabitants of the land** refers to the enemies of Israel who were still in the vicinity and would love to extract vengeance on unprotected wives and children.

**Fortified cities** ( also in Nu 32:36) is [mibtsar](#) which is used to describe structures designed for military defense. TWOT says "for the most part, the term "**fortified** (or fenced) **city**" is utilized as a term of designation, indicating the largest and most important habitation sites (ct. 2 Ki 17:9). Such cities were very important strategically since they were almost impregnable until the perfection of siege techniques by the Assyrians (Jer 5:17). This fact was of special significance to the Israelite conquest (cf. Josh 10:20, 19:29, 35).

**Numbers 32:18 "We will not return to our homes until every one of the sons of Israel has possessed his inheritance.**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GADITES AND REUBENITES GIVE THEIR WORD**

**We will not return to our homes until every one of the sons of Israel has possessed his inheritance**- Again the use of **until** signals their assurance that all of the sons will possess their possessions and then they can cross back over the Jordan to their dwellings. One wonders if they knew exactly what they were getting into? I doubt it. As the conquest of Canaan unfolded it probably took about seven years.

**THOUGHT** - When we enter a specific area of service to the Lord, we should enter with full surrender (not conditions or stipulations) and that includes the surrender of our most valuable commodity TIME! Indeed, our time is not really our time - our time is His TIME. We know not how long a particular service may last (be it missionary, preacher, teacher, etc). Our call is to be faithful and to gratefully accept that we have the privilege to serve the Most High God. Are you grumbling about your area of service? Then (enabled by the Spirit) stop!

Joshua records the "end of this story"

Then Joshua summoned the **Reubenites** and the **Gadites** and the **half-tribe of Manasseh**, 2 and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. 3 "You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. 4 "And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan. 5 "Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Joshua 22:1-5)

**Numbers 32:19 "For we will not have an inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan toward the east."**

NET Numbers 32:19 For we will not accept any inheritance on the other side of the Jordan River and beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on this eastern side of the Jordan."

NLT Numbers 32:19 But we do not claim any of the land on the other side of the Jordan. We would rather live here on the east side and accept this as our grant of land."

ESV Numbers 32:19 For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on this side of the Jordan to the east."

NIV Numbers 32:19 We will not receive any inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan."



- **we will:** Ge 13:10-12 14:12 2Ki 10:32,33 15:29 1Ch 5:25,26 Pr 20:21
- **because:** Nu 32:33 Jos 12:1-6 13:8
- **on this side:** Nu 32:32 34:15 Jos 1:14,15
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THEIR INHERITANCE IS EAST OF THE JORDAN

**For we will not have an inheritance with them on the other side**(western side) **of the Jordan and beyond** - NLT = "we do not claim any of the land on the other side of the Jordan." NET = "we will not accept any inheritance on the other side of the Jordan River and beyond." In other words the Gadites and Reubenites promise they will be satisfied with their share of the land on the eastern side of the Jordan.

**Because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan toward the east**- NLT paraphrases it "We would rather live here on the east side and accept this as our grant of land." They are slightly presumptuous here for the inheritance on the East was not truly theirs until Moses made it official by awarding it to them.

**Numbers 32:20 So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for the war,**

- De 3:18-20 Jos 1:13-15 4:12,13 22:2-4
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES BEGINS TO AGREE WITH THEIR TERMS

**So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for the war** -Moses opens with a "DOUBLE IF," introducing a conditional promise in the following two verses (vv 20-22 are one long sentence which several "conditions").

**UBS** says "Having heard the [deferential](#) words of the Gadites and Reubenites, Moses modifies his earlier hard comments and works to reach a compromise with them and an agreement that will preserve the unity of the nation."

**Numbers 32:21 and all of you armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven His enemies out from before Him,**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And all of you armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD** - This passage appears to clarify that all of the numbered warriors would cross over into the land of Canaan to fight. Apparently there were no contingents (at least no major "battalions") of men left behind in the fortified cities. If this is true, it would surely indicate that the LORD honored their word and protected the families they left in the fortified cities.

Notice the repeated phrase in vv 20-22 **before the LORD** (5 TIMES) - **UBS** has a good comment on before the LORD in v21 - "In Nu 32:17 the Gadites and Reubenites had offered "to go before the people of Israel," but Moses changes this to going **before the LORD** for the war. Moses puts the conquest of Canaan on a theological level both here and in the next verse. The conquest will be a holy war since the LORD will fight on behalf of his people."

**THOUGHT** - One is reminded of young David's words as he was about to face the Philistine Goliath "the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands." (1 Sa 17:47) May these words ever be our "battle cry" in the very real spiritual warfare we all experience daily. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**Armed** ([02502](#))(**chalats**) has two main senses (1) to equip for war and (2) to draw out (rescue). The NAS Concordance (see below) separates these two uses while the KJV concordance lumps them all together.

**Baker** - to draw out, to prepare, to deliver, to equip for war. The primary meaning of the word is that of strengthening or fortifying (Isa. 58:11). It is used to convey the activity of drawing out, such as occurs in



breast-feeding (Lam. 4:3); removing a shoe (Deut. 25:9, 10; Isa. 20:2); dispatching to another location (Lev. 14:40, 43); withdrawing from a crowd (Hos. 5:6); removing or delivering from danger (2 Sam. 22:20; Ps. 6:4; 50:15). Significantly, this word conveys the notion of taking up arms for battle (Num. 31:3; 32:17) or preparing for a general state of military readiness (Josh. 4:13; 2 Chr. 17:18). (Complete Word Study Dictionary)

**Gilbrant** - A variety of nuances of this verb are expressed in the Hebrew Bible. This variety is matched by its cognates, which exhibit a number of meanings. The verb refers to the action of taking one's shoe off in legal ceremonies (preserved in Middle Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic; cf. Ethiopic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Syriac). One who refused to perform the societal law of levirate marriage was to undergo a humiliating legal ritual, in which the wife of his deceased brother was to spit in his face before the elders of the village, and his descendants were to bear the name of "descendants of the shoeless one." The title carried the stigma of ill-gotten gain, as the sandal-less one refused to procreate a son, who would then inherit the deceased's patrimony (cf. Gen. 38). Isaiah became shoeless and naked in order to symbolically portray the coming fate of the Cushites and Egyptians in face of the threat of Assyria (Isa. 20:2f). This was symbolic of slavery, as a slave is completely destitute, unable to clothe himself. Baring does not necessitate removing clothing, but also denotes accessibility (Lam. 4:3). The verb also connotes the notion of military preparedness (cf. Syriac and Mandaean cognates). It primarily refers to logistic preparation (e.g., Deut. 3:18), and it can mean "to despoil," a prime method of logistic preparation (Ps. 7:4). Perhaps this is the semantic link to the nuance above. Preserving one's stores by withdrawing is also within the semantic range of this verb (Hos. 5:6). A meaning exclusively reserved in Hebrew for poetic contexts is "to rescue" (cf. cognates in Old Aramaic, Punic, Arabic, Middle Hebrew and a nominal derivative in Akkadian). Yahweh is usually the subject, and humans in distress the object (e.g., 2 Sam. 22:20; Ps. 140:1). Indirectly, knowledge can deliver the righteous (Prov. 11:8f). Since knowledge in the Hebrew Bible refers to fear and awareness of Yahweh's laws, it is clear that Yahweh rescues the righteous through reflection upon divine revelation. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

#### **NAS divides chalats into two main uses -**

**(1) 21v TO EQUIP FOR WAR** - arm(2), armed(13), army(1), equipped(4), give strength(1). Num. 31:3; Num. 31:5; Num. 32:17; Num. 32:20; Num. 32:21; Num. 32:27; Num. 32:29; Num. 32:30; Num. 32:32; Deut. 3:18; Jos. 4:13; Jos. 6:7; Jos. 6:9; Jos. 6:13; 1 Chr. 12:23; 1 Chr. 12:24; 2 Chr. 17:18; 2 Chr. 20:21; 2 Chr. 28:14; Isa. 15:4; Isa. 58:11

