

Numbers Chapter 32-35 The Transjordan Tribes and Allocation of the Land

The Request of the Tribes of Reuben and Gad

After Israel journeyed around Edom, became discouraged and faced discipline by fiery serpents, and finally approached the Promised Land from the east, the kings of the territories around Jazer— that is, east of the Jordan and north of Moab— came out and fought against Israel. They were defeated and Israel captured their lands. Numbers 21:21-26 & 31-35

Read Numbers 32:1-5

The tribes of Reuben and Gad request to live in the land seized east of the Jordan. What do you think of their request? What might have motivated it?

Read Numbers 32:6-15

Moses summarizes the episode from Numbers 13, when the spies' reports discouraged the people of Israel. Can you understand Moses' reaction to the request from Reuben and Gad?

Read Numbers 32:16-19

How does the proposal of the tribes of Reuben and Gad satisfy Moses' concern?

Read Numbers 32:20-26

We learn from the book of Joshua that Reuben and Gad fulfill this promise. They fight alongside the rest of Israel until the Promised Land is conquered and then return to their land east of the Jordan. Yet they did not take hold of the promise that work entitled them to receive. What about their choice is unsatisfactory?

For us, just as the salvation from slavery in Egypt represents our salvation from the slavery of sin, the Israelites' crossing the river Jordan represents our entry into the spiritual rest of faith and obedience. Psalm 27:14; Hebrews 3:16-4:1; Hebrews 10:35-39

In what ways do we also stop short, and settle for less than the full promise of the restored relationship with God?

How can we instead enter into the full life promised to us in Christ?

Romans 12:2: _____

Galatians 5:16-25 _____

1 Timothy 6:6-12 _____

The Log of the Journey and the Law of Possession of the Land

Read Numbers 33:1-2

In this chapter, Moses recounts the journey taken by Israel from Egypt to Canaan.

Read Numbers 33:50-56

Why is it crucial that Israel drive out or destroy all the inhabitants of the land?

What warning does God give to Israel?

Numbers 34 describes the borders of the land given to Israel and lists the tribal chiefs by name.

The Cities of the Levites

Read Numbers 35:1-8

The Levites are devoted to service in the temple and do not receive a portion of the land. Therefore, they are given cities (villages), in which to live, and land for grazing the livestock given to them by the people.

Read Numbers 35:9-13

The law established that the intentional murder must be put to death. The one guilty of accidental manslaughter, however, must merely be exiled into one of the six cities of refuge. If found guilty of manslaughter he would be confined to the city of refuge until the death of the high priest (Num 35:16-30).

Read Numbers 35:31-34

Here, God explains the reason that “ransom” or money payment, will not atone for spilled blood. It is the same reason that the people must utterly destroy or drive out the inhabitants of the land. The land has been defiled by the Canaanites, and is being cleansed to be a holy place for God to dwell. The people must keep it, and themselves, holy.