

## *Numbers Chapter 32*

---

V: 1-5 The nation of Israel is camped out on the East side of the Jordan River in the area of Gilead. In fact they have just vanquished the Midianites and most if not all the area East of the Jordan.

- They are more or less headed into the promised land West of the Jordan River, into the land of Canaan.
- The tribes of Reuben and Gad have lots of cattle, and while waiting to enter into the promised land they start to get comfortable, noting that where they are at the moment isn't such a bad place, in fact it's pretty good for raising cattle.
- The question is why bother going over to the other side? Why not just stay here?
- There are some issues here, but one thing that I do like is the fact that they are asking for permission as opposed to saying this is what we're going to do, or in some other way rebelling against God regarding the land.

V: 6-15 Moses is concerned that this is going to be a repeat of the earlier sin of not wanting to go into the promise land because of their lack of faith and what might result as before.

- Moses points out that people are either encouraged or discouraged in the things of the Lord by our behavior – our actions have an impact on those around us.

V: 15 **James 1:17** “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

**Hebrews 13:8** “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

- These verses speak to the immutability of God, God doesn't change.
- Moses is pretty much saying that God hasn't changed and that if we commit the same sin of disbelief, He will again judge His people in the same way, and this generation would be wiped out just as the last one was.

V: 16-19 The leaders of Reuben and Gad clarify to Moses their intent. They won't sit idly by while the other tribes go to war.

- They'll set their wives and children up – and they themselves will go out armed for war to help the other tribes take their inheritance, after that they will rejoin their families in Gilead which will be their inheritance.

V: 20-22 Moses tells them that if they keep their word they will be guiltless before the Lord and before the children of Israel.

V: 23 But if you don't keep your word, then you are guilty, and be sure that your sin will find you out.

- There is a truth that we are all aware of, that is a constant in the Bible:  
**Romans 6:23** "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- Often times people will seemingly get away with their respective sin for a season. Often times because God is gracious and does not immediately judge us for our sin we infer God's approval, or that somehow we're the exception – that God would wink or nod at our sin.
- Eventually those chickens come home to roost.

**Hebrews 4:13** "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

- A child of God will not be allowed to get away with sin, it seems to always come out, to be discovered – that there would be opportunity for repentance and restoration.
- Moses is speaking from experience: When he killed the Egyptian, he didn't think anyone saw his actions – but God did – and he was discovered.

**Galatians 6:7-8** "7Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8For 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."

- Ultimately our sin will find us out, if not now, then certainly later.

**Revelation 20:11-12** "11And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

- Praise the Lord that Jesus died to blot out our sins, to pay the price, to take our penalty upon Himself – otherwise we would face that judgment.
- Because He has washed us in His blood we stand justified, cleansed, and pure before God!

V: 24-27 Build your cities and your sheep folds – do those things you said you would do.

- Maybe this is why God devoted a chapter (Ch. 30) on keeping our vows.

V: 28 Moses commands both Joshua and Eleazar regarding the children of Reuben and Gad – because he knows that he won't be there to see the end of it.

- Moses knows that he will soon be gathered to his fathers before the children enter into the promise land – he believes God's word.

**Joshua 24:15** “And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you and not one thing hath failed thereof.”

V: 29-32 “If” they do what they said, then give them Gilead, the land on this side of the Jordan. If not, then their inheritance will be in the land of Canaan like the rest of Israel.

- Moses has learned to trust the word of God, but he's not too sure about the word of man.
- Moses has heard their words, now he's waiting to see if they will follow through.
- The tribes of Gad & Reuben affirm that they will do as they said.

V: 33 Moses gives Gad, Reuben, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan – all the land East of the Jordan – Gilead.

V: 34-42 So they went out and built their cities, took over some – changing their names – which makes it difficult to find on a map.

- Nobah took Kenath and the villages and area around it – naming it after himself... His name means “howling” or “barking”.
- The question asked earlier is why bother going over to the other side? Why not just stay here? Which is what the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and not the ½ tribe of Manasseh want to do.

1. This isn't what God wanted for them, this isn't the land of promise – they are settling for less than God's best for them.

