

NUMBERS 32:1 Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock. When they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that behold, the place was a place for livestock;

The Reubenites and Gadites request Moses to give them their inheritance on this side of Jordan, Num 32:1-5. Moses expostulates with and reproves them, Num 32:6-15. They explain themselves, and propose conditions, with which Moses is satisfied - they are to build cities for their wives and children, and folds for their cattle, and go over Jordan armed with the other tribes, and fight against their enemies till the land is subdued; after which they are to return, Num 32:16-27. Moses proposes the business to Eleazar, Joshua, and the elders, Num 32:28-30. The Gadites and Reubenites promise a faithful observance of the conditions, Num 32:31, Num 32:32; on which Moses assigns to them, and the half tribe of Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, Num 32:33. The cities built by the Gadites, Num 32:34-36. The cities built by the Reubenites, Num 32:37, Num 32:38. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, expel the Amorites from Gilead, Num 32:39, which Moses grants to them, Num 32:40. Jair, the son of Manasseh, takes the small towns of Gilead, Num 32:41. And Nobah takes Kenath and its villages, Num 32:42.

NUMBERS 32:2 the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the princes of the congregation, saying,

NUMBERS 32:3 "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo, and Beon,

Verse 3

Ataroth, and Dibon, etc. - The places mentioned here belonged to Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, which being conquered by the Israelites, constituted ever after a part of their territories, Num 32:33.

NUMBERS 32:4 the land which the LORD struck before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock; and your servants have livestock."

NUMBERS 32:5 They said, "If we have found favour in your sight, let this land be given to your servants for a possession. Don't bring us over the Jordan."

Verse 5

Let this land be given unto thy servants - Because it was good for pasturage, and they had many flocks, Num 32:1.

NUMBERS 32:6 Moses said to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, "Shall your brothers go to the war, and shall you sit here?"

NUMBERS 32:7 Why do you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them?

NUMBERS 32:8 Your fathers did so when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to see the land.

NUMBERS 32:9 For when they went up to 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.

NUMBERS 32:10 The LORD's anger was kindled in that day, and he swore, saying,

NUMBERS 32:11 'Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me,

NUMBERS 32:12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun; because they have followed the LORD completely.'

Verse 12

Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite - It was Jephunneh that was the Kenezite, and not Caleb. Kenaz was probably the father of Jephunneh.

NUMBERS 32:13 The LORD's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander back and forth in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, who had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

NUMBERS 32:14 "Behold, you have risen up in your fathers' place, an increase of sinful men, to increase the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel.

NUMBERS 32:15 For if you turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all of these people."

NUMBERS 32:16 They came near to him, and said, "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones;

Verse 16

We will build - cities for our little ones - It was impossible for these, numerous as they might be, to build cities and fortify them for the defense of their families in their absence. Calmet supposes they meant no more than repairing the cities of the Amorites which they had lately taken; which work might have been very easily accomplished in the time which they spent on this side of Jordan, before they went over with their brethren, to put them in possession of the land.

NUMBERS 32:17 but we ourselves will be ready armed to go before the children of Israel, until we have brought them to their place. Our little ones shall dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

Verse 17

Because of the inhabitants of the land - These were the Ammonites, Moabites, Idumeans, and the remains of the Midianites and Amorites. But could the women and children even keep the defenced cities, when placed in them? This certainly cannot be supposed possible. Many of the men of war must of course stay behind. In the last census, Numbers 26, the tribe of Reuben consisted of 43,730 men; the tribe of Gad, 40,500; the tribe of Manasseh, 52,700; the half of which is 26,350. Add this to the sum of the other two tribes, and the amount is 110,580. Now from Jos 4:13 we learn that of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half of the tribe of Manasseh, only 40,000 armed men passed over Jordan to assist their brethren in the reduction of the land: consequently the number of 70,580 men were left behind for the defense of the women, the children, and the flocks. This was more than sufficient to defend them against a people already panic struck by their late discomfitures and reverses.

NUMBERS 32:18 We will not return to our houses, until the children of Israel have each inherited their inheritance.

NUMBERS 32:19 For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan, and forward; because our inheritance has come to us on this side of the Jordan eastward."

NUMBERS 32:20 Moses said to them, "If you will do this thing, if you will arm yourselves to go before the LORD to the war,

NUMBERS 32:21 and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before the LORD, until he has driven out his enemies from before him,

NUMBERS 32:22 and the land is subdued before the LORD; then afterward you shall return, and be guiltless towards the LORD, and towards Israel; and this land shall be to you for a possession before the LORD.

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.

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

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

NUMBERS 32:26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock, shall be there in the cities of Gilead;

NUMBERS 32:27 but your servants will pass over, every man who is armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord says."

NUMBERS 32:28 So Moses commanded 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 children of Israel.

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

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

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

NUMBERS 32:32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us beyond the Jordan."

NUMBERS 32:33 Moses gave to them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, according to its cities and borders, even the cities of the surrounding land.

NUMBERS 32:34 The children of Gad built Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer,

Verse 34

The children of Gad built - Aroer - This was situated on the river Arnon, Deu 2:36; 2Kgs 10:33. It was formerly inhabited by the Emim, a warlike and perhaps gigantic people. They were expelled by the Moabites; the Moabites by the Amorites; and the Amorites by the Israelites. The Gadites then possessed it till the captivity of their tribe, with that of Reuben and the half of the tribe of Manasseh, by the Assyrians, 2Kgs 15:29, after which the Moabites appear to have repossessed it, as they seem to have occupied it in the days of Jeremiah, Jer 48:15-20.

NUMBERS 32:35 Atrothshophan, Jazer, Jogbehah,

NUMBERS 32:36 Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran: fortified cities, and folds for sheep.

NUMBERS 32:37 The children of Reuben built Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim,

NUMBERS 32:38 Nebo, and Baal Meon, (their names being changed), and Sibmah. They gave other names to the cities which they built.

Verse 38

And Nebo - their names being changed - That is, Those who conquered the cities called them after their own names. Thus the city Kenath, being conquered by Nobah, was called after his name, Num 32:42.

NUMBERS 32:39 The children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were therein.

NUMBERS 32:40 Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh; and he lived therein.

NUMBERS 32:41 Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its towns, and called them Havvoth Jair.

Verse 41

Havoth-jair - That is, the villages or habitations of Jair; and thus they should have been translated. As these two tribes and a half were the first, says Ainsworth, who had their inheritance assigned to them in the promised land, so they were the first of all Israel that were carried captive out of their own land, because of their sins. "For they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after other gods. And God delivered them into the hands of Pul and Tiglath-Pilneser, kings of Assyria, and they brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and Gozan, unto this day." See 1Chr 5:25, 1Chr 5:26.

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