

Numbers Chapter 32

Verses 1-42

The tribes of Reuben and Gad desired to live in the land already conquered because they possessed much livestock and the land was good for grazing.

Moses gave them, along with the half tribe of Manasseh, portions of the land only on the condition that they would fully participate in the conquest of Canaan.

Numbers 32:1 "Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place [was] a place for cattle;"

“Reuben”, unable to wait for the best, was the first tribe to demand its inheritance.

In the terrible rebellion of Korah (chapter 16), Reuben was at the forefront.

Reuben was Jacob’s firstborn (Gen. 29:32, and is mentioned first due to his seniority.

Elsewhere the Gadites are mentioned first, no doubt due to their being the leaders in the drive to settle Trans-Jordan.

This was a very good place for raising cattle.

It appears, the cattle that Reuben and Gad had accumulated were in addition to the few they received from the battle with the Midianites.

It also appears, they found the land here to be a wonderful place for their cattle, sheep, and other animals.

The land was fertile and the water was plentiful enough to produce grass for the animals.

Gilead is a name that was given to a large portion of land on this side of the Jordan.

Verses 2-5

This was the “country which the LORD smote”, whose defeat is recorded (in 21:21-31).

Israel had not planned on fighting with Sihon, but because he blocked their path to the Jordan, the battle was fought.

Numbers 32:2 "The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,"

The children of Gad are mentioned first, though Reuben was the firstborn, and had a standard under which Gad pitched.

It may be, as Aben Ezra thinks, the Gadites were the first authors of this counsel, the contrivers of this scheme.

Who first moved it to the Reubenites, which they had an opportunity of doing, lying encamped by them.

Or however, they might be the busiest and active in this affair, or the best spokesmen.

For it could be only some, in the name of the whole, that addressed Moses on this account, and spoke to him about it.

"And to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation":

Who perhaps were the seventy elders, and with Moses the chief ruler, and Eleazar the High Priest, made up the grand Sanhedrim.

Or great council of the nation, and were undoubtedly the most proper persons to apply unto.

"Saying":

As follows.

This would be something that would affect all 12 tribes.

If they started breaking up, they would be no stronger than the people around them.

All of the princes as well as Moses and Eleazar should have a say in this.

Numbers 32:3 "Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,"

"Ataroth ... Beon":

The places mentioned here cannot be identified, but all lie between the Arnon River to the south and the Jabbok River to the north.

These places mentioned are in the south of Gilead.

This is probably where the cattle were already grazing.

Numbers 32:4 "[Even] the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, [is] a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:"

In which the above cities were, and perhaps some others not named.

This was now in the hands of the people of Israel, being subdued by them.

The conquest of which is ascribed unto the LORD, for the victory was of Him.

It was He that smote their enemies; and delivered their country into their hands.

And now Moses, Eleazar, and the princes of the congregation, being the representatives of the people, had a right to dispose of it.

And, which these two tribes request might be given to them, because, say they.

"It is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle":

To stock it, with and great numbers of them.

We saw in the last lesson, that this was true.

The Midianites had many animals.

Since the land is such a good place to raise cattle, and since they have many cattle, this would be the logical place for them to live.

Numbers 32:5 "Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, [and] bring us not over Jordan."

Directing their speech to Moses, the ruler of the congregation.

In a very modest, decent, and respectable manner.

"Let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession":

As their own portion and inheritance, to be enjoyed by them, and their children after them.

"And bring us not over Jordan":

Into the land of Canaan, where as they afterward explain themselves.

They did not desire to have any part with their brethren, but should be content with their possession here, should it be granted them.

They are saying, they are well pleased with this land, and will not expect any of the land on the other side of the Jordan.

They are asking Moses, for God to give them this fertile grazing land.

Verses 6-15

Moses feared that the proposal of the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben would cause the other tribes not to proceed to conquer the land west of the Jordan.