**(2) 23v - TO DRAW OFF OR OUT, WITHDRAW** -- delivered(4), delivers(1), offer(1), plundered(1), pull(1), removed(1), rescue(5), rescued(4), rescues(1), take(1), tear(1), torn(1), withdrawn(1). Lev. 14:40; Lev. 14:43; Deut. 25:9; Deut. 25:10; 2 Sam. 22:20; Job 36:15; Ps. 6:4; Ps. 7:4; Ps. 18:19; Ps. 34:7; Ps. 50:15; Ps. 60:5; Ps. 81:7; Ps. 91:15; Ps. 108:6; Ps. 116:8; Ps. 119:153; Ps. 140:1; Prov. 11:8; Prov. 11:9; Isa. 20:2; Lam. 4:3; Hos. 5:6

**Until He has driven His enemies out from before Him**- **Until** again indicates it will come to pass. Note the emphasis is on Yahweh driving out the enemies. **Driven out** ([yarash](#)) is more literally "dispossessed" (English = "deprive of possession of real estate!") as is translated in Nu 32:39 ([yarash](#) also found in Nu 33:52, 53, 55+). The idea of **before Him** (NLT = "His enemies") indicates that while they were enemies of the sons of Israel, they were first and foremost enemies of the one true God. Sin is always first against God.

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#### **John Bennett - Numbers 32:20–42 WE WILL PASS OVER ARMED BEFORE THE LORD**

On first reading, the offer of Reuben and Gad seems a perfectly reasonable and even gracious proposal. However, on closer examination other features come to light. The record of scripture will show that Reuben is invariably motivated by self-interest, both the man and the tribe. A consideration of the occasions from Genesis to Judges when Reuben is mentioned will bear this out; our reading today is no exception.

The seemingly magnanimous gesture to 'pass over armed before the Lord' is at best a compromise, and compromise is a word which does not sit comfortably with the word of God!

The warning of Moses does nothing to alter their resolve, the two tribes had already laid plans to safeguard their possessions, and provide secure homes for their families, v. 16. Instead of bowing to the will of God for their blessing, they had made up their minds that the east bank of Jordan was to be their inheritance, and they expected Moses and the Lord to fall in with their plans!

Yet, decisions we make invariably affect others. Lot discovered this when he selfishly 'chose him (for himself) all the plain of Jordan', Gen 13:11, to the detriment and loss of his family. Now Reuben and Gad were to leave their families, and go over the Jordan to assist in the possession of the land. Their wives and children would never enjoy the intended inheritance. They would be denied an appreciation of the land flowing with milk and honey, with its wells, vineyards and olive trees. Instead they would dwell in 'fenced cities' in a hostile environment, v. 17, in a land that was good for cattle, v. 4! How careful we need to be as husbands and as parents in the decisions we make which have an impact on our families, and even on our testimony in the neighbourhood.

The Lord was very gracious in allowing Reuben, Gad and later half the tribe of Manasseh to occupy their chosen inheritance. He even provided cities of refuge for them, Num. 35. But finally, having turned from God to idols, these three tribes were the first to be taken captive by the Assyrians, who first 'took away their cattle', 1 Chr. 5:21, then themselves, 1 Chr 5:26.

**Numbers 32:22 and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you shall return and be free of obligation toward the LORD and toward Israel, and this land shall be yours for a possession before the LORD.**

NET Numbers 32:22 and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be free of your obligation to the LORD and to Israel. This land will then be your possession in the LORD's sight.

NLT Numbers 32:22 then you may return when the LORD has conquered the land. You will have fulfilled your duty to the LORD and to the rest of the people of Israel. And the land on the east side of the Jordan will be your property from the LORD.

ESV Numbers 32:22 and the land is subdued before the LORD; then after that you shall return and be free of obligation to the LORD and to Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

NIV Numbers 32:22 then when the land is subdued before the LORD, you may return and be free from your obligation to the LORD and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the LORD.

- **land:** De 3:20 Jos 10:30,42 11:23 18:1 Ps 44:1-4 78:55
- **shall:** Jos 22:4,9
- **be guiltless:** Jos 2:19 2Sa 3:28
- **this land:** De 3:12-18 Jos 1:15 13:8,29-32 22:9
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE REWARD FOR FULFILLING THEIR WORD

**and the land is subdued** (Lxx = [katakuriueuo](#)) **before the LORD, then afterward you shall return** ("then you may return when the LORD has conquered the land" = NLT) **and be free of obligation toward the LORD and toward Israel** ("You will have fulfilled your duty to the LORD and to the rest of the people of Israel"= NLT), **and this land shall be yours for a possession before the LORD**- Note that their work as warriors is first seen as work for Yahweh and secondarily as work for their brethren. One is reminded of Paul's words

**Whatever you do** in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father...**Whatever you do, do your work** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive ([apolambano](#) = RECEIVE IN FULL YOUR DUE!) the (DEFINITE ARTICLE = "THE SPECIFIC") reward ([antapodosis](#)) of the inheritance ([kleronomia](#)) (JUST AS THE GADITES & REUBENITES). (AND HERE IS THE KEY =) It is the Lord Christ Whom you serve ([douleuo](#)). (Col 3:17+, Col 3:23-24+)

**Subdued** (Subjugated, tread under foot) ([03533](#))([kabash](#)) means to subdue, to bring into bondage, to keep under, to force, to enslave (and so to degrade). The basic meaning is to overcome or subdue someone or something. It often expresses the idea of excessive use of power and is used of subduing nations as well as of subduing or violating a woman (Est 7:8) The first use is a command from the LORD God to Adam to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue (Lxx = [katakuriueuo](#) = exercise dominion over, gain power over, bring into subjection) it." The role of humans is to keep order in nature, to live in harmony with nature, not to abuse and destroy it. Kabash is used of subduing the land and in context to do it by military conquest (Nu 32:22, 29 and Josh 18:1 = of Israel taking control of the Promised Land, 1Chr 22:18), of King David subduing the nations (2Sa 8:11)

**Numbers 32:23 "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.**

BGT Numbers 32:23 ν δ μ ποι σητε ο τως μαρτ σεσθε ναντι κυρ ου κα γν σεσθε τ ν μαρτ αν μ ν ταν μ ς καταλ β τ κακ

NET Numbers 32:23 "But if you do not do this, then look, you will have sinned against the LORD. And know that your sin will find you out.

NLT Numbers 32:23 But if you fail to keep your word, then you will have sinned against the LORD, and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.

ESV Numbers 32:23 But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

NIV Numbers 32:23 "But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.

KJV Numbers 32:23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

YLT Numbers 32:23 'And if ye do not so, lo, ye have sinned against Jehovah, and know ye your sin, that it doth find you;

LXE Numbers 32:23 But if ye will not do so, ye will sin against the Lord; and ye shall know your sin, when afflictions shall come upon you.

ASV Numbers 32:23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out.

CSB Numbers 32:23 But if you don't do this, you will certainly sin against the LORD; be sure your sin will catch up with you.

NKJ Numbers 32:23 "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

NRS Numbers 32:23 But if you do not do this, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

NAB Numbers 32:23 But if you do not do this, you will sin against the LORD, and you can be sure that you will not escape the consequences of your sin.

NJB Numbers 32:23 But if you do not, you will sin against Yahweh, and be sure your sin will find you out.

GWN Numbers 32:23 "If you don't do all these things, you will be sinning against the LORD. You can be sure that you will be punished for your sin.

BHT Numbers 32:23 wū`im-lō´ ta`ásûn kën hinneh Hátä'em lyhwh (la`dönäy) ûdeü`û hatta'tekem ´ášer timsä´ ´etkem

BBE Numbers 32:23 But if you do not do this, then you are sinners against the Lord; and you may be certain that your sin will have its reward.

- **if you will not do so:** Lev 26:14-46 De 28:15-68
- **be sure your sin:** Ge 4:7 44:16 Ps 90:8 139:11 140:11 Pr 13:21 Isa 3:11 Isa 59:1,2,12 Ro 2:9 1Co 4:5
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages to Ponder on this Passage with a Principle of great import:**

Joshua 7:19-21 Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." 20So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when I **saw** among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I **coveted** them and **took** them; and behold, they are **concealed** in the earth inside my

tent with the silver underneath it.”