2. This compromise in God's perfect will for them would eventually lead to other compromises.
3. Many years later Jesus would travel across the Sea of Galilee to a place called Gadara, the land of the Gadarenes, named after the inhabitants of the land, descendants of Gad.
4. Jesus would minister to the demoniacs, demon possessed men who would be delivered, the demons being allowed to inhabit the heard of swine grazing nearby.
5. The tribe of Gad went from walking in obedience to God's word, into compromise – not partaking of God's promise to them, being disconnected and out of fellowship to where they eventually make their living raising swine – quite the spiritual decline.
6. Reading in the NT regarding the "Decapolis" – safe haven for Hellenistic Jews, a comfortable place for the Roman and Grecian culture. 9 of the 10 cities of the Decapolis were located in the region of Gadara.
  - Spiritually these people are like so many who are satisfied in their current level of spiritual development.
  - God challenges us to a deeper, richer, commitment to Him – but there are many who say "I'm satisfied, content where I'm at..."
  - Sitting on a spiritual plateau – in the same place they were 6 months ago, or 15 years ago – no more spiritual development.
  - Not to go forward in our Christian walk is to go backward because God always wants us to be moving forward in Him.

Paul wrote:

**Philippians 3:12-14** “<sup>12</sup>Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. <sup>13</sup>Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

- What Paul was saying was he hadn't arrived yet, and that he was still moving forward in the Lord.
- When God called Paul to Himself, just like when He called each of us to Himself, He did so with an express purpose in mind – territory to take for the kingdom of Heaven.

**Jeremiah 29:11** “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

- Some of the people have stopped at this place of spiritual stagnation – a dangerous place.
- Later when the enemies of Israel would arise and make war against, and eventually conquer Israel – guess who went into captivity first?
- The tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manaseh – were on the wrong side of the Jordan River, they were disconnected from the main body – and easy pickings – They were the first to go into captivity.
- All because they were content with spiritual mediocrity. Preferring a place of comfort over commitment.

## *Numbers Chapter 33*

---

V: 1-2 “These are the journeys of the Children of Israel which went forth out of the land of Egypt... travelogue.

- By the commandment of the Lord – as the Lord led and guided.

V: 3-4 Leaving Rameses on the morning after Passover, when all of Egypt’s first born sons had been slain.

- Examining each of the 10 plagues we see that God did indeed execute judgment upon the pagan gods of Egypt:
  1. They worshipped the river Nile river, so God killed it, turning it to blood.
  2. They worshipped frogs, flies, and lice, so God multiplied them abundantly.
  3. They worshipped the god of the harvest – so the true and living God showed them who really had the power over the harvest by destroying it.
  4. They worshipped Pharaoh as a god, but their god couldn’t keep his own son alive, and was eventually drowned in the Red Sea.
    - Each plague had a direct correlation to one of the Egyptian gods.
    - So the Lord executed judgment upon the pagan god’s of Egypt.

V: 5-37 Succoth, Etham, Pihahiroth & Migdol – trapped between the high mountains and the Red Sea.

- The children of Israel passing through the Red Sea, Pharaoh and his army being buried in the Red Sea.

- Their journey through the 40 years of wandering, being guided by and provided for by the Lord.

**Isaiah 42:6-7** “<sup>6</sup>I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles; <sup>7</sup>to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”

V: 38-40 Aaron is gathered to his fathers on Mt. Hor.

V: 41-49 A few more stops in the wilderness as the older generation dies off.

V: 50-54 Ending up in the plains of Moab, near Jericho – preparing to enter into Canaan, the promise land.

V: 51 “When” – not if...

**Philippians 1:6** “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

- Instruction: drive out the inhabitants of the land, destroy their pictures and molten images, tear down their pagan altars – don’t tolerate sin.
- Divide up the inheritance according to lots for each tribe according to their numbers.

V: 55-56 Warning: If you don’t drive out the inhabitants they will cause nothing but trouble – and I will end up doing to you what I was going to do to them.

- God wanted them driven out so that they would not intermingle. God knew that if the children of Israel didn’t drive the inhabitants out, they would adopt their un-godly practices – which would lead to their destruction.
- There is no room for compromise, no middle ground – there can be no peace between the Spirit and the flesh – someone’s going to die.

**Romans 8:7-9** “<sup>7</sup>Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. <sup>8</sup>So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. <sup>9</sup>But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

- God brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and he carried them all the way – through many adventures, many lessons, and trials – but He’s kept them and preserved them.

- This has been an incredible journey, an incredible adventure!

**Exodus 19:4-6** “<sup>4</sup>Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto Myself. <sup>5</sup>Now there, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine. <sup>6</sup>And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation...”