He said it would be the defection at Kadesh (14:1-10), all over again, and that they would “destroy all this people”.

Numbers 32:6 "And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?"

Being displeased with their motion, as his following discourse shows.

It having at first sight an appearance of covetousness and cowardice.

"Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?"

It is not reasonable that your brethren should be left by you and engage in a war with your common enemies.

To dispossess them of their land before they can settle in it.

And you remain here easy and quiet in the possession of a fruitful country.

It is not fair for them to inherit land, without going to war to help their brothers take their land.

Moses is showing them how wrong that would be.

Numbers 32:7 "And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?"

Which he suggests it would, should they settle on that side Jordan.

Since they would lose the assistance of two of their tribes.

Even two thirds of one of their standards in fighting with their enemies and subduing their land.

And besides it might be thought that this request of theirs not only proceeded from selfish views and a love of ease, which might set a bad example to others.

But carried in it a distrust of ever being able to enter into, at least to conquer and possess, the land of Canaan.

And so, might have a tendency to discourage their brethren.

"From going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?"

Despairing of ever enjoying it, and so laying aside all thoughts of it.

And not caring to make any attempt to get possession of it.

This might even cause some of the other tribes to choose a plot of land on this side, and not go into the land the LORD had promised them.

The other tribes might get the idea it would be too hard for the tribes to split up, and take the land.

Verses 8-10

The land of discouragement is deadly territory, and this story demonstrates that to unwittingly dishearten others by a negative or critical spirit dampens their spiritual enthusiasm and displeases the LORD (Prov. 15:13, 15).

Numbers 32:8 "Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land."

"Thus did your fathers":

Moses feared that if these two tribes were comfortably settled, they would not join with the other 10 tribes in conquering Canaan, and that could be the beginning of a general revolt against entering the Land.

As the 10 spies had dissuaded the people at Kadesh nearly 40 years earlier from conquering the Land (verses 9-13; 13:26 – 14:4), the refusal of these two tribes could cause the people to fail again (verse 15).

Now Moses tells them this is the attitude their fathers had.

He sent them to spy the Promised Land, and they came back, not wanting to take the land.

Numbers 32:9 "For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them."

That is, when they went up the hill.

For they were bid to go up into the mountain, and proceeded on into the country, until they came to the valley or brook of Eshcol.

So called from the cluster of grapes they there cut down, and brought along with them (see Numbers 13:17).

"And saw the land":

Searching it for the space of forty days.

"They discouraged the heart of the children of Israel":

By telling them that there were giants in the land, and that the people in common were strong.

And their cities walled, and that they were not able to go up against them and overcome them.

And by this means they disheartened the people.

"That they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them":

And this Moses feared, and suggests would be the consequence of the request the two tribes now made.

They had come back with a bad report, and God caused them to wander in the wilderness 40 years, because of their lack of faith.

Numbers 32:10 "And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying,"

Against the spies that brought the ill report.

And against all the people that were disheartened and murmured upon it.

And which, above all things, was to be dreaded now.

"And he sware, saying":

As follows.

Moses is telling them, that this kind of attitude angers God.

Numbers 32:11 "Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:"

(See Num. 14:28).

"Shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob":

The land of Canaan, which at various times He swore to give to them, and to their posterity.

"Because they have not wholly followed me":

The laws which He prescribed them, and the directions He gave them.

And particularly the orders they had to go up and possess the land at once (Deut. 1:21).

None of those who doubted would inherit the Promised Land.

God made them wander in the wilderness, until they all died off.

Numbers 32:12 "Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD."

"Joshua" and "Caleb" were different from the rest of the spies – faithful in their following of the LORD, fearless in the face of crisis, and filled with the Spirit of God.

Out of the 12 spies, there were only two who believed God would help them take the land of promise.

They both lived through the wilderness wanderings, and will see the Promised Land.

Their faith in God brought them through.

In fact, Joshua will take Moses place as their leader.

Joshua will lead them into the Promised Land.