Psalms 90:8 You have placed our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your presence.

Proverbs 13:21 Adversity pursues sinners, But the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

Job 20:27 “The heavens will reveal his iniquity, And the earth will rise up against him.

Proverbs 26:26 Though his hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Luke 12:2+ “But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

## A SOLEMN WARNING REGARDING SIN

**But if** - Now Moses gives a negative conditional promise introduced by **IF**. The former was the blessing and this is now the "curse."

**You will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD - Behold** is [hinneh](#) which calls for giving full attention to the words (warning) that follows! The failure of the Gadites and Reubenites to obey and keep their word, would be accounted to them as sin, missing the mark. And note that sin is always **against the LORD**.

**And be sure your sin** ([chattat/chattath](#); Lxx = [hamartia](#)) **will find you out** - Not "you might" but "be sure!" And **be sure** is [yada](#) (know; Lxx = [ginosko](#)) in the imperative! The idea is "know for certain" or "**make no mistake about it!**" This phrase assured that the Gadites and Reubenites would not be able to hide their failure to keep their word to go with their brothers into battle. God is **omniscient** and He sees our every sin against Him and every sin is in fact against Him! Every sin will be brought out into the open! One paraphrases it "your sin will follow you." They might stay on the Eastern side of the Jordan River but God would see it and clearly there would be consequences, because they were sinning against Him.

**THOUGHT** - The punishment for sin will "**find**" the guilty, if not in this lifetime, then in the next! There is no "free pass" for sin. Either it falls on the sinner or it falls on the sinner's Savior (2 Cor 5:21+, 1 Pe 2:24+, Isa 53:5-6+) Beloved, never *sweep* sin [under the rug](#), but put it **under the blood**. "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper (aka "will be found out"), But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." (Pr 28:13+, cf 1 Jn 1:9+).

Paul says it this way

**"Do not be deceived**, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." (Gal 6:7-8+)

Ro 14:10, 12+ But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ...12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

No sin against God or His Word will remain secret and unpunished.

-- Henry Morris

**THOUGHT** - Principles in this passage are important to ponder. There is no such thing as "**secret sin**." So-called "secret sin" on earth is open scandal in Heaven. The omniscient eyes of Jehovah see every sin we commit, whether of thought, word, or deed. We are deceived when we sin and think we have gotten away with it and/or there will be no consequences. Yes, the blood of Jesus is efficacious to cleanse ALL of our sins in these mortal bodies, but this does not signify that there will be no consequences. The point is God hates sin, whether committed by an unbeliever or a believer.

Proverbs 15:3+ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

Hebrews 4:12-13+ For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is **no creature hidden from His sight**, but **ALL things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do** (or "to give an account" - NIV).

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**See Pastor Chuck Smith's excellent sermon notes on Numbers 32:23:**

- [Numbers 32:23 Your Sin Will Find You Out \(in your face, conscience, life, death\)](#)
  - [Numbers 32:23 Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out](#)
  - [Numbers 32:23 Discovered! \(Three common errors about sin\)](#)
  - [Numbers 32:23 You Can Be Sure](#)
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**D L Moody** - DO you want to know the reason why, every now and then, the church is scandalized by the exposure of some leading church member or Sabbath-school superintendent? It is not his Christianity, but his lack of it. Some secret sin has been eating at the heart of the tree, and in a critical moment it is blown down and its rottenness revealed.

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### **Facts of the Matter - What Are You Becoming?**

" The gods we worship write their names on our faces, be sure of that. And a person will worship something, have no doubt about that either. One may think tribute is paid in secret, in the dark recesses of his or her heart, but it is not. That which dominates imagination and thoughts will determine life and character. Therefore it behooves us to be careful what we are worshipping, for what we are worshipping we are becoming." 89

For a while we may appear to defy gravity by juggling our secret inner imagination and thoughts with our external world of studied conformity to accepted norms. In fact, some of us should get an Oscar for our acting ability!

God cautions us however, that sooner or later, the truth will emerge: " You may be sure that your sin will find you out." (Numbers 32:23)

Either:

- God will expose our deepest secrets:

" What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs." (Luke 12:3)

- Or we will come to a point where we will tire of acting. It is then that the true life and character that has dominated our thoughts and imagination will bubble to the surface for all to see.

Perhaps that is why some older people are so unpleasant to be around. Having grown weary of acting in an "acceptable" manner, they are now reaping what they have sown these many years by allowing their true inner imagination and thoughts to find expression.

" Don' t be under any illusion: You cannot make a fool of God! A man' s harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows. If he sows for his own lower nature his harvest will be the decay and death of his own nature. If he sows for the Spirit he will reap the harvest of everlasting life by that Spirit." (Galatians 6:7, 8 – Phillips Translation)

QUESTION: Just what is it that dominates your imagination and thoughts? Are you pleased with the fact that you are in the process of becoming what you have been thinking and dreaming about?

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### **Greg Laurie - NO EXCEPTIONS**

But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out. (Numbers 32:23)

I read a newspaper article about a hungry thief who grabbed some sausages in a meat market. What he didn't realize was that the sausages were part of a 45-foot long string. As he was making his getaway, he tripped over them and couldn't escape. The police found him collapsed in a tangle of sausages. He was caught in the act. Literally.

In the same way, many people today play with sin, thinking they will get away with it. If they don't get caught at first, they will go and do it over and over again. Sometimes people misinterpret God's loving patience and willingness to forgive as leniency. They think

God is a soft touch, a pushover. Because they get away with their sin, they think God doesn't really mind. Then they deceive themselves into thinking God approves of what they're doing.

We must not misinterpret God's mercy as God's lenience. The Bible says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Is God cutting you slack right now? By that I mean, if you are committing a sin that has not yet caught up with you, please don't misperceive that as leniency. Recognize it as mercy. Recognize that, sooner or later, it will catch up with you. The best thing you can do is turn from that sin, run to Jesus, fall down at His feet, and ask for His mercy. But if you continue, you will one day discover that your sin will find you out.

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## The One Who Sees

You may be sure that your sin will find you out. Numbers 32:23

Today's Scripture & Insight: Numbers 32:16–24

"Oh no!" My wife's voice rang out when she stepped into the kitchen. The moment she did, our ninety-pound Labrador retriever "Max" bolted from the room.

Gone was the leg of lamb that had been sitting too close to the edge of the counter. Max had consumed it, leaving only an empty pan. He tried to hide under a bed. But only his head and shoulders fit. His uncovered rump and tail betrayed his whereabouts when I went to track him down.

"Oh, Max," I murmured, "Your 'sin' will find you out." The phrase was borrowed from Moses, when he admonished two tribes of Israel to be obedient to God and keep their promises. He told them: "But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

Sin may feel good for a moment, but it causes the ultimate pain of separation from God. Moses was reminding his people that God misses nothing. As one biblical writer put it, "Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13).

Though seeing all, our holy God lovingly draws us to confess our sin, repent of it (turn from it), and walk rightly with Him (1 John 1:9). May we follow Him in love today. By: James Banks

How does the truth that God sees everything we do and still loves us encourage you to turn from sin? In what practical ways can you respond to His love today?

Thank You for being "the God who sees me" (Genesis 16:13). I praise You that though You see both good and bad, You sent Your Son to save and set me free. Help me to walk in loving obedience. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## Catching Up With Us

When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning. —Psalm 32:3

Today's Scripture & Insight: Psalm 32:1-5

A pastor told this story on himself in his local newspaper. He was chatting with an older man to whom he had just been introduced. "So, you used to work for a utility company," the pastor said, naming the organization. "Sure did," the man responded. The pastor remarked that when he was a kid the cables from that company ran across his parents' property. "Where did you live?" the man asked. When the pastor told him, the man said, "I remember that property. I had a tough time keeping the cable warning signs up. Kids were always shooting them down." When the pastor's face flushed with embarrassment, the man said, "You were one of the shooters, weren't you?" And indeed he was.

The pastor labeled his confessional story:

**Be sure your signs will find you out,** a clever play on Moses' words in Numbers 32:23: **"Be sure your sin will find you out."**

Old wrongs have a way of catching up with us. And old sins that have not been dealt with can lead to serious consequences. As David laments in Psalm 32: "When I kept silent, my bones grew old." But confessing our wrong restores our fellowship with the Lord: "I acknowledged my sin to You . . . and You forgave the iniquity of my sin" (v.5). Through confession, we can enjoy God's



forgiveness. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, it's time to come clean with You.  
I've held on to \_\_\_\_\_ for too long.  
Thank You that this sin is under the blood of  
Christ. Restore me to fellowship with You.

Christians can erase from their memory what God has erased from the record.

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### **Charles Stanley - Consider the Consequences**

- SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Samuel 12:10–18
- KEY VERSE: Numbers 32:23

But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

The fundamental law of physics is this: for every action, there is an opposite and equal reaction. Just as universally applicable is this unchanging spiritual principle: for every sin, there are corresponding, continuing consequences. In other words, we reap what we sow.

Sin's most blinding deception is that we can avoid any ramifications. We think we can get away with immorality, indiscretion, or indecency without paying the consequences. Because our loving God understands the inevitable results of sin, He persistently seeks our holiness. Sin has a price. If you are thinking of violating the law of God, think of these sobering truths:

Grace does not cancel sin's consequences. God will forgive us when we sin. He will still love us and use us, but the damage will not always be erased. A one-night stand can yield a lifetime of regret; a moment of anger can wreak havoc for years. Sin's consequences affect others as well. Even the next generation can be adversely impacted by our unwise choices.

If you are tempted to disobey, consider the consequences. If you have sinned and you are suffering the aftereffects, turn to God with a repentant heart. He will restore you.

Dear Lord, keep me from sin and its consequences. Help me understand the ramifications of disobedience.

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### **Billy Graham - Head Back Home!**

You may be sure that your sin will find you out. NUMBERS 32:23 NIV

We don't need the Bible to tell us (as it does) that there can be pleasure in sin. We know this from our own experience. But the Bible also says that sin's pleasure is only for a season (Hebrews 11:25). Then it's over, leaving us bitter, and finally destroying us. A day of reckoning always comes. No one has ever committed a sin that he or she did not have to pay for.

In Luke 15 we read of a loving father and his son who learned this lesson the hard way. The boy had been reared in a wonderful home, with a father and mother who worshipped God. They loved their children and tried to raise them right. But this young man left home and wasted his inheritance on foolish and sinful living—and he paid the price. Eventually he found himself living in a pigpen and eating with the pigs. That is how low he sank . . . before he headed back home.

What sin do you need to leave behind? Repent and return to your Father today. He wants to welcome you home!

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### **David Jeremiah - PAYING THE PIPER**

Be sure your sin will find you out. NUMBERS 32:23

The great news of the Gospel is that we have a forgiving God. When we come to Him, open our hearts, and confess our sins, God does hear us and forgive us. He's just waiting for us to come and ask Him. God puts confessed sins behind His back as far as the east is from the west. He buries them in the deepest sea.

God forgets what He forgives. Yet there's a postscript: the Lord won't erase history. Some consequences may be set in motion while we are out of fellowship with God, and we must reap what we sow. Even when we have been restored to fellowship through the forgiveness process, sometimes we have to "pay the piper."

It is impossible to get away with sin. You can't do it. Numbers 32:23 says it this way: "Be sure your sin will find you out." Just as

surely as you can't get away with sin, you can't get away from God's love. No matter how evil your conduct, God loves you. The reason you have that hurt in your heart right now is because you're God's, and He doesn't want you out of fellowship with Him.

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### **Henry Morris - "Be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23)**

God has built certain unalterable principles into this world of ours, and not all man's ingenuity can escape the outworking of these principles. One of them is that you can't sin and get away with it.

Some of us learned this early when we swiped jam or other foods which left their tell-tale marks which mother easily discovered. But the truth applies to all of life, and is attested by every newspaper.

The poem "The Dream of Eugene Aram" is a remarkable illustration of the point. Thinking he could commit a "perfect crime" Aram murdered a man and threw his body into the river—"a sluggish water, black as ink, the depth was so extreme." The next morning he went down to the riverbank where he had committed the crime

And sought the black accursed pool,  
With a wild misgiving eye;  
And he saw the dead in the riverbed  
For the faithless stream was dry.

He tried to cover the body with a huge pile of leaves, but that night a great wind blew through the area, leaving the corpse plainly visible.

Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep,  
On land or sea, though it should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

Finally he buried his victim in a remote cave, but years later the skeleton was discovered; he was tried for the crime, and executed. His sin had found him out.

But there is another way in which sin catches up with us. E. Stanley Jones reminds us that "it registers itself in inner deterioration, in the inner hell of not being able to respect yourself, in compelling you to live underground in blind labyrinths."

And even if a man's sin could somehow remain undetected in this life, it will surely overtake him in the next. Unless that sin has been cleansed through the blood of Jesus, it will be brought to light in the Day of Judgment. Whether it be acts, thoughts, motives or intents; it will be charged against him and the penalty announced. That penalty, of course, is eternal death.

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### **SIN AND GUILT.**

The ancients used to make drinking-cups of the amethyst, supposing that they prevented drunkenness. But the blue "amethyst could not prevent the blues. The cup of sinful pleasure, no matter how beautiful, will not save from guilt and judgment. "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numb. 32:23).

Robert Neighbour - The Perfect Crime

But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out. Numbers 32:23

Nobody will ever know. We've done all we can do to cover our tracks. We've committed the perfect crime.

That's what King David thought he had done. All the men were away at battle. Quietly, he snuck Uriah's wife, Bathsheba into his house and committed adultery with her. Then he deceitfully sent her home to be with her husband who had been called in from battle. "Go spend some time with your wife," the king said. "You deserve it after a tough day at war."

The only complication was that Uriah refused to go home. He couldn't abandon his troops in the thick of battle. So, he was sent back to the front lines. Now, David was forced to commit another sin—murder—to conceal his first sin of adultery.

David discounted one important factor. God was there the entire time. He was watching. David forgot, "...the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth..." (2 Chronicles 16:9) A few months later, God sent Nathan, the prophet, to rebuke David and tell him of his punishment.

Nothing we do escapes the watchful eye of God. God reveals those secret sins that we've carefully covered up. It is both dangerous



and foolish to hide from God.

It may be a quick look at a bad magazine, a couple of dishonest dollars from the cash register at work, or an intentional "error" on your tax returns. Whatever it is, God knows and will not overlook secret sin.

Hurt not your conscience with any known sin. Samuel Rutherford

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## Sourdough Bread

Be sure your sin will find you out. —Numbers 32:23

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. —Luke 12:1

Today's Scripture: Luke 12:1-7

Sourdough bread became popular during the California Gold Rush of the mid-1800s. In the 1890s, it was a favorite during the great Gold Rush in Alaska. Prospectors would carry with them a small portion of sourdough mix that contained a natural yeast. It could then be used as a starter to make more of their favorite sourdough bread.

In the Bible, though, yeast or leaven can have a negative connotation. For example, in the New Testament, "leaven" is often referred to as a corrupting influence. This is why Jesus said: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1).

Hypocrites put on a show of righteousness while hiding sinful thoughts and behavior. Christ warned His disciples and us that secret sins will someday be exposed to full disclosure. He said, "There is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known" (v.2). Because of this, we are to reverentially fear God, to ask for His grace to forsake any sin, and to grow as authentic believers.

Yeast may be a blessing in the bakery, but it can also remind us to guard against the permeating influence of sin in our hearts. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The holiness of God demands A heart that's pure within, Yet grace unites with holiness To purge the heart from sin. —D. De Haan

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## Numbers 32:23 Our Daily Homily F B Meyer

Be sure your sin will find you out.

Sin is like the boomerang of the savage, it comes back on the hand that has launched it forth. The brethren accused Joseph of being a spy, and cast him into the pit; and on the same charge they were cast into prison. King David committed adultery and murder; so Absalom requited him. The Jews crucified the blessed Lord; and they were impaled around Jerusalem till room and wood for their crosses failed.