Numbers 32:13 "And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed."

For murmuring against the report of the spies.

"And he made them wander in the wilderness forty years":

For though it was but about thirty-eight years from that time that they were in the wilderness, the round number of forty is given.

And besides it includes the time of their first coming into it.

Which being reckoned, makes the complete number, within a few months.

Kadesh, from whence the spies were sent, and whither they returned, and where the people murmured, and had this sentence pronounced on them.

That they should not see the land of Canaan, but wander and fall in the wilderness.

Seems to have had the addition of Kadesh-barnea made unto it on that account, which signifies the son of him that wandereth.

"Until all the generation, which had done evil in the sight of the LORD was consumed":

As they all were at this time when Moses spake these words.

All of the other men of the Israelites, who had been 20 years old and older, died in the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

Of course, that did not include Moses.

Numbers 32:14 "And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel."

Succeeded them in their families, of which they were now the heads.

And in their substance, their flocks, and herds.

And he suggests also, in their manners amid evil dispositions.

"An increase of sinful men":

This new generation was greatly increased.

For when the number was taken, as it was but a little before this time, they were pretty near the same number as of those that came out of Egypt.

But then they were not only an increase of men, but of sinful men.

Like fathers like sons.

"To augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel":

To make it greater and fiercer towards that nation than even their fathers had by their many sins and transgressions.

Moses says, "You are making the same mistake as your fathers".

Numbers 32:15 "For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people."

From following Him in the way of His commandments.

From attending His word, worship, and ordinances.

And from walking after Him, who went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire.

As it is suggested they would, should they stop short here and not go over Jordan into the land of Canaan.

"He will yet again leave them in the wilderness":

As he did at the time of the affair of the spies.

When they were ordered to turn and get into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

And where they had been ever since unto this time (Num. 14:25).

"And ye shall destroy all this people":

Be the cause of their destruction, if the LORD should in such a manner resent this step of theirs.

As to order them back into the wilderness again.

Though they were now as they were before, on the border of the land of Canaan.

Moses does not want to see the Promised Land lost to all of these people again.

Verses 16-19

They responded that they would "go ready armed" and would not return "until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance".

Some scholars believe that the presence of the two-and-one-half tribes in the area of the Trans-Jordan was in opposition to the will of God.

They say their reasons were purely selfish, and that Moses merely accommodated himself to their wishes.

However, a study of Joshua 22 does not give this impression.

At least three things are evident:

- (1) It appears that the eastern boundary of the Promised Land was not the Jordan Valley, but the mountain range of Gilead.
- (2) Joshua blessed the tribes and indicated that they indeed did have a right to settlement in Trans-Jordan.
- (3) The fact that God delivered the land of Sihon and Og to Israel seems to imply that someone was to possess it (Joshua 24:8).

Numbers 32:16 "And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:"

The heads of the tribes of Gad and Reuben came a little nearer to Moses.

Having something more to say unto him, in order to explain their meaning.

And in doing which they used some degree of freedom and boldness with him (see Gen. 44:18).

"And said, we will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones":

Not build new ones, but repair the old ones.

For there were cities enough in the country, as before named.

And no doubt sheepfolds too, as the land was a place of cattle.

But those were through the war broken down and demolished, and needed repairing.

And this they proposed to do, and leave their children and their cattle to the care of their servants.

Under the protection of the divine Providence, and did not mean for the present to take up their abode here.

The sheepfolds were places of safety for the sheep at night.

They also want to build a safe place for their little ones to stay.

Numbers 32:17 "But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land."

This they said to free themselves from the charge of cowardice.

And that they did not mean to sit still while their brethren went to war.

They were willing to put on their armor, and be ready to meet the enemy upon the borders of the land.

And engage with them, and to expose their lives in favor of their brethren.

"Until we have brought them unto their place":

To the land of Canaan.

The place designed for them, and given unto them, to the possession of it, and a settlement in it.