There is a Divine order in society. God has so constituted the world, that as man deals with his neighbour, so he is dealt with. The consequence does not always follow immediately. There is often a long interval between the lightning flash and the thunder-peal. The sentence against an evil work is not executed suddenly. But though God's mills grind slowly, they do grind, and to powder. It is impossible to deceive God; for it is his immutable law, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

When sin comes to find you out, like a sleuthhound on the track of the criminal, be sure that it finds you in Jesus. "That I maybe found in Him." Nothing will avail to intercept the awful execution of sin's vengeance, except the blood and righteousness of Jesus. Put Him between you and your sins, between you and your past, between you and the penalty of a broken law. Be sure that only when the blood of Jesus speaks for you through earth and heaven, there can be a cutting off of sin's terrible entail.

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## Collision Course

Be sure your sin will find you out. — Numbers 32:23

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:1-15

My wife and I were driving on an expressway when we saw a driver turn left into a median turnaround that was intended for emergency vehicles only. He was planning to make a U-turn and head back the other way.

Looking to his right, the driver waited for an opening in oncoming traffic, so he failed to notice that a police car was backing up toward him on his left. Finally seeing an opening in traffic, the U-turn driver pulled out and rammed into the back of the police car.

It's not unusual for us to think we can get away with doing something wrong. After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he too was focused on "getting away with it." But he was on a collision course with Nathan. His adultery, deceit, and murder "displeased the Lord" (2 Sam. 11:27), so when Nathan exposed David's grievous sin, the king was deeply remorseful. He confessed, repented, and received God's forgiveness. But the consequences of his sin never departed from his household (12:10).

If you've been trying to get away with something, remember that "your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). Turn yourself in to God. Don't hide. Instead, seek His gracious forgiveness. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God knows all you've thought or done—  
From Him you cannot hide;  
Confess to Him and He'll forgive  
Through Christ the crucified.  
—Hess

We have to face our sins before we can put them behind us.

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## What's The Trouble?

Be sure your sin will find you out. — Numbers 32:23

Today's Scripture: Joshua 7:1-13

There was something wrong with my lawn. I couldn't see what the trouble was, but I knew something was causing damage.

After investigating, I discovered the problem: moles. Those voracious little bug-eaters were crawling around just under the surface of my previously well-groomed lawn looking for food and wreaking havoc on my grass.

The children of Israel also had a problem with a hidden cause (Josh. 7). They were experiencing trouble, and they couldn't figure out why. There was something hidden from their view that was causing serious damage.

The trouble became noticeable when Joshua sent 3,000 troops to attack Ai. Although that should have been a sufficient army to defeat Ai's small force, the opposite happened. Ai routed the Israelites, killing 36 of them and chasing them back where they came from. Joshua had no idea why this trouble had come. Then God explained the hidden problem: One of his men, Achan, had violated a clear command and had stolen some "accursed things" from Jericho (Josh. 7:11). Only when that hidden sin was discovered and taken care of could Israel have victory.

Hidden sin does great damage. We need to bring it to the surface and deal with it—or face certain defeat. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, I don't want anything in my life to hinder my fellowship with You. You know what's in my heart. Reveal any areas of my life that are not pleasing to You and forgive me. Amen.

Confession to God ensures forgiveness.

**Numbers 32:24 "Build yourselves cities for your little ones, and sheepfolds for your sheep, and do what you have promised."**

- Nu 32:16,34-42
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**BUILD YOUR CITIES  
KEEP YOUR WORD**

**Build yourselves cities for your little ones, and sheepfolds for your sheep, and do what you have promised**- Literally "that which has proceeded out of your mouth!"

**Rashi** (Jewish commentator) on **do what you have promised**. - What you promised to the One on high—that you will cross over and fight until the land has been subdued and apportioned.—For Moses had demanded only that they stay for the seven years that it took the land to be conquered, but they had voluntarily agreed to stay for the additional seven years it took to be apportioned (NOT EVERYONE AGREES THEY WOULD STAY FOR THE APPORTIONING but see Dt 3:18–20, Josh 22:1-9). And they fulfilled this promise.

**Numbers 32:25 The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, "Your servants will do just as my lord commands.**

- Jos 1:13,14
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GADITES AND REUBENITES AGREE TO OBEY**

**The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, "Your servants will do just as my lord commands-** They now acknowledge Moses' leadership with the derential "**your servants**." Servants obey and that is what they say they will do. They also refer to Moses as "**my lord** (['adon](#))," again expressing their [deference](#) to him.

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Numbers 32:1-42

We your servants will do as our lord commands. - Numbers 32:25

### TODAY IN THE WORD

In the second half of Numbers we have seen plenty of dissatisfaction from the people of Israel. Even Moses was fed up with the complaining of the Israelites. As his life was drawing to a close, he had no patience for any more unfaithfulness. So when the tribes of Reuben and Gad requested to take their homes before crossing the Jordan, he assumed the worst. As it turned out, at least in this instance, these tribes had their hearts in the right place. They were actually satisfied with what they already saw, and God honored their request.

Moses' reaction is understandable given what he has gone through with Israel. After forty years of wandering and waiting to enter Canaan, a request to not enter the land would have been foolish. Similarly, if Reuben and Gad failed to fight alongside their brother tribes, it would have constituted treachery. But the tribes were merely asking the Lord to provide, not complaining for what they didn't have. And they did prove faithful to their commitment to fight throughout the campaign in Canaan.

For Reuben, Gad, and a segment of Manasseh, the battle began early. They drove out the enemy, an important requirement for faithfully claiming the land. They even changed the names of the cities to remove the stigma of false gods as well as the people who worshiped them.

What Moses originally suspected as a sinful act became a breath of fresh air in the book of Numbers. Where others had complained, these tribes asked from the Lord. Where others served their own interests, these tribes were willing to leave their families in order to serve their brothers. And where others were drawn to false gods and foreign worship, these tribes drove out the enemy. The key difference was faith. These tribes trusted the Lord to give generously to meet their needs, and that faith produced obedience in their hearts and deeds.

### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Even when Israel seemed desperate or disappointing, God was always in complete control. He doesn't get overwhelmed by anything, even disobedience. Remember that as your faithfulness waivers or your situation worsens, God's sovereignty remains. When you feel like a failure or threatened by anything at all, know that God's grace is sufficient and His faithfulness is steadfast. Your circumstances will change, but your God will not.

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**Numbers 32:26 "Our little ones, our wives, our livestock and all our cattle shall remain there in the cities of Gilead;**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Hills of Gilead

Our little ones, our wives, our livestock and all our cattle shall remain there in [the cities of Gilead](#) - Gilead is the land east of the Jordan River.

**Numbers 32:27 while your servants, everyone who is armed for war, will cross over in the presence of the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."**

- **servants:** Jos 4:12
- **armed:** Nu 32:17 2Co 10:4,5 Eph 6:10-18 2Ti 4:7,8
- **as my lord:** Nu 11:28 12:11 36:2
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **CROSSING OVER IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD**

**while your servants** (their [deference](#)), **everyone who is armed for war, will cross over in the presence of the LORD to battle, just as my lord says** - The phrase in the presence of is repeated 3 times in this section (Nu 32:27, 29, 32) and clearly implies He is with them when they go to battle and they are confident in that truth.

**THOUGHT** - When we begin our day and **cross over** from the relative safety of our safe home into the "land of Canaan", this godless, immoral world, do we do so in full confidence that it is in **the presence of the LORD**. And don't be deceived, because when you **cross over**, you are entering the battle field (of course you have already been engaged in warfare from the moment you opened your eyes each morning!), and you need to remember David's words that **"the battle is the LORD'S"** (1 Sa 17:47). That does not mean we are to be passive participants, but that we are to actively fight not relying on our power, but on His infinite power!

**UBS** - The Gadites and Reubenites show their commitment to the agreement by adopting the theological language used by Moses in verses 20–21. As in verse 21, GNT renders before the LORD as "under the LORD's command."

**Numbers 32:28 So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' households of the tribes of the sons of Israel.**

- Jos 1:13
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **MOSES COMMUNICATES WITH THE OTHER LEADERS OF ISRAEL**

**So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' households of the tribes of the sons of Israel** - Since they had apparently spoken privately to Moses, Moses now

declared what he had arranged with them and so he summons as witnesses the same group that will divide the land (cf Nu 34:16-29). Eleazar and Joshua were to make sure they kept their word.

**Numbers 32:29** Moses said to them, "If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, everyone who is armed for battle, will cross with you over the Jordan in the presence of the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession;

- Nu 32:20-23
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### MOSES GIVES THE "OKAY" FOR THE 2.5 TRIBES

**Moses said to them** - He is speaking to **Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' households of the tribes** - The stipulations of the agreement are repeated in their hearing, so that the agreement (covenant) may be made finalized. Again, this is much of what has been discussed in Nu 32:20-23.

**If** - While Moses does give the "okay," it is still a conditional "okay!" Partaking of God's promises call for obedience.

**The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, everyone who is armed for battle**(THE SOLDIERS, NOT WIVES OR CHILDREN), **will cross with you over the Jordan in the presence of the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them [the cities of Gilead](#) (see [verdant hills of Gilead](#) = land east of the Jordan River) for a possession** - Notice that Moses "bows out" so to speak, for he will be dead when these events occur. He transfers the responsibility to Eleazar, Joshua and the tribal leaders to finalize the giving the land of Gilead to the tribes of Gad and Reuben.

Prior to Israel crossing over the Jordan to battle, Joshua reminds the Gadites and the Reubenites of their commitment...

(Joshua 1:13-18) Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God gives you rest and will give you this land.' 14 "Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, **all your valiant warriors**, and shall help them, 15 until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, **and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them.** Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise." 16 (THEY GIVE A SOUND SPIRITUAL ANSWER TO JOSHUA) They answered Joshua, saying, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 "Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses. 18 "Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous."

**Numbers 32:30** but if they will not cross over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan."

NET Numbers 32:30 But if they do not cross over with you armed, they must receive possessions among you in Canaan."

NLT Numbers 32:30 But if they refuse to arm themselves and cross over with you, then they must accept land with the rest of you in the land of Canaan."

ESV Numbers 32:30 However, if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan."

NIV Numbers 32:30 But if they do not cross over with you armed, they must accept their possession with you in Canaan."

- Jos 22:19
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REFUSAL TO GO YOU WILL HAVE NO CHOICE

**But if** - Here is the second conditional statement. Moses repeats the warning in summary form (cf Nu 32:23).

**They will not cross over with you armed** - NLT = " if they refuse to arm themselves and cross over with you."

**They shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan** - NLT "then they must accept land with the rest of you in the land of Canaan." So even if they 2.5 tribes fail to cross over and fight the Canaanites, their PUNISHMENT would be that they would receive land in the promised land but not in the [the cities of Gilead](#). Is this not a perfect illustration of undeserved favor or grace. So the 2.5 tribes would not receive some of the promised land because they deserved it but ultimately because Yahweh was faithful to His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the patriarchs! One writer suggests that they would be given what is left over after the 9.5 tribes had received their land allotments. The German Common Language translation reads "then they must content themselves with a piece of [left-over] land among you [in Canaan]".

One Jewish Rabbi **IBN EZRA** explains "They shall receive holdings among you. He was speaking euphemistically. What he meant was: "If they do not cross over with you, drag them over by force and give them a holding on your side." Or perhaps Moses is simply saying, "They shall receive holdings among you" if they change their minds and decide to settle on that side. The o of noḥazu reflects a ם rather than an ן; remember that ן, ן, ן, and ם are interchangeable.

Another Jewish Rabbi **NAHMANIDES** says "But if they do not cross over with you as shock-troops, they shall receive holdings among you in the land of Canaan. If they do not wish to cross over with you, take all this land from them, expel their wives and children, and give them their holding in the land of Canaan—whenever they decide to cross over and conquer it for themselves. And see Ibn Ezra's comment about dragging them over by force.

**Numbers 32:31 The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do.**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do**

Although I am not absolutely certain, from the context, this statement seems to be Moses telling the leaders of Israel what the Gadites and Reubenites had agreed to. It could also be them repeating their willingness to obey. In Nu 32:25 they had stated it more to Moses "Your servants **will do** just as my **lord** (MOSES) commands."

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### Ian Paisley - "As" and "so" Obedience

"As the Lord has said unto His servants so we will do." Numbers 32:31

To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams (1 Sa 15:22). Obedience is to follow Christ's example, for He in His mediatorial capacity learned obedience by the things which He suffered. The obedience affirmed in our text resulted from

#### Petition

The children of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh were cattlemen. Here on the east of Jordan they had found the cattle country. They therefore petitioned Moses to give their lot of inheritance on the eastside of Jordan. Moses acceded to their request on the condition that their warriors all marched with the rest of the tribes to the conquest of the promised land west of Jordan.

The answer to prayer spurred the men of Gideon, Reuben and Gad to cry out, "As the Lord has said so we will do", May it be so with us today and every day. This obedience also resulted from:

#### Possession

They had their prayer answered immediately and entered into possession right away. They built their cities, their sheep and cattle folds, and settled their families in the heritage allotted to them. That possession spurred them to obedience. The goodness of God in a ready answer to prayer should motivate us to further obey the good word of a God who daily loadeth us with benefits. This obedience was also the direct result of

#### Promise

God promised them even greater things. Protection for their families at home and protection for themselves in the battle and prosperity for both, was the promise of God to the obedient. All that God promised He totally and absolutely fulfilled. His promises should encourage us today in wholehearted obedience.

"But we never can prove the delights of His love Until all on the altar we lay, For the favour He shews And the joy He bestows Are for them who will Trust and obey."

**Numbers 32:32 "We ourselves will cross over armed in the presence of the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us across the Jordan."**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**We ourselves will cross over** (cross the Jordan) **armed in the presence of the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us across the Jordan** - See comment on v31

**Numbers 32:33 So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan, the land with its cities with their territories, the cities of the surrounding land.**

- **Moses:** Nu 32:1 De 3:12-17 29:8 Jos 12:6 13:8-14 22:4
- **half the:** Nu 34:14 1Ch 5:18 12:31 26:32
- **the kingdom:** Nu 21:23-35 De 2:30-33 3:1-8 Ps 135:10,11 136:18-21
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH INCLUDED

**So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh-** This is the first indication that part of Manasseh was also to receive their inheritance east of the Jordan (cf. Josh. 17:1-18). Why were they not mentioned at the beginning? The text does not give an obvious answer.

This tribe would prove a problem for all 2.5 tribes on the east of the Jordan (the time was circa 722BC some 700 years after they settled the land). And so we read

1 Chr. 5:23 Now the **sons of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land**; from Bashan to Baal-hermon and Senir and Mount Hermon they were numerous. 24 These were the heads of their fathers' households, even Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah and Jahdiel, mighty men of valor, famous men, heads of their fathers' households. 25 But **they acted treacherously against the God of their fathers and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them.** 26 So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, **king of Assyria**, even the spirit of **Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria**, and he carried them away into exile, namely **the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh**, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara and to the river of Gozan, to this day.

**The kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites** (Nu 21:23-32+) **and the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan** (Nu 21:33-35+), **the land with its cities with their territories, the cities of the surrounding land** - These were the lands that all the nation had played a part in conquering. It would only be fair for the 2.5 tribes to join the other 9.5 tribes as they sought to conquer the land of Canaan.

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[Brian Bell](#) - This is an excellent summary of this chapter!

1. **THE RESULTS!** (33-42)
2. At 1st Moses was **indignant**, but now after their explanation, **he modifies his wrath** & grants their request.
  1. Their **cattle** kept them on the wrong side of the river of separation.
3. **Results:**
  1. God had promised them....**THE LAND!** [Israel's place was inside Canaan]
  2. They were led by **sight** (Nu 32:1, cf 2 Cor 5:7) [Who else saw the land good for grazing? Lot!] [It was an eye-choice!]



3. They sought **their own things** & not the things of God [They despised their inherit]
  4. These 2.5 tribes never entered the **national life** as did those on the other side
  5. They were far from the **religious life**. 1st at Shiloh, then at Jerusalem.
  6. When **invasions** came, it came upon them first, as they were **isolated & exposed**. Sweeping **them** & their **cattle** into captivity.
    1. Often in later centuries the other tribes had to come to their rescue. (1 Sam 11:1-15; 1 Kings 22:3)
  7. They were the first to be swept away with **idolatry**.
  8. In **Deborah's great song**, in Judges 5:1-31, Reuben is rebuked for "sitting among the sheepfolds, to hear the pipings for the flocks" (read Jdg 5:15-16)
    1. This was against **Jabon** king of Canaan & his commander **Sisera** (Jdg 4:2), who gets the tent peg through his head by **Jael** Jdg 4:21.
  9. When the land was fully conquered, the 2.5 tribes had to **put up an altar** to let people know "*they belonged to Israel*". (Joshua 22:10 altar)
    1. Joshua 22...this blew up w/ misunderstandings, the other tribes were ready to go to war over it (Josh 22:12). No, no, it is called *the Altar of Witness* (Joshua 22:34).
  10. Lastly, who remained in this land that we find in the NT? The [Gadarenes](#)! Mark 5
- 4. Application to us today:**
5. The 3 tribes east of the Jordan River have been compared to **worldly believers** today.
    1. Those who have chosen to **'live on the wrong side of the cross'** -- the river.
    2. They have no desire to share in the **crucifixion** of the **self-life**.
      1. (Nu 32:16) We just want to provide for our **livelihood** & our **little ones**.
        1. What's wrong with that? Isn't that noble? - Yes, but not at the expense of disobeying God (Who of course would have provided both for them).
        2. **When material gain, not the glory of God, govern our decisions, we will make the wrong decisions**
          1. Read - Ps.47:1-4 "He will choose our inheritance for us!"
  6. Some people choose to live **"on the border"** of God's blessing.
    1. They make their decisions on the basis of **material gain** not **special blessing**.
    2. The 2.5 tribes did not claim their inheritance in Canaan, though they were very close to it.
  7. We must beware of **the cares of this world** if we are **poor**, & of **the deceitfulness of riches** if we are **rich**.
    1. Mt.16:26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:34-38+)
  8. **Beware of falling short of your proper position; your proper portion; of being content with things of this world; of taking any stand short of death and resurrection (our true & spiritual Jordan).**
    1. These are **1/2 & 1/2 Christians** (ok for milk, not for believers) (cf Heb 5:11-14).
  9. **What great principle with regard to sin & consequences is expressed in Nu 32:23?**
    1. **What you sow that you shall reap**. Gal 6:7,8+
  10. **How does compromise occur?** [Sherman & Hendricks have a 7-step process that, if left unrecognized, could lead to moral compromise]
    1. **A failure to** commit ahead of time to do the right thing.
    2. **Underestimating evil** and flirting with dangerous temptations, thus being exposed to far more powerful evils.
    3. **A failure to** recognize the numerous forms of compromise lurking at every corner of life.
    4. **A failure to** recognize the smooth flatteries and enticing fantasies of temptations.
    5. **Succumbing to** slick rationalizations.
    6. **A sudden**, deliberate choice to give in to sin.
    7. **A failure to** consider the costly consequences of sin.
  11. **Amaziah** was a good king. Yet in 2 Kings 14:3, we are told why Amaziah did not experience the **full blessing of the Lord**. The text says, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like **David**."
    1. He followed the example of his father **Joash** and failed to put a stop to the semipagan worship conducted on hills throughout the land.
    2. He simply didn't aim high enough!
    3. Ps.68:19 Blessed be the Lord, **Who daily loads us with benefits**, The God of our salvation! Selah. [Don't miss those daily benefits]
  12. **"Compromise** is but the sacrifice of one **right** or **good** in the hope of retaining another - too often ending in the loss of both."

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**Question:** [Who was Manasseh in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** There are two historically significant men named Manasseh in the Bible. [King Manasseh](#), the son of King Hezekiah; and



Manasseh, Joseph's firstborn son. This article will deal with Joseph's son, [Joseph](#), Jacob's eleventh son, was sold into slavery and, through the providence of God, ended up as the vizier of Egypt. In that land, he married Asenath, daughter of Potiphara, priest of On (Genesis 41:50). Asenath was the mother of Manasseh.

Manasseh's name literally means "making forgetful"; Joseph said he chose that name "because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household" (Genesis 41:51). Joseph had a new life in Egypt and a new family.

Joseph and Asenath had a second son, Ephraim. Later, Joseph's father, Jacob, and Joseph's brothers and their families moved to Egypt to escape a famine. When Jacob was about to die, Joseph brought his sons to him for a patriarchal blessing. Jacob basically adopted the boys as his own sons (Genesis 48:5) so that they would share in his inheritance. Manasseh and Ephraim are among the twelve tribes of Israel that inherited territory in the Promised Land.

Joseph intended for Jacob to bless Manasseh more than Ephraim, since Manasseh was the firstborn and the customary recipient of the [birthright](#). However, Jacob chose to give Ephraim the greater blessing—even though Joseph objected. Jacob said, "[Manasseh] too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations" (Genesis 48:19). These words came to pass much later, when Moses took a census of all the children of Israel. Manasseh had 32,200 descendants who were age 20 and over and able to go to war, and Ephraim had 40,500 (Numbers 1:32–35). From then on, the tribe of Ephraim, the younger, is almost always listed before that of [Manasseh](#), the older (see Numbers 2:18–20). [GotQuestions.org](#)

### Numbers 32:34 The sons of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer,

- **Dibon:** Nu 32:3 21:20 33:45,46
- **Aroer:** De 2:36 Isa 17:2
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The sons of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer** - See descriptions below. The Gadites responded to Moses' "okay," by building towns, which they would need to house their families while they went to battle. And as stated elsewhere, they may have been in battle for as long as 7 years (and possibly longer if they stayed for the apportioning of the land).

It is worth noting that when the time for battle arrived, not all of the Reubenites and Gadites were required (this does not seem to be disobedience but at the discretion of Joshua) so that about 40,000 men equipped for war crossed over for battle before the LORD (Joshua 4:12-13). This number is less than half of the total number of their available warriors and would suggest that the other half remained on the eastern side of the Jordan to protect the families from the inhabitants of the land. It is notable that these 40,000 were in the vanguard and led the crossing into enemy territory.

**Dibon** - Place name possibly meaning, "pining away" or "fence of tubes." Capital city of Moab captured by Moses (Numbers 21:21-31). **Gad and Reuben** asked for it as their tribal territory (Numbers 32:3). **Gad** took control and fortified Dibon (Numbers 32:34). It thus became known as **Dibon-gad** and was one of Israel's camping spots east of the Jordan (Numbers 33:45-46). Joshua reported that Moses gave Dibon to the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:9 ,Joshua 13:9,13:17). In pronouncing judgment on Moab, Isaiah described the religious mourning at the worship place in Dibon (Isaiah 15:2), showing that **Moab had gained control of Dibon by about 730 B.C. The Moabite stone of King Mesha, discovered in Dibon, shows that Moab controlled Dibon about 850 B.C.** About 700 B.C. Jeremiah again announced destruction for Moab and Dibon (Jeremiah 48:18-22). ([Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

**Dibon** - 11v - Num. 21:30; Num. 32:3; Num. 32:34; Num. 33:45; Num. 33:46; Jos. 13:9; Jos. 13:17; Neh. 11:25; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:18; Jer. 48:22

**Ataroth** - Place name meaning, "crowns." Town desired and built up by tribe of Gad (Numbers 32:3 ,Numbers 32:3,32:34 ). Mesha, king of Moab, about 830 B.C. claims he captured Ataroth but admits it belonged to Gad "from of old" and had been built by an Israelite king. It is located at modern Khirbet Attarus, eight miles northwest of Dibon and eight miles east of the Dead Sea. ([Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

**Aroer** - City on north rim of [Arnon Gorge](#) east of Dead Sea on southern boundary of territory Israel claimed east of the Jordan River (Joshua 13:9 ). It figured in territorial claims of Reuben (Joshua 13:16 ), though the tribe of Gad originally built it (Numbers 32:34). Compare Deuteronomy 3:12 . [Sihon](#), king of the Amorites, ruled it prior to Israel's conquest (Deuteronomy 4:48; Joshua 12:2). Israel claimed a three hundred year history in the area (Judges 11:26 ). **Jehu's sins brought God's punishment on Israel, including the loss of Aroer to Hazael of Damascus (about 840 B.C.)** (2 Kings 10:33 ). Compare Isaiah 17:2 . Jeremiah asked Aroer to witness God's coming judgment on Moab (Jeremiah 48:19). **The Moabites had gained control of Aroer under King**

**Mesha, as his inscription on the Moabite Stone witnesses (about 850 B.C.).** Spanish excavations show Aroer to have been more a border fortress than a major city. It is located at Khirbet Arair two and one-half miles east of the highway along the [Arnon River](#). ([Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

#### **Numbers 32:35 and Atroth-shophan and Jazer and Jogbehah,**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and [Atroth-shophan](#) and [Jazer](#) and [Jogbehah](#)

#### **Numbers 32:36 and Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran as fortified cities, and sheepfolds for sheep.**

- fenced cities: Nu 32:24
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and [Beth-nimrah](#) and [Beth-haran](#) as fortified cities, and [sheepfolds](#) for sheep.

Bethnimrah: Probably the same as Nimrim in Jer 48:34, and the Bethnabris mentioned by Eusebius, five miles north from Livias. Burckhardt says, that "in the valley of the Jordan, south of Abou Obeida, are the ruins of Nemrim, probably the Beth-nimrah of the Scriptures." Nu 32:3, Nimrah

#### **Numbers 32:37 The sons of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kiriathaim,**

- Heshbon: Nu 32:3 21:27 Isa 15:4
- Elealeh: Elealeh is placed, by Eusebius, a mile from Heshbon. It is now called El Aal, "the high," and is situated on a hill.
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The sons of Reuben built [Heshbon](#) and [Elealeh](#) and [Kiriathaim](#),

#### **Numbers 32:38 and Nebo and Baal-meon--their names being changed--and Sibmah, and they gave other names to the cities which they built.**

- Nebo: Isa 46:1
- Baal meon: This town is placed, by Eusebius and Jerome, nine miles from Heshbon, at the foot of mount Abarim. Nu 22:41
- gave other names unto the cities: Heb. they called by names the names of the cities, Nu 32:3 Ge 26:18 Ex 23:13 Jos 23:7 Ps 16:4 Isa 46:1
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and [Nebo](#) and [Baal-meon](#)--their names being changed--and [Sibmah](#), and they gave other names to the cities which they built - As Rashi noted, some of these cities bore names associated with pagan gods. The Israelites were impelled to rename these cities, so that the pagan gods were not mentioned when reading the sacred text. It is not clear how many names this phrase refers to in Hebrew, which is literally "name being changed."

Here is a rendering - "The tribe of Reuben rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, 38 Sibmah, as well as the towns that used to be known as Nebo and Baal-Meon. They renamed all those places."

**John Trapp** on **their names being changed** - Out of detestation of those idols, Baal, Nebo, &c. {see Ex 23:13 Ps 16:4 Isa 46:1} Heathenish gods should not be so far honoured as to be heard of out of Christian mouths.

**RASHI** - Nebo, Baal-meon—some names being changed. Nebo and Baal-meon were the names of idols, for the Amorites used to name their towns after their idols. The Reubenites, however, changed them to other names

**NAHMANIDES** Nebo, Baal-meon—some names being changed. See Rashi's comment. But they gave their own names to towns

that they rebuilt—all the towns they rebuilt, not just these two. Besides, what would be the point of recording the idolatrous names and then saying that they had been changed, without telling us the new, wholesome names? In fact, Scripture ordinarily does give us the new names when names are changed, as in Nu 32:41–42; see also Josh. 14:15; 15:15, and Josh 19:47. My guess is that the names given here were the Moabite names; remember that Sihon had captured these towns from Moab; see Nu 21:30. (You will find some of the same names in the oracles against Moab in Jeremiah 48 and Isaiah 15–16, for Moab had recaptured them after King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria captured Gilead and deported the Gadites and the Reubenites to Assyria; see 2 Kings 15:29.) To make a long story short, it was the Amorites who changed the names of these towns. The Gadites and the Reubenites simply changed them back to “their own” original, Moabite names. These were the names they knew them by—or perhaps they wanted to embarrass Moab. It may well be, as the Sages say, that the Amorites named their towns after their idols. But we do not find Joshua changing any of the names of the towns that he conquered.

**Numbers 32:39 The sons of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it.**

- Nu 26:29 Ge 50:23 Jos 17:1
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The sons of [Machir](#) the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it- **Dispossessed** is the Hebrew verb [yarash](#) which means to take possession or take away the possession from someone. The **Septuagint** translates [yarash](#) with a "stronger" verb [apollumi](#) which means to destroy, kill or bring to ruin. This would suggest that the sons of Machir did not just run them out of town, but put them out of their misery so to speak!

**Machir** - Personal name meaning “sold.” 1. Oldest son of Manasseh and grandson of Joseph (Joshua 17:1 ). He was the father of Gilead (Joshua 17:1 ), Peresh, and Sheresh (1 Chronicles 7:16 ), and a daughter whose name is not given (1 Chronicles 2:21 ). He had a brother named Asriel (1 Chronicles 7:14 ) and a wife named Maacah (1 Chronicles 7:16 ). Machir was the head of the family called the Machirites (Numbers 26:29 ). Apparently Machir along with his family had a reputation for being expert warriors (Joshua 17:1 ). “Because he was a man of war,” Machir was allotted the territory of Bashan and Gilead, east of the Jordan (Joshua 17:1 ). Apparently the territory of the Machirites started at the site of Mahanaim, on the Jabbok River, extended northward, and included the region around the Yarmuk River (Joshua 13:29-31 ).

**Numbers 32:40 So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he lived in it.**

- De 3:13-15 Jos 13:29-31 17:1
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he lived in it** - One would think that Machir per se would not be alive if he was of the first generation out of Egypt.

**NAHMANIDES** Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of Manasseh. That is, to the Machirite clan; according to v. 39, it was Machir’s descendants who captured it. (The same applies to Deut. 3:15.) All the tribes are referred to in this way, in honor of the great men whose descendants they were. The holding is given to Ephraim (and so forth)—not to the tribe of Ephraim. Josh. 17:1 does refer to “the tribe of Manasseh,” out of respect. For all the men of this tribe were valiant warriors; they in fact conquered Gilead on their own.

**Numbers 32:41 Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its towns, and called them Havvoth-jair.**

- Jair: De 3:14 Jos 13:30 1Ch 2:21-23
- Havothjair: Jud 10:4 1Ki 4:13
- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its towns, and called them [Havvoth-jair](#).**

**Jair** - Son, i.e. descendant of Manasseh ( Numbers 32:41; Deuteronomy 3:14; Joshua 13:30; 1 Kings 4:13 :1 1 Kings 2:22 f).

According to 1 Chronicles 2:21 f he was the son of Segub, son of Hezron, a descendant of Judah, who married the daughter of Machir, son of Manasseh. He was thus descended both from Judah and Manasseh. At the time of the conquest he distinguished himself by taking the tent-villages HAVVOTH-JAIR. The accounts of his exploit are difficult to harmonize (see *ICC* on above passages). Some would identify him with the Jair of Judges 10:3 , holding that Manasseh's settlement in Northern Gilead and Bashan took place, not before Israel's passage of the Jordan, but after the settlement of the tribe on the West.

**Numbers 32:42 Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and called it Nobah after his own name.**

- Numbers 32 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Nobah went and took [Kenath](#) and its villages, and called it [Nobah](#) after his own name.** - See [Nobah - the Man and the Place](#).