"And our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land":

Where they might be safe from them.

Which they proposed to repair and refortify for the security of them.

While they went with their brethren into the land of Canaan, to put them into possession of that.

Of which they made not the least doubt.

And so served to clear them of suspicion of any distrust they had of entering into and possessing the land.

Which might tend to discourage the people.

They would leave their families, who were not able to go to war, so someone would not come in and take their spot, while they were gone.

The men of age to fight, would go with the other tribes, and fight to win their land for them.

They were not afraid of battle; they had just found a place to their liking.

Numbers 32:18 "We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance."

In the cities built or repaired by them, or to their families.

And their substance, flocks and herds.

All which they should leave behind them, and never think of returning to them.

"Until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance":

Until all the tribes were settled in their respective places.

And every family and everyone in them had their portion assigned them.

And accordingly, they did not return until the land was wholly subdued.

Nor even until every lot came up, and the land was divided by it, and the inheritance of the several tribes fixed.

And even the cities of the Levites assigned to them out of the several tribes (see Joshua 22:1).

They will stay and fight, until all the land is in the hands of the Israelites that God had planned to have it.

They will not quit and go home, before the war is over.

Numbers 32:19 "For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward."

This they said, not as being determined whether Moses and the princes were willing or not to stay where they were.

And not pass over Jordan to inherit any part there, and much less as despising the good land.

But as giving up all pretensions to it, should they be settled where they desired.

They were not of that selfish and covetous disposition as to desire any part on the other side Jordan.

If it was but granted them to continue on this side, and possess the land they requested.

"Because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward":

They seem to speak as if they were assured of it.

And that it was so ordered by divine Providence, and wanted nothing but the consent of Moses, and the princes of the congregation.

They are sure the inheritance God wanted for them was on this side of the Jordan.

They are satisfied with this land. They will not ask for more land on the other side of the Jordan.

Verses 20-24

These verses lay out the conditions by which the tribes of “Reuben” and “Gad” could have the land they wanted: they would have to send their fighting men with the rest of Israel when Israel crossed into Canaan, and they would have to lead the troops.

They could only return after the land was “subdued” and Israel’s enemies were driven out.

Numbers 32:20 "And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,"

Being better disposed towards them, and more satisfied with the reasonableness of their request, it being explained unto him.

"If ye will do this thing":

Which they had promised.

"If ye will go armed before the LORD to war":

They had said they would go ready armed before the children of Israel.

But Moses expresses it "before the LORD "; which is more agreeable to their encampment and order in marching.

For not the standard of Reuben but that of Judah went foremost.

Yet the standard of Reuben marched directly before the sanctuary bore by the Kohathites, (see Numbers 10:18).

And so might be properly said to go before the LORD, who dwelt there.

The key to this is "if".

Moses puts a condition on them receiving the land they wish.

Numbers 32:21 "And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,"

Moses tries them thoroughly, and is very express in his words.

Requiring them not only to go armed, or march from the place where they were, towards the land of Canaan, but to go over Jordan.

And not some of them only, but all, and that before the LORD.

Though indeed, when the tribes came to the river Jordan, the ark, which was the symbol of the divine Presence, went before all the tribes into it.

And there stayed till they passed over.

And then these two tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh passed before the children of Israel, and before the LORD, unto battle (Joshua 3:11).

"Until he hath driven out his enemies before him":

The Canaanites, who were the enemies of the LORD, as well as of His people.

And because of their sins, in which they showed their enmity to God, the land spewed them out.

And he drove them out to make way for His people Israel.

And till this was done the tribes of Reuben and Gad were to continue with them.

They are not to shirk their duties as one of the twelve tribes.

They are to fight with Israel.

They are to help drive out the enemy.

Numbers 32:22 "And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD."

For the inhabitants fleeing before His people, and being conquered by them.

Might be said to be subdued before the LORD.

This being done in His presence, by His power, and for His people.

"Then afterward ye shall return":

To this side of Jordan.

The land of Jazer and Gilead, to their cities, and families there.

"And be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel":

Having fulfilled all that they promised.

"And this land shall be your possession before the LORD":

Be established and settled in it as their inheritance.

The LORD seeing and approving of it, and protecting them in the enjoyment of it.

If they do all the things Moses lined out for them, then they shall inherit this land they want, and the LORD will not be angry with them.

They were not fearful.

They just liked this particular plot of land.

There is no sin in that.

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."

"Your sin will find you out":

The two tribes committed themselves to provide their warriors for the conquest of the Land.

This agreement satisfied Moses, although he added that non-participation would be sin and God would certainly find and judge the tribes for their sin.

This warning related to the condition of going into Palestine and fulfilling their obligations of fighting.

It is interesting that in the ancient Near East the "great king" owned crown land which he distributed "free of charge" to fighting men and their families, with the requirement that they go to battle when needed.

In Israel God was the "great King".

He owned the land (Lev. 25:23), and distributed to the tribes by lot.

One of His requirements was for all of the tribes to enter into battle and then settle in their prescribed locations.

If they do not keep their bargain, they will be punished by the LORD.

He knows even the intents of our heart.

He certainly knows our deeds.

Numbers 32:24 "Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth."

For their safety and security, as they proposed to do.

"And do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth":

All that they had promised.

Moses gives them permission to build their folds for their sheep, and their cities for their wives and children.

He is the same as saying, they have taken a vow with their mouth.

They had better keep it.

Numbers 32:25 "And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth."

In answer to his speech.

"Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth":

Both with respect to their march before the LORD to battle.

And with respect to their provision for their children and flocks.

The families of Reuben and Gad agreed to all of the terms Moses set down.

Numbers 32:26 "Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead:"

Their families, and their substance.

"Shall be there in the cities of Gilead":

Such as are before mentioned (Num. 32:3).

And which they proposed to repair and fortify.

To preserve their families and possessions from the Amorites about them.

Their wives and children will stay with their flocks in the land of Gilead, while they go to war.

Numbers 32:27 "But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith."

The river Jordan, and go into the land of Canaan.

"Every man armed for war":

Moses had required that all should go over, and they consent to it.

And promise that everyone should, though this was not insisted on when they came to it.

For only about 40,000 went over (Joshua 4:13).

Whereas the two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, numbered more than 110,000 (see Num. 26:7).

"Before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith":

For now, instead of saying, "before the children of Israel".

A phrase they first used, they say, "before the LORD", as Moses had expressed it.

All of the men 20 years old and older, who were able to go to war, gathered their war gear, and went with the other tribes.

Numbers 32:28 "So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel:"

That they should have a grant of the land they requested.

This looks as if Moses determined the case himself, though perhaps it was by the vote.

And with the consent of the whole court; only Moses strictly enjoined them to observe it, namely.

"Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel":

And the reason he did this, because he knew that he would die.

And not see either the thing itself or the conditions of it performed.

Moses knew before this all was completed, that he would die.

He would not cross over Jordan.

He tells Eleazar and Joshua the conditions of Gad and Reuben receiving the land on this side Jordan.

Numbers 32:29 "And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession:"

To Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes of the congregation.

"If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the LORD":

As they have promised they will.

"And the land shall be subdued before you":

Which must be done before their return.

"Then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession":

Which, no doubt, included that of Jaazer too.

Since Jaazer, which is the same, is after mentioned as one of the cities built by the children of Gad (Num. 32:35).

This is the condition for them to receive the land.

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

Shall change their minds, and break their promise.

And refuse to go over the river Jordan with the other tribes.

And armed ready to engage in battle with the enemy.

"They shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan":

Take their lot there, but have no inheritance or possessions on this side Jordan.

This is the condition for them not to receive the land they wanted.

Numbers 32:31 "And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do."

The word is in the singular number, and shows their unanimity.

That they agreed to what Moses said.

And replied all of them as one man, as Jarchi expresses it.

And it may be there was one that was the mouth of them all, and answered for them.

"Saying, as the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do":

Here they make use of the word Jehovah.

Taking what Moses had said unto them as from the LORD.

And therefore should strictly and punctually observe it, as if they heard the LORD himself speak it.

The children of Gad and the children of Reuben were in total agreement with the conditions.

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

This is repeated again and again, for the confirmation of it.

Assuring that it should be strictly performed according to the true intent of it.

"That the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours":

That is, that the possession and inheritance they desired.

And which had been granted them, on conditions to be performed by them, might be ratified.

And confirmed unto them on their fulfilment of them.

This is stated again, as if they were swearing they would do this.

Numbers 32:33 "And Moses gave unto them, [even] to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, [even] the cities of the country round about."

“Half the tribe of Manasseh”:

Also chose land on the east side of the Jordan.

The same stipulations that Moses gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites would apply to this group (see note on 32:20-24).

The other half of the tribe of Manasseh would receive land on the west side of the Jordan (see Joshua 13:7).

Once the agreement was reached with Reuben and Gad concerning settlement on the east side of the Jordan, the half tribe of Manasseh, also rich with flocks, joined in seeking land in that territory.

However, (verses 39-42) indicate that Manasseh conquered cities not yet taken and settled in the northern area of Gilead.

It is very strange to me that the half tribe of Manasseh would be included in this.

They had not been involved in the negotiations.

We are not told for sure, just why the tribe of Manasseh was divided.

Perhaps it was because they had increased greatly in size.

It could also have been because of some division in their ranks, that we are not told of.

This was a large area.

Possibly, Reuben and Gad were not large enough to take care of it all.

For whatever reason, God gave them this land of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan.

Numbers 32:34 "And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,"

Or rather repaired the walls and fortifications.

And rebuilt houses which had been demolished in the wars with Sihon and Og.

When the following places were taken by the Israelites.

"Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer":

The two first are mentioned in (Num. 32:3).

Aroer was a city situated on the river Arnon, and was after this in the hands of the Moabites.

Jerom says, it was shown in his day on the top of the mountain.

Upon the bank of the river Arnon, which flows into the Dead sea (Jer. 48:19).

Numbers 32:35 "And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,"

Of these no mention is made elsewhere, except Jaazer, which is the same with Jazer (Num. 32:3).

Numbers 32:36 "And Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities: and folds for sheep."

The first of these is the same with Nimrah (Num. 32:3).

And the other is the same with Beth-aram (Joshua 13:27).

It is called in the Jerusalem, Talmud, Beth-ramtha, and so by the Syrians, Beth-Ramphta.

These cities the children of Gad built or repaired for their families.

"And folds for sheep":

They also built for their cattle, as they promised to do.

And Moses enjoined them (Num. 32:16).

We see from this, Gad built his own cities and his own sheepfolds.

He made a place to leave his family, while he went to war.

These were all cities of Gad, above.

Numbers 32:37 "And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,"

Heshbon was the royal city of Sihon king of the Amorites.

And Elealeh was within a mile of it (see Num. 32:3).

This shows that those cities were not built anew properly, only repaired.

For they were cities in being long before.

Besides, they had not time to build new cities, for in a few months after this they passed over Jordan.

Though indeed they left men enough behind to rebuild cities, whom they might set to work about them when they departed.

Kirjathaim is, by the Targum of Jonathan, called the city of two streets paved with marble.

And it adds, this is Beresha: Jerom says, it is now called Coraiatha.

Which is pretty near its ancient name.

And that it is ten miles from Medeba, a city of Arabia.

Mentioned as one of the cities in the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites (Num. 21:30).

Numbers 32:38 "And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded."

The act of changing the names of these cities indicates the Israelites' superiority over them (compare Dan. Chapter 1), and the change of names for Daniel and his friends; and the naming of things by God in (Gen. chapter 1), and Adam in naming the animals in (Gen. chapter 2).

It appears from this, that the children of Reuben took the ruins left by the people conquered, and rebuilt their cities.

They renamed each of them.

This was a separate area from Gad and Manasseh.

Numbers 32:39 "And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which [was] in it."

"Manasseh": (Deut. 3:13 and Joshua 13:29-31 and 17:1-2), assume the settlement of part of Manasseh in Trans-Jordan.

Joshua 22:7, indicates this tribe had a share on the west side also.

This just quickly says, the Amorites were defeated and their land given unto Machir, the son of Manasseh.

Numbers 32:40 "And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein."

That is, to the children of Machir, who went and took it.

Though some say, as Aben Ezra observes, that Machir himself was now alive.

And that it was given to him.

But that is not probable; for, supposing him to be living when the children of Israel came out of Egypt.

All that came from thence, who were twenty years old and upwards, died in the wilderness, excepting two (see Num. 32:11).

"And he dwelt therein":

That is, the family of the Machirites (see Num. 26:29).

This area of Gilead is given to the family of Machir by Moses.

Numbers 32:41 "And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-jair."

By his mother's side, otherwise he was of the family of Judah.

For Hezron, of the family of Judah, married a daughter of Machir, the son of Manasseh.

By whom he had a son called Segub, who was the father of Jair, (1 Chron. 2:21), the same;

"Went and took the small towns thereof":

Of that part of Gilead given to Machir.

"And called them Havoth-jair":

After his own name (in Deut. 3:14).

They are called Bashan-havoth-jair.

Jair is another descendent of Manasseh.

His family inherits the small towns.

Jair was actually one of the daughter's descendants.

Jair's mother was the granddaughter of Manasseh.

Numbers 32:42 "And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name."

Who this Nobah was is not certain.

Very probably a descendant of Manasseh.

It is said he was among those that were born in Egypt, and died after the death of Moses, and was buried beyond Jordan.

As it is said, also did Machir and Jair, so that there were none left but Caleb, and Joshua.

"And called it Nobah, after his own name":

But it seems that in later times its ancient name was restored to it.

For Jerom, says there was a village in Arabia, called Cannatha.

Which is supposed to be this place.

Though he also tells us, that eight miles from Heshbon; to the south, is shown a desert place called Naba.

Pliny places Cannatha in the Decapolis.

There is no other record of Nobah.

Some believe he is of the family of Jair.

He was included as part of Manasseh's family.

Numbers Chapter 32 Questions

1. Who of the tribes, had large herds of cattle?
2. What did they find pleasing about the land on this side the Jordan?
3. Who did they speak to about the land?
4. What were the names of the places they were interested in?
5. What do they ask of Moses and Eleazar?
6. What question did Moses ask them?
7. What would this do to the other tribes?
8. Their attitude is like their _____.
9. What sin had their fathers committed?
10. What happened to their fathers?
11. Who were the only two of the twelve spies, who did not come back with a bad report?
12. What happened to these two?
13. Why had they wandered in the wilderness 40 years?
14. What does Moses tell them they are doing?
15. What did they want to build, before they went to the war?
16. What are they willing to do, that would please God?
17. Do they ask for an inheritance on the other side of Jordan?
18. What is the key in Moses answer to them?
19. They are not to shirk their duties as one of the _____.

20. If they keep their word, what reward do they get?
21. What happens to them, if they do not keep their word?
22. What did Gad and Reuben agree to?
23. Who will stay with their flocks?
24. Who does Moses tell the agreement to?
25. Who is added to the agreement of the land on this side Jordan, in verse 33?
26. Why do you suppose they were included in the deal?
27. What cities did Gad build?
28. What does it appear that Reuben did?
29. How did they acquire Manasseh's